

What's on tomorrow...

Inauguration: A photography exhibition by renowned photographer Anwar Hossain will be inaugurated. Venue: Cafeteria of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 5:00 pm.

Founding anniversary: The 18th founding anniversary of Retired Armed Forces Officers' Welfare Association (RAOWA) will be held. Venue: RAOWA office premises on VIP road, DOHS, Mohakhali. Time: 7:30 pm.

Weather

Rain likely

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Khulna and Dhaka divisions in next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged during the period, the Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 33.4 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest 16.8 degree Celsius at Rangamati.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6.10 pm and rises tomorrow at 6.01 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

| City/Town | Temperature in Celsius | Humidity in Percentage |
|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | Max | Min |
| Dhaka | 30.8 | 21.2 |
| Chittagong | 30.2 | 19.4 |
| Rajshahi | 33.0 | 20.5 |
| Khulna | 33.2 | 22.2 |
| Barisal | 31.8 | 20.0 |
| Sylhet | 29.7 | 19.5 |
| Cox's Bazar | 32.5 | 19.6 |
| | Morning | Evening |
| Dhaka | 68 | 67 |
| Chittagong | 82 | 72 |
| Rajshahi | 86 | 75 |
| Khulna | 91 | 74 |
| Barisal | 85 | 80 |
| Sylhet | 79 | 22 |

\$ 180b world water vision adopted

Global body calls for rapid solution to growing water crisis in the world

The World Water Council on Saturday adopted its 180 billion US dollar World Water Vision calling the global community to support the vision for water, life and environment to translate that into action, reports BSS.

The World Water Council adopted this vision at the current Second World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference being hosted at Netherlands. "We call on and count on the assistance, cooperation and collaboration of all organisations, institutions, and ordinary citizens to put into practice the spirit of the World Water Vision," President of the Council Dr Mahmoud Abu-Zeid told the five-day international water policy gathering, the largest ever of its kind, that opened on Friday.

The forum called for rapid solutions to the world's growing water crisis, in which one billion people including Bangladesh lack access to safe drinking water and two billion people lack water for safe sanitation.

Outlining the Vision and Roadmap, World Water Commission Chairman and Vice President of the World Bank Dr Ismail Serageldin recalled the process through which the vision was developed, open, transparent and participatory, with participation of 15,000 people over 15-month period.

The roadmap includes establishment of monitoring systems for the vision into action, stimulating policies for the financing of water development and protection, creation of World Commission on Water, Peace and Security to resolve conflicts by providing third party mediation of shared water disputes, reduce gaps between concerned parties to ensure 'win-win' solutions," he told around 3,500 participants from across the globe.

He said the council will work to ensure adequate policies are in place to replace fear and suspicion with mutual trust, reliability and equity for the poor and disadvantaged should be assured adequate services at affordable costs, he added.

2 BCL workers shot dead, fire kills 3 in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 19: At least six persons were killed and 12 others injured in separate incidents during the last four days, police and Fire Brigade sources said.

Two BCL activists of Tayeb group identified as Nazrul Islam, 23 and Md Yunus 24, were gunned down allegedly by their rivals at Hanifa Pukur Par under Fatikchhari thana at 9 am on Thursday, police said.

They were killed following intra-party rivalry in BCL, Fatikchhari unit.

Three others, including a woman and a minor girl, were killed in two fire incidents at Abul Colony and Rajakali under Chandgaon thana in the city on Friday.

Aklima Begum, 38, was killed and 12 others received burn injuries when a fire broke out at Abul Colony at 7 am on Friday, police said.

The fire was originated from a gas burner and gutted ten dwelling houses, fire Brigade said.

In another incident Janatunnessa, 8, and Khalilur Rahman 25, were roasted alive as their houses at Rajakali caught fire at 12 pm on Friday night.

The origin of fire was yet to be known.

