

PM confers degrees on BOU students

GAZIPUR, Nov 18: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia laid emphasis on the schooling of the deprived section of society to convert the growing population into human resources, reports UNB. "Only education and training can turn them into human resources," Begum Zia said while addressing the first-ever Convocation of the Bangladesh Open University (BOU) here today.

Convocation Speaker. It was also addressed by Vice Chancellor Prof M Shamsheer Ali. Dean of the School of Education Prof Shamsul Kabir presented the graduates before the Chancellor, Begum Zia, for conferring degrees and the conferred graduation degree on about three thousand pupils. Nearly 800 pupils were awarded Bachelor of Education Degree.

Begum Zia distributed certificates among the 34 students who got first class in B Ed course.

Raushan Ershad

From Page 1 team, formed to monitor the health condition of the fast-aging persons. General (ret'd) Anis Wayez expressed concern over the health condition of Raushan and three others, the press release added.

UNB adds: Begum Raushan Ershad yesterday sent letters to the heads of foreign missions in Dhaka seeking their help to shift Ershad to a hospital.

Ershad is "critically ill and struggling for his life in the prison," she said in the letter urging the Ambassadors and High Commissioners to use their good offices to send him to a hospital for necessary treatment, according to party sources.

Raushan alleged that her husband "has been subjected to revenge and inhuman treatment by the present government."

The University has been striving relentlessly to achieve its goal for the last few years and 3,000 graduates are getting their certificates in the first convocation, Begum Zia noted with satisfaction.

The Prime Minister observed, to receive certificate through a convocation is a matter of pride. But the ceremony was almost lost from the memory of university students after the independence of the country.

After taking over power by her party, she said, the convocation system again started.

Member of the BOU Board of Governors Azizul Haq also spoke on the occasion as

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They got a chance to speak

By Staff Correspondent Some leaders came to the meeting alone, some came with statements written by their leaders, some blasted both the government and the Opposition alike, and some complained about the attitude of the big political parties towards the smaller ones, but they all were eager participants.

This was the scene at the meeting called by the Election Commission yesterday to discuss measures for conducting the next general elections. Major opposition parties - Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami - did not attend the meeting held at the NEC conference room.

The EC had sent letters of invitation giving the parties only two days time to attend the meeting. A total of 39 leaders of 22 parties arrived. Among them two were contestants in the last presidential election.

The leaders of the parties, mostly unheard of, at least had the chance to hold the microphone in their hands and condemn some bigger parties for what they called creating the crisis in the country.

The representative of the Bangladesh Bekar Shamaj (Society for the Unemployed) complained that the big parties were always trying to bully the small ones.

On the dais, the Election Commission Officials laughed and tried to contain the eager crowd of leaders who desperately tried to say something.

JS polls in phases

From Page 1 ment would pass the legislation debarbing bank loan defaulters from participating in the elections.

"We have taken steps to stop use of black money in the elections by limiting the expenses of each candidate to Tk 3 lakh, and that must come through bank cheque", he said.

He added that each candidate would be allowed to use only three loud-speakers for a maximum period of eight hours a day. Posters used in the campaign must be locally procured and printed and the size cannot exceed 12 inches.

Tough measures would be taken against use of arms — legal or illegal — and muscle power. Use of minibuses, jeeps, motor-bikes and other transports would be strictly limited, he said.

About 5 lakh people would be needed to conduct the polls, he said. "This time the EC would recommend rigorous imprisonment for those who are found guilty of any irregularities." Haque said, adding that before they start work, these borrowed workforce would undergo training at the local level.

Haque announced that electoral enquiry committees has been formed in each district to monitor the polls. An elaborate training programme has already been launched for the members, he said.

Among the political parties, National Democratic Party, Bangladesh Muslim

League, Jatiya Janata Party, Bangladesh Janata Dal, Jatiya Nagarik Sanghati, Bangladesh Free Democratic Party, Paragatishil Jatiyatada Dal, Muslim Peoples Party, Gantantrik Sarbhabara Party, Bangladesh National Congress, Bangladesh Bekar Samaj, Republican Party, Bangladesh Sebadal, Bangladesh Public Party, Bangladesh Ideal Party, Freedom League and National Hindu Party were represented at the meeting.

DEOs' memo to PM

District Election Officers (DEOs) in a memorandum to the Prime Minister yesterday sought their upgradation suiting the nature of their job, reports UNB.

