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## Their homes shattered, hopes lie in finding work

By Naimul Haq, back from Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi

Hundreds of thousands of flood-hit people in Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi districts wait to rebuild their homes shattered by floods but cannot afford building materials.

All the kutcha houses in the five thanas of Chapainawabganj and Godagari thana of Rajshahi were completely damaged, throwing thousands of families under the open sky.

According to local officials, there are some six lakh people in the Chapainawabganj and 80,000 in Godagari, of whom over 90 per cent was affected.

During visits to parts of the devastated areas, the affected people were found collecting bamboo, palm leaves and other house building materials from open fields. They are very hard to find though.

"I have lost everything. My only valuable property -- a bed and an almira -- were also washed away by the fierce current of the flood," lamented a 54-year-old Shahjadi at Chapainawabganj's Chaklampur village. "I have no money to build another house."

In the remote char areas, the stories were similar. "I had a lovely home. It cost me a lot of effort to build the house. But it took a few minutes to vanish," said Raju Mia in deep despair.

"I have no savings to rebuild my house. The small savings I had were used to cover day to day expenses during the two and a half months of flooding. I am now completely broke and badly in need of work."

Raju is living in the open with wife and his four children in char Durlabpur.

In Godagari, many people who had taken shelter in the Rajshahi-Chapainawabganj have returned home. But scarcity of house building materials has not let thousands of them start life afresh. Lack of work does not give them any hope for the near future.

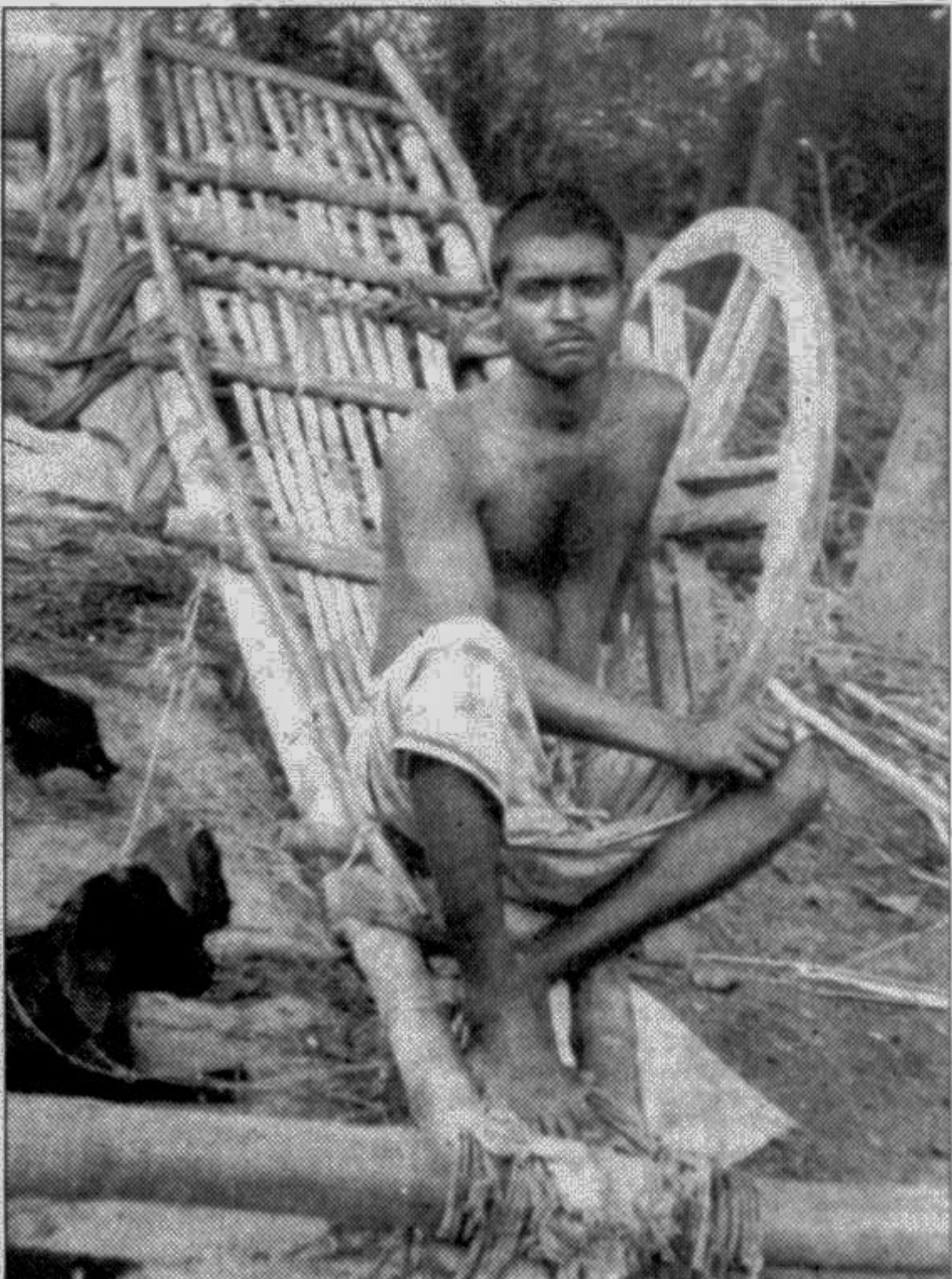
Many people cannot afford buying bamboo, palm leaves, steelwire, CI Sheet, nails and

