



Leaders of the Awami League greet its President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina with a bouquet at the Zia International Airport yesterday when she returned from Germany, ending a five-day visit.

## Hasina returns home

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina returned home yesterday from Frankfurt, Germany, after a five-day visit abroad.

AL Presidium members and other senior leaders received her at the Zia International Airport in the morning.

Hasina had left Dhaka on October 25 on an invitation from a German-based forum of businessmen and entrepreneurs called BKU.

During her stay in Frankfurt, Hasina met various businessmen, economists and bankers and exchange views with them on investment, training of manpower and other related issues.

She also urged the German entrepreneurs and investors to invest in Bangladesh's small and medium industries.

## Minister briefs WB officials about education, dev credit programme

UNB, Dhaka

World Bank Human Resources Development Director for South Asian region Charles Griffin and Country Director Christine Wallich yesterday met Education Minister M Osman Farooq at his office.

The minister briefed the World Bank officials about the preparation of the proposed "Education Sector Development Credit" programme.

Expressing their satisfaction over the progress achieved by Bangladesh, Griffin and Wallich hoped that the proposed IDA assistance would be processed immediately.

With the approval of the IDA project, the government may get 150 million US dollars from the World Bank in the first phase.

Education Secretary Mohammad Shahidul Alam was present during the meeting, said a handout.

## \$ 1.20 lakh ADB grant to review arsenic situation

UNB, Dhaka

Asian Development Bank (ADB) will give Bangladesh 120,000 US dollars as technical assistance grant to review the situation of arsenic contamination in the country and evolve a strategy to address it.

The goal of the grant is to provide safe drinking water and improve the health and economic conditions of the people exposed to arsenic and other groundwater contamination, says an ADB release from its headquarters in Manila.

The grant will go to Local Government Division to compile the progresses of ongoing mitigation activities and formulate a strategy suggesting priority interventions with specific timeframe.

Arsenic contamination was identified as a problem in the mid-90's when groundwater was believed to be the most dependable source of safe drinking water while

most people have developed the habit of drinking tube-well water.

Until then, Bangladesh earned appreciation from external agencies for its tremendous achievement of 97 per cent access to safe drinking water from some 4 million tube-wells installed across the country in last three and a half decades. It was a great relief also for the country often exposed to diarrhoeal diseases.

Some 50,000 tube-wells have so far been tested and 63 per cent of them have been found contaminated with unacceptable concentrations of arsenic. The permissible

limit of arsenic concentration in water is 0.05 milligram per litre.

Long-term health effects of arsenic concentrations are extensive, resulting in arsenicosis, skin cancers and damages to kidney, stomach and liver.

So far, some 4000 cases of arsenicosis patients have been identified while the government is conducting surveys to identify patients of arsenic contamination with assistance from external sources.

The health effects of drinking arsenic-contaminated groundwater could be reduced by 70 per cent by

replacing 31 per cent of the tube-wells in the country with deeper wells, some surveys suggest.

The government, with assistance from development partners, has initiated pilot projects in this aspect.

Although arsenic contamination in groundwater has been reported from various regions of the world, including Taiwan, Argentina, Alaska, Chile, Mexico, China, Mongolia, Ghana and Hungary, the single largest contamination has so far occurred in the lower Ganges delta region covering parts of Bangladesh and Indian state of West Bengal.



PHOTO: STAR

Local residents stage a demonstration in front of the Khilgaon Police Station yesterday demanding punishment to the officer-in-charge for death of Shakil Ahmed Chowdhury Suman in police custody.

## JU students submit memo to vice chancellor

JU CORRESPONDENT

General students of Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday submitted a memorandum to the vice-chancellor demanding immediate restoration of normal situation on the campus.

They also threatened to enforce a tougher programme if the authorities do not take measures to end the present stalemate in academic and administrative activities.

The memorandum was signed by 487 students of different departments of the university.

Earlier, the students decided to submit separate memorandum to Jahangirnagar University Teachers' Association (JUTA), and Teachers' Association of Jahangirnagar

University (TAJU) urging them to keep the examinations out of the purview of the current movement and solve other problems.

But they changed the decision after observing the necessity of the movement to restore a stable situation on the campus.

The JUTA, at a press conference on October 28, explained the necessity of ongoing teachers' movement.

Leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra Front (BCF) and Bangladesh Chhatra Federation (BCF) in separate statements yesterday demanded of the authorities to take immediate measures to end the current deadlock.

They also urged the students to be united to resist, what they said, the autocratic activities of the authorities.

Meanwhile, the VC, two Pro-VCs and the treasurer yesterday called on the JUTA to take classes and conduct examinations to reduce session jam, says a press release.

All classes and examinations remained unofficially withheld till yesterday the 16 consecutive day due to indefinite strike called by the JUTA to press for their two-point demand including the removal of VC.

The other demand is punishment to the Jatiyatabadi Chhara Dal (JCD) activists who had kept confined the authorities of Shaheed Salam Barkat (SSB) Hall on August 11.

About 70 per cent of the students have already left the campus in the face of the teachers' movement.