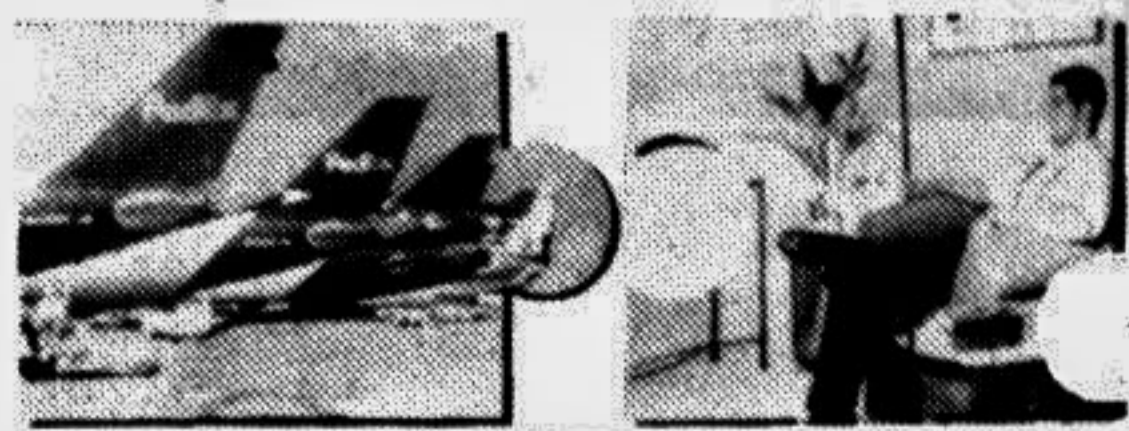


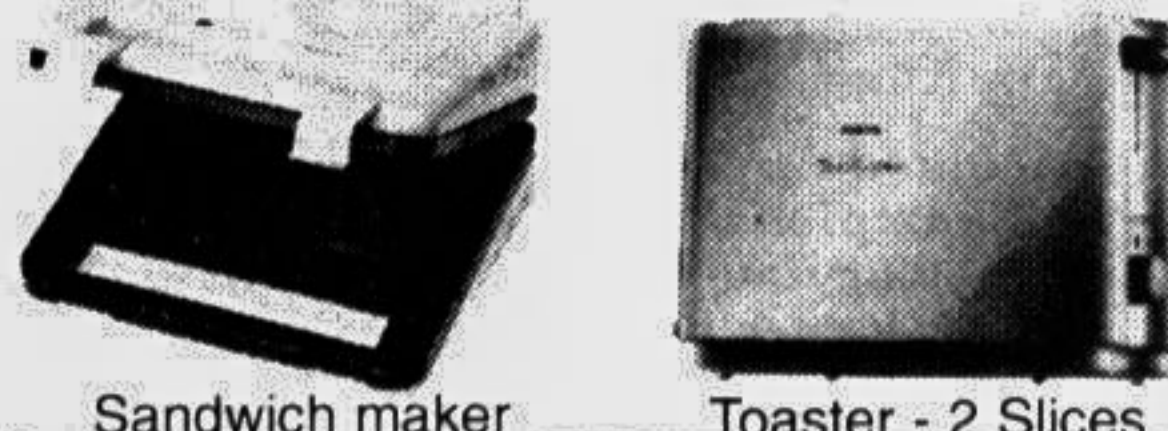
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# Down to Earth Development Prospects Across Buriganga

By ASM Nurunnabi

The expansion of the Dhaka city on the northern and north-eastern sides appears to be taking place more rapidly on account of absence of any natural obstruction. The pace of development in those areas is more noticeable in recent times. But the Buriganga river seems to act as a deterrent to any appreciable expansion of the city southward.

The Buriganga flows by the southern side of the city. It has been felt that due to absence of suitable communication network, such important places on the other side of the river like Zinzira and Keraniganj could not experience a similar spurt of development. It has been estimated that normally not less than half a million of people previously used to cross the river only by boats from the surrounding areas for their daily business in Dhaka city.

In February, 1989, a new horizon in communication infrastructure of the country opened with the completion of the Bangladesh-China Friendship bridge over the Buriganga. The bridge, 847.32 metre in length, was a long-felt necessity for both extending the Dhaka city on the other side of the river and for improving the road link with the southern part of the country. It has contributed to the opening up of the Dhaka-Khulna highway up to Mawa. And a couple of bridges for road gaps beyond Mawa will complete the highway.

