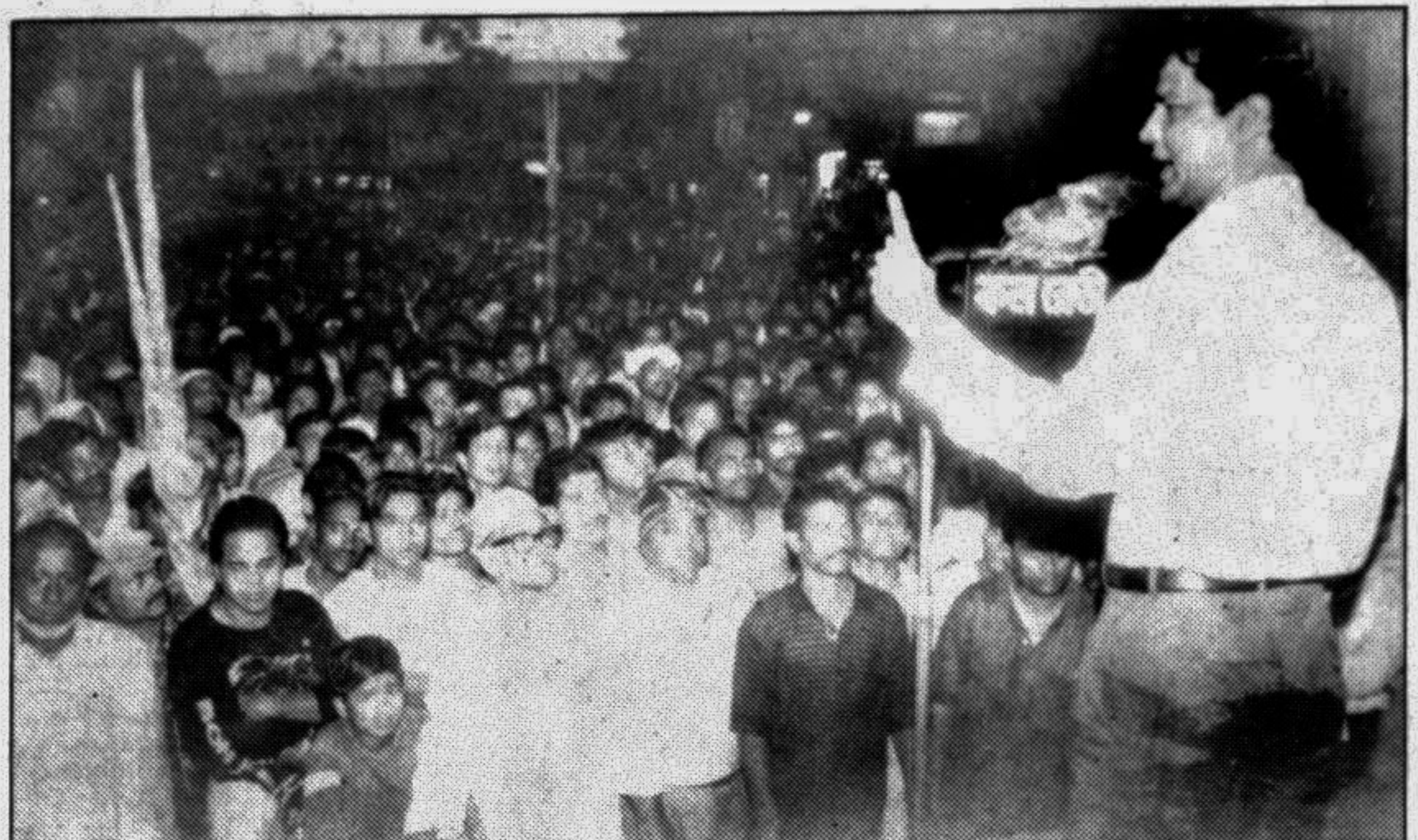


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City Mayor Mohammad Hanif addressing a public meeting in the city yesterday organised by the city Awami League to mark the first anniversary of fall of BNP government. — Star photo

JRC to take up sharing of Teesta water soon: Razzak

A national water policy is now being formulated. Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak said while inaugurating a roundtable discussion on water issues in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

He said Bangladesh could now go ahead with planning exercise for a Ganges barrage in greater Faridpur to ensure irrigation to an area of 1.9 million hectares through an integrated water resource development programme.

