



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia hands the first prize for tree plantation in 2002 to Stephen Daintith, managing director of British American Tobacco Bangladesh, at the inauguration of the three-month Tree Plantation Movement and Tree Fair 2003 at the National Parade Square yesterday.

PM: Plant trees

FROM PAGE 12 stalls have been set up at the 15-day tree fair.

The prime minister said Bangladesh could make tremendous progress if the three major resources — soil, water and human resources — could be utilised properly.

Urging all not to depend any more on nature for trees and forests, she said "we have to plant trees, we have to create forests."

She urged everyone to start planting saplings and develop it into a habit in order to make Bangladesh full of trees in the next 10 years.

"That would be the biggest social success. We have been trying to build that movement. I call upon all of you to join this movement," she added.

With the monsoon approaching, she said, this is the right time to plant trees which need water.

"Those who do not have private land should plant trees in open government land," she said, and called upon all to plant medicinal plants along with fruit bearing and timber.

AL: SQ Chy

FROM PAGE 12 opposed the country's independence and Liberation War, the meeting observed.

Terming SQ Chowdhury a 'criminal', the AL meeting said there are specific allegations of killings, violence, repression of minority community, smuggling of drugs and arms, and corruption against him.

It also pointed out that SQ Chowdhury was involved with different military governments in past and expelled from his party BNP several times for getting involved in criminal activities and violating party discipline.

The meeting also urged different political, social organisations and the civil society to come forward and compel the government to withdraw the nomination.

The AL government had nominated Humayun Rashid Chowdhury, a career diplomat and former speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad to run for the post, the meeting said. His nomination was however withdrawn following assurance from allies that they would support Bangladesh's candidate in the next polls.

Sircar

FROM PAGE 12 from the country's independence and Liberation War, the meeting observed.

Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain told The Daily Star last night that he hoped the AL lawmakers would join the budget session and said the opposition lawmakers would be given ample opportunity to speak.

Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid yesterday said the notices submitted by the opposition lawmakers should be accepted and discussed in the House and the microphone of the opposition leader should not be switched off.

Sixteen get RI for murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A court here yesterday sentenced sixteen people to life imprisonment for murdering a fish trader in 1999.

The Additional District and Sessions Judge of Bagerhat Mohammad Golam Rabbani also fined the convicts Tk 10,000 each, in default of which they are to serve one more year of rigorous imprisonment.

The convicts are Zafar Shaikh, Alal Sardar, Imdadul, Nasir Shaikh, Faru Shaikh, Kabir Sardar, Hasaul Shaikh, Wahab, Mozam, Halim, Salam, Mobarak, Kabir, Zia Sardar, Shihab and Mozaffar. Five of them are absconding.

The prosecution story in brief said fish trader Abu Bakar Shaikh, 45, was stabbed to death by the accused on the afternoon of September 19, 1999, after he was summoned to the murder spot at Chila village on the pretext of settling a dispute over a shrimp enclosure.

Victim's uncle Abul Bashar lodged an FIR with Mongla thana on the following day. The chargesheet against the accused was submitted on August 4, 2000.

'Oldest' woman

FROM PAGE 12 husband after six years following the birth of her first child.

Later, she knotted tie with Abdul Pramanik of Chargobindapur village.

She had 167 grandsons and granddaughters and her youngest granddaughter died last year at the age of 95.

Earlier, Begum Poirunessa shoot into prominence when newspapers and electronic media made exclusive reports on her.

Hundreds of local people went to the residence of the deceased as soon as her death news spread. She was buried at a local graveyard yesterday after namaj-e-Janaza at Chargobindapur government primary school.

Vehicles

FROM PAGE 1 form a committee with all involved in the transport sector and emphasised the need to stop toll collections in the transport sector.

GM Siraj MP, Shahjahan Khan MP, Communications Secretary Syed Rezaul Hayat, BRTA Chairman Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas, representatives from the Home Ministry, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and transport association representatives Principal Abdur Rashid Khan, MA Baten, Saiful Alam and Syed Omar Faruq were among those who attended the meeting.

