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## Set up agro-based industries in northern dists: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked all concerned to give priority to setting up more agro-based industries to increase export earnings and boost the economy, reports

"More agro-based industries will benefit farmers, generate job opportunities and help increase income," she said while presiding over a meeting of the National Export Committee at the ICC here.

Hasina said northern districts would be the ideal area for setting up such industries due to its geographical location, climate and availability of land.

She also emphasised that packaging, processing and other industries should be set up, and new export items, like mushroom, radish, baby corn, broccoli, tomato and lettuce be chosen.

The Prime Minister also stressed the need for training and developing skill in processing agro-based products as well as fish, meat and other perishable commodities.

She said her government had solved the problems of GSP and frozen food export and hoped that exporters would remain alert to keep up the image of the country.

The meeting also reviewed

the decisions of the previous meeting of the committee and the progress of activities.

Earlier, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed informed the meeting that the export earning rose to US dlrs 5.2 billion in 1997-98 from dlrs 4.2 billion in 1996-97.

Tofael said export in different sectors increased substantially in last two years and the growth rate of export is 17.08 per cent.

'We have requested for 30 per cent quota for garment sector by the importing countries after the elimination of child

labour," he said. He told the meeting that a five-year export-import policy would be approved soon and an industrial policy, which has been framed, will also be approved shortly by the govern-

Commerce Secretary Syed Alamgir Faruque Chowdhury explained various activities of the ministry.

The meeting was told that export diversification process is going on and efforts are also on to include more new items in the export list to increase export earnings. The new items include fresh

flowers, fruits, vegetables software, ornaments, diamond cuttings and stuffed toys.

The export earnings from vegetables and fruits reached US dollars 25 million in 1997-98 against only 1.55 million dollar in 1981-82.

The meeting was informed that container yard expansion process is going on and a project has been taken up to preserve more containers by expanding the existing two container sheds in Chittagong Port.

An American company, SSA (Stevedoring Services of America), has been given permission to set up two container terminals, one at Potenga in Chittagong and the other at Pangaon in Narayanganj.

Leaders of the business community, present at the meeting, congratulated the prime minister for presenting an excellent budget for the current fiscal year, officials said.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Presidents of BGMEA, finished leather and wear export. tea traders association, representatives of different chambers and concerned officials were present.

# Top BNP leaders

portedly an initiator of collecting resignation letters of party MPs, admitted to the BBC last night that they had deposited the letters on their own. "There was no party decision about resignation. Since the government is not allowing us to play the role of an effective opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad, we have thought it appropriate to deposit our letters of resignation from parliament to our party

Ziaur Rahman, another member of the national executive committee who has not deposited any resignation letter. found Khan's explanation 'inadequate'.

"Had there been a call for an allows movement against the government and a party decision to quit parliament, all of us would have signed the resignation letters.

Meanwhile, the Standing Committee reiterated its demand for immediate resignation of the government, paving the way for holding mid-term polls. This was the only way to free people from the yoke of misrule' of the government said a press release last night.

"The government which could not check the price hike, provide security to life and property, and ensure adequate supply of power, gas and water ... has no right to stay in power", a resolution adopted at the meet-

ing said. The committee, the highest policymaking body of BNP. went into an emergency session at the official residence of Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda

Zia with herself in chair. The meeting reviewed the overall situation including the political situation in the country, the course of party's agitation and the forthcoming parliamentary by-election in Barisal. It express its anger at 'machinations' by the Election Commission and the ruling party to 'tailor' the results of the

It posted a notice upon the Election Commission, the Chief Election Commissioner and the government, reminding them of the consequences of snatching the results of the election on

July 20. The committee pointed out 'violation' of the electoral code of conduct by persons holding the rank and status of ministers', state ministers and chief whip, 'trying to influence the administration to manipulate the outcome of the polls.

Bringing charges against government functionaries it

#### Haripur

From Page 1 permanent workers sparked dissatisfaction among the workers and they put the officers of Haripur and Kailashtila gasfields under lock and key Tuesday afternoon. Some agitated employees also manhandled Abdur Rashid, Senior Ad-

same day. On getting information, the Additional SP of Sylhet visited the Haripur gasfield yesterday. The General Manager (Administration) of SGFL said that they could not file any case due to the absence of the Managing Director, who was in Dhaka.

ministrative Officer, on the

A police contingent had been deployed today to avert any untoward incident in the office of the gasfield.

said that they were making false promises regarding development of the area, arresting and chasing BNP activists and publicly making calls for get ting the ruling party candidate

elected by any means'. The meeting expressed 'resentment and concern' at the 'failure of the EC in taking any action. An interview of the Chief Election Commissioner published in a newspaper yesterday also came up for discussion at the meeting.

