

## BNP's letter to Speaker for action against Hasibur

**By Nazmul Ashraf**  
BNP has requested the Speaker to take necessary measures for publication of gazette notification, vacating the Jatiya Sangsad seat held by Hasibur Rahman Swapan, the newly-appointed Deputy Minister for Industries, for 'violating' Article 70 of the Constitution. Chief Whip of the Opposition, Khandakar Delwar Hossain, made the request to Speaker Humayun Rashid Choudhury in a letter sent yesterday afternoon. The Daily Star obtained a copy of the one-page letter last night. As per Article 70, the Sangsad seat of an MP will fall vacant if he resigns from or See Page 12 Col 1

## NCBs enter secondary stock market

**By M Shamsur Rahman**  
For the first time, the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) have started operating to enter in the secondary stock market as part of government strategy to prop up the ailing capital market. The move comes after a government advice on January 22 to the four NCB, two development financing institutions and the lone state-owned investment bank, to support the market 'within their resources'. Agrani Bank has created a fund of Tk one crore to invest in the secondary market through Investment Commercial Bank (ICB) and Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB). Agrani Bank has started See Page 12 Col 8

## Murder case filed against OC, ASI for death in custody

**From Staff Correspondent**  
KHULNA, Feb 12: A murder case has been recorded in the CMM's court, Khulna against OC Abdul Jabbar, ASI Mahbubur Rahman of Rupsha thana and Moinuddin Ahmed, medical officer of Khulna District Jail. The complainant, A Jabbar of village Moishaguni, stated in his petition that his son Harun, 30, arrested by police on February 4 from Anandnagar, was severely injured in beating during interrogation by the OC and the ASI. The court on February 6 rejected prayer for his remand See Page 12 Col 2

## Uzbek FM due today

Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Abdul Aziz Kamilov arrives in the city today on a two-day visit to Bangladesh with a mission to boost trade and economic cooperation between the two countries, reports UNB. Kamilov will lead a four-member delegation during the visit. He will hold official talks with Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad tomorrow. A trade agreement will be signed during the visit to expand economic relations between Dhaka and Tashkent.

