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### Seeds (Amend) Bill '97 placed in JS

A private-sector seed development bill was introduced in Parliament yesterday aiming to ensure availability of adequate seeds for farming, reports UNB.

Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury tabled the Seeds (Amendment) Bill 1997 in the House which proposed certain changes in the Seed Ordinance 1977.

The proposed changes in the ordinance would help the private sector develop their seed industry to ensure quality seeds at the farmers' level at fair price in light of the National Seed Policy.

As per the proposed amendments, the government may specify the standard regarding the germination percentage, purity percentage, moisture content and such other components of seed quality with respect to any seed of any notified kind or variety.

The government may also specify the mark or label to indicate that such seed conforms to the standard and the particulars which such mark or label may contain.

The Bill also proposed that no unregistered seed dealer should carry on the business of selling, keeping for sale, offering to sell, bartering or otherwise supplying any seed of any notified kind or variety.

BNP lawmaker Major (ret'd) Akhteruzzaman raised objection against the introduction of the Bill, saying there is no need of such a Bill and it is only designed to favour some people.

He said the Bill proposed enhancement of the members of Seed Board to 25 from the existing 15, and the objective of such move is politicisation. The farmers would not get quality and adequate seed at fair price by only making the board top-heavy, he said.

### Dy Speaker

From Page 1  
The government must thoroughly investigate the incident and take legal steps against those responsible for the killing of the peasants, Rahman demanded.

The Deputy Speaker who was presiding over the sitting said: "I am in agreement with Khalilur Rahman. The Home Minister should make a statement in the House on the gruesome incident."

The Home Minister was not present in the House at that time.

### Iranian quake

From Page 1  
people, was devastated. Shiran is 25 kilometers southwest of the town of Ardabil.

Reza Azizvand was among only a handful of people who remained here, and he sat in the only room of his house that remained standing.

He said his wife of five months was among the dead and estimated that half of the village's people had been wiped out.

The Iranian quake was one of a number that jolted Asian countries over the last couple of days, including tremors in Armenia, China and Pakistan. Scientists said there was no evidence that any of them were connected.

The death toll in just six villages visited by reporters in Ardabil province was estimated at more than 2,000 people.

"We do not know who is where," said a man in Viand, a village of 700 people where residents said 33 people had died.

"No one knows whether his neighbours have left the village to go live with relatives elsewhere, whether he is in a hospital or buried somewhere under the rubble," he said.

A doctor in Ardabil and several villagers said the wolves and dogs had attacked the corpses of people and animals and, at times, hampered rescuers.

Hundreds of sheep and cows — the livelihood of the farming villages — were buried under landslides and the collapsed walls of houses.

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The Ekushey Book Fair at the Bangla Academy premises in the city is drawing a large number of visitors everyday. — Star photo

### 8 steps taken to combat arsenic pollution, JS told

By Staff Correspondent

The government has taken up all possible measures to combat arsenic contamination in various parts of the country, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

Winding up a short discussion on the arsenic contamination, the minister mentioned eight steps undertaken by the government to deal with the problem.

The government steps include ensuring supply of arsenic contamination-free drinking water through setting up of tubewells and deep tubewells in the affected areas, identifying the sources of contamination and testing contaminated water, undertaking short and long term projects to check the disease and treat the patients, formation of a national committee and three sub-committees to protect public health, sealing off of the tubewells supplying contaminated water, setting up of testing laboratories in rural areas, listing of the affected population and detecting the impact of contaminated water on them and vigilance on the situation in the affected areas.

Speaking on the spread of arsenic contamination in the country, Zillur Rahman told the House that arsenic had been detected in some areas, especially some northern districts.

The minister stressed on the role of the press in creating awareness among the people and also sought cooperation of the opposition parties in dealing with the problem.

Earlier, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Dr Badruddoza Choudhury proposed that a random survey on

the spread and effect of arsenic contamination be conducted and investigation be held on the issue, physicians and the health workers be trained on the disease, a committee, if possible, a parliamentary one, be formed on the matter and improved medical services be made available in the country.

Dr Choudhury also blamed the government for not taking adequate steps to deal with the problem.

