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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Quake shakes Sirajganj**

SIRAJGANJ, July 26: A mild earthquake shook Sirajganj district town at about 7:20 pm today. Town dwellers said the duration of the tremor was for few seconds. No casualty or damage was reported, says UNB.

**Fire at textile mills in Ctg**

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, July 26: A fire broke out at a textile industry in Nasirabad area in the small hours of today. Fire Brigade sources said. One godown and a store room were damaged by the blaze. The loss of property and origin of fire are yet to be ascertained, the Fire Brigade sources added.

**200 tribals killed in Assam since May**

GUWAHATI, India, July 26: Six people have died in inter-tribal clashes in the far-eastern Indian state of Assam in the latest spurt of ethnic violence that has claimed more than 200 lives since May, officials said today. D Jhingran, chief of the western district of Kokrajhar, said 200 Santhal tribals were killed by members of the rival Bodo tribe on Thursday while on their way for shopping, reports AFP.

**Businessman killed in road accident**

PANCHAGARH, July 26: A small trader, Mukhlesur Rahman, 45, was crushed under wheels of a speeding truck near Sonali Bank branch of the town on Dhaka-Panchagarh highway this evening. The accident took place when Rahman was crossing the road. Police seized the truck and arrested the driver, reports BSS.

**7 killed in Delhi bldg collapse**

NEW DELHI, July 26: Seven people died and at least 10 were trapped under debris today when a two-storey building on to which workers were adding two more floors collapsed in South Delhi, rescue officials said.



A family on a boat with its belongings in flood-hit Lauhajong thana of Munshiganj district. — Star photo

## Flood situation in 10 dists alarming Dhaka-Aricha highway may go under water

Flood situation in Manikganj and Dhaka districts as well as low-lying areas around the capital deteriorated yesterday with further rise in water levels in the rivers of the region, reports UNB.

Officials said heavy rainfall at most places over the Ganges, the Meghna and the South East Hill basin also worsened the flood situation in Bogra, Faridpur, Shairapur, Chandpur and Cox's Bazar districts.

Flood information Centre here in its latest bulletin forecast that more areas in and around Dhaka and Narayanganj were likely to be inundated today.

Witnesses said flood water levelled the Dhaka-Aricha

highway at Amin Bazar outskirts of the capital. Flood water may overflow the highway while vast tracts of Dhamrai, Savar, Mirpur and low-lying areas of the city have already been inundated.

The flood situation of Munshiganj, Narsingdi, Kishoreganj, Brahmanbaria and Rajbari districts remained alarming and it improved in northern districts including Sherpur, Sirajganj, Jamalpur, Tangail and Pabna.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong reports: The low lying areas in and around the port city were inundated yesterday as downpour continued here from last night. Met office recorded 1.39 mm rainfall during 24 hours till 6 pm

yesterday. Flood water entered Chandgaon, Muradpur, Bakalia, Katalganj, Agrabad, Chaktai, Hathazari, Razon, Anwara, Banakali and Sakania.

Normal life was paralysed in the city due to incessant rain. In Cox's Bazar, flash flood caused by onrush of hilly waters and incessant downpour submerged the low-lying areas of the district. Vast areas of Chakaria, Ramu and Moheshkhali thanas of the district went under water disrupting road communications.

Under the influence of low over the Bay, the southeastern district experienced a heavy rainfall in last two days and it

## AL national council deferred due to flood, by-elections

By Reaz Ahmad

The national council session of the ruling Awami League which was scheduled to be held in September this year will now be held in the first week of December.

The decision to defer the council session by three months was taken at a meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) yesterday in view of the current flood in the country and the coming by-elections to 16 Jatiya Sangsad seats.

The meeting held at the party central office, was chaired by party chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

A resolution adopted at the meeting also asked the local leaders to complete the party's council sessions at district and thana levels by November 15 this year, according to party sources.

The meeting in another resolution also decided to extend the tenure of the party's present Central Working Committee by six months. The last national council of

the party was held on September 11 last year while the previous one was held in late 1992.

The ALCWC meeting, the first after the June 12 election, discussed the present political situation in the country — flood situation, programmes for the August 15 National Mourning Day, status of the grave of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and measures to strengthen the party.

It observed with deep regret that some BNP activists were indulging in "terrorist activities and creating chaos in a planned manner" at various places including educational institutions and urged the people to remain vigilant against these ulterior motives.

While addressing the meeting Sheikh Hasina expressed her gratitude to Allah for placing her party to power. She also urged her partymen to express gratitude to Allah in their "words and deeds" and to perform religious rituals regu-

larly. She also asked her cabinet colleagues not to "bow down to any pressure or persuasion from partymen for any undue facilities" and to perform their duties upto the the expectation of the tolling masses.