The bridge has been exercising a considerable impact on the development of the areas adjoining the highway, such as

Sreenagar, Zinzira, Keraniganj, Nawabganj and Doha. The potentialities of the bridge in the development of the areas are yet to be fully realised.

With a view to reaping greater benefits from communication with the southern side of the Buriganga river, construction of a second Buriganga bridge at Babubazar linking Zinzira has been undertaken. This second bridge will offer further facilities in road communication to the people living on the other side of the river. It will also establish an easy link between Dhaka city and Zinzira and Keraniganj.

The over-all socio-economic impact of the project will be considerable inasmuch as transportation cost of agricultural produce from these areas to the Dhaka city will be reduced and temporary employment opportunities will be created for the poorer sections of the society in those areas. The project is likely to be completed by February, 1999.

Some observers are of the opinion that a third bridge over Buriganga may be necessary in the near future at Kataras point of the city to establish proper links with new satellite townships that may be set up on the other side. Such townships when created are expected to reduce the pressure of population on Dhaka city to a large extent.

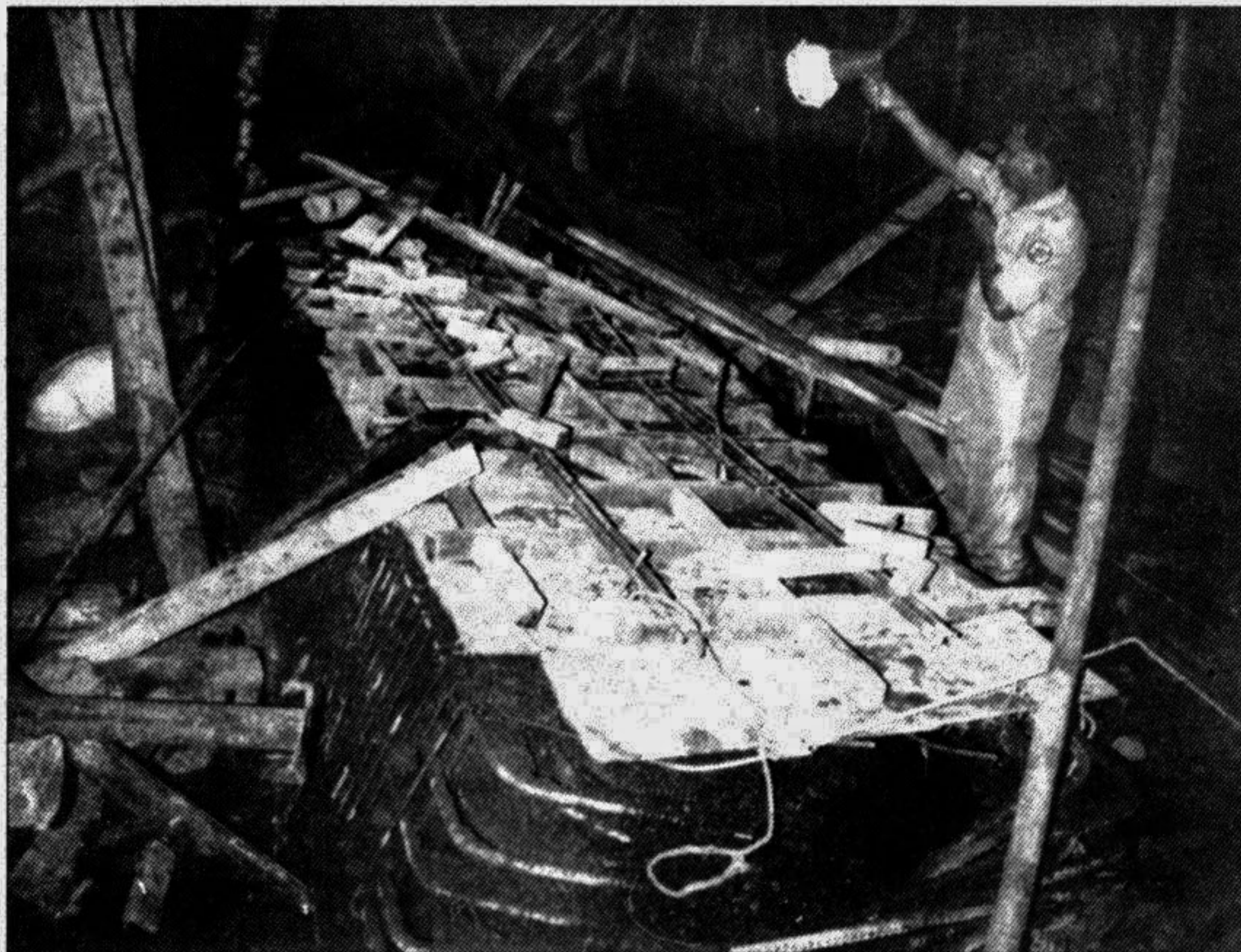
As a result of the bridge projects, vast areas of land on the other side of the river will come under urban jurisdiction as per Dhaka City Master Plan. This may, in due course, play an important part in relieving the