other house building materials to build new houses.

"The flood has crippled us. It would take a long time to rebuild the economy because people in this part of the country are not used to floods. Those who lost property have to treble their income to adjust to usual life," said Abdul Wadud.

Chairman of Maharajpur union in Chapainawabganj.

The last time the district faced such a devastating flood was way back in 1938. According to local journalists, teachers and mango traders, the 1988 and 1991 floods did not cause much damage in Chapainawabganj.



WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS! A cart-puller in Shibganj thana of Chapainawabganj waits for work which is not there. Thousands like him have been rendered jobless due to recent flooding that has virtually stopped economic activity.

—Star photo by Naimul Haq

## Film star Jasim passes away

By Staff Correspondent

Popular film star Jasim died of heart attack at the Suhrawardy Hospital yesterday noon. He was 48.

According to the Film Stars' Association sources, A K M Jasimuddin, fondly called Jasim, was rushed to the hospital following complaints of chest pain.

Jasim started working as a villain in the seventies and later elevated himself to a hero. A *namaj-e-janaza* was held at the FDC that was attended by a large number of people.

His body will be laid to rest after Juma prayers today, the Film Stars' Association sources said.

Jasim was born in Dhaka in 1950 and had his debut in 1971 as a villain in 'Rangbar'. He acted in more than 200 films and produced a number of films.

He married popular heroine Sucharita and then Nasreen. He, however, separated with Sucharita. He left behind his wife Nasreen, three sons and a host of relatives and well wishers to mourn his death.

UNB reports, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, and BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday expressed their deep shock at the death of Jasim.

## BCL factions trade gunshots at Tejgaon Polytech Instt

By Staff Correspondent

Gunshots rocked the Dhaka Polytechnic Institute campus as two factions of BCL, locked in a gunfight at Tejgaon in the city yesterday afternoon.

No casualties were reported in the incident, police said, adding they picked up more than 20 young men from the spot suspecting them to be outsiders.

Witnesses said both the groups locked in the clash following a dispute over seats of residential halls at about 2 pm. The feuding groups chased each other, exchanged gunshots and exploded crackers during an hour long clash.

Police raided Latif hall of the institute soon after the incident and recovered two firearms, seven bullets and five crackers.

## Maoists kill 16 policemen in Madhya Pradesh

By Staff Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Oct 8: Suspected Maoist rebels killed 16 policemen with landmines today in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, United News of India (UNI) reported, reports AFP.

The news agency said 14 of the injured were in a critical condition.

## Zillur

By Staff Correspondent

of all political killings for the last 23 years, but the previous governments ignored their demand.

"So, Begum Khaleda Zia and her party should extend aloof cooperation in carrying out proper investigation into the killing of former President Ziaur Rahman," he told the meeting.

He said, No conspiracy of any vested quarter can foil the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu and those involved in the jail killing.

Organised by Sonargaon thana unit of Awami League, the meeting was presided over by its president Abul Hasnat.

Among others, AKM Shamim Osman MP, Shegupta Yasmin MP and district Awami League president Prof. Nazma Rahman were present.

## Bangabandhu Murder Case

### Taheruddin Thakur was a victim of circumstances: Defence Counsel

A defence counsel in Bangabandhu Murder Case yesterday said Taheruddin Thakur was in confinement at Bangabhaban and just carried out orders becoming a victim of the circumstances, reports UNB.

Claiming that Thakur was innocent, defence counsel Sharfuddin Mukul said Thakur was a politician and for that he became a state minister and continued to discharge his duties during Mushtaque regime.

After the end of Mushtaque era, the counsel contended that Thakur became inactive in politics. He didn't join the Democratic League of Mushtaque, the BNP of Zia or Gano Forum of Dr Kamal Hossain.

Thakur was a very small fry as a state minister and when all the big ministers like Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, Mohammadul-Lah, Abdul Mannan and other senior ministers along with the top brasses of the armed forces joined hands with Mushtaque, he has got nothing to do, the lawyer said.

"He virtually became a dead man after the killing of Bangabandhu," Mukul told the court concluding his argument.