Replying to a query from a party leader, Sheikh Hasina said that relief materials for the flood victims would be distributed through the administrative network and that party MPs would help the local administration in this regard, the sources said.

The meeting in another resolution urged the party leaders and workers to stand by the flood-hit people to supplement government relief. In the meeting party president member Amir Hussain Anu proposed that the mortal remains of Bangabandhu be shifted to the capital from Tungipara.

A young party MP argued that the people of Gopalganj, who considered the grave site

## Govt has failed to realise severity of floods: BNP

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a statement yesterday noted with grave concern that the government had not only failed to tackle the flood situation but also failed to realise the severity of the flood across the country, reports BSS.

As a result lives of the flood-affected people have become miserable due to inadequate relief materials and lack of proper planning," he said.

The BNP secretary general said that the government had been giving lofty assurances to the flood victims instead of taking up measures to face the situation.

The BNP secretary general said in spite of a coordinated assistance both by the government and the opposition for the flood affected people, the government had been carrying out activities to take revenge

## Resist anti-nationalist forces, says Khaleda

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said people are rallying round BNP for its nationalist politics although its victory in the June 12 election was snatched through rigging and terrorism, reports UNB.

"When our opponents are being united to destroy nationalist politics, we have no scope to remain scattered. We have to be united and strengthen our party to resist that evil force," she told a meeting of the party's Standing Committee as its Kakrail office in the evening.

She said anti-nationalist forces are hatching a conspiracy against BNP and urged her partymen to gear up organisational activities and resist that conspiracy.

The BNP chief said in the name of national consensus, the coalition government of the Awami League, Jatiya Party and the JSD (Rob) was out to weaken and destroy BNP's poli-

tics. "They are working at the direction of the same master," she added.

Begum Zia urged the leaders and workers of her party to resist what she called terrorism, repression and harassment by the ruling party targeting BNP workers.

She accused the government of failing to discharge its responsibilities to the flood affected people who are leading miserable life. Relief materials are too inadequate to meet the demand of the flood-hit people, she said.

During the meeting, a group of BNP leaders and workers of Laxmipur district met Begum Zia and informed her of the recent attacks on local leaders.

They alleged that the ruling party activists attacked the residences of Hamasdi union BNP leaders Shahidul Islam and Sharif Mollah, while warrants were issued against some other party leaders and work-

## News Analysis: BIRDEM affair-I Implication of the Committee Formation

By Mahfuz Anam

There are two different things about the BIRDEM affair that we would like to comment on. First the formation of a three-member committee and second the incident connected with Bangabandhu's picture.

The strike at BIRDEM has ended with the formation of the committee which is supposed to submit a report within 15 days. The idea of the three member committee was put forward by the Prime Minister's secretary, Mr. Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, to the National Council of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh (DAB). The members of the

committee (Joint Secretary, Health, Commissioner of Dhaka Division, and one Dr. Abul Kalam, former employee) were also named by him, with out any prior consultation with the Council, which was in session at that time. The terms of reference (TOR) of this committee was written by Mr. Alamgir himself, again with out detailed discussion with the Council.

What is the implication of formation of this committee? Are we to take it as direct intervention of the government in the workings of a non governmental institution (NGO)?

Even if we don't want to, how can we take it to be otherwise? Let us examine the issue. Two of the three members of the committee are government servants. They are likely (as good civil servants) to see the government's point of view more than BIRDEM's.

Its recommendations or findings may not be binding but can BIRDEM afford to ignore them? A government formed committee's recommendations naturally become associated with the prestige of the government itself. Rejecting it may be looked

## HSC admission only on marks obtained

Star Report

The government yesterday dispelled rumours regarding admission to colleges at HSC level and clarified that the admission would be held on the basis of marks obtained in SSC examinations.

Sources in the education ministry told The Daily Star that enrollment of students at colleges would be on the basis of marks under the new system introduced last year that replaced the old system of admission test.

There has been a rumour in the city for the last few days that the government might revert to the old system of admission test. Some students seeking admission in HSC level told this correspondent that they were confused because of this rumour.

The education ministry had issued directives last year for government and non-government colleges to enroll students on the basis of marks obtained in SSC and HSC examinations. The autonomous

colleges in Dhaka-Delhi relations. Bangladesh is currently a whopping three billion dollar market for India, although two-thirds of the business is done through illegal channel.

In contrast, Bangladesh exports to India totalled about 70 million dollars last year.

Business sources allege that the Indian move to penalise Bangladesh's exportables through countervailing duty is a clear breach of the Anti-Dumping Agreement of the Uruguay Round.