The standing committee said that the CEC's unwarranted remarks without taking steps to ensure free and fair polls have only raised questions on credibility of the polls. It noted that BNP wants to see that the EC play its role as enshrined in the Constitution, working as a neutral, responsible and effective institution. "We want an atmosphere in Barisal in which it would be possible for the voters to exercise their franchise freely and fairly."

The meeting strongly condemned "repression" by police and ruling party supporters on BNP activists during the halfday hartal in the city and congratulated the people for "making it a success.'

### Audit objections of Industries Ministry discussed

A meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts was held at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday with committee president S M Akram in the chair, reports

It discussed audit objections of various departments of Industries Ministry for 1994-95 fiscal raised by Auditor and Comptroller General.

It was informed in the meeting that there were 39 audit objections involving Tk 128.92 crore for the period. Of which Tk 47 crore 94 lakh and 43 thousand has already been ad-

#### BGMEA concerned at proposed strike programme at Ctg Port

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) yesterday expressed deep concern at the indefinite work abstention programme at the Chittagong Port from July 20, reports UNB.

Chittagong Port Agents Stevedores and Contractor Employees Union has called the programme protesting setting up of private container terminal in Chittagong.

## Faruk murder

From Page 1

Keraniganj thana following a court order yesterday. However, police were yet to arrest any one of the six accused in the killing.

Earlier Nasrin Akhter Flora was arrested for her alleged involvement in the killing.

A murder case was lodged with Keraniganj thana after police recovered Faruk's body from the luggage compartment of a car which was found abandoned on Dhaka-Mawa highway at Bhawar Bhiti in Kerani-

### **Editor: Mahfuz Anam**

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## Algerian rebels cut throats of 13 villagers

ALGIERS, July 16: Muslim rebels cut the throats of 13 people and wounded two others overnight at a village in the province of Tiaret, 220 km southwest of Algiers, government security forces said today, reports Reuters.

The carnage seems to follow a new patern in Algeria's sixyear-old conflict with attacks carried out mostly on Wednesday nights or Thursdays, the first day of the Muslim week

Popular singer Lounes Matoub was gunned down on Thursday June 25, just after 17 villagers had their throats cut the night before. A bomb ripped through a crowded market in Algiers on Thursday last week killing at least 10 people and wounding 21.

## Maoists kill 7 ın Andhra

NEW DELHI, July 16: Seven people, including a village chief, were hacked to death by Maoist guerillas in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh today. AFP quoting the United News of India (UNI) said.

Police said the guerillas, belonging to the outlawed Peoples War group, attacked the villagers following a land dispute.

#### New JU VC From Page 1

the appointment letter yester-

Born at Burudia village in Pakundia thana of Kishoregan district, Prof Alauddin obtained M Sc degree from Dhaka University in 1971 and MS degree from Kanajawa University in 1982 and DSc from Tohoku University in Japan in 1985.

He also worked as a visiting professor at Kanajawa university in 1994. Dr Alauddin was also a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy

Collector from 1973 to 1997. He actively took part in the war of Liberation in 1971 and played an important role as a

naval commando. Some 30 research papers of Dr Alauddin have been published in different national and international journals.

## Magurchhara

From Page 1 Plants, trees and bamboos worth about Tk eight crore were destroyed, the report said.