"It is a matter of great pleasure that the donor agencies have already showed interest in conducting feasibility and detailed engineering design studies for the Ganges barrages," he added.

The discussion on "Ganges water treaty — Follow up actions and other transboundary water issues" was jointly organised by Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) and the London-based Panos Institute.

With BUP Chairman Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad in the chair, the inaugural function was also addressed by Karmen Miranda of Panos Institute.

Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman said there were certain issues related to water which needed to be addressed bilaterally keeping in view the Ganges water sharing.

"There are other issues which may involve more countries since the augmentation of water is concerned," he said, suggesting increased collection of information and its dissemination to help the people of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna region know the realities about water in the region.

A group of journalists from India, Nepal and Bangladesh as well as leading water experts of the country are participating in the discussion.

The minister, however, said both Bangladesh and India were jointly engaged in monitoring the operation of Ganges water treaty which was expected to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and transparency between the two countries.

Abdur Razzak also said the Joint Rivers Commission was reactivated to play its due role in dealing with the Ganges water treaty as well as hitherto unresolved issues of sharing of waters of other 53 common rivers.

He said the Joint Rivers Commission would very soon be involved in finding out a solution to the sharing problem of the Teesta water. "Such exercise will continue for Brahmaputra and other rivers," he added.

The minister referred to the government's firm belief that with the goodwill and understanding of the two neighbours, all water sharing issues would be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

"This will help formulation of an integrated trans-national basin development plan to alleviate poverty in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna region," he said.

"The greatest plus point in this agreement is that it is a long 30 years agreement which will enable Bangladesh to formulate its national water plan as well as frame the water management schemes for south-western Bangladesh," he observed.

Dhaka iterates support for unification of Taiwan with mainland

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed reaffirmed Bangladesh's support for peaceful unification of Taiwan with mainland China and continued backing to her on the human-rights issue, reports UNB.

The President renewed Dhaka's position on the issues when the visiting Secretary General of the State Council of China and Vice Premier, Luo Gan, called on him at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Welcoming Luo, Justice Shahabuddin said China is a valued partner in Bangladesh's economic development. He mentioned the three friendship bridges already built by China and a fourth one now being built as symbols of Bangladesh-China friendship.

He conveyed through the Vice Premier his good wishes and greetings to President Jiang Zemin, the government and the friendly people of China.

Reciprocating, the Chinese Vice Premier thanked the President for cordially receiving him and said, China values her relationship with Bangladesh.

He referred to the visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to China in September last and observed that the Bangladesh government initiated a number of welfare-oriented programmes for the people and expanded cooperation with the outside world.

He assured continued support and financial assistance in accelerating the uplift programmes of Bangladesh.

Chinese Assistant Minister Yang Wenchang, Chinese Ambassador in Bangladesh Wang Chungui, Secretary to the President Muhammad Enamul Haq, Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan and Military Secretary to the President Maj Gen A M Siraj were present.

The Chinese Vice Premier Luo Gan had a meeting with Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury at Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

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PHILIPS




BNP leaders and workers offering gayebana janaza of two party activists in front of the party central office in the city yesterday. The two activists were killed at Feni on Thursday and Saturday last. — Star photo

DSE chairman won't resign

Ignoring the demand from a section of councillors and general members, Dhaka Stock Exchange Chairman Imtiaz Husain yesterday said he would not resign bowing down to an undemocratic plea, reports UNB.

"What wrong have we done? Why should we bow down to the undemocratic demand of a minority group?" he questioned when asked about the reported division in the council of the country's prime bourse.

Following the submission of the enquiry committee report which reportedly identified 20 brokers responsible for share-market scam, the rebel group of the council and some general members are demanding the resignation of the council and early election.

Dental College JCD activist beaten up

A second year student of the Dhaka Dental College was assaulted by some unruly students of the college in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

Some of his friends said, Mohammad Zakir, 21, reportedly a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists, was beaten up severely by some unruly students at about 11 am on the Dental College campus. The miscreants hit him on the head by bricks leaving him critically injured.

