

SILK

A Solution to Problems: Rural Poverty Alleviation

by Prof Sajjad Hussain

Bangladesh has an over-populated and under-employed rural sector where the burden of poverty is borne by the landless and the marginal farmers... The way to solve this under-employment and poverty of the rural population is to take up a crash programme in the growth and development of sericulture in which Bangladesh has a long history and enormous potential.

THE Ministry of Textiles is in the process of setting up a private non-profit-making company entitled Bangladesh Silk Foundation (BSF) for qualitative and quantitative improvements in the production of silk in Bangladesh through research and training, and for carrying out other programmes for its stakeholders, namely, the Government of Bangladesh, NGOs and private entrepreneurs engaged in silk and sericulture. The organisation is to be headed by an MD whose responsibilities will include, among others, functioning as Chief Executive with full responsibility for formulating both short and medium-term work plan, management and execution of work-plan, mobilising the flow of funds, preparing the annual budget and monitoring and controlling expenditure, fostering functional cooperation with various government, non-government and private sector organisations engaged in silk sector development, appointing professional and other staff and so on.

Such an attempt by the Government of Bangladesh could not have been more timely. On the one hand the silk industry in Bangladesh is literally dying. On the other hand a revival of this industry is perhaps the only solution to the problem of wide-spread rural unemployment and poverty in Bangladesh, particularly among the landless and marginal farmers. The experience of Bangladesh with the Silk Board tells us that, the task that has been set for the Bangladesh Silk Foundation (BSF) is easier said than done, and there is no room for complacency. However, given the right motivation, proper political commitment and the backing of the government, and the right kind of professional approach it is a task that is not unachievable.

The proposed BSF could start functioning by initiating a 'Strategic Planning Process' by using the 'Log Frame Approach'. The 'Strategic Planning Process' should involve the management, the staff, and qualified professionals, if necessary by

hiring them from outside the organisation. It should culminate in the development of programmes for the removal of impediments to the development and growth of silk industry in Bangladesh, as well as for actively promoting their development.

An immediate outcome of the 'Strategic Planning Process' should be the development of a 'Mission' or goal for the BSF as follows: 'To assist the poor landless and marginal farmers of Bangladesh to improve their economic status and living standard by creating employment opportunities for them through the distribution of credit and provision of technical assistance'.

The Mission of BSF could be achieved through the following objectives:

1. A credit programme through which credit could be offered to the landless and the marginal farmers both directly and through associate/grantee agencies.

* Credit disbursed to be invested for sericulture.

* BSF could take a 5 per cent service charge from associate/grantee agencies which, in turn, could take a 20 per cent service charge from the farmers.

* Associate/grantee agencies are to repay the credit plus interest to the BSF in 30 equal monthly instalments after an initial moratorium period of 6 months.

* Associate/grantee agencies, in turn, could determine the repayment period and the method of credit disbursement and repayment according to the principles, rules and by laws determined by the BSF.

* Associate/grantee agencies could meet their administrative and related costs from the service charge retained after paying the BSF its 5 per cent.

2. A technical assistance, training and institutional development programme:

* To assist the associate/grantee agencies to run their credit programmes more efficiently and effectively.

* To train the landless and the marginal farmers in the various aspects of sericulture.

3. A research programme to primarily promote sericulture among the landless and the marginal farmers of Bangladesh.

The following activities could be performed in order to achieve the objectives of the BSF:

1. To provide various types of financial, institutional, advisory, and technical assistance to various NGOs, autonomous, government, and social-welfare agencies, associations, and local government bodies within the norms of the BSF to enable them to create employment opportunities for the landless and the marginal farmers of Bangladesh through sericulture.

2. To assist associate/grantee agencies in their programme to remove poverty and unemployment from the rural areas through credit programme, and provide cooperation and assistance towards increasing their efficiency through education and training.

3. To provide technical assistance to strengthen the institutional infrastructure of associate/grantee agencies in order to improve their activities with a view to creating employment opportunities and income through sericulture for the landless and the marginal farmers of Bangladesh.

4. To support, encourage and patronise various innovative sericulture programmes and projects that would aim to create self-dependence through increasing awareness and creat-

ing productive employment opportunities for improving the living standard of the landless and the marginal farmers.

