

News

What's on today

World Habitat Day: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the programmes marking World Habitat Day. Venue: Osmani Memorial Hall. Time: 10:00 am.

Rally: Islamic Trade and Commerce Limited (ITCL) will hold a rally to protest the recent attacks on its trade and sales centres. Venue: Outdoor Stadium, Paltan Maidan. Time: 10:00 am.

Inauguration: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the programmes on occasion of World Habitat Day. Venue: Osmani Memorial Hall. Time: 10:00 am.

NSU-CPD lecture: North-South University in association with Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) will hold a lecture on 'Mutual trading system and challenges for developing countries'. Venue: NSU campus. Time: 9:30 am.

Comedy Film Week 2000: Dhaka University Film Society will screen *Parosh Pathor*, *Gold Rush*, *Hirok Rajar Deshey* and *The Great Dictator* on the second day of its Comedy Film Week 2000. Venue: Shawkat Osman Auditorium of Public Library, Shahbagh. Time: 11:00 am, 2:00 pm, 4:30 pm and 7:00 pm respectively.

Exhibition: Mirpur Laboratory School inaugurates an exhibition of stamps, coins and posters. Venue: School premises, 2/3 Courtbari, Mirpur. Time: 3:00 pm-5:30 pm.

Discussion meeting: Bangladesh Education Board Retired Officials Welfare Association will hold a discussion meeting to mark 'International Day of Older People'. Venue: Conference Room of Education Board. Time: 4:00 pm.

Rally: Left Democratic Front will hold a rally to protest communalism, price hike of essentials, terrorism, extortionism etc. Venue: Paltan Maidan Gate. Time: 4:00 pm.

Symposium: Bangladesh Education Boards Retired Servicesmen's Association will hold a symposium to mark International Day of Older Persons. Venue: Conference Room of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education. Time: 4:00 pm.

National Guider Conference: Bangladesh Girl Guides Association begins a 3-day long National Guider Conference. Venue: Guide House, Bailey Road. Registration will be held from 4:00 pm-6:00 pm.

Group sculpture: A weeklong group sculpture exhibition will be inaugurated. Works of 7 contemporary artists in different media as wood, metal, paper and fibreglass will be on show. Venue: Zainul Gallery of Institute of Fine Arts, DU campus. Time: 5:00 pm.

Seminar: Shobar Jonnya Shasthya (Health for All) will hold a seminar on 'Homeopathy for Cure of Diseases'. Keynote speaker: Dr Shahida Akhter. Venue: Gonoshasthya Nagar Hospital, House No 14/E, Rd No 6/A, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 5:30 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Comedy Film Week 2000: Dhaka University Film Society (DUFFS) will screen *Pat Day Adams*, *God must be Crazy-II*, *Pushpook*, *The Nutty Professor*, *Baby's Patch* and *The Mask*. Venue: Shawkat Osman Auditorium of Public Library, Shahbagh. Time: 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, 3:20 pm, 5:30 pm & 7:30 pm respectively.

Weather

Dry weather forecast

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Chittagong division and at one or two places over Barisal division in next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Weather may remain mainly dry and sunny elsewhere over the country, Met office said.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 35.2 degree Celsius at Jessore and the lowest 23.6 degree Celsius at Sirimongal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:46 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:50 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	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.2	25.8	63	60
Chittagong	31.6	25.0	95	78
Rajshahi	33.0	25.3	78	86
Khulna	35.0	26.2	73	87
Barisal	34.0	25.5	80	95
Sylhet	34.5	24.6	69	71
Cox's Bazar	30.3	26.0	88	92

Garments: US market

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important structural shifts, both in terms of markets and sourcing, are to be expected in the near future as well as in the medium to long term.

These signals need to be treated as wake-up calls and warning bells for the country's RMG sector, the paper said.

It also broadly discussed the much-debated SAARC cumulation which Bangladesh will continue to get GSP facilities for its export to the EU using raw materials of SAARC origin.

The paper said that even if regional cumulation becomes operative, the additional margin to be accrued to Bangladeshi exporters of RMG will be insignificant, under two per cent of the export value.

On the other hand, regional cumulation may create disincentive for the local spinning and weaving industries. Under the circumstances, agreeing to the RC may not have been a well advised move by the government, the keynote paper said.

