

## Confce on Flood Action Plan 5-yr water management plan recommended

By Staff Correspondent

The Ministry of Water Resources, in its final report on the Flood Action Plan (FAP), has recommended a five-year programme for the development and implementation of a strategic national water management plan for the country.

The main activities of the programme include preparation of a national water management plan, strengthening of water sector organisations responsible for planning, construction, operation and maintenance and implementation of a compact portfolio of high priority projects, the report said.

The report was presented at the fourth conference on FAP held at the International Conference Centre here yesterday.

Inaugurated by Water Resources Minister M Majidul Huq, the conference was addressed by Pierre Landell Mills, Country Representative of the World Bank, Eimi Watanabe, Resident Representative of UNDP and Water Resources Secretary Mohammad Nazrul Islam.

Majidul Huq, in his speech, sought cooperation among the regional countries to solve the water related problems. "We need Indian help in this regard but they do not provide desirable co-

operation," he regretted. Underscoring the need for people's participation in the development project, Pierre Landell Mills said World Bank will not be willing to fund any project against the will of the affected people.

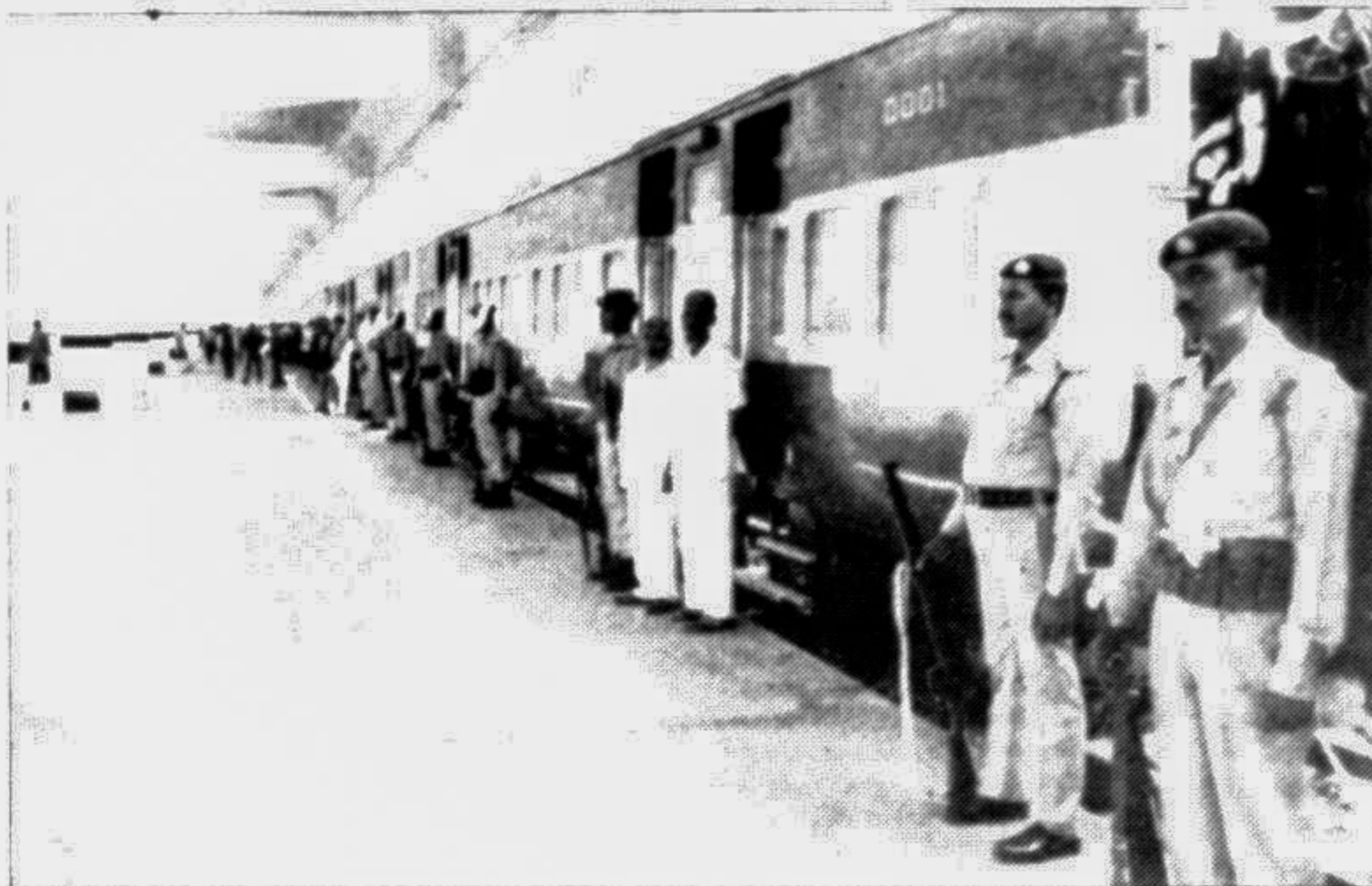
Referring to the demand of some NGOs for suspending all activities under the Flood Action Plan, he said that stopping of all projects regardless of their nature would be a mistake. "Each project needs to be considered on its merits," he pointed out.

