

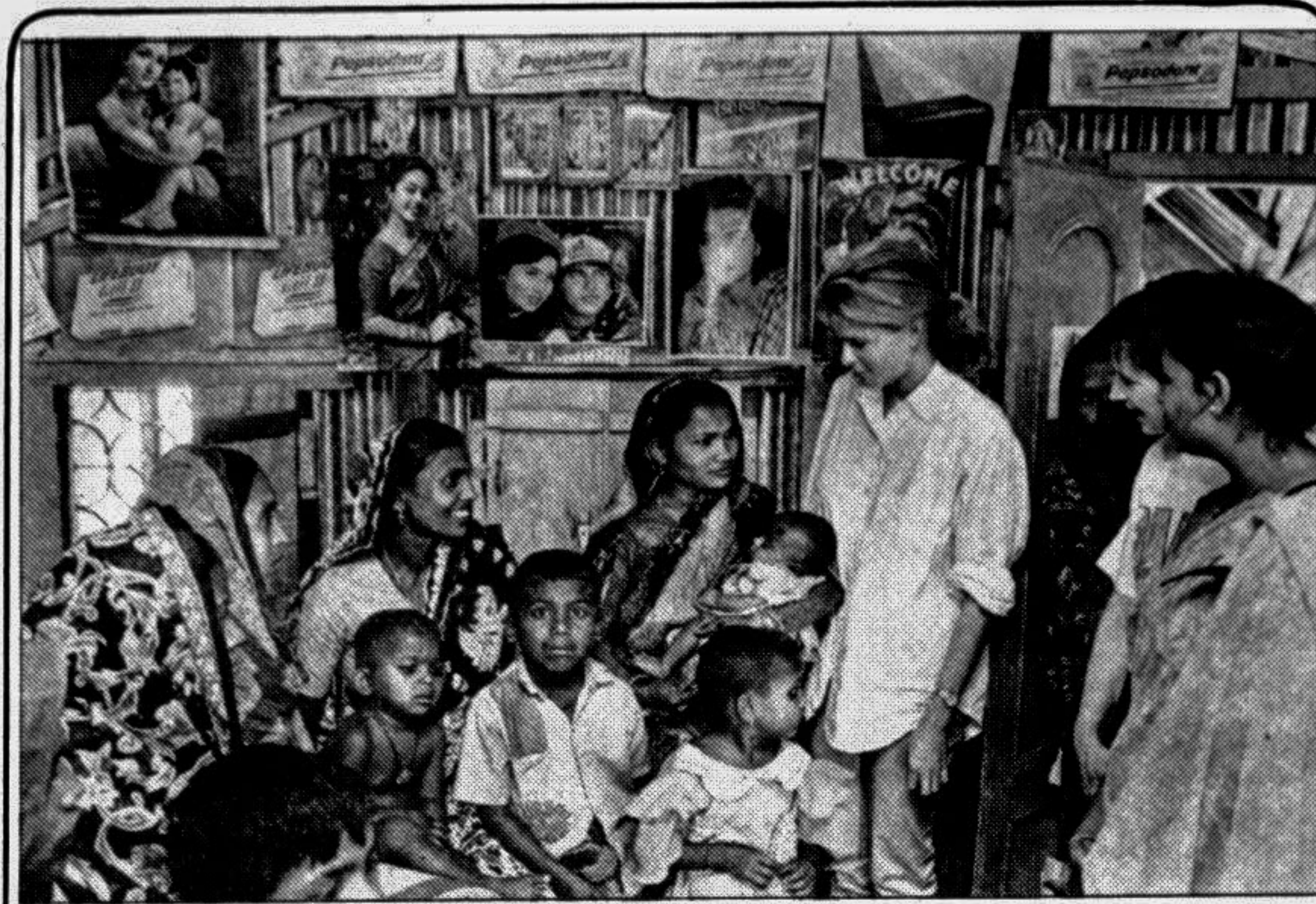
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The World on Time



UNICEF spokesperson Vendela Thommessen with a group of mothers during her visit to a EPI out-reach site in Manikganj yesterday. — UNICEF photo

Visiting UNICEF spokesperson Miss Vendela yesterday said Bangladeshi children have the potentiality to grow into assets in future if they get their basic opportunities, reports UNB.

"I am very much impressed by the will force and energy of the world's poorest country's children. They are studious and meritorious," she said and called upon all quarters to come forward to ensure development of children.