Bangladesh should start negotiating with the SAARC Secretariat as regards a review of the regional cumulation. For this to happen, Bangladesh will now have to take initiative to restart negotiations with the SAARC member countries, specifically with India, on a bilateral basis, the paper said.

Speaking on the SAARC Cumulation, Commerce Minister M Abdul Jalil said the government is actively engaged in studying the possible implications of the recent changes in the rules of origin criteria of the EC in terms of competitiveness of the RMG sector in the EU market and possible impact on the backward linkage activities in the textile sector.

Any future step will necessarily involve consultations with all the important stakeholders, the minister said.

Dean Spinganger of Kiel Institute of World Economics, Germany, who is also a member of Centre for Trade Policy and Law (CTPL), focused on overall conditions shaping the global demand for textiles and clothing products around Bangladesh.

He said that with high quota utilisation rates in important Asian textile and clothes exporting countries, buyers were constantly looking for locations where quotas were available. And thus Bangladesh profited

Pulin Dey in coma

CHITTAGONG, Sept 30: The ailing Prof Pulin Dey, president member of Bangladesh Awami League is in a coma, reports BSS.

Prof Dey, who suffers paralysis and old age complications, is now in coma, attending physician said while contacted last night. He has not been taking any food orally since September 25.

The 99-year-old anti-British fighter Pulin Dey has lost all physical strength and may collapse at any moment, doctors said.

A devoted politician and bachelor, Prof Dey is now in his sister's residence at Joynagar, Chakbazar in the city.

CID starts probe

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A tense situation prevailed in the camps of Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League following the filing of an FIR by wife of advocate Islam on Thursday accusing 15 persons including Poursava Chairman Abu Taher for the abduction.

The town residents were living in panic. They were scared by gun shots and explosion of crackers after sunset at Dattapara, Bottala, Syedpur and Mollarhat of Sadar Upazila.

Flood

From Page 1

Seven unions in Shailkha and Sadar upazilas in Magura district have been flooded as Phaldi river swelled further due to onrush of water from across the border.

In Sakthira, 25 more villages in Kolaroa upazila have been affected by flash flood. Jarapur bridge in Sonabaria union has been washed away.

The affected people has started moving to safer places with their belongings.

Sufferings of the flood-hit people in other parts of the district have been mounted due to scarcity of pure drinking water and inadequate supply of relief materials.

Gunmen

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Villagers alleged that the gang of 25-30 was led by Laxmipur Union Parishad Chairman Saifullah Biswas Montu and identified terrorists Nazrul and Ansar in the operation.

The marauders fired on the watchmen indiscriminately and stormed into and looted the homes at Sripur village one after another.

They fled the scene firing gunshots and threatened to kill anyone dare to watch the villages once again.

Police in a raid seized a double-barrel gun, one rifle and 45 bullets from the house of UP Chairman Saifullah. A case was filed in this connection.

Seminar on Palestine

A seminar on 'Palestine and the status of Jerusalem' was held yesterday at the seminar room of Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought (BIIT), M E Shahta Zarab, Ambassador of Palestine and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps was present as the chief guest, while Dr M Shamsur Ali, former Vice-Chancellor, Bangladesh Open University and the Chairman of BIIT, chaired, says a press release.

After the address of welcome by the Secretary General of BIIT, Zohurul Islam, the keynote paper was presented by Ahmed Farid, former ambassador and a secretary to the government of Bangladesh. Vividly focusing on the historical dimension, contemporary predicaments and prospects of the Palestine issue, Farid raised some critical points in the context of present deadlock in Palestine peace process. The paper contested the Jewish claim of 'divine homeland' as they refer to Palestine and reasserted the historical, anthropological, and geopolitical justification of Muslim claim to the Palestine.

He also said that countries close to the USA and the EU have location advantages, which Bangladesh cannot beat. Hence it must do everything to ensure that getting in and out of the country and connection up with the country is as easy as elsewhere.

He said that Bangladesh has profited from the existence of quotas, their removal will put the country to the test as to whether the textile and clothing industry can undo an image which will hurt it. "Whereas price was important in the past - and here too Bangladesh profited - in the future clothes need to be produced just in time and almost on a much shorter fashion season than now exists."

