

## BLUE DART

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EACH DAY EVERY DAY  
TO INDIA

Kazi Zafar Ahmed (L) Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury (C) and Shah Moazzem Hossain (R) after Kazi Zafar's press conference at his residence in the city yesterday. — Star photo

IJC session opens in city

## Jute facing dual challenge: IJO chief

Total acreage of jute cultivation in the major jute-producing countries has been on the decline in recent years resulting in lower global output of the fibre, reports UNB.

The world production of raw jute reduced from 3.4 million tons in 1991-92 to 2.58 million tons in 1995-96 fiscal year.

This was disclosed at the opening function of the three-day 25th session of International Jute Council (IJC) organised by the International Jute Organisation (IJO), in Dhaka yesterday morning.

It was further informed that the production of jute goods also declined from 3.46 million tons in 1990 to 3.07 million tons in 1995.

The world export volume of jute and jute products which was in the range of 1.5 million tons in 1990 declined to 1.23 tons in 1995.

"This scenario indicates that jute is facing a dual challenge -- at the consumer end, jute has been facing a challenge from synthetics and other substitutes and also the modern technique of bulk handling while at the farmers end, jute is facing competition from other crops which are becoming more remunerative than jute," said IJO Executive Director K M Rabbani.

Fiancee Minister S Shah A M S Kibria inaugurated the IJC session being participated by representatives of all IJO member countries, observers and others concerned.

Kibria said the jute question is not simply related to marketing, but it is deeply interlinked with the question of very survival of the renewable natural fibre in the face of serious competition from synthetics and other substitutes.

He said the problem had been compounded by the fact that farmers were not getting remunerative price for jute, operation of the jute mills was not efficient because of old machines and a variety of other reasons related to labour and shortcomings.

State Minister for Jute and Textiles A K Faezul Huq said the government was deeply concerned with the progress and

welfare of millions of jute-growing farmers and thousands of industrial workers engaged in a number of downstream activities.

The minister informed that the government had fixed a production target of 47.09 lakh bales of raw jute and the export target of 14.09 lakh bales during the current 1996-97 fiscal year.

Export of raw jute has already exceeded the annual target during the last nine months as the country exported 14.29 lakh bales fetching Tk 384.25 crore.

Moreover, export earning has increased by around 62 per cent and 50 per cent during the year over the corresponding period of last year.

K M Rabbani placed before the council a set of new proposals for restoring the glorious past of jute, the golden fibre.

The proposals include strengthening of extension network and organising farmer training programmes, ensuring fair price of jute to growers, keeping buffer stock of good quality seed to meet emergencies, improving management and administrative efficiency in jute mills and IJO countries to expedite and promote the diversified uses of jute.

3 killed in road accident

NARISINGDI, Apr 26: Three rickshaw pullers were killed and three others injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Shibpur thana here today, reports UNB.

The deceased were identified as Motker Hossain, 30, of Shibpur thana, Lokman, 35, and Sadhu Mia, 50, of Polash thana in the district. Injured Moslem, 40, Nasir Uddin, 32, and Anwar Hossain, 38, were admitted to local hospital.

The mishap occurred when a Bhairo-bound truck hit a rickshaw van at Baraitala in the thana at 12:30 am today that left three people killed and three others wounded.

Police seized the truck, but its driver managed to flee the scene.

## Death anniversary of Sher-e-Bangla today

The 35th death anniversary of Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Haq will be observed in the country today, reports BSS.

The programmes of the day include placing of wreaths at the graveyard of the late leader, special prayers and discussion meetings.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in separate messages yesterday, paid homage to the memory of Sher-e-Bangla.

Two functions will be held at the graveyard of the great leader in the city. Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad will be present as chief guest at the discussion to be organised by Sher-e-Bangla National Research Council.

## 77 more Rohingyas repatriated

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 26: Seventy-seven Rohingya people of 12 families returned to their Myanmar homeland from the refugee camps in the district today, reports UNB.

With this a total of 2,28,911 Rohingyas, who took refuge in Bangladesh to escape alleged torture by the Myanmar troops, have been repatriated to their homesteads.

## EC secy leaves for London

Secretary of the Election Commission M M Reza and Deputy Election Commissioner of Rajshahi Division A R Siddiqui left Dhaka yesterday for London to observe the coming general election of the United Kingdom, a press release of the Election Commission said yesterday.

## HSC examinees

From Page 1 build resistance against such destructive activities.

He advised the examinees not to be misled by these elements.

Meanwhile, the Education Ministry has completed all preparations to hold the HSC examination fairly.

The ministry urged the people to hand over those selling or distributing false question papers to the law-enforcing agencies. Stern legal action will be taken against these elements.

It also urged the newspapers and other media to inform the Ministry or the Education Board first if they get any information about the leakage of question papers.

## BCI team

From Page 1

They complained serious deterioration of law-and-order situation in the production-oriented industrial units due to ever-increasing demands of the extortionists and misdeeds of local terrorists."

Labour leaders of various industries frequently demand undue privileges, such as extra-bonus, pay-rise and promotions and obtain pecuniary benefits from purchase and sale of the products of industrial units by imposing unauthorised commissions, the trade body leaders informed President Shahabuddin.

They viewed that economic activities should be kept above politics and for that there should be broad consensus among political parties.

Under the circumstances, the delegation appealed to the President for initiating a dialogue among the leaders of all political parties so that congenial atmosphere is created for uninterrupted economic development and foreign investment.

During the hour-long meeting, the President gave them a patient hearing and said he would take up the issues with the appropriate authorities.

## The Daily Star

## Dhaka urged to support Cuba's struggle against US embargo

By Staff Correspondent

Roberto Mackchaser Siveright of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with Foreign Countries yesterday appealed to the people of Bangladesh to extend moral support to their 'struggle against 35 years of United States economic blockade against Cuban people.'

"We passionately appeal to the people of Bangladesh to support us in our struggle against US economic sanctions on Cuba," he said.

Siveright, who came to the country on a three-day visit on Friday, made this appeal while participating in a 'citizen's dialogue' in the city last evening. The dialogue was organised by some eminent citizens including Matiur Rahman, editor of The Daily Borer Kagoj, Barrister Lutfur Rahman of the fortnightly Chinta, Hassan Arif of the Odhikar and Talea Rahman of the Democracy Watch.

Explaining the recent Helms-Burton Act of the United States that intensified the decades-long sanction, the Cuban official said it was aimed at curbing the Cuban right to self-determination.

Siveright said under the law, the product of any country coming from Cuba is forbidden to enter into the United States, while no US company is entitled to export any item which is used in the USA to Cuba. "Besides, any foreign ship that leaves Cuban port after offloading anything is not allowed to touch any port of the United States within six months from the date of leaving."

The law is not only affecting the economic growth of Cuba, but also substantially curtailed the rights of other nations to operate in the free market world economic system, the Cuban official said claiming.

Confronted by a question regarding democracy, Siveright said that Cuba had its own concept of it. "The workers in the factories and people in their localities enjoy hundred per cent freedom to choose their representatives. Besides they take active participation in planning their development projects," he said. On the leadership of Fidel Castro, he said it was the people who wants to see him to lead the nation.

At the end of a two-hour dialogue, Barrister Lutfur Rahman told the audience that we should demand of the government to invite Castro to visit our country, especially after the visit of great personalities like Nelson Mandela and Yaseer Arafat.

Talking on the issue of women rights in Cuba, he informed the audience that the women literally enjoyed equal rights in his country. "A woman worker gets nine months of maternity leave — three months before the delivery with full wages and six months after the child birth with some sixty per cent of her monthly wages."

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