

### Cooperation sought to prevent environmental degradation

A two-day international conference on water and environment ended in the city on Sunday underlining the need for a national plan for sustainable water resources development and management, reports UNB.

The conference that focused on the problem of surface and ground water management, arsenic contamination and desertification syndrome in Bangladesh also called for regional and global cooperation to prevent environmental degradation and save the people from health hazards.

Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) and the US-based International Farakka Committee (IFC) jointly organised the conference. It was inaugurated on Saturday by Water Resources Minister Abdur Razak at IEB auditorium.

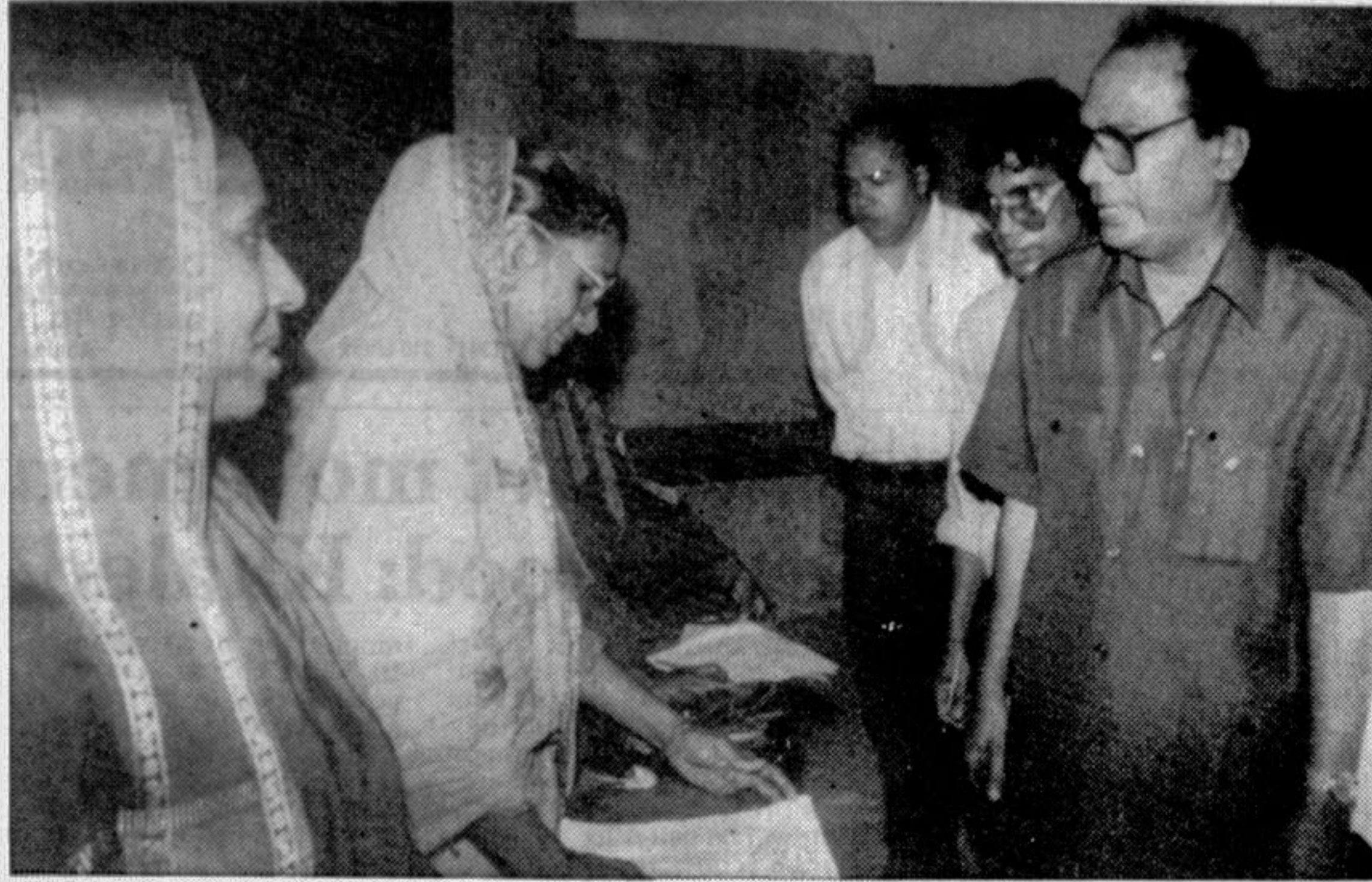
Experts pointed out the withdrawal of the Ganges water upstream during the dry season

causes shortage of surface water for agriculture, industry and household use, affects public health in the eco-system, flora and fauna and navigability, and reduces fish production.