The Anti-Dumping Agreement allows a country to put countervailing duty on an im-

## Body to probe alleged gutting of ballots

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) has set up a high-powered inquiry committee to investigate the alleged gutting of some election materials including ballot papers at the Chandpur Treasury.

Sources concerned said that the two-member committee was formed on Thursday comprising Joint Secretary of the EC Abdus Salam and Deputy Secretary Iktidar Ahmed.

The Chief Election Commission at a press conference on Sunday last, announced that

## Query on Smith angers IOC



ATLANTA, July 26: The International Olympic Committee today called for an end to drugs inuendo at the Atlanta Olympics, saying athletes were human beings with human rights, reports Reuter.

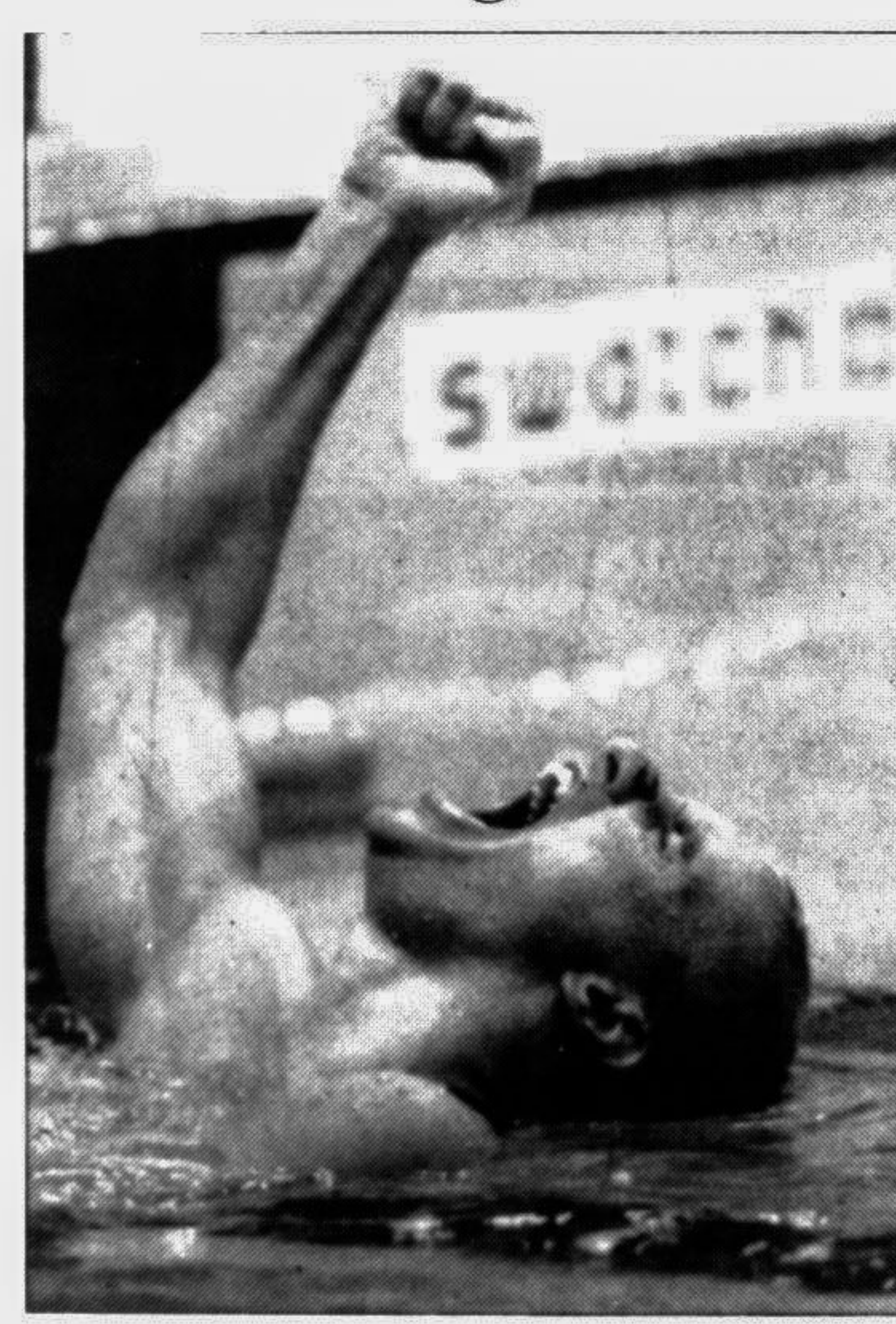
As Irish swimmer Michelle Smith bid for her fourth gold medal at the Centenary Games, IOC press spokeswoman Michelle Verdier reacted angrily when asked if Smith had failed her latest dope test.

