



Visitors at a stall of the Iranian trade fair that began at the Officers' Club in the city yesterday.

—Star photo

## Iranian trade fair opens in city

By Staff Correspondent

Expensive Persian carpets, furniture, crockery and jewellery and many other household items have been put on display and for sale at the Iranian fair which opened in the capital yesterday.

The single-country exhibition of Iran, the first of its kind in the country, was inaugurated by Commerce and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam, at the Officers' Club.

The opening function was also addressed by M Morshed Khan, Special Envoy to the Prime Minister, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce president A Rob Chowdhury and Iranian Ambassador Mahmud Bayat.

Inaugurating the 10 day fair, M Shamsul Islam said, the exhibition will help strengthen the bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries.

The trade fair is the beginning of further improvement of the economic relations between Iran and Bangladesh, the minister said.

Mentioning the steps taken by the present government to liberalise the economic policies of the country, the Commerce Minister said, Iranian entrepreneurs can now invest or set up joint venture industries in our country.

The minister also called for opening the Iranian markets for Bangladeshi products.

He hoped Bangladesh would

have a big market in Iran specially for jute and tea in the years to come.

Morshed Khan said the time has come to improve direct trade relations among all Muslim countries. He emphasised the need for direct air link between Bangladesh and Iran and other Middle Eastern countries.

A Rob Chowdhury said, although Bangladesh has been exporting jute and jute goods, tea and some other non-traditional items to Iran for a long time, still there is potential market for Bangladeshi products like ready-made garments, handicraft and leather goods.

In his brief speech, the Iranian Ambassador recalled the historic relations between the two countries and hoped the Iranian trade fair will help consolidate it.

About 20 private companies of Iran are taking part in the fair.

Among the products on display, the famous and colourful Persian carpets, various household items, melamine electrical equipment, high-quality furniture, handicraft and precious ornaments attracted the visitors.

The fair will remain open during office hours until December 25.

## Victory Day today

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message on the occasion, called upon all to renew the pledge to establish democracy and rule of law in the country.

The government, political parties and various socio-cultural organisations have taken up elaborate programmes to mark the day.

The day's programmes begin with a 31-gun salute in the capital. The National Flag will be hoisted atop the public and private buildings.

The day is a public holiday.

The national dailies will bring out special supplements while the Bangladesh Television and Radio Bangladesh will put up special programmes highlighting the significance of the day.

Political parties, organisations and individuals will place wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar which is dedicated to the 30 lakh martyrs of the war of independence. They will also hold discussion meetings, seminars and cultural functions on the occasion.

The bands of Army, Navy and Air Force, BDR, Police, Ansar-VDP and civil defence will play bands at selected

places of the capital.

The naval ships will remain for public display at Chittagong, Khulna and Mongla ports, Dhaka Sadarhat, Narayanganj and IWTA terminals from 3 pm to 5 pm on the day.

In observance of the day, cultural functions will be arranged. Shilpkala Academy, from its roving trucks, will render sessions of patriotic songs in various important city places.

Bangla Academy will hold a cultural session in its premises.

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Sammita Sangskritik Jote will bring out a colourful rally. Mayor Mohammad Hanif will take part in the rally from Central Shaheed Minar at 10:30 am.

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has chalked out week-long programme on the occasion of the Victory Day.

National and party flags will be hoisted atop the party central office. Wreaths will be placed by the leaders of the BNP and its front organisations at the mazar of late President Ziaur Rahman.

The BNP will also bring out a colourful procession on the occasion at 3 pm. JASSAS will hold a discussion meeting to be followed by a cultural programme at Ramma Park at 3 pm.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina will place wreath at the National Mausoleum. Central leaders of Awami League will accompany her.

The AL will also bring out a colourful procession from the party central office at Bangabandhu Avenue at 3 pm.

Old woman run over in Ghor

MANIKGANJ, Dec 15: Dhaka-Aricha highway remained closed for about three hours this (Thursday) morning as local people in Ghor put up barricades demanding a speed-breaker after an old woman was run over by a speeding coach, reports UNB.

Suru Bala, 55, died on the spot while she was hit by a Khuina bound bus.

### Editor : Mafuz Anam

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## Haider India's new foreign secy

NEW DELHI, Dec 15: India on Thursday named Salman Haider, a career diplomat with 35 years' experience, as its next foreign secretary, reports AP.

