



JS session resumes today

By Staff Correspondent
The third session of the country's seventh Jatiya Sangsad resumes at 3:30 this afternoon.
The session began on January 15 and was adjourned on January 29 for the Eid-ul-Fitr.
The Sangsad is scheduled to have a 24-hour general discussion on a motion of vote of thanks for the presidential address in the House. President Shahabuddin Ahmed gave his inaugural address of the year on the opening day of the third session.
The members of parliament had an hour of discussion on the presidential address before the session was adjourned.
However, the session is likely to complete some serious See Page 12 Col 4

Body to probe death of Shima

The government has formed a one-member enquiry commission to probe the death of Shima Chowdhury in 'safe custody' of Chittagong jail, reports UNB.
An official announcement yesterday said the commission comprising a retired judge of the Supreme Court's High Court Division, Dalil Uddin Ahmed, would investigate the incidents.
The probe body will submit its report along with recommendations to the government within three weeks.
Shima, a garments worker and an alleged victim of rape while in Raouzan thana police custody on October 9 last year, died in the jail on February 7 night.

Shima's death mysterious, says BWLA

By Staff Correspondent
The Bangladesh Women Lawyers' Association (BWLA) in a press release yesterday published the findings of its investigation into the death of Shima Chowdhury.
Shima, a garments worker, aged about 17, who was allegedly gang raped by some police men at the Raouzan Police Station in October last year, died while under the safe custody at the Chittagong district jail on February 7.
The four-page report said there are enough grounds for suspicion that Shima died from poisoning or other causes.
"The decision to keep the victim, Shima, and the four accused police personnel at the same jail provides enough grounds for suspicion about the cause of the death," it added.

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DSE MARKET

DSE price index: 1890.46 (+231%)
Market capital Tk: 14150.44cr
Transactions in volume: 329366
Transactions in value Tk: 1095cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index: 794.59 (+237%)
Market capital Tk: 10409.77cr
Transactions in volume: 133645
Transactions in value Tk: 2909160cr

Action plan for 25m MT annual food production by 2002

By Reaz Ahmad

A plan of action is being drafted to attain an annual food production target of 25 million metric tons (MT) by the turn of the century, said official sources.

A task force was formed earlier to prepare a report outlining the plan to achieve the ambitious target by the year 2000.

The task force, headed by the Executive Vice Chairman of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC), submitted its report recently. After detailed discussions on various aspects of the report, it was sent back for revision with the recommendation that the target-year should be re-fixed as 2002.

A highly-placed source in the Agriculture Ministry told The Daily Star yesterday that a meeting of the task force would be held immediately after necessary revisions in the report.

The task force also comprised heads of various research institutions like BRRI and BINA, Director General of Agriculture Extensions Department and a representative of Bangladesh Krishi Bank.

A roundtable would be organised sometime in early March to elicit suggestions

from all concerned for attaining the cherished target. All former food and agriculture ministers and advisers and experts concerned would be invited to participate in the roundtable and contribute with their suggestions and opinions to the government's efforts for self-reliance in food production.

The task force report, now being revised, is likely to have provisions for an increase of food production by 10 lakh MT a year so that the target of 2.5 crore MT could be achieved by the year 2002, the source added.

The target of food production is 207 lakh MT in fiscal 1996-97, according to official statistics.

Officials concerned explained that emphasis would be given on seed supply, extension of irrigation facilities and agricultural credit disbursement while 'favourable' output price and the 'climate factor' would also be taken into active consideration.

A high official of the Agriculture Ministry said, "Our arable lands have a maximum yield potential of six MT of crop See Page 12 col 6

PM tells IPU confce in Delhi Women's role in politics must to make democracy meaningful

NEW DELHI, Feb 15: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today called for finding ways allowing women to play their rightful role as equal partners in socio-economic and political life, reports UNB.

"The urgency of political empowerment of women is now widely recognised... the participation of women and the poor in politics has to be integrated in such a manner as to make democracy truly meaningful," Sheikh Hasina said.

She was addressing the plenary session of the inter-parliamentary conference titled "Towards Partnership Between Men and Women in Politics" at the international conference centre of Vigyan Bhawan here.

Hasina said age-old traditions, social norms and values, economic dependence and illiteracy contributed to the marginal position of women in the realm of power and decision-making at all levels.

"Women no longer want to remain peripheral actors and want to play their rightful role in all spheres of life, including economic and political life," she told the distinguished audience.