"Please don't use the name of athletes when you are referring to rumours and allegations. Behind the name is a human being and they have rights like any other human being," she testily told the reporter.

German swimming star Franziska van Almsick sprang to Smith's defence and the media inquisition prompted USA Today to say: "We have a nasty, careless little habit here in the colonies. If you can't beat 'em, accuse 'em."

The newspaper could well have been referring to an ugly outburst by a beaten US boxer on Thursday.

The United States is the



ATTILA THE HUN? Attila Czene of Hungary yells in ecstasy after setting a new world record mark while winning the gold in the men's 200m individual medley swimming on July 25 at Atlanta with a timing of 1:59.91. — AFP/UNB photo

## Warm reception awaits Hasina in Beijing

From M Anwarul Haq

BEIJING, July 26: Preparations are underway to accord a warm reception to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina when she arrives here on a five-day state visit.

The likely date of her arrival is September 13. Official announcements about her exact visit schedule will be made from Dhaka and Beijing shortly, sources said here.

The Prime Minister during her visit will have talks with top Chinese leaders on matters of bilateral, regional and international issues. A large entourage will accompany the Prime Minister.

Sheikh Hasina's programme will also include a visit to a special economic zone outside Beijing. Her talks with the Chinese leaders will focus on increasing bilateral trade and Chinese investment in Bangladesh.

The talks will also focus on reducing the trade imbalance which is currently in China's favour. The Prime Minister will

## Open market policy not at the cost of local interest, Tofael tells BBC

By Monitoring Staff

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed has said the government will pursue the policy of the open-market economy but not at the cost of local industries' interest.

The minister was talking to a BBC correspondent yesterday. He said, "In the name of the open-market economy, we can't allow our industries laid off and import the essentials from other countries."

He said a concrete policy would be followed so that country's industries get protection. Otherwise, he explained giving an example, "If we keep our door open for sugar import, production at local sugar mills will be stopped, sugarcane cultivators will become unemployed and workers will lose their jobs."

When asked about the government's recent decision of

## Maid stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A teenaged maid was stabbed to death in a house at Khilgaon under Shabujbagh thana in the city yesterday evening.

Maid Hazera Khatun, 14, was stabbed by one Amad Hossain alias Imran, 23 in a kitchen at about 7:30 pm. Hazera died on the spot, police sources said.

Imran, son of Jummat Ali, was arrested by Shabujbagh police. Sources said local people caught Imran as he tried to escape after killing the maid. Jummat was a tenant of the house located at the second floor of a multi-storied building at Khilgaon, police sources said.

The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately. Hazera was working in the house for about three years.

It was learnt that Imran entered the kitchen where Hazera was working.

## Shantibahinimen kidnap nine

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 26: Armed Shantibahinimen abducted nine woodcutters from a deep forest in Panchhari thana under Khagrachhari district yesterday afternoon, security personnel said today.

One woodcutter, who also went to the forest with the nine, escaped the abduction and described the incident to security men.

The abducted were identified as Mosharraf, Shah Alam, Md. Jakir Abul Kalam, Md. Mannaf, Kazzal, Md. Shafi, Akkel Ali and Raju.

The fate of the victims was yet to be known.

## Turkish businessmen for investment in 2 sectors

Some leading Turkish entrepreneurs have shown interest to invest in cement and apparel sectors of Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The willingness to invest was expressed during a meeting between the Board of Investment (BOI) and a high-powered Turkish investment delegation in Dhaka yesterday.

The 9-member delegation, led by Istanbul Chamber of Commerce vice president Omer Besim Kufrevi, is now visiting Bangladesh to explore business and investment opportunities.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and FBCCI president Salman F

Rahman were, among others, present from home side. BOI executive chairman Dr Tawfik-e-Elahi Chowdhury presided over the meeting at the State Guest House Meghna.

Bangladesh side suggested the Turkish entrepreneurs to invest in infrastructure, including telecommunication and energy.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury assured about support to Turkish investments in Bangladesh. The minister said there was vast scope to expand trade and commercial relations between Dhaka and Ankara.

Turkish Ambassador in Bangladesh K Ozcan Davez.

**LATEST FROM ATLANTA**

"I know what it's like"

US President Bill Clinton gave his support to Irish Olympics hero Michelle Smith over the drug allegations she has faced, the swimmer said today. Smith, who has won three swimming gold medals and could get a fourth today said she met Clinton, who told her "I admire the way you've handled all the crap that's been thrown at you," Smith reported shortly after qualifying for the 200m butterfly final. "I've had to deal with that myself, so I know what it's like." Smith's victories in the 400m free and the 200m and 400m medleys have sparked rumours, unsupported by any evidence, that the 26-year-old has used performance enhancing drugs.