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STOCK MARKET
 DSE price index: 790.44(+1.07%)
 Market capital Tk: 49.04 billion
 Transactions in volume: 259078
 Transactions in value Tk: 32.78 million

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Hasina offered nothing new, BNP leaders say

By Staff Correspondent

Most of the senior leaders of the ruling BNP have found "nothing new" but "some negative points" in Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's latest formula for a caretaker government headed by the Chief Justice.

Some of the leaders, however, said that the matter had to be discussed in the party forum before giving a formal reaction to the proposal.

Pressed by reporters at the Parliament lobby yesterday, the BNP leaders including party Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar said they found "nothing new" in Hasina's proposal.

Hasina, addressing a press conference in the city on Wednesday, proposed a caretaker government headed by

the Chief Justice to conduct the next general elections. She also demanded that Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia resign 90 days before the elections, instead of 30 days as offered by the Chief Justice.

Deputy Leader of Parliament Prof A Q M Badruddoza Choudhury, in his cautious remark, only said, "We'll discuss the matter in the party forum."

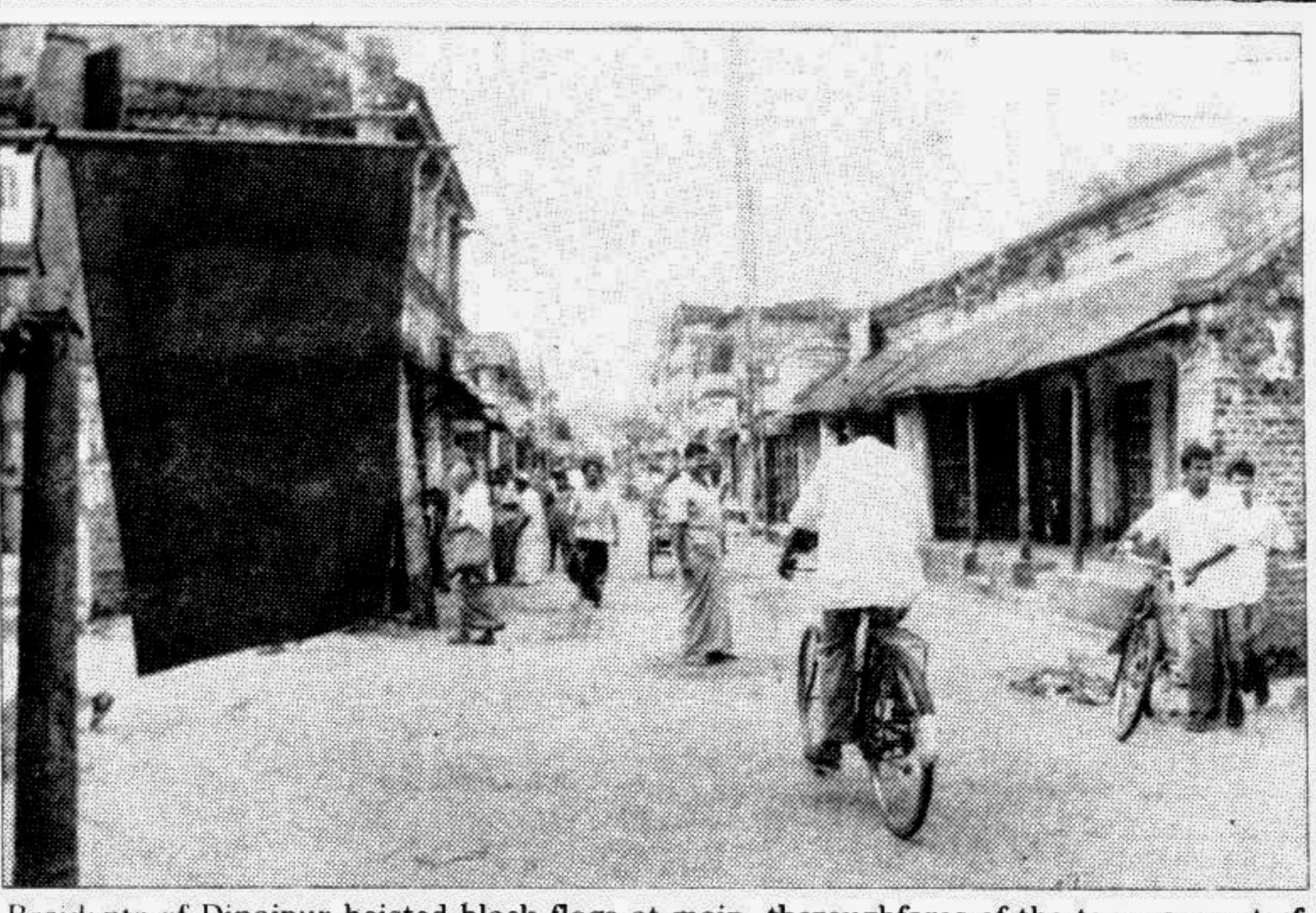
How can we reject the proposal before discussing it? he said replying to a question.