5. To encourage and patronise innovative ideas and techniques of sericulture with a view to alleviating poverty in the rural areas, and provide technical assistance and cooperation for the development of programmes that give importance to innovative/new technology, creation of employment opportunities and development oriented activities.

6. To take up various research activities with a view to alleviating poverty and creating employment opportunities through sericulture, provide cooperation for the establishment of sericulture research and training institutes; provide scholarships and fellowships for the study of sericulture, organise seminars, workshops and conferences on sericulture and take steps to publish reports, periodicals, monographs, bulletins, journals, and books for fulfilling the objectives of the BSF.

7. To develop an effective MIS for the regular monitoring and evaluation of the poverty alleviation programme through sericulture of associate/grantee agencies.

8. To establish contact and develop links with associate/grantee agencies and other national and foreign agencies and associations, various associated international agencies and associated UN agencies and affiliates with a view to achieving the objectives of the Foundation.

9. To encourage, patronise, support and cooperate for taking up various educational, social, commercial, agricultural and industrial programmes for achieving the objectives of the Foundation.

10. To participate in all

types of legal activities/programmes and take all necessary steps to achieve the objectives of the BSF and in the interest of its continued growth and development.

In order to perform the activities listed above the BSF must have its own funds which it could develop through: 1) government grant; 2) grant from international non-government sources/organisations; 3) credit/grant and technical assistance received from foreign governments, international agencies, institutions, and other sources; 4) own income of the Foundation.

Conclusion

Bangladesh has an over-populated and under-employed rural sector where the burden of poverty is borne by the landless and the marginal farmers who constitute an overwhelming majority of the rural population. The only way to solve this under-employment and poverty of the rural population in Bangladesh is to take up a crash programme in the growth and development of sericulture in which Bangladesh has a long history and enormous potential.

Although Bangladesh is lagging behind in sericulture and the silk industry is all but dying, there is a tremendous scope for its development. Through the development of sericulture it would, in turn, be possible to solve the problem of rural unemployment and poverty provided a number of important measures are adopted which are not easy, but also not impossible, given the right commitment and support.

The decision of the Bangladesh Government to establish a Silk Foundation could be a step in the right direction provided the government sets, it up with the necessary goals, autonomy, funds, and proper commitment. We must not forget that the Bangladesh Silk Board failed to achieve its goals less for want of proper policy decisions or funds, but more due to a lack of sufficient commitment on the part of the government to implement the programme set.

US Gives Tentative Approval to UN-brokered Accord with Iraq

by Vasantha Arora

According to some estimates, the present level of arms build-up in the region would cost the US exchequer about a quarter of a billion dollars per month.

US President Bill Clinton Monday night gave a tentative approval to the deal brokered with Iraq by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

He however reiterated his threat of airstrikes in case Baghdad reneged on its commitment to allow unrestricted access to all its weapons sites.

Addressing a news conference, flanked by his national security team, including Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, in the Oval Office, Clinton said the military force in the Gulf that had grown in size over the past several weeks would remain until it was clear that Iraq was honouring the terms of the agreement it had signed with Annan in Baghdad yesterday.

According to some estimates, the present level of arms build-up in the region would cost the US exchequer about a quarter of a billion dollars per month.

However, there is an apparent sense of relief in Washington over the fact that there is now no immediate possibility of another Gulf War, which appeared imminent last week. US officials also made it clear that there was no promise on their side on lifting economic sanctions slapped on Iraq after the Gulf War in 1991. Under the UN Security Council resolution, the issue would come up for consideration after the receipt of the report of the weapons inspectors.

"We have seen that diplomacy must be backed by strength and resolve," Clinton said, lending credence to the view that the massive demonstration of force by the United States had forced "recalcitrant" Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to come to the negotiation table.

President Clinton, who had

telephoning talks with French President Jacques Chirac, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, said Baghdad had made a written commitment to "immediate, unconditional inspection of all sites in Iraq."

Clinton recalled that "we have had two crises in the past four months," and warned: "Failure to let UNSCOM do its job would be a serious, serious matter."

"If Iraq does not honour the agreement, I believe everyone would understand that then the United States and hopefully all of our allies would have the unilateral right to respond at a time, place and manner of our own choosing," he said.

Clinton wanted Iraq to allow its biological, chemical and nuclear weapons to be destroyed along with the missiles that delivered them. The UNSCOM should be allowed to put in place a monitoring system to cripple Iraq's capacity to build such weapons again, he said.

