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NEWS BRIEFS

Khaleda, Hasina greet Kohl

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina greeted...

Lightning kills one

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Oct 2: A young man was killed when struck by lightning...

Mother, daughter murdered in city

By Staff Correspondent

In a gruesome double murder in the city yesterday, a college teacher and her grown up daughter were brutally hacked to death...

Nilufar Chowdhury, 50, a teacher of the Home Economics College at Azimpur and her 20-year-old daughter Mahjabeen Chowdhury Shoma, a second year student of the...



Nilufar Chowdhury



Mahjabeen Shoma

Mymensingh Medical College, were found dead by their landlady and a colleague of Mrs Chowdhury in the evening.

According to Nilufar Chowdhury's sister Dr Atiya, who works at the nuclear medicine centre of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), a maid named Romena, 35, who had been working at the house for the past eight years, was...

missing. Romena was the only other person living in the flat.

Dr. Atiya, who rushed from work to her sister's 5/5, Block-A, Lalmatia residence after being informed around 6:30 pm, also told this correspondent that she wasn't quite sure if any valuables were missing.

Nilufar Chowdhury's husband Aminuddin Chowdhury, who retired as Divisional Commissioner of Khulna and now works for the UNHCR, was in Cox's Bazar where he looks after the Rohingya refugees affairs. He was told of the tragedy by relatives over telephone. The Chowdhurys have a son who was not in the house at the time.

According to Mohammadpur police, who recovered the bodies after being informed over telephone by the landlady, said the killings took See Page 12 Col 4

Tariff Commission report Duty exemption for all exportables suggested

Star Report

The Tariff Commission has suggested duty exemption for all export items to make them competitive in the global market.

"Bangladesh does not have any export item on which it enjoys monopoly control in the international market. So, the Tariff Commission does not consider it logical to impose duty on any exportable item," the commission said in its annual report for 1993-94.

Submitted to the Commerce Minister Saturday, the report argued about the possibility of a shortfall in export earnings if duty is imposed on an item which do not have a controlling share of the international market.

The commission recommended a reduction or waiver of all duties on every imported material used in export-oriented manufacturing units, to gain competitive advantage by...

reducing production costs. The report noted that although the government may lose some revenue earning in the short run, in the medium and long term the policy would have a positive impact through increased exports resulting in higher revenue from income and other taxes.

Acknowledging the necessity of proper protection for agricultural, industrial, service and other sectoral items, the report suggested a 30 per cent protective duty on all locally produced products.

It, however, maintained that the interest of the consumers and users is not served if the effective rate of protection is above 50 per cent while it also breeds inefficiency and deters development of adequate technology.