MLOs

FROM PAGE 1 CPA to drop names of those ships from its arrival list.

Meanwhile, the government yesterday asked the Bangladesh Ocean Going Ship Owners Association (BOGSOA) to carry all the piled-up containers to Singapore immediately.

Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain yesterday told The Daily Star that the CPA issued a letter asking the president of BOGSOA to clear goods presenting valid documents.

The letter was issued since the local ship owners had been claiming that they have the capacity to carry all the import-export goods to and from Bangladesh, the minister said.

BAC files case

FROM PAGE 1 BAC sniffed the corruption out following a complaint by one Khasrul Alam who said Sohrab cleared Tk 26,400 in bribes for bringing three of his files.

Sources said BAC is also investigating how these 50 companies obtained illegal tax exemption.

BAC investigators would visit the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to obtain the tax exemption-related files of these companies.

The Duty Drawback and Exemption Department has been given the mandate to exempt 13 export-oriented industrial products from taxes. These are crust and finished leather, carpet, urea fertiliser, ceramic, melamine, printed calendar, cigarette, newsprint, furnace oil, stainless steel and cartularies.

The industries producing these 13 categories of products depend on imported raw materials. On import, the industries pay import duty and they can claim refund of the duty within six months of export.

The department refunds the duty through commercial banks. Annually, the refunded amount sums up to about Tk 100 crore.

It is now speculated that a large chunk of the refund is based on false claims.

In another dramatic twist, robbers looted a huge amount of money from the apartment of the Director General of the Duty Drawback and Exemption Department, Jahuril Haq, on May 27.

Police said the looted money was a chunk of the bribe raised by the department.

JIC grilling four men arrested with smuggled explosives

BSS, Dhaka

The joint interrogation cell (JIC) here yesterday began interrogating the four people arrested on Thursday night at Patnitala frontier in Naogaon district on charge of anti-state activities.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) arrested the four men as they entered Bangladesh territory from India with explosives worth Tk 10 crore. The BDR seized the explosives and handed the four men over to Patnitala police station.

The four were later placed on a 10-day remand by a district magistrate court in Naogaon.

The arrested were identified as

Saiful Islam, son of Ahmed Ali of village Puiyan under Patnitala upazila, Abdul Latif Mohari, son of Jamir Uddin, and Dulal Hossain, son of Kazim Uddin of Malahar village under Dhamoirhat upazila of Naogaon district, and AKM Belal Hossain, son of late Ahaj Jaban Ali of village Palooanpara under Adamdighee upazila of Bogra district.

The explosives haul has caused a sensation among the people of the northern districts as police, BDR and officials declined to give details for the sake of proper investigation.

G-8: Iraq hatchet

FROM PAGE 12 world. The leaders of the wealthy countries were joined by their counterparts from major developing nations such as China and India.

The leaders arrived at the talks at a posh hotel on the shores of picturesque Lake Geneva by boat and helicopter, in a successful effort to thwart anti-globalization protesters' hopes of barring their passage to the meeting site.

"The most important thing, particularly after all the differences there have been over Iraq, is that the international community comes together and gives a very strong statement," said British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Bush's leading supporter in the war effort.

"It will be the quality of intent that is as important as anything else," Blair said. The British prime minister said he hoped the summit would take a clear position on the need to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Differences over Iraq caused an unprecedented breach between the United States and longtime partners such as France and Germany. With prompting from Washington, some Americans have refused to buy French products.

The repair work started Saturday when the leaders gathered in St. Petersburg, Russia, to help Russian President Vladimir Putin celebrate the 300th anniversary of his hometown.

At a news conference in St. Petersburg on Sunday, Bush and Putin urged North Korea and Iran to halt development of nuclear weapons. Both leaders said relations between their countries were sound despite the Iraq debate, in which

Putin had sided with France, Germany and Canada against the Bush administration.

"We will show the world that friends can disagree, move beyond disagreement and work in a very constructive and important way to maintain the peace," Bush said, with Putin at his side.

"The fundamentals between the United States and Russia turned out to be stronger than the forces and events that tested it," Putin said, Bush nodding in agreement.