Though the draft of the agreement has not been made public, informed sources say one of its provisions calls for "senior diplomats" to accompany UNSCOM teams to sensitive weapons sites.

The US wants clarification as to who will select these diplomats and whether Iraq would have a say in their selection. US Congressmen, especially those associated with the majority Republican Party, are

least enthusiastic about the terms of the UN-brokered accord and hit out at the Clinton administration for what they called its lack of a long-term policy to deal with Saddam Hussein, "the root cause of the trouble in the region." Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott disliked the UN intervention in the stand-off and called it another example of US foreign policy "subcontracted" to another entity.

Senator John McCain said, "I believe in situations like these it should be for the United States and not the Secretary-General of the United Nations to make a settlement, since it is American lives at risk."

He believed the proposed settlement came about not because of negotiation but because of the threat of US military action. Lott, however, found it important for Congress to offer its support for US military action should the President consider it necessary.

Senator Arlene Specter said he would sponsor a resolution calling for Saddam Hussein's trial as a "war criminal." Asked about the possibility of US sending troops into Iraq to get Hussein, Specter said, "one way or another, we've got to topple Saddam Hussein. It may be a covert action, it may be a lot of pressure on the Voice of America."

"Saddam Hussein has a lot of enemies within Iraq. We may be able to avoid that kind of military action, but, one way or another, we have got to get rid of Saddam Hussein if we are to avoid another build-up of weapons of mass destruction."

"If Saddam Hussein goes back on his word," said House Speaker Newt Gingrich, "there should be immediate retaliation." India Abroad News Service

Sanskritik Jote protests assault on Ramendu

By Staff Correspondent

Sanskritik Jote yesterday brought out a procession protesting the assault on its president Ramendu Mojumder and the act of vandalism at the Central Shaheed Minar on Saturday.

Cultural activists chanted slogans demanding exemplary punishment to those responsible for the incidents from the procession.

The procession began from TSC of the Dhaka University and paraded different thoroughfares of the city.

The Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of the ruling Awami League also brought out a procession and held a rally at the Aparajito Bangla protesting the incidents.

The BCL rally was addressed, among others, by Enamul Haque Shamim, Ishaque Ali Khan Panna, Abu Syed Al Mahmud Swapon, Bahadur Bepari and Ajay Kor Khokon.

Russia keen to assist afforestation programme

Russia is interested to help Bangladesh in the afforestation programme, visiting Russian parliamentarians said here yesterday, reports BSS.

The five-member parliamentary delegation of state Duma of the Russian Federation, who met Minister for Forest and Environment Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury at her office, offered to assist Bangladesh, a PID handout said.

The leader of the delegation Gabbulvahit G Bagautdinov while praising the environment management policy of Bangladesh said "mutual cooperation between the two countries could help prevent environmental pollution".

Terming Bangladesh as a modest country endowed with diverse forest resources, the delegation expressed its "keen interest" to help in implementing massive afforestation programme with technical and managerial expertise, the handout added.

JS body meet on Religious Affairs Ministry held

A meeting of parliamentary standing committee on the Religious Affairs Ministry was held at Sangsad Bhaban yesterday with its President Shah Haiduzzaman in the chair, reports UNB.

The meeting discussed about the publication activities of the Islamic Foundation and related matters of Hajj camp.

It was informed that the foundation has so far published more than 1,900 Islamic books with an objective to reach the Bengali translation of Tafsir on the holy Quran, Hadis and fundamental Islamic books to the people.

The meeting was also informed that the permanent Hajj camp built up at a cost of Tk 40 crore will be used by the Hajj pilgrims during Hajj season and as Imam Training Centre in other time.

Committee member Md Hafez Ruhul Amin (Madani) and Panchanan Biswas attended the meeting.



A partial view of the children's rally in the city yesterday on the occasion of 'Global march against child labour' organised by the Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum. —Star photo

Minister's call to stop unplanned construction

By Staff Correspondent

LORD Minister, Zillur Rahman yesterday urged all concerned to stop uncontrolled, unplanned infrastructure to ensure healthy civic life and ecological balance, reports UNB.

He said unplanned sky scrapers and multi-storied buildings are causing misery to public life and pollute environment.