They emphasised that fair share and augmentation of the dry season flow of trans-boundary rivers should be ensured and water quality preserved. They also stressed free flow of information regarding implementation of the Ganges water sharing agreement.

The conference recommended implementation of the proposed Ganges and Brahmaputra barrages and formulation of National Water Management Plan (NWMP).

They said domestic, industrial and agro-chemical wastes are causing deterioration of surface water quality while lead contamination following black smoke emission from vehicles is affecting the food chain and public health.



Chief Election Commissioner Md Abu Hena visited a polling centre at Kashipur in Barisal during the by-election yesterday. — Star photo



Presence of voters was thin at the Nabajagaron Kashipur polling centre during the by-election in the Barisal-5 constituency yesterday. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

## HERE and THERE

### ADAB

Non-government organisations (NGOs) have decided to launch relief and rehabilitation activities alongside the government programmes in case of further deterioration of the present flood situation, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting of ADAB, the coordination body of the country's NGOs, yesterday.

Chaired by ADAB Director Shamsul Huda, the meeting was attended by 49 representatives of 42 NGOs, including BRAC, Proshika, CCDB, Caritas, CARE-Bangladesh, OXFAM and World Vision.

However, the meeting observed that although the flood has inflicted sufferings on the poor people, the situation is not still serious.

### Zoological Society of Bangladesh

The Zoological Society of Bangladesh (ZSB) has started to compile a directory of zoologists in Bangladesh, according to a press release of the society, reports BSS.

All zoologists have been requested to send their names, mailing addresses, fields of specialisation, photo and educational information by August 31 to the general secretary of the Society in the Department of Zoology, Dhaka University. For further information, zoologists have been requested to contact the society, reports BSS.

### Body recovered in Sylhet

SYLHET, July 20: The villagers today recovered the body of a young man who was shot dead by police at a remote village Turang under Companyganj thana two days ago.

The dead was identified as Tajul Islam alias Taju, 22, son of Alfu Miah of village Turang. The villagers handed over the body to the Companyganj thana, official source said.

Police sent the body to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College for autopsy.

A police team headed by Sub-Inspector Abul Kalam went to the border village Turang, about 15-km off the thana headquarters for nabbing some accused in a case at about 8 pm Friday.

Then a group of villagers gheraoed the policemen, suspecting them as dacoits. They swooped on the police with lethal weapons, police alleged and said that, the Sub-Inspector and four constables sustained injuries.

On the next day, a police official informed that the police had to fire seven rounds of blank shots to disperse the 'unruly' mob. Another police team also came under attack the next day when it went to the village, the source added.

### Task force to make complete list of tribal refugees

CHITTAGONG, July 20: A meeting of the Task Force on Tribal Refugees Affairs today decided to make a complete list of the refugees — both repatriated and domestic refugees — for their proper rehabilitation, reports BSS.

Presided over by the task force Chairman Dipankar Talukdar, MP, the meeting was attended by Bir Bahadur, MP, Commissioner of Chittagong division Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain, Brigadier of Khagrachhari Zone Mohammed Ali, Deputy Commissioners of Rangamati, Bandarban, and Khagrachhari Hill Districts, and Jana Sanghati Samiti leaders Sudhasindhu Khisa and Bakul Chakma.

The meeting reviewed the progress of the on-going rehabilitation programmes undertaken by the government.

The meeting, as per decision of the previous meeting, decided to prepare a final list of the domestic tribal refugees of August 31.

The next meeting of the task force will be held next month at Bandarban Hill District.

