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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**3 more beheaded in S Arabia**

**RIYADH, Sept 1:** Three Pakistani men convicted of heroin trafficking were executed today in Makkah, Islam's holiest city, the state-run Saudi Radio reported. Executions are usually carried out at a public square near a mosque after midday prayers on the Muslim holiday, reports AP.

**2 rickshawpullers die in accidents**

**COMILLA, Sept 1:** Two rickshawpullers were killed in separate road mishaps at Chandina and Dabiddar of the district today, police said. They were identified as Babul Mian, 32, and Habib, 18. Both of them died instantly. The bodies were sent to Comilla Sadar Hospital for autopsy, reports UNB.

**LTTE refuses to free passengers**

**COLOMBO, Sept 1:** Tamil Tiger rebels have refused to release some of the 144 passengers and crew of a ferry they seized four days ago to lure and destroy naval gunboats, officials said today. The rebels said some of the passengers were members of a rival Tamil group that is helping the military to fight the Tiger guerrillas, said a lawmaker in parliament, reports AP.

**Liberian war ends**

**MONROVIA, Sept 1:** Liberia's 6-year-old civil war formally ended today when the nation's chief warlords were seated as the new government. The warlords, who wrecked the country but promise peace, arrived in the capital to the cheers of hundreds of thousands of people. Many of the fighters were based in the bush and had not been to the capital in years, reports AP.

## Khaleda offers talks but warns against 'anarchy'

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia has renewed her call to the Opposition to sit for a dialogue with an 'open mind' for resolving the persisting political impasse which, she said, was created by the Opposition itself.

"Let's sit for dialogue with an open mind. We're ready to resolve the crisis through discussions. But that must be within the framework of the Constitution," she told a huge public meeting at Gulistan Square in the city yesterday afternoon organised to mark the 17th founding anniversary of the BNP.

Begum Zia, however, warned that the government

would be compelled to take tough measures to check any 'destructive and anarchic' activities in the name of agitation and the Opposition alone would have to bear the responsibility for such a situation.

The prime minister's fresh call for a negotiated settlement of the long-drawn political standoff came a day after expiry of Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's deadline for acceptance of the demand for a neutral caretaker government to conduct the next general elections.

Retorting to the Opposition threat of removing her government unless their demand was accepted, Be-

gum Zia said, "We're not afraid of anybody's threat ... our government came to power with people's mandate and not through any illegal way ... no agitation can remove us from power."

The premier's remarks came while the three major opposition parties — the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami — are set to enforce a 32-hour hartal across the country from this morning to press their demand and also plan to announce further agitation programmes.