Zakir is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The cause of the incident was reportedly a previous enmity.

PM's directive Strengthen prosecution, ensure early disposal of cases

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday took note of a string of untoward incidents in last few days and instructed police to extend all-out cooperation to security of public life, reports UNB.

"We are committed to ensuring security and safety of life and property of the people, and I want your (police) cooperation in this regard, we don't want you to organise public meeting for us," she said.

Presiding over the cabinet committee meeting on law and order at her office yesterday afternoon, the Prime Minister also directed the Home Ministry to submit a comprehensive report immediately regarding the implementation of decisions, including disposal of political cases, taken earlier in three meetings.

The cabinet committee meeting decided to constitute a joint enquiry committee to unearth the causes of some untoward incidents that occurred in different places of the capital on March 26, the Independence Day.

Reviewing the overall law-and-order situation of the country, the meeting specially took note of some subversive activities that have taken place during past few days in Laxmipur, Pabna and Feni.

She also asked for strengthening the prosecution and taking measures for early disposal of all pending cases.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim, Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, Energy Minister Noor Uddin Khan, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru and Home Minister Rafiqul Islam attended the meeting.

Body to scrutinise 61 applications for merchant banks formed

The Finance Ministry has constituted a six-member committee to consider the applications of 61 more companies seeking permission to operate as merchant banks.

The committee, headed by the Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), also includes the secretary of the banking division in the Finance Ministry.

It will submit a report within two weeks, according to sources in the SEC.

Earlier, eight banks and financial institutions got licences to operate as merchant banks.

These are: Sonali Bank, Prime Bank, Dhaka Bank, International Development and Leasing Company, Protogi Insurance, Bangladesh General Insurance Company, ANZ Bank and American Express Bank. These financial institutions will have to work as separate companies, not as surrogates of parent companies, within six months of getting permission, the sources said.

Ex-JCD leader held in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Mar 30: Kotwali police arrested former president of the district unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Wahiduzzaman Wahid here last night.

He is wanted in connection with three cases, police said.

The leaders of JCD have demanded his release immediately.

Meanwhile, the JCD brought out a procession in the town demanding the release of ex-JCD leader and commissioner of Sylhet Pourashava Kamal Miah and eight other JCD activists.

Zobaida's bail Hearing adjourned till tomorrow

Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday adjourned the hearing of government's leave petition against the High Court judgement on granting bail to Zobaida Rashid, an accused of the Bangabandhu murder case till tomorrow, reports BSS.

Kushtia Polytec closed to avert JCD-BCL clash

From Our Correspondent
KUSHTIA, Mar 30: The Kushtia Polytechnic Institute has been closed upto May 4 apprehending clashes between the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and JCD.

A tense situation was prevailing on the campus following the student union election in which the JCD has bagged all seats. All examinations have also been postponed.

300 houses gutted at Bihari slum in Khulna

KHULNA, Mar 30: A devastating fire at a Bihari slum at Khalishpur today gutted about 300 dwelling houses, reports UNB.

Police and fire brigade sources said the fire that broke out at about 1.30 am raged through the slum burning down its pucca and semi-pucca houses. None was reported injured.

Firefighters from Daulatpur, Khalishpur and Nunnagar rushed to the spot and put out the flame after one and half an hour of hectic efforts.

Khulna City Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman and Kazi Sekandar Ali Dalim MP, also visited the slum.

Meanwhile, an all-party relief committee, headed by Kazi Sekandar Ali Dalim MP, was formed to help the fire-affected slum dwellers.

SEC to reject

From Page 1
ning the financial details of the applicant only.

The sources said the new method would protect the investors interest as it would probe the background of the company intending to go public, including its sponsors' financial background.

Already the SEC has turned down the application of Sonali Paper and Pulp Mills Limited for having adverse report from CIB and Master Textiles for submitting incorrect statement on their tax status.

It returned the applications of the Shineeupur Ceramics, Bexi-Maru and International Cement, affiliated with the country's biggest conglomerate, BEXIMCO, for failing to comply with the new guidelines regarding IPOs.

The new guideline ask for "list of the sister concerns, permanent business addresses and telephone numbers, directors name (s) with Father/ husband's name (s), date of last AGM held and dividend declared, if any, and the bank loans with overdue loans if any."