The World Bank representative suggested the formation of a forum for regular dialogue between the government and concerned NGOs regarding problems in the water sector.

The speakers in the technical session also stressed on people's participation in the implementation of Flood Action Plan.

Two technical sessions, presided over by Nazrul Islam, Water Resource Secretary, and Shamsul Huda, Secretary, Banking Division, Ministry of Finance, respectively, were held yesterday.

M A Khaleque, Atique Rahman, M H Siddiqui, Qazi Faruque Ahmed and Saeed A Rana took part in the discussion.



Police guarding the special train for Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to Chittagong at Kamalapur Station yesterday.

## Special train

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in her mass contact train tour to the port city.

When asked whether the leaders of other political parties could enjoy the same arrangements, the BR officials made it clear that only the President and the PM are entitled to such a special train.

The train that the PM availed left the city's Kamalapur Railway Station one and a half hours behind the scheduled departure time at 10 am, said the BR officials adding that the delay caused some dislocations in the traffic resulting in delays of a few passenger trains at various stations.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed could not be reached over the phone last night for details as the minister went to Makkah and is supposed to return by December 5, according to his family sources.

BR sources said the 15-compartment special train had two special compartments — a PM Saloon and a VIP Saloon. Besides, there were separate compartments for security personnel, railway engineers and guards.

The railway's designated caterers prepared and served to the passengers in accordance to the pre-fixed menu.

Earlier in the morning, a strong contingent of security personnel cordoned six platforms of the Kamalapur Railway Station and the force was withdrawn after the PM's train left the station finally at around 11:30 am.

## Nirmul leaders stage token hunger strike

Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee yesterday observed a five-hour token hunger strike in front of the Jatiya Press Club from 11 am renewing its demands to declare the "war criminals", including Ghulam Azam, disqualified for election, reports UNB.

The committee also demanded a ban on the politics of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir.

The committee leaders who joined the hunger strike were Kazi Nuruzzaman, Nirmul Sen, Abdullah Sarker, M Morshed Ali, Garib Nawaz, Mian Sadekur Rahman and Belal Muhammad.

## Legal experts on impasse

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caretaker government from amongst outsiders as some lawyers claim. But Haq added, "If both parties agree and if both want a free and fair election to be held for the next Parliament then there's still scope to do it — to form a neutral non-party cabinet."

An interim government can only be formed by the President if a vacuum arises which cannot be solved under the constitutional framework. This vacuum can arise, for example, if the Prime Minister announces that she is resigning and that neither she nor any other BNP member will be available for appointment as prime minister or minister, he said.

Only if any such situation exists for which there is no constitutional provision, Haq observed that the President may promulgate an ordinance to address the situation.

Such an ordinance could give power to the President to choose the prime minister and ministers from any persons of his choice until the next election. Barrister Haq maintained that the scope of making such law is conferred by Article 48 (2): "The President shall as head of state take precedence over all other persons in the state, and shall exercise the powers and duties conferred and imposed on him by this Constitution and by any other law."

In such a case, the lawyer

## Congestion at Ctg port eases

By Staff Correspondent

The congestion situation at the Chittagong port has eased substantially and the Shippers' Council of Bangladesh (SCB) should now urge the international shipping lines to withdraw their surcharges imposed on the local exporters as well as importers.

This was disclosed at a luncheon meeting organised by SCB yesterday.

The country's traders have been paying the surcharge imposed by international shipping lines since the past several months, because of a severe congestion at the port, it was further said.

State Minister for Shipping Shahjahan Siraj addressed the meeting as the chief guest, while M R Ali, Chairman and Rezaul Karim, senior vice-chairman of the SCB also spoke at the meeting. Shipping Secretary Waliul Islam was the special guest.

The state minister in his speech said that the government was going to build a land container port at the Pangoan of Keraniganj at a cost of Tk 400 crore. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to lay the foundation stone on December 6, Siraj said.