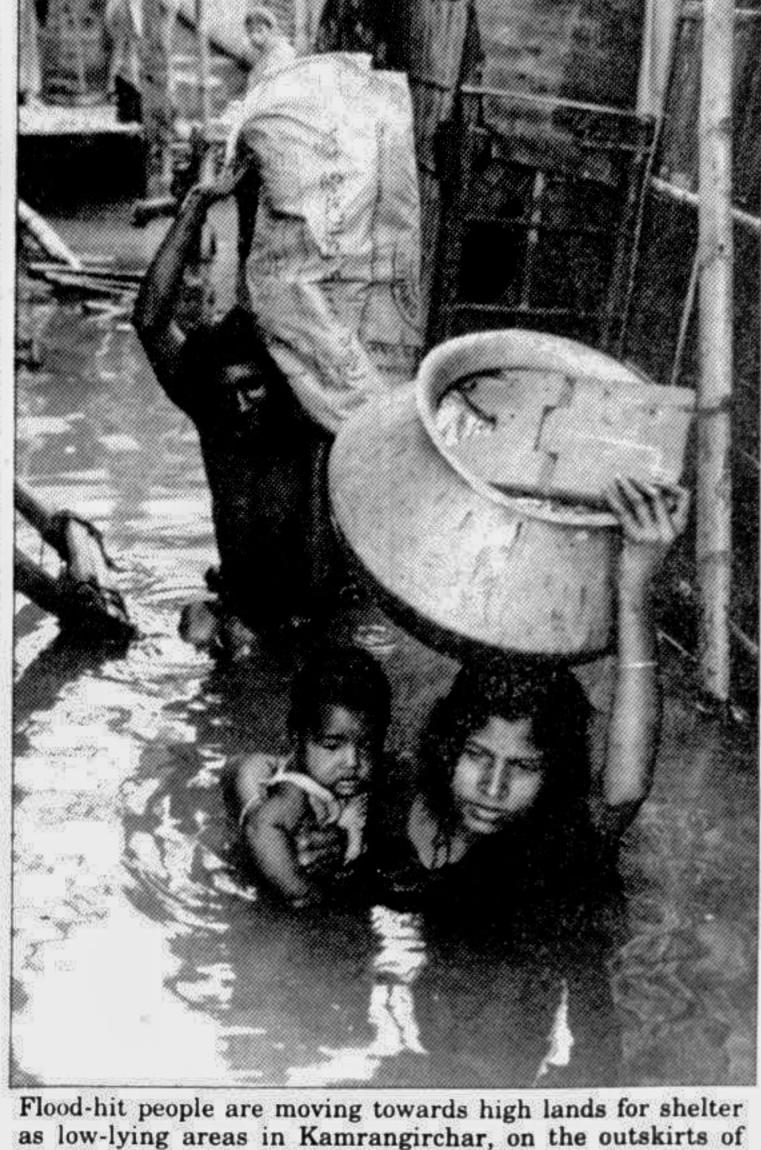
Environmental losses due to the blowout have been broadly outlined as "damage to the nat ural absorption of carbon dioxide, natural process of oxygen generation, flora and fauna and the flow of surface water

through natural creeks". The report mentioned that under ground water table around the area 'has sunk and the micro-nutrients of the soil has also been damaged'. Most of the environmental damages caused by the blowout will have a long term effect in the area, it

"Database required for an exact assessment of the total environmental losses due to the blowout is not available at the moment. Collection of data in this regard is not only time consuming but also expensive,

the committee added. "Through discussion and analysis members of the expert committee determined that cumulative losses due to the blowout for a period of next 50 years stand at Tk 600 crore," the report said. It added that losses mentioned under various heads have been counted as an overall damage to the eco-system and the environment.

"Long term and short term scientific investigation will be needed to remedy the environmental damages to the area, the report stressed.



the city, went under water. Star photo

## Flood situation

From Page 1

A total of 39 unions have been affected by the flood water, engulfing most of the dwelling houses in the Gaibandha pourashava. A four-year-old girl. Mom-

ena, of Kamarjani in sadar thana drowned in the flood waters. Railway sources said that movement of goods train remained suspended at Teestamukghat. Our staff correspondent

from Chittagong reports: Thousands of people have been marooned in the district as 104 unions have been submerged in the flood waters. The flood situation deterio

rated in Mirersharai, Satkania Raozan, Chandanaish, Lohagara, Anwara and Banskhali thanas of Chittagong district. Tidal water inundated the low-lying areas of Sandwip island as the protection em-

bankment breached at three points at Harishpur union. With the release of rain water from Kaptai lake, the lowlying areas of Rangunia.

Boalkhali and Raozan were inundated. There was less rainfall in

Chittagong yesterday. In Cox's Bazar district, the flood situation worsened at

Chakaria due to more rainfall vesterday, an official said. Our Kushtia correspondent reports: The flood situation in four thanas of the district has further deteriorated with fur-

ther rise in the water level of

the Ganges and Gorai. UNB Correspondent from Rajbari reports: A middle-aged woman drowned in the flood water at Chargachhia village in Sadar thana yesterday. The victim was identified as

Rokeya, 59 Seed beds and standing crops on about 3,000 hectares of land were damaged by flood water in the district. Some 10,000 families have been marooned in the

district. In Jamalpur, the overall flood situation remained unchanged. The Old Brahmaputra was flowing 15 cm above its red mark at Jagannathgani ferryghat. Some five lakh people in seven thanas of the district have been affected.