Without considering the availability of electricity, gas, water and sewerage facilities, such construction based on the thinking of economic and commercial benefit would create problems, the Minister told a seminar.

Addressing the opening session of a three-day international seminar on "Geo-Science and Urban Development" at the National Museum Auditorium Zillur said priority is given to the modernisation of service sectors and infrastructural construction with the help of foreign aid agencies.

American Alumni Assoc to be launched in March

An American Alumni Association (AAA) is being formed in Bangladesh to promote fellowship among American graduates, to help American graduates find and develop careers that use their abilities and education, to maintain a database of members for international and domestic users, to recognize American graduates for significant achievements, to give awards and scholarships, and to assist Bangladesh students exploring the possibility of study in the United States.

The Association is in the process of being registered under the Societies Act. A launching ceremony in March is planned, says a press release.

The Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament Humayun Rashid Chowdhury and the US Ambassador to Bangladesh, John C Holzman have agreed to act as co-chairs of the Association.

The founding board of the organization comprises: Dr A K M Mashur Rahman, Secretary, Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance; Sayeeful Islam, Managing Director, Concorde; John Kincannon, Director, USIS; Dr Iqbal Mahmud, Vice Chancellor, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET); Dr Perween Hasan, Professor of Islamic History and Culture, Dhaka University; Syed Fahim Munaim, Managing Editor, The Daily Star; and Forest Cookson, President of the American Chamber of Commerce, Bangladesh.

Anyone possessing a university degree from an accredited American institution of higher education may apply to be member. Certain other types of long-term academic work in the United States may also qualify an individual for membership. Prospective members are invited to contact Elgin Rodriguez at telephone no 873444 for application information.

Slum-dwellers protest eviction move by govt

By Staff Correspondent

Slum-dwellers at the Mohammadpur Joint Quarter have protested the government move to evict them from the site and allocate the plots through lottery, said a press release of the Ekota Dushtha Kalyan Bahumukhi Samabay Samity.

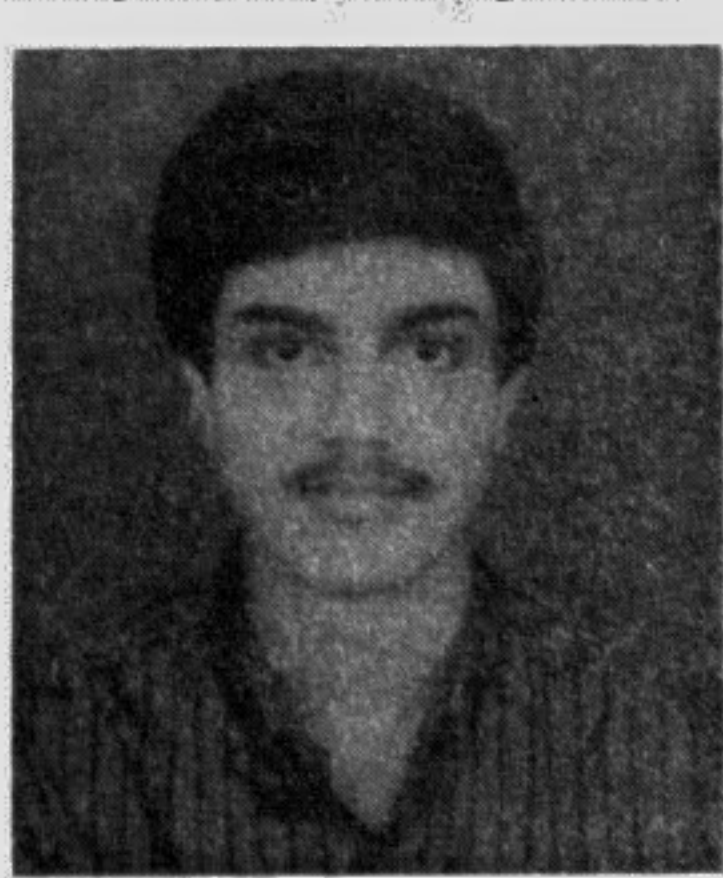
The release said that the Samity had earlier submitted a project plan to the Works Ministry which proposed construction of six multi-storied residential buildings with playground.

Amar Ekushey observed abroad

Amar Ekushey was observed by different Bangladeshi Missions abroad in a befitting manner on Saturday, reports UNB.