The commission recommended restructuring the tariff See Page 12 Col 6

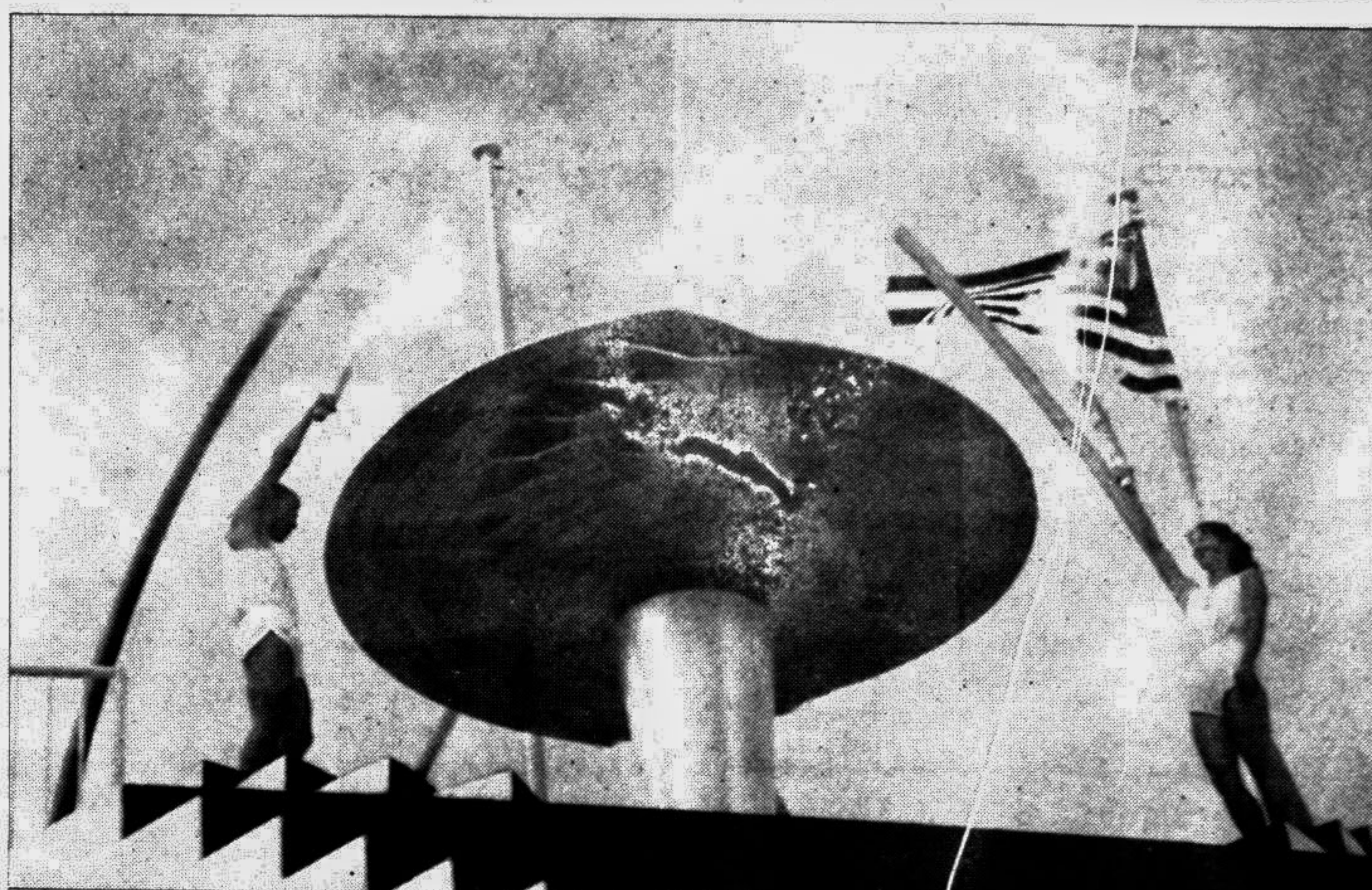
Village focal point of development, repeats PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said the present government believes in balanced development of the country and is pursuing programmes for the welfare of the commonman, reports UNB.

She said the village is the focal point of the development programmes to create employment opportunities in the rural areas for reducing the migration pressure to big cities, including the capital.

Begum Zia was exchanging views with the elite of the city's Telegaon area who called on her at the Prime Minister's Hare Road office last night.

Different problems of the area, including setting up of college, community centres and children's parks as well as development of water supply, sewerage system and road communication particularly extension of Bijoy Sarani towards Nakhapara were raised during the discussion. See Page 12 Col 4



Japan's steeplechaser Yasunore Uchitomi (L) and women's basketball player Aki Ichijo (R) light the Asian Games flame yesterday during the opening ceremony of the 12th Asiad at the Hiroshima stadium in Japan. Story on page 11 — AFP photo

Mouse in parcel creates panic in Kuwait

KUWAIT, Oct 2: A mouse that jumped out of a package sent from India caused a scare in a post office for fear it was carrying the pneumonic plague, the Al-Qabas daily reported today, says AP.

The newspaper said officials from the interior, health and communications ministries were called to the sorting office in the suburb of Jleib al-Shuyouk Saturday.

The building was fumigated and three employees who touched the package were given antibiotics, the daily said.

A health ministry source, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed the report. But he said reaction to the incident was exaggerated because the mouse was most probably from Kuwait, not India.

Doctors' strike Fall in number of patients at hospitals

By Staff Correspondent The number of patients at government hospitals has fallen remarkably due to the continuous strike by the doctors.