## Speakers tell discussion on Col Taher Military training should be mandatory

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh should have a mass defence force with a small techno-based regular force for providing military training to people to effectively protect the country's sovereignty.

This was underscored by participants at a discussion on "The Question of National Defence" and Colonel Taher's Thoughts: Subcontinental Perspective" held at the TSC auditorium of Dhaka University yesterday.

Referring to Colonel Taher's thoughts and concern at the national defence policy, they said military training should be mandatory for people, and defence expenditure must be curtailed.

Cuba fearing a stiff and fierce mass-resistance as all the Cubans have been given military training to form a civil defence initiative," he said.

Comparing the defence policy propagated by Colonel Taher with the Cuban experience, Lawrence said Taher was



Demanding fresh trial of the killing of Colonel Taher, the speakers called upon all to come forward for implementing his ideals for people's emancipation.

Organised by Colonel Taher Sangsad to commemorate 22nd death anniversary of the valiant freedom fighter Colonel Abu Taher, the discussion was chaired by Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury.

Taher's younger brother and a teacher of Dhaka University Dr Anwar Hossain presented the keynote paper at the discussion. Lawrence Lifschultz, an American journalist and author of a book on Taher, Awami League leader Amir Hossain Amu, economist Anur Mulhamad, Major General (ret'd) Syed Mohammad Ibrahim Beer Protik, and Haider Akbar Khan Rano took part in the discussion.

Lawrence Lifschultz said small countries should adopt a civilian based resistance system under the guidance of a modern, small and organised army to face alien invaders.

"US did not venture to invade

justified to think it in a modern way and the third world countries should take the policy to satisfy their security concern."

Amir Hossain Amu said the killing of Taher was a part of the conspiracy against the Liberation War.

He said the country had been turned into a Neo-Pakistan following the August 15, 1975 killings and the razzakars managed to take control of the society with the help of the rulers of post-75 regimes.

"A number of freedom fighters were killed during General Zia's regime only to silence the dissident voice and continue autocratic misrule," Amu said.

"We are being defeated again and again as the pro-liberation forces are still not united. But

the anti-liberation forces are united in the country," he added.

Major General (Ret'd) Ibrahim said Bangladesh cannot ensure its security by developing its army in a traditional way. "We need to develop human resources to use it for security purposes if we want to face potential threat from the neighbours," he said.

Anu Mohammad said Bangladesh had to suffer a series of setbacks, debacles and coups as the political leaders failed to lead the country properly during the liberation war.

"It is a tragedy that Taher was hanged by Zia whom he saved by taking a grave risk," he added.

Expressing concern, he said defence allocations has alarmingly increased in Asia and some African countries.

"Military expenditure in underdeveloped countries are 25 times higher than their educational expenses which suggests a balanceless military system posing threat to their own security as a whole," he said.

Referring to a statistics, Dr Anwar Hossain said at least 74000 crore US dollars have been spent for military expenses across the world in 1997 with which 920 Jamuna Bridges can be built.

He said defence expenditure has been multiplied by at least 13 per cent this year compared to the previous year in Bangladesh.

Dr Hossain called for introduction of military education in colleges and universities.

He also urged the government to make constitutional provisions banning coups and to make the parliamentary committee for defence active to streamline defence policy of the country.

## New Broom Pledges Clean-up After Exams Fiasco

Patrick Mwanza writes from Blantyre

Malawi's education system is in crisis, plagued by a high rate of examination failures, indiscipline and widespread cheating, reports Gemini News Service.

The 1996-97 school year produced the worst-ever results in school-leaving exams. Out of 28,328 candidates, 20,000 failed.

At least 6,000 of the failures were disqualified for cheating, many for taking reference materials into the exam room.

The poor results have cost Catherine Chimwenje her job as executive director of the Malawi National Examinations Board. The government refused her a second five-year term.

Her replacement, Meria Nowa-Phiri, has described her major challenge as the fight against cheating.

"As a nation we must all rise up in arms against cheating if we are to restore the standards

we said. "We will make life almost impossible for those who want to cheat."

