

## Cooperative Bank to be made scheduled bank

BSS, Dhaka

A meeting yesterday decided to turn the Bangladesh Cooperative Bank into a scheduled bank for making it the bank of the cooperative societies of their own.

The meeting, organised to further strengthen the national level cooperative societies, was chaired by LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

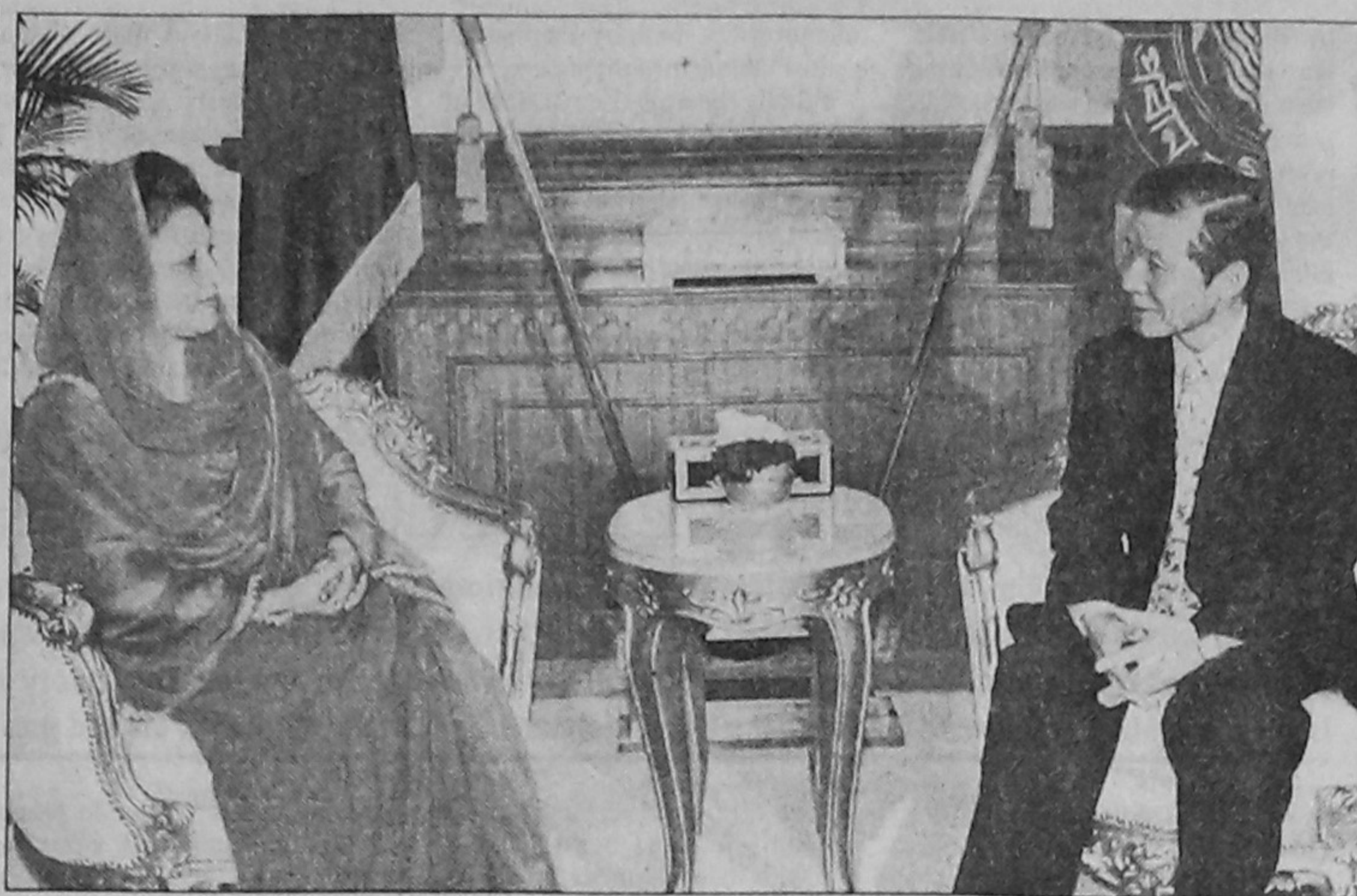
It also decided to make the cooperative societies more effective for eradication of poverty and achieving self-reliance of the rural population.

Held at the LGRD Ministry, the meeting was attended by Minister of State for LGRD and Cooperatives

Ziaul Haq Zia, Deputy Minister Advocate Ruhul Quddus Talukder and Secretary of the Ministry Dhiraj Kumar Nath.

The meeting directed the officials concerned to realise the public money lying as arrears with the Jatiya Mahshyajib Samabaya Samity.

Besides, the meeting reviewed the activities of a number of cooperative societies including Bangladesh Jatiya Samabaya Unnyan, Bangladesh Jatiya Mohila Samabaya Samity, Bangladesh Milk-producers Cooperatives Union Ltd, Bangladesh Samabaya Shilpa Sangstha, Bangladesh Jatiya Samabaya Shilpa Samity Ltd, and Bangladesh Samabaya Marketing Society Ltd.



Outgoing South Korean Ambassador Youngja Jung made a farewell call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office in the city yesterday. (Story on page 6)

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## Ban on two-stroke vehicles 5,000 four-stroke autorickshaws to be distributed

UNB, Dhaka

The government will introduce 5,000 environment-friendly four-stroke autorickshaws for the people affected by the ban on two-stroke three-wheelers.

The four-stroke three-wheelers will be distributed through Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) among the affected

owners of the banned vehicles.