Haider, who has been ambassador to China, will succeed Srinivasan, who retires on February 28.

The foreign secretary is the top bureaucrat in the ministry.

## Award after name of Bangabandhu

By Staff Correspondent

The Uttaran Institute has announced a peace award after the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the occasion of the Victory Day. The award will be given every year on the eve of Victory Day.

The institute will give the award following the guidelines of the 'Julio Curie Peace Award'. The award will be given to national and international personalities for their contribution to the cause of peace, freedom and democracy and struggle for the welfare of the deprived and exploited section of society, says a press release.

## Disabled FFs continue hunger strike

By Staff Correspondent

War disabled freedom fighters and their family members, who are on a 'fast-unto-death' programme since December 10, have made some more demands on the eve of Victory Day.

Demands include increase of honorarium, housing facilities for them and re-employment of retrenched FFs in the Freedom Fighters' Welfare Trust.

A press release of the central action committee of the Bangladesh Mukti Joddha Kalyan Trust said that of the 500 members of martyrs' families taking part in the strike, some one dozen fell sick yesterday and had to be shifted to different hospitals because of hunger-related illness. Yesterday was the sixth day of their strike.

The freedom fighters started their fast-unto-death programme demanding withdrawal of lease of Trust enterprises and transfer of important offices to Swadhinata Bhawan.

The summit stand rejects strongly confederation and advocates boosting the size of the

## Sakharov prize for Taslima

STRASBOURG, Dec 15: Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen was awarded a literary prize by the European Parliament here today amid protests from French intellectuals claiming her plight has been exaggerated, reports AFP.

Thirty-two year old Nasreen, who lives in exile in Sweden after fleeing a death threat for alleged blasphemy in Bangladesh, was given the parliament's Sakharov prize as the intellectuals protested what they termed excessive media exploitation of her visit to France last month.

Meanwhile writer and professor polemicist Jean-Edern Hallier made a 'solemn protest' in this eastern French city today and said the award was a 'stun' on the parliament.

Witnesses said Hallier made a 'solemn protest' in this eastern French city today and said the award was a 'stun' on the parliament.

One found dead in Badda

By DMCH Correspondent

Rafiqul Islam, 40, was found dead in the city's Badda Nagar area early yesterday.

Police arrested his friend, Mohammad Yunus Ali Khan-dkar, 45, who was reportedly with Rafiqul just before the incident around 1 am Wednesday.

According to police, the two friends were going to Gulshan by an autorickshaw from a bar, Sakura, at Mymensingh Road. They were drunk. On the way, Rafiqul fell unconscious and was taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he was declared dead.

Patrol police arrested Yunus when he tried to escape leaving Rafiqul unconscious on board the vehicle.

He was detained in the Ramma police custody under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr PC).

## KAFCO

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terday said 'the first drop of saleable ammonia was produced at its plant in Rangamati, Chittagong'.

The brief statement added that the Chittagong plant, which is in the final stage of commissioning, would produce at full capacity 1500 metric tons of ammonia per day of which 1000 mt would be processed to produce approximately 1725 mt of urea per day. Urea production is scheduled to start shortly.

The entire production is for the export market, which is expected to fetch around 150 million dollars in foreign exchange.

Editor : Mafuz Anam



From L to R Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, King Hassan II of Morocco, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto attending a meeting of the Jerusalem Committee on the sidelines of the seventh OIC summit in Casablanca Wednesday.

— AFP photo

## Casablanca summit

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tion made a reservation on the proposal which was passed, that called on Israel not to make any demographic or geographic changes to Jerusalem during the interim period of Palestinian peace process and insisted on dismantling settlements.

However, OIC Secretary General Hamid Al-Gabid told reporters that a detailed plan for action in Bosnia was agreed.

A Moroccan official said the Muslim contact group would hold talks with its Western counterpart in Geneva "as soon as possible."

The western contact group that is trying to broker a political solution in Bosnia is composed of Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States.

The Islamic group comprises Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore and Turkey.

But the Islamic group is unlikely to accept French and US proposals to offer the Serbs in Bosnia the possibility of confederation with the Serbian Republic in exchange for their acceptance of a territorial settlement.