Addressing a press conference, the internationally-known model and actress said that she visited some schools for the children who formerly worked in garment factories and diarrhoea hospital. While speaking of the diarrhoea hospital in Dhaka, Vendela started weeping and said that she was astonished to know children die here of diarrhoea.

She, however, said that Bangladesh has the success story in the world to contain diarrhoea.

After giving a brief resume on the overall situation of the children, Vendela said on return home and during UNICEF campaign she will seek increased support for the children of Bangladesh. "I must narrate

## Foreign currency

From Page 1

Hakim who hails from Rauzan in Chittagong, was carrying three polythene hand bags.

He was taken to the Customs hall where the polythene bags were opened. The foreign currency and traveller cheques were found in several envelopes.

The recovered foreign currency and traveller cheques include about 44 thousand US dollars, 1.58 lakh Saudi Riyal, 23 thousand UAE Dirham, 1.195 Pound Sterling, 2.879 Qatar Riyal, 2.420 Deutsch Mark, 43 Malaysian Ringgit, travellers cheques of 3,000 US dollars and Tk 435, said an official of the Airport Customs.

Hakim told the airport officials that he was carrying the money of one person of Chandanish thana in Chittagong to hand these over to another man in Dubai, airport sources said.

BSS adds: The passenger was handed over to Cantonment police and a case was registered with the police station.

## US Congress

From Page 1

The resolution tabled by five Congressmen led by Doug Bereuter on March 11 in the Congress was passed by 415-1 votes. The other Congressman who moved the resolution were Howard Berman, Garry Ackerman, Edward Royce and Benjamin Gilman.

In his statement Congressman Benjamin Gilman, who is the Chairman of the House Committee for International Relations said that Bangladesh's recent general elections would provide the country with new hope to its democracy and that "the water sharing agreement would help put it on more solid ground", the message said.

## Showcase

From Page 1

should not be declared to have been made without legal authority.

A Division Bench of the High Court comprising Justice H M Haque and Justice Md Hasan Amin also stayed the said CPA order till disposal of the writ petition filed by the Managing Director of QC Shipping Limited (QC), Giasuddin Quader Chowdhury.

The petition challenged the legality of the CPA order issued on March 17.

Appearing for the petitioner, Barrister Raliqui-Ul Huq noted that the CPA had entered into an agreement with QC on September 24 last year, allowing QC to use its own equipment for loading and unloading of its cargo at the port.

He argued that QC had imported those equipment at a huge cost and, as such, the CPA now cannot refuse to allow the company to use those in the port area.

## A weeping Vendela says I never saw such bad condition of children

behalf of UNICEF and added that she never saw such poverty-stricken children in the past.

"My visit to Bangladesh is a great experience for me because I have never seen the picture of poverty and miserable condition of children," she added.

While speaking of the diarrhoea hospital in Dhaka, Vendela started weeping and said that she was astonished to know children die here of diarrhoea.

She, however, said that Bangladesh has the success story in the world to contain diarrhoea.

After giving a brief resume on the overall situation of the children, Vendela said on return home and during UNICEF campaign she will seek increased support for the children of Bangladesh. "I must narrate

## Ershad at JP rally

From Page 1

of Ershad in the meeting venue.

During the meeting, Nazim Rahman Manju was seen pushing Kazi Zafar Ahmed while the latter was delivering his speech. Ershad, who was sitting on the podium had to intervene to bring normalcy and allow Kazi Zafar to complete his speech.

Ershad delivered his speech immediately after Kazi Zafar completed his deliberations.

"Nothing should be done which would jeopardise the SAARC," Ershad said raising questions about the proposed sub-regional grouping.

"Several countries including China and Myanmar have expressed their willingness to join the SAARC," Ershad said.

The government should not to follow any policy which may lead to loss friends in the international arena."

About the proposed Asian Highway, Ershad said, if it crosses the Jamuna bridge and reached Myanmar through Teknaf, the JP will not have any objection to it but if the route is changed then the JP will have to study it.

Ershad said the Chittagong port does not have the capacity to handle the export-import of the country. Before allowing its facilities for others, the government should properly examine the issue, he added.

During his 45 minute speech, Ershad bitterly criticised the former BNP government of Begum Khaleda Zia. He also claimed that he had to take over power at the request of the then President Justice A Sattar.