If Bangladesh does succeed in clarifying the above issues, there is a good chance that such clothes could also be produced there. If not, the rapid growth rates that Bangladesh exhibited in world trade will be a thing of the past.

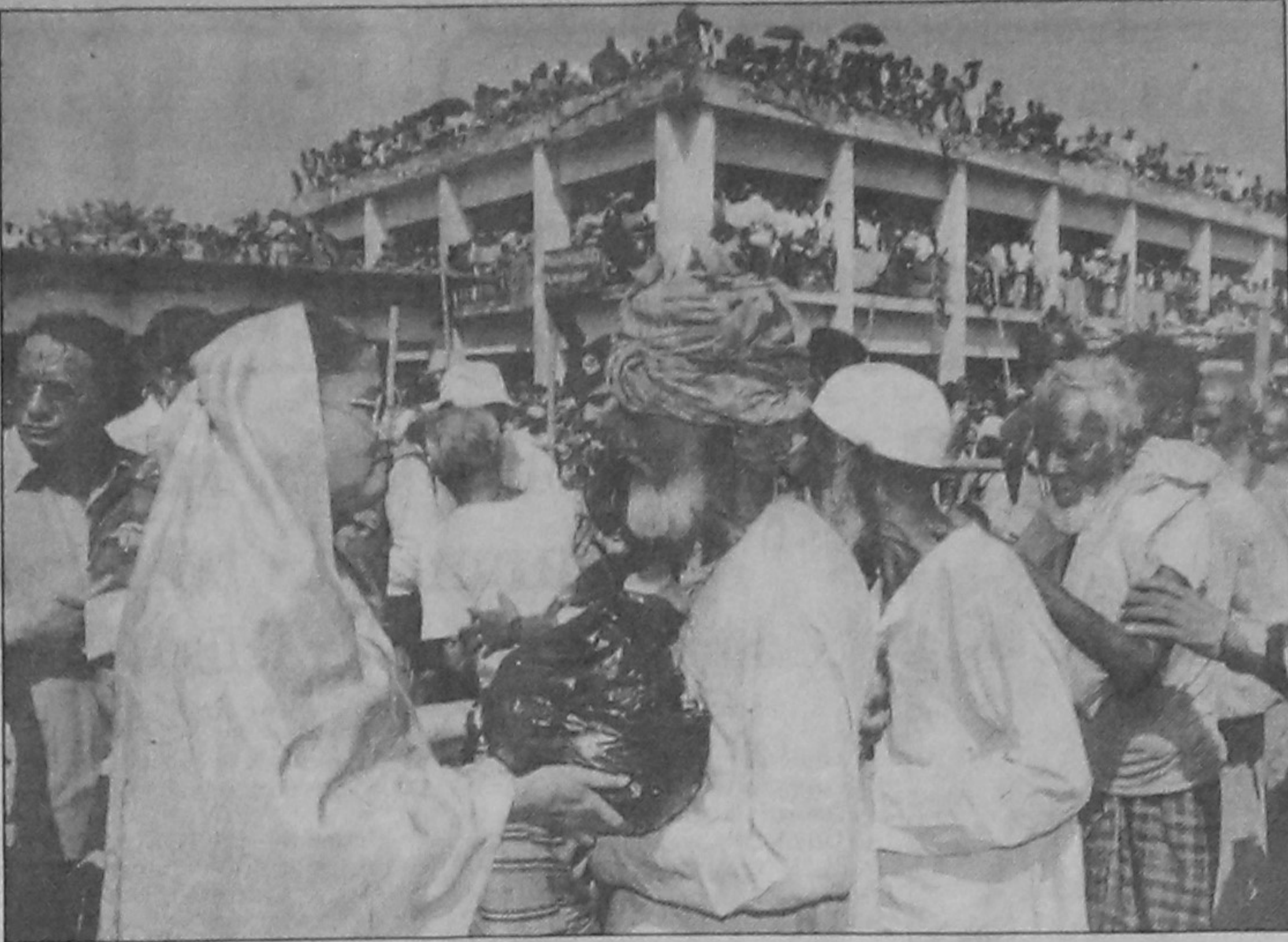
Speaking on the occasion State Minister for Textiles AKM Jahangir Hossain opposing the SAARC Cumulation said that this regional cumulation was likely to yield short-term benefit one of the six sub-sectors in the textile and apparel industry which is the RMG.