At the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), the country's highest, which traditionally remains overcrowded, many beds were seen empty yesterday. The number of patients yesterday morning was 1138 while before the strike began, on September 21, there were over 1400 everyday against an official capacity of 1200.

Although the indoor departments are exempted from the strike, called by the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) most duties were being performed by ward boys and nurses and even patients' relatives on attendants yesterday morning.

The poorer patients are staying at the DMCH ignoring their miseries in the hope the doctors would withdraw their See Page 12 Col 8

Confirmed plague cases in Maharashtra rise to 79

BANGALORE, Oct 2: The number of confirmed plague cases in Maharashtra seem to be on the rise with a total of 79 cases testing positive in anti-plague tests by noon today at the plague surveillance cell of the National Institute of Communicable Disease (NICD) here, reports PTI.

While Beed district accounted for a maximum of 50 positive cases out of the 54 ones tested, Akola district has a single confirmed case from the two tested. Today alone 14 cases were tested positive of the 15 samples from Beed.

Meanwhile, with the death of three more suspected plague patients yesterday the total number of plague-related deaths in Delhi has gone up to five.

The Delhi state government, however, today ordered schools to reopen.

The Assam govt has instructed the Karimganj District Health Department to...

set up camp at Surabari area, on the border between Tripura and Karimganj district of Assam to medically examine all passengers, coming by bus, truck and train from Tripura.

The order was given following the death of two persons in plague in Tripura recently, official sources in Silchar today said.

No report of plague case in Bangladesh

By Staff Correspondent

Three people, earlier suspected of carrying plague germ and hospitalised in Dhaka, were released yesterday as medical tests on them proved negative.

The blood culture reports of the three confirmed they were free from plague, said doctors at the Infectious Diseases See Page 12 Col 1

Reuters adds: India appears confident it has controlled a deadly plague outbreak and the World Health Organisation (WHO) said today the next two days would prove if this was right.

Nearly 3,000 suspected cases — a number which has doubled over the past five days — are under investigation.

"This spurt was to be expected," WHO spokesman Jitendra Tuli in Delhi told Reuters. "We believe the full picture will be clear by Tuesday."

He said the pattern of the plague's spread since it first erupted in the western city of Surat and its three-day gestation period indicated the disease was tampering off.

AP says: Two Persian Gulf states today began evacuating their citizens from Bombay and New Delhi after fear that the deadly disease was far from being contained. See Page 12 Col 3

Proposed dialogue has lost its utility: Hasina

SYEDPUR, Oct 2: Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina today said the proposed government-Opposition dialogue for resolving the present crisis has lost its utility because of the Prime Minister's remarks about a caretaker government, reports UNB.

"One should not behave in a way that might push the country towards confrontation," she told newsmen at the Syedpur airport when asked to comment about the Prime Minister's remarks at the Manik Mia Avenue public meeting on Saturday.

On the Prime Minister's contention that a caretaker government is unconstitutional, Hasina said: "If it is true, the last election, present Parliament and the BNP government become unconstitutional as these are the products of election under a neutral caretaker government." She said a caretaker gov-

ernment issue has been included in the three-point formula of the Commonwealth Secretary General.

The caretaker government has been made constitutional through the 11th Amendment of the Constitution, the Awami League president said. "We don't want to do anything unconstitutional... We are demanding introduction of a bill to make constitutional provision of a neutral caretaker government."

What the Prime Minister is saying about a neutral caretaker government was also uttered by the past regime of Ershad, she said. "One should not make any comment that may block the way to dialogue."

