

Inside Today

Article

The 'Third Force'

Column: As I See It
by Ikram Sehgal
Page 4

Focus

Special issue on Women
on the Move
Page 5

International

Clinton pledges to keep
one lakh troops in Asia-
Pacific region

Strike protesting killing
paralyzes Kashmir
Page 8

Business

Buy more Bangladeshi
goods, Chief Adviser
urges Bhutan

S Asia tipped to post 6
pc growth, 8 pc inflation
this yr
Pages 6, 7

DSE MARKET

DSE price index	815.85 (-0.08%)
Market capital Tk	5538.10 cr
Transactions in volume	106052
Transactions in value	Tk 3.47 cr

NEWS BRIEFS

WB mission chief meets Dr Jamilur

The World Bank mission Chief in Dhaka Pierre Landell Mills called on Adviser for Energy and Mineral Resources Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury at his office here yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed the progress of some WB-aided projects in energy and water resources sectors. They also discussed the possible ways and means of future cooperation of WB in the energy and mineral resources sector, reports UNB.

Raphel arrives in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Apr 17: US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Robin Raphel arrived here today on a five-day regional tour expected to focus on ways of resolving the civil war in Afghanistan. Raphel goes to Afghanistan on Friday for two days after talks with government leaders here, Pakistani official said, reports AFP.

32 firearms seized

The law enforcing agencies, during the countryside drive for illegal arms recovered, 32 firearms and some ammunition and arrested 20 people. The arms and ammunition include three pistols, two revolvers, two single barrel-guns, 20 pipe-guns, five LGs, 43 bullets and cartridges and 36 bombs and different types of explosives, reports UNB.

Gano Forum team meets CEC

A four-member delegation of the Gano Forum led by president member Major General (ret'd) Khairul Rahman called on the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Mohammad Abu Hena, at his office yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to coming Jatiya Sangsad elections, reports BSS.

16 killed in Indian bus accident

NEW DELHI, Apr 17: At least 16 people were killed and 24 injured in Maharashtra today when a bus plunged off a bridge into a dry river bed, the Press Trust of India said. Police said 10 of the injured had been admitted to hospital in serious condition. The accident occurred on a highway linking Bombay, the Maharashtra capital, to the western industrial city of Pune, reports AFP.

Dr Kamal visits Mujibnagar

A Gano Forum delegation led by Dr Kamal Hossain visited Mujibnagar in Meherpur district marking the Mujibnagar Day yesterday. The other members of the delegation are Begum Nurjahan Morshed, Pankaj Bhattacharya, Sham-sudhoo, Mostafa Mohsin Montu, Jamil Chowdhury and Abdul Matin Chowdhury, reports UNB.

2 children burnt alive in Babupura slum fire

By Staff Correspondent

At least two children were burnt alive and several persons injured in a devastating fire that gutted some 150 thatched houses and left more than two thousand people homeless at the Babupura slum in Nikhet in the city yesterday.

Identities of the two children, one aged about 6 and the other aged about 10, could not be known till last night. Dhanmondi police said they recovered the bodies and sent those to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy. The two children were trapped in a hut.

Six fire fighting units rushed to the spot immediately after the fire broke out around 12:30 pm and brought it under control within an hour.

Local people said the

prompt fire fighting operation saved part of the slum and the adjoining old books' market and the Nikhet T&T complex.

The cause of the fire and extent of damage could not be known immediately, fire service officials said.

However, a rickshawpuller who was at the spot then claimed that the fire originated from the kitchen of a roadside tea stall. Some local people claimed that the fire broke out from near a garage there.

A microbus, parked in the garage, was also damaged in the fire, local people and fire service sources said.

BSS adds: BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia visited the fire-affected slum.