Regarding the overall situation in education, he conceded that standards had fallen badly over the past decade. But he urged people to regard last year's results not as the worst in history, "but as a sign that we are doing something."

Some candidates reportedly committed suicide after failing their final exams. In one case, a student who thought he had failed said in his suicide note that he felt ashamed because his mother had laboured to find the school fees. It was discovered later that he had passed.

The social services ministry says that indiscipline is on the rise and that increasing numbers of young people are abusing drugs and alcohol and experimenting with sex.

Among more than 100 cases of indiscipline reported in secondary schools by the police,

that a growing number of private secondary schools has contributed to the problems. "There is nothing taught in these schools," said Mpinganjira.

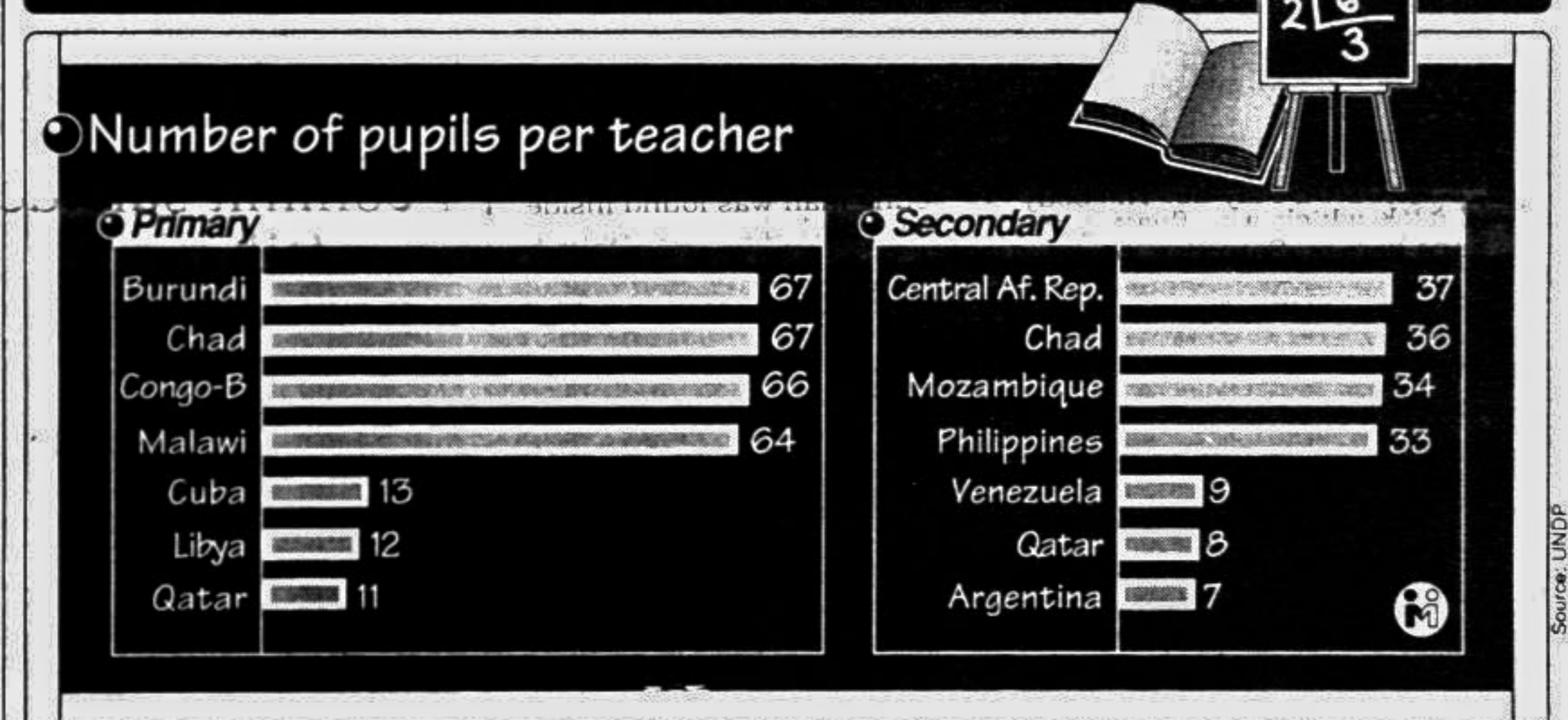
Teachers are often poorly motivated, with many graduates taking up teaching only after failing to get jobs elsewhere.

