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**BNP considering BTV's invitation to Khaleda**

Star Report

In a major shift from its previous stance, the opposition BNP is now considering the invitation to party chief and Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia for appearing in the BTV programme — Deshbarish Mukhamukhi (facing the court). The party is now in contact with the BTV authorities to know all about the programme. Consultation within the party is also going on whether or not to respond to the invitation positively, according to sources in the party.

The BTV authorities sent a letter to Begum Zia on June 23 requesting her to participate in the programme, seeking a reply by July 9.

The offer to the leader of the Opposition was made after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina appeared in the newly-introduced BTV programme on June 23.

Contacted by telephone, BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP told The Daily Star last night, "We're eager to participate in the programme."

**Transport strike**

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passengers buses on July 10.

The decision to enforce the strike was taken of a joint meeting of the Barisal, Patuakhali, Jhalakati, Barguna and Peropur districts bus and minibus owners associations and workers unions held here yesterday.

Abdur Rashid Khan, president, Barisal minibus association, is in the chair.

**Bangabandhu Murder Case**

From page 1  
Rama then went to the second floor of house and awoke Sheikh Kamal and his wife and ran down to the first floor and awoke Sheikh Jamal and his wife and informed them about the attack.

Bangabandhu's eldest son, Sheikh Kamal, wearing a pant and shirt went down, Rama said. Afterwards, "I heard sound of firing and groaning of Kamal Bhai."

He said Bangabandhu went upstairs into his room and closed the door when he (Rama) took shelter in an adjacent room and also closed the door. Tremendous firing was going on outside the house at that time, he added.

As Bangabandhu came out of his room, Rama told the court, he came out and saw a group of army men surrounding Bangabandhu standing near the bedroom.

As the army men surrounding him and dragged him towards the stairs, another group fired on him. Bangabandhu fell dead on the stairs.

After killing Bangabandhu, an army person enquired me about my identity and asked me to go inside. I then ran to Bangabandhu's room and went into the bathroom where I found Begum Mujib along with Sheikh Jamal, Sultana Kamal, Rosy Jamal, Sheikh Russel and injured Sheikh Naser."

Begum Mujib tore her saree and gave a bandage to Sheikh Naser, added the house servant.

"Amma, they (army) shot saheb," Rama told Begum Mujib.

Soon after the army had come to the room and knocked the door, Begum Mujib said: "I will open the door." Sheikh Jamal, who was standing beside his mother, said he would open the door. But Begum Mujib said: "Let me open the door. If we die, we will die together."

Then Begum Mujib opened the door and the army men "brought out Begum Mujib, me, Sheikh Russel and Sheikh Naser and dragged us downstairs," said the witness.

As Begum Mujib came out of the room and got struck seeing the body of Bangabandhu..... she shouted "I will not go anywhere. Kill me here."

The army personnel then dragged Begum Mujib towards the bedroom and soon sounds of firing and screams of women were heard, Rama said making his deposition on the fifth day of cross-examination in the trial of the state murder case that began on July 6.

He went on saying "at that time the army men brought him, Russel and Sheikh Naser to a line outside the building. I saw there the body of policeman in plainclothes lying on the ground."

One army person then asked Sheikh Naser about his identity and took him inside the building. "I heard sound of firing and groaning of Sheikh Naser .... baba ... ma..."

A scared and weeping Russel went near AFM Muhtul Islam, plaintiff of the case, and asked: "Will they also kill me?" Muhtul

**Samad Azad**

From page 1  
he added.

Referring to the hartal called for Tuesday, the minister said it would create dissension among the people who witnessed a national unity of all parties in parliament in condemning the heinous Zionist act in occupied Palestine.

Azad, accompanied by acting President of Awami League Amir Hossain Amu and State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Talukder Abdul Khaleq, flew here today to see the flood situation which has started improving in the district.

After the review meeting, the foreign minister flew low in a helicopter over the flood affected areas of the district, including the worst-affected Chokoria thana, and then landed at Bandarban district town to see the flood situation there.

