

# Commission asked to submit education report in 6 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has set a six-month timeframe for the Education Commission to submit its report. Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk told the newly formed commission that the government should have enough time to implement the recommendations before its tenure ends. The commission had its first meeting yesterday and discussed the modus operandi for the next education policy. In October 2002 the Bangladesh Nationalist Party-led government formed the 24-member commission, the ninth so far since independence. No recommendations of the earlier commissions could be implemented fully due to change in power, sources said. The commission members stressed the need for a language policy so that students may attain proficiency in English. The commission chairman Professor Moniruzzaman Miah told The Daily Star, "In spite of the highest allocation to the education

sector, it has been remained chaotic due to frequent changes in syllabus and curriculum." He said commission members might seek an appointment with the prime minister for her brief next week. The commission will have its secretariat at the National Academy of Education Management (NAEM), education ministry sources said. Moniruzzaman Miah aside, State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon, Education Secretary Mohammad Shahidul Alam, and other members of the commission attended the meeting held at the secretariat. The commission comprises vice-chancellors of Dhaka University, Islami University, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Open University, North South University, South East University. Professor Wakil Ahmed, principal of Scholastica School and co-ordinator of Teachers Employees Unity Council Shariful Islam are also involved.

# Mandela sees oil link in US war plans

## Bush "can't think properly", Blair "US foreign minister"

AFP, Johannesburg

The sole reason for a possible US-led attack on Iraq would be to gain control of its oil resources, Nelson Mandela said yesterday, adding that President George W Bush "can't think properly". The former South African president also attacked British Prime Minister Tony Blair, whom he said had been newly deployed as the "US foreign minister" in a criticism of London's close alliance with Washington over Iraq. "He (Blair) is no longer prime minister of Britain," Mandela opined at the opening of a three-day International Women's Forum in Johannesburg. "Bush is acting outside the United Nations and both he and Tony Blair are undermining the United Nations, an organisation which was an idea sponsored by their predecessors." Mandela said the "arrogant behaviour" by the United States was mainly motivated by Iraq's rich oil reserves. "Why does the United States behave so arrogantly? Their friend Israel has got weapons of mass destruction but because it's their ally they won't ask the United Nations to get rid of them. "They just want the oil... We must

expose this as much as possible," Mandela said. "All Bush wants is Iraqi oil," Mandela said. "He is making the greatest mistake of his life by trying to cause a war." Mandela has consistently criticised US policies in the past year, voicing his staunch opposition against a war on Iraq, in line with more diplomatic statements issued by Pretoria. His latest scathing attack on the two world leaders came as South African President Thabo Mbeki prepared to leave for Britain to meet with Blair at the weekend. "Mbeki will meet with Blair in the context of the global effort to avert war with Iraq," foreign ministry spokesman Ronnie Mamoepe told AFP on Thursday. South Africa has repeatedly called on the United States and its British ally to resolve the Iraqi crisis through the UN Security Council. Mbeki, who also chairs the newly formed African Union, the successor to the Organisation of African Union, will also brief Blair on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an economic recovery plan for the continent.

# Rajshahi City Corporation

FROM PAGE 12 The contractor of the Tk 14 lakh sanitation project, asking him to replace the low quality things. The group drove away office staff, closed the doors and windows of the office room and beat him up. They also damaged office equipment and furniture. One witness said the attackers shouted at Parvez, "Our party (BNP) is now in power, see what happens if you defy our order." They also threatened to kill Parvez and attack his family members if he still refused to act as they demanded. According to sources, Aminur Rahman, a contractor and another person named Nazmul Haque were given the job of supplying 350

pieces of tubewell spare parts through open tender last month. Mithu later 'took the job' against payment to them. Chief executive officer of the RCC Khalilur Rahman told newsmen that they were waiting for the mayor who was now in the capital. When contacted over telephone, Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu MP said he has cut short his stay in the capital to returned to Rajshahi and has already asked the authorities concerned to take stern action against those involved in the incident. Meanwhile, five other engineers were also beaten up allegedly by ruling party activists recently. But the victims did not dare to file any case.