Ershad also narrated the "successes" during his nine years rule.

The meeting was also addressed by among others, party president members Shah Moazzem Hossain and Yousuf Hossain Humayun, secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju and Nazim Rahman Manju.

## Death of Shima Time for submitting probe body report extended

The time-limit for submitting report of the enquiry commission formed to probe the death of Shima Chowdhury in 'Safe Custody' in Chittagong jail, has been extended for four weeks said an official handout yesterday.

## Ganga Barrage

From Page 1

his assassination.

The government would take necessary steps for dredging and loop cutting to make the river navigable through increasing its depth.

Through dredging and loop cutting, she said, land will be reclaimed for rehabilitation of landless people.

The Prime Minister directed the ministries concerned to give a comprehensive report in the next meeting of the council.

The meeting also constituted a specialised committee with Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak as its head to thoroughly study the water resources of the country. The other members of the committee will be nominated later.

Earlier, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak made a presentation on the country's water and flood management strategy.

## Edn boards

From Page 1

lying vacant due to non-availability of suitable persons. The two other boards of Rajshahi and Chittagong were being run by chairmen.

According to the sources, Dr Azizur Rahman, Principal of the Comilla Victoria College, has been appointed chairman of Comilla Board. Prof Tozammel Haq, Director of the Directorate of the Primary Education, chairman of Dhaka Board and Prof Afaruddin Sheikh, Principal of the Sharada Sundari College, Faridpur chairman of Jessore Board.

## PDB union

From Page 1

Development Board engineers.

Some 200 MW power is now being supplied through this bypass line. In addition, some 250 MW power is being supplied in isolated manner from different power stations in these areas. The total demand for power in the area is around 500 MW.

The East-West Interconnector project has 200 such towers, constructed in 1980 at a cost of Tk 287 crore. These towers can withstand a wind speed of 200 or 250 miles, "another source in the PDB said.

He pointed out that the nuts and bolts of these towers could not be dismantled with ordinary tools or ordinary expertise. "In Bangladesh, only specialized organisations like PDB have the tools for dismantling these towers. It seems that it must have been done by miscreants using PDB expertise."

Ever since the installation of these towers, PDB has been maintaining and monitoring those regularly, the source said. "Maintenance is done every six months. We have an automated monitoring system which helps us detect problems in the towers instantly."

He however said that although there is a monitoring system, PDB workers are not always dutiful. "Sometimes they skip valuable maintenance works for undue gains."

## WB team meets PM

From Page 1

term interest of the country.

The present government may not be responsible for the problems, but in the interest of the country it might consider the actions necessary, the World Bank team observed.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said her government is committed to building the country through adopting people-oriented policies, but she regretted that the government had inherited badly managed financial system, which couldn't be improved overnight.

She reiterated that her government would take all measures to streamline the financial system of the country. In this regard, she said the government has already constituted a banking reforms committee comprising financial experts of the country.

Sheikh Hasina said the present government doesn't have to depend on distributing charity in the form of bank loans as the ruling Awami League has its foundation in the grassroots level of the society.

She said the so-called growing of private sector in previous years was nothing but exposition of politically motivated bad loans.

In this connection, she said that her government did not give political appointment to the post of executive of any bank, neither it sanctioned any loan with political motive.

## JCD Aman-Ratan faction 'captures' Surya Sen Hall

By DU Correspondent

The activists of the Aman-Ratan faction of the pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) captured the Surya Sen Hall of Dhaka University yesterday.

According to sources on the DU campus, 20 to 25 supporters of the Aman-Ratan faction entered the hall yesterday afternoon.

The activists of the Titu group, who were in the hall at the time, surrendered to them, sources said. No incident of violence was reported.

Police were at the gate of the hall at the time.

## Traffic jam for hours after JP rally

By Staff Correspondent

Hundreds of buses and trucks carried the supporters of the Jatiya Party chief Hussain Mohammad Ershad to Manik Mia Avenue yesterday.

He held a rally there for the first time since he was deposed in a mass upsurge against his nine-year rule in December 1990.

It was also his first appearance before a public meeting in the city following his release on bail in last of the 19 cases on January 8 after having spent nearly six years behind bars.

Wearing a cream safari suit with a polka dotted silk handkerchief, meticulously tied around his neck, Ershad waved his hands at the cheering supporters, who came from all over the country on transports provided by his party.

