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## First JU convocation today

By JU Correspondent

The first convocation of the Jahangirnagar University (JU) will be held today at the central playground on the university campus. President and Chancellor of the universities Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed is expected to preside over the ceremony. He will also confer 5463 degrees to 2290 former students who have registered their names to attend the convocation. The degrees comprise graduation, postgraduation, M Phil and Ph D degrees. A total of 2290 former students, of whom 1800 male and 490 female, have registered their names for the convocation.

University Grants Commission (UGC) has allocated Tk 10 lakh to supplement the 24 lakh budget of the convocation. A total of Tk 11.4 lakh has been collected from the former students while the rest of the total expenditure has been collected from the university's own sources.

## By-election to Thakurgaon-1 JS seat Feb 18

By-election to Thakurgaon-1 seat of the Jatiya Sangsad will be held on February 18, said an Election Commission announcement yesterday, reports UNB.

The seat fell vacant after the death of M Khademul Islam who was elected from the constituency in the June 12 election.

According to the election schedule, the last date for submission of nomination papers to the returning or assistant returning officer is January 18.

On January 19, the returning officer will scrutinise the nomination papers while January 25 has been fixed as the last date for withdrawal of candidature.

In a notification, the EC has appointed the Deputy Commissioner of Thakurgaon Returning Officer and Thana Nirbahi Officer, Thakurgaon sadar. Assistant Returning Officer.

## Major starts 3-nation trip Jan 8

LONDON, Jan 4: Prime Minister John Major starts a visit this week to Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan aimed at promoting trade between some of Britain's most important former colonies, officials said today, reports Reuter.

Major will be the first British premier to visit Bangladesh since labour leader James Callaghan in 1978. Officials in Bangladesh say they hope the three-day visit will open a new horizon in bilateral relations.

A delegation of business and industry leaders will accompany Major on the January 8-14 trip, which coincides with India and Pakistan's 50th anniversary of independence from Britain.

## Ilias dead

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Ilias got Ekushey Award, Bangla Academy Award and Ananda Bazar Literary Award for his outstanding contribution in the field of contemporary Bangla literature. Some of his noted works are: 'Onno Ghore Onno Swar' 'Khwar', 'Dudh Bhato Utpat' 'Dokjher Om' and 'Khawbana'.

The noted litterateur, who had been undergoing treatment at Community Hospital for a long time, died at about 6:30 am. His right leg was amputated for bone cancer a year back.

The body of Ilias was first taken to Dhaka College in the morning. Teachers and students of the college paid rich tributes to the late professor.

Intellectuals, poets and writers placed floral wreaths on the coffin at Bangladesh Lekhak Shibir office at Paltan at noon. The body was then taken to Dhaka University in a mournful procession in the afternoon.

The namaj-e-janaza for Akhteruzzaman Ilias was held at the Dhaka University Central Mosque after Asr prayers.

Later in the evening the body was sent to his village home in Bogra for burial.

Bangladesh Lekhak Shibir will hold condolence meetings at different places of the country on January 6 and a citizens' rally at the Central Shaheen Minar on January 8.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday expressed his deep shock at the death of popular short story writer Akhteruzzaman Ilias.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited the residence of noted litterateur Prof Akhteruzzaman Ilias.

On hearing the death news while attending a function at Rajbari Police Line in the morning, the Prime Minister went straight to the Azimpur residence of Ilias to express her deep shock and sympathy.

She stayed with the bereaved family members of the late novelist for sometime.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the officers and jawans of the 46 Infantry Brigade while witnessing the winter exercise of the brigade at Narsingdi yesterday. —PID photo

## PM witnesses winter exercise

## Army to be modernised

NARSINGDI, Jan 4: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said the government is willing to build a modern, well-equipped and disciplined army capable of facing present-day challenges, reports UNB.

"But, it is not possible to implement any plan without the concerted effort of all," she said while addressing the officers, GCOs and jawans of 46th Infantry Brigade at Dukundi school ground in Belabo thana of the district.

The Prime Minister went to Kamargaon and Dukundi areas of Sripur and Belabo thanas of the district to witness the winter exercise of the 46th Brigade.

Expressing satisfaction over the exercise of the brigade, Hasina said, "We hope you will develop your skills utilising the limited resources of the government."

She said Bangladesh army is a glorious institution and from the day of its inception after the independence it is brightening its glory day by day.

During the Liberation War the members of the armed forces of the country proved their heroism in the battlefield.