burgeoning congestion of dwellers in the city proper. However, there may be some dark aspects of consequences resulting from the erection of new bridges. A major part of the area on the other side of Buriganga are low-lying, which have so long been used for production of agricultural crops. On account of the inevitable process of urbanisation due to their easy accessibility from Dhaka proper made possible by these bridges, these low-lying areas are likely to be used for non-agricultural purposes, leading to decreased agricultural output.

Another potentially ominous consequence may also arise. To make these low-lying areas for use as habitats by raising their levels, a large amount of investment is required. To avoid this implication, some landowners in these areas may be tempted to erect makeshift structures, like those on Kamrangirchar, paving the way for the large-scale growth of slums.

Besides, we have already been observing unplanned growth of industries in some areas of Zinzira and Keraniganj.

In this context, it is very desirable that the authorities concerned need be vigilant that the development of these areas takes place with appropriate planning so that the shortcomings and drawbacks experienced in the planned growth of the Dhaka city proper are avoided in future in the expanded new areas.



The beam of an under-construction auditorium at Shilpakala Academy in the city collapsed again yesterday. — Star photo

## Wage another war to end poverty: PM

MUJIBNAGAR, Apr 17: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today called upon the freedom fighters to unite again with the spirit of liberation war to wage a war against poverty, hunger and exploitation, reports UNB.

"Wage another war to free the country from poverty, to ensure economic freedom and to reach fruits of independence to the doorsteps of the people," she told a freedom fighters' grand rally here in the afternoon. Thousands of people from all walks of life converged at tiny Mujibnagar in the border district to join the rally, held here for the first time after the independence.

The people from far-flung areas started coming since morning to the 'Amrakanan' (mango grove) of Mujibnagar, where the first independent government was formed in 1971 under the leadership of father

of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Prime Minister said the 17th April has a special significance in the history of the nation. It was on this day in 1971, the independent Mujibnagar government was formed.

Hasina, in an emotion choked voice, said "I've lost everything — my father, mother, brothers and the dear ones. Now it's my only objective to work for the welfare of the people, to establish their rights."

She added, "If needed I'll also shed my blood for the people of the country, for establishing their rights."

Hasina said the government has taken a massive programme to project the glorious history of the liberation war. "I've laid the foundation of the Mujibnagar Complex today as part of that effort."

## Beam collapses

From Page 1

advisor and others concerned. "There is no need for further investigation into the matter," he said.

The State Minister directed the police on the spot to take immediate lawful action against the project officials.

He said punitive action will be taken against those who will be found negligent to duty.

Quader said the construction firm, 'Project Builders,' was working on sub-contract basis. 'Moon Construction' is the main contractor.

The State Minister also told UNB that the work order of the Jatiya Natayashala and Shangeethala had been cancelled after yesterday's incident.

Azad Rahman, Director of the Shilpakala Academy, filed a case with Ramna thana against the construction firms.

## BNP MP demands

arrest of culprits behind attack on his house

BNP leader Ziaul Huq Zia MP yesterday demanded arrest of the culprits involved in the attack on his village home at Ramganj in Laxmipur, reports UNB.

Talking to newsmen at the BNP central office in the city, he alleged that a group of about 30 to 40 armed youths of ruling Awami League had attacked his house at about 11:30 pm on Wednesday and damaged a microbus and a tempo.

Zia said they also assaulted the caretaker of the house. On the following afternoon, he said, the armed goons again stormed into the house and set fire to furniture and other goods.

He also alleged that earlier, the Awami terrorists also attacked his house three times.

The ruling party has created a reign of terror in his constituency, he said, adding that about 300 party workers went into hiding because of false cases filed against them.

About his reported meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the House after BNP's walkout on Thursday, he said he went to the Treasury bench and sat beside the PM after he was called by Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed and Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak and as well as by the Prime Minister herself.