**Shima murder  
'Stern action  
for faulty  
investigation'**

An emergency meeting yesterday resolved to take stern action against anyone to be found at fault in investigation, preparing chargesheet and conducting the rape and murder case of Shima Chowdhury, reports UNB.

The meeting, with Home Minister Rafiqul Islam in the chair, reviewed certain comment made by the judge concerned, as published in newspapers, while pronouncing the verdict of the sensational case on Sunday.

The meeting directed the authorities concerned to send the certified copy of the judgement immediately to the Home Ministry for its perusal.

An official handout said the government ensures all necessary steps for the protection of life and property of the people without any partiality.

It was also mentioned in the handout that the four policemen accused in the case had been sacked and they were no more members of the force.

**Khaleda to visit  
flood-hit  
Feni July 17**

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will visit the flood affected areas in her constituency on July 17, reports UNB.

The areas include Fulgazi, Parshuram and Chhaganalya thanas and other parts of Feni district, said a press release yesterday.

**AL candidate  
elected Pabna  
pouira chairman**

PABNA July 14: Awami League candidate Mosharrif Hossain was unofficially elected chairman of Pabna Pourashava today, reports UNB.

Officials said Mosharrif bagged 17,948 votes while his nearest rival Kamrul Hasan Mintu of opposition BNP polled 16,608 votes.

A total of 36,556 votes out of 60,431 were cast.

The post fell vacant as former chairman Sheikh Shahidullah Bachchu was killed on April 4, this year.

Meanwhile, pro-BNP candidate Kamrul Hasan alleged that the election was rigged.

Barring some stray incidents, the election was held peacefully at 24 centres in the town. Two fake voters were arrested during the polling hours.

**Hartal protested**

From page 1  
Bangladesh Muktijuddha Smriti Sangsad Chairman Mubedur Rahman and general secretary M Ziaul Haque Kaabi, in a statement, called upon the people to resist the hartal "called by the anti-independence forces who used to trade on religion."

The Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association yesterday called upon the people not to support the hartal and termed it "a design to create anarchy in the country to attain the objectives of the anti-liberation forces."

President of 'Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, Bangladesh' Syed Maulana Mainuddin Ahmed Al-Hasani Majibhandari, in a statement, strongly criticised the hartal call and questioned the objectives of the programme when the parliament has unanimously condemned the blasphemous act.

Maulana Majibhandari also questioned the intention of the sponsors of the hartal which, he said, was called in the holy month of Rabiul Awal and to disrupt the programmes of the Eid-e-Miladun Nabi.

**Govt scheme**

From page 1  
bond is likely to be issued by the government in order to generate resources only for industrial financing.

He said the revenues to be mobilised by selling out the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) would be ploughed back in the manufacturing sector as industrial financing.

Moreover, he said, the banks and the development financial institutions would be revamped, enhancing their capacity to disburse credit to the industrial sector.