Another person identified as Nurul Alam, 40, was shot dead allegedly by his brother-in-law at West Madarbari Nishipukur Par at 4 pm on Friday, police said.

The killing was a sequel to a family feud, police said.

US, India may sign

From Page 1
driven to his hotel in a bullet-proof limousine through empty streets. Security forces halted all traffic and kept away pedestrians 200 meters from the route taken by his 40-car convoy.

Thousands of armed policemen patrolled the streets, while military helicopters buzzed overhead as Clinton's convoy sped through the highway from the airport to the Maurya Sheraton hotel.

The president had no events on his schedule the first night and said he was glad to have arrived in time for dinner. "I love Indian food," he told reporters on his plane.

Tomorrow, Clinton will fly to Dhaka, capital of neighbouring Bangladesh for a daylong visit, the first by an American president. American businesses are helping Bangladesh tap its vast resources of natural gas.

Clinton will fly back to New Delhi late tomorrow. His five-day tour of India officially begins Tuesday with a ceremonial welcome at the sandstone palace of India's President, KR Narayanan.

On Saturday, Clinton will stop over briefly in Islamabad, capital of Pakistan to meet with Gen Pervez Musharraf, the military ruler of Pakistan, before returning to Washington. BSS adds: India and the United States are expected to

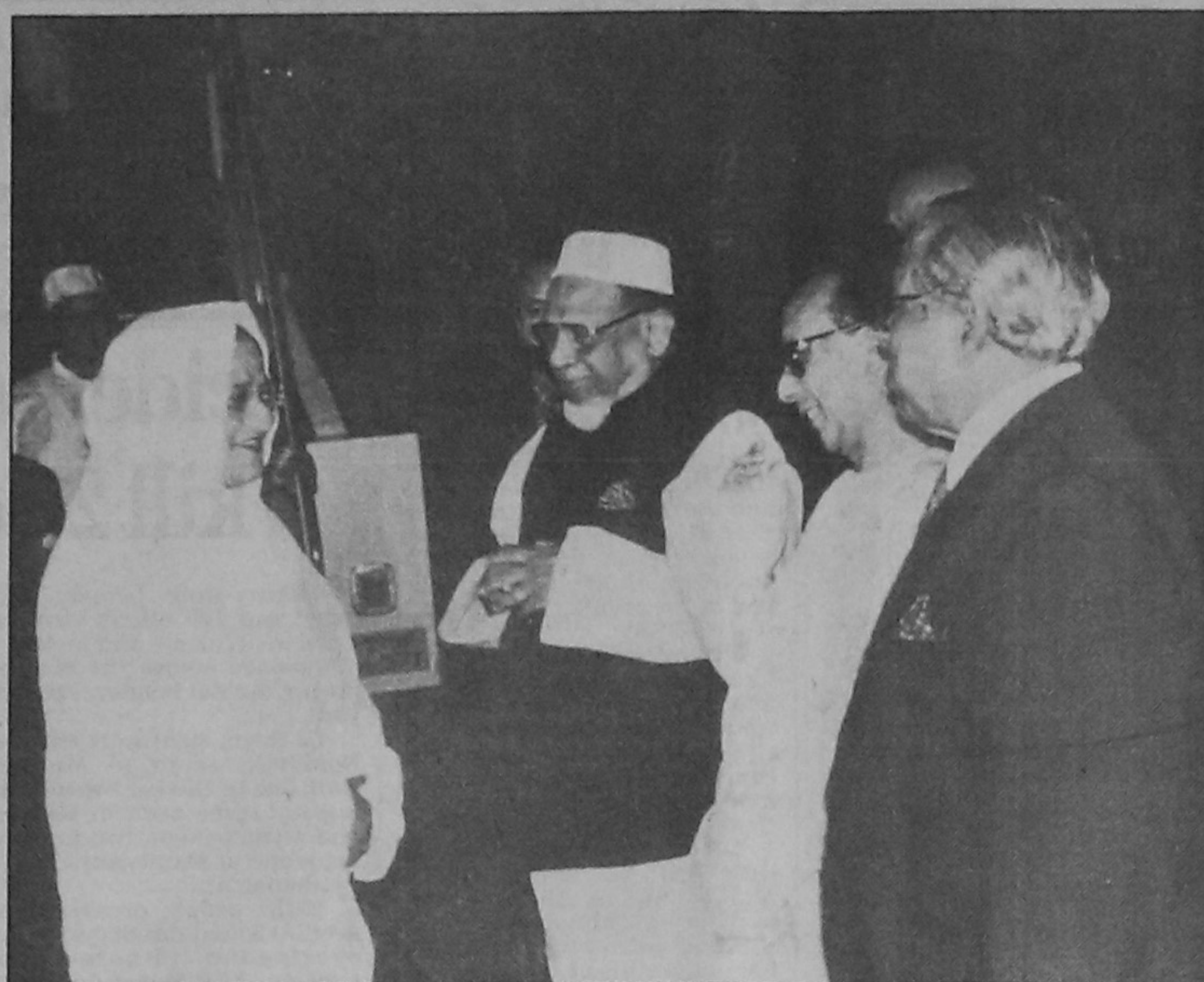
sign three broad agreements to promote bilateral cooperation in the fields of science and technology, energy and information technology during Clinton's visit.