The summit stand rejects strongly confederation and advocates boosting the size of the

## A cruel contrast!

By Staff Correspondent

While the world spends 40 billion US dollars a year for golf and 85 billion for wine, an additional amount of 34 billion dollars would eradicate problems related to basic child health, primary education, safe water and sanitation and family planning, according to a UNICEF estimate.

The 1995 State of the World's Children report of the UNICEF says, it only requires annually 13 billion dollars extra budget to ensure basic child health and nutrition, 6 billion extra for primary education, 9 billion for safe water and sanitation and 6 billion for family planning.

In contrast, the world spends 160 billion dollars for beer, 400 billion dollars for cigarettes, 250 billion dollars for advertising and 800 billion dollars for the military, the report points out.

## Hasina yet to reply

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Bangladesh to help solve the crisis created over the caretaker government issue. Chief Emeka faxed separate messages to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina urging them to resume the dialogue.

Meanwhile, party sources said the AL high command has already finalised its stance on Emeka's fresh initiative for a settlement.

We welcome the Commonwealth Secretary General's efforts, but we have already discussed enough during the dialogue arranged by Sir

Gunmen kill 8 more in Karachi

KARACHI, Dec 15: Gunmen today killed eight people including a policeman and his son in Pakistan's southern city of Karachi, where 104 people have died in ethnic and sectarian violence this month, police and hospital sources said.

He was detained in the Ramma police custody under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr PC).

## Muktijoddha

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to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Shahiduddin alleged that Mujibur Rahman and Hamidullah Khan at a press conference at Hotel Sheraton on December 12 defamed the freedom fighters of the Central Action Council.

According to the schedule, nomination papers have to be submitted with the returning or assistant returning officers on January 1, scrutiny will be held on January 2 and the last date of withdrawal is January 9.

The magistrate ordered a judicial inquiry in this regard.

Editor : Mafuz Anam

## The Midnight File

### 48 killed in Liberia

MONROVIA, Dec 15: At least 48 Liberians including women and children were killed in fighting in an outer Monrovia suburb Thursday, according to an AFP correspondent who counted the bodies after they were brought to the city centre. The bodies, many of them burnt and dismembered, were buried in a mass grave near the city centre late in the afternoon.

### Russia shells Chechen village

GROZNY, Dec 15: Russian guns shelled a strategic village outside the Chechen capital for a third day Thursday, but fighting eased as a thick fog settled over the separatist republic. A regional official sympathetic to Chechnya's cause said hundreds of civilians had been killed in four days of fighting. Chechens defied the Kremlin's ultimatum to lay down their arms by Thursday or face the consequences even as Moscow said Russian soldiers had already entered the northern and western outskirts of Grozny and were advancing from the east, reports AP.

### EC officials' meet with NGOs in Dhaka soon

The leader of the delegation of the European Community, now visiting Bangladesh, has praised BRAC's non-formal schooling programmes for eradicating illiteracy from the country, reports UNB.

We have never seen anywhere in the world such an effective primary education system. We are very happy to be associated with and share your efforts in providing the children of those who come from very poor families with the light of knowledge, said E Fassati.

Fassati said that an informal meeting between EC officials and NGOs will be held in Dhaka within a few months. This, he said, will be first direct dialogue between the EC and the NGOs.

During the discussion at the VVIP villa of the Kuwaiti Amier, Begum Zia and Sheikh Jaber underscored the need for strengthening the existing excellent relations between the two countries. They expressed identical views that effective action plan should be worked out to help the Bosnian Muslims.

Referring to the Bangladeshi workers working in Kuwait, Begum Zia urged the Amier to take more Bangladeshi manpower.

During the discussion with Saudi Crown Prince at the royal palace, Begum Zia and Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz yesterday separately.

During the discussion at the VVIP villa of the Kuwaiti Amier, Begum Zia and Sheikh Jaber underscored the need for strengthening the existing excellent relations between the two countries. They expressed identical views that effective action plan should be worked out to help the Bosnian Muslims.

Referring to a question asked by a teacher who is undergoing training at TRAC on why EC is helping BRAC, he said the world is becoming a smaller global village. We would like to see the world just as a village organisation formed by BRAC where everyone is working hard under good management and with financial assistance. Together we want to make the entire world a better place to live in.

Fassati, who is the Asian Regional Director in the EC headquarters in Brussels, is also the co-chairman of the EC-Bangladesh Joint Commission.

He and members of the Diarrhoea claims