## Gowda: Warm welcome

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Bangladesh airspace. His arrival will be heralded by a 21-gun salute.

Airport formalities over, Gowda, accompanied by Sheikh Hasina, will straight drive in a ceremonial motorcade to the Jamuna state guesthouse where he will stay.

Official sources in Dhaka said yesterday the leaders would make efforts for resolving the outstanding Chakma refugee problems for laying another landmark in the current move towards further strengthening the ties between the two countries as they did by signing the Ganges water-sharing treaty on December 12.

The two prime ministers will give emphasis on joint collaboration for development of the water resources of four countries — Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan — located along the Ganges and the Brahmaputra basins.

They are likely to deal with the proposal forwarded by Dhaka at the recent SAARC Council of Ministers meeting for developing a sub-regional cooperation grouping those four countries.

The two heads of government will also discuss matters relating to expansion of economic cooperation between the two countries, particularly through investment and joint

Siddiq became the president of the Transport Owners' Association and Azad Siddiq was made an executive member. The AGM of the association was held four months ahead of schedule. There are 281 mini busses plying on the Dhaka-Tangail route. The vehicles belong to some 200 owners.

Meanwhile, a rally of Chhatra League was held in the afternoon. The rally paraded along the city roads.

Tangail

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on a country since ESCAP decisions were taken by its Council which consists of high level representations of its member countries.

He further said that the first Asian Highway route through Chittagong was conceived with official understanding with Myanmar. After Myanmar joined the Asian Highway officially in 1989, and China in 1988, the map of the route changed dramatically.

According to Dr Rahmatullah, Myanmar was not interested in making its transit point near Chittagong because it had no economic interest there.

"Instead, Myanmar approved a route in its north west region with India. This route will go through India to Bangladesh via Tamabil point and go out of Bangladesh through Benapole or Bangabandhu (and vice versa) in this part of the region. On the south eastern Asia side, this route links China's business city of Kunming, Thailand and further on," he pointed out.

Some other speakers, however, maintained that the current gateways served the purpose of India more than Bangladesh's and that ESCAP was imposing the present route.

Dr Rahmatullah, explaining ESCAP's position said that it could not impose any decision

## PM's address on Police Week '97

## Ensure peace, discharge duty with neutrality

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the police to perform their duties with utmost sincerity to strictly maintain law and order and help create condition for increased investment in the country, reports UNB.

Foreign investors are taking more and more interest in Bangladesh, Hasina said, adding that maintenance of peace and order is imperative to keep up the economic rejuvenation.

Inaugurating the Police Week '97 at Razbari Police Lines in the morning, the Prime Minister said: "If we want prosperity and development, there is no alternative to investment...continued peace and order is prerequisite to development."

"A developed economy will benefit you and your family and free and people from the curse of poverty," she told the police force.

The Prime Minister said the government had given topmost priority to the prevention of terrorism and improvement of law-and-order situation by curbing crime.

The police force by discharging their duties with honesty

and neutrality would definitely be able to free the country from terrorism and ensure safety for public life.

Referring to various government efforts for the welfare of policemen, Hasina said despite resource constraints, the government would take all possible steps to modernise the police force by providing them with modern training and logistics.

She said ration for the non-gazetted police employees had been raised to 40 per cent from 20 per cent.

She also lauded the glorious role of Bangladesh police contingent in UN peacekeeping missions abroad and said they had enhanced the country's prestige through their laborious performance there.

Earlier, the Prime Minister inspected the parade and took salute of the colourful police march-past.

Later, she distributed police and President medals among 45 policemen, five of them posthumously, for their outstanding contribution to maintenance of law and order.

The function was attended by ministers, MPs, top civil and military officials and diplomats.

## '\$100 m taken away by foreign portfolio investors'

By Staff Correspondent

Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, former finance advisor to the caretaker government of Justice Habibur Rahman yesterday said that the country faced "constraints in macro-economic vulnerability" for the first time in last three years after liberation.

He was speaking at a public lecture on "macro-economic vulnerability, international finance and aid," organised by Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) at the auditorium of the Academy for Planning and Development in the city.

"Facing serious decline in foreign aid, the government took a number of steps to liberalise the economy for attacking Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). But it failed, drawing a small amount of FDI during the recent years."

Although the amount of FDI was very small, a big portion of that amount went out of the country. About 100 million dollars have been withdrawn by the foreign portfolio investors in just two months, Mahmud claimed.

Prof EVK Fitzgerald, Director, Finance and Trade Policy Research Centre of University of Oxford presented the key note paper at the lecture. Prof Debapriya Bhattacharya, general secretary of the BEA also spoke.