There will be an agreement on science and technology as well as one of energy cooperation. An Indo-US science and technology forum will be set up to enable scientists from both the countries to establish a comprehensive data bank, exchange ideas on technology and joint endeavors in certain fields.

Reuters, says, Clinton will urge India and Pakistan to curb their nuclear programmes and ease long-simmering tensions over Kashmir during his one-week visit to South Asia, US officials said.

"Our view is that a nuclear future is a dangerous future for them and for the world," US National Security Adviser Sandy Berger told reporters on Thursday. "Our ultimate goal would be to persuade them to give up their nuclear programme."

Berger said that Clinton would press India and Pakistan to take four specific steps: joining the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, restraining their nuclear programmes, ceasing to produce fissile material and tightening their export controls.



Ministers received Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at ZIA International Airport on her return home yesterday after performing Hajj in Saudi Arabia. — PID photo



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia hosted a reception for diplomats and politicians on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha at her Minto road official residence on Friday. — Star photo

Khaleda exchanges Eid greetings with diplomats, politicians

Opposition leader Khaleda Zia exchanged Eid greetings with politicians, diplomats, professionals and a cross-section of people at her official residence in the city on March 17, reports UNB.

The BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament hosted a reception for Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Charge d'affaires on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

Party sources said diplomats from USA, UK, Japan, China, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, United Arab Emirates, Switzerland, Sweden, Romania, Poland, France, Pakistan, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Thailand, North Korea, South Korea, Malaysia, Denmark, Germany, Vatican City, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Egypt, Libya, European Commission and European Union attended the reception.

Leaders of the seven-party alliance, including Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad, also met with the opposition leader and exchanged Eid greetings with her. Begum Raushan Ershad MP along with her son Shaad Ershad exchanged Eid greetings with her shortly before noon.

The killing was a sequel to a family feud, police said.

The origin of fire was yet to be known.

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The killing was a sequel to a family feud, police said.

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BCL-JCD clash in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, March 19: At least 15 people were injured in a series of clashes between BCL and JCD activists at Mahilara and Gournadi thana headquarter in the district yesterday and today.

Zahiruddin Swapan, BNP central Asstt. office secretary alleged that BCL activists are responsible for the attacks and ransacking of two shops and two houses at Gournadi thana headquarter. The BCL activists are also reported to have damaged and ransacked two houses at Mahilara yesterday.

Gournadi thana BCL activists alleged that their leaders Saikat Guha and Subrata Guha were injured in the BNP attack on them. Saikat had received stab injuries.