Abdul Latif Mirza of the ruling Awami League submitted the notice on the arsenic contamination on Wednesday on which Mirza himself spoke only. Discussion on the notice could not be held on the day as other MPs of the ruling AL and opposition BNP and Jatiya Party who were scheduled to speak were absent from the House on that day.

The members listed to speak on the issue were absent yesterday also and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition rose to speak on the matter as soon as Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid, pointing out the absence of the concerned MPs, invited the LGRD Minister to make a statement.

**Bhasantek slum**  
From Page 1  
ing community of some 1,000 handed eviction operation. She requested anonymity in fear of reprisal from the *mastans*.

The State Minister for Housing and Public Works, Afsar Uddin Khan, was later asked to resign following eviction at the slum.

Others said that the group has already 'sold' the plots as many as 'few hundred' families. "Everyone knows that having a plot here would serve as a guarantee for rehabilitation, so many have paid up the sum and are building their huts," said Nasir, another victim who came to The Daily Star office, adding that the real poor and homeless people like him did not stand the slightest chance in front of the *mastans*.

Asked whether the police were informed about it, Nasir said that they were too afraid to do so. When contacted, the duty-officer of the Cantonment thana said that they had heard about it but could not do anything because there had not been any written complaint about it.

**BNP agitation**  
From Page 1  
against them, resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner and introduction of voter's identity card.

BNP's month-long programmes include countrywide mass contact from March 3-29 and meetings and processions at thana headquarters on March 30.

It threatened to declare 'tougher' programmes if the government failed to improve the present political and economic situation and meet its demands by March 30.

### Chinese investors urged to set up textile units

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed has urged the Chinese investors to set up joint-venture textile industries in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

"Bangladesh wants to be self-reliant in textile sector by the year 2000 to maintain GSP and increase value addition in garment export," the Minister told the visiting Chinese business delegation who called on him in the city yesterday.

Yin Junde, Vice-Chairman of the China National Textile Machinery Corporation (CTMC), is leading the delegation. Their visit is aimed at expediting the use of Chinese machinery in textile sector.

During the meeting, the visiting Chinese businessmen and investors expressed their happiness over the normalcy in overall situation, including political harmony, prevailing in Bangladesh.

Yin said CTMC is willing to extend its vast experience in textile sector by providing textile machinery and technology

to revamp the sector. "CTMC is ready to provide complete spinning machineries and equipment at competitive prices," he said.

Welcoming the delegation, Tofael said: "Chinese government and the people are always friendly to us and have become our development partner."

Referring to the GSP and increase value-addition in garment export, he said the government is mobilising Tk 500 to 1000 crores to support the local investors to expedite their interest in this sector.

Tofael called upon the Chinese entrepreneurs to enjoy the "incentive package" offered to the foreign investors and said China will be welcomed in setting up an industrial park in Bangladesh to cement the Bangladesh-China friendship.

CTMC is one of the biggest textile machinery manufacturers in the world and exports its products to over 30 countries. More than 30 mills have so far been set up in Bangladesh with the assistance of CTMC.

### PM meets cross-section of people

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave audience to a cross-section of people at her office yesterday to know their problems and give immediate solution, reports UNB.

Some 20 people told their personal problems to the Prime Minister during an hour-long meet-the-people programme.

Some of them appealed to the Prime Minister for job and some for monetary help and some of them only came to have a glimpse of their beloved leader.

Sheila Begum, a young lady, and her sister came to Sheikh Hasina with an appeal for protection against harassment by some terrorists of their area at Peelkhana in the city.

A 70-year-old woman, Zuneda Khatun, also appealed to the Prime Minister for taking action against some terrorists who are threatening her son.

Prime Minister Hasina directed the officials concerned to investigate the incidents and take necessary steps.

Sheikh Hasina also consoled some others who came to meet her and assured some others of help. She also encouraged some of the distressed people and suggested them to do something themselves to face the challenges of life.

**Hartal observed at Chhatak**  
From Staff Correspondent  
SYLHET, Mar 2: The movement of buses on the Sylhet-Sunamganj Road remained suspended today as a hartal was enforced at Chhatak.

The limestone industry production committee enforced the dawn-to-dusk strike demanding an end to the alleged pilferage of gas in the lime producing factories in Dhaka, Narayan-ganj and Gazipur.