The Bangladesh District Election Officers' Association (BDEOA) submitted the memo to the PM's office, demanding that their salary scale be raised to Tk 4800 from Tk 2850 for the interest of maintaining administrative discipline.

It said, presently District Election Officer and Thana Election Officer are in the same scale (Tk 2850).

It said currently there are 87 DEOs in the country while there are only four Assistant Election Commissioner posts (Tk 4800 scale). So, promotion is due.

The memorandum was received by an official of the Prime Minister's office at the main gate as Begum Zia was attending the convocation of Bangladesh Open University, officials said.

Off-shore drilling soon

From Page 1 this would ultimately enhance the exploration cost, the sources said.

These companies were offered total tax exemption for "temporary" import of equipment under Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) No 22. But as the SRO 22 left some room for confusion regarding the definition of the "temporary import" and total tax exemption, the authorities revised it and sent it to the Ministry of Law for clearance in the first week of October.

The scheduled seismic survey of 450 km area in Semutang, Sitakund, Jaladi and Sandwip for hydrocarbon exploration also remained suspended as the equipment remained stock up.

If the revised SRO 22 is not cleared soon, the drilling equipment would similarly remain stuck at the port. Official sources said, the British-Dutch joint venture companies have hired the rig for 1 lakh dollar daily, a cost which the government will ultimately have to bear.

In Kutubdia, an American company — Union Oil had drilled an well in the Bay in 1974 but left without developing it although it had a proven reserve of 0.40 trillion cubic feet of gas. The

Cairn Plc and Holland Sea Search are also going to develop this same well.

The results of drilling the two new wells would be known by April next year.

Meanwhile, the US company, Occidental has begun seismic survey in a 700 km area in Sylhet-Netrokona region.

However, spendings by these foreign companies remain largely unmonitored although the Petrobangla was supposed to regularly keep an account of their expenditure, sources in Petrobangla said. The sources said that the companies were spending "wildly and unnecessarily."

AL-LDF

From Page 1

Hasina, also observed that the only way to resolve the present crisis is to hold elections under a neutral caretaker government, says an AL press release.

The meeting was attended by AL leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Abdul Mannan, Abdul Momin, Zillur Rahman, and LDF leaders Rashed Khan Menon, Haider Akber Khan Rono, Kazi Aref, Nirmal Sen, Hasanul Haq Inu and Mujahidul Islam Selim.

Japanese keen to invest in Bangladesh

The second Bangladesh investment seminar held on Wednesday in Osaka generated much interest and enthusiasm among the potential Japanese investors, according to a message received last night, reports\*BSS. The seminar, attended by over 100 potential Japanese entrepreneurs, was inaugurated by Bangladesh ambassadors to Japan Rashed Ahmed.

The seminar was a follow-up of the first Bangladesh investment seminar, jointly organised by the Bangladesh embassy and the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry last month on the occasion of "Global Business Opportunities Convention '95".

Rashed Ahmed mentioned the attractive investment package offered by Bangladesh government, the unique strategic location of Bangladesh as well as the

complete religious and ethnic harmony prevailing in Bangladesh. Citing some of the advantages including low inflation, lowest tariff in South Asia, lowest corporate tax and low wages and facility for expeditious remittance of profit, Rashed Ahmed made a strong plea to the Japanese investors to avail those opportunities.

This seminar at the time of the APEC summit was an added success and considerably enhanced the image of Bangladesh. Besides, there was tremendous interest among the Japanese investors about the recent study of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The study report was recently submitted to Bangladesh government.

Ahmed told the Japanese investors that a "task-force" is being set up by Bangladesh government to implement the JICA report.



South African President Nelson Mandela poses with Miss Nigeria Toyin Raji, who had been disqualified from Miss World contest, after his press conference yesterday in Johannesburg. Mandela said he will urge China to join international efforts to isolate Nigeria in response to Nigeria's hanging of nine minority right activists. — AFP/UNB photo

3 shot as JCD factions clash at N'ganj

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Nov 18: Three persons sustained bullet wounds today during a clash between two factions of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at Alam Para Square in the town.

Shyamol Chandra Dey, 30, Shamsul Chowdhury, 30, and Sony, 25 were injured when a rival group opened fire at the office of the JCD and Juba Dal at Alam Para Square at about 1 am, witnesses said. The two rival groups of Mission Para and Alam Para have been fighting for last three days to keep control over the Alam Para Square area.