She expressed her deep shock at the devastating fire

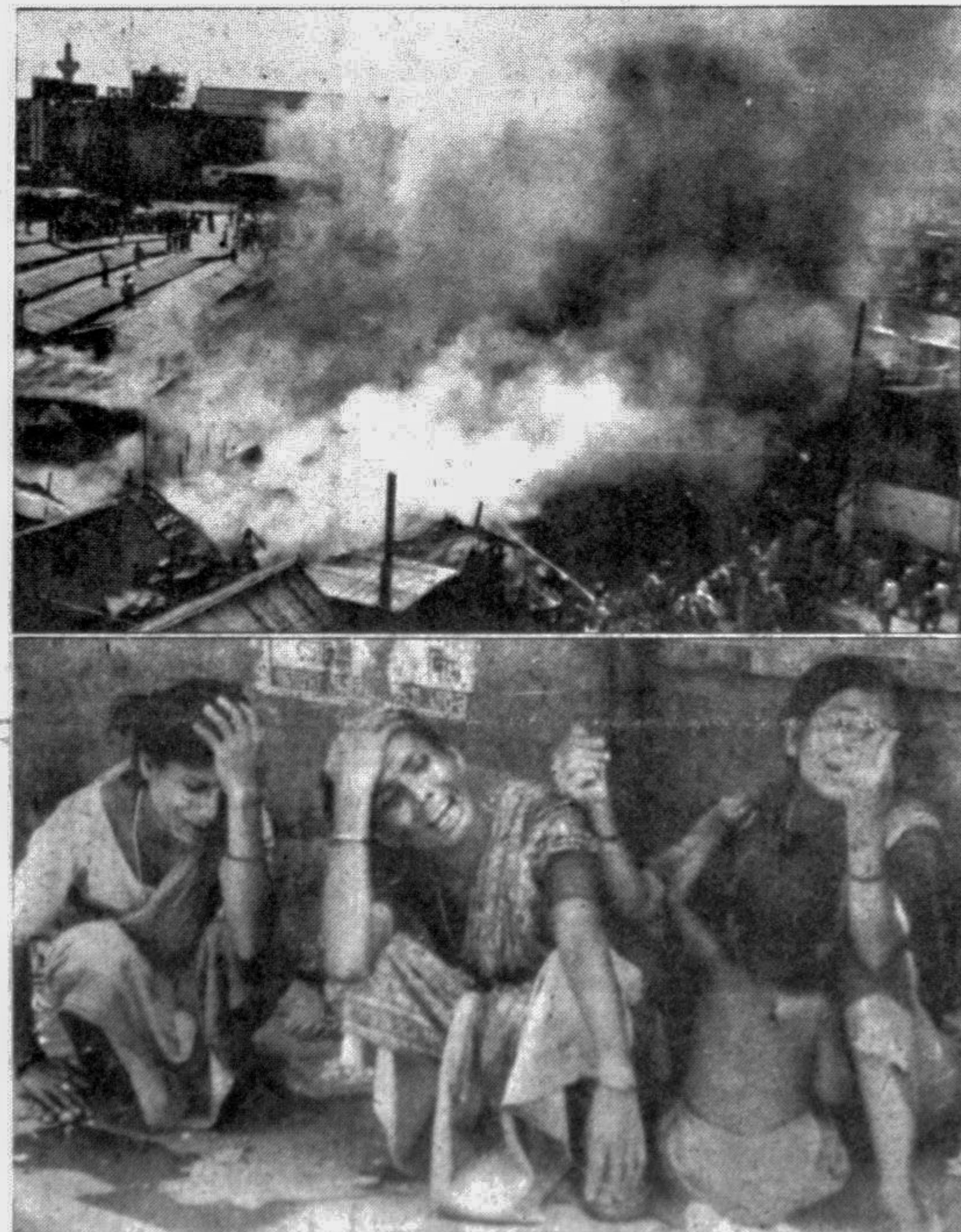
incident and sympathised with the affected people. Begum Zia said her party would do everything possible for the succour of the fire-affected people.

Gruel kitchen has been opened by the BNP to serve food to the affected people.

UNB adds: Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has expressed her deep shock at the deaths and damages in the fire at the Babupura slum. She also sympathised with the affected people.

In a statement, she called for providing adequate relief for the victims and urged the rich and the party leaders and workers to come forward to help the affected people.

Hasina also prayed for the salvation of the departed souls and demanded proper treatment for those injured



Fire gutted part of the Babupura slum (Top) in the city and women (Bottom) wailing over their losses yesterday. — Star photo

Tax collection falls short of target by Tk 300 cr

Country's tax revenue during the last three quarters of the current fiscal slipped off the target by more than Tk 300 crore as collection drive tumbled in the past two months of political turbulence, reports UNB.

Total tax revenue receipt during July-March period of the 1995-96 fiscal stood at about Tk 7,560 crore, down from the period's target of Tk 7,865 crore.

Sources in the Ministry of Finance attributed the slump to sharp fall in the collection of customs duty, particularly during the months of February and March, as well as poor re-

turn from income tax.

Customs duty collection, which totalled at 2630 crore up to March, fell short of the target by more than 8 per cent. Shortfall in income tax was yet worse as the collection from the head was trailing the projection by about 16 per cent or more than 150 crore.

Collection of both the customs duty and income tax were even lower than that of the corresponding months of the last fiscal (1994-95).

Tax revenue collection was ahead of the target by about Tk 87 crore till January, but the situation plummeted following severe disruptions in foreign

trade and industry in February and particularly in March.

An official of the National Board of Revenue, when contacted, however, said the revenue position was not as bad as apprehended.