Quoting national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, the Prime Minister said though men and women had been equal partners in the development of civilisations, women were denied an equal status.

Social and political institutions as well as the legal systems discriminated against them, she maintained.

Hasina observed that unequal opportunities in education and training, unequal access to health facilities, limited rights in owning wealth and assets and denial of the right to exercise political power condemned them to a subordinate status in most societies.

She said the journey from the Mexico to Beijing conferences on women was marked by a sense of dedication and commitment on the part of both men and women who were determined to break the social, political, legal and psychological barriers and obstacles in See Page 12 Col 4

Shantibahini men gun down 3 policemen

From Our Correspondent

BANDARBAN, Feb 15: Shantibahini men today gunned down three policemen in an ambush at Katapahar, four kilometres off the Roanaghara thana of the district, official sources said.

The dead police constables were identified as Abdul Mannan of Fakirhat thana under Bagerhat district, Shahor Ali of Bhangra thana of Faridpur district and Wahed Ali of Pirganj thana in Rangpur district.

The incident took place at a time when talks continued between the government and the Parbatyia Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), the parent organisation of the Shantibahini, for a peaceful settlement of the Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) problem.

The Shantibahini men first charged grenades and then opened fire while a seven-member police team, split in front and rear groups, was on its way to a road protection post at Katapahar at about 8.30 in the morning, the sources said.

When the three-member front group came under attack, the four others in the rear re-

sisted with gunshots. The four policemen were unhurt.

The Shantibahini men also took away three SLRs (automatic rifles), 150 rounds of bullet, caps, waist-belts and shoes of the policemen who were later found dead at the site of the ambush.

The three bodies were sent to their respective homes after autopsy at the Bandarban Sadar Hospital, hospital sources said.

The Superintendent of Police, could not be contacted since he was at the tension-gripped spot till filing of this report at 6:30 pm. The Deputy Commissioner left for Chittagong.

After the attack the Shantibahini men fled into deep forest and they also abducted two persons of Tonchanga tribe on their way back, the official sources said.

Tension gripped the Bandarban hill district following the attack by Shantibahini.

Security forces later launched a search operation in the surrounding jungles to nab the killers and recover the looted See Page 12 Col 1

Hasina, Gowda talk bilateral, regional issues

NEW DELHI, Feb 15: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on her Indian counterpart H D Deve Gowda at his official residence here tonight, reports BSS.

They discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations between the two countries. The two leaders also discussed matters of regional cooperation and international issues of common concern.

Minister for Environment and Forest, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Deputy Minister for Primary and Mass Education, Prof Jinnatunnessa Talukder, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr S A Samad, Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India C M Shafi Sami were present in the meeting.

Indian External Affairs Minister I K Gujral, Principal Secretary to the Indian Prime Minister Satish Chandra and Indian Foreign Secretary Salman Haider were also present.

Later, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended a dinner hosted by Indian Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda.

Yasmin murder

Arrest warrant against doctor of forensic deptt

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Feb 15: The Special Court here today resumed trial of the three main accused in the sensational Yasmin rape and murder case.

The court recorded deposition of Hannan, a guard of Dinajpur DSB office, and issued bailable warrant of arrest against Amirul Hossain, a doctor of forensic department, because of his non-appearance in the court.

The three main accused in the case, facing trial in the Special Court under the Women and Children Repression Control Act, were on the dock. They were Amirul Haq, former driver of Dinajpur police line, Mominul Haq, former ASI of Dinajpur Kotwali thana, and Abdus Sattar, a former police constable.

The defence counsel pleaded See Page 12 Col 2

BNP will protest govt's misdeeds both in JS & on streets: Khaleda

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday accused the present government of violating the Constitution, reports UNB.

"This government is violating the Constitution sitting in the parliament," she said while addressing newcomers to the BNP at her Minto Road official residence in the evening.

Four former Jatiya Party MPs — Sultana Doula, Enayet Noor, Firoza Zaman and Syeda Sakina Islam — and a group of Jatiya Mahila Party leaders and workers joined the BNP yesterday.

"We have to protect the country and its Constitution and save the countrymen from conspiracies," she said.

The Opposition Leader said the BNP will not remain silent if the government tries to sell out the country's independence and sovereignty. "In that case, we'll be bound to announce any programme."