"The regional cumulation may have adverse effect on other five sectors which needs to be taken under consideration before deciding further," Jahangir said.

Additional Commerce Secretary Fazlul Huq said that a study on SAARC Cumulation was underway and the findings will be submitted before a sub-committee for its recommendations. The Commerce Ministry will act on the recommendations.

Former commerce minister Shamsul Islam said that the issue has given birth to heated debates and should be dealt with critically. "We have to decide protecting national interest."

Professor Muzaffar Ahmed contradicted the observation of Dean Spinganger that there are 22 reasons that are hindering Bangladesh's growth. Prof. Muzaffar said of the 22, he could find only two observations relevant.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina distributing relief materials among flood-affected people of Mohehpur Upazila under Jhenidah district yesterday.

Roundtable on 'Bangladesh Economy: Now and In 2025' 'Protect strategic sectors from the grip of politics'

By Staff Correspondent

Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud at a roundtable yesterday said the politics in the country is now the fastest growing business and most of that business belongs to the darker side of the economy.

As a result, he said, the menace of extortion, including collection of illegal tolls and protection money, now pervades most sectors of the economy and it has spread to remote village markets.

Professor Mahmud was speaking at the roundtable on 'Bangladesh Economy: Now and In 2025' in the city, organised by Rapport Bangladesh Limited and sponsored by Rhone-Poulenc Rorer Bangladesh Ltd.

He urged the political leadership to protect the strategic sectors of the economy from the grip

of such politics.

Stressing on the efficiency of the port service to achieve high growth for a country that devised export-led growth policy, he said the country sometimes suffer from the disadvantage of being landlocked because of work stoppages in the Chittagong port.

The Chittagong port has earned the reputation of being one of the most inefficient ports in the world, not because of lack of physical facilities, but because of unhealthy politics of trade unions, he said.

In this connection, Professor Mahmud said recently he came to know from a seminar that only 50 individuals control the port activities.

Talking on the US demand for establishing trade unions in the EPZs, Professor Mahmud said the

government should have taken this as an opportunity to create political consensus on making the trade unions free of all the vices.

If such move failed, he said, government should have argued that the ground realities of the trade unionism in the country are far from establishing ideal trade unions, and suggested that in legal system there could be 'specific regimes' for restricting certain civil rights.

There are certain areas in the US where citizens do not enjoy certain civil rights, he said, mentioning that residents of Washington DC can't vote for the Congress and Senate and right of collective bargaining is not allowed in certain mafia-controlled neighbourhoods in New York city.

Terrorism

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one raised any question about sincerity of the Chief Election Commissioner after the elections, she added. "I hope democracy would continue its march forward."

She, however, voiced her concern over the increasing use of money and muscle in elections. "Black money owners are driving politicians out of politics as bad money drives good money out of circulation."

Motia said over the four years the government had done many good jobs but there is still a lot more to do, especially in areas where it failed to deliver.

She said that absence of the opposition lawmakers in the parliament proceedings is hindering the practicing of democracy. "Had they been there, they could have exposed the loopholes for us to deliver better."

She defended continuation of subsidy in agriculture sector and said the government had decided to give increased subsidy to fertiliser because of higher production cost due to rise in gas price.

Motia said the number of people living below poverty line came down to 44.7 per cent from 47 per cent in the last four years while food intake per person rose to 2283 kilo calorie from 2216 over the last three years.

The agriculture minister said that government provided subsidy worth Tk. 411 crore to fertiliser over the last four years and the country's food production rose to two and half crore MT from 1.9 crore MT in 1997-98.

Paddy on two lakh hectares of land was affected in the current spell of flood hitting across eight southwestern districts of the country. "Hopefully, there will be some crops left with the recess of the flood water." Vegetables and flower cultivation was also affected in some flood-hit districts.

She expressed her optimism that the present level of agricultural output could be maintained despite the affects of the sudden flood.

Intra Party

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committees of AL and Jubo League are there due to the feuds in the district bodies.

The Sylhet District Committee of Awami League was formed at a district council in 1984 with Advocate MA Rahim and ANM Shaifque as its President and General Secretary respectively.

