

Cyprus: EU Approach

Turkey May Not be a Passive Spectator

A Delegation of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was due in Dhaka on 15 March to have talks with Bangladesh on the problems faced by them in a divided island. Those problems are assuming alarming proportions with the impending talks between the European Union (EU) and the Government of Cyprus, that is the southern part of the island.

IN order to understand the gravity of the situation it is important to travel back in time. Cyprus, which is 80 kms from the southern shore of Turkey, was for long a part of the Ottoman Empire. It changed hands and became a part of the British territory, which to this day maintains a military base there. In 1960 Britain withdrew from the island and crafted an intricate plan of settlement. The majority population of Cyprus is of Greek origin and the minority of Turkish origin. There was no love lost between the two communities and therefore the British brokered settlement had to take account of this reality. Cyprus was admitted to the UN as a sovereign member state in 1960. Besides the two communities of the island, the sovereignty and independence of Cyprus was guaranteed by the Governments of Britain, Greece and Turkey.

This is the genesis of the virtual partition of the island. Yet neither side, the Turks or the Greeks, are in favour of partition. Talks, specially mediated by the UN have been going on for years in order to find an acceptable solution. Those talks have never been broken up.

EU, which never took much interest in finding a settlement to the Cyprus problem, by a recent decision, has totally upset the apple cart. EU has decided to start negotiations with Cyprus, beginning 8 April next, in order to include her in the expanded EU. It goes without saying that EU negotiations will be held with the southern Greek part of Cyprus. This decision of the EU was adopted at the Luxembourg summit in December 1997. It is a violation of the 1960 accord because the accord stipulates that Cyprus cannot join international organisations or pacts of alliance of which both Turkey and Greece are not members. The 1960 Treaty of Guarantee contains the provision that Cyprus cannot participate in whole, or in part, in rights to the guarantor powers.

any political or economic union with any state whatsoever. Through this decision EU has destroyed the very basis of the bi-communality on which the independence of the island was based, and the parameters for a federal settlement.

Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Through the joint declaration of 20 January 1997 adopted by their Presidents, and endorsed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly, have stated the joint approach they would follow in the event that the EU opens accession negotiations with the Greek Cypriot side. Turkey as guarantor power will continue to maintain its rights and obligations arising from international agreements, and will exercise its contractual responsibilities towards the Turkish Cypriot people.

From the narration of events it is evident that EU, with scant information and less understanding of the delicate balance between the two peoples on the island of Cyprus, have taken a leap into the unknown. The delicately balanced agreement of 1960, has virtually been torn to pieces. The negotiations between Turkey and the EU in view of Turkey's admission to that ever expanding body, have been virtually frozen. This is because Turkey after a herculean effort and years of waiting, have found the EU door slammed. And to add insult to injury, friendly noises are emanating from the current EU presidency — namely Britain.

With the negotiations between EU and Government of Cyprus — namely southern Cyprus — slated for 8 April next, a new twist has been added to the Cyprus problem. It is evident that Turkey, which is taking measures along with TRNC, cannot be a passive spectator. There is a famous French proverb 'tete d'un Turc' (meaning extremely obstinate). EU in its headlong rush to expand its Christian club may have forgotten this expression.



The Horizon This Week  
Arshad-uz Zaman

Trouble broke out almost at the start of the new state and the two communities came close to splitting in 1963. The drama was heightened in the early seventies, when an adventurer named Samson, with covert help from the Greek authorities, overthrew President Archbishop Makarios and installed a virtual military rule and attempted annexation of the island with Greece. This was the most blatant violation of the 1960 accord, which gave

BJP Coming to Power in India and its Ramifications on the Sub-continent

by Barrister Harun ur Rashid

*The people of the sub-continent, deserve a good living with the basic necessities of life at their disposal. All they want is safe drinking water, shelter, food, clothing and healthcare in a safe environment. I only wish the leaders of the sub-continent do not fail their people.*

BJP leaders claim that they have won the mandate from the people to form the next government in New Delhi. If BJP succeeds with the support of regional and independents to form the government and unless they adjust their policies while in power, the principles on which the Indian leaders stood for in 1947, namely secularism and inclusion of all Indian people irrespective of religion in the bodypolitik, will very likely be sacrificed to the detriment of harmony and stability. It would rather be a reversal of the principles which the Indian leaders were proud of at the time.