# Inflation to rise

FROM PAGE 1 In fuel prices. As a result, the area under boro cultivation could increase this season and agriculture growth is likely to be close to three per cent this year compared to the negative growth of last year," the ADB said. The agricultural recovery will crucially depend on weather conditions and timely supply of inputs to farmers, it noted. Service sector activities, particularly in trade, transport and finance, are likely to maintain steady improvement with the expected recovery in agriculture production and export-oriented manufacturing, the QEU said. In the face of stagnation in imports and a moderate pick up in domestic economic activities, the surge in revenue collection since September 2002 has raised optimism that the ambitious revenue target in FY03 could be exceeded, it mentioned. Revenue collection during the first six months of the year has exceeded the target. A pick-up in exports, a contraction in imports and continued strong growth in remit-

tance have led to a balance of payments surplus. However, external reserves have leveled off in recent months and the investment climate remains weak, the QEU added. The government will need to deal with growing infrastructure constraints, improve private sector's access to credit and address the governance issues to take full advantage of relatively strong demand for its main export in the highly competitive EU and US markets, it said. **Bus fares** FROM PAGE 1 erment formed the fare re-fixing committee on January 1 to work on a new fare. The meeting also decided that no bus counter would be allowed by the roadsides. A number of high quality passenger shades would be built at different points. The authorities would also take steps so that homebound passengers are not harassed or charged with extra fare during the Eid-ul-Azha.

# Court orders fresh probe into Tarajj murder case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, yesterday ordered further investigation into the Tarajuddin murder case. Magistrate Shafiq Anwar passed the order upon a narajj petition (no-confidence) submitted by Mohammad Nurul Islam, complainant of the case, on November 30 last year. The petition was filed for dropping the names of three people from the chargesheet submitted on November 6 the same year. They are Sajedul Islam Chowdhury alias Dipu Chowdhury, son of former state minister for shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Sourav and Rana. In the petition, Nurul Islam said names of Dipu, Sourav and Rana were included in the chargesheet though he and other prosecution witnesses did not mention their names to the investigation officer (IO). He had also submitted an affidavit before the court, saying that Dipu, Sourav and Rana were not present on the spot when the incident took place, thereby contradicting the FIR in the case, filed by him. Tarajuddin, president of a cooperative society at Narda in the city's Uttara area, was gunned down by an armed gang on February 8, 2001. On the following day, Nurul Islam filed a murder case with Uttara police station, accusing Dipu Chowdhury and 22 others.

"We took the incident very seriously and we decided to report it to our father-in-law and mother-in-law after their return home from shillong (in India)," he said. They went there on April 3. "We all returned to my sister-in-law Simeen's Baridhara residence in Dhaka on April 16. My father-in-law and mother-in-law returned from Shillong on April 18 and took Shazneen from there. But my mother-in-law fell sick. So, we decided to report the April 1 incident to them at a later date, on April 24," the witness said. BUET security officer Golam Kuddus Khan and security guard Shahjahan were cross-examined yesterday as prosecution witnesses. Sony, a student of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), was killed on the campus during a gunfight between two factions of Jatiyatabad Chhatra Dal (JCD), the ruling BNP's student front, on June 8 last year. The Detective Branch (DB) of police on January 4 submitted a charge sheet against JCD cadre Mokammel Hayat Khan Muki and 14 others.

# Sony murder trial begins

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The trial of the Sabequn Nahar Sony murder case began at the Speedy Trial Tribunal, Dhaka Division, yesterday. Judge Shahed Noor Uddin fixed February 4 for next hearing of the case. BUET security officer Golam Kuddus Khan and security guard Shahjahan were cross-examined yesterday as prosecution witnesses. Sony, a student of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), was killed on the campus during a gunfight between two factions of Jatiyatabad Chhatra Dal (JCD), the ruling BNP's student front, on June 8 last year. The Detective Branch (DB) of police on January 4 submitted a charge sheet against JCD cadre Mokammel Hayat Khan Muki and 14 others.