He said that due to sharp increase in the exportables and importables, the coun-

try's cargo volume experienced a 50 per cent growth over the last two years. "During the five months of the current fiscal, the cargo and container volume grew at a rate of 20 per cent approximately," the minister said.

He said that the condition of the Benapole land port was miserable. "In spite of our continuous efforts the port cannot be developed if the Indian counterpart do not give due attention over the issue," he pointed out. He said, Bangladesh has already drawn the attention of the Indian authority in this regard.

The minister assured that the government would take immediate steps to modernise the Chittagong as well as the Mongla port. "A few consignments of modern equipment have already reached the country," Siraj said.

M R Ali noted that the Asia-North America-East Bound Rate Agreement (ANERA) had increased the "common origin receiving" at a rate of 161 per cent approximately, from Tk 65 to Tk 170 respectively.

He said, the surcharges imposed by the feeder and main line operators on container users should be abolished. He also urged the government to decrease the ANERA charges.

## JCD-BCL clash at Shailakupa

JHENIDAH, Nov 30: A violent clash between two rival student organisations at Shailakupa Degree College today left at least four students injured, two of them seriously, reports UNB.

College sources said, the clash between the activists of pro-Awami League Chhatra League and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) erupted when their two militant processions confronted on the college campus at about 11.45 am.

Witnesses said both the groups chased each other and fought a fierce battle with lethal weapons for about an hour leaving four activists injured on both sides.

## \$650,000 Dutch grant for IJO

The Netherlands will provide one million Guilder, equivalent to 650,000 US dollars to the International Jute Organisation (IJO) for execution of special activities like projects and studies, reports UNB.

The announcement came at the 24th session of the IJO Committee on Projects (COP) that held in Dhaka on November 27, said an IJO press release yesterday.

IJO said that the Dutch donation would be a "tremendous boost" to the longer-term financial stability of the Dhaka-based organisation which, in recent times, has experienced severe fund crisis.

The Committee reviewed the status of the on-going projects

## Drama festival on freedom struggle begins today

By Staff Correspondent

A week long street drama festival on freedom struggle will begin today at the Central Shaheed Minar premise to mark 25 years of the War of Liberation.

Dr Abdul Kader Chowdhury, popularly known as "Dactar Da" will inaugurate the festival at 4 pm. The Samay, a cultural organisation, has organised the function.

It will begin with a play followed by a musical soiree, poetry recitals, a puppet show, a short film and a reminiscence. Rabi Niyogi will be present as chief guest. Aminul Haq Mantu will preside over the function.

The reminiscence programme would be participated by national personalities who were freedom fighters. On Friday Shawkat Osman, Pratiti Dutt and Zahurul Islam Rumi will present their recollections to the public.

The leading theatre groups will stage dramas. Artists of the Shawdhin Bangla Betar Kendra will also render songs.

## Five robbed of Tk 20,000

By Staff Correspondent

Passengers of four autorickshaws and two rickshaws were robbed of about Tk 20,000 within a span of ten minutes near the police control room at Shahbagh road crossing in the city early yesterday.

About 10 muggers armed with pipe guns and daggers snatched cash and valuables from two journalists, a government employee, a businessman and a rickshaw-puller, said one of the victims.

The victim, Parvez Khan, a reporter of the Bengali daily Bhorer Kagoj, said the armed muggers in black jackets stopped the vehicles on the road between the police control room and the Engineers' Institution at about 12.45 am, and snatched the money at gunpoint.

The muggers snatched Tk 6,500 and wrist watch from Parvez, Tk 1,500 and wrist watch from a senior reporter of the Daily Inqilab, Saiful Alam, Tk 3,000 from an employee of the BCS (Administration) Academy, Tk 9,000 from a businessman and Tk 120 from a rickshaw-puller, according to sources.

Meanwhile, police arrested two persons — one of them identified as Dulal — in this connection. A case has been filed with Ramna Thana.

## RU winter vacation from tomorrow

From Our Correspondent  
RAJSHAH, Nov 30: The Rajshahi University authorities have declared a one month winter vacation from December 2.

The decision for this long vacation was taken at a special Syndicate meeting of the University yesterday.

This vacation has been announced against the backdrop of a prevailing tense situation on the campus. The Anti-Communal Students' Unity — an alliance of five student organisations — went into strike since Saturday last demanding the removal of the Vice-Chancellor

## Golden handshake

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retirement. The government first offered a "golden handshake" programme in 1991 and it continued upto 1994.

"BADC employees might not respond the way the authorities expect," said the official adding that the employees who had already opted for early retirement are yet to receive their full-payments.