Reports of observing the Amar Ekushey reached here from Bangladesh Missions at Doha, Tripoli, Baghdad, Colombo and Bahrain.

The programmes of observing of Amar Ekushey included meetings, rendering of National Anthem, recitation from the holy Quran, Special 'munajat' were also offered for the salvation of the souls of the martyrs of Amar Ekushey and for the well-being and continued peace and prosperity of Bangladesh.



First class first

Md Amirul Islam Khan (Pavel) stood first class first in the M Sc Examination-94 held in '97 from the Department of Physics (Thesis Group), Dhaka University, says a press release.

He is the son of Nazrul Islam Khan, Deputy General Manager, Janata Bank, Head Office, Dhaka and Mrs Khurshid Jahan and grand son of late Rezaul Karim Khan Manik Miah of Vill Baraid Satoria, Manikganj.

Presently he is studying in the Cambridge University, London under Cambridge O D A scholarship.

Magician couple off to Russia

Magician couple Ulfat Kabir and Rukhsana Kabir left Dhaka for Moscow on Monday at the invitation of Moscow Illusion Theatre, says a press release.

They will perform magic show in circuses in Russia.

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়
প্রকৌশল বিভাগ, অঞ্চল-৪
ঢাকা সিটি করপোরেশন, ঢাকা

আপনার পরিবেশ সুন্দর ও পরিষ্কার রাখুন
আপনার শিশুকে টিকা দিন

পুনঃ টেডার/টেডার নোটিশ

নিম্নে বর্ণিত কাজের জন্য ঢাকা সিটি করপোরেশনের তালিকাভুক্ত সকল শ্রেণীর টিকাদারগণের নিকট হইতে বাংলাদেশ স্বরূপ নং ২৯১১তে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে টেডার আকান করা যাইতেছে। আগামী-২৫/১/৯৮ ৯/৩/৯৮ইং তারিখে বেলা ১২-০০ ঘটিকার সময় বিভাগীয় কমিশনার, ঢাকা জেলা প্রশাসক, ঢাকা সিটি করপোরেশনের সকল অঞ্চলের প্রকৌশল বিভাগ কর্তৃক টেডার গ্রহণ করা হইবে। এ দিনই বেলা ১২-০০ ঘটিকার সময় উপস্থিত টেডারদাতা অথবা তাহাদের প্রতিনিধিগণের সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হইবে। শতকরা হারে দর অর্থে এবং কথায় উত্তর দিহিতে হইবে, অন্যথায় দরপত্র বাতিল বলিয়া গণ্য হইবে। ঢাকা সিটি করপোরেশনের মেয়র মহোদয়ের অনুকূলে যে কোন সিভিলিয়ান ব্যাংকের ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার-এর মাধ্যমে বায়নার টাকা হিসাবে টেডারের সহিত জমা দিতে হইবে। ঢাকা সিটি করপোরেশনের সকল আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয়-এর প্রকৌশল বিভাগ এবং হিসাব বিভাগের হিসাবরক্ষক (পোদার)-এর নিকট প্রসিষ্টে নির্ধারিত মূল্যের বিনিময়ে করপোরেশনের চালান মারকৃত (অফেরতযোগ্য) টেডারের শর্তাবলী, আর্থিক সিভিলিয়ান ইত্যাদি ক্রয় করা যাইবে। দরপত্র শর্তাবলী এবং সিভিলিয়ান ক্রয়-এর প্রকৌশল বিভাগ কর্তৃক টিকাদার বর্তমান আর্থিক বৎসর পর্যন্ত তাহাদের স্ব-প্রকৌশলী প্রতিষ্ঠানের তালিকাভুক্ত মূল কাগজপত্রাদির সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি জমা দিতে হইবে। যে সকল টিকাদার চলতি আর্থিক বৎসর পর্যন্ত টিকাদারী তালিকাভুক্ত নয়ান করেন নাই তাহারা কোন দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করিতে পারিবেন না। এতদসংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত বিবরণ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় ঢাকা সিটি করপোরেশনের অঞ্চল-৪ এর নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তরে (বিলগাও-ভিলগাপাড়া) ঢাকা জানা যাইবে।