The clash erupted Thursday after a student of class six was stabbed at K B Shaha road by the group of Mission Para. He said that 74 private members' bills were placed,

5 drown in Jamuna

PABNA, Nov 18: At least five people drowned when a boat capsized in the Jamuna near Alokdiar in the district's Bera thana on Friday night, reports UNB.

Police said a Kazirhat-bound mechanised boat, with 18 passengers on board from Aricha, went down the river after a barge rammed it in the dark at midnight.

Five dead bodies were recovered from Sreepur area this morning.

DU exams postponed

By DU Correspondent The Dhaka University authorities have postponed all examinations scheduled for today at the main examination centre of DU due to unavoidable reasons, says a DU press release. The timetable for other examinations will remain unchanged. Fresh schedule of the postponed examinations will be announced later.

Talks without agenda

From Page 1 after political repression, police attack on Awami League office in presence of Sheikh Hasina, media coup in Mirpur, election, killing of voters after mayoral election in Dhaka and "Ershad style" election in Magura bypolls.

Nasim said Begum Zia dishonoured the spirit of the Liberation War by not implementing the 4-point accord signed in parliament by the government and the Opposition.

If Begum Zia has any respect for democracy, she must declare election under a non-party neutral caretaker government and test her acceptability to the people.

Jatiya Party Secretary General Anwar Hossain Manju said he agreed with the Prime Minister that there was no alternative to discussion to resolve the crisis in a democracy, but asked with whom she wanted to discuss.

"It appears that she has invited only the Awami League to a discussion to resolve the crisis by excluding the Jatiya Party as autocrat and the Jamaat as anti-liberation force," he said.

Without rejecting or accepting her call for dialogue, Manju said the Prime Minister possibly felt that it could be possible to give democracy an institutional shape through the BNP and the Awami League.

Jamaat Secretary General Matur Rahman Nizami said without any specific agenda, a free-style discussion cannot yield any positive result.

Strike at DU

From Page 1 Enamul Haq Shamim, BCL President and Bahadur Bapari, DU Unit President of the student wing, addressed the rally.

The rally demanded action against the police officers involved in the incidents. They also urged the government to accept the Opposition demand for a caretaker government for holding the next general election.

Linking governance with development underscored

By Staff Correspondent Speakers at a seminar yesterday underscored the need for understanding the quality of leadership, the cultural specificity that each country operates in the distinction between top-down and bottom-up accountability and the role of donors in affecting the framework of governance for economic development.

The seminar was organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue for presenting the findings of their continuing research on "The governance of Asia: Lessons for Bangladesh's development."

The research is being directed by Prof Rehman Sobhan.

Four papers were presented at the seminar including "Contemporary theories of the state and governance" by Mirza Hassan, "Governance the market: The East Asia paradigm" by Prof Syed Hashemi, "Perceptions of governance by bilateral and multilateral donors" by Dr Meghna Guhuthakurta and Shanaz Karim and "Towards a theory of governance and development" — by Prof Rehman Sobhan.

Former finance minister M Syeduzzaman, SAMS Kibria, member advisory council of Awami League, M Siddiqueur Rahman, advisor BNP, Pierre Landell-Mills, resident representative of the World Bank, Peter J Fowler, British High Commissioner, Dr P B Rana of Asian Development Bank, Dr Ahmed Kamal and Dr Imtiaz Ahmed of Dhaka University, and Mujahidul Islam Saleem took part in the discussion.

The Midnight File

Bosnian FM's resignation offer positive development

DAYTON, Ohio, Nov 18: Balkan peace talks entered their most crucial day today with US sources saying the offered resignation of Bosnian Foreign Minister Mohamed Sacirbey was a "positive development." The move could pave the way for a greater Croatian role in a future Bosnian government, the sources said, reports\* Reuter.

PM urges Opposition

From Page 1 for the welfare of the people and the country and to protect democracy which has no substitute", Begum Zia said adding, "Confrontation can't help resolve any problem".

Commenting on the Opposition's on-going agitation, the Chairperson of the ruling BNP said agitations like hartals and barricades could never bring welfare to the people and these only caused public sufferings.

As you've the right to announce such programme, the people too have the right not to respond to those. They (the people) have no support for the programmes that harm development and production".

Without naming any political party, the PM said those who opposed the liberation war and also those who removed an elected government to establish autocratic rule in the country could never have faith in democracy.

"But how can a party believing in the spirit of the Liberation War can abstain from participating in the process of democracy, development and welfare of the people", she asked without referring to a major opposition party.