The Mathabhanga Bridge on Mahmudpur-Madarganj road has already broken down and Kalibari Bridge on Jamalpur-Sharishabari road is threatened by the onrush of flood wa-

Road Communications between Jamalpur and Sherpur and district headquarters with four thanas of South Jamalpur remained disrupted for last four days as the ferry ghats in the town and at Jhenai went under flood waters.

In Sirajganj, all the thanas of the district were submerged by flood water due to continuous rise of the river Jamuna. The Jamuna was flowing 12 cm above its danger point. Over one lakh people of the remote char areas of 25 unions in five thanas have been marooned.

Flood situation in Sherpur district deteriorated with 60 villages in 10 unions in Sadar thana going under water yesterday. About 60,000 people of the affected areas were marooned. A minor girl, identified as Papan. 8, of Betmari village in Sadar thana, drowned.

The Brahmaputra embankment is threatened as breaches developed at three points of the embankment. In Mymensingh, two minor

children drowned at Trishal yesterday. They were identified as Shilpi, 8, of Natun Char, and Sujan, 9, of Dhala village. In Comilla, a vast tract of

land have been submerged as flood water is entering through the damaged part of Kankri dam of Chouddagram village. UNB Lalmonirhat corre-

spondent reports: An unidentified old man of Kaimari area and a minor boy Piplu, 5, of Raumari thana in Kurigram district drowned in the flood The flood situation in Rang

pur region, including Lal monirhat, worsened further as the water of Teesta and its tributaries started swelling again from yesterday morning. Meanwhile, train communication in Trimohini-Balashi

section remained suspended as flood water submerged 10.8 km rail track in the section. UNB Kishoregani Correspondent adds: Low-lying areas of 11 thanas in the district went under water during last four

days and about three lakh people have been marooned. The Meghna was flowing 10 cm under danger level at Bhairab point while Dhanu, Ghora Uttara, Dhaleswari, and

the Kala were flowing above their respective danger levels. Local Met Office recorded 271 mm rainfall during last four days.

The flood damaged standing crops on about 2,000 hectares of land, a large number of dwelling houses, roads and cul-UNB Faridpur Correspon-

the district aggravated further with further rise in water level in Padma, Arial Khan and Kumar rivers. Padma was flowing 55 cm above danger level at Daulatdia

dent reports: Flood situation in

ghat. Ten unions of three thanas of the district have been Reports from Rangpur says About 500 families rendered

homeless at village Dhamur in Gangachhara thana due to erosion by the river Teesta. UNB Khagrachhari Correspondent adds: The overall

flood situation in the district improved vesterday. Flood affected people, who took shelter at different places. were returning their homes as

## 16 Asian states

water receding gradually.

From Page 1 world's richest nations shelved for six months negotiations on regulating the multibillion-dollar flows of foreign direct investment at a meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, mainly over sharp differences between the United States and France.

The sharp divergence of views on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment was evident in New Delhi as well.

were Azerbaijan, Bangladesh,

North Korea, South Korea, In-

dia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mal-

dives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pak-

istan, The Philippines, Singa-

pore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and

Vietnam, organisers said.

Experts laid before the par-Mahila Sangstha ticipants the legal options before governments — including complete state discretion on letting in foreign business, or unrestricted entry to companies in all segments apart from certain specified areas, the statement "The views expressed ranged

from the opinion that there was UNB. no need for an international investment regime that was legally binding, to the view that bilateral investment promotion agreements were sufficient jects. to enhance FDI flows," the statement said skilled and experienced train-The participating countries

## missile programmes, the panel

sooners than previously pro-jected, a bipartisan panel set up by Congress said on Wednesday, reports Reuters. The blue-ribbon panel also found the United States 'might well have little or no warning' before foes deploy ballistic missiles that could change the

WASHINGTON, July 16:

North Korea, Iran and Iraq will be able to hit the United States

and its allies with missiles

tipped with deadly weapons

dynamics of global power.
"The threat to the US .... is broader, more mature and evolving more rapidly than has been reported... by the intelli-gence community," the nine-member panel concluded with-

out dissent.

In the unclassified version of its report, the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Threat to the United States did not spell out precisely how close North Korea and Iran might be to fielding missiles that could hit the United States.