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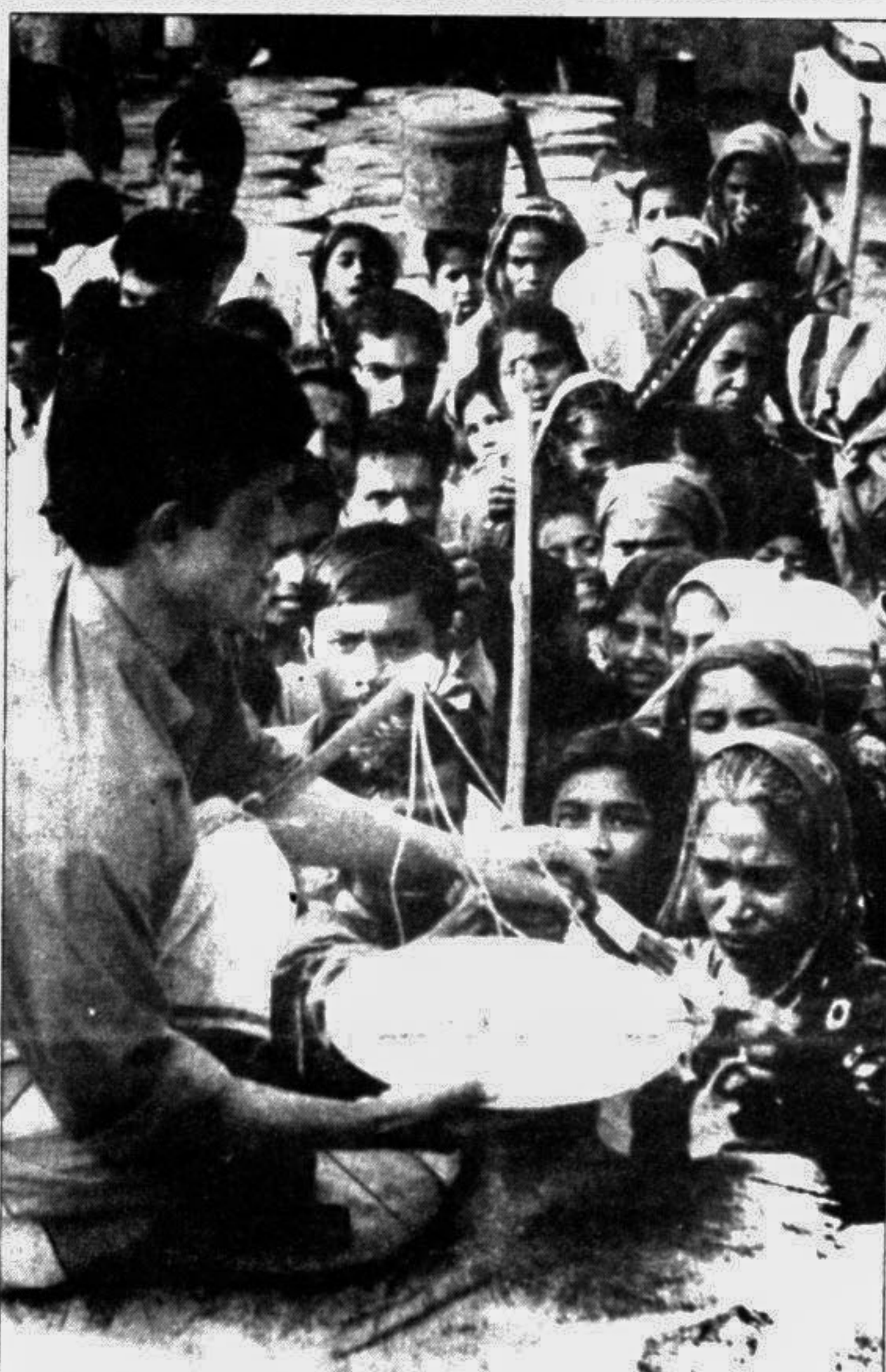
## Business

SEC asks for clarification from company: Going gets tough for Fu-Wang, issue manager and auditor

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## 63 receive export trophies Earn confidence of importers: PM

**By Staff Correspondent**  
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sought exporters' cooperation in expediting industrialisation of the country and broadening its export market. The government could create a congenial environment for investment and trading but actual production and expansion of export depend on you, she told the well-performing exporters while awarding them the 'National Export Trophy' yesterday at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city. We need swift industrialisation and expansion of trade, she said, urging the private entrepreneurs to use their intelligence, creativity and competence to travel along an obstacle-free way for the country's economic development. The function was also addressed by Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Commerce Secretary Sayed Alamgir Farouk Chowdhury, Export Promotion Bureau Vice Chairman Faisal Ahmed Chowdhury and FBCCI President Yussuf Abdullah Harun. A total of 63 exporters received the trophies in recognition of their significant contribution to the country's export for the years 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96. The Prime Minister said that a national committee headed by her was working to review export progress and give necessary directives. The government is implementing a number of programmes to ensure increased participation of the private sector in the export arena. Strong institutional facilities, structural amenities and increased export assistance to the traders were also being ensured, she added. Terming the exporters as See Page 12 Col 6



People queuing for purchasing OMS rice at Dayaganj in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Rice prices fall further