He said the Board was still not forecasting any revenue shortfall at the year end. The official added that a vigorous collection drive was now on, resulting in a 'very good' collection performance in the current month.

Another source in the revenue board, however, cautioned that good performance of April might not sustain in

See Page 12 Col 4

JP threatens polls boycott unless Ershad is freed

The Jatiya Party might opt out of the electoral race if its jailed chairman, former president H M Ershad, is not released before the coming elections, reports UNB.

A final decision on its participation in the coming election would be announced on April 28 at the party's grand rally at the Manik Mia Avenue, JP presidium member Begum Roushan Ershad said.

Exchanging views with some senior journalists at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday morning, she suggested that the election would not be fair and neutral if her husband was kept in jail.

"We want to judge the neutrality of the caretaker government," she said, adding, "It

was not anyone's gift, neither was it installed at anybody's mercy."

"The establishment of the caretaker government, the JP leader said, was a victory of the people and the opposition parties that achieved it through a movement."

"If we want a fair and neutral election and a real representative government then Ershad will have to be set free before the election," she said.

The last caretaker government did not maintain its neutrality, at least with the Jatiya Party. And if this caretaker government do the same, then it will also lose its neutrality," she said.

Roushan Ershad further said: "If Ershad is not released,

it will be undemocratic." She observed that it would be unfortunate for the nation if the coming election is not held in a free and fair atmosphere.

Referring to the cases filed against Ershad, she said the former president had been framed out of grudge and vindictiveness. She pointed out that Ershad had not been allowed to be released on bail when his other co-accused in the same case had been given bail.

She mentioned the arms case against Ershad in which he had been given 10 years sentence by the lower court, but subsequently released by the highest court.

Replying to a question as to

See Page 12 col 6

Defence Ministry: President sees nothing wrong

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday said the Defence Ministry and the Armed Forces Division are placed under him in accordance with the 13th amendment of the Constitution, reports UNB.

"There is nothing wrong in it and nobody should confuse public mind about it," he said referring to the statements made by certain political parties regarding the allocation of the Defence Ministry under the President.

He said the government has already clarified the position in this respect.

President Biswas was talking with a 10-member delegation of Islami Shashanra Andolon when it called on him at Bangabhaban. Its Chairman Barrister Moulana Korban Ali led the delegation.

Earlier, members of the delegation thanked the President for appointing the caretaker government within a very short time and stressed the importance of recovery of illegal arms for holding the next election in a free and fair manner.

Haji delegation leaves tomorrow

A three-member Haji delegation headed by Adviser for Health and Family Welfare and Religious Affairs Major General (ret'd) Abdur Rahman Khan leaves here for Saudi Arabia tomorrow on a 15-day official tour, reports UNB.

During their stay in Saudi Arabia, the delegation members will meet with the high-level Saudi authorities and discuss matters of bilateral interest.

They will also attend other related state functions in the country, said a PID handout yesterday.

The other members of the delegation are Justice A M Mahmudur Rahman and Director General of Health Directorate Prof A K Shamsuddin Siddiqui.

They will visit Makkah, Jeddah, Madina, Mina and Arafat to see for themselves the conditions of Bangladesh Haj pilgrims and ensure their welfare.

AL extended meet today

By Staff Correspondent

Around 1,500 Awami League delegates from across the country would get together to discuss and exchange views on crucial issues of national and political importance at an extended meeting of the party in the city today, according to party sources.

With AL president Sheikh Hasina in the chair, today's meeting is scheduled to be attended by all members of the presidium, central working committee and advisory committee of the party and presidents and general secretaries of the party's district and thana units. Former parliament members of the party are also likely to be present at the meeting that begins at 10

See Page 12 Col 2

Khaleda goes to Khulna Apr 23

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 17: BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to address a public meeting at the Circuit House ground here on April 23, said a party press release. It will be her first visit to Khulna after resignation as prime minister.

Meanwhile, Jamaat chief Professor Golam Azam will be accorded reception by local units of the party on April 20. He will also address a public meeting at the Circuit House Ground on the same day.

SSC examinee stabbed to death

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Apr 17: An SSC examinee was stabbed to death allegedly by a group of young-men today.

Syed Ahmed Dildar, 16, of village Syedpur in Jagannathpur thana of Sunamganj district, succumbed to stab injuries at the MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital here today.

Family members of the victim alleged that a group of five youngmen of the neighbouring village Habbipur called him out of his village home to accompany them on way to the thana headquarters. They took him to the nearby field of old court and stabbed him severely, the family members said.

Claiming the victim to be a Shibir activist, the Jagannathpur thana unit of Islami Chhatra Shibir blamed the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists for the killing.