# Police swoop

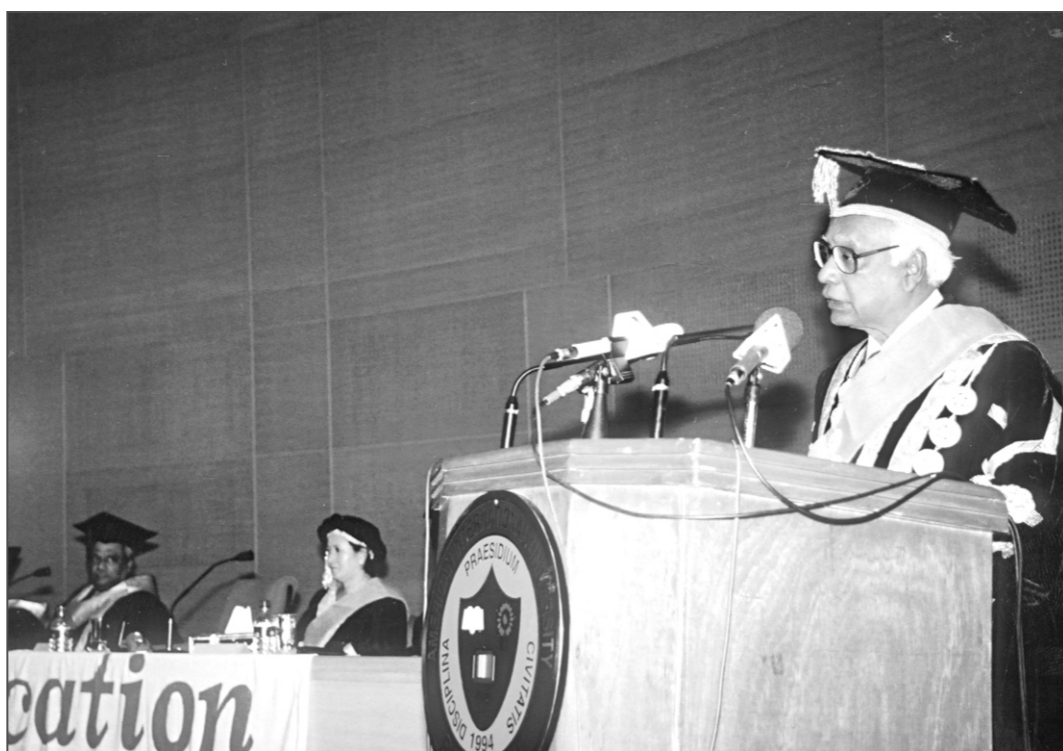
FROM PAGE 1 League activists, police entered the AL central office. Of the injured, eight were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and some others including three women Jubo League activists were admitted to clinics. At a rally earlier, former AL leads Abdus Samad Azad, Amir Hossain Amu, Mohammad Hanif and Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Mirza Azam MP and Liaqat Sikder strongly protested the 'false' graft charges against the AL chief. They demanded immediate withdrawal of the charges against the AL chief.

# Book Fair

FROM PAGE 12 As in the previous years, there will be a media centre and a stall for writers. Discussion and cultural functions will also be held regularly at the academy premises. A website, which will provide people with the updated news of the fair, is being developed. The book fair will remain open from 2:00pm to 8:00pm every day and from 11:00am to 8:00pm on holidays. On February 21 it will be open from 8:00am to 9:00pm. The fair will remain closed from February 11 to 15 for Eid-ul-Azha. The Amar Ekushey Book Fair Committee will accord prizes to the best three stalls for attractive decorations.

# NGOs

FROM PAGE 1 The World Bank, the European Commission, the Netherlands, the United Nations Fund for Population Programme, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the DFID attended the meeting with Local Government and Rural Development Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan. Bhuiyan is also the president of the cabinet committee that made the proposals. After the meeting, World Bank Country Director Fredrick T Temple told reporters that donors have requested the government to drop some proposals of the committee. Committee members Health and Family Planning Minister Mosharruf Hossain, Industries Minister MK Anwar, Information Minister Tariqul Islam and Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Muzahid were also present in the meeting.