BADC had a workforce of about 27,000 in the late 80s. Presently, there are around 15,000 employees.

## Teenaged girls

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The girls paid Tk 20,000 each to the detained gang, sources added.

The rescued girls, who are now in custody of Demra police, were identified as Runa, 15, Rawan Akhter, 15, Khadeza, 16, Suriya, 15, Ameena Begum, 14, and Jahanara, 14. They hailed from Nurulapur village of Narsingdi, Demra police said.

Meanwhile, police identified the arrested persons as Nurul Islam, 40, Hazrat Ali, 35, Sattar, 45, Amir Hossain, 40, and Abdul Hamid, 22. They are likely to be produced before the court today, police sources said.

## The Midnight File

### UN to end operation in Bosnia Jan 31

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 30: The Security Council decided today to end the UN operation in Bosnia on January 31 so a NATO-led international force can implement the recent Balkan peace accords, reports Reuter.

### Disruption of ferry services Road links with northern districts threatened

MANIKGANJ, Nov 30: Disruption of ferry services in Aricha-Nagarbari and Aricha-Daulatdia routes threatens the road communication between the capital and 36 districts, reports UNB.

BIWTA sources said the ferry service is now facing a setback due to abnormal fall in water level and emergence of numerous shoals in the Jamuna-Padma river forcing hundreds of buses and trucks to remain stranded at Aricha, Nagarbari and Daulatdia ghats for hours together.

At least 600 buses and 6,000 trucks were stranded this afternoon at the three ghats. A 9-kilometre queue of vehicles was created from the Aricha ghat.

More than 30,000 passengers including women and children were waiting at the ghats to cross the river. Hundreds of launch passengers were seen walking towards the terminal with their luggages due to the traffic congestion.

The ferries cannot ply with their full capacity due to fall in the water level. A RO-RO ferry with a capacity of carrying 24 vehicles is now moving with maximum 12 vehicles. As a result, the daily turnover of the BIWTA ferries have come down to only 1,200 vehicles

### Burnt out scraps

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of the Bangabazar area were auctioned in front of the devastated area by the respective associations of the four markets. The cluster of markets included Bangabazar, Gulistan Hawkers Market, Adarsha Hawkers Market and Mahanagari Hawkers Market.

Bangabazar, a busy trading centre mainly dealing in ready-made garments at cheap price, was burnt into ashes in a devastating fire on Monday. The famous market known for its variety of quality garments at a relatively low price, was doing business in both wholesale and retail markets worth millions of taka daily.

### AIDS Day

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mate of about 20,000.

Prof Chowdhury said the AIDS Committee has suggested that the government expedite the activities of containing the disease, formulate a national AIDS policy and coordinate the efforts of government, NGOs and donors in this regard.

Sounding a note of caution against "sensational journalism" concerning the disease, he said it will hamper the national interest and destroy the life of an HIV carrier.

Director General of Health Department F A K Shamsuddin Siddiqy said a Tk 3-crore UNDP funded project is going on and Japan will extend technical cooperation for setting up a laboratory

from 2,500.

The water level dropped to only 4-5 feet at some places in the 20-kilometre Aricha-Nagarbari and 12-kilometre Aricha-Daulatdia route. At least 8 feet depth is required for smooth movement of ferries, the sources said.

Two ferries — Keramat Ali and Kethi — were again stuck up at a shoal in the confluence of the Jamuna and the Padma near Kashadaha, about 3 kilometres downstream of Aricha on Wednesday night halting the ferry services for five hours.

Moreover, two ferries cannot ply at the same time as the river channel has become narrower. BIWTA authorities are now operating ferries in one-way system in these narrow channels.

Sources said the slow progress of dredging operation could not bring any remarkable improvement of the situation. A BIWTA official said they would soon intensify the dredging operation using high-powered dredger and other equipment.

For the last few days, the passenger buses have to wait at the terminals for 6-8 hours to get a chance for boarding on a ferry while the trucks have to wait even for several days causing severe congestion at the terminals.

Goods including perishable commodities like fruits and vegetables worth about lakhs of taka have already been damaged due to overstay of trucks at the ghats. Goods worth about Tk two crore are about to perish, the sources said.

### Bangabazar

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1994, there was Tk 3 crore 83 lakhs only in the relevant account, sources concerned said. The rest was spent for other purposes while no efforts were made for the construction of the promised market, they added.

They, however, could not give details as to how and under which heads the money was spent.

It is learnt that the DCC had once floated tender for the construction of markets replacing the makeshift structures at Bangabazar towards the end of Col (ret'd) Malek's tenure as the DCC chief. His successor Nazrul Rahman Manju, however, discontinued the initiative, sources pointed out.