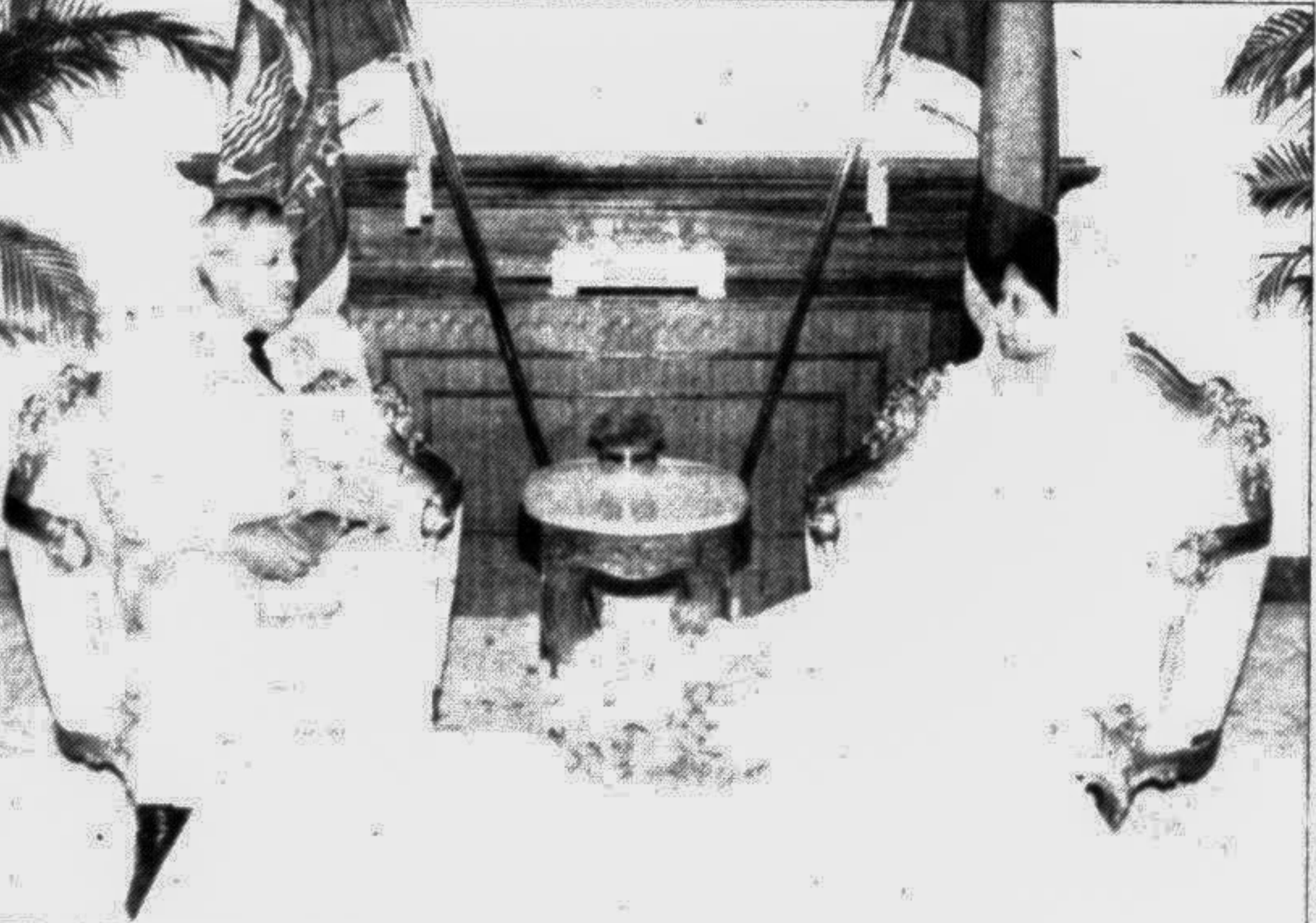
A report from Kurigram adds: Hasina today called for declaring the drought hit northern districts as distressed area and providing See Page 12 Col 7

AL, JP, Jamaat react to PM's remark

Opposition parties reacting to a caretaker government to conduct future polls, yesterday sharply reacted to the Prime Minister's remark on the issue, saying it would seriously disrupt the pre-dialogue atmosphere, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia while addressing a public meeting at the Manik Mia Avenue in the city on Saturday asserted that future elections would be held under the elected government, apparently negating the Opposition demand for a neutral caretaker government to conduct national elections.

