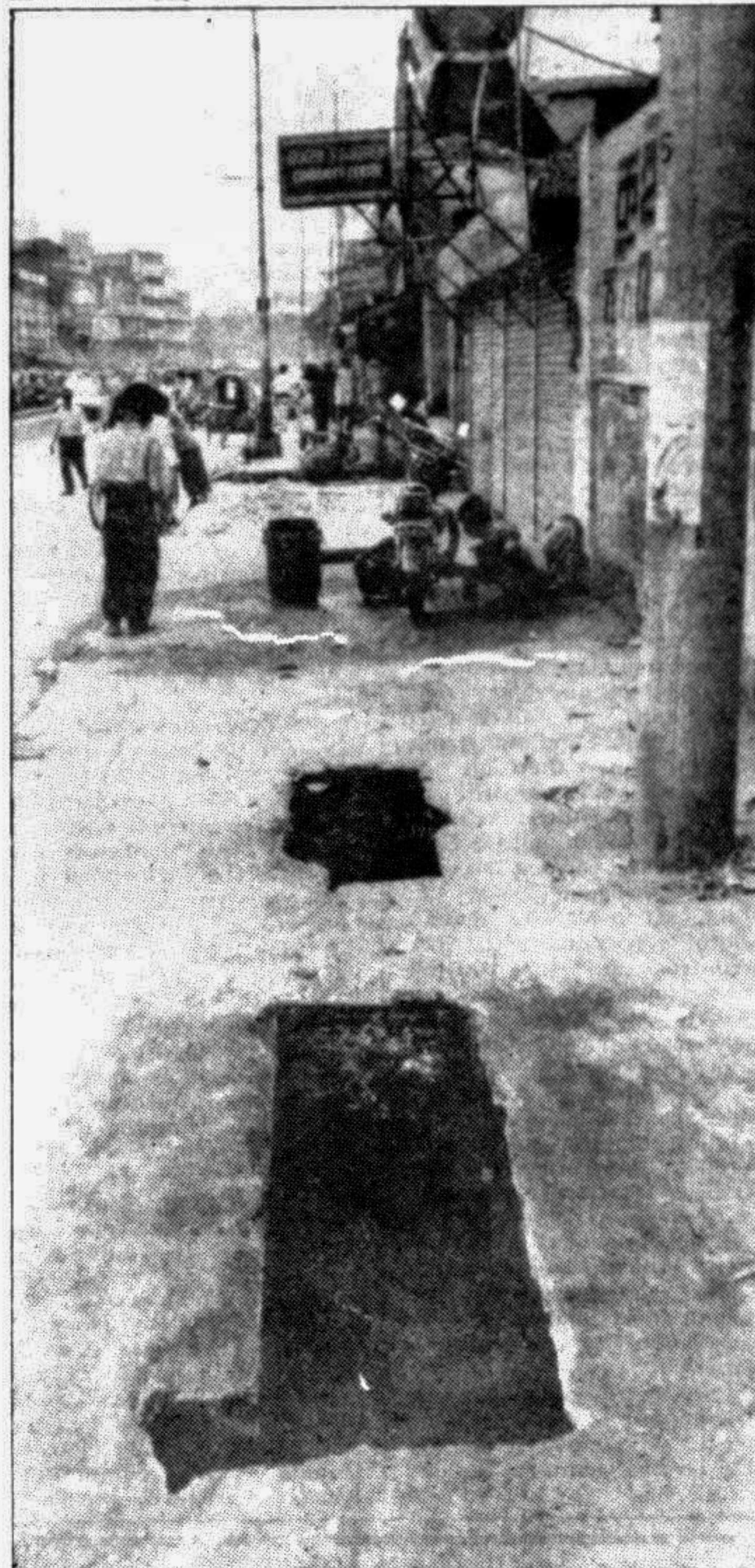


SAVE DHAKA



A THREAT TO PEDESTRIANS: Partial view of a footpath along a major city street in Maghbazar area. —Star photo

Environment Day today

The World Environment Day will be observed today in the country as elsewhere across the world, reports UNB.

"We the Peoples: United for the Global Environment" is the theme for this year, chosen by the United Nations Environment Programme.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia have given separate messages on the eve of the day.

Different organisations have drawn up programmes to observe the day. The programmes include discussion, seminar, procession and children's rally.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will attend a function organised by the Environment Directorate at 5:30 pm today at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the city.