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Dr Razee's death anniversary observed

The 15th anniversary of the death of Dr Alim Al Razee, a renowned lawyer, was observed on Wednesday with due solemnity, reports UNB.

Dr Razee Memorial Council placed wreaths at his Banani graveyard and offered *Fateha* there. Food was distributed among the destitute and orphanage.

A number of educational institutions including Nari Mukti Sangsad and Bangladesh People's League, founded by Dr Razee, separately organised discussion meetings on the life and works of the lawyer.

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Clinton arrives today

From Page 1
the security apparatus and surveillance gear, all food consumables have already been flown to the country.

A communications centre, a replica of the White House Communications Centre, will be operating today from the Bangladesh capital, allowing the US President to talk to any one, anywhere in the world through secured telecommunication links.

The US President's Bangladesh itinerary is packed with programmes. Although Clinton is staying for only 12 hours, itinerary experts say his White House protocol handlers have managed to pack schedules that normally take three days to complete.

Grameen and BRAC
According to well informed sources, Clinton's visit to distant Bangladesh was rooted since he had befriended Yunus when he was Governor of Arkansas. The success of Dr Mohammed Yunus's micro-credit programmes and empowerment of women in Bangladesh and in some other parts of the world won public adoration from both Clinton and Hillary who had been looking forward to a trip to the country to see those.

Dr Yunus, a 1970 graduate from Vanderbilt University with Ph.D in Economics, will be at hand when Clinton visits a Grameen project in Joypura, 35 kilometres northwest of Dhaka and eight kilometres from the Savar Martyr's Memorial. Rice fields surround this picturesque village, which consists of 150 mud and corrugated sheet houses with intermittent home gardens, built in a U-shape around a large open field. He will address the people of Joypura under an old banyan tree.

President Clinton will also join a meeting of women who are Grameen Bank borrowers. Escorted by Yunus, founder and director of the bank, Clinton

will also visit a Grameen project producing Grameen fabric, enterprise development programmes and a solar power unit there.

The US President will also visit a primary school for girls at Joypura, run by Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). He will be escorted by Fazle Hasan Abed, Founder and Executive Director of BRAC, now considered the largest non-government organisation in the world.

Political Programmes

Three political programmes have been fixed for the visiting President. The US President will have bilateral official talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, where "new initiatives" will be taken on energy cooperation and tropical forest conservation. The on-going defence cooperation is also likely to come up for discussion.

President Clinton will also call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed and hold exclusive talks with him at the Bangabhaban.

Leader of the Opposition and former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia will call on the US President at his Sonargaon Hotel suite in the late afternoon.

Briefing newsmen yesterday, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury said the official talks will be "open-ended", with emphasis on enhancing political and economic cooperation.

He said issues including duty-free access of Bangladeshi products to the US market, expansion of bilateral trade, judicious use of natural resources, exemption of debts under PL-480, regularisation of Bangladeshi immigrants to the US will also come up for discussion.

A photo session and a joint statement is expected to be issued at the end of the bilateral talks.

A number of PSCs with American oil companies were

due to be signed during Clinton's visit. But it became uncertain yesterday afternoon although hectic negotiations were on with US oil companies, chiefs of some of which are already in the capital.

However, an agreement for cooperation in peaceful use of nuclear energy, particularly regarding Roorpur Power Plant is expected to be signed.

The US President will be hosted a state banquet by President Shahabuddin at the Durbar Hall of the Bangabhaban. The banquet will be concluded with a cultural programme. It was learnt that arrangements for 250 selected guests have been made at the sit down dinner.

Dropped programmes

Since the announcement of Bill Clinton's visit on February 2, a number of advance teams came to Dhaka. The teams in cooperation with Bangladesh officials fixed the programmes. Some programmes proposed by Bangladesh were not included. These include a civic reception, visit to the Bangabandhu Museum, luncheon with the Prime Minister and conferment of a Honorary Doctorate Degree by Dhaka University.