The committee was reformed in 1990 with Syed Abu Nosor advocate and ANM Shaifque as its President and General Secretary.

At present, as many as 26 posts of the 39-men committee have been lying vacant for years. Demands were raised several times to fill up these posts by the senior leaders. But all attempts failed due to parallel committees on rival groups in the party in most of the upazilas.

While talking to this Correspondent, some activists alleged that the District Committee failed even to establish an office. Besides, the factions backed by two party stalwarts, the Foreign Minister and the Speaker have now become evident. District AL President Syed Abu Nosor, Vice-President Sirajuddin Ahmed, have sided with the Speaker while District AL Secretary ANM Shaifque and Joint Secretary Iftikhar Hossain Shamim are supporting the Foreign Minister.

In a similar way the student, youth and the labour fronts are also deeply divided, they alleged.

PM: Rehabilitation

From Page 1

the affected people at Dariyapur school ground in the afternoon.

The Prime Minister visited the worst affected areas of Jhenidah, Chuadanga and Meherpur districts. The flash floods caused serious damage to standing crops, roads, bridges and educational institutions in these areas.

Thousands of people took shelter in flood relief camps or on drylands.

The Prime Minister first reached Mohehpur in Jhenidah district and distributed relief among the flood victims. She consoled them saying none will be allowed to die from starvation.

According to official sources, over two lakh people in Mohehpur upazila of Jhenidah district have been affected and 130,000 of them have taken shelter in flood relief camps or on drylands.

Assuring the people of all possible help, the Prime Minister urged them to face the situation with patience.

She said the government is capable of facing the adversity with its own resources, and if needed, it would seek international help.

Hasina said the government is taking precautionary measures to stop the outbreak of waterborne diseases with the recession of flood water. "We are supplying medicine, pure drinking water and sending medical teams to help the flood victims."

In a note of warning the Prime Minister said stringent action will be taken against those who will misappropriate relief material.

At Chuadanga, the Prime Minister visited a flood centre at Karpasdanga and on return to the district town she stopped at Komorpur in Damurhuda upazila.

She went to the people staying on both sides of the roads making makeshift houses. The people of that areas complained to the PM that no relief had reached them yet.

Hasina distributed relief goods and money in cash among them.

Garments quota

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Moreover, had Bangladesh gained the access before it would have been in a position by now to face the challenges beyond 2005, when the Generalised System of Preference (GSP) will cease to exist.

He said about 10 lakh women workers in the garment sector would lose their jobs and about 6,000 small entrepreneurs would lose their livelihood.

Backward and forward linkage industries, consumer item producers, banks and other service industries will have to face similar problem, he said.

Nazrul Hossain of B.P. Garments accused the BGMEA of inactivity over the issue since a section of BGMEA leaders have been holding huge quota.

Chowdhury said when World Trade Organisation (WTO) had announced quota for Least Developed Countries (LDC), Bangladesh applied for a 30 per cent increase in quota instead of duty-free access to serve their own business interest.

"We hope the prime minister would be able to persuade the US government to provide Bangladesh with duty- and quota-free access," one leader said.

Korea miss gold

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tag. Cuba's Felix Savon won his third consecutive heavyweight boxing title as Cuba's four boxing finalists emerged with gold.

Olympic boxing minnows France were celebrating thanks to light-flyweight Ibrahim Asloum, whose victory over Spain's Rafael Lozano gave France their first boxing gold since 1936.

Russian Viacheslav Ekimov upset two-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong's plans for Olympic gold and held off Jan Ullrich's bid for a road cycling double when he came from deep in the field to win the men's time trial.

Ekimov powered to victory eight seconds ahead of silver medalist Ullrich, the winner of Wednesday's road race, and 34 seconds in front of Armstrong. Ekimov's US Postal teammate on the pro circuit.

Dutch cyclist Leontien van Moorsel dominated the women's time trial to win her third gold of the Olympics, and one of three titles for the Netherlands on the day along with the triumphs of Anky van Grunsven in dressage and the men's handball team.

Tian Liang gave China their fifth diving gold, and Germany's Birgit Fischer became the greatest canoeist of all-time winning her ninth medal and sixth gold in an Olympic career that spans 20 years.

The 38-year-old didn't have time to celebrate, however, since she had to race again on Sunday.