The directorate will also bring out a juvenile rally from the Shishu Park which will march towards the Shishu Academy in the morning.

Bangladesh National UNESCO Club Association has arranged a seminar on "Environment and Education" at Banbaise Bhaban near Plassey Market at 4 pm.

Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar will attend the seminar as the chief guest while Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed will be the special guest.

In observance of the day, the United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) will hold a symposium today at the Scout Bhaban at 5:30.

UNAB President Prof M Inas Ali will preside over the function while eminent scientist Abdullah Al Muti Sarfuddin will be the key speaker.

Bangladesh 2000, a voluntary organisation, will hold a seminar on afforestation at the Asiatic Society auditorium at 12:30 pm.

EC refutes

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enumerators to inform the assistant registration officers (AROs) of the number of voters registered till June 6.

The AROs have been asked to inform the registration officers (ROs) of the voters' number on June 7 and the ROs are to send the information to the EC immediately, sources concerned said.

The instructions were issued so that the EC could do an instant assessment of the number of registered voters since there were allegations that many voters would be excluded from the registration process, the sources pointed out.

The voter registration programme, which began on May 25, would continue till May 7 with the enumerators making house-to-house visits.

The EC yesterday again advised those who were yet to be registered to collect forms from the enumerators and fill up those immediately. One would have to be a voter in the area where one intends to cast vote.

The EC also asked the voters to contact the AROs, if necessary. One ARO is working for a union in rural areas and a ward in urban areas.

Meanwhile, a delegation of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) led by ASM Abdur Rab, met Chief Election Commissioner Justice AKM Sadeque yesterday and discussed different issues relating to the registration programme.

While returning from the meeting venue, Begum Zia halted at a number of places and talked to the villagers line up on both sides of the road.

The Prime Minister also dropped in the house of a farmer, Haider Ali Mandal, at village Nawdabash. The farmer, however, was not present at that time.

UN forces

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Herzegovina, including some 1300 from Bangladesh.

"We believe there is scope to broaden the mandate of the UN peacekeeping forces. The UN mandate should not be interpreted in a narrow sense since a limited interpretation would be unproductive to the UN Forces stationed there," the spokesman said.

"We must now seriously look into the reality of the UN forces playing a role not only as peacekeepers but also as peacemakers in a bid to resolve the conflict."

Explaining he said, "We do not believe that peacekeeping and use of force is incompatible since one side, the Serbs, have arms while the Bosnians face an arms embargo."

Dhaka would also extend support for a rapid deployment force for tackling any eventualities. Besides, it was willing to commit more troops in Bosnia under the UNPROFOR, the Foreign Ministry said.

UN forces now stationed in Bosnia should be redeployed so that they are less vulnerable, the spokesman said, adding Bangladesh troops serving there are so far reported to be unaffected by the recent activities of the Serbs.

Responding to a question, the spokesman said, "Bangladesh is willing to support the involvement of multilateral forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina should it be necessary."

Fertiliser crisis: Probe report July 10 likely

By Staff Correspondent

The Judicial Enquiry Commission to probe into the recent fertiliser crisis has examined a cross section of people and hopes to submit its report by July 10.

The enquiry is taking so long because fertiliser crisis gripped the whole country and our investigation covers a vast area. But we shall do our best to meet the deadline of July 10," a commission source said.

The one-member commission headed by Justice BI Chowdhury was formed on April 11 last.

Initially the commission was granted a month's time for submitting its report. But, according to the source, twenty days' had gone by before it could start work. The government then set the current deadline of July 10.

The commission has so far made one field trip to Kishoreganj and an official of the commission said that further trips would follow soon.

It has examined a cross section of people including the former chairman of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), farmers, traders, government officials and members of the Bangladesh Fertiliser Association (BFA), the official said.

Another source in the commission office at the old High Court building said that former minister for industries Zahiruddin Khan would be examined by the commission in the final phase of the enquiry.

"As usual, the report of the commission will be kept a top secret and it will be handed over to the government," the source said.

Asked whether the report would be made public, he said it is a matter of government decision.

He, however, added, "People are increasingly becoming skeptic about commission reports since, in the past, many such reports were suppressed by successive governments."