He said that after he was asked, he explained to them the causes of BNP's walkout and informed the PM of the attack on his village home.

BNP secretary general Manan Bhuiyan, who was also present on the occasion, told a questioner that the government which has failed to give protection to parliament members has no right to stay in power.

Parliament rejects Yeltsin's PM candidate again

MOSCOW, Apr 17: Parliament rejected Boris Yeltsin's candidate for premier by an overwhelming vote of 271-115 today, reports AP.

The vote was another setback for the President, and sets the stage for a showdown next week, when a third and final vote is expected.

If parliament rejects the President's candidate three times, Yeltsin is empowered to dismiss the State Duma, parliament's lower house, and call new elections.

Yeltsin's office said the President would immediately re-nominate Kiriyenko for a third time. Parliament has one additional week to consider the nomination and another vote is likely next Friday.

Kiriyenko had lobbied hard to win additional support this time, but received even fewer votes than last week, when he was turned down 186-143.

## US pressing Pakistan, India to resolve bilateral problems

ISLAMABAD, Apr 17: The United States is pressing for comprehensive talks between Pakistan and India on resolving bilateral problems, including Kashmir. US presidential envoy Bill Richardson said today, reports AFP.

Richardson made the remarks during a breakfast meeting with Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, their second in two days, before the US envoy's departure for Afghanistan on a peace mission, an official Pakistani statement said.

The US is "advocating both India and Pakistan to engage in a comprehensive dialogue to resolve all their problems, including the problems of Jammu and Kashmir," the statement quoted Richardson as saying.

The dispute over Kashmir, the Himalayan region divided between Pakistan and India and claimed by both, has been a catalyst for two of the three wars between the neighbours in the past.

During the meeting Sharif explained the "immediacy and magnitude of the threat posed to Pakistan by India's massive

nuclear and ballistic missile arsenal," the statement said. Sharif said Pakistan had no other option but to take "appropriate" measures for its security, an apparent reference to the recent testing of a 1500-kilometre (937-mile) range Ghauri missile, capable of hitting most major Indian cities.

Richardson told him the United States understood and appreciated the steps Pakistan had to take to ensure its defence," the statement said.

## Foundation laid

From Page 1

educational institution, vocational training centre, children's park, shopping centre, picnic spot, telephone exchange and post office.

Besides, an agriculture centre, a Mosque and a 10-bed hospital will be built in the complex, Hasina said.

A 150-feet high tower will also be built as per the original plan of the monument, she said.

Earlier, the Prime Minister placed wreath at the alter of the monument.

The jubilant crowd chanted slogans like "Joi Bangla" and "Joi Bangabandhu". The artists of Swadheer Bangla Bazar Kendra rendered the inaugural song: "Purba Digante Surjo Uthechhe Rakta Lal, Rakta Lal..."

## Poachers active

From Page 1

old, male with full tusks, which is very costly in the international ivory market.

Forest officials said this was the 22nd elephant known to have been killed by poachers and in land mine explosions across the border in Cox's Bazar region.

Unofficial sources, including local people, reported that elephant casualties could be higher but securitymen often fail to get far into the jungles, bordering Myanmar.

Of the 22 elephants killed, more than 15 were blown up by land mines. Often the elephants get killed during the frequent cross-border movements in search of food, a forest official said.

Landmines still dot the other side of Bangladesh-Myanmar border, despite an agreement two years ago between the border guards of the two countries to clear those off, he pointed out.

The landmines were planted by Myanmar border guards to prevent Rohingya refugees from fleeing Arakan state in 1992.

Last month three elephants were badly injured when they stepped on the mines.

## US army chief calls on Hasina

The Chief of US Army General Dennis J. Reimer called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Gonobhaban yesterday, reports BSS.

During the meeting, General Reimer appreciated the role of Bangladesh Army in different UN peacekeeping forces. He also mentioned that he had talks with the Bangladeshi contingent of the UN peacekeeping forces in Haiti.

The Prime Minister stressed the need for exchange of visits of armed forces personnel between the two countries for training and sharing experiences. She said that Bangladesh is always ready to participate in UN peacekeeping forces in a bigger way.

Sheikh Hasina also lauded the role of the US 'Sea Angle', who did excellent job during 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh.

## Ctg: Police raid

From Page 1

against the backdrop of deterioration of law and order in the port city.

Meanwhile, some identified terrorists went into hiding sensing the crackdown earlier.

Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police Iftekar Uddin Ahmed who is conducting the operation told this correspondent that the hunt was on to nab those identified terrorists who went into hiding.

He said that the operation would continue.

## Death toll 62

From Page 1

mitted to Gaibandha Sadar Hospital while another 35 were admitted to RMCH till last night.

Those who died at their residences yesterday were identified as Kashem, 38, Badsha, 47, Humayun Kabir, 45 and Rafiqul Islam, 35. Identity of others could not be known till filing of this report late last night.

It is suspected that the liquor was laced with poisonous substances. But it is yet to be determined. Samples of the liquor are being tested at the Public Health Laboratory in the city, sources said.

Meanwhile, three medical team from RMCH, Bogra and the Institute of Public Health in Dhaka and a 22-member paramedical team from Rangpur are working at Gaibandha Sadar Hospital to treat the patients, the DC of Gaibandha said when contacted over telephone.

The DC also said that two persons were so far arrested for allegedly selling the poisonous liquor.

"I have arranged public announcement over microphones in the town and in the surrounding areas so that the affected people who have not yet turned up to hospital may go there for treatment. We are yet to get the result of sample test of the liquor from Dhaka," the DC said.

Doctors at the RMCH could not be contacted till filing of this report.

## WTO ministerial conference begins in Geneva today

From A Correspondent

GENEVA, Apr 17: The Second WTO Ministerial Conference and 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Multilateral Trading System opens here today in Geneva. The meeting will end on April 21.

Apart from commerce ministers of the WTO member states and observer states, representatives of international inter-governmental organisations and NGOs, a few heads of state and government are expected to participate, specially in the 50th Anniversary Commemoration.

Among them, US President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair are noteworthy. They are expected to hold a summit meeting in Geneva. UK being the current President of the European Union, the British Prime Minister will represent the European Union at his meeting with President Clinton.

Two broad areas of discussion — implementation of the WTO work programme and future activities of the WTO — will

make up the substantive agenda of the Ministerial Conference.

It is expected that while the developing countries would stress on the implementation of the WTO work programme, their developed counterparts would strive to include new issues in the future activities of WTO. The LDCs, on their part, would underscore the necessity of carrying forward the momentum built on LDC issues and would emphasise on the implementation of the decisions of the Singapore Ministerial Conference and of the high-level meeting on LDCs held in Geneva on October last year.

The 50th Anniversary of the Multilateral Trading System is going to be commemorated at a time when majority of the global population remain in the morass of absolute poverty and outside the scope of the benefits of this trading system. However, the developed countries, have reasons to cheer on this occasion.

Shibir activist held while kidnapping girl in Pabna

From Our Correspondent

PABNA Apr 17: An Islamist Chhatra Shibir activist and one of his accomplices had entered the village home of a girl and kidnapped her after forcibly entering the house and beating the inmates at Sayarampur village under Santhia thana on Wednesday night, police said.

The two, Mizanur Rahman Mizan, 18, and Yunus, were handed over to Santhia police and the girl, Doly Rani, 13, was taken in safe custody.

Police said, Mizan along with her accomplices had entered Doly's house forcibly at dead of night, beat his father and brothers and dragged her out of the house. The injured inmates raised a hue and cry. The neighbours and villagers came in and caught two of the kidnapers, police said.

Mizan, son of Maulana Ebadat Ali, a Jamaat-e-Islami leader of the village, had been teasing the girl for some time and finally proposed to marry her. But she refused, police said quoting local people.

A case has been lodged with Santhia thana in this connection, police said.

Meanwhile, an HSC examinee, Jayanti Rani Ghosh, kidnapped from Sujanager by Tofazzal Hossain Tofa, general secretary of the thana unit of Chhatra League on April 4, could not be rescued till today, police said.

## Nasaka kidnaps 7 Bangladeshis

BANDARBAN, Apr 17: Seven day labourers were allegedly abducted by the members of the Myanmar Border Force, Nasaka, from frontier Gundum area of Naikhongghari thana of the district today, reports UNB.

They were Abdul Khaleque, Mohammad Saker, Monzur Alam, Zaher Ali, Siraj Miah, Yakub Ali and Mohammad Mobarak.

150 houses gutted in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Apr 17: About 150 thatched houses were gutted in a devastating fire that broke out in the Dock Workers' Colony under port police station here last night, reports BSS.

SC orders Rao's trial

NEW DELHI, Apr 17: India's Supreme Court rejected an appeal today by former Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao to dismiss charges against him for offering bribes for legislators' votes, reports AP.