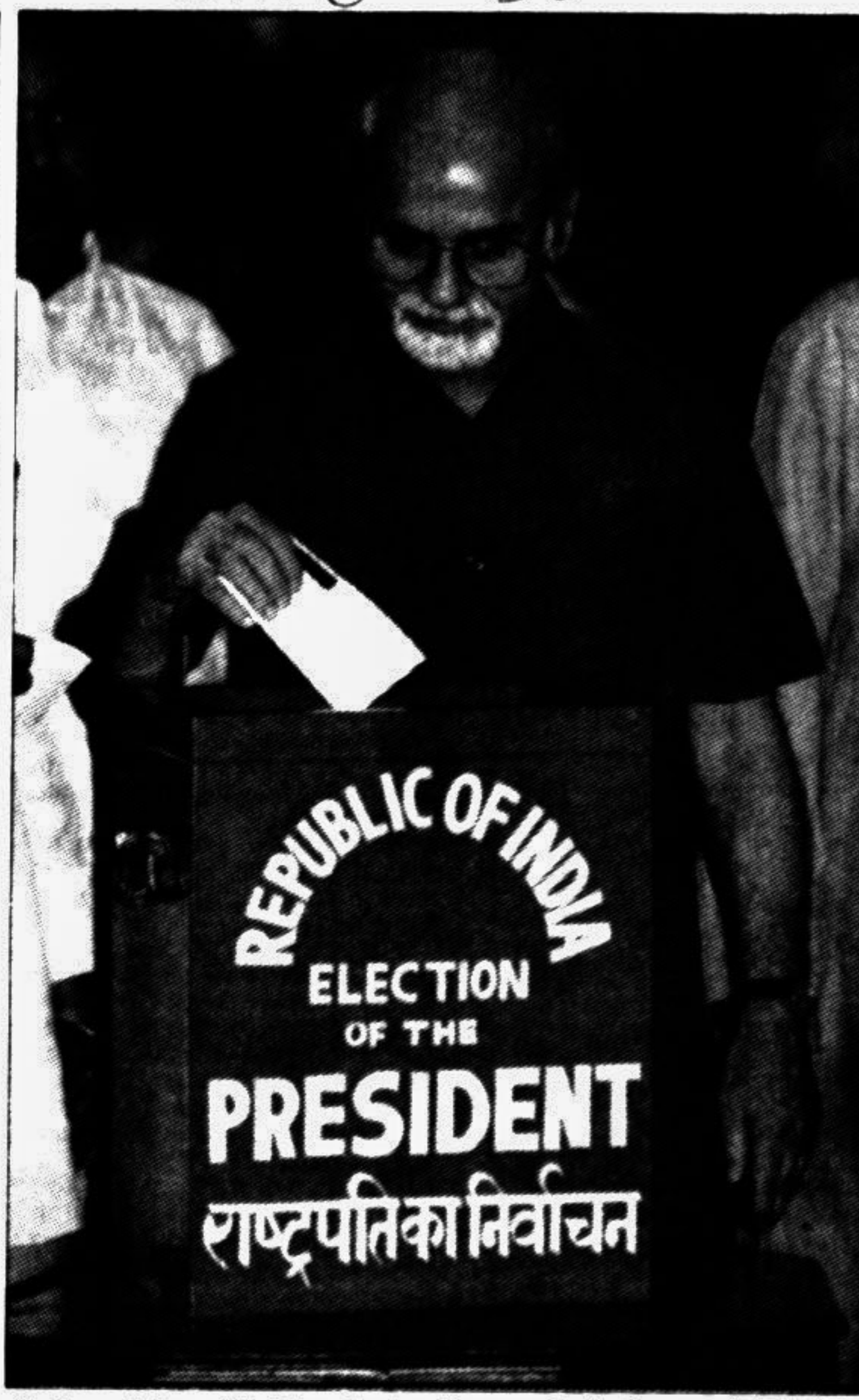
"Our aim is to further strengthen the industrial financing," Kibria said with a note of optimism that the industry would pick up as a favourable environment has been created by the government.

At present, many foreign investors are negotiating with concerned agencies here in a process to invest in the country, he said, adding the untaxed moneyholders have also started investing.

Asked about the low industrial credit last year, the minister said it was "not correct" that credit to the private sector was restricted during the last fiscal (1996-97), the first year in office of the Awami League government.

He said the credit to the private sector rose to Tk 34,246 crore on May 15 this year from Tk 32,421 crore on June 30, 1996. Credit to public sector also rose to Tk 13,055 crore from Tk 11,032 crore during the period.

He admitted that the credit to the private sector was lower in 1996-97 fiscal than that of a year back and said the expansion of credit in 1995-96 was unusually high. And "that was directly linked with the default culture."



Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral casts his ballot during presidential election yesterday in New Delhi. — AFP/UNB photo

**DMK walks out of UF  
govt with 4 ministers**

NEW DELHI, July 14: India's fragile minority ruling coalition suffered a major new blow today when one of its partners walked out of the government, taking four cabinet ministers with them, reports AFP.

K Karunanidhi, chief of the Dravidian Progressive Party (DMK), said in a statement: "The DMK is not willing to go along with parties which are functioning with minimal plans and with persons trying to fulfil their personal ambitions."

Karunanidhi stressed, however, that the DMK party, which is based in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, would continue to support the government from the outside.