"Although I was teaching, my heart was not there. I taught just to get paid at the end of the month," said Bob Jamu, a history teacher who now works in banking.

This phenomenon is likely to continue since job creation in the economy has been very low, according to labour experts. From 1990 to 1996, between 15,000 and 35,000 jobs were generated annually in the formal sector, while 145,000 people a year joined the labour force. The labour ministry puts the total workforce at four million, but says there are fewer than one million jobs.

In addition, teachers some-

## Class divisions



of our education system," she said. "We need to find out how well the syllabus is being covered, what teaching materials are available to pupils and how prepared pupils are before examinations. Without knowing why and how pupils cheat, we cannot effectively address the problem."

Chimwenje placed some of the blame on teachers, emphasising that the board had ensured that all packages of exam papers had been properly sealed. "We do not know if the teachers sold the papers or not," she said.

Education Minister Brown Mpinganjira pointed out: "There are teachers who have been helping students cheat. I know for a fact that pupils from well-to-do families take teachers' drinking, and the pupils pass with flying colours."

But he also cast doubts on the board's security procedures. "We are plugging all the holes,"

one involved the death of a pupil in a fight which broke out after boys raped three girls from the school they had beaten in a football match, while another concerned the charging of 97 pupils with arson after a teacher's house burnt down.

Mpinganjira urged parents to take more responsibility for the moulding of their children's characters: "We want teachers to take care of the academic life of these pupils and the parents to look after behaviour."

Fed up with indiscipline and poor examination results, a group of parents — with government's blessing — has formed the Malawi Parents' Union. Its coordinator, James Chapita, says it will work closely with education institutions, but admits that "parents and guardians are equally to blame for ignoring and neglecting their role in teaching children good manners."

Government officials believe

times have to wait weeks, or even months, for their salaries. Inevitably, they are forced to take their work to make ends meet.

Four years ago, the government set out to improve education, introducing free primary schooling in September 1994 in an effort to boost literacy levels, estimated at about 40 per cent. Enrolment rocketed from 1.9 million to 3.2 million, putting heavy pressure on teachers.

To pay for primary expansion, says the deputy vice-chancellor of the University of Malawi, Professor Brown Chimpamba, his institution has experienced funding cut-backs which limit its ability to perform effectively.

"The university now has to generate more of its funding and intends to privatise most of its non-teaching services, such as catering, housing and maintenance. Staff will also be cut.

## Govt has taken up various religious programmes

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman yesterday said the opposition has no scope to undermine the contribution of the Awami League in spreading the ideals of Islam, reports BSS.

Addressing a function at the Islamic Foundation in the city Zillur Rahman said the present government has taken up various programmes to spread awareness of Islam in the country's schools, colleges and madrasahs. Besides, the Islamic Foundation has also taken up elaborate programmes to establish Islamic values under the present government.

Presided over by State Minister for Religious Affairs Maulana Nurul Islam, the function was also addressed by Director General of the Islamic Foundation Maulana Abdul Awal. A number of prominent Islamic thinkers participated in it.

The minister distributed prizes among the successful participants of a fortnight-long Islamic cultural competition, organised by the foundation.

Referring to the contribution of the Awami League to the cause of Islam, the minister said that it was Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who established the Islamic Foundation, selected the site of the Biswa Itjema in Tongi, established the Madrasah Education Board and gave the site of the Kakrail Mosque for the Tablig Jamaat.

## British HC donates computer to Dwip Unnayan Sangstha

British High Commission to Bangladesh has donated a computer set to Dwip Unnayan Sangstha (DUS), reports UNB.

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh David Walker handed over the new computer, printer, software and some accessories to DUS in the city yesterday, said a press release.

The new computer replaced the old and outdated one, also donated by the British High Commission to improve their project monitoring system and update their financial records.

DUS, a Hatia Island-based NGO, is working with the poor and vulnerable groups since 1985.