Regarding reports in a section of the press that higher officials not cooperating with the commission, the source noted that under Section 4 of the Commissions of Enquiry Act 1956, the commission can take severe punitive action against anyone disobeying its summons.

Meanwhile, the commission will carry out its task at the Tangail circuit house on June 6 and 7. It has appealed to people of the area to submit their statements in writing or verbally.

Lower caste Hindu woman new CM of UP

NEW DELHI June 4: An outspoken woman today began the first day as Chief Minister of India's most populous state after a three-day political drama which led to the sacking of the previous government, reports AFP.

Mayawati, 38, was sworn in as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh late Saturday, three days after her Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) pulled out of a coalition which had ruled the state since November 1993.

The former school teacher was the first woman member of the Hindu lower castes to assume the reins of power in Uttar Pradesh, a state of some 140 million people bordering Nepal.

Mayawati took office in the Uttar Pradesh capital Lucknow soon after Governor Motilal Vora sacked Chief Minister Mulyam Singh Yadav following his refusal to quit after losing majority support in the legislature.

Yadav's Socialist Party and the BSP (majority society party) were partners in the Uttar Pradesh government. The BSP sparked the political crisis by withdrawing from the coalition on Thursday.

Literacy rate increases by 10pc

LALMONIRHAT, June 4: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said the literacy rate in the country had increased about 10 per cent during the last four years due to government's priority over education for human development, reports UNB.

The prime objective of the government is to develop the economic condition of the poor people and turn them into human resource," she told a huge mass education rally here today.

Begum Zia, however, observed it is yet a long way to go to build a fully literate nation as two-thirds of the total population are still illiterate.

The Prime Minister made a clarion call for all — the educated and the affluent in particular — to come forward for eradicating illiteracy.

"It's a must to educated all the people of the country within a short period to meet the challenge of educating the vast multitude."

The rally was organised by the Lalmonirhat Mass Education Association at the Collectorate ground on the occasion of the inauguration of the last phase of Lalmonirhat District Mass Education Programme.

Tk 1000 cr to be spent

From Page 1

Saifur expressed his confidence that for its achievements the government would be able to muster people's support in next election.

"We have to continue and accelerate the ongoing reform programmes to draw an increased bilateral and multilateral foreign aid," said Saifur.

Agriculture Minister Majidul-Haq, Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Communications Minister OI Ahmed, Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Energy Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, State Minister for Planning Dr A Moyeen Khan and State Minister for Industries Lutfar Rahman took part in discussion.

The ministers pleaded more allocation for agriculture, energy, railway, river dredging and water resources sectors.

Maudud dismisses speculation about joining BNP

Jatiya Party leader Maudud Ahmed, Bar-at-Law, whose new book stirred controversy for its dig at the JP rule, dismissed speculation about his joining the BNP.

"It is out of question," he told UNB yesterday. "I should not arouse any kind of speculation in anybody's mind. I will be working of the party as I was doing before."

In the book — Democracy and Challenge of Development — Maudud discussed some of the weaknesses of the Ershad regime under which he had served as Prime Minister and Vice President.

When contacted for his comment, acting Chairman of the Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury said "Let me first read the book, and then I will give my reaction to it."

When Maudud's attention was drawn to an apparent adverse reaction in his own party for making certain comments against former President Ershad in the book, he said, "I have written the book as an individual, not as a Jatiya Party leader."

"If one reads the whole book, why one should feel upset," he said. "I have written the book for the posterity."

Maudud said in the book he highlighted the achievements of the Ershad government. "I have rated him (Ershad) as the best administrator this country ever had.... He is a builder and reformer, best in the subcontinent. It will improve the credibility of Ershad as a modern reformer."

Jute production

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to 929,500 tons in the current year from 782,300 tons in 1993-94. Total availability of jute in the country in 1994-95 is expected to be about 6,145 thousand bales as against 5,712 thousand bales last year.

Output in India and Thailand also increased, while in China and Nepal stagnated.

Quoting government sources, the IJO review report said production in Bangladesh during the coming year (1995-96) would remain at the current year's level.

Increased production also affected the internal prices in most producing countries.

In Bangladesh, the average internal price of raw jute during the first eight months of the current fiscal year came down to Tk 702.7 per quintal against Tk 816.6 during the same period of last year.