The Sydney Games ended on a high note for the 24-year-old Jones, who came in with an ambitious plan to win an unprecedented five titles.

That hope was dashed with a third-place finish in the long jump on Friday, and on Saturday two botched baton hand-offs in the 4x100m relay cost her another gold.

The United States' backyard bit back as the Bahamas and Jamaica crushed past the bumbling US runners for gold and silver.

"The Americans never respect us, Marion Jones was in their team and we beat them. Now they will have to show us some respect," said Pauline Davis-Thompson, who teamed with Sevatheda Fynes, Chandra Sturup and Debbie Ferguson for the gold.

Jones, the 100m-200m champion, took her gold total to three in the closing 4x400m relay.

"I was shaking in my boots. I was trying to be cool, trying to look like a 400m runner when I am not," Jones admitted. "The other girls did all the work and I just went for a jog."

Characteristically, there were no mistakes in Johnson's Olympic swansong.

He anchored the US men's 4x400m relay team to victory to

the roar of more than 100,000 people.

Derartu Tulu clocked an Olympic record to lead Gete Wami in an Ethiopian one-two finish in the women's 10,000m, with Atlanta gold medalist Fernanda Ribeiro of Portugal taking the bronze.

Million Wolde came of age when he gave Ethiopia another gold in the men's 5,000m.

Older Persons

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elaborate programmes in the district towns on the occasion.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the eve of the day.

In his message, Shahabuddin Ahmed said the older persons are the most honourable men in society. Their experiences, wisdom and knowledge can be the guidelines of the new generation for building their future.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in her message, said the older persons of society are the respected ones as they are enlightened with the experiences of their long lives.

Highlighting different programmes undertaken for the welfare of the elderly people in the country, she said the government as part of its 'Old age allowance programme' is providing allowances to 403,110 to such people every year.

Pir murder

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A team from Mohamahpur police which went to Joypurhat failed to arrest Aman and Ershad, two suspects in the murder. The two persons stayed at Chisti's Mohammadpur house on Thursday night.

Chisti's sister Mohsina Akther came to the city yesterday.

He owned about 600 bighas of land at Char Barkat in Joypurhat.

He had houses also in Pakistan and USA, some sources claimed.

He ran a Madrasa and Orphanage at Char Barkat.

Ruling party

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Milon gave the names and developed a link with law enforcers when he was interrogated by a joint interrogation cell comprising officials from SB, NSI, DB, DGF after his arrest on August 30 last year.

Milon's name was dropped from the charge sheet in a gold smuggling case filed with Cantonment police on July 27 last year.

He was shot dead on the court premises in Old Dhaka after he appeared before the court for hearing on dropping of his name from the charge sheet.

Power sector

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theft and corrupt practices.

The national budget has to support the sector with about 300 million dollars a year, more than the health budget. Financial weakness of the power sector also affects the gas sector, he added.

Temple said, "Introduction of Independent Power Producers (IPP) has created new challenges for the sector, because they operate on a commercial basis and have to be paid on time. Because of weak cash flow, more budgetary resources might be sought for payments to IPPs in foreign currency, which would expose Bangladesh to risks as regards foreign exchange reserve."

Performance of the power sector has to be improved radically because economic growth and poverty alleviation depend on it, he said. The positive impact of rural electrification on development of the rural economy has been amply proved, he noted.

The opposition to power sector reforms come from vested groups which benefit from the current situation. Unholy alliance between some power sector employees and some private consumers lead to the massive theft of power.

Temple observed that a reformed power sector would be one of the fastest growing areas with expanding job opportunities.

The three sessions of the workshop were chaired by Planning Secretary Dr Tawfique-Elahi Chowdhury, Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr S.A. Samad and Imran Ahmed MP, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Undertakings.

Policemen, muggers shot in city

By Staff Correspondent

Two policemen and two muggers were shot in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

They are Abdul Wahab 45, and Shamsul Huq, 52, both constables of Ramna police station while the two muggers shot in police firing are Abu Saem, 22 and Abdul-Jalil, 23.

The two policemen were shot as they chased a gang of muggers in front of a petrol pump at Hazipara at about 5 am. The gang, before fleeing the area, shot at them in which the policemen sustained bullet injury