**JUTA polls**  
From Page 1  
Mahmud and Meherigar Kabita.

The other group jointly led by the JU VC Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury and pro-VC Prof Alauddin Ahmed has nominated Prof Anwarul Haq Shaif (secretary) and Dr M A Matin (president) and the contestants are Prof Nazma Siddiqui (Vice president), Prof AFM Ubaidur Rahman (Treasurer), and Dr Mozammel Haq (Joint Secretary). Candidates for the posts of six members are: Dr Abdul Ghani, Dr U H M Shamsunnahar, Dr Abdul Awal, Dr Tazul Islam, Dr Farhad Hossain and Dr Subhas Chandra Das.

**Pollution**  
From Page 1  
has been taken to operate such courts at least 15 days a month in Dhaka City.

She came up with suggestions that all automobiles should have anti-emission devices and use lead-free fuel with lesser sulfur contents. Besides, the minister said the number of buses should be increased in the metropolitan areas and steps should be taken to end the traffic-jam.

Sajeda Chowdhury said, a draft of environment protection rules, 1997 has already been prepared and the government would soon approve it. Meanwhile, a "Bangladesh Environmental Project" has been taken up as a follow-up action of the National Environmental Management Action Plan (NEMAP), said the minister.

**Malaysia**  
From Page 1  
The authorities had legalised a total of about 1.2 million illegal workers.

Many Bangladeshis are waiting at the detention camps for deportation, said Rasiah, adding a "large number of Bangladeshis are stuck up in the jungles on the border of Thailand and Malaysia." Asked about their number, Rasiah said Malaysian police believe it would not be less than 20,000.

The Malaysian authorities also blamed the migrant workers for various social problems and criminal activities in that country.

According to Rasiah, the number of marriages between Bangladeshis and Malaysians would not be more than 1000 and it was not even 10 per cent of the number of marriages between Indonesians and Malaysians.

**12 held**  
From Page 1  
The arrested were identified as Monjur Morshed, Harun-ur Rashid, Rokonzaman, Shahadat Hossain, Salahuddin alias Chanchal, Moinul Hossain, Monjur Hossain, Mor-salin, Rashed alias Sumon, Firoz, Jahangir Alam and Saidul Islam.

A gang of about eight armed men had entered the single-storey house of the doctor where family function was going on. One of the miscreants snatched away a necklace from his sister while the others held the family members and guests in a room, family sources said.

At the that time the doctor returned home and some people started shouting 'daocits ... daocits'. The gang then got out of the house and tried to escape. As Dr Rahman tried to catch one of them, the gang members opened fire leaving him fatally injured. He died on way to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), hospital and police sources said.

A case was lodged with Dhanmondi thana in this connection.

Meanwhile, the body of the doctor was handed over his family after autopsy at DMCH, police said.

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**PHILIPS**



Indian artiste Prerana Shrimali performing a Kathak dance yesterday at the Dance Festival being held at the National Museum auditorium in the city. — Star photo

### Shuja Khandaker dead

By Staff Correspondent  
Shuja Khandaker, a noted television personality, died of cardiac arrest yesterday morning in the city. He was 56.

The namaz-e-janaza of the deceased was held at Moghbazar and Rampura television station. He was later buried at the Azimpur graveyard.

The deceased is survived by his wife three sons and one daughter.

The Betar-Television Artistes Sangsad in a statement con-doled the death of Shuja Khandaker and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

Wahidul Huq, a leading cultural activist, also con-doled the death of Khandaker in a statement.

### 2 shot in city

Two people were injured as unknown gunmen opened fire on them at East Rampura in the city yesterday, police said, reports UNB.

The injured were identified as Rubel, 20, and Abdul Matin, 35, a scooter driver. Both of them were struck by bullets in their legs. Matin was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while Rubel to Pongu Hospital.

### Shahjahan

From Page 1  
Press Secretary protesting the statement made against him by a BNP lawmaker Alamgir Kabir.

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid who was presiding over the sitting said he had still no idea about any letter of Prof Shahjahan. "Let me see the letter first, then I will consider the issue," the Deputy Speaker said.

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A case was lodged with Dhanmondi thana in this connection.