This was the biggest ever concentration of transports around Manik Mia Avenue, Mirpur Road, Rokeya Saroni, Panthapath, roads around Sonargaon Hotel, Airport Road and the Farm Gate area. On some streets, the buses were parked two to three rows abreast, creating massive traffic jam.

Ershad moved at a snail's pace as the JP supporters started relearning homes in a caravan style after the meeting ended late in the afternoon. The traffic jam on the Airport Road continued for hours.

The JP supporters donned paper-made sun caps with inscriptions welcoming Ershad. Others carried placards with colour portraits of Ershad.

Some newspapers earlier reported that Taka two crore had been budgeted for the meeting, which the JP did not deny.

## Sylhet dist AL cofce today

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Mar 18: The triennial conference of the Sylhet district unit of Awami League will be held tomorrow.

The inaugural session will begin at 10 AM at the Registry Maidan where Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad will be the chief guest.

## Property worth Tk 50 lakh gutted

FARIDPUR, Mar 18: A pre-dawn fire at Madhukhali Bazar in the district today gutted property worth about Tk 50 lakh, reports UNB.

Police said 10 shops, including five jute godowns were burnt to ashes in the fire originated from an electric short circuit at dead of night.

Firefighters from the district headquarters and Magura rushed to the spot and put out the flame with the help of the local people after three hours.

## Deadlock at Ctg port

From Page 1

man said.

Vice-president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kamal Uddin Ahmed told this correspondent that the port users' organisations including the Master Stevedore Association, Steamer Agents Association, Shipper Council Association and C&F Agents Association held an emergency meeting today at the Chamber House and decided to continue the boycott of the port till private equipment brought inside the port with prior permission from the authorities were allowed to be used.

BSS adds: The Combined Port Users today urged the government to take appropriate measures to allow the port users to use imported equipment.

They urged the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) to create a congenial atmosphere in the port for its proper use. The demand was made at a joint press conference of all port users at the Chittagong Press Club.

The port users said the port authority has given permission to private companies to use their own equipment in handling cargo at a port market economy policy adopted by the government.

Kamalluddin Ahmed, Vice President of Chittagong Cham-

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria, State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Bangladesh Bank Governor Lutfur Rahman, Minister, ERD Secretary Dr Mashhur Rahman, Finance Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Banking Division Secretary Syed Amirul Mulk, Secretary-in-charge to the Prime Minister's office Begum Zakia Akhter Chowdhury, World Bank Mission Chief Marilou Uy, financial sector specialist and former minister of Hungary Lajos Bokros and principal financial analyst Abid Hasan were present at the meeting.

## Proposal on pvt edn institutions not placed at cabinet meet

By Staff Correspondent

The weekly cabinet meeting ended yesterday with no decision, as the sole item on the agenda was not placed for discussion, cabinet sources said.

The only item scheduled for discussion was a finance ministry proposal that sought relaxing of certain rules for setting up of private sector educational institutions after the names of a few historical personalities.

The item was not discussed as the Education Minister was not present at the cabinet meeting, sources in the Education Ministry told The Daily Star.

According to the existing rules, people willing to set up educational institutions after the name of any person, dead or alive, have to deposit varying amounts of money in favour of the proposed institution for getting government recognition.

But the Education Ministry has proposed that no money would be required if the institutions are named after Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, his wife Begum Fazilatunnesa, Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, A K Fazlul Huq, Hossain Shahid Suhrawardi and seven freedom fighters who had been given the gallantry award of Bir Shrestha.

However, the cabinet members discussed the issue of loadshedding but did not take any decision.

## Kidnapped girl rescued: 3 held

By Staff Correspondent

A young girl who was kidnapped from Madaripur was rescued from Mohakhali area in the city on Sunday last, police said yesterday.

Three persons were arrested when Gulshan police raided a house at Mohakhali to rescue the girl.

The arrested three were identified as Sirajul Islam, Ranju Sarder and Shamal Chakravarti, according to police.

The father of the rescued girl filed a case with Madaripur thana when she was kidnapped by a gang on February 28.

## Villagers clash over control of market: 60 hurt

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 18: More than 60 people, including four policemen, were injured in an armed clash between rival groups of villagers in Shajapur thana today, police and hospital sources here said, reports UNB.

Residents of five villages — Daya, Nadolapur, Basra, Chhoti Koiria and Boro Koiria — locked in a three-hour long clash this morning over the possession of a village market, Porjona Hut.