She said her party will protest "injustice and repression" of the government both in parliament and on the street.

The BNP Chairperson stressed the need for greater unity among patriotic and nationalist forces for raising voice against all conspiracies against the people.

"Inshallah we'll succeed in our movement against all injustices and misdeeds of the government," she said.

Pak NA special session begins

ISLAMABAD, Feb 15: The special session of Pakistan's National Assembly started here this morning with the outgoing Speaker of the House, Yousuf Raza Gilani, in the chair, reports Xinhua.

The new members of the National Assembly-elect have also started taking oath of office.

The names of the new lawmakers-elect were called and they started signing the roll individually.

Begum Zia said the government is destroying the country in a planned way through terrorism, repression and false propaganda.

"This is not true that we forgot the Ganges water sharing issue during my visit to New Delhi," she said refuting ruling party's propaganda in this regard.

"In fact, we did not want to sign any accord against the country's interest. We wanted to reach an agreement like the one signed during the period of Shaheed Zia," she said.

The BNP Chairperson accused the government of destroying Islamic values by creating troubles in Eid Jamaat at different places of the country.

Begum Zia termed February 15 as the day of consolidating democracy and upholding the Constitution. She claimed that the then BNP government held the elections to protect democracy.

On the other hand, she then opposition party, which boycotted the elections, was not allowed to participate in the session.

Ekushey '97 Rich tradition in juvenile literature developed in 25 yrs

By Staff Correspondent

A rich tradition has developed in the arena of juvenile literature of Bangladesh in the last 25 years, said Prof Hayat Mahmood at a function in the city yesterday.

He was presenting the key note paper titled "Panchish Bachar Bangladesh Shisu Shahitya" (Juvenile literature of Bangladesh in the last 25 years) at a lecture session organised by the Amar Ekushey '97 programme.

He said a large number of books had been published in at least ten different branches of child literature including fiction, travelogue and poetry since the independence of Bangladesh.

"It is encouraging that books on the Liberation War are being published in stead of surrealistic stories," Prof Mahmood said.

Prof Abdur Rashid presided See Page 12 Col 5

Place nat'l interest above party politics: President

NETRAKONA, Feb 15: President Shahabuddin Ahmed today called upon political parties to place the country's greater interest above party politics and work unitedly for national development, reports BSS.

"There is no harm for anyone to follow and propagate his own party ideals and politics, but everybody must remember that the national interest is the supreme," he said while addressing a public reception at Moktarpura ground here.

The President said, "There should not be any bar in forging unity and working together for the national interest, keeping one's political identity and party politics intact."

Presided over by Fazlur Rahman Khan MP, the reception was also addressed, by Members of Parliament from Netrakona Jalaluddin Talukdar, Nurul Amin Talukdar and Dr Muhammad Ali.

M Atiur Rahman Chowdhury, chairman of the municipality of Netrakona, President Shahabuddin's home town, presented the President the key of the town.

The President said it is a matter of regret that criticism against political rivals has become the only issue in national politics.

He called upon the Members of Parliament, particularly those from Netrakona, to set an example of unity among themselves for the development of the district.

Earlier, speaking at two other receptions accorded by Netrakona Government College and Netrakona Girls' College, the President told the students that in a democratic country everyone has the right to express his or her political opinions.

"(but) educational institutions should be the place for academic pursuit only and all concerned must ensure that politics might not pollute the academic atmosphere," the President said.

See Page 12 Col 2

Kibria tells The Daily Star Macro economic situation stable, looking up

By Inam Ahmed

A low inflation rate, stabilisation of foreign exchange reserve from a free fall, qualitative improvement of import contents, and a slight increase in export, are the signs that Finance Minister S A M S Kibria finds as indicators of a stable macro-economic situation that is "looking up".

However, he is concerned about the slurring performances of garments and leather, the two major export items. To push them up, he has already advised the central bank and the commercial banks to give more banking facilities, the finance minister told The Daily Star in an interview yesterday at his office.

"The macro economic situation is sound, stable and looking up. The inflation rate is low, and whatever gains the country makes it goes to the people's pockets," he said.

According to the old system of measurement taking 1973-74 as the base year, the current rate of inflation is 2.71 per cent. Under the new system taking 1985-86 as the base year, the inflation rate comes to 3.89 per cent. In December 1995, this figure was 5.81 per cent as per



Finance Minister SAMS Kibria

the old system and 6.86 per cent according to the new system.