The four ministers included high-profile industry Minister Murali Manohar and Transport Minister TG Venkataraman.

Their departure, from a 23-member cabinet, comes a week after Gujral's Janata Dal (People's Party) split in two in the wake of a corruption scandal.

That led to three coalition ministers and 17 members of parliament in all — quitting the government.

**Acquittal of 4**

From page 1  
Das and Natasha Ahmad were present at the press conference.

Narigrantha Probartana has also blamed the government for not providing sufficient evidence in the Shima Chowdhury murder case in Chittagong.

At a meeting yesterday, they said Shima was raped by police during police custody. The government, while filing a case in this regard, did not provide sufficient documents and evidence against the accused, they alleged.

UNB adds: Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh has expressed surprise and alleged a long-drawn chargesheet was issued against the accused so that the allegation is not proved.

In a joint statement yesterday, ADAB executives said: although the criminals were released for lack of proper investigation, they will be considered accused in the eye of conscious people of society.

Bangladesh Nari Progti Sangha alleged that the police administration showed negligence and irresponsibility in duty, filing a partial and faulty case to protect the accused.

Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights expressed concern over the court judgement in the Shima Chowdhury rape case and decided to appeal to the higher court.

Ain O Shalish Kendra urged the government to take necessary steps against the verdict of the court without further delay.

**Bidding**

From page 1  
a model production sharing contract for that purpose. This model PSC will be the basis for negotiation with the companies which will bid.

After the government's announcement of the bidding schedule, a delegation of high level officials led by the Energy Minister visited UK and USA and held two international seminars on hydrocarbon prospects in Bangladesh.

The sources further said that big oil companies have requested that after their submission of bid documents, the papers should be evaluated by a neutral international body preferably by the World Bank, in addition to the government's scrutiny.

**Attracting Japanese investment**

From page 1  
ter's visit, the Investment Protection Agreement was signed. The agreement bolstered their confidence since it was learnt to be based on the Japanese draft and was beneficial to both the countries.

Keidanren business leaders also said that they were already proceeding with a 100 million US dollar project for manufacture of polyester textiles in Ghorashal where participation of a Japanese company and a German firm is expected along with financial assistance from JAIDO.

The Japanese business leaders pointed out that JAIDO, which has been set up with Japanese government assistance for providing financial support to developing countries, is likely to assist future private sector projects in Bangladesh. JAIDO has already provided assistance to many projects in 23 countries.

The immediate business gain from the visit was an assurance to import from Bangladesh sea foods worth 2.2 million dollars this month and 3.2 million dollars in October.

Another important development was fixing the date for the Joint Economic Committee meeting. It will be held in Tokyo on October 24.

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**PHILIPS**

**HC judgment on  
removal of AB  
Bank MD stayed**

By Staff Correspondent  
The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has stayed operation of a judgment by the High Court rejecting a writ petition filed by the Managing Director of AB Bank, challenging an order by the Governor of the Bangladesh Bank removing him from his office.

Justice Mohammad Abdur Rauf of the Appellate Division stayed the operation of the judgment for three weeks following a provisional writ petition by Abdur Rahim Chowdhury, the MD of AB Bank, pending obtaining of certified copies of the order passed by the High Court division on July 10.

Bangladesh Bank ordered removal of Abdur Rahim Chowdhury as chief executive of the private sector bank in December last year accusing him of irregularities in sanctioning a loan taken by Santal Ltd.

Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud moved the appeal on behalf of Abdur Rahim Chowdhury.

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**Cross-section of people  
protest hartal call**

Star Report  
A cross-section of people in Dhaka city believe that the recent Zionist attempt to be little the Holy Quran and Prophet Mohammad (SM) is definitely a heinous act, but protesting the incident by calling a country-wide hartal is counterproductive.

Many of the persons interviewed observed that today's hartal would not only hit the country's already shattered economy, it would also affect their personal interests.

Dr Omar Haider Chowdhury, an economist, said that the unanimous parliamentary resolution demanding punishment to those responsible for the offence effectively conveyed the sentiment of the people of Bangladesh. "But it is meaningless to call a hartal in Bangladesh to protest against the foreign offenders."