NGO rules: HC issues showcause on govt

By Staff Correspondent

The High Court yesterday issued a showcause notice on the government as to why the law regulating NGOs, which was amended to include the church, should not be held unconstitutional, discriminatory and violative of the fundamental right to freedom of religion.

The rule was issued by a division bench comprising Justice Ismailuddin Sarkar and Justice Abu Sayeed, on a writ petition filed by Joseph Costa, a member of the Christian Church and president of the Savar branch of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), says a press release.

The respondents named in the petition are the Secretary, Ministry of Law; the Secretary, Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the Director General of the NGO Affairs Bureau.

Counsel for the petitioner Dr Kamal Hossain argued that the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Ordinance 1978 is discriminatory and in violation of the guarantee of equality contained in Article 28 of the Constitution, since it singles out the church among all religious institutions for regulation.

He further argued that certain provisions of the Ordinance were in violation of the fundamental right to freedom of religion.

The Ordinance provides for the regulation of all foreign donations received by persons or organisations in Bangladesh for voluntary activities.

It requires all such persons or organisations to register with the appropriate government authorities, obtain governmental approval for carrying out voluntary activities and for receiving foreign donations.

The Ordinance was amended in 1982 to bring within its ambit "the church" and other missionary activities.

HC issues rule

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hury. Additional Sessions Judge, Dhaka, in Sessions Case No 137 of 1994.

The Sessions Judge's action prejudiced a fair trial also was prejudicing defence plea. Babu's wife said in her prayer.

Amirul Islam, Bar-at-Law, yesterday moved the application on behalf of the petitioner. Awami League MP Akhtarruzaman Babu is one of the accused of the murder of Humayun Zahir, a leading businessman. Babu has been in hiding after jumping bail.

The Additional Sessions Judge, Dhaka indicted Akhtarruzaman Babu and the other accused. The case is now pending before the same court.

The Midnight File

Close associate of 'Carlos the Jackal' extradited to Germany

SANAA, Yemen, June 4: A close associate of the international terrorist "Carlos the Jackal" was extradited Sunday to Germany to face murder and terrorism charges, security sources said. Johannes Weirich, Germany's most-wanted fugitive, was flown out of the capital, Sanaa, escorted by German justice officials and intelligence agents, the sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity, reports AP.

Khaleda, Hasina kept hostage by black money: Dr Kamal

Mafia is controlling the country's politics and both the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition are kept hostage by black money, said Gano Forum leader Dr Kamal Hossain in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

He was addressing a seminar on "Institutional shape of Democracy in Bangladesh," organised by the Jatiyatabadi Sangskritik Jote at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday evening.

Dr Kamal said arms and black money were the real enemy of democracy. These two would not only ruin democracy but also society, he added.

"We all are drawing benefit of black money," he told the seminar. The political leadership should take a decision to free themselves from mafias, otherwise it would be useless to talk about democracy, he said.

The Gano Forum chief said there was no freedom of press in the country and the newspaper industry was also been made captive of black money.

Referring to a report of commission, appointed by Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed's government, which identified 1200 persons for holding black money. He demanded

Import orders

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dollars and 2.70 lakh tonnes of BP Sheet worth 93.93 million dollars were also opened with it during the same period.

Import payments bill for cereals was 29.54 million dollars in fiscal 1993-94 and 52.91 million dollars in 1992-93, the Bank estimate said.

Agri loans

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desh Krishi Bank provided Tk 598.55 crores, the Rajshahi Krishi Bank Tk 143.79 crore and different commercial banks 345.26 crores. The Bangladesh Pali Unnayan Board and Bangladesh Samabaya Bank disbursed Tk 12.03 and Tk 1.16 crores respectively.

Of the total credits Tk 884.71 crores were short-term loans and Tk 216.08 crores long terms. In the previous fiscal — 1992-93 — these figures stood at 710.90 crores and 85.18 crores respectively.