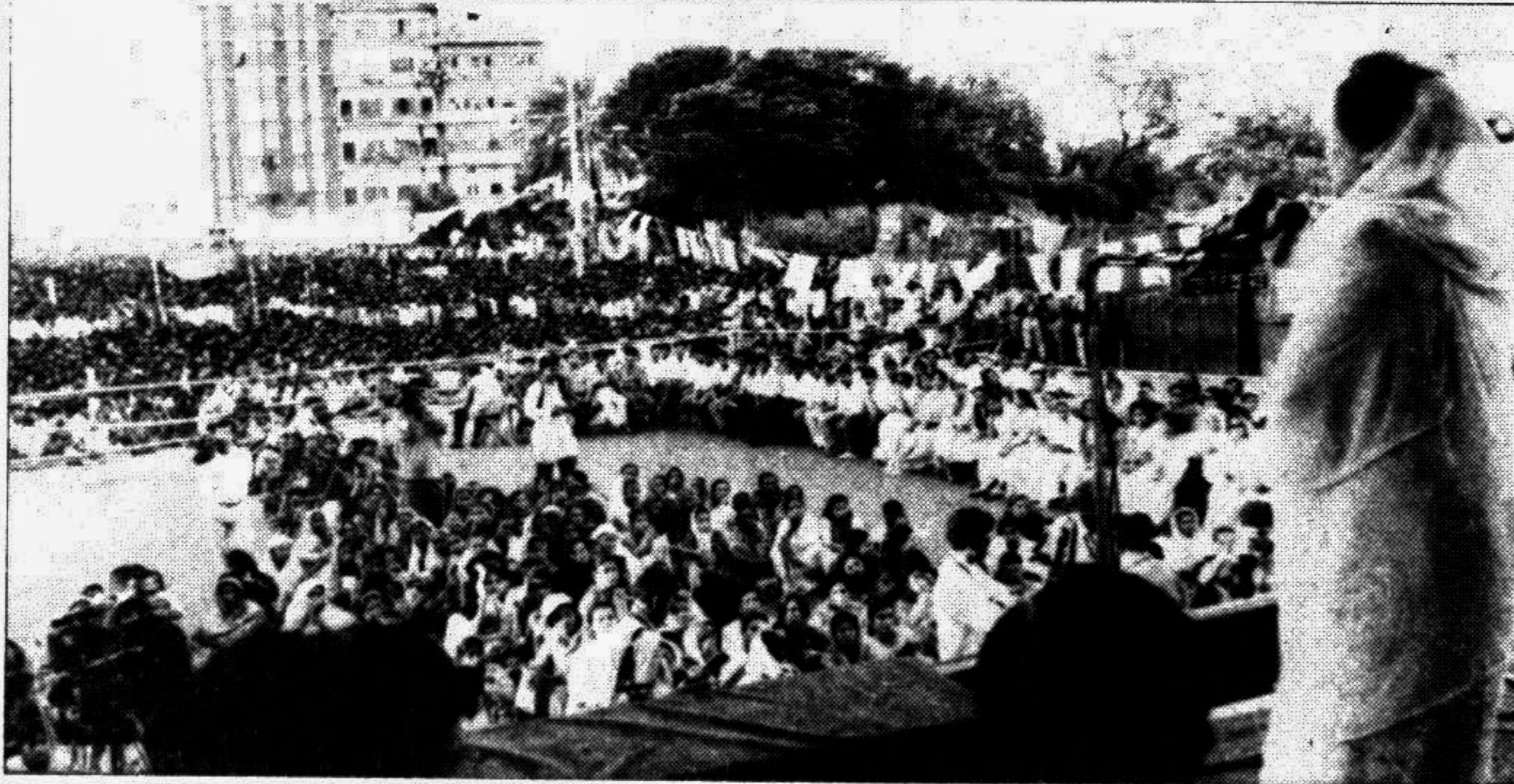
Terming the Opposition demand for polls under a caretaker administration il-

### Opposition rejects PM's offer

Opposition leaders yesterday outrightly rejected the Prime Minister's offer for dialogue, saying it is designed to hoodwink the people, reports UNB.

In instant reactions, they said that dialogue could take place only after acceptance of the demand for a neutral non-party caretaker government.

The Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat leaders re-



BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a big public meeting at Gulistan Square in the city on the occasion of the 17th founding anniversary of the party yesterday. — Star photo



The IWTA terminal at Chandpur is threatened as the rivers Meghna and Dakatia continue to devour more areas in the town. — Star photo by Shirin Akhter

## Meghna set to devour BIWTA terminal

From Our Correspondent

**CHANDPUR, Sept 1:** Fresh erosion by the mighty Meghna has threatened the existence of the Tk 200 crore modern IWTA terminal at Natun Bazar here.

Cracks have developed in

the terminal building after about 100 feet area of the terminal protection embankment was devoured last night.

The erosion has also hit the fish market at Natun Bazar. Four more fish sheds were devoured by the river last night.

The terminal building situated at the confluence of the Meghna and the Dakatia may be devoured completely any time of protective measures are not taken by the authorities, according to sources.

If the erosion continues, nearby steamer ghat, launch ghat and railway station will be threatened.

Prof Md Abdullah MP, Md Mohsin, chief engineer, Eastern zone, Water Develop-

### Violence at ZIA 2 arrested men sent to jail

By Staff Correspondent

Two persons, arrested during a violence at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) Thursday night, were sent to Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

The arrested were identified as Rafiqul Islam, 24, of Gheorpol, Nagarpur under Tangail district and Mokhles.

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## 32-hour hartal begins today

By Staff Correspondent

A 32-hour countrywide hartal called by three major opposition parties begins at 6 am today.

The Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami called the hartal to press the demand for dissolution of Parliament and elections under a neutral caretaker government.