Senior vice-president of the BNP and Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz, rejecting the proposal, said, "they (the opposition) are suggesting

that the judiciary be vested with executive powers a time when the government is working to separate the judiciary from the executive. It can't happen."

Rejecting Hasina's suggestion, party Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar said, "I find nothing new in the proposal by the Opposition leader (Hasina). No dialogue can be held on the issue."

Talukdar, however, said yet there was scope for resumption of talks between the government and the Opposition on the Prime Minister's offer for resignation 30 days ahead of the next elections. "We can discuss how the affairs of the



Residents of Dinajpur hoisted black flags at main thoroughfares of the town as part of the programme to mourn the alleged rape and murder of Yasmin and killing of seven others on August 24 and 25. The week-long mourning programme ended yesterday. — Star photo by Anis Ahmed

IAF plane crashes in Panchagarh

An Indian military aircraft exploded in the air and the wreckage fell on a border village in Panchagarh district yesterday, according to the Deputy Commissioner of the district, reports BSS.

The wreckage of the aircraft fell in a paddy field at village Omarkhan, about one kilometre from the border, in Dhakkamara union under the Sadar thana at around 12:30 pm, the DC said.

The Deputy Commissioner, when contacted over telephone, said that the police and BDR were guarding the wreckage. He added that he was awaiting instructions from the Home Ministry on what to do with the wreckage.

He said the local officials See Page 8 Col 6

Raphel tells newsmen Compromise key to overcome impasse

By Diplomatic Correspondent

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Robin Raphel yesterday underlined the need for compromise and understanding among the political parties for resolving the present political impasse in Bangladesh.

"We want to see an election that is free and fair and all the parties have a chance to participate. This is possible and can be done. It just needs the will."

Emphasising, Raphel said, "I think the major parties have to sit down and come up with a plan. And create a situation so that everyone can participate in the elections."

Raphel was speaking briefly to a select group of journalists late yesterday afternoon.

The US Assistant Secretary dispelled the notion that she had come with a solution to the political stand off.

"The purpose of my visit was to update myself with the economic, political and development situation of your country."

Raphel said, "The political impasse here requires a Bangladeshi solution. Outsiders may come with their own suggestions but you have to solve your own crisis."

See Page 8 Col 6

PDB, Titas blame each other as load shedding continues

By Sharier Khan

Frequent load shedding, caused by short supply of gas and mechanical faults in some of the country's power plants, has increased the miseries of the city dwellers as well as of people in other parts of the country in the last two weeks.

Daily load shedding varies between 200 and 250 MW in the country. Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna cities bear a total of 120 MW load shedding with a share of 30 MW each. Barisal and Comilla share 30 MW load shedding each.

Power Development Board sources say the load shedding is due to short supply of natural gas — the main raw material for power generation.

Gas supplying authorities admit short supply but say this is not the only reason. "Power plants often remain inoperative due to mechanical faults," a high official of the Titas Gas claimed.

Areas in Dhanmondi, Green Road, Shantinagar, Shahjahanpur, Kakrail, Elephant Road, Jatrabari, Gandaria, Mirpur in the city are experiencing unprecedented load shedding for five to 20 hours daily for the last two weeks.

In addition to the shortfall in power generation, faulty and overloaded electricity distribution system in Dhaka city is causing the disruption in power supply, a source in the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) said. In many areas the transformers have become too old to bear a slight overload of power supply. So, a temporary dislocation is created, the source added.