**From Inam Ahmed and Reaz Ahmad**  
DINAJPUR, Feb 12: Rice price marked further fall in the markets in the northern region today. The government's offering of OMS rice at a lower price and gradual decrease in demand for rice from other parts of the country contributed to this fall, traders said. A 50 paise cut in OMS price from Tk 12.50 to Tk 12 came into effect today in the northern parts of the country. Rice sellers in different markets in Rangpur, Dinajpur and Joypurhat said that the mad rush of rice traders from Dhaka and other parts of the country is no more there. As a result, prices of rice dropped today. As rice price is decreasing, big traders and hoarders are disposing of their stocks. Fakhrul Islam, District Food Controller of Rangpur, told The Daily Star that some traders, who normally do not trade in rice, sensing a food shortage, hoarded rice. It is one of the reasons that prices had gone up, he said. But falling price is now forcing them to dispose of their stocks at the earliest. Meanwhile, more rice is being imported from across the Bangladesh-India border in the northern region. At the Bangla-Hill border point, Indian trucks were unloading rice. Sadrul Islam, Customs Inspector at Bangla-Hill, said that on an average 2000 metric tons of rice were being imported daily.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presenting National Export Trophy to an exporter at a ceremony at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the city yesterday. — PID photo



## Proper medication for Chetia in jail ordered

**By Staff Correspondent**  
A magistrate's court yesterday ordered the jail authorities to ensure proper medication for Anup Chetia and asked them to allow a meeting between the detainee and his lawyer. Chetia, secretary general of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), was arrested along with two others identified as Lakhmi Prasad Goswami and Babul Sharma from a flat in Mohamudpur in the city on December 21, 1997. The Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) yesterday moved a petition in the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka praying for adequate treatment for Chetia and seeking permission from the court to allow a defence lawyer to meet Chetia. Alina Khan, a lawyer of the See Page 12 Col 3

## Govt encouraging separatists: BNP

Main opposition BNP yesterday blamed the government for, what it said, encouraging separatist movement among various tribes in the country by signing the accord with the 'terrorist' Shantibahini, reports UNB. The perspective of the accord has already encouraged Garos and other tribal groups towards separatist moves, said the party's special committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts, giving its reaction on the February 10 arms surrender by the tribal insurgents. Addressing a press conference at the central BNP office in the evening, committee convenor Lt Gen (ret) Mir Shawkat Ali said people of the plains are also demanding local government councils following the 'anti-constitutional' CHT agreement. He termed the ceremony of arms surrender by the Shantibahini insurgents as an arranged drama costing Tk 10 crore where the 'Jana Sanghati Samity' through its people raised the demand for full autonomy displaying banners and placards. We warned the government earlier that the accord will encourage the misguided tribals to demand autonomy and finally independence, said General Shawkat who was the first brigade commander in the hill tracts after independence. He said the security personnel were assaulted when they tried to remove the anti-state banners and placards. But till now no government action was seen against them, he regretted. Quoting anonymous intelligence report, the retired General gave a total picture of number of arms and ammunition used in guerilla warfare in last 24 years by the Shantibahini insurgents and said the deposited arms were only an insignificant part of those. According to him, the Shantibahini's arms and ammunition included SLR, 303 rifle and AK-47 rifle-2,000, Indian SMG-400, Indian and Czech LMG-200, grenade - 10,000, rocket launcher - 12, explosive (P-3) — See Page 12 Col 8

## All Shantibahini members leave transit camp

**By Special Correspondent**  
All the 739 members of Shantibahini, who surrendered their arms on Tuesday, have gone back to their respective homes in different parts of Chittagong Hill Tracts. District administration sources told our Khagrachhari correspondent that 257 former guerillas headed for their homes yesterday from the Perachara transit camp. Earlier on Wednesday, 424 See Page 12 Col 7

## Advani's desire sparks protest in Sangsad

A Treasury Bench member yesterday demanded of the government to lodge immediate protest against the Indian BJP leader's desire for reunification of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, reports BSS. Abdul Latif Mirza (AL-Sirajganj) drew attention of the Speaker towards a newspaper report, which quoted BJP leader, Lal Krishna Advani as saying, he would be happy to see the reunification of these three countries. Mirza, on a point of order told the Jatiya Sangsad that he was strongly protesting the statement of the Indian BJP leader made at a New Delhi press conference on Friday last. Latif Mirza referred to the historic War of Liberation led by the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1971 and said 30 lakh Bangladeshis had embraced martyrdom to achieve the long cherished independence not for See Page 12 Col 7

