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7.42 lakh to sit for SSC exams beginning today

By Staff Correspondent
 The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examinations of 1997 under five education boards begin today. This year about 7.42 lakh candidates will sit for the examinations which will be held with a common set of questions introduced for the first time at the SSC level.
 Among the examinees 4,30,247 are male and 3,11,614 are female. A total of 2,20,059 examinees are appearing in the examinations under Dhaka Board at 201 centres while over 1,98,358 candidates will sit for examinations at 197 centres under Rajshahi Board.
 In Jessore Board over 1,36,818 students will sit for the exams in 155 centres, over 1,22,673 examinees at 154 centres under Comilla Board and 63,953 students will sit for examinations from Chittagong Board in 75 centres.
 According to official sources, the examinations will also be held at five centres outside the country for the examinees living abroad. The centres outside the country are at Jeddah, Riyadh, Dohar, Abu Dhabi and Tripoli.
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Independence Day Govt takes up extensive programmes

By Staff Correspondent
 The government has taken up extensive programmes to mark the Silver Jubilee of the Independence Day, depicting various historic events of the month of declaration of national independence. State Minister for Information Abu Sayeed told newsmen yesterday.
 The programme, beginning on March 7 and ending on March 16, would be sponsored by different organisations under the Information Ministry including Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar, Department of Mass Communication (DMC), Department of Films and Publications (DFP), Press Information Department (PID) and the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB), said the state minister.
 Talking to newsmen about the programmes at the Betar headquarters at Shahabagh in the city, Abu Sayeed also sought their views on those.
 "Our endeavour is to project See Page 12 Col 6

Khaleda goes to Jessore tomorrow

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia will address a public meeting at Keshabpur maidan in Jessore at 3 pm tomorrow, reports UNB.
 Party central leaders will also address the meeting.

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Pledge to expand bilateral cooperation in all fields Dhaka, Manila for int'l confce on problems of migrant workers



President Shahabuddin Ahmed receiving Philippines President Fidel V Ramos on his arrival at ZIA yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina looks on. —Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh and the Philippines yesterday pledged for a 're-invigorated partnership' to enhance and expand bilateral cooperation in trade, economic and other fields between the two countries.
 The two countries also agreed to promote the interests and welfare of the migrant workers and mooted an international conference on migration.
 Addressing a joint press conference yesterday, visiting Philippines President Fidel Ramos and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called for strengthening the traditional ties between the two nations and suggested holding of an international conference to solve the problems of migrant workers around the world.
 The unscheduled press conference was held at the International Conference Centre at the end of official talks between the two sides.
 President Ramos stressed the need for promoting and protecting the interests of the large number of migrant workers who work overseas both from the Philippines and Bangladesh. He said that the two See Page 12 Col 1

Debate on alleged misbehaviour of JS Chief Whip

By Staff Correspondent

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid abruptly adjourned yesterday's sitting of the Jatiya Sangsad cutting short a debate on the reported misbehaviour of the Sangsad Chief Whip with his parliament staff the day before.
 Hamid, who was presiding over the session, adjourned the House immediately after informing the fate of the notices of the MPs at 7:40 pm, although he was scheduled to allow two minutes each to those whose notices had been rejected by the Chair and dispose of the accepted notices.
 The debate started with BNP legislator Shahidul Islam claiming that the reported beating of officials working in the Chief Whip's office Tuesday by Chief Whip Abul Hasanat Abdullah himself had terrified all officers and employees of the Sangsad Secretariat. Referring to newspaper reports, the BNP legislator also said, "terrorism sponsored by the Awami League government has now entered into the Sangsad Secretariat."
 The newspaper reports said that the Chief Whip had manhandled his Personal Secretary (PS) and Assistant Personal Secretary (APS), two government officials, and other employees working in his office.
 However, before the Chief Whip took the floor to explain his position on the issue, the Chair retorted: "He who loveth is fit to admit his sin."
 While explaining, the Chief Whip told the House that the statement made by the BNP lawmaker was "untrue and baseless."
 "I only scolded some of my See Page 12 Col 7