But it said they would be able to cause 'major destruction' in US cities 'within about five years of a decision to acquire

## BNP condemns police attack on pro-hartal activists

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a statement yesterday congratulated the city dwellers for making the half-day hartal an allout success, reports UNB. "The people by spontaneously observing the hartal

have expressed their no confidence in this government for its failure and anti-people activities," he said. The BNP leader said the demand of the people for adequate supply of water, power and gas

order situation has also been manifested in the hartal. He said the government should pave the way of holding a midterm election by stepping down, if it has minimum re-

and improvement of law and

spect to people's verdict. The BNP secretary general condemned police attack on pro-hartal activists at Mouchak, Mirpur, Pallabi, Postogola and other parts of the city during the hartal hours and demanded immediate release of the party activists.

## Arrest warrant against Benazir

LAHORE, July 16: An accountability court here today issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto, court officials said, report agencies

The warrant was issued by a two-judge accountability bench of the Lahore High Court as Benazir, accused in a corruption case filed by the government, failed to comply with summons to appear before the court, they

Benazir, who is in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has been ordered to appear in court on July 27. She is accused of failing to declare some of her assets when she filed her election papers prior to the February 1997 elections.

Although Benazir could be arrested when she returns to Pakistan, it seems unlikely given that she has not been arrested on previous warrants.

## Flood situation in Tripura

worsens

AGARTALA, July 16: The flood situation in different parts of Tripura deteriorated further following incessant rains, reports PTI.

incessant rains for the last five days inundated many lowlying areas and all the major rivers — Deo, Juri and Manu in north. Howrah in West and Gumti, Feni, Muhuri in South were still flowing above the danger marks, officials said. Thousands of people still

remained marooned in Udaipur and Belonia districts. JS body reviews dev projects of

A meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Women and Children Affairs Ministry was held at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday with committee president Dr MS Akbar in the chair, reports

The meeting reviewed the function of Jatiya Mahila Sangstha and discussed about its various development pro-It emphasised on recruiting

ers for improvement of various training programmes of the Sangstha. It also laid emphasis on renovation of the Office building of the organisation and construc-

tion of a new building of its

own, if necessary.

#### such a capability,' and 10 years in the case of Iraq. Arguing that Washington

DPRK, Iran, Iraq growing fast

may be in the dark about covert left open the question of how far along North Korea and Iran might be now.

Chaired by former defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the Commission spent six months studying the threat based on what Rumsfeld called 'unprecedented access to the most sensitive and highly classified' US intelligence data.

"As surprising as it may seem, because of compartmentation in the intelligence world, we had access to information ... that most of our briefers have not," he told a news conference. The Commission said China

and Russia each posed a threat to US national security as big exporters of ballistic missile technologies, including to US antagonists such as Iran. The panel's timelines for an

intercontinental ballistic

threat from a country other

than Russia, China and North

Korea were shorter than those

as a ballistic threat to US reported to Congress in March by the Central Intelligence Agency, CIA Director George Tenet said in a letter to key

lawmakers on Wednesday. But Tenet embraced the panel's findings, saying they would inspire 'healthy debate' sharpen thinking about the missile speedups that would come from foreign technology transfer.

"Foreign assistance is not a wild card," Rumsfeld said. "It is a fact of our relaxed post cold-cold war world" of liberalised export controls and in-creased educational and scien-

tific swaps among other things.
The Commission found Stalinist North Korea had deployed its No Dong medium-range bal-listic missile, capable of flying 800 miles (1.300 kms) and threatening Japan and South

The panel said North Korea's current effort to develop a longer-range missile called the Taepo Dong 2 could put at risk western US soil in an arc extending northeast from Phoenix, Arizona to Madison,

### 15000 rtd Gurkha soldiers stage protest against British govt

KATHMANDU, July 16: Over 15,000 retired Gurkha soldiers and their families demonstrated today over the treatment by their former employer the British government, reports Led by 79-year-old Victoria

Cross (VC) winner Tul Bahadur

Pun Magar, the protesters

chanted slogans against the

British government and listed demands they claim as their entitlement for serving the British crown. "We, the British Gurkhas gave blood and sweat to the

British empire but in return we got only misery and pain," the angry ex-soldiers shouted. "We will continue our struggle until our demands are met.

chanted the protesters who at

for the British embassy where

one point, formed a human The demonstration was organised by the Gurkha ex-servicemen organisation. The demonstrators headed

six delegates handed over an ultimatum letter to British ambassador L B Smith. "We have given a letter to the British ambassador to remind the British and the Nepalese governments to sit down for a dialogue to solve our problems,

secretary of the organisation told AFP. "The British government must face reality and fulfil our

Yam Bahadur Gurung, general

demands," Gurung added. "If our demands are not met by August or September, we will surround the British embassy," he said.