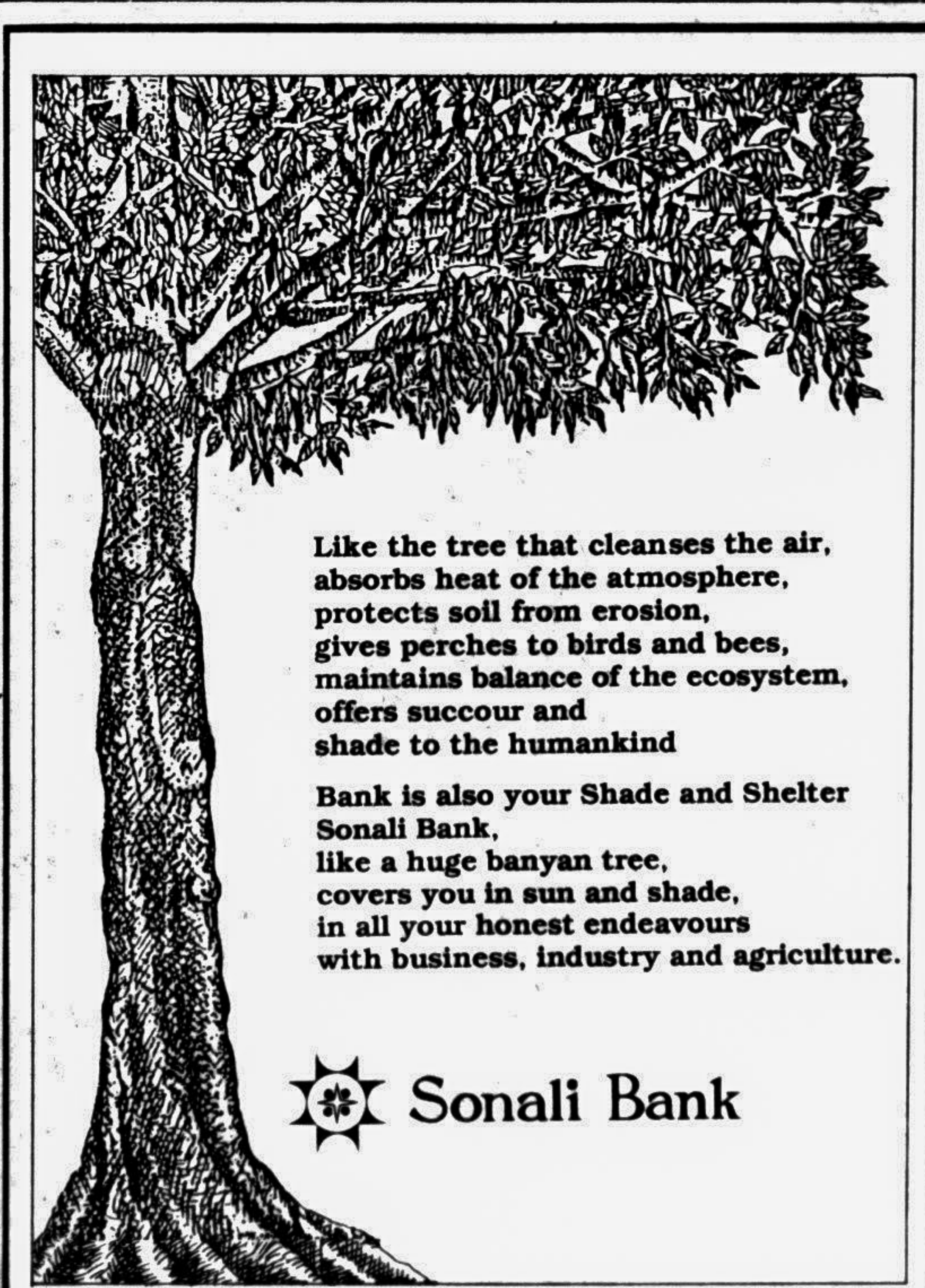
UNDP

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Gradual degradation of land, erosion of top soil, creeping salinity, rapid extraction of ground water, declining soil fertility, waterlogging, increasing sediment load on riverbeds and destruction of forestry resources are all combining to devastate the landscape of Bangladesh.

Proper management of resources and maintenance of ecological balance are seen as crucial to ensuring sustainable development of the country, said the report.

The government needs to provide and enabling setting for tackling the country's pressing environmental problems by providing necessary policy and legislative framework, by moving forward on policy implementation and by enforcing environmental laws, the UNDP suggested.



Like the tree that cleanses the air, absorbs heat of the atmosphere, protects soil from erosion, gives perches to birds and bees, maintains balance of the ecosystem, offers succour and shade to the humankind

Bank is also your Shade and Shelter Sonali Bank, like a huge banyan tree, covers you in sun and shade, in all your honest endeavours with business, industry and agriculture.

Sonali Bank

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