## Mosque-based programme to disburse small loan

MYMENSINGH, Feb 12: The government has decided to take a massive mosque-based interest-free small loan disbursement programme for eradicating poverty in rural area, reports UNB. A fund of Tk 50 crore has already been formed at the initial stage. The welfare programme will be launched very soon. LGRD and Cooperative Minister Zillur Rahman disclosed this while addressing the concluding session of a grand Islamic conference at Islampur Jamia Gafuria, Madrasa ground in the district today. Some five lakh devotees from different parts of the country attended the conference. See Page 12 Col 7

## Ship carrying rice detained at Ctg Port

**From Staff Correspondent**  
CHITTAGONG, Feb 12: The ship, owned by a Bangladeshi and registered in Cyprus, which brought a large consignment of rice without having any importer in Bangladesh, has been detained at the outer anchorage of Chittagong Port. Port sources said the detention came following a case filed in the admiralty court by the supplier of the rice carried by the ship. The court issued order for detaining the ship, port sources added. A Singapore based organisation Evex Ltd was the supplier of 12,000 tons of rice loaded in the ship from Kabinada port of India. The rice carried by the ship 'MV Raffi' was scheduled to be supplied to Russia, but the See Page 12 Col 2

## Security guard killed in city garments factory fire

**By Staff Correspondent**  
A security guard of a garments factory was burnt alive when a fire broke out in the factory building at Moghbar in the city early yesterday. The victim was identified as Abdul Wahab Mollah, 60. He was allegedly trapped in the five-storey building as he could not unlock a collapsible gate. Fire brigade officials said an electric short circuit on the second floor reportedly sparked off the blaze that damaged four garments factories in the building. The fire that started at around 3:45 am continued for about one hour. However, the extent of damage could not be ascertained immediately. Five fire fighting units from three stations rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control. The affected factories are Jesis Apparels Ltd, Western Dresses Ltd, VIP Garments Ltd and Up-to-date Fashions Ltd.

## Young man stabbed to death in city

**By Staff Correspondent**  
A young man was stabbed to death at a slum in Mirpur in the city yesterday evening. Police identified the dead as Sohel, 20. The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy. Some local people found the blood soaked body of the young man at about 8 pm. It was lying under a bamboo structure on which several makeshift houses of Sarengbari slum were located. Mirpur police could not trace the killers of Sohel and find out the reason behind the murder till last night. Police were yet to confirm whether the boy was killed near the slum or was dumped there after being killed somewhere else.

## Trade and tourism among SAARC states 'Adoption of 7 int'l conventions on traffic movement essential'

**By Staff Correspondent**  
Adoption of seven international conventions on traffic movement has become essential to facilitate trade and tourism among the SAARC countries in line with the agreement on SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA), said Dr Rahmatullah, an ESCAP official. Five SAARC countries — Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka — are yet to become party to any of these conventions while India and Pakistan have adopted one and two of these seven conventions respectively. The conventions are: Convention on Road Traffic (1969); Convention on Road Signs and Signals; Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of the TIR Carnets (1975); Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles (1956); Customs Convention on Containers (1972); International Convention on the Harmonisation of Frontier Control of Goods (1982); and Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) (1956). Dr Rahmatullah, who came here on a visit recently, is a Director of the Bangkok-based ESCAP. Whatever movement is taking place now between the SAARC countries is because of the bilateral agreements, which in future will have to follow international norms, Dr Rahmatullah said. Importance of these Conventions are now being felt realising the potential of economic activities and the importance of overland transport to serve inland destinations or landlocked countries, he said. "ESCAP will be available for providing advisory services on request of any of its member country to assist it in becoming party to these conventions," he added. Services of the ESCAP will be also available in drafting the changes required in the legal provision, he added. The need for becoming a party to these conventions was not felt earlier because there was not much demand for overland transport between the countries," Dr Rahmatullah noted. Talking about the benefit of adopting these conventions, Dr Rahmatullah said, "the major benefit lies in internationalising the country." While taking initiative to become a party to these Conventions the countries concerned will have to take measures to organise their transport sector," he said. The transport sector will have to be trained and prepared See Page 12 Col 3