The DESA purchases 750 MW to 810 MW power from PDB daily for supplies to Dhaka, Tongi and Narayanganj.

Presently, the PDB is producing around 1700 MW power daily. Its demand exceeds 1950 MW and sometimes reaches 2100 MW during peak hours. All power plants of the PDB have a total capacity to produce 2800 MW, but many of those sometimes remain out of See Page 8 Col 7

Rafsanjani due in Oct

President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani of the Islamic Republic of Iran will pay a state visit to Bangladesh sometime in October, reports UNB.

Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan said that Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Alaaddin Brujerdi is already in the capital to work out the details of the planned visit.

Brujerdi, who arrived here Wednesday night on a five-day visit, had the first round of talks with the Foreign Secretary yesterday.

The FS said that the exact date of the visit would be announced simultaneously from Dhaka and Tehran.

During the visit, some agreements on expanding cooperation between the two countries in different fields will be signed, the FS said.

NEWS BRIEFS

Licence cancelled
 The government has cancelled the licence of the Messers Ahlam Trade International, a manpower recruiting agency, of 36/E, Purana Paltan, Dhaka, and confiscated the security money of the agency, a PID handout said yesterday. The authority has also been asked to file a case against the agency, reports BSS.

Five policemen suspended

From Our Correspondent
MANIKGANJ, Sept 7: Five policemen, including a havildar, have been suspended as an accused in several murder and robbery cases fled away from their custody at the court of the District and Sessions Judge here yesterday. The accused Kamal Hossain alias Mostafa Kamal of Palash thana under Narasingdi district, convicted in a murder case, was sentenced to seven years in prison.

Two Sarbahara leaders held

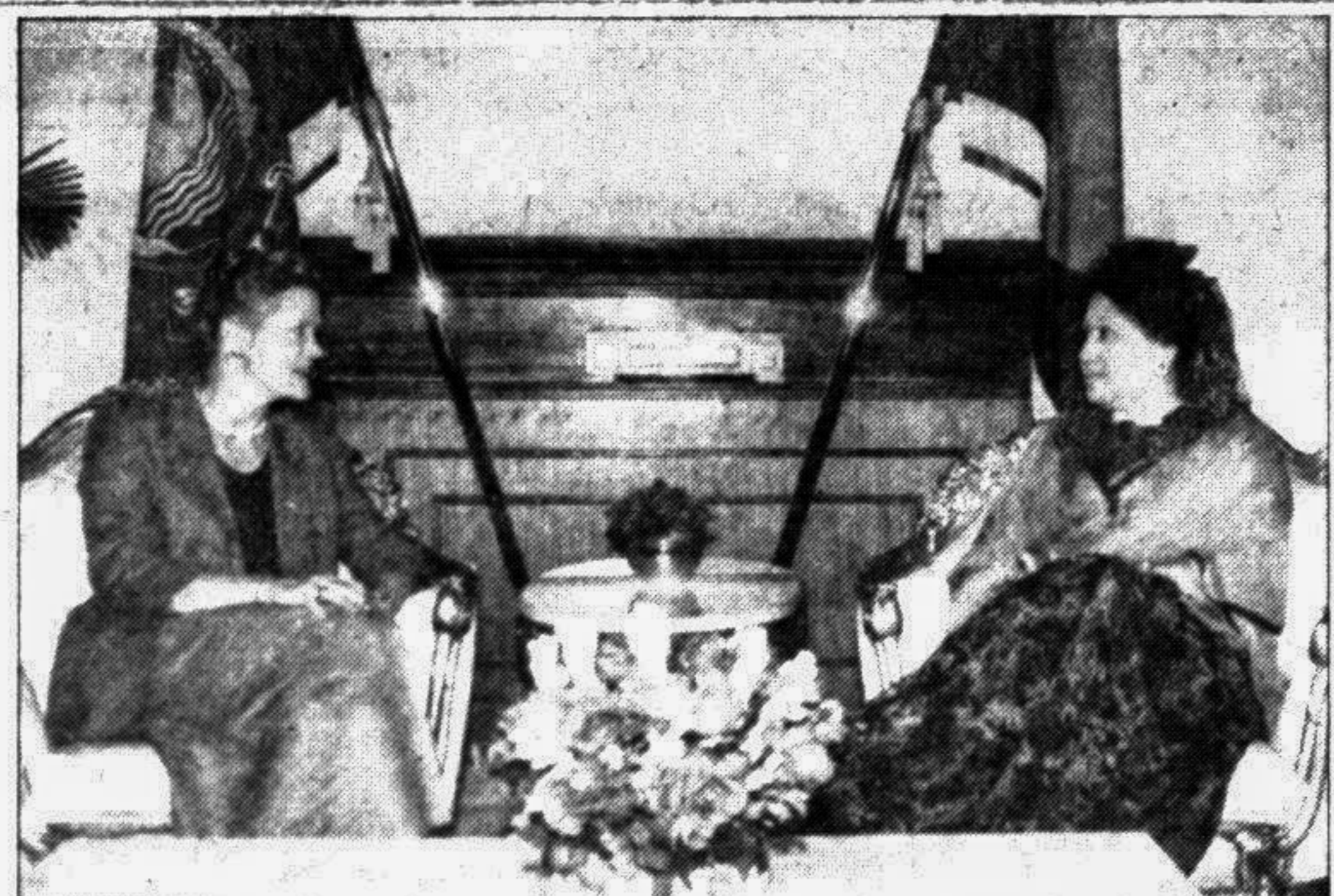
From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Sept 7: Police arrested two Sarbahara party leaders — Hiru, 22, and Rafiq, 30 — last night. Two cases against Rafiq and Hiru were earlier lodged with the Banaripara thana, police said.