About the foreign exchange reserve, he said the government's target is to maintain a reserve at the level of 2.3 billion US dollars against the current 1.98 billion dollars, recorded in January.

"But the point to note is that throughout fiscal 1995-96, there was a drain out of foreign exchange which resulted in a net outflow of about one billion US dollars because of food-grains purchase and import of consumer goods triggered by high expansion of domestic credit," said Kibria. "From 3.07 billion dollars in June 1995, it plummeted to 2.039 billion dollars in June 1996 when I took over the office."

"Since then, the reserve has stabilised and it is hovering around a certain level," he maintained.

The reserve was 2.013 billion dollars, in July 1996, 2.065 billion dollars in August, 1.979 billion dollars in September, 2.021 billion dollars in October, 1.862 billion in November, 1.914 billion in December, and 1.984 billion in January.

"We are trying to stabilise the situation through monetary measures like exchange rate adjustment," the minister asserted.

"I am also satisfied with the trend of import which is about the same level as last year's. But in the previous year there was a large import of consumer goods See Page 12 Col 7

US orders expulsion of 2 Indian diplomats

WASHINGTON, Feb 15: The United States has ordered the expulsion of two Indian diplomats in an apparent retaliation to the expulsion of two American diplomats from New Delhi, believed to have been working for CIA, reports PTI.

The two Indian diplomats have been given a deadline of 'a few weeks' to leave the country, diplomatic sources said here today.

The two Indian diplomats are said to be junior in rank working in Indian consulates in Chicago and San Francisco.

Indian Acting Charge d'Affaires Shiv Mukherjee was summoned to the State Department earlier this week and conveyed the American decision. He declined any comment on the subject today.

Teenaged boy burnt alive in city

By DMCH Correspondent

A teenaged boy, Zakir Hossain, was burnt alive in a fire at a shop at North Goran in the city Friday night, police and sources at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital said.

Zakir Hossain, aged about 15 was the son of Tazul Islam of Bancharampur, Brahmanbaria. He was an employee of the shop, Beauty Boponi Bitan, and was sleeping inside when the fire broke out at about 1 a.m. See Page 12 Col 3

One killed, 10 shops gutted in Bhola

From Our Correspondent

BARISAL, Feb 15: One person was killed, two were injured and at least 10 grocery shops gutted in a fire in the Borhanuddin bandar area of Bhola last night.

According to witnesses, the fire originated from a shop. The deceased was identified as Gouranga Babu, 60, owner of a shop and the injured as Milon, 30, and Kader Dhal, 41. The fire fighters from Bhola rushed to the spot to extinguish the blaze.

জাতীয় পুষ্প প্রদর্শনী '৯৭
স্থান : শেরেবাংলা নগরস্থ ঢাকা আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য মেলা মাঠের সম্মুখ স্থান।
সময় : ১৭-১৯ ফেব্রুয়ারী '৯৭ প্রত্যহ সকাল ১০টা হতে বিকাল ৫টা।
ফুল অনুরাগীদের জন্য সুখবর
ঢাকা আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য মেলা '৯৭-এর অংশ হিসেবে আগামী ১৭ই ফেব্রুয়ারী হতে ১৯শে ফেব্রুয়ারী পর্যন্ত ৩ (তিন) দিনব্যাপী জাতীয় পুষ্প প্রদর্শনী '৯৭ অনুষ্ঠিত হতে যাচ্ছে।
বাণিজ্য মন্ত্রণালয় ও রক্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরো যৌথভাবে এই প্রদর্শনীর আয়োজন করছে এবং প্রদর্শনীটি শেরেবাংলা নগরস্থ ঢাকা আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য মেলার একই প্রাঙ্গণে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।
প্রদর্শনীটি প্রতিদিন সকাল ১০টা থেকে বিকাল ৫টা পর্যন্ত জনসাধারণের জন্য উন্মুক্ত থাকবে।
দেশের লক্ষ প্রতিষ্ঠিত ফুলচাষী ও ফুল ব্যবসায়ীগণ বিপুল ফুল সম্ভার নিয়ে এই পুষ্প মেলায় অংশগ্রহণ করবেন। এই উন্মুক্ত পুষ্প মেলায় ফুলের সৌন্দর্য পিপাসু সকল স্তরের জনগণকে আমন্ত্রণ জানানো যাচ্ছে।
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