The counsel said the country was virtually under military rule on August 15 and army was in full command and there was no movement of civilians.

"Either the country was ruled by Mushtaque in the name of the generals or by the

generals in the name of Mushtaque," the lawyer said and urged the court to judge the situation of that time and to see whether Thakur had power with discretion or by option.

Mukul said armed forces chiefs were at Bangabhaban for three days for drafting the proclamation of Martial Law and none of them were in confinement rather they were controlling their respective forces and state affairs from there.

Pointing to some illegalities in the investigation, Mukul said PW-43, Prof Korshed Alam, who named Thakur for hatching a conspiracy, was examined long after the confessional statement given by Thakur.

"Witness cannot be collected to corroborate a confession," Mukul said citing a judgement.

Referring to Thakur's confessional statement, Mukul said he gave this statement under pressure and coercion. "The statement embodied in the so-called confession goes uncorroborated. The statement was not true and proper," he added.

Pointing to some other anomalies and discrepancies in the statements of the recording magistrate and the IO, Mukul said, "IO has probably lied in the court."

Citing a judgement, the lawyer said Thakur's confinement in the CID office during



The 30 million-taka electronic scoreboard is in the final stages of erection at the Bangabandhu Stadium. The formal inauguration will be held on 12 October.

—Star photo by Anisur Rahman

## BNP stages demonstration at dist HQs

By Staff Correspondent

Main opposition BNP yesterday staged demonstrations across the country to protest the filing of 'false cases' against Begum Khaleda Zia and other leaders and workers of the party and arrest of three political leaders, reports APB.

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the rank of assistant IG. Superintendent of Police (SP) in Faridpur Mujibur Rahman came to Dhaka, SP of Khulna Abdul Mabud to Faridpur, SP Chapainawabganj Abdur Rahim to Special Branch, Dhaka, Commandant of Range Reserve Force in Sylhet Kazi Mujibur Rahman got posting as SP of Sylhet and Nader Begh was posted as RRF Commandant, according to the changes.

"This order took immediate effect," said an official, adding that Osman Ali Khan, a senior official, was made an Officer on Special Duty (OSD).

Eight more senior police officers would go on retirement soon after 25 years of service, the official said.

Earlier, 12 senior police officials, nine of whom came from the Army, were given retirement on October 6 as they completed their 25 years of service.

## Businessman

By Staff Correspondent

Quader was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries after half an hour.

Police and family sources said a group of terrorists demanded a toll of Tk 10 lakh from the businessman a week ago.

Protesting the incident, agitated businessmen in Agrabad area put up barricade on Sheikh Mujib road from 8 am to 1 pm today and damaged at least 20 vehicles.

Most of the business houses of the area remained closed during the period.

The barricade was withdrawn after assurance from the police authorities to arrest the killers.

A case was filed with the police and two people were arrested in this connection.

## Rouf Chy vows to fight defaulters

By Staff Correspondent

FBCCI presidential candidate M A Rouf Choudhury has urged the government to recover money from top loan defaulters and distribute it among the small entrepreneurs.

He said that around Tk 8,000 crore had been stuck up with 25 top loan defaulters, speaking at a projection meeting last night at the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) Auditorium.

"If the money is released and distributed among 8,000 small entrepreneurs, they would create at least 40 lakh jobs in the country," Rouf Choudhury said.

Calling default culture a "cancer" to the society, he vowed to help government recover the money from loan defaulters if elected to head the national chamber.

A large number of businessmen and association leaders attended the meeting. Presided over by Nazrul Islam, president, Bangladesh Optical Manufacturers' Association.

Claiming himself as Mr. clean as far as bank loan defaults are concerned, Rouf Choudhury, Chairman of MARC Group of Companies and current president of Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners' and Vanaspati Manufacturers' Association, pledged to fight corruption, government bureaucracy and toll collection in the business community.

Announcing his five-point election agenda, he said his prime objective is to bring economic development in the country through providing necessary help to the business community.

He urged the voters to elect honest, efficient and business-friendly people as their leaders.

Rouf Choudhury, however did not declare any panel of EC members in his support saying, "I do not believe in panel system." He said his opponent was still putting pressure on him to retreat from the race. "But I would not surrender to any quarters, and always uphold the norms of democracy."

FBCCI, the apex body of the country's business community is going to elect its new president, vice-president and a 30-member executive committee on October 15. This year the president would be elected from the Association Group while the vice-president from the Chamber Group.

The other presidential candidate is Abdul Awal Mintoo, chairman of Multi-mode group of companies. He, however, has declared a 15-member panel for the EC.

Rouf Choudhury also threw a challenge to his opponent for a public debate and alleged that his sole opponent was being reluctant.