It is an admitted fact that BJP stands for 'one nation, one culture and one people' in India and they are open about it. India will be for them 'Hindustan' — land of Hindus. It is an elitist right wing party which does not appear to believe in the accommodation of other religions and cultures in India. The monocratic rhetoric of a religion is not only a dangerous trend but against the concept of modern nationhood which embraces and emphasises multiculturalism. BJP appears to be injecting fear and terror in the minds of minority

Muslims in India and other non-Hindus. Why the BJP could gain almost 250 seats in Lok Shava (Lower House of Parliament) in 1998 in a Parliament of 545 from only 2 seats in 1984? The reasons are not far to seek. The Congress became a moribund party without its credible policies. It is torn by factional quarrels. The Congress neglected the party organisations when they were in power. The promises they made were not kept. The Muslims and other minorities became disillusioned by the Congress party rule. Above all while the Babri mosque was demolished by BJP supporters in 1992 the Indian Congress Prime Minister was a silent spectator. In fact some believe the government of the day acquiesced in it to get votes from nationalist Hindus. It was a sad record of governance, to say the least, from the Congress government.

four governments that were incapable of ruling effectively the country. Another reason appears to be that the people all over the world are frustrated to see that the capitalism with its 'trickle-down effect' and economic globalism did not bring any prosperity among the poor people. In many instances, the poor became poorer and the rich richer under economic rationalism. The community became restful, divisive, violent, materialistic and to quote Hobbes 'nasty, brutish and selfish.' In the circumstances, religion could be a powerful magnet for the people. Implementation of religious precepts could bring hope where there is despair, and harmony where there is discord.

The people gradually opted for religious party which appeared to be the alternative way to achieve their goals. The religious party leaders are usually articulate, passionate and robust in their views. Even the secular Turkey was recently ruled by an Islamic Welfare Party (now banned by the court). The ideology based on religion seems attractive to the common people and they go for it. BJP appears to have followed the same trend as it pledged to establish the dominance of the majority Hindus. BJP might remove its secular character from its Constitution as the president of the party L K Advani foreshadowed it. He also wishes to bring the whole of Kashmir under India, now part of it controlled by Pakistan.

Further, BJP advocated the policy of dominance of India in the sub-continent through its commitment to the renewal of nuclear arms policy. It may have touched common chord with the Indian people. With the collapse of Soviet Union, India feels somewhat helpless and less secure in international scene. The move of Non-Aligned movement in the present international context is gone. All these factors have combined to give an image of power and pride to the Indian people by BJP. It appears that a BJP government in New Delhi can be a

serious threat to the stability of the sub-continent. Pakistan would be reacting adversely to shifts of the politics unless BJP change their while in power. The 'Gujral doctrine' pursued by previous two Indian governments had a salutary effect on the political climate in the region. It seems that the doctrine could have its natural death with the BJP in power. The most important concern for the people of the sub-continent would likely be the arms-race between India and Pakistan, creating a tension and instability. The social sectors would be ignored and more funds from the budget would go for the purchase or production of weapons of destruction. In my view, the spillover effect could be felt in Bangladesh. The right wing parties in Bangladesh would likely attempt to counter the policies of 'Hindutva' of BJP. The existing relations with India may run into difficulties. Bangladeshi people do not want at this stage any forces of tension and social unrest in the community when all the energies are directed to the uplift of the conditions of the people. The people of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, may the people of the world, deserve a good living with the basic necessities of life at their disposal. All they want is safe drinking water, shelter, food, clothing and healthcare in a safe environment. I only wish the leaders of the sub-continent do not fail their people.

SAARC Cardiac Society  
Sharing of Skill at Academic and Professional Level

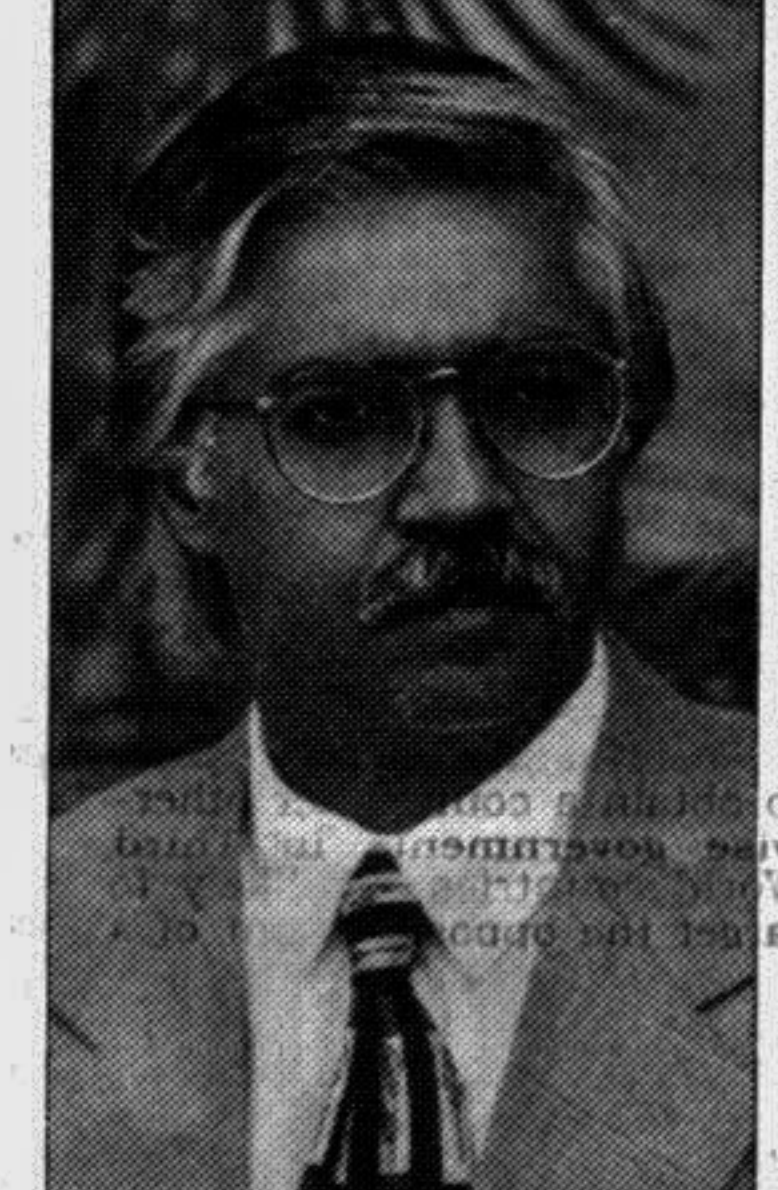
Dr Ashok Seth, Head of the Department of Invasive and Interventional Cardiology, Escorts Heart Institute and Research Centre, New Delhi, who was on a three-day visit to the country, in an exclusive interview told The Daily Star Correspondent Naimul Haq about the progress of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Cardiac Society formed in late November last year and possibilities of academic skill exchange programmes.