Chief Whip's PRO didn't attend office yesterday

By Staff Correspondent

The Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Chief Whip of Jatiya Sangsad Abul Hasanat Abdullah's office did not attend the Sangsad Secretariat Office yesterday following the Chief Whip's reported misbehaviour with his staff on Tuesday.
 The PRO, a government official belonging to the Information Cadre Service, however attended office at the Press Information Department. PID See Page 12 Col 7

Dhaka needs support of its friends: Shahabuddin

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday expressed the confidence that the visit of President Fidel Valdez Ramos of the Philippines to Bangladesh would provide a tremendous boost to the bilateral cooperation in all fields between the two countries, reports BSS.
 He referred to the large number of business delegation accompanying President Ramos and expressed the hope that they with their Bangladesh counterparts would find areas of mutually beneficial cooperation which would contribute towards economic progress and prosperity of both the Asian countries.
 The President was speaking at the state banquet given in honour of President Fidel Ramos at the Bangabhaban yesterday evening.
 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Speaker of parliament Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury,

members of the cabinet, Mayor of Dhaka, Chief Election Commissioner, diplomats, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, judges of the Supreme Court Appellate Division, MPs, Attorney General, industrialists, senior lawyers, editors of newspapers and news agencies, intellectuals and high civil and military officials attended it.
 President Shahabuddin Ahmed said although the full potentials of economic, trade and other cooperation between Bangladesh and the Philippines yet to be explored, both the governments attached high priority to economic diplomacy in foreign policies of both the countries.
 He said the new government in Bangladesh, in power for close to nine months now, had already scored some significant achievements which had earned a resurgence of peoples' See Page 12 Col 8

Fraternal ties since birth of Bangladesh : Ramos

President of the Philippines Fidel V Ramos said the two nations have an unprecedented opportunity to forge such ties as will greatly benefit the peoples of the two countries, reports UNB.
 "This is an opportunity of freeing our economies from the bond of excessive government regulation and the domination of monopolies and opening them up to each other and to the world," he said addressing a banquet hosted in his honour at Bangabhaban yesterday evening.
 President Ramos said the two countries had a close fraternal ties since the day of Bangladesh's birth, with the Philippines, being one of the first countries to recognise Bangladesh as a new state.
 He said: The cordiality and warmth of our relations since then, however, have not been

manifested in the levels of our trade, investment or tourism or in active political and cultural interactions.
 Referring to the talks with Bangladesh Prime Minister yesterday, he said: "We affirmed our determination to take resolute steps to overcome the inertia caused by the circumstances of history and political development and to give substance to the potential with which geographic proximity, cultural affinity and human friendship invest our relationship."
 Ramos said the Philippines has been honoured with the visits of no less than three leaders of Bangladesh, including Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the late distinguished father of the present prime minister, who has been honoured and acknowledged in your history as the Father of Bangladesh." This return visit See Page 12 Col 2

ODA loans may fall significantly Tokyo asks Dhaka to ensure transparency, discourage subsidy

A Japanese economic team yesterday said the donor country would extend all possible cooperation to Bangladesh, but clearly hinted that future assistance could reduce significantly, reports UNB.
 The indication came from the Japanese Mission at a two-day consultation that began at the NEC conference room yesterday to discuss new development projects to be implemented under Japanese loans.
 The annual meeting is being held after a two-year gap and Bangladesh is likely to seek 610 million US dollars for eight development projects from the Japanese government. Besides, project proposal for the Rupsha bridge will be placed in the meeting.
 Japan is one of the largest bilateral donor and its assistance to Bangladesh had amounted to 526 million US dollars upto 1995-96, out of which loan portion totalled 325.48 million dollars.
 Official sources told UNB that the Japanese team suggested Bangladesh to concentrate more on 'self-help efforts' for its development endeavours, but said Japan would continue to consider the case of Bangladesh as exceptional one.
 The mission also asked the authorities here to discourage subsidy in different sectors of the economy and invite private initiatives to invest in priority See Page 12 Col 4

House rents in city up by 17.86 per cent

By Staff Correspondent
 The rents of houses in the city have increased by 17.86 per cent on an average in 1996 compared to the increase of 22.61 per cent in the previous year.
 This was revealed at an executive committee meeting of the Metropolitan Tenants Welfare Society, held at the office of Consumers Association of Bangladesh yesterday, said a press release.
 According to the press release, the rents of various types of houses like pucca, semi-pucca and kutcha have increased by 21.16, 14.60 and 22.03 per cent respectively. The rents of mess and shanties have increased by 15.38 and 16.15 per cent.
 The cost of living in the city has increased by 4.09 per cent while the prices of essentials have increased by 4.77 per cent.