President Iajuddin Ahmed addresses the third convocation of the American International University of Bangladesh at the China-Bangladesh Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

# Brother-in-law's statement

FROM PAGE 1 She said that at about 3:30 pm contractor Hasan had entered her (Shazneen's) bedroom (at Gulshan residence) and asked her to show the defective mirror in the bathroom. As she entered the bathroom, Hassan grabbed her with ill-motive. Shazneen pushed him aside and warned that she would tell her parents about this so that he is punished. Hasan became angry and went away, Arshad told the court. "I also asked him what he was doing there. He left the spot without saying anything." Arshad said he then went to the backyard of the house and was surprised to see that 10 to 12 people including carpenter Shaniram were lying nearby as if they were asleep despite so much of noise around. He also came to know that Minu and Parvin were giving conflicting versions of the incident. The witness told the court that he did not see Hasan at his father-in-law's house. Later, he (Hasan) was called by Shazneen's paternal uncle Masum on April 30. "We asked him (Hasan) when he came to know about Shazneen's incident. But he became nervous and went away saying nothing." He went on, "Shezhi, Simeen, her husband Waqar Hossain and I went there and saw my father-in-law crying beside Shazneen's body on the floor in front of the bathroom. Her body was blood-stained."

"After a few minutes, I went out of the room and came to know that Shahidul alias Shahid was missing and a kitchen knife was also missing. I found that all security lights on the compound of the house were off but the light in the servants' bathroom was on. Its door was closed. As I knocked it repeatedly, guard Humayun came out of it and I found his hands, face, legs and dress wet. He (Humayun) looked bewildered. I asked him why he was yet to leave the house as his duty hours ended at 10:00 pm. "I also asked him what he was doing there. He left the spot without saying anything." Arshad said he then went to the backyard of the house and was surprised to see that 10 to 12 people including carpenter Shaniram were lying nearby as if they were asleep despite so much of noise around. He also came to know that Minu and Parvin were giving conflicting versions of the incident. The witness told the court that he did not see Hasan at his father-in-law's house. Later, he (Hasan) was called by Shazneen's paternal uncle Masum on April 30. "We asked him (Hasan) when he came to know about Shazneen's incident. But he became nervous and went away saying nothing." He went on, "Shezhi, Simeen, her husband Waqar Hossain and I reported the April 1 incident involving Hasan to my father-in-law and mother-in-law after their health condition improved."

Arshad said he went to his father-in-law's house on September 27 and came to know that police took Shahid to that house and he narrated the incident in detail. He (Shahid) said Hasan and Badal hired Humayun Minu, Parvin, and Shaniram and him to kill Shazneen after rape. Later, Shahid described how she was raped and killed and how he fled the scene with the help of Shaniram, throwing the blood-stained knife beside the tinshed. Shahid then met Hasan at Gulshan Avenue where he was waiting in a microbus. Hasan asked him if the job was done. Shahid said it was done as per his instruction, Arshad told the court. Shazneen Tasmin Rahman, 15, the youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom, was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on April 23, 1998. Special Public Prosecutions (PPS) Arfanuddin Khan, ABK Sharfuddin Khan Mukul and Assistant PP Anisur Rahman appeared for the state. Advocates MA Kamrul Hasan Khan Aslam, Mosharruf Hossain Kajol, Mizanur Rahman, Anwarul Kabir Babul and Abdus Salam Bhuiyan represented the accused. Meanwhile, the court rejected the bail petitions of Shahid and Shaniram submitted on Wednesday by defence lawyers.