Meanwhile, two companies have received permission to float IPOs. Of them, Rahima Foods has already published their prospectus in The Daily Star and Faragon Shoes is expected to publish it shortly, according to SEC sources.

The sources hoped that the new issues would inject fresh blood in the market, already showing an upbeat trend this week after the bearish trend under heavy retail sales pressure last week.

Ershad

From Page 1
Prof Sirajul Haq and Prof Taher of the PG Hospital after examining the former President referred him to the Cardio Vascular Diseases Hospital.

Physicians suggested him to avoid visitors. JP leaders urged all not to gather at the hospital.

For early recovery of the party chairman, the JP will hold a *milad mahfil* at its central office at 5 pm today.

Meanwhile, the ailing JP Chairman has urged the people to pray for his speedy recovery.

Ershad first felt pain at his chest and belly while visiting Nilphamari on Friday and returned Dhaka on Saturday afternoon.

E-W interconnector

From Page 1
basis of confessional statement arrested Chhunu unearthed a 47-kv base plate, four bolts and eight nuts from Monohorpur village in the thana today.

Seven people have so far been arrested in connection with the power tower collapse.

Cong withdraws

From Page 1
Deve Gowda's 10-month-old government.

The head of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), the largest opposition party in government with around 160 seats, added a "snap poll was inevitable."

The United Front steering committee is meeting here tomorrow to take stock of the situation arising out of the withdrawal of support to the coalition government by the Congress.

The Front leaders are reaching here tonight to finalise their strategy to face the challenge. United Front sources said. The steering committee will meet at 1800 hours.

Meanwhile, former prime minister, V P Singh, who had played a key role in cobbling up the 13-party coalition, called upon the Front leaders to close ranks and meet the challenge unitedly to foil the Congress move to destabilise the government.

Bangladesh emerge

From Page 1
overs, including one maiden. Bangladesh after winning the toss, decided to bat and reached 211 for nine in 50 overs.

In reply, the hosts were restricted to 152 for eight in 50 overs.

Details on Page 10

16 boys rescued

From Page 1
boys were destined to be sent. The boys were rescued from the house of one Delwar Hossain, which carried a signboard reading "sole representative for immigration to Canada."

Delwar Hossain, reportedly suffering from cardiac disease, was interrogated but was not arrested, police said.

Those arrested are Abul Kalam and Bachchu Mia Khondakar.

Of the 16 boys, 10 were brought from Yousufpur village in Daudkandi by Abul Kalam, four from the same village by Bachchu Mia Khondakar and two by one Keramat Ali. They were to be sent to Faiz-e-Rabbania Madrasa at Baghail in Tangail, said police, quoting statements by the arrested.

AL: Shun conspiracy

From Page 1
ity to India.

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak alleged that the BNP, falling to cash in on water and power issues, was conspiring to unseat the government. "As long as we are engaged in nation-building activities, no conspiracy will be successful."

Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury claimed that late president Ziaur Rahman had agreed to give transit to India. "Calling hartal now to protest transit is a hoax."

"After establishing peoples' right to franchise, our government is now trying to ensure food for all," she said.

Termining the current power crisis a legacy of the BNP government, Motia Chowdhury said, "Give us a little more time, Inshallah we will be able to solve this crisis."

In his presidential speech, Mohammad Hanif urged the party rank and file to get ready for building resistance against "destructive forces." "Wait, you will get instructions from Sheikh Hasina at the April 7 rally at Pantahapath," he told the party workers.

Recalling the movement launched from the Janata Mancha last year, Hanif said, "People forced Begum Khaleda Zia to relinquish power. While in power she used to say that those who called hartal were enemies of the country. Now she has proved herself an enemy of the country."

He also referred to the recent

Nor'wester

From Page 1
some villages in Sadar thana of Sirajganj district.

Several hundred *kutcha* and semi-pucca houses of Jumnunachar, Chandipur, Kalipur, Noalchhapara, Chhoto Noalchhapara, Megharpal and Ariapatol villages were damaged by the storm that lasted for 20 minutes.

The dead was identified as Ayesha, 52, of Chhoto Noalchhapara village in sadar thana. She died when the house collapsed on her.