However, the cause of the murder could not be ascertained yet, police said.

Khaleda urges party delegates

Adopt pragmatic tactics, sink differences

By Nazmul Ashraf



Khaleda addressing BNP EC meeting

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has instructed her party men across the country to adopt pragmatic political tactics, sink differences, maintain discipline and forge total unity in the party to ensure its victory in the coming general elections.

The instructions were given to some 1500 delegates who attended the closed door extended meeting of the National Executive Committee of the party at the auditorium of the Institution of Engineers in the capital yesterday, meeting sources said.

The nearly 10-hour meeting began at about noon with the party chief and former prime minister delivering her inaugural address.

Khaleda Zia began her 38-minute concluding speech at 9:29 pm after listening to some 150 leaders of the party's district and thana units.

Khaleda said, "To win the coming polls, we must attract prospective candidates from other parties. It's a political tactic because simple politics does not work now-a-days."

In this regard, she advised her partymen to name such political leaders of their respective areas.

In response to grievances of many party leaders, who failed to secure nomination in the previous elections, the BNP chief said, "We must give top priority to the party's victory

See Page 12 col 1

More senior officials, large number of TNOs transferred

By Staff Correspondent

In another major administrative reorganisation, some senior officials and a large number of TNOs (Thana Nirbahi Officers) were transferred or promoted.

Director of the National Security Intelligence M Wahidul Haq has been promoted to the post of Director General of the same department, according to an official handout last night.

Senior Finance Controller (Army) Faruq M Siddique was appointed Member (Finance) of Water Development Board on deputation. DC of Madaripur M Moslem Ali was made Director of Disaster Management Bureau. DC of Rangamati M Kamal Uddin was appointed Director of BRTC. DC of Moulvibazar M. Abdul Matin appointed Trade Mark Registrar. DC of Khulna Mujibur Rahman made Director of NGO Bureau.

DC of Jessore Mohammad Ali Akand was appointed Director of Youth Development Department. Deputy Secretary of Industries Ministry M Abu Zafar was appointed Director of IFAD project, and Officer on Special Duty of Establishment Ministry M Saheb Ali Mridha appointed Director of Land Administration Training Centre.

Thana Nirbahi Officers

S M Faisal Alam, Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) of Dumuria thana under Khulna division was transferred to Atoari thana of Panchagarh district, while the TNO of Atoari thana Talukdar Shamsur Rahman replaced S M Faisal at Dumuria.

Md Abul Hasnat Khan, TNO of Harinakundu thana under Jhenidah district was transferred to Panchbibi thana of Jaypurhat district. Md Mah-

bubur Rahman, TNO of Jhikargachha thana under Jessore district was transferred to Puthia thana of Rajshahi division.

The TNO of Biswanath thana of Sylhet Division Md Mahfuzul Karim was transferred to Tongibari thana of Munshiganj district, while Md Amjad Hossain, TNO of Tongibari was transferred to Kalia thana under Narail district.

Md Mohsin Ali, TNO of Mo-hammadpur thana of Magura district was transferred to Rayganj thana of Sirajganj district, while Md Matiar Rahman, TNO of Kalia thana under Narail district transferred to Singair thana under Manikganj district.

The TNO of the Jessore Sadar thana A K M Lutfor Rahman was transferred to Biswanath thana of Sylhet district.

See Page 12 col 7

Seminar marking Mujibnagar Day

Unite against all conspiracies

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a discussion meeting here yesterday called upon the people to unite against all conspiracies and to uphold the spirit of the Liberation War.

Awami League arranged the discussion at the Bangabandhu Avenue to mark the historic Mujibnagar Day. On April 17 in 1971, the elected representatives of the then East Pakistan had formed the provisional government of Bangladesh at a mango grove at Baydernath in Meherpur. The place was later named Mujibnagar after the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman, the architect of the country's independence.

With AL presidium member Abdus Samad Azad in the chair, the discussion was addressed by senior leaders of the party and its front organisations. AL president Sheikh

Editorial on page 4

Hasina was scheduled to preside over the discussion but, could not attend due to illness, according to the organisers.

Earlier, AL also hoisted the National Flag and party flag at the party's central office and at Bangabandhu Bhavan at six in the morning and placed floral

wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu in observance of the day.

Speaking at the discussion, Abdus Samad Azad called upon the people from every strata of life to rise against what he called the new conspiracies and to give their verdict against the BNP in the upcoming elections.

He also demanded immediate placing of the defence ministry under the disposal of the Chief Advisor from that of the President and gearing up of the illegal arms recovery drive. AL general secretary Zillur

See Page 12 Col 3

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