Meanwhile, the body of the doctor was handed over his family after autopsy at DMCH, police said.

### Shishu Hospital No probe report yet on alleged irregularities

By Staff Correspondent  
A committee formed during the tenure of the Caretaker Government to probe alleged irregularities at the Dhaka Shishu Hospital involving its management board has mysteriously remained silent over the months, sources at the hospital said.

The three-member committee comprising Director of Health, a Joint Secretary of the Health and Family Planning Ministry, and a member secretary on June 4 last year following widespread allegations of irregularities at the hospital. It was supposed to submit its report in three months.

The matters which the committee was supposed to look into, included irregularities regarding employment, finance, income and expenses and promotion of the personnel," said a top official of the 305-bed hospital, requesting anonymity.

The then Dhaka Shishu Hospital Management Board consisting of 'top people of the BNP government' went for giving 'permanent status' to 30 personnel working on contract. "This decision was a serious blow to the basic principle of the institution and it violated the recruitment policy of the hospital. This was a typical example of politicisation," the official claimed. In the process, the jobs of 24 in the medicine, six in surgery and three in anaesthesia departments were made permanent. He explained that the Shishu Hospital, since its inception, had been running as a training institute where doctors and other specialists were taken in on contract basis.

It was also claimed that several 'expensive project' concerning electrification and wiring, sewerage and roads in the hospital premises were abandoned 'half finished' while the whole amount for the projects 'disappeared'.

**Illegal beer factory found**  
JAMALPUR, Mar 2: An illegal beer and rectified spirit manufacturing factory was unearthed at Baitia in the town today, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided the house of one homeopath doctor, Kamal, and recovered machineries and a huge quantity of rectified spirit worth about Tk five lakh from the factory.

Muhammad Wahab, 40, son of the owner of Akand Homen Hall, was arrested in this connection.

**BNP: Defaulters**  
From Page 1  
members of her entourage".

He demanded white paper on bank defaulters and ban on their doing politics.

Referring to the Awami League rule, the BNP member said: "This party has expertise in making cocktails and violence, not governing the country."

Kabir criticised Sheikh Hasina's policy about the issues of Farkha, Shantibahini and transit and said the government's love for India had been exposed.

"When our Prime Minister speaks, it seems that she is speaking like an Indian Prime Minister ... Love (for India) is deeper to them than to the country."

During his stay, Ramos will meet the Filipino community living and working in Bangladesh at a reception at a local hotel.

He will visit the National Memorial at Savar to pay respects to the Bangladesh Liberation War heroes.

President Ramos will leave Dhaka for Islamabad on March 7 at 11:30 am.

### Sugarcane growers, mills workers gherao DC

KISHOREGANJ, Mar 2: Workers-Employees Sangram Parishad of Kalichapra Sugar Mills and Sugarcane Growers Sangram Parishad today brought out a joint procession in the town protesting the government move to denationalise the mills, reports UNB.

They also gheraoed the DC office and submitted a memorandum containing their four-point demands, including immediate reopening of the mills.

Later, they held a meeting at the DC office premises. It was addressed by convener of Sugarcane Growers Sangram Parishad advocate Mohammad Ali and others.

The Mills were closed on June 19, 1994 due to staggering loss leaving some 20,000 sugarcane growers and labourers unemployed.

### Nor'westers may hit 3 divns this month

Some moderate nor'westers are likely to sweep over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions this month, according to a long-range Met Office forecast yesterday, reports UNB.

The forecast also predicted 2-4 light or moderate nor'westers elsewhere across the country during the month.

Sylhet is likely to experience highest 70-80 mm rain during the current month. Dhaka, Chittagong and Barisal may have 40-50 mm rain each, Khulna 30-40 mm and Rajshahi 25-35 mm.

### Dhaka, Manila

From Page 1  
tween the two countries now is "at a very insignificant level" although Bangladesh enjoys a favourable trade surplus by exporting jute goods and some traditional items.

Diplomatic sources indicated that discussions would be held on reactivating and materialising a number of agreements and protocols signed on previous occasions between the two countries. These include revival of the Bangladesh-Philippines Joint Economic Commission and fixing a date for its next meeting. Talks will also focus on materialising a protocol for establishing direct air links between Dhaka and Manila and two previously signed agreements on educational programmes and exchange of cultural delegations on a regular basis.