Police charged batons, lobbed several tear gas shells and fired 15 rounds of bullets on the feuding groups to bring the situation under control.

pointed at the agreement reached between the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and the port employees' unions to the effect that private company's equipment would not be allowed to be used inside the port, the statement said.

MCCL called upon the government to act decisively and to declare Chittagong Port facilities as essential service.

"This incident highlights the necessity of privatisation of the port as soon as possible to prevent such happenings in the future and to ensure the smooth functioning of the port at all times," said the MCCL chief.

Meanwhile, President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) A S M Quasem also urged the government to take 'urgent measures' to resolve the problems now prevailing in the Chittagong Port and 'save the trade, specially the export trade, from peril'.

Quasem said that against the backdrop of the government's professed policy of free market economy, calling of a strike by the port workers on a trivial issue like use of privately-owned equipment for handling cargo was really unfortunate, specially when those equipment were only meant to supplement the existing ones being used by the Port Authority.

MCCL was utterly disap-

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PHILIPS



BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia receiving a bouquet from some leaders and workers of Natore District Jatiya Samik Party who joined her party in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Loadshedding Mills, factories in greater Barisal face closure

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Mar 18: Acute loadshedding in six districts under Barisal Division is hampering production in mills and factories.

Against the 40 to 45 megawatt of power required by the Barisal region, it received only 5 megawatt on Saturday and Sunday. Two textile mills were closed because of loadshedding. Hundreds of small industrial units are also facing closure.

In Barguna, the power supply remained snapped for the last 3 days and in Bhola for the last 12 days. The situation is equally bad in Jhalakathi, Pirojpur and Patuakhali.

## Farmers block road demanding regular power supply

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAH, Mar 18: The farmers of Godagari thana blocked the Dhaka-Chapaina-wabganj Highway from dawn to dusk today demanding regular power supply for irrigation.

According to eyewitness, thousands of farmers from different areas of the thana gathered at the Ranibazar early in the morning and put up barricades on the highway disrupting road communication for the whole day.

## Villagers clash over control of market: 60 hurt

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Residents of five villages — Daya, Nadolapur, Basra, Chhoti Koiria and Boro Koiria — locked in a three-hour long clash this morning over the possession of a village market, Porjona Hut.

Police charged batons, lobbed several tear gas shells and fired 15 rounds of bullets on the feuding groups to bring the situation under control.

## Kazi Zafar expelled

From Page 1

one kind of transit and said the government was using religious sentiment for such step talking about Ameer Sharif.

The pandemonium got its way as Kazi Zafar Ahmed started saying: Solve the power crisis with our own resources... We will give our life but not allow power from India.

Earlier, the JP presidium member also demanded midterm election, saying that "I am echoing the voice of Secretary General Anwar Hossain Manju, a member of the Cabinet."

Later when reached by phone in the evening, Kazi Zafar expressed his dismay and denied that his speech ran counter to party and its ideology as such.

"It's beyond my guess that my speech was anti-party's," he said claiming that the speech was totally in line with the decision unanimously taken in the party's extended meeting.

"Please read out the written speech of party Chairman Hussain Mohammad Ershad and compare my one whether it was similar or not," Kazi said.

He said it was expected that punitive action would be taken against those who "jumped on me during my deliberation" at the grand rally.

"But it happened the opposite," he said, adding that he was informed of the expulsion by a fax message by a journal-

## Ctg experiences heavy rainfall

CHITTAGONG, Mar 18: Chittagong city and its adjoining areas experienced heavy rainfall this morning, reports BSS.

Local Met office recorded 29 mm of rainfall during two and a half hours of shower that started at about 6 am.

## Taka devalued

From Page 1

produced here competitive.


The last depreciation of the local currency against dollar was done in the second week of February. With the latest adjustment, taka has been devalued six times by 2.5 per cent in last six months, officials sources said.

A senior official of the central bank said the country's forex reserve stood at 1765 million US dollars on March 13, a sharp drop from 1908 million US dollars as calculated on March 6.

"The foreign exchange reserve is in a very bad position... the country has only a reserve by which import bills for less than 2.5 months can be paid," he said, preferring anonymity.

The official pointed out that the depletion was because of a payment in the Asian Clearing Union (ACU).

He also apprehended that the foreign exchange reserve level would not increase substantially if there is no aid disbursement within a short time.



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