He said 80 per cent of the FDI from developed countries is now going to only 10 developing countries which do not include Bangladesh.

## Cancel absorption rules of '85, demands (Gen) Edn Assoc

The BCS (General) Education Association yesterday urged the government to cancel the absorption rules of 1985, what it said was harmful for the majority members of the education cadre.

The Association, at a meeting in the Dhaka College auditorium decided to give a memorandum to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 8 to press home their demand, a press release of the association said.

They will also sit for a token hunger strike in front of the 'Shikha Bhawan' on March 4, the release added.

Chaired by acting president of the Samity Prof A B M Zanab Ali, the meeting was also addressed by Prof Jahanara Begum, Abu Yusuf, Kudrot-e-Khuda, Dr Golam Rasul Mia, Subir and Bikash Dev.

## Conventions

Bangladesh as well as most of the 25 countries involved in the ALTID project, requires to adopt some internationally recognised conventions of standardised common road signals, customs procedures, container rules and other related issues to facilitate the smooth operation of the Asian Highway, he noted.

The agreement we have with India for river transit for decades does not allow such trafficking. So adoption of these conventions would only ensure safe transportation of goods and people," he noted.

## Trans-Asian Railway

Although the Trans Asian Railway (TAR) project of ESCAP was conceived separately, it is now part of ALTID. But building a Trans Asian rail link still has a lot of challenge, ESCAP rail way expert Peter J Hodgkinson said.

There were several missing links in the rail links of the 25 member countries while rail line gauges also differed in different countries. The cover up missing links building of the Jamuna Bridge would play an important role in this region, the seminar was told.

These conventions are: Road Traffic, Road Signs and Signals, Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets, Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles, Customs Convention on Containers, International Convention on the Harmonisation of Frontier Control of Goods and Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road.

A route through Chittagong to Yangon would only be supplementary to the already existing shipping links. "Thus it has less economic implication or attraction for other countries," he added.

"The routes are not imposed by the ESCAP or any single country. So, if Myanmar and Bangladesh agree, it can have

## BCL founding anniversary observed

By DU Correspondent

The Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and the pro-JSD Chhatra League (K-C) brought out two colourful rallies in the city on the occasion of their 49th founding anniversary yesterday.

The supporters of the BCL (S-P) from different parts of the city gathered at the foot of the Aparajey Bangla of Dhaka University. The rally started at around 1 pm.

Jubilant BCL workers joined the rally riding on horse carriages and bullock carts. A discussion meeting and a reunion programme will be held at the Ramna Batamul at 10 am today.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will address the meeting.

The BCL (K-C) rally started from the Aparajey Bangla. The pro-JSD activists placed wreaths at the central Shaheed Minar.

## JCD activist

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On December 30, Ruhul Amin and Mahid, students of Madan Mohan College and JCD activists sustained stab injuries as they, along with some others, were attacked allegedly by the activists of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-P).

They were admitted to the medical college hospital where Ruhul Amin, a 2nd year student died.

The Sylhet district JCD brought out a procession carrying the body of Ruhul Amin.

Police resorted to lathicharge, lobbed 15 rounds of tear gas shell and opened fire to disperse the agitating JCD activists.

## Six foreigners

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The six were arrested on December 22, 1995 when Indian Air Force jets forced their plane to land in Bombay. The aircraft had dropped the arms five days earlier and criss-crossed India without being detected.

At the time it was intercepted, the plane was on its way to the Pakistani city of Karachi following a stop in the Thai resort of Phuket.

A seventh member of the crew, identified as a New Zealander, ran away after the plane landed in Bombay.

The arrested men have reportedly said they were financed by parties in the Caribbean, but to date have publicly refused to divulge who the arms were destined for.

Muslims caught eating in public are often jailed for no more than a week, lectured in prison about their conduct and encouraged to fast and pray with others jailed on similar charges.

Other Gulf states also punish those caught eating, drinking or smoking in public during the holy month of Ramzan.

In Bahrain, violators can be jailed until the end of the month and have their heads shaved. In the United Arab Emirates, violators face one month in jail or a fine of up to 1,500 dirhams (dirls 410). Anyone caught drinking alcohol in public during Ramzan in the UAE could be sentenced to 80 lashes.

## Burglary

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The theft of the telephone set would have appeared as the handiwork of 'cat burglars' if someone would not have probed the gloves compartment and the boot of the car of an official of the SEC on the previous day.