# Europe split over Iraq

FROM PAGE 12 Blair was to meet with Aznar in Madrid yesterday before heading for talks with Bush at the presidential retreat of Camp David. Bush was meanwhile to hold talks with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, another signatory to the European letter of support, who held talks in London with Blair late Wednesday. The rush of diplomacy comes as US Secretary of State Colin Powell readies what he called a "comprehensive" case to present to the United Nations next week that would prove Saddam was continuing to defy disarmament demands. At a meeting of the Council Wednesday to decide what the world body's next step, Germany and veto-wielding France pushed for a diplomatic solution. "It is obvious inspections need time," French ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere said. "The majority in the Council... is in favour of disarming Iraq through peaceful means and a majority is in favour of giving more time to the inspectors." But US ambassador John Negroponte warned "the diplomatic window is closing." In Baghdad, a defiant Saddam put on a televised show of fine-tuning Iraq's war preparations, while promising to fight and "break the enemy's neck." The mouthpiece of Iraq's ruling Baath Party dismissed Bush's State of the Union speech earlier this week, in which he laid out charges that Saddam

was harbouring banned weapons. The comments were echoed by state media in China, another veto-wielding member of the UN Security Council. Other Middle East states continued to prepare for war in neighbouring Iraq, with Jordan set to receive three Patriot anti-missile batteries from the United States next week to bolster its defences. Despite the war preparations, Washington said for the first time on Wednesday it was willing to help arrange Saddam's exile. "If he were to leave the country and take some of his family members with him and others in the elite who have been responsible for so much trouble during the course of his regime, we would, I am sure, try to help find a place for them to go," Powell said. "That certainly would be one way to avoid war," he said. US officials have said in the past they would look favourably on Saddam's exile but have never before said they were willing to actively assist in an endeavour to convince him to accept such a move. Meanwhile, a meeting between Bush, Powell and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal was hastily arranged yesterday, two US officials said, to discuss efforts to disarm Baghdad. However, Powell would not say whether Washington would back immunity for possible war crimes charges for Saddam or other members of his entourage, which would be

a likely precondition for them to even consider exile. In Russia, an unnamed general staff official said that the US military needed another two to three weeks to assemble a strike force in the Persian Gulf. "The US administration will make the formal decision to launch the operation in Iraq as soon as the US armed forces and their allies have formed battle groups in the region," the official said. "This will take another two to three weeks. Therefore, the war in Iraq could begin after February 20," he added. By mid-February, the Pentagon will have 150,000 troops in Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and at sea, plus a contingent of 26,000 troops from Britain. The general staff source said that Washington would likely inform Moscow about its decision just before the launch of the war. "Strikes on Iraq from the air and sea will follow in a day or two and land units will then invade," the official added. Russia has opposed unilateral US strikes against Baghdad, its Soviet-era ally, and argues that Washington must exercise patience and give UN weapons inspectors time to complete their work in Iraq. However, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday hinted that Moscow could toughen its stance against Iraq should it hamper the inspections.

# CAB for expert body to probe condensed milk furore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) yesterday demanded formation of an expert committee to investigate the condensed milk issue. To end confusion over the matter, they also demanded to make public the committee report. At the press conference in the city yesterday, the CAB said the condensed milk companies have been cheating consumers for about twelve years, using vegetable fat instead of milk fat. Kazi Faruq, general secretary of the CAB, read out the written statement where he said the companies could not claim their products to be condensed milk. According to Bangladesh Standard (BDS 896), condensed milk should be produced with refined sugar which must be a concentrated form of cow, goat or buffalo milk. The statement said that CAB is "committed to protect consumer interests". The CAB, December 17 last year, sent condensed milk samples from four companies to Institute of Public Health (IPH) for testing. The test

found the three samples from that of Goalin, Starship and Dutch Fresh to be indigestible. The test made it clear that the condensed milk were spurious because of absence of milk fat. And in a biological test it was found that all three condensed milk carries great amounts of bacteria making them hazardous to health. Among others, Humayun Kabir, Borhan Ahmed, Khalilur Rahman and Kazi Shahidul Haq were present. **Criminal held with arms in Rajshahi** BSS, Rajshahi Detective Branch (DB) of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) yesterday arrested a notorious criminal from the city's Panchabati area. Acting on a tip-off, a DB team raided the area in the afternoon and nabbed Arman Ali, 42, an accused in 12 criminal cases, with arms. He was handed over to Boalia police.

