

Tk 179 cr project for 5 medical colleges

Star Report

The government has approved a project involving Tk 179 crore for setting up five medical colleges in Dinajpur, Bogra, Faridpur, Khulna and Comilla.

Funded by the government, the project is expected to be implemented by 1996.

The new medical colleges have already started administrative functions while students have been admitted for the first year courses. Since the institutions are yet to have their own buildings, the Medical Assistant Training Schools in Comilla, Faridpur and Bogra are now being used temporarily for the purpose while houses have been rented in Khulna and Dinajpur to run the colleges.

The new colleges will be attached to the 250-bed hospitals of the districts to provide facilities for practical education to the medical students, said an official in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The project proposal for



Mayors Mohammad Hanif of Dhaka, Prasanta Chatterjee of Calcutta and A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury of Chittagong with two other guests attending a discussion meeting held yesterday to mark Masterda Surya Sen's birth centenary at the Central Shaheed Minar in the

— Star photo

SAARC Press Clubs' confce

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countries of the region," she said.

Lauding the role of the National Press Club and the journalist community of the country in the anti-autocracy agitation, she said the journalists of this country never compromised with falsehood and injustice.

"Now the tide of democracy can be felt in our newspaper industry. The journalists are at full liberty to write. We firmly believe that proper and responsible journalism can make valuable contribution to nation-building efforts," she observed.

The inaugural function over, Begum Zia exchanged greetings with some of the foreign delegates attending the meeting.

BSS adds: SAARC Secretary General Y K Silwal paid special tribute to SAARC Chairperson Begum Zia's dynamic leadership and firm commitment to regional cooperation which had contributed immeasurably to the success of the seventh summit in Dhaka in April last year.

Silwal said the information process needed to go beyond the present event-orientation and to process-orientation and the formal institutions of SAARC, NGOs and the media needed to work together to achieve this end.

National Press Club President Hassan Shahriar said that journalists in Bangladesh had been working under a remarkably free atmosphere since the removal of autocracy and establishment of parliamentary democracy.

"Censorship has gone and restrictive parts of the law have been repealed. There are as many as 47 dailies and more than 150 weeklies published regularly in Bangladesh, which many here see as a sign of unprecedented spurt of publications over the last three years due to the newly-found freedom of press," Shahriar said.

Renowned Indian journalist Hiranyakar Karlekar underscored the need for closer co-operation among the journalists of the region and termed the South Asian Press Clubs' Majidul Huq

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The ministers, in reply to questions from correspondents, said it was not known to them why the Chief Election Commissioner had left Magura.

They also said there was nothing in the election manual stipulating that the CEC had to stay in the constituency where the polls were being held.

The ministers expressed full confidence in the Election Commission and said it would conduct the polls in a fair manner, as it had done in the past.

Pak-Bangla stock markets

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investment climate will deteriorate, both for the local and the foreign investors."

He suggested that the government should immediately consider off-loading the shares of various listed companies currently being held by the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB), the Sadharan Bima Corporation (SBC) and the state-owned scheduled banks.

"The government should immediately take up a crash programme and set specific dates to off-load these shares," Alam said.

The government-owned financial institutions are presently holding an estimated Tk 110 crore worth of shares of different companies listed with the stock exchange.

He welcomed the recent government decision to off-load Tk 100 crore worth of shares of the state-owned gas and oil companies within the next one year.

Terming it as a "pragmatic, bold and a timely decision," he added "We hope this decision doesn't get stuck in bureaucratic red tape."

He urged the government to form a task force to fix a specific time table for off-loading the shares of the energy and gas sector companies. "Good quality shares have to be offered so that more investors

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BCCI executives' trial postponed

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates, Mar 19: The trial of former top executives of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International was postponed Saturday until April 2, pending a report on financial damages caused by the bank's collapse to Abu Dhabi's ruling family, reports AP.

The court, in a closed door session, ordered international auditing firm Arthur Andersen to speed up its report on losses suffered by BCCI shareholders, mainly the Abu Dhabi government, said court officials.

Judge Shihab Abdul-Rahman was quoted by court sources as saying that the report is essential for the shareholders' lawyers to present their civil claims.

Replies to another query, he said although some improvement has been made regarding the disclosure requirement of the listed companies under the Companies Act, it is still not adequate.

"More transparent disclosure requirement for listed companies are needed and the accounting disclosure system should be further developed," he added.

China objects to UN sanctions against DPRK

SEOUL, Mar 19: China will not agree to sanctions against North Korea as a means to pressure the isolated communist state into abandoning any nuclear ambitions, Beijing's ambassador to South Korea said in an interview released today, reports AFP.

The Security Council, the sanctions or any other stringent measures, China cannot agree to," ambassador Zhang Tingyan told the Yonhap news agency.

"Such measures (sanctions) are not only ineffective, they would complicate matters, aggravate the situation," the agency quoted Zhang as saying adding that Beijing supported the normalization of Washington-Pyongyang ties because it would enhance peace and stability in the area.

"It is an international rule now to solve all issues through negotiations, why should the

North Korean nuclear problem be an exception?" he added. China, seen as the Stalinist North's last major ally, had earlier warned western powers against sanctions, and Japan and South Korea have both expressed doubts over whether they might be counter-productive.

The release of the interview by Yonhap came shortly after the North stormed out of an inter-Korean meeting in the border truce village of Panmunjom today charging the South with being uncooperative over a proposed exchange of presidential envoys.

The North-South envoy exchange and satisfactory inspections of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of the North's suspect nuclear sites are preconditions set by Washington for a US-Pyongyang meeting which had been scheduled for Monday.

BNP believes in work, not in publicity : PM

MURADNAGAR (Comilla), Mar 19: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today urged the people to strengthen the hands of the BNP to lead the country towards progress and prosperity, reports UNB.

The BNP believes in work, not in publicity, she said listing the development programmes of her government aimed at improving the lot of the people and making the country self-reliant.

Begum Zia was addressing a public meeting at the Sreekanth College ground here this afternoon.

Presided over by BNP president Nurul Islam, the meeting was also addressed by Communication Minister Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed, Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah, State Minister for Relief Harun Al Rashid, Rabeena Chowdhury MP, Asia Khatoon MP and other local leaders.

The Prime Minister said the present government has undertaken programmes to reduce dependency on import and stressed the need for increasing production in fields and factories.

Terming villages as the focal point of development, she asked the people to set up small and medium scale industries in the rural areas to create employment opportunities and help check migration to the big cities.

She assured all cooperation from the government including bank loans for self-employment projects.

The Prime Minister said if the development programmes initiated by her government are implemented properly the country would achieve progress and self-reliance.

Referring to overall development during the last three years of the BNP rule, she said, "We will be able to contribute 33 per cent from local resources to the national budget this year."

She however, said that certain political parties were trying to mislead the people by orchestrating historical truths.

Chatterjee also underlined the need to strengthen the ties between Dhaka and Calcutta.

He proposed a cultural and sports exchange programme between the two cities. The proposal was gladly accepted by his counterpart in Dhaka.

The centenary observance committee will bring out a colourful procession on Monday — Sen's birthday — in the city as part of their programme. A three-day long programme will also begin at Chittagong to commemorate the 100th birth anniversary of Masterda Surya Sen.

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