Shahed Ali, a rickshaw-puller, said: "The Zionists have done a very bad thing by 'insulting' our Prophet and disregarding the Quran, but the hartal would not help punish the criminals."

Abdus Salam, a doctor working in a city hospital, observed that the Zionists concerned had committed a big crime by hurting the sentiments of Muslims. "But politicking with the incident by calling a shut-down in a poor country like ours is another crime," he said.

Shafiqul Alam, an official of a semi-government organisation, was also very critical about the 'Zionist misdeed'. "However, the hartal would not only affect the national economy, it would also affect my private practice," Shafiqul Alam, who is also a physiotherapist, said.

Fatin Fayaz Khan, a housewife living in the Lalmitia, also believes that the Zionist attempt to dishonour the Prophet of Islam deserves strong condemnation and some sort of punishment. "But the hartal would not help ensure the punishment."

**Flood**

From page 1  
significant rainfalls were experienced during the last 24 hours included Moujibazar, Patuakhali, Chandpur, Durgapur, Bhairab Bazar and Barisal.

During the last 24 hours the Brahmaputra and the Ganges continued to rise at all points, while the rivers in the Meghna basin recorded both rise and fall. Most rivers in the south-eastern hill basin registered fall, the press release said.

It said in the Brahmaputra basin, except in the Dibrugarh, Kurigram and the Brahmaputra at Bahadurabad all other rivers are flowing below their respective danger levels.

Although the Ganges, the Kumar and the Goral recorded rise at several points during the period all the rivers in the basin were flowing below the danger levels.

**PM at Hamburg**

From page 1  
tion programmes both by the respective governments as well as aid agencies.

Sheikh Hasina told the meet that her government is committed to structural reforms in the field of literacy that must accompany its drive for eradicating poverty through education and empowerment of the people.

"We consider education at all levels as one of the major factors of poverty alleviation," she said, reaffirming her commitment to eradicate illiteracy from Bangladesh within next 10 years.

The Prime Minister said nearly 900 million people predominantly belonging to developing nations are illiterate.

Gap between literate and illiterate in a developing society is likely to grow wider in future, she said, adding a Human Development Centre has recently been set up in Dhaka to cater to the most illiterate, most malnourished, least gender-sensitive and the most deprived region in the world. This region has a very low female literacy rate.

A recent study found that farmers with only four years of education are 9 per cent more productive than farmers with no education. Literacy gains of 20 to 30 per cent can boost a nation's GDP by 6 to 8 per cent, improve nutritional status significantly.

Hasina said recognizing the fact that the formal education system alone cannot eradicate illiteracy from society, it was thought necessary to embark upon a comprehensive Non-Formal Education Programme (NFE).

The Prime Minister said that Bangladesh had adopted forward-looking strategies to keep phase with the very fast-changing global order.

"Our government's aim is to develop the nation's human resources, equip it with the necessary technical and professional skills needed to support a process of sustainable development."

**Law ministry**

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highlight the 'circumstantial evidences of rape' for proper judicial consideration."

Shima Chowdhury, a garment worker, was arrested by Raozan thana police on October 8 last year while she went to the village along with her lover Abdul Hafiz. Police then took her to Raozan thana where she was allegedly raped by the policeman in the OC's room, the temporary custody, at midnight on October 9.

**hartal**

From page 1  
out separate torch processions yesterday in support of the hartal.

Jatiyatobadi Juba Dal Dhaka city unit led by Glasuddin Khokon also brought out a procession in the city for the hartal.

UNB adds: Leaders of Jatiya Party (Zafar-Moazzem) yesterday called on the people to observe today's hartal to express solidarity with the Muslim Ummah.

The call came from a protest rally of the party held at Muktaoing in the city afternoon.

Presided over by JP (Z-M) presidium member Ismail Hossain Bengal, the rally was addressed, among others, by secretary general Shamim-Al-Mamun, presidium member Prof Nurul Islam Milon, vice-chairman ASM Zakaria and MA Latif.

Later, a torch procession was brought out in the city in support of the hartal.