The DCC yesterday floated a tender for constructing a Tk 19-crore building to house Adarsha Hawkers Market and Mahanagari Hawkers Market, two of the four markets gutted in the recent fire.

It will soon float another tender for constructing a multi storied building for the two other markets — Bangabazar and Gulistan Hawkers market, official sources said.

## PM's train journey

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other than dialogue and discussion is adopted, that is undemocratic."

Depicting the development activities of the ruling party, Begum Zia said development is possible if the democracy exists in the country and for the continuity of democratic process the support of the people was necessary.

"As you voted for the 'Dhaner Sheesh' (sheaf of paddy) to elect the BNP government in 1991, so I hope you will do again in your interest and for the interest of the nation," she said at Pubal Station off Tongi at about 2:15 pm.

The Prime Minister's caravan broke journey at Arikhola, Ghorashal and Jinardi stations before sundown, and reached Narsingdi at about 5:35 pm stopping over every

### Dinesh Singh dead

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: Union Minister Dinesh Singh died after prolonged illness at a Delhi hospital at about 0300 hrs this morning. He was 70, family sources said, reports PTI.

### 20 hurt as villagers clash in Barguna

From Staff Correspondent  
BARISAL, Nov 30: At least 20 people including a woman were injured, six of them seriously, in a clash between two groups of people at Laibhog village under sadar thana of Barguna district today.

Police and witnesses said two groups of armed people — one led by Abdul Wahab and the other by Abdul Kader of the village locked in a clash centering reaping of paddy on a disputed land.

### British team

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and Industry (DCCI), with the help of the British High Commission and the British Council to offer a wide-range of information to business people seeking to establish links with British trading partners.

Hockney also said that two more SAAG missions will come next year which indicates the growing British interest in Bangladesh regarding trade and investment.

Lee said Bangladesh suffers from infrastructure constraints which will need some time to develop. He said British businessmen are eager to work with the private sector in this field.

"We also see opportunities in ports, river crossing, education, power, tourism, flood protection for development," he mentioned.

About the impact of the political impasse on investment climate he said, "Some businessmen said it has little effect, some said it has some effect."

During the visit, the mission also received over one hundred enquiries about the British Leather Technology Centre from firms wishing to benefit from the British technical know-how.

Considerable progress was made on franchising deals between UK firms keen to establish a presence in Bangladesh and local entrepreneurs wishing to gain the backing and experience of UK firms with a global network.

station she addressed the cheering crowds and exchanged greetings with the people waiting at the stations.

"We have completed most of our election pledges. Still there remain many tasks unfinished, and I hope your support will be continued to finish our unfinished tasks."

"What we have done, done only for the welfare of the people. The Opposition said they would not give this government chance to remain in peace, and they did not allow to work. "Despite their obstructions, we have done a massive development in the country."

"We want to remove all the problems of the country, to alleviate poverty," she told the people at the Narsingdi station.

She said her journey is to involve the people more in the development activities. "You have to give top priority to the national interest, for that support the BNP for the continuation of the progress."

### PM's letter

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file to the BNP central office of Naya Paltan yesterday evening. Food and Agriculture Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan turned up at the BNP office at around 8 pm after accompanying the PM in her train-march upto Narsingdi railway station. Bhuiyan reportedly carried a message from the PM and conveyed it to Talukdar. The two ministers also had confidential talks for some time and went through the letter.

Shortly afterwards, witnesses said, Bhuiyan left the venue with a gloomy face while Talukdar also came out of the party office with the file containing the PM's letter a little later.

Asked on the delivery of the letter, the BNP secretary general did not make any comment to the reporters present there.

Bhuiyan, who is also a joint secretary of the BNP, was not available for comment.

Meanwhile, the Awami League Organising Secretary Mohammad Nasim told The Daily Star last night that they did not receive the PM's letter.

BNP's Office Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan told this correspondent Wednesday night that the letter was ready and it might be sent the next day.

The secretary general of the party also told reporters the same day that the letter would be sent in a day or two.

### Hasina

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countable and corruption-free government and to ensure people's rights.

The rally, presided over by Jatiya Krishak League President Rashed Mosharrarf, was also addressed, among others, by Abdur Razzak, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury, Obaidul Kader and Chittagong City Mayor A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

The rally adopted a 22-point charter of farmers' demand, dubbed the Chittagong declaration. It includes withdrawal of all certificate cases, fertiliser, seeds and agricultural equipment at fair rate and subsidy in agriculture sector.