Fidel Ramos will address a gathering of local business and industry leaders organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) at a city hotel.

Ramos and the Minister for Trade and Industry along with the visiting businessmen would discuss with Bangladeshi entrepreneurs the possibility of setting up joint venture industries in the two countries.

President Ramos will host a state banquet in honour of the President Ramos at the Bangabhaban.

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**বাংলাদেশ পোশাক প্রস্তুতকারক ও রপ্তানীকারক সমিতি**  
৭-৯ কাওরান বাজার, বিটিএমসি ভবন, ঢাকা

**বিজিএমইএ'র সকল সম্মানিত সদস্যদের প্রতি**

সকলের সম্মিলিত প্রচেষ্টার মাধ্যমে বিজিএমইএ'র নেতৃত্বে রপ্তানীমুখী পোশাক শিল্পখাতের সমস্যাবলী সমাধান এবং শক্তিশালী ও গতিশীল সংগঠনের লক্ষ্যে বিজিএমইএ'র নব নির্বাচিত সভাপতি জনাব মোস্তফা গোলাম কুদ্দুছ-এর সভাপতিত্বে আগামী ৪ঠা মার্চ বিকাল ৫ টায় সোনারগাঁও হোটেলের বলরুমে নির্বাচনোত্তর এক সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

উক্ত সভায় দলমত নির্বিশেষে বিজিএমইএ'র সকল সম্মানিত সদস্যদের উপস্থিত থাকার জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

**চারপ্রাণ সচিব**

**Editor: Mahfuz Anam**  
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**ধ্বংস সত্য বস্তুর ১টি মাস**

**নগদে কিনুন** **দামে জিতুন!**

**ইচ্ছাার্ণ হাউজিং এর তত্ত্ব প্রকল্প**

ঢাকা শহরে নিজের একমুঠ জমি মানেই আপনার এক অমূল্য সম্পদ। এই জমি এককালীন নগদ টাকার কেনাই বুঝিমানের কাজ। কিন্তুতে কিনতে পেলে আসল দামটা পড়ে যায় অনেক বেশি।

ইচ্ছাার্ণ হাউজিং আপনাকে দিচ্ছে অপুর্ব এক সুযোগ। একসঙ্গে পুরো মূল্য পরিশোধ করে কিনে দিন আকতাবনপর একসঙ্গে অথবা বোর্ডিংকাল পার্টনে সলেন্ডু পদ্ধতী বিতীয় পরের অভিজাত পরিশোধ অবস্থিত একটি প্রট। এতে কাঠাঠতি জমির দাম পড়বে স্থানীয় চলতি বাজারদরের চেয়ে প্রায় ২ লাখ টাকা কম। জেবে সেলুন, কতকা সাপের। এই প্রটে ইচ্ছে হলে বাড়ি করুন। যদি চান, বিক্রিত করতে পারেন। বিক্রিতে লাভ কী রকম? - আঙ্কের কেনা প্রট আপামী ৫ বছরের মাথায় ৩৭ বেশি দামে বিক্রি করতে পারবেন আপনি।

তবে মনে রাখবেন, এই একসঙ্গে এভাবে এককালীন অঙ্ক দামে জমি কেনার সুযোগ মেওকা হচ্ছে কেবলমাত্র ১৭ ফেব্রুয়ারী ১৯৯৭ থেকে ১৭ মার্চ ১৯৯৭ পর্যন্ত। শুধু সত্যি করার জন্য আপনার হাতে এই ১টি মাত্র মাস। কাজেই দ্রুত সিদ্ধান্ত নিন।

বিভাবিত মূল্যাতালিকার জন্য আঙ্কই ইচ্ছাার্ণ হাউজিং লিমিটেড-এর অফিসের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

**EH ইচ্ছাার্ণ হাউজিং লিমিটেড**  
পূর্ব সংস্থান এরাসে আপনার বিশ্বস্ত বন্ধু  
ইসলাম শেখার (৪র্থ তলা)  
১২৪/৫, সফিফিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০, বাংলাদেশ।  
ফোন: ৯৬৬৬৬৬৬-৫, ৯৬৬৬৬৬৬-৫