Talking to journalists before the meeting, he said that a certain quarter had been trying to stop the election and thwart the democratic process. "But they have failed and the elections would be held on schedule."

## FBCCI polls

By Staff Correspondent

"Strange" the objection came from FBCCI President and Chairman of the Arbitration Tribunal Yussuf Abdullah Harun, "one source said, Harun wrote to the Appeal Board to say: 'I have to mention that, according to our records, Neyamattullah Sabu is the president of Bangladesh Dress Makers Association and he is the proper representative of that association.'"

Meanwhile, Manzur Ahmed, a member of the Election Board, resigned alleging manipulation in the voters list. Prior to his resignation, Ahmed also brought his charges to the notice of the Ministry of Commerce.

The ministry on September 7 informed the Election and Appeal Boards that "the committee of Farokul Islam is the only legal executive committee."

## 5 blocks

By Staff Correspondent

Chevron-Texaco for block 9 and Mobil-Petronas for block 11. In addition, the government excluded block 10 from the bidding process saying that decision on this block would be taken later as no company was found as an acceptable bidder. This block was offered to Shell-Cairn in late 1997.

After this announcement, a top executive of US company UNOCAL, which is pursuing an unsolicited Production Sharing Contract (PSC) for Shahbazpur Gas Field in block 10, told the press that the company would get the block. UNOCAL said that it was expecting an invitation to negotiate a contract for the block 10 very soon.

The announcement prompted the government to stop the process temporarily, sources said.

The government offered 15 blocks for exploration under the second round bidding in mid-1997 with plans to award all the blocks in the country by December 15.

However, changes in decisions and efforts to find a big partner for the small Irish company Tullow delayed the bidding process.

At the same time, public outcry against awarding all the blocks to foreign companies and depriving the national exploration company BAPEX had also slowed down the process, sources said.

## LOI issued for Baghabari power project

By Staff Correspondent

The government Wednesday issued a Letter of Intent (LOI) for implementation of the 100 MW gas-based Baghabari Power Project to Midland Power International, the UK subsidiary of the Cinergy Corporation of the USA.

The project was being implemented under the Power Cell of the Energy Ministry and Midland was selected through a bid last year. The project has been delayed due to various issues including allocation of land at Baghabari.

Midland Power's Baghabari Project and Country Director John C Hides said that the company and consortium partner Nishho Iwai were very pleased to be awarded the project LOI and would move forward with the implementation of the project.

"Taslima to get protection, face legal process"

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday (Thursday) categorically said Taslima Nasrin being a citizen would get legal protection and face as well the legal process for hurting the religious sentiment of the people, reports UNB.

"None is above law and Taslima too has to face the law," said Azad responding to reporters' queries about the controversial feminist writer who returned to the country on September 14 after four years of self-exile in Europe.

The Foreign Minister said Taslima should refrain from trying to build up campaign abroad by taking advantage of legal protection here.

Samad Azad yesterday expressed his firm optimism that US President Bill Clinton will visit Bangladesh next year.

"I am sure the visit will take place," he said replying to a question.

Khaleda Zia must show respect to law: Abu Sayeed

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed yesterday urged Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia not to give shelter to the killers of four national leaders, reports BSS.

In a statement Sayeed criticised Begum Zia for describing the jail killing as an incident and said she has presented herself as a protector by trying to downplay the serious offences.

He said that Begum Zia has to show respect to the law and that the law would take its own course.

The state minister said Begum Zia is pursuing heinous tactics like Ziaur Rahman to protect the killers.

He said utterance of words like democracy, human rights, rule of law and justice do not benefit those who had disregarded the Constitution and the rule of law, declared martial law, curbed basic human rights, killed thousands of soldiers and political leaders and activists or put them behind the bars, snatched power through killings, coups and conspiracies.

He said Begum Zia has to answer why her husband, late Ziaur Rahman, had stopped the functioning of the judicial enquiry commission comprising Justice Ahsanuddin Chowdhury, Justice K M Sobhan and Justice Syed Mohammad Hossain constituted to probe the brutal jail killing of four national leaders.

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## PM: Killers to be tried

By Staff Correspondent

visiting Dhamrai. From there, she went to Nawabganj and finally to Dohar to see the condition of the flood affected people.

She addressed spontaneous gatherings of the flood-affected people and gave relief including rice, saree, lungi, baby food and seedlings.

Local people demanded better road communication between the capital and Dohar-Nawabganj.

Hasina said the government is taking steps to improve the communication system of the country and added that this year's flood also severely damaged the roads, bridges and culverts.

"We have a long term plan to connect unions with the thanas and the thanas with the district headquarters and develop a communication network across the country," she added.

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Awami League joint secretary Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, publicity secretary Abdul Mannan, office secretary Abdul Mannan Khan also addressed the meetings.

The prime minister first