343 Rohingya return home

From Our Correspondent
COX'S BAZAR, Sept 7: Some 343 Rohingya refugees of 11 families returned to Myanmar today. The total number of refugees repatriated so far stands at 1,92,853. As many as 58,024 refugees are now staying at eight camps in Bangladesh.

Phensidyl recovered

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Sept 7: A special squad of police recovered 127 bottles of Indian phensidyl syrup from a hotel at Barisal launch-ghat early today. One Mazharul Islam, 28, was arrested. According to police, Mazharul Islam and his two accomplices were trying to send these phensidyl bottles to Patuakhali.



US Assistant Secretary of State Robin Raphel called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office in the city yesterday. — PID photo

DOE for stricter rules against pollution

By Masud Arif and Reaz Ahmed

The Department of Environment (DOE) is awaiting environment ministry's approval of a set of new rules for taking "effective and immediate" measures against vehicles creating smoke and sound pollution.

If approved, the Environment Quality Standard (EQS), prepared by the DOE will allow it on the spot scientific determination of the hazardous black smoke and sound, according to official sources. The DOE now depends on "visual consideration" to determine the smoke emitted by vehicles and sound created by those.

The draft EQS was earlier submitted to the environment ministry.

The DOE has already imported a number of hi-tech smoke metres and "noise metres" to check random emission of black smoke and sound pollution.

So long, the DOE was handicapped by the absence of any criterion in determining the environmentally non-friendly vehicles and had to depend on "visual consideration."

Meanwhile, to replace the traditional visual fitness testing of motor vehicles, the government is going to establish five computerised vehicles.

See Page 8 Col 8

Int'l Literacy Day today

By Staff Correspondent

The International Literacy Day will be observed today in the country as elsewhere in the world.

Besides the government programmes, different socio-cultural organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes to mark the day.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas, and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday gave separate messages on the occasion.

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina has also given a message.

District literacy forums of journalists and cultural activists will observe the day jointly with other organisations at the local level. The programmes are rally, seminar, literacy fair, cinema slide show, paintings, debate and essay competition and motivational theatre programmes.

Accept fresh proposal: Hasina Resignation of govt now demand of time

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the ruling party to accept her fresh proposal of caretaker government under the Chief Justice to pave the way for establishing voting rights of the people, reports UNB.

"What's the problem in the Prime Minister's resigning 90 days ahead of election when she agrees to resign," Hasina said at the national convention of the Jatiya Samik League at Engineers' Institute.

The AL chief said resignation of the government has now become the demand of time. "If this government does not resign, it will be forced to step down in the face of mass agitation."