It is estimated that over 15,000 two-stroke three-wheelers will go off the roads with the ban coming into effect in the capital on September 1. The ban has been imposed to check pollution.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) chairman M Jalaluddin in a release yesterday asked the affected owners of autorickshaws to contact BRTC immediately.

"Since it's a first-come, first-served programme, the affected people should contact BRTC immediately," he said, adding that applicants from the cooperatives would get preferences.

Meanwhile, a committee was formed yesterday with State Minister for Communications Salahuddin Ahmed as its head for rehabilitating the affected autorickshaw drivers and owners.

The committee was formed at a meeting held at the ministry with Communications Minister Nazmul Huda in the chair. It was attended by autorickshaw owners and drivers' leaders.

Addressing the meeting, the minister described various steps taken by the government for proper rehabilitation of the affected people.

The steps included leasing 100 BRTC buses through cooperative societies, opening LCs to import 5000 taxi cabs for BRTC and providing soft loans for CNG-run three-wheelers.

The minister said all sectors including the people, donor agencies and media are against the two-stroke three-wheelers. "The decision is a bit hard but inevitable," he said.

Leaders of Auto-tempo, Autorickshaw and Auto-truck Owners' Employees Oikya Parishad at-

tended the meeting. They will again sit for another round of discussion today.

The meeting was attended, among others, by State Minister for Communications Salahuddin Ahmed, Secretary Syed Rezaul Hayat, BRTA chairman M Jalaluddin and BIWTC chairman Shimul Biswas.

Haji Fazul Haq, Nasir Ahmed Khan, Chowdhury Kamaluddin Ahmed, Majibur Rahman, Sheikh Nur Mohammad, Shah Alam and Anwar Hossain represented the owners and drivers of the autorickshaws.

## Berger Painters' Art Competition announced

BSS, Dhaka

Berger Paints Bangladesh Ltd has announced its seventh Berger Young Painters' Art Competition 2002 with a view to promote the young painters of the country, says a press release.

The competitors are free to choose the subject of competition. The size of the oil-based paintings is suggested to be 24"x24".

Competitors have been requested to send 5R size colour photographs of their paintings for preliminary entries on or before September 15.

The six award winning paintings will be treated as the properties of Berger Paints Bangladesh Ltd, the press release pointed.

Persons willing to participate at the competition have been requested to send the 5R colour photographs to Taslim Ahmed, Unitrend Limited, House 70 (New), Road 15/A, Dhanmondi in the city.

## Plan to raise number of internet subscribers to 50000 a yr

BSS, Dhaka

The government has fixed a target to raise the number of internet subscribers by 50,000 a year in both public and private sectors, said the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications sources.

They said Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) would extend internet service to all the 64 districts of the country by December this year.

Currently, the service covers 44 districts and 150,000 people na-

tionwide.

The sources hoped that the service would spread fast after the country gets connection with fibre-optic submarine cable in June 2004.

Meanwhile, the National Taskforce on Information Communication Technology (NTICT) has suggested patronising the private sector for spreading internet facilities to the remote areas of the country.

The Internet Service Providers' Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB) has welcomed the NTICT recommendation. They, however, demanded removal of the hurdles to the flourish of the service.

ISPAB President M Akhtaruzzaman Manju told BSS that installation of adequate number of landline telephones and fibre-optic submarine cable connectivity would perk up internet density in the country.

He said the connectivity would easily raise the number of internet browsers by 50,000 a year. If BTB adds 50,000 more connections a year, internet subscribers would grow by 20,000 in the same period, he added.

Mohtamim alleged that internet service providers were being subjected to all sorts of government control and are not getting incentives.

A meeting of the NTICT was held with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair on August 8. The meeting decided to patronise private service providers and lower

licence fees.

Currently 62 organisations, including 61 private firms, are providing internet service. BTB is the lone public sector organisation operating in the sector.

Internet was introduced in the country in 1993, but its use was opened to all in 1996.

The country is now lacking in the number of the technology users. Its 1.5 lakh users is paltry against 50 lakh in India, 5 lakh in Sri Lanka, 35 lakh in Malaysia, 20 lakh in the Philippines and 2.68 crore in South Korea.

## 2 new DCC commissioners take oath

BSS, Dhaka

The newly-elected ward commissioners Ferdousi Ahmed Misthi (Ward No 8) and Sarika Sarkar (Ward No 72) took oath as ward commissioners of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) yesterday.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka administered the oath at a simple function.

The by-elections of two ward commissioners were held on April 25 following the murder of the elected ward commissioner -- Saur Rahman Liton (Ward No 8) and Binoy Krishna Sarkar (Ward No 72) by the miscreants.

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(ভর্তি ফর্ম বিতরণ : সকাল ৯টা হতে ছোট পর্যন্ত)

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## Flood situation likely to improve further

UNB, Dhaka

The country's overall flood situation is likely to improve further today with continued recession of the major rivers.

Flood situation in the Brahmaputra and Ganges basins continued to improve as the rivers in these two basins receded further in the 24-hour period ending at 9am yesterday.

According to a bulletin of Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), the flood situation around Dhaka City will also improve as the Turag, Tongi Khal and Buriganga are receding.

With further recession of the Meghna, the flood situation in Kishoreganj, Narsingdi and Brahmanbaria districts is likely to improve, the bulletin added.

The Brahmaputra, Jamuna and Meghna continued to fall at all points, the Padma observed rise at the upstream, and rivers in the southeastern hill basin registered

rise and fall. Out of 46 water level monitoring points, nine points recorded rise, 32 marked fall and two points remained steady.

Six rivers were still flowing above danger mark at seven points -- Lakhya at Narayanganj, Turag at Mirpur, Padma at Bhagyakul, Surma at Kanaighat, Kushiara at Amalshid and Sheola and the Meghna at Bhairab Bazar.

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