An example of moderate democracy

Bill Clinton's visit is a testimony to recognition of Bangladesh as an emerging democracy. This was observed by US Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth in a recent statement in Washington. "The President's main objective will be to recognise, reciprocate, and reinforce a tradition of friendship and cooperation with Bangladesh, one of the leading moderate Muslim democracies in the world", Inderfurth said.

American investment in Bangladesh has increased to 750 million dollars now from 25 million US dollars some years ago. US companies are highly interested in Bangladesh's energy resources.

Clinton's visit will also raise the geo-political profile of Bangladesh and reinforce its position as a strategically important country.

PSCs

From Page 1

However, the future of the contract for Block 9, initiated by Petrobangla and Tullow-Chevron-Texaco, became uncertain after Texaco sent a letter to Petrobangla asking for more time.

"After initialising a contract, such an action is unprofessional for any oil company," said a source. "Texaco is deliberately delaying the contract signing ceremony for some reasons unknown to us."

Chevron and Texaco submitted a joint-bid for Block 9 in 1997. Chevron played a key role in all negotiations moderated by the government, especially those with Tullow, an Irish company.

The contracts were initiated and processed in three weeks after a two-year delay. Cabinet approved the three contracts last week. With the exception of the contract signed with Pan-gaea, the contracts deviated drastically from their original proposals.

The contract with Unocal seeks a work commitment on condition the government allows the company to export gas, while the contract with Tullow-Chevron-Texaco seeks the drilling of 3 exploratory wells instead of the 10 stated in the original proposal.

Oil companies were enthusiastic when the second round of bidding began in October 1997. However, the government's clear-cut favouritism towards Tullow, a financially weak company negotiating for the coveted Blocks 9 and 11, led to delays.

Backed by a strong political lobby, Tullow was officially chosen by the government based on its plan to drill 10 exploratory wells in three years.

The government tried to find Tullow a larger financially partner. Chevron and Texaco were invited to form a partnership with Tullow in Block 9, but the talks failed when Tullow asked for a larger share.

The government revived the talks last month in light of Clinton's pending visit. The companies agreed to a 30:30:30 equity sharing partnership. The remaining 10 per cent will go to Bangladeshi explorer BAPEX.

Indo-Pak troops exchange fire on Kashmir border

SRINAGAR, India, Mar 19: Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged heavy artillery fire along their disputed Kashmir border for a third day today, hours before the arrival of US President Bill Clinton in New Delhi, police and army sources said, reports AFP.

An Indian army spokesman in Kashmir described the skirmishes as "routine exchange of fire" across the Line of Control (LoC) -- a de facto border that divides the Indian- and Pakistani-administered zones of divided Kashmir.

The latest artillery duels along the LoC erupted early Friday and continued on Saturday and Sunday, police sources said but added there were no casualties on the Indian side.

Since Friday some two dozen houses were totally or partially damaged in northern border region of Uri in shelling, local police official Aziz Akbar told AFP by telephone on Sunday.

"Today also intermittent shelling is going on and shells have landed in Churanda, Tulawari, Garkote, Sokad, Balkote and Navarunda villages of Uri, but without causing any human damage," he said.

An army spokesman in Srinagar blamed Pakistani troops for opening unprovoked artillery and mortar fire on Indian army installations and civilian border localities along the Kashmir border.

The fire is being effectively returned by the Indian gunners."

Tension between the two arch-rivals, who have fought three wars, has escalated since last year after they fought a de facto battle in Kashmir in July.

The continuing shelling in border areas has prompted an exodus from many villages on the Indian side.

Khaleda

From Page 1

Badruddoza Chowdhury MP, former finance minister M Saifur Rahman MP, BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan MP, special envoy of the prime minister M Morshed Khan MP and the BNP chairperson's Advisory Council member MM Rezaul Karim are expected to be with