The parties yesterday separately brought out processions to drum up support for hartal in the city's Gulistan, Baitul Mukarram and Press Club areas.

However, ambulance fire

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## Investors fear political uncertainty DSE trading falls further

By Sharier Khan

Trading of shares and debentures in the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) continued to slide down for the second consecutive week as investors are unwilling to buy shares apprehending an uncertain political situation in the coming months, market operators said.

An uncertainty about the political situation has worried the small investors who had been most active for the last few months," a DSE source said. "Everybody thinks that there will be a series of hartals and demonstrations after the 32-hour hartal which begins Saturday.

The DSE witnessed the year's lowest daily average value and volume of trading of shares and debentures during the last week. The average volume of trading fell by over 20,000 shares and value by Tk 23 lakh from those of the previous week.

One market operator noted that there was a lesser flow of investment in the secondary market as some new issues would be floated in the primary market in the

coming weeks. "Investors are getting ready to buy the IPOs (Initial Public Offerings) and as a result trading at the DSE floor has been partially affected," he said.

The market capitalisation however, rose by Tk 26 crore last week from that of the

### 'CSE to help channelise investments'

From Staff Correspondent

**CHITTAGONG, Sept 1:** Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, MP and chairman of Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) yesterday said that with the operation of the CSE from October 10, enough scope would be created to channelise investment of traders, Bangladeshi expatriates business houses, Chittagong Export Processing Zone and multinational companies located here.

Khosru was addressing as chief guest a seminar jointly

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previous week and it stood at Tk 48.28 billion at the closing of the week. During the week, it had, however, dropped to Tk 47.67 billion.

The all share price index during the last week was volatile. The week began with a drop of the index by 3 points from the previous week's closing point of 775.455. The index, however, rose by 2.76 points to 778.22 last week.

A total of 4 lakh 31,150 shares and debentures worth Tk 7 crore 62 lakh 98,244 was traded last week as against 5 lakh 74,189 shares and debentures worth Tk 9 crore 1 lakh 66,582 in the previous week.

The average daily volume of trading declined to 71,858 last week from 95,698 of the previous week. Only two weeks ago, a healthy average of 1.43 lakh shares were traded daily.

The daily average value of trading fell to Tk 1.27 crore last week from Tk 1.50 crore of the previous week. This average stood at Tk 3.35

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## BNP celebrates 17th founding anniversary

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) celebrated its 17th founding anniversary by holding rallies and processions throughout the country yesterday, reports BSS.

On the day, the programmes of the party began with the hoisting of national and party flags atop the BNP's central office and offices of the party's front organisations across the country.

The recorded speeches of founder of the BNP, Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman, were played in the party and its front organisations offices all over the country.

In the capital, BNP chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, leaders and workers of the party and its front organisations visited the mazar of Shaheed Zia in the morning and offered fataha.

In the evening, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and other central leaders of the BNP addressed a massive public meeting at Gulistan square and reiterated the party's vow to protect the country's democracy and constitution at any cost.

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## Gayebana janaza, rallies held Plainclothes policemen arrive at Dinajpur

From Morshed Ali Khan

**DINAJPUR, Sept 1:** Plainclothes policemen have started arriving in this troubled town by train from Dhaka, witnesses said.

Passengers arriving here from Dhaka by train at 10:45 tonight told this correspondent that they saw plain-

clothes police in every compartment, coming to this town.

The arrival of police is linked with the process of replacement of the BDR personnel, who took charge of the law and order in the town after clashes broke out between the police and people Saturday last, sources said.

Officials could not be reached for confirmation of this.

Meanwhile, restoration of normalcy here seems somewhat the district administration is finding an uncertain as yet as very strong anti-police sentiment among the members of the public.

As a consequence, many people detained in different thanas over the last few days could not be produced before courts because police was unable to bring them to the town.

The acting DC told The Daily Star this evening, "Many of the 13 thanas in the district are now crowded with people detained over the last

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### 127 die due to police action in 42 months

Star Report

At least 127 people were died in police custody or due to police action around the country during the last three and a half years.

According to statistics based on newspaper reports and fact-finding reports compiled by the Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh (CCHRB), of the 127, at least 28 died so far this year, 60 in 1994, 18 in 1993 and 21 in 1992.