Chirac met one-on-one early Sunday morning with Chinese President Hu Jintao, who was making his first foreign trip since he took office in March and was meeting later in the day with Bush. It was also the first time China has attended the annual summit of the world's seven richest industrial countries and Russia.

Chirac also invited the leaders of India, Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia and several African countries. The move was intended in part to answer the criticism of anti-globalization protesters that the G-8 was a rich country's club that was failing to do enough to deal with the needs of poorer countries.

In addition to Chirac, Bush has been cool to German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who won reelection with what the White House viewed as an anti-American as well as anti-war campaign.

Bush took the initiative to offer his hand to Schroeder in a brief greeting at Sunday night's dinner in St. Petersburg.

Lack of expertise

FROM PAGE 1 expanded their share in the global market by adopting pragmatic policies and visionary leadership which rightly addressed their problems.

When pointed out that the LDCs were not benefiting from the rule-based multilateral trading system and that the share of the LDCs' trade in the world market has been declining over the last few decades, Rana said the LDCs had been wrongly demanding quota and special concessions.

"Good governance, necessary legislative changes and a good investment environment will attract investment and help small economies to grow large," Rana said.

He said protectionism and quota do not offer the real solution in the long run. "Market access and special concessions are only temporary measures which do not contribute to improving trade competitiveness of the LDCs."

"Rather than asking for market access, the LDCs should think of the future, understand the issues and

challenges ahead and work out the ways and means which will help them tap their due share in the global trade," he said.

Rana said the poor nations should work out the comparative advantages of their products and promote South-South trade by lowering tariff structure. "Reduction of tariff will open up opportunities for the LDCs to strengthen their economies."

He said the poor economies should eye the regional markets, which can improve trade among the countries in the region. "ASEAN countries, for example, conduct most of the trade among themselves and their economies are growing. Bangladesh, being a member of SAARC, should also opt for such trade with other members of the regional grouping."

When pointed out that many countries, unlike Bangladesh, still practise protectionism to protect their own economies, Rana said: "Such problems should be solved by 'fighting it out' like what other developing countries did."

Crackdown on opposition

FROM PAGE 12 had been torn down. Its headquarters in the capital was sealed on Saturday.

Diplomats in Yangon said the developments sounded the death knell for hopes of democratic reforms in Myanmar, which has suffered four decades of military rule.

"If they are rounding up the (leadership in Yangon) it's very difficult to work out what they're thinking and why they're doing it. The timing is quite extraordinary really," said one observer.

Aung San Suu Kyi had been on a month-long political tour of Myanmar's north, which became increasingly tense as her supporters repeatedly clashed with members of the junta-sponsored Union Solidarity Development Association (USDA).

The charismatic democracy leader had already complained of mounting harassment by the junta on her political visits across the

country, during which thousands of adoring fans flocked to see her.

The opposition leader departed on the trip to northern Myanmar on May 6, the first anniversary of her release from 19 months under house arrest, and had been due to return to Yangon on June 4.

When she was released by the government, she was guaranteed freedom of movement around the country, sparking hopes that a dialogue between the warring sides and a transition to democracy for Myanmar was finally in the offing.

However, the mood soured in April when Aung San Suu Kyi complained publicly for the first time that talks with the junta, which began in October 2000 at the urging of the United Nations, had failed to make any progress.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's special envoy to Myanmar, Razali Ismail, said Sunday he would proceed with a planned visit to Myanmar on June 6 which is aimed at getting the national reconciliation



PHOTO: STAR

Workers of the Dhaka City Corporation clear water hyacinths and spray insecticide during a countrywide cleanliness drive that began yesterday.

Privatisation Commission under PMO

BSS, Dhaka

The government placed the Privatisation Commission under the Prime Minister's Office recently to increase dynamism in the privatisation process, a Commission press release said yesterday.

The step is aimed at speedier privatisation of the government's non-profitable industrial units, the release said.

The Commission was earlier under the Cabinet Division.

Heads of deer, tiger recovered from poacher's house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Mongla thana police on Saturday recovered eleven heads of deer and the head of a Royal Bengal Tiger from the house of a poacher at Burbania village here, sources said.