But the court granted immunity to the lawmakers who accepted the bribes, allegedly totalling 30 million rupees (850,000 dollars), in exchange for their support for Rao's minority government in a crucial no-confidence vote four years ago.

## Begum Zia alleges AL godfather behind terrorism in Feni

FENI, Apr 17: Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia has called upon all patriotic citizens to come forward to "protect the country's independence facing threat under the present government," reports UNB.

"People of Feni fought for independence. If necessary, they will fight again to protect sovereignty of the country," she said while laying the foundation stone of a hostel of Rampur Hafezia Madrasa here today.

"I'm the daughter of Feni. I'll join your struggle to safeguard independence and integrity of the soil," she said adding, "If necessary, I'll shed my blood, but will not allow anyone to jeopardise the sovereignty of the country."

The BNP Chairperson alleged that the present government is handing over one-tenth

of the country to others by signing the accord on Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Referring to a series of killings in Feni, Begum Zia said a ruling party 'godfather,' under the patronisation of the government, has been unleashing terrorism in the district.

"The inhabitants of Feni want to get rid of the terrorists," she said, urging the people to build up a resistance against terrorist acts.

The BNP Chairperson came here this afternoon on a short visit and laid the foundation of the madrasa hostel named after Mehedi and Saidee, two sons of local BNP leader Nurul Afzar, who were killed in a road accident recently.

The Leader of the Opposition also held a meeting with party leaders and workers at local Circuit House. She left for Dhaka in the evening.

## A Bir Pratik's disbelief

RANGPUR, Apr 17: After long 27 years of the Liberation War, a former soldier of East Bengal regiment has recently come to know that he had been awarded "Bir Pratik," reports UNB.

"I was not aware of the award which I was given two decades ago. I heard about it last week. But still I think that it's a hearsay," said a beaming Abdul Majid.

The valiant freedom fighter, now a car driver, joined the Army in 1970 and was on training at Comilla Cantonment when the liberation war started.

Majid, a father of eight children, had fled the cantonment and joined the war through sector No 2. He had played a heroic role in a front war at Bolpur in Chowddagram thana of Comilla district and suffered bullet injuries in his right leg.

During his service, Majid also received four other awards — Joy, Sangbiddhan, Samar and Ranataraka.

He has sought cooperation of the Prime Minister regarding the gallantry award which he could not receive due to lack of information.

India to export rice to Bangladesh

By Staff Correspondent

India has decided to export 40,000 tonnes of rice to Bangladesh following requests from the latter, BBC said yesterday.

West Bengal Food Minister Kalimuddin Shams told BBC that Union Food Minister Surjesh Singh Barua agreed to permit export of rice to Bangladesh during his meeting with Barua recently.

"We have a surplus of rice and we can export it to Bangladesh," Kalimuddin Shams was quoted as saying.

## Assessment

From Page 1

lic by the end of June.

The remaining medical colleges would also come under similar quality assessment and audit review. There are 20 medical colleges in the country including the private ones and all will come under the programme, the sources said.

The study has been organised and co-ordinated by the Further Improvement of Medical Colleges Project.

The project is managed by Dr Collin Bullough on behalf of the British Council and is supported by the UK Department of International Development. It is a component of the Government of Bangladesh Fourth Population and Health Project and aims at improving the community orientation and competence of medical college graduates.

Power import

From Page 1

Ishwardi. In exchange, Bangladesh will supply 100 mw to Agartala.

The Bangladesh part of the scheme will cost about 60 to 70 million US dollars. The ADB is interested to finance this scheme both in Bangladesh and in India, the sources said.

As per this proposal, a 45 km long 230 kv transmission line along with necessary sub-stations have to be built from Ishwardi to the border at a cost of 25 million US dollars.

However, energy experts say, before committing itself to importing power, the government should evaluate the cost-benefit of setting up a power plant in the Western Zone in the country. According to them, construction of a 100 mw power plant in the Western Zone will cost about 100 million US dollars. This plant could be connected with the national gas grid easily. They say the cost difference between setting up transmission lines and building a new power plant is not very big. Therefore, setting up its own plant rather than importing power, will be beneficial for Bangladesh, they said.

"Myanmar needs to build up a solid foundation for democracy. Democracy cannot be restored overnight," he said.

U Ohn Gyaw said he (military chief) is now paving the way for constitutional framework for a disciplined democracy.

Asked when democracy will be restored in Myanmar, he said, "As soon as possible."