# Form JS bodies soon: AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) yesterday demanded immediate formation of the parliamentary standing committees. The main opposition party made the demand when Chief Whip of the Opposition Abdus Shahid led a two-member AL delegation to a meeting with Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar at the latter's office. The Speaker told the delegation that he would discuss the matter Prime Minister and Leader of the House Khaleda Zia. "The standing committees should be formed immediately to make the parliament more effective," the Speaker was quoted to have told the AL members. Opposition Whip Faruk Khan and AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta were the two other members. Convened more than a year ago, the eight Jatiya Sangsad is yet to form its standing committees on different ministries and other issues. The delegation had met Chief Whip of the House Khandakar Delwar Hossain on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the ruling BNP plans to unilaterally form the standing committees unless the AL names its nominees.

# Teenage girl gangraped in Jhalakathi

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Miscreants abducted a teenage girl from Dapdapia in Nalchhiti upazila of Jhalakathi district and gangraped her Wednesday night. The girl and her mother Rizia Begum had missed the launch to Chittagong and were staying over at a relative's house at Deuli when she was kidnapped, police said. The miscreants took the girl to a bush near Helkencha Kheyaghat of Bakerganj upazila where they raped her and left her unconscious. Police and local people mounted a search and found the girl in a critical condition. She was sent to a local health complex and later shifted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

# 40 injured in Habiganj bus mishap

UNB, Habiganj

At least 40 people were injured, six of them seriously, in a road accident at Kalaradoba on Baniachang-Habiganj road yesterday. Witnesses said the accident took place at about 5pm when a Habiganj-bound bus from Baniachang fell into a roadside ditch. The seriously injured, identified as Tazul Islam, Rafiq, Abdul Jalil, Mazid Mia, Ranjit Hrisi and Farooq Mia, were admitted to Habiganj General Hospital. The bus driver managed to flee the scene.

# DMC student

FROM PAGE 12 Javed and some JCD activists on Sunday allegedly asked Assistant Professor of the Forensic Department at the DMC Dr Mizanur Rahman to quit the hospital within 24 hours or face dire consequences. Javed went into hiding after a warrant of arrest was issued against him on December 21. The warrant was issued after he allegedly led a group of students to vandalising the offices of DMC Principal Professor Tofael Ahmed and some other teachers. The Bangladesh Medical Association suspended Javed's membership. Javed however secured bail from the High Court on January 20 and threatened Dr Mizanur for having him implicated in the case for vandalising the rooms.

# Bangladesh misses out

FROM PAGE 12 CFTC is dominating feeder service business as it has close links with the MLOs. Meanwhile, the CFTC is creating pressure on the Bangladesh government to withdraw the Bangladesh Flag Vessel (Protection) Ordinance 1982. According to the ordinance, local ships should get preference in loading goods and foreign ship owners have to take 'waiver certificate' showing absence of local ships before loading goods from sea ports in Bangladesh. In November 2001, the director general of shipping gave a general waiver to all feeder vessels operating in Chittagong-Colombo, Chittagong-Singapore and Chittagong-Malaysia routes. But the local ship owners are opposing this move and demanding strict enforcement of the ordinance. They claim that this would help develop shipping business in the country. The local ship owners also filed a case with the High Court against the waiver order and got its verdict in

# Rajuk to sue

FROM PAGE 1 officials flatly denied the signatures on the papers to be theirs. The Rajuk archive did not have any back up document to check against either. The organised gang, in exchange for hefty bribes, approved the plans and emptied the archive, sources alleged. The incumbent Chairman of Rajuk, Engineer Iqbaluddin Chowdhury, said the Board has decided to take action against the culprits.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia speaks as chief guest at the foundation-stone laying ceremony for a permanent campus and tenth founding anniversary of North South University (NSU) in the city yesterday.