PSC signed with UMCBC

A production sharing contract (PSC) was signed in Dhaka yesterday between the government and UMC Bangladesh Corporation, reports UNB.
 According to the contract, the UMCBC will explore petroleum in block number 22, comprising Bandarban, Rangamati, Khagrachhari districts and Teknaf, a part of Cox's Bazar.
 The period of exploration will be of seven years in four phases, and once the period is over, the company will have to relinquish the area except the production site, said a PID handout.
 The company will drill four wells during their exploration at an estimated cost of 12.40 million US dollars.
 The profit sharing will be on See Page 12 Col 4

Pakistan visit successful: FM

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday termed his Pakistan visit as a fruitful and successful one, reports BSS.
 He said this on his return home after the three-day goodwill visit to Pakistan. Azad visited Pakistan from March 3-5, at the invitation of Foreign Minister Gauhara Ayub Khan.
 During his visit he called on Prime Minister Mian Mohammad Nawaz Sharif and delivered a message of greetings from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.
 Azad also called on Wasim Sajjad, Chairman of the Senate and Foreign Minister Gauhara Ayub Khan.

Sadhapur killings 15 remanded for 3 days

Ten Ansars and five security personnel of Partex Group, arrested in connection with the Savar killings, were taken on three-day police remand yesterday, reports UNB.
 They were being interrogated by Criminal Investigation Department personnel at the CID office in the city till last night on the murders.
 Earlier, the court allowed a three-day police remand for the 15 people. Police, however, had sought for a seven-day remand.
 Four people were killed and 10 injured as Ansars opened fire on a mob at village Sadhapur in Savar thana on Friday over a land dispute.

Consensus at BARC seminar Agri subsidy should continue

By Staff Correspondent
 Speakers at a seminar including former agriculture ministers, advisers and secretaries yesterday emphasised the need for allocating more resources for the agriculture sector to ensure fast development of high yielding variety (HYV) rice and proper management of irrigation and soil fertility.
 Bangladesh had no alternative but to depend on HYV rice to increase its production or to keep the level of production in pace with the population growth, they asserted at the seminar on "Prospects and direction of agriculture in Bangladesh", organised by Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC) and held at its auditorium.
 Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, who inaugurated the seminar, said, "In 25 years, we have to admit, we could not teach farmers the primary lesson on how to use fertilisers properly." Agriculture research had never been given its due importance before, she added.
 The seminar was addressed by former ministers Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Amzad Hosain, Maj Gen (ret'd) M A Munaim, Sheikh Abdul Aziz and Dr. Fasihuddin Mahitab and former advisers M Azizul Haq and A Z M Nasiruddin.
 The speakers reached a consensus that the government should continue to subsidise agriculture until the standard of living of farmers improves.
 Matia Chowdhury observed, "We could never reach the optimum level of agricultural production because of lack of proper irrigation system."
 She urged the business community to make large-scale investment in agriculture sector and stressed the need for forming an agriculture investment forum.
 "Industrialisation is very important for the development of our economy. But it is more important that we improve the living standard of the poor farmers first because they constitute 80 per cent of our population. If they are better off, our See Page 12 Col 6

Mannan Bhuiyan expresses 'full confidence' in Matia
By Staff Correspondent
 Former Agriculture Minister and Secretary General of BNP Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday expressed his "full confidence" in the sincerity and efficiency of Food and Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury.
 At a seminar on "Prospects and direction of the development of agriculture in Bangladesh" yesterday, he said the government should continue to subsidise agriculture until the standard of living of farmers improves.
 He said the new government in Bangladesh, in power for close to nine months now, had already scored some significant achievements which had earned a resurgence of peoples' See Page 12 Col 3



Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury speaking at a seminar at BARC auditorium in the city yesterday. BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan is on her left. —Star photo

Total solar eclipse Mar 9

A total eclipse of the sun will take place in the early hours of March 9, reports BSS.
 According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, the solar eclipse will begin at 5:16 am (5 hours 16 minutes 32 seconds) and end at 9:30 am (9 hours 30 minutes 48 seconds).
 The greatest eclipse will occur at 7:23 am (7 hours 23 minutes 48 seconds).
 The maximum magnitude of the eclipse will be 1.043 and the duration of the total phase will be 2 minutes 53.6 seconds.
 As the eclipse begins before the sun rises, the eclipsed sun will rise in Bangladesh. So, the beginning of the eclipse will not be visible in the country. The sun will rise in Dhaka and Chittagong at 6:13 am (6 hours 13 minutes and 36 seconds) and 6:7 am (6 hours 7 minutes 24 seconds) respectively on that day. However, the eclipse will end in Dhaka and Chittagong at 6:57 am and 6:24 am (6 hours 24 minutes 48 seconds) respectively.
 See Page 12 Col 2

Shima's death in 'safe custody' CMM for cognizance of 2 jail doctors' offence

From Staff Correspondent
 CHITTAGONG, Mar 5: The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Chittagong, today sought sanction of the home ministry to take cognizance of offence of two doctors of Chittagong jail for the death of Shima Chowdhury while in safe custody, official sources said.
 The offence of two jail doctors — Shal Alam Mollah and Salauddin — under Section 166 of the Penal Code would be taken into cognizance to start trial after the home ministry sanction is received, the sources said.
 CMM Kamal Uddin today took the measures on the basis of enquiry reports submitted to him by the judicial committee formed as per his order.
 In the judicial enquiry report the two jail doctors were blamed for their negligence in the treatment of Shima Chowdhury when she fell sick, the sources said.
 The CMM also recommended the home ministry for taking See Page 12 Col 3

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
National Board of Revenue, Dhaka

* কর দেয়া আপনার নৈতিক দায়িত্ব।
 * প্রদেয় কর যথাসময়ে পরিশোধ করুন এবং
 অর্থনৈতিক কর্মকাণ্ডে আপনার অবদান রাখুন।

The date of paying advance Income Tax for the third quarter of the current financial year is 15th March, 1997. The advance income tax payable by the respective taxpayer should be paid through Form No. IT-31(B) (Amended) challan form. The tax payers shall have to replace the figure '74(1)', wherever it is mentioned in the form, by the figure '64' and pay the advance tax by properly filling in the form. It may be noted that for all classes of taxpayers, the financial limit of total income, in case of paying advance income tax, is now Tk 1,00,000/-. All taxpayers concerned are requested to pay the advance income tax for the third quarter of the current financial year for 1997-98 tax year by 15th March, 1997 in this system.
 On non-payment of advance income tax or payment of less than the amount of advance tax, the rule of imposing simple interest at the rate 10% yearly will be applied.

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Alleged stock market scam Complete probe report expected this month

Special Correspondent
 The committee probing the alleged scam in the country's capital market during its bull run in July-November last year, is expected to complete its report by the third week of this month, committee sources said.
 It was formed on December 27 amidst street protests when share price index slid down at the two bourses in the country.
 The Securities and Exchange Commission constituted the enquiry committee headed by Vice-Chancellor of the Jahangirnagar University Prof Amrul Islam to find out if there had been any underhand dealings, both local and foreign, to reap a bonanza from the booming market that nearly collapsed.
 Since its formation the committee members held several meetings, visited the Dhaka and Chittagong exchanges, summoned piles of documents and interviewed a number of persons. But it could not meet its deadline of one month to submit its report on January 27.
 It was given an extension for a month, which also ran out last month. Finally the latest time until March 23 to complete its enquiry was given last week as it could not complete investigations due to the long Eid holidays and delay in getting requisite information, the sources said.
 They said that the committee initially was to have five members, besides the JU VC. Prof Zahurul Haq of the Economics Department of Dhaka University, former Law Secretary Khandaker Asaduzzaman See Page 12 Col 3