Of the injured, three were admitted to Bhuaupur health complex and four others taken to the Sirajganj General Hospital.

Patuakhali Polytec closed

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Mar 30: The Patuakhali Polytechnic Institute was closed for an indefinite period from today following yesterday's clashes between the activists of BCL and JCD over the student union election.

AL-BNP meet

From Page 1
police sources at Feni said that 29 people have been accused in the case filed on Friday last in connection with the killing of Ashfaqur Rahman Tushar on Thursday last.

No case has yet been lodged in connection with the killing of Sharifuddin Nasir on Saturday last, police said.

Arab League for freezing ties with Israel

CAIRO, Mar 30: Arab foreign ministers decided today to call for a freeze of ties with Israel and the closure of liaison and interests bureaux in the Jewish state, an Arab League official said, reports AFP.

Ministers at an Arab League conference here "took a decision recommending a halt to all measures of normalisation with Israel within the framework of the peace process," said Said Kamal, the League's deputy secretary general for Palestinian Affairs.

Refugees

From Page 1
Refugee Welfare Association Upendra Lal Chakma, when asked, said that all refugees are eager to return to their home if proper rehabilitation could be ensured.

"We well wait and see whether the 6,700 refugees being repatriated this time are rehabilitated as per agreement and then the rest 45,000 refugees will surely return home," he added while visiting the makeshift camps set up at Mondirhat of Subroom on the bank of the Feni river that divides India and Bangladesh.

390 MW power

From Page 1
became inoperative from Friday due to technical problems. "Despite technical recommendations for annual maintenance of this factory, it did not undergo any maintenance in the last three years," he pointed out.

The Rajuan power unit-1 remained inoperative for a long time due to poor gas supplies from the Bakhrabad gas field. The Bakhrabad gas field, the minister said, had been over-used in the past despite warnings and forecasts from experts that unless some measures were taken to improve the Bakhrabad well, sand would start surfacing along with gas.

"Now we are considering proposals from three international companies for rehabilitation of the Bakhrabad gas field. We will soon take a decision on awarding the contract to one of these companies and we hope, by the end of July, a daily extraction of 25 billion cubic feet of gas from this gas field would be ensured," the minister said.

Noor Uddin Khan further said that eight power units having 390 MW were under rehabilitation programme. "These units will start operating in phases, from this month up to September," he said, "but at the same time, some other plants in operation will go for maintenance."

In general, I can say that we will get fresh 100 MW power from Ghorashal units, 100 MW from Haripur and 210 MW from Rajuan unit-1 during May-June next year. In addition we hope three large-mounted plants having around 300 MW capacity will come into operation by February-March next year," he said.

Tk 2.64 lakh looted from B'baria post office: 2 killed

From Our Correspondent
BRAHMANBARIA, Mar 30: Two persons were stabbed to death during a robbery in the main post office of Brahmanbaria Saturday midnight.


The dacoits also looted over Tk 2 lakh and 64 thousand.

The victims were identified as Abul Kalam Azad, 40, treasurer of the post office and night guard, Abul Mannan, 25.

According to police, a gang of eight to ten robbers entered the post office building by breaking the windows.

A case has been filed with Brahmanbaria thana. Two persons have been arrested.

Qul Khwani of Samiul Hoque Choudhury Today



The Qul Khwani of Samiul Hoque Choudhury, son of Late Serajul Hoque Choudhury (Peara Mia) and Feroza Choudhury (Mona) of Brahmanbaria and grandson of Late Khawja Khan Bahadur Muharram Ali Choudhury of Tripura will be held at his sister's residence at House # 38G, Road # 11, Banani after *Asr* prayers today (Monday, March 31, 1997).

Najma Shams, Rehana Babar, Samia K. Ahmed, Nasrin Moin, Sanaul Hoque Choudhury, Shamim Choudhury and Tasneem Sarwar, brother and sisters of the deceased, request all relatives, friends and well-wishers to attend the *milad mahfil* and pray for the peace of the departed soul of Samiul Hoque Choudhury belovedly known to many as Bhaiyu, Sami or Khoka. S-237

Editor : S. Mahfuz Anam
Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, City Publishing House Ltd, 90, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000.
Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Email: dstar@bangla.net