In this regard, she added that none could oppose programmes undertaken for meeting the five basic needs of the people. "Let's work together for the betterment of the people and the nation".

In her speech, the Prime Minister highlighted the

Rajshahi polytech

From Page 1 atleast six bombs on it and fled.

The Polytechnic Institute was closed sine die yesterday following incidents of hurling bombs and setting fire in some room of two hostels. But it was decided that the examinations would be held as per schedule.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal threatened to boycott the examinations which were held normally yesterday.

Meanwhile, JCD leader and VP of the Students Union of the Institute Kaiser Rizvi, was allegedly abducted by Islami Chhatra Shibir activists. Shibir, however, denied this. Police could not confirm the incident.

Institute sources said that some students union leaders were pressing for shifting the date of examinations.

Khaleda

From Page 1 say anything in this regard." She, however, noted, "Some of the newspapers reported things that we never discussed."

The Prime Minister simply smiled when asked whether she would accept a neutral person to head an interim government.

One shot in city

By DMCH Correspondent Two boys and a young man sustained injuries in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Shahjahan Mia, 25, received bullet injury in his right thigh when some unknown person opened fire at him near Anandanganur under Ramna police station in the afternoon. Police could not confirm the incident.

In two other incidents — one at Zakir Hossain Road in Mohammadpur and the other in Karwan Bazar area, two boys, Shohag, 8, and Manik, 9, sustained bomb injuries yesterday morning. They were admitted to DMCH.

Car damaged at DU

By DU Correspondent A car was damaged and two auto-rickshaws were set ablaze yesterday evening, reportedly by the BCL activists, at the TSC area of the Dhaka University.

The pro-Awami League Chhatra League workers earlier brought out a procession demanding immediate release of Shahin Khan, a BCL leader arrested during the hartal programme called by the Opposition last week.

Some 15 rounds of gunshots were heard from the TSC area during the incident. Police lobbed several rounds of tear gas shells to bring the situation under control. A female student of the university was injured by a tear gas shell.

Chokhbandha

From Page 1 cret underground dens of the party at 23 unions of the six thanas, they said adding the well-organised abductors shift the victims to other dens in case of delay of paying the ransom.

High police officials of the four districts at a meeting on September 12 decided to conduct a "combine operation" throughout the area. But in the next 15 days, they could arrest only a few wanted criminals and some members of the terrorist group.

Police also organised public at two villages in Dharmar thana to create mass resistance against the gang. Local people alleged that some influential people were patronising the groups. As a result, police cannot resist or uphold them.

Police, however, said they cannot arrest the gang due to shortage of force and vehicles and the poor communication facilities.

Tax collection

From Page 1 remains normal in the months ahead, we will easily be able to achieve the target for customs duty," he hoped.

A 33-per cent increase in import operations in July-August vindicated the NBR official's observation. According to the Bangladesh Bank estimates LCs (Letter of Credit), excluding the back-to-back ones, worth Tk 1005 crore were registered during the first two months of the current fiscal as against Tk 756 crore in the corresponding time of the fiscal 1994-95.

Police constable

From Page 1 he witnessed the rape of one Monwara Begum by some staff of the hospital on the same day.

Mohalchhari police arrested thana health and family planning officer Imranul Haq, a doctor of the thana health complex, ward boy Ali Ahmed and night guards Ajit Kumar Dey and Maung Ching Thoyai and charged them with rape and culpable homicide, said Abul Hashem.

Monwara Begum, daughter of late A Karim of village Nuchhari under the same thana, in a statement to the police alleged that she was raped by some of the hospital staff and that the young police constable, a BA candidate this year protested it. She also claimed that she witnessed the killing of constable.

\$ 276m deficit

From Page 1 rise and stood at 681 million dollars during the period as against 618 million dollars in the corresponding period of the last year.

The government's measures for off-balancing the effects of this trend through devaluation is also seen as a counter-productive step as the costly import will directly hit two major export sectors — garments and leather industries — which have to depend on imported raw materials, sources concerned said.

The inflation rate has been continuing to rise mainly due to an upswing in the contribution of food item in the inflation parameter. From 1.33 per cent in fiscal 1992-93, it rose to 5.46 in July this year and jumped to 5.71 in August. The sources concerned claimed that the inflation now stood at not below 7.00 per cent.

The contribution of food item to inflation rose from 1.08 in July last year to 8.31 July this year, resulting in a general inflation of 5.46. The contribution of food continued its upswing and stood at 8.82, making the general inflation at 5.71.