status and future trends of coronary artery diseases. About the SAARC Cardiac Society, we mooted the idea some three months ago when we had the first meeting here in Dhaka that was when we formed the Society constituting its headquarters here for two years. And now the implementation of the programme has to be decided and this was the executive committee meeting which was attended by the representatives of the national cardiac societies who formed the executive committee at the SAARC Cardiac Society from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and the absentee who sent their apologies were from Sri Lanka and Nepal. This was held on Thursday evening. At the meeting we formed various committees looking into various aspects of cardiology. The main objective of the society is to share our knowledge of expertise, create multi-centre research programmes which would benefit all the society members as a whole. So, several committees were formed at the meeting to explore fields like disease prevention, rheumatic heart disease, rehabilitation of patients after myocardial-infarction, research and coordination, medical education in the member countries. We also formed a number of special committees on cardiac surgery and interventional cardiology, angioplasty, pediatric cardiology and surgery and also clinical cardiology. Each of the committees would coordinate in specific sphere and arrange training programmes so that individuals from any member country would be sent to and research centre within the SAARC countries which has the expertise. The idea is that the individual doctors become competent enough to perform standard procedures.

teaching each other which is the goal of this mission? You see, information on research carried out on cardiology in America is hardly available in Bangladesh or any other member nation. Basically, the idea of the mission is that we share the existing knowledge available within the region. DS: When do you think this mission is going to set off? AS: By the time we sit for our next executive committee meeting in about six months time, we hope to take off implementing the actions decided now. DS: How would the activities of the society be funded? AS: For a body like this, funding could come from the main body, individual countries, ministries and national cardiac societies. In fact, members of each society have to contribute to strengthen the goal. But overall funding will be a much more complex process. A lot of ground work has to be done by the committees for smooth functioning of the system, that involves accurate co-ordination. Once the system is ready for functioning, then we hope everything would start very rapidly. DS: During your interview last time with The Daily Star you said the benefit of the mission would start showing in about a year. Do you still think its going to work on time? AS: Yes, in a year we hope to get the benefit of the mission showing up. DS: The third purpose of your visit is very significant —

that involves your commitment to skill exchange between students of Bangladesh and India. What sort of objective are you looking for? AS: As a visiting professor to Bangladesh Medical College I had this opportunity to open up fresh relationship of medical education and training. The education programme would help in exchange of education trips between two countries — Bangladesh and India. Students can swap knowledge among themselves this way which I think is a great idea. I think more and more medical colleges and institutes should think of this exchange programme because the benefit from the idea is enormous. I think government should also encourage skill sharing at academic and professional level, so that one has a commitment to each other. And to share my knowledge, I have trained more than 200 doctors including foreigners in India. What I am saying is, we need to build this up at constitutional level. DS: Do you believe the idea of skill exchange programmes can be a break-through in the field of medical education? AS: Absolutely. We have done similar programmes in medical colleges in India and we had very satisfactory results. And it needs no financial commitment. I like to build up this idea, if possible, here too. There is no reason why this should not happen in Bangladesh.

that there is a view that the BJP is likely to be more moderate in government than its official policies suggest. What we need at this juncture is a government in India that will seek to pursue harmony and peace among all people irrespective of caste and religion. It will be a sad occasion if India, the largest democracy in the world, is to propagate racial hatreds and adheres to aggravating the divisive forces within its borders and beyond. I am, however, comforted that there is a view that the BJP is likely to be more moderate in government than its official policies suggest. What we need at this juncture is a government in India that will seek to pursue harmony and peace among all people irrespective of caste and religion. It will be a sad occasion if India, the largest democracy in the world, is to propagate racial hatreds and adheres to aggravating the divisive forces within its borders and