Ansar Ali Shikari, 48, the alleged poacher however managed to escape but police arrested his son Rezaul Shikari, and wife Rina Begum.

Ansar Ali Shikari is the ringleader of a gang of poachers in the Sundarbans involved in smuggling skulls and hides of deer and tigers through different routes. Rezaul Shikari, 19, told police during interrogation.

A case was lodged with Mongla thana.

New crack force

FROM PAGE 1

The cabinet at two previous meetings on April 28 and May 12 seriously objected the home ministry's RAB proposals that wanted to give "excessive" authority to the new force passing a new legislation.

The cabinet viewed that excessive authority of the force might lead to widespread abuse of power. It sent the proposals to the cabinet body for scrutiny.

Officials said the cabinet body on law and order recommended formation of the RAB in view of the law and order under the existing Armed Police Battalion (APBN) Ordinance, 1979 by bringing some amendments to two of its articles.

The draft of the proposal is likely to be finalised today by the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order under Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

The body is waiting for the prime minister's comments and the law ministry's interpretation of some legal aspects.

The committee at its May 26 meeting asked the law ministry to examine whether new provisions to the APBN were required to make the RAB effective.

Sources said the cabinet committee disapproved of the provisions for fresh recruitment and inclusion of retired servicemen in the force as proposed by the home ministry.

According to the draft proposal, the RAB will be empowered to carry out investigation into crimes and prepare reports of related cases on government instruction.

The officer in-charge of the police station concerned will submit the report to a law court within 48 hours of the submission of a report by the RAB.

Meanwhile, the cabinet committee has already asked the officials of the home ministry, police and other civil forces to prepare a plan of action immediately to raise the effectiveness and skills of the law-enforcement agencies in the fight against crimes.

Declaration

FROM PAGE 1

the developed nations in the name of 'Blue Box subsidy' and 'Green Box subsidy' are against the spirit of Uruguay Round and different ministerial declarations of the WTO, sources alleged.

According to WTO rules, the products, which have been subsidised, are barred from export. But the industrialised nations do not go by the rules.

As a result, agro-based industries of the poor countries have been hit hard. The agro-products originating from the LDCs could not compete with those of the developed countries.

The EU, US and Canada have high import tariffs for agricultural products.

On condition of inclusion of agricultural subsidy, the African countries are learnt to have agreed to free movement of natural persons.

Commerce Secretary Suhel Ahmad in a short briefing said the officials of the LDCs have so far agreed on market access with increasing share in the global trade, implementation of S&D and free movement of natural persons.

Exports go haywire

FROM PAGE 1 erment to resolve the stalemate within 24 hours. Otherwise, it would create a havoc in the garments sector, they said.

Termining the Bangladesh Flag (Protection) Ordinance, 1982 outdated, the garments sector leaders demanded its immediate suspension. There should be an initiative to scrap the Ordinance in the greater interest of the nation.

"The leading buyers have already expressed grave concern at the situation," said BGMEA President Quazi Moniruzzaman. He appealed to the government to raise the issue at the next cabinet meeting and find a permanent solution to the problem.

He said the garments owners expect development of local shipping, but not at the cost of the export-import business and a sector like the garments which employs more than 18 lakh workers.

Moniruzzaman said following the government's circular, the Main Line Operators (MLOs) have also stopped loading Bangladesh-bound goods, mainly raw materials from ports around the world.

The BGMEA president told journalists that foreign buyers have threatened to cancel business deals with them if the situation does not improve soon.

He further said the BGMEA is planning to file a case with the court to seek compensation for the damage caused by the delay in shipment of exportable goods.

The garments owners would have to make air shipment at their own cost if they fail to ship the items. Most of the items are exported on the basis of Free on Board (FOB) and the local exporters do not have to bear the transport costs, he said.

The results of this stalemate would be felt within a few months and around 100 garment factories would be affected, said Anisul Huq, former vice-president and director of the BGMEA.

SM Nurul Haque, first vice-president of the BGMEA, Zinnat Ali Mian, second vice president and President of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industry (BCI) AK Azad and other BGMEA leaders were present at the conference.

Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association

President of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and

Exporters Association (BKMEA) Monjurul Haq in a statement sought direct intervention of the prime minister to end the crisis. "Otherwise, the garments sector would face a disaster," he observed.

Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association President of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association Quazi Monirul Haq appealed to the prime minister to take immediate steps to resolve the deadlock.

Expressing grave concern at the situation, he said the crisis might reduce export earnings from the frozen foods sector.

Urging the authorities concerned to work out an acceptable formula to solve the problem immediately, the BFFEA president said the crisis affected loading of frozen food items as a huge quantity of exportable goods were waiting to be loaded into containers at Chittagong and Mongla ports.

Seafood Export Buying Agents Association of Bangladesh

President of the Sea food Export Buying Agents Association of Bangladesh Kamal Ahmed in a separate statement observed that the shipping crisis would seriously hurt the frozen foods sector.

Unless shipments are made within the stipulated time, overseas buyers will cancel their pending orders and move on to other exporting countries which are strong competitors of our products, he said.

Shippers Council of Bangladesh

Chairman of the Shippers Council of Bangladesh Farber Anwar also expressed deep concern over the deadlock at the Chittagong Port.

The council has been receiving numerous letters and protests from the shippers and importers of the country regarding the stalemate at the port, he said in a statement last night.

"Like all other trade bodies, the Shippers Council also believes that the Bangladesh Flag Vessel (Protection) Ordinance goes against the free market policy of the government," he said.

Farber Anwar demanded immediate scrapping of the ordinance and observed that Bangladesh flag vessels do not have sufficient capacity to carry all the exportable goods.



David JH Griffiths, CEO of HSBC in Bangladesh, inaugurates a five-day World Environment Day photography exhibition at the bank's Dhanmondi branch yesterday.

726 HSC examinees

FROM PAGE 12 seven in Rajshahi, one in Nawabganj, 12 in Naogaon, six each in Panba, Sirajganj and Bogra, two in Joypurhat, 18 in Kurigram, 12 in Thakurgaon, 23 in Dinajpur, three in Nilphamari and four in Panchagarh.

Under Sylhet board, two were expelled in Sylhet, two in Habiganj, one in Moulavi Bazar and four in Sunamganj.

One teacher was allegedly assaulted by expelled examinees at Alif Sobhan Chowdhury College at Habiganj when he was returning home after the end of the day's examination duty.

Mojibur Rahman, a lecturer of Moulvi Bazar Government College and a member of the Sylhet education board vigilance team, was soon rescued and a complaint was lodged with the local administration.

Under the Jessore board, four were expelled in Jessore, five in Meherpur, one in Jhenidah, five in Khulna, three in Bagerhat, one in Satkhira, five in Kushtia and two in Chuadanga.

Our Barisal correspondent adds: under Barisal board, six were expelled in Barisal, three in Jhalokathi, two each in Pirojpur and Patuakhali, 13 in Bhola and one in Borguna.

Officials of Madrasa education board said 233 examinees and four invigilators were expelled from 138 centres.

from 200 centres.

UNB adds: Prof Satyajit Chowdhury, a teacher of Panchhari College, was attacked by outsiders at Dighinala College centre for preventing them from supplying copies.

Outraged by the attack, 16 teachers of the centre refused to continue their duty, but later they did it at the request of the higher authorities.

In Sherpur, four students, who were expelled on Saturday, attacked the residence of Mohammad Haque, a teacher of Chowdhury Saburenessa Degree College, later at night.

Meanwhile, police arrested the four — Lutfur Rahman, Jewel, Sadekuzzaman and Shakhawat Hossain.

Women's groups

FROM PAGE 12 Salahuddin had reportedly said that currently Bangladeshi culture has been reduced to unmarried women walking the streets bare feet at midnight singing 'Aa mori bangla bhasha'.

Chowdhury, the Bangladesh representative for the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC), also commented about Bangladeshi women wearing saree below navel.

Chowdhury had been speaking as chief guest at the closing ceremony of a book fair and cultural programme, arranged by Jamat-e-Islami in Feni last Friday.