### Indian lawmaker carries weapons into parliament

NEW DELHI, July 16: An unruly opposition lawmaker who was thrown out of India's parliament was found to have been armed with two knives and a gun, a newspaper reported today, reports AP.

The Hindustan Times said doctors discovered the weapons as they treated Anand Mohan for minor injuries he received in a scuffle with guards as they ejected him from parliament on Tuesday. Anand was protesting the Speaker's decision not to introduce a bill that would have set aside a third of the federal parliamentary seats for women. The bill had been derailed by other protests.

The Times said the weapons discovery was reported to the parliament Speaker, and authorities were reviewing security measures. It was not clear whether Mohan would face cen-Dozens of legislators in the

parliament have links with

criminals, and some of them, including Mohan, have criminal records. Politicians are often accused of using their powerful positions to slow or derail cases against them. Mohan, a member of the small opposition Rashtriya Janata Party, is from the northern state of Bihar, which

is plagued by violent crime.

Mohan once conducted a par-

liamentary campaign from prison and went on to win. He has been linked to cases ranging from arson to murder. New AG

From Page 1 Attorney General from December 1972 to May 1976.

He was a delegate from Bangladesh in the seminar on 'model maritime code' held in Bangkok in 1981-82 and wrote the part of the report relating to jurisdiction of admiralty court. He is the author of the book

titled 'Constitutional Law of

Bangladesh' which is consid-

ered as the most authentic ref-

erence book on constitutional

interpretations.

### Wisconsin. Pakistan calls for emergency session of OIC FMs on

N-sanctions ISLAMABAD, July 16: Pakistan has called on the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to convene an emergency session of foreign ministers over the nuclear sanctions against Islamabad, a minister said today, reports AFP.

Raja Zafarul Haq, Minister

for Religious Affairs, said on re-

turn from visits to Iran and

Saudi Arabia that the secretariat of the 55-nation OIC would consult member states on the proposal, the state-run television reported. He said Pakistan has called for the session to muster Islamic support to counter the

impact of the sanctions im-

posed after its nuclear tests in

May in retaliation to the Indian nuclear detonations. Iran, the current OIC chairman, and Saudi Arabia, where the organisation is based, have supported the Pakistani pro-

posal, the minister said.

## ROK investment

From Page 1 epitomised in the construction of Bangabandhu bridge over the river Jamuna in which Korea also played a part. Hundai, a Korean construction company, was the main contractor of the

bridge. During the meeting, they discussed matters of mutual in terests which lasted for nearly

Later, Shin held a meeting

half an hour.

with the acting foreign secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed at his chamber in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ahmed briefed Shin on the achievement of the present government in the past two years.

He also spoke about the tension

generated in the sub-continent

due to the nuclear tests con-

ducted by India and Pakistan and the efforts made by Bangladesh to ease it. Korea assured that it would consider Bangladesh's candidature for non-permanent seat of UN Security Council for the year 2000. The election will be

held next year. Ahmed told newsmen. Shin arrived here last night on a three-day visit. Korean ambassador in Bangladesh Han Tae-Kyu and ATM Nazrul Islam

## Foreign Affairs were present.

DG (Far East) of the Ministry of

DMCH. Pro-hartal workers hurled a cracker at a police officer's vehicle during the chase and counter-chase. None was, however, injured. Police lobbed several rounds of tear gas shells when a hand bomb was hurled

At a later stage, during the

clashes the pickets surrounded police in riot gear and brick batted them heavily. Fourteen policemen were injured in the incident, police sources said.

at about 10.30 am.

Police then used riot car and lobbed several rounds of tear gas shells to restore order in the area. At least 30 people were picked up from the spot, police

Clashes between pro-hartal

BNP supporters and Awami

League-backed anti -hartal activists took place in Motijheel area. Some minor clashes between pro and anti hartal groups also took place in Farmgate. Mahakhali, Mirpur and Demra areas. Some vehicles without passengers and under police protec-

tion were seen moving around in Mahakhali, Farmgate, Bangla Motor, Shahbagh, Topkhana and Gulistan areas during the hartal period. Two persons, Dulal Miah

and Qaiyum, were stabbed when they tried to resist damaging rickshaws at Dholaipar and Jatrabari. They were admitted to DMCH.

### Hartal From Page 1