The total number of killing this year includes the

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## 50 hurt as AL, JP men clash with police

From Our Correspondent

**NARAYANGANJ, Sept 1:** At least 50 people were injured, five of them bullets hit, in a series of clashes between the activists of two political parties and police here this afternoon.

The trouble started when two scheduled rallies of the local units of Awami League and Jatiya Party at Bangabandhu Road were marred due to armed attack by some youths around 4 pm, according to witnesses. The AL office at Bangabandhu Road was also ransacked.

Sporadic incidents of bomb blast and firing occurred during the clashes between police and activists of the AL and the JP, who brought out separate processions from Chashara area protesting the attack. They blamed the ruling party's activists for the attack.

Police resorted to baton charge and lobbed teargas shells to disperse the political activists, who damaged at least 15 vehicles and five shops in the town's Ukil Para, Golachipa and Chashara

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## Three key obstacles to equality



Tibetan women stand in a circle with their mouths gagged as a crowd of delegates to the Women's NGO Forum voice their support yesterday in Hsaiou, China, at a protest to mark the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese-controlled Tibet autonomous region. — AFP/UNB photo

### Beijing NGO Forum meet

**HUAIROU, China, Sept 1:** The largest international gathering of women tackled three key obstacles to equality today: Few women in government, male control of economic power, and violence against women, reports AP.

In the process, speakers attacked the United Nations and demanded governments shift priorities from military might to social development. They also attacked China's human rights record.

Many of the 19,000 participants at the 10-day meeting of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) braved a driving rain and waded through ankle deep mud to attend workshops. The rain collapsed part of a Tibetan tent set up by China to showcase the Himalayan region's progress under Beijing's rule.

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### Dhaka participates in South Asian exhibition today

Shaheen Anam from Beijing

The South Asian countries have arranged a joint exhibition here today in which India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh will participate.

The Bangladesh NGO delegation which now numbers more than 150 will present a cultural programme today.

Meanwhile, the National Preparatory Committee organized two well-attended workshops.

At the workshop on Politics of Discord in South Asia, speakers were from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh.

The South Asian women focussed on various factors that create discord in society and affect women's lives. They touched on topics, such as, fundamentalism, communalism, ethnic rivalry, rising militarism — all of which have implications for violence

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## Weatherill's call for consensus 'Interim govt for polls in practice in UK'

By Staff Correspondent

A former Speaker of the House of Commons now on a visit here yesterday urged both the ruling party and the Opposition to reach a compromise on formation of a neutral government to conduct the next general election.

"I agree with the concept of interim neutral government which is also practised in the British parliamentary system," said Lord Weatherill, at a seminar on "making parliament effective" which was addressed by MPs and former MPs from all major political parties.

"The 30 or 90 days factor could be settled through a consensus" Weatherill said Opposition Awami League has demanded resignation of the BNP government before 90 days of the next general

election while the Prime Minister and BNP chairperson has offered to resign before 30 days.

He also warned to dire consequences in case of failure to ensure participation of all parties in the election. "Think of the consequence of failure ... boycotting elections by the Opposition may result in a total breakdown of law and order. All these are potential threats for democracy and a revert to dictatorship."

Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni inaugurated the day-long seminar organised by the Centre for Analysis and Choice (CAC) at a local hotel.

In a parliamentary democratic system, there might be difference of opinion. "Truth emerges from the clash of opinion," Weatherill said.

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## Naidu sworn in as Andhra CM

**HYDERABAD, India, Sept 1:** The new chief minister of Andhra Pradesh state was sworn in today, capping a family rebellion that ousted former movie actor NT Rama Rao from the state's highest office, reports AP.

Rao's son-in-law, N Chandrababu Naidu, took the oath from Governor Krishna Kant, one day after Rao resigned rather than face a no-confidence vote in the state Assembly that he was certain to lose.

The feud erupted last week over demands by Naidu that Rao force his new wife to stop interfering in political and state affairs.

Rao, defending his wife, expelled five rebels from his cabinet, including Naidu who was finance minister, and asked the governor to dissolve the assembly.

But Naidu mustered a majority of the party to his side and forced Rao to quit. Shortly after submitting his resignation, the 74-year-old Rao suffered a mild heart attack and was rushed to hospital.