## HC judgement delivered in Bangla

**By SC Correspondent**  
A division bench of the High Court yesterday delivered two judgements in two criminal cases in Bangla instead of English. The division bench of the HC comprising Justice Kazi Ebadul Haque and Justice Md Hamidul Haque pronounced the judgements in the Criminal Miscellaneous Case No-13 of 1996 and in the Criminal Revision Case No-275 of 1986. On behalf of the bench, Justice Kazi Ebadul Haque delivered the judgement on the first case and Justice Md Hamidul Haque on the later. It was learnt that as Bangla is the state language of the Republic there is no bar in delivering judgement in Bangla, rather it should be appreciated to use generally the mother language in the higher judiciary along with every sphere of the Republic. Article 3 of the Constitution says, "The state language of the Republic is Bangla." Regarding the two authentic text of the Constitution in See Page 12 Col 7

## US trade show opens in city Bilateral investment to grow, hopes Tofail

**By Staff Correspondent**  
Sophisticated computers, industrial machinery, electronic goods, electrical equipment, cars, food and other products made by world famous US companies have been put on display and sale at the US Trade Show '98 which began yesterday at the Hotel Sheraton's Winter Garden. Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed formally opened the three-day exhibition in the morning. Large number of city dwellers rushed to the show in the evening as the morning session was open only for the businessmen and traders. American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh and the US Embassy jointly organised the annual exhibition of products made by various US companies and US-Bangladesh joint venture companies. Inaugurating the exhibition, Tofail Ahmed hoped that it will open up avenues for expansion of bilateral trade and investment between the US and Bangladesh. I am confident that the US Trade Show '98 will provide opportunities for Bangladesh consumers and businessmen to be acquainted with the goods and services of different established and reputed firms of the USA," the minister said. The inaugural function was also addressed by US Ambassador to Bangladesh John C. Holzman, President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh Forrest E. Cookson and AMCHAM Executive Director A. Galur. John Holzman observed that in recent years there has been a dramatic increase in US investment in Bangladesh and hoped that the trend would continue in the future. Last year around 25 million US dollars of US investment came to Bangladesh and it will See Page 12 Col 4



Visitors at a stall in the US Trade Show that began at Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Concerted efforts needed to tackle arsenic pollution

**By Staff Correspondent**  
The five-day-long international conference on the arsenic pollution problem in Bangladesh that concluded yesterday said in the declaration that the arsenic contamination of groundwater needed to be addressed on an emergency basis. The participants from different countries, working on different aspects of the arsenic problem observed that the groundwater of a significant area in Bangladesh is contaminated with high concentration of arsenic. They pointed out that the cause of the contamination was geological and a large number of people were suffering from the poisoning. The arsenic problem is a threat to public health and social structure of Bangladesh and supply of arsenic-free water is the only solution, they said. The conference, titled "Arsenic Pollution of Groundwater in Bangladesh: Causes, Effects, and Remedies," attracted over 100 participants from 13 countries. It was organised jointly by the Dhaka Community Hospital Trust and the School of Environmental Studies, Jadavpur University, Calcutta and was held at the LGED auditorium in the city. The participants — scientists, physicians, geologists, engineers, biochemists, hydrologists and others — declared that the arsenic pollution problem could emerge in other countries of the world and thus coordinated and concerted efforts were needed from national and international organisations and individuals to overcome the problem. The participants in their declaration vowed to direct their research for the benefit of all people. They agreed to share information among themselves, make their findings freely accessible and allow others to use them for the interest of the people all over the world. Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Salauddin Yusuf, in his speech as the chief guest said the government would not spare any effort to tackle the arsenic contamination. See Page 12 Col 8