In his reaction, Awami League leader and Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim said prospect of the Government-Opposition dialogue, created in the wake of recent developments was destroyed after the unguarded remarks of the Prime Minister and he See Page 12 Col 7



Visiting Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti armed forces Major General Ali Muhammad Hasani (L) and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. — PID photo

'JMB won't affect wildlife around project area'

By Asiuzzaman

Construction of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge would have little impact on nearly 200 species of wildlife in the Jamuna and the Dhaleswari river areas, wildlife experts said after a comprehensive study.

"Considering all aspects of the problem, it seems there will be no significant impact on the present wildlife of the areas concerned," leader of the study teams Prof Kazi Zaker Husain told The Daily Star.

"Perhaps the whole operation would be a blessing in disguise... as the trees on the embankments and approach roads would provide good shelter for the birds," said Prof Husain who is a teacher of Zoology department of Dhaka University.

The other members of the team are: Prof S U Sarker, M K Rahman and Dr Anwarul Islam.

The study was undertaken in view of reports that the project areas were food and breeding habitats for 'resident' and migratory birds. The donors also insisted on ensuring that wildlife in the project areas should not be affected, Prof Zaker Husain said.

During the eight-month study, the wildlife experts found nine species of mammals, 169 species of birds, nine species of reptiles and six species of amphibians.

All the species of mammals except the Ganges dolphin, the reptilian species except soft shell and spotted flap shell...

and all the amphibian species were recorded from villages away from the banks of the Jamuna and the Dhaleswari. The villages are likely to be impacted directly or indirectly and fully or partially due to the construction of the bridge, the study team said.

Of the 169 bird species, 119 were found 'resident' and 50 migratory.

Moreover, five types of ducks and 17 waders were also recorded in those areas.

The study team identified five possible impacts on wildlife due to construction of the bridge. These are: 1) Closure of the northern intake of the Dhaleswari would cause a major hydrological change in See Page 12 Col 1

World Habitat Day today

World Habitat Day with the theme Home and the Family will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the world today, reports UNB.

The day is being observed in accordance with a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1985.

This year's theme — Home and the Family — was chosen to underline the need for building up stable families across the world.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in separate messages underscored the significance of observing 1994 as the international year of the family.

President Biswas in his message stressed on planned housing, pointing out that homelessness is a serious problem.

In her message, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia See Page 12 Col 6

'Some WB, IMF policies are tough to follow'

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman said some demands by the World Bank (WB) and IMF in policy formulation in Bangladesh may be good apparently but sensitive enough and socio-politically very difficult to put to practice, reports UNB.

Saifur, also the Chairman of the joint annual meetings of the WB and IMF in Madrid, made the comment on the recommendations by the Bank and the Fund in formulating economic, monetary and fiscal policies of Bangladesh in an interview with the daily "Madrid Capital" on Saturday.

When asked about the complaint by the outside institutions that the WB and IMF have failed to curb poverty suffered by one billion people around the world, Saifur said, "It is not exclusively the WB's fault."

According to a message received in Dhaka yesterday,

Saifur Rahman sounded cautions about judging world economic prospects in the wake of half-yearly IMF report which announced the end of recession and start of economic recovery.

The prospects of the economic recovery will depend on deficit control in the industrialised countries, he said.

Replying to another question, Saifur said as far as the WB was concerned the only missions left before them was to play their due role in the economic recovery of Africa and a few countries in South-East Asia and perhaps facilitation of technical advices to the transition of economies of the former communist block into the world market economy would provide the WB as well as the IMF See Page 12 Col 3

8 BNP activists sued for hurling crackers

By Court Correspondent

A case has been filed against eight BNP activists, including Lubbah Thana BNP president Mesbahuddin Sabu, accusing them of hurling crackers at an Awami League procession on Sept 27.

AL city vice president M A Aziz was injured in the blast.

The case was lodged yesterday by the joint secretary of city AL, advocate Quamrul Islam with the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM).

The other accused are Nazim Bashan, Siraj Rahman, Soley, Mohammad Ali and Laquat. Quamrul Islam in his complaint said Sabu and seven other BNP men had hurled crackers at an AL procession in Chankharpool area during the Opposition's rail and road barricade programme.