## Bangabandhu Murder case Verbatim Text of Cross Examination of the Last Prosecution Witness

Cross examination of the last prosecution witness in Bangabandhu murder case, ASP Abdul Kahar Akand, by defence lawyers was completed on Monday, reports UNB.

Following are the excerpts of the examination by Advocate Abdul Kaiyoom, junior to Advocate T M Akbar, defence lawyer for accused Lt Col (ret'd) Muhiuddin:

Q: PW-27 Harunur Rashid didn't tell you "I heard firing from small arms".

A: He didn't say about small arms. He said, "I heard huge firing".

Q: "At the same time sound of shelling by canon was also heard," he also didn't tell you this.

A: He didn't mention anything about canon. He mentioned only huge firing.

Q: This witness didn't say that after one or two hours the canons were hooked and taken to Ganobhaban.

A: No, he didn't say this. He said that the canons were taken to Ganobhaban after a long time.

Q: This witness also didn't tell you that the canons were taken from Ganobhaban after one hour at the order of Major Muhiuddin.

A: No, he didn't tell me.

Q: He didn't tell you that he (witness) was in Papa Battery.

A: No, he didn't tell.

Q: He too didn't tell you: "Then we realised that the officers bluffed us".

A: No, he didn't say.

Q: PW-33 M Selimuddin didn't tell you about anyone named Ghani.

A: No, he didn't say.

Examination by Advocate Anwar Zahid Bhuiyan, junior to Advocate Abdur Razzak Khan, defence lawyer for accused Hon Capt (ret'd) Abdul Wahab Joardar:

Q: PW-48 Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) A K Khandakar didn't tell you: One thing was cleared in this meeting — Major Noor, Major Dalim, Major Ferooz, Major Rashid, Major Shahriyar and others who were involved in the killings and conspiracy — they must be brought to book. Apart from these officers, none of the entire army was involved in the killings and conspiracy.

A: The version was not the same, but the essence is like this. He said that whole army was not involved in it.

Q: Did PW-11 ALD Bashir Ahmed tell you that Major Noor

asked one Subedar to check whether all were finished?

A: The witness here is saying only Subedar. But in his deposition he mentioned the person as Subedar or Subedar Major.

Q: PW-36 Newaz Ahmed Gorjon told you that he, coming out from his house, saw that the flag at Bangabandhu's residence was hoisted.

A: Yes, he told.

Examination by Advocate Khan Saifur Rahman, defence lawyer for accused Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Ferooz Rahmani:

Q: PW-26 Naik Gunner Jamrul Islam told you that Rashid became commanding officer of 2 Field Artillery after returning from India in March.

A: Yes, he said.

Q: PW-12 ALD Sirajul Haq told you: Ferooz Saheb asked us whether we support monkey or not. We replied that we don't support monkey."

A: Yes.

Q: PW-35 Subedar Major Anisul Haq Chowdhury told you: It was about 5 am. Al Mia, the driver of Major Rashid, came to my house by a car and said Sheikh Mujib has been killed and martial-law imposed in the country.

A: Yes, he said.

Q: PW-30 Sheikh Abdur Rahman told you: ... it was also announced that army took over the power.

A: Yes, he said.

Q: PW-27 Havildar Harunur Rashid told you: ... it was announced that army took over the power under the leadership of Khandakar Mushtaque Ahmed.

A: Yes, he said.

Q: Is driver Al Mia a witness in this case?

A: No, he is in abroad.

Q: What document the serial number 33 of seizure list of charge-sheet of the case contains?

A: Recorded tape (spool number 2067) of speeches of Major Dalim and Khandakar Mushtaque Ahmed and different announcements and orders read out by Sarkar Kabiruddin after the killing of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 15/8/75. Besides, a queue sheet signed by Ashraful Haq on 28/8/75.

With this, more than a year-long deposition and cross examination of all the 61 prosecution witnesses in the Bangabandhu murder case were completed at Dhaka District and Sessions Judge Court.



Big potholes have developed on the Bishwa Road near Maddhy Badda in the city due to incessant rains that continued for few days. — Star photo