

## Ministerial meet begins in Jakarta August 25

Strategies, programmes for rural dev

BSS, Dhaka

The two-day ministerial meeting on strategies and programmes for rural development begins at the Indonesian capital of Jakarta this week.

President Megawati Soekarnoputri will inaugurate the meeting.

Rural Development and Agriculture Ministers from 13 countries of the Asia-Pacific region, who are the rural development planners and policy-makers of their respective countries, will meet on August 25 and 26 to discuss strategies for alleviating poverty that continues to affect lives of rural population in the region.

The ministers are members of the Governing Council (GC) of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP).

Indonesia is hosting the 14th meeting (GC-14) of CIRDAP – the apex policy body of the Centre, said a CIRDAP press release here yesterday.

The CIRDAP Governing Council meeting (GC-14) will be preceded by a two-day meeting of the Centre's Executive Committee (EC) which consists of the respective

Secretaries of the relevant Rural Development Department of the Ministry in the 13 member countries of CIRDAP.

The Twenty-fourth Executive Committee meeting (EC-24), also hosted by Indonesia, will be held from 22-23 August 2003 in Jakarta.

EC-24 will be inaugurated by Indonesian Home Minister Hari Sabarno.

## CU students boycott class

BSS, Chittagong

Chittagong University (CU) students boycotted classes and formed a human chain on the campus demanding immediate cancellation of grading system.

The agitating students formed the human chain under the banner of Sadharan Chhatra Chhatra Sangram Parishad (SCCSP), sources said.

CU authorities called an emergency meeting with chairman of all departments, deans and representatives of general students at the VC's office to discuss the situation arose out of class boycott. The meeting was continuing.



PHOTO: STAR

Small jute traders observe token hunger strike in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday demanding payment of their dues from the now defunct Adamjee Jute Mills authorities.

## AD syringe in vaccination programmes soon

BSS, Dhaka

The government would soon introduce Auto Disable (AD) syringe in all vaccination programmes instead of using disposable syringes, health ministry sources said yesterday.

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations (GAVI) has already assured the government of providing necessary funds for the programme, an official of the ministry said.

He said the AD syringe would not only ensure safe vaccination programme but also help check many diseases that are being spread through used syringes.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Khondoker Mosharruf Hossain at a workshop in the city yesterday also announced the introduction of the safest syringe in Bangladesh saying a policy would soon be formulated to ensure safe injection and disposal of used syringes.

"The policy will be placed before the cabinet as early as possible for approval," Dr Mosharruf said in the workshop on 'National Policy on Injection Safety' at a city hotel.

He said steps would be taken to ensure uses of AD syringe in family planning programmes and private activities side by side its uses in EPI programmes.

In this context, he called upon the development partners to come forward to help establishing such plants locally to produce AD syringe and make it affordable to all.

## CPB protests US envoy's comment on gas export

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday protested the statement of Harry K Thomas, the newly appointed US Ambassador to Bangladesh, that Bangladesh should export gas.

In a statement, CPB President Monzurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Muzahidul Islam Selim urged the new ambassador not to interfere in the domestic affairs of Bangladesh.

They also questioned Harry K Thomas whether he is a gas engineer as the envoy, in his move to oppose the comment of Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, said he (Stiglitz) was not a gas expert.

During his recent visit to Dhaka, Stiglitz suggested that Bangladesh should reserve its gas to meet its future need.

In another statement, the CPB leaders extended their support to 48-hour hartal called by the workers of three laid-off jute mills in Khulna.

They also demanded immediate reopening of the jute mills.

## JU to introduce post-diploma on journalism

BSS, Savar

The Jahangirnagar University (JU) authorities have been considering to open post-diploma course on journalism, laying emphasis on community, environment and human-rights journalism, JU sources said.

A meeting in this regard was held at the office of Vice-chancellor Prof Jasim Uddin Ahmed here yesterday.

Prof Jasim Uddin expressed keen eagerness of the university to introduce the diploma course initially, which he hoped later would be turned into a full-fledged department, sources added.

## Sit-in against illegal business in Dhanmondi tomorrow

The Dhanmondi Poribesh Unnayan Jote will stage a sit-in tomorrow from 10-12 Noon, on Road 32, says a press release.

The demonstration is to protest against the hundreds of illegal business establishments operating throughout their area.

DPJ, which celebrated its first anniversary a few days ago (August 7), has been organizing Dhanmondi residents in the struggle to restore the residential character of their neighbourhood.

The sit-in will feature talk, songs, and a brief skit. Speakers include Professor Serajul Islam Chowdhury, Retired Ambassador Mahmood Ali, Waliur Rahman, chief of BILIA. The skit is by Mamunur Rashid and his drama group.

## Recommendations to increase agri output

BSS, Dhaka

The Cabinet Committee on Agriculture Commission's reports review has formulated 20 recommendations with a view to boosting agriculture production.

The recommendations were finalised by the committee at its 7th meeting yesterday at the agriculture ministry.

Agriculture Minister M K Anwar and Convenor of the committee presided.

Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami, Information Minister Tariqul Islam, Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman, Water Resources Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir and State Minister for Fisheries & Livestock Ukil Abudus Sattar Bhuiyan attended the meeting.

The recommendations include expeditious research on developing super rice and super hybrid rice varieties suitable for Bangladesh and their replication in the fields, development of HYV of pulses and increased cultivation of pulses, induction of intensive jute cultivation, development of fish-hub and crop diversification in line with the soil content and nutrition, irrigation development, establishment of pest control laboratory, incentives for setting up low-cost cold room by private sector in the major vegetable-growing areas,

enhancement of incentives to agri-produces exports, incentives to animal food and agriculture inputs producers, increasing shelf life of vegetable by applying biotechnology, exploring scope for introducing agriculture insurance, maximising utilisation of 160 tea garden areas, support to encourage social and floating seed-beds development, discourage import of agriculture machinery which produced locally, strengthening agriculture marketing department, identifying the areas to give incentives directly to farmers and ensure an overall review of the agriculture sector to assess the success, failure, future challenges and actions to be taken to overcome the hurdles to rapid increase of agriculture production.

Commenting on the recommendations, the agriculture minister said agriculture is the largest sector in Bangladesh in terms of contribution to GDP which is 20 per cent, in term of employment 60 per cent of total employment have been engaged with this sector and in terms of poverty alleviation efforts 80 per cent of the people directly or indirectly depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

He said rapid increase of agriculture is the only way to keep up with these agenda. To achieve this goal, we have finalised 20 recommendations, which will be submitted to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia soon, he

added.

M K Anwar said, we will give emphasis on target-oriented applied research providing incentives to growers, diversifying the agriculture produces through exploiting our huge untapped resources, attracting private sector to set-up agro-based industries by providing them multi-dimensional incentives, ensuring production and supply of sufficient quality seeds of all crops and other inputs and increasing irrigation facility to boost production.

He said issues like crop diversification, multiple cropping, use of hybrid seeds and bio-technology on seed production etc have come up by this time which should be taken care by reviewing the overall agriculture sector.

The minister said diesel-driven irrigation pumps users will get incentives to level their cost of irrigation with the electric-pump users. He said at present farmers are getting subsidy in urea only to the tune of about Tk 200 crore.

He said the government has allocated Tk 300 crore this year as subsidy. So we have decided to give support to quality seed producing farmers also. He said adding, "We are exploring other areas and welcome and viable proposal to give incentives to growers."



PHOTO: STAR

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) held a roundtable discussion on national programmes and other issues at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.