Reiterating the long running demand of the Opposition for dissolution of parliament, she said this government has no legality to run this 'truncated parliament.'

"BNP is running the illegal parliament by dint of force, ignoring the demand of the people. It is lingering on parliament to manage more money by exploiting the people," Hasina alleged.

The power-hungry BNP is pushing the country towards destruction, she said adding that "laws passed by the illegal parliament are also illegal. People are not bound to abide by these laws."

See Page 8 Col 3

Sec 144 at B'baria town

BRAHMANBARIA, Sept 7: The district administration, imposed Section 144 in the area from Kadamtali to Kumarkhali of the town today to avert any clash between the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), reports UNB.

The move was taken as both the parties had convened rallies at the same venue and time to protest Wednesday's incidents in which a BCL leader was wounded and BNP offices and house of a minister were ransacked.

The administration also deployed heavy contingent of police and para-military BDR in vulnerable points of the town.

5 injured in Labagh clash

By DMCH Correspondent

At least five persons received bomb injuries in a clash between two rival groups at Killer Mor in Labagh in the city yesterday.

Witnesses said, several crackers were hurled and gunshots fired during the two-hour long clash that started at about 2:30 pm.

The injured — Ranjan, 45, Alam Miah, 25, Majid, 34, Rana, 17 and Uzzal, 17 — were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Local people said, the clash was the result of a conflict between two groups of youths over establishing domination in the area.

Madhu Purnima today

CHITTAGONG, Sept 7: Madhu Purnima, one of the important festivals of the Buddhists, will be celebrated in the city and elsewhere in the districts tomorrow with solemn devotion and traditional enthusiasm, reports BSS.

The members of the Buddhist community celebrate the day in honour of the service rendered by the elephant and offering of honey by a monkey to the Lord Buddha.

The Purnima will be celebrated through elaborate programmes which include hoisting of the national and religious flags atop all monasteries, chanting of the sacred verses from the Tripitaka, breaking of fasting by the monks, madhu daan, shilgrahan, feeding to the monks, pradip puja, discussion meetings, blood donation and mass prayers.

Microcredit for poor now powerful issue at Beijing confce

BELJING, Sept 7: What are basic human rights — the right to food, health, work and shelter. But what about access to credit, should that be a human right too?

So say advocates of micro-credit, or lending to the very poor, who have emerged as a powerful voice at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women here, reports Reuters.

Such economic issues occupy more than one-third of the Platform of Action the conference will adopt to chart a path for women into the next century.

"Credit is a human right for everyone," said Mohammad Yunus, Managing Director of the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, whose two million low-income clients, 90 per cent of them women, make it the world's largest bank for the poor.

In 1994, Grameen made dollar 400 million in loans ranging from one dollar to dollar 200, with a repayment rate of 97 per cent, Yunus said.

Grameen's clients are among 10 million people worldwide, mostly women, receiving small loans at market rates from credit institutions, most only set up in the last 10 years.

US First Lady Hillary Clinton said she was strong believer in microcredit, which the US government supported through loans at home by the small business administration and abroad by USAID.

Nancy Barry, President of Women's World Banking, told a news conference on Wednesday that access to credit would emerge as one of the most important messages of the Beijing conference and the best way to fight poverty was to give low-income women access to finance.

More than 70 per cent of those who live in poverty in the world are women.

Despite their scepticism, commercial banks were gradually accepting the idea that low-income women were good clients, Barry said. "All good lenders are migrating very rapidly to women."

She cited the Banco Del Pacifico of Ecuador, which has announced a plan to reach 70 per cent of the rural poor by the year 2000 using mobile vans, satellite technology and computer software so that a poor, illiterate person can get a loan.

New Technologies available to banks allowed them to use very sophisticated approaches to cut dramatically the administrative costs of making very small loans, she said.

Women's World Banking is a non-profit financial institution set up in 1979 with more than 50 affiliates in over 40 countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and North America.

It aims to reach 100 million of the world's 500 million poor by the year 2005 and 180 million by 2025.

The conference Platform of Action, which Women's World Banking helped to draft, says providing women with access to savings mechanisms and credit is a strategic objective.

It calls for banks and other financial institutions to simplify banking practices and lower minimum deposits and to make credit more available to poor and rural women.