কোন টেডারদাতা দরপত্র ৫% এর অধিক উর্ধ্ব বা নিম্ন দর প্রদান করিলে টেডার বাতিল বলিয়া গণ্য করা হইবে। সর্বনিম্ন প্রদত্ত দর একাধিক পাওয়া গেলে লটারির মাধ্যমে টিকাদার নির্ধারণ করা হইবে।

টেডার খোলার তারিখে টেডারের দলিলপত্র বিক্রয় করা হইবে না। যে কোন বা সমুদয় টেডার কোন কারণ দর্শনাতে বাতিলকৃত হইলে বা বাতিল করিবার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষের সন্মুখিত থাকিবে।

ক্রমিক নং	কাজের নাম	প্রাকলিত টাকা	বায়নার টাকা	সময়সীমা
১।	মাদারকে রাষ্ট্রায় হোঃ নং ৬৪/এ ও পাওয়ার হাউজের নিকট অর্ধেক দখল উচ্ছেদকৃত স্থানে কাঁটার দিগে বেড়া দেওয়ার কাজ (পুনঃ টেডার)	টাকা ১৩,৩১৩/-	টাকা ৩৯৯/-	১০ দিন
২।	আদমজী সল সিঃ কর্তৃক বননকৃত শিল্প ব্যাংক ভবনের সম্মুখ হইতে আদমজী কোর্ট পর্যন্ত রাস্তা মেরামত কাজ।	টাকা ৫৭,৪৩৪/-	টাকা ১,৭২৩/-	১০ দিন
৩।	উল্লেখিত পার্কের মেরামত কাজ।	টাকা ৪,০০,০০০/-	টাকা ১২,০০০/-	৪০ দিন
৪।	উত্তর মুগাপাড়া এলাকার গুয়াসা কর্তৃক বননকৃত কাজ।	টাকা ৯,৬২,৯৮৭/-	টাকা ২৮,৮৮৮/-	৪৫ দিন

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী
অঞ্চল-৪ (বিলগাও)
ঢাকা সিটি করপোরেশন

ডিসি/পিআর/ডি/৩৩২/৯৭-৯৮
জি-১৪০

Working children parade city thoroughfares

By Staff Correspondent

More than a thousand working children paraded the city thoroughfares yesterday as part of a global march which began in Manila last month to mobilise opinion against child labour across the world.

Two cabinet ministers led the procession which was brought out from Osmani Uddyan at about 10 am. Forty-one marchers from different countries, including six from Bangladesh, are participating in the march.

Labour and Manpower Minister M A Mannan while addressing a brief rally before the march reiterated the government's intention to protect children's right.

Besides, the State Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare Dr Mozammel Hossain stressed the need for implementation of the government's action plan in this regard.

BTUS demands arrest of Litu's killers

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Trade Union Sangha (BTUS) held a rally at the city's Paltan Square yesterday, demanding arrest and punishment of the killers of its leaders Rabiul Ahsan Litu, reports UNB.

The rally also strongly protested the "plundering" of the country's oil and gas resources by the imperialist forces in the name of free market economy.

Chaired by BTUS president Khaliur Rahman, the rally was addressed by Jatiya Ganatantrik Front president Dr M A Karim, Krishak Sangram Samity general secretary Salahuddin Ahmed, Jatiya Chhatra Dal president BM Shamimul Haq and general secretary Prokash Dutta, Dhaka Mohanagar Hotel Samik Union president Abdul Khaleq, Noujan Samik Federation leader Shah Alam, Gonogouj leader Mostafa Fayez and BTUS leader Pares Mondol and Obaidullah Sagar.

Envoy of Qatar meets President

By Staff Correspondent

Atik Nasser Sultan al-Bader, ambassador of the State of Qatar to Bangladesh, called on President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports BSS.

FEMA study team meets Indian CEC

A study team of Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) called on Chief Election Commissioner of India Dr MS Gill at New Delhi yesterday, reports UNB.

The team comprising FEMA Chairman Fakrudin Ahmed and Executive Director Tarikul Gani, also met Election Commissioner GVG Krishnamurthy and Deputy Election Commissioner Subash Pani.

During the meeting they exchanged views on the electoral law and administration of respective countries, according to a message received here from Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi.



United Nations Information Centre and United Nations International Drug Control Programme in association with the Department of Narcotics Control organised a workshop on 'National precursor control policy formulation' at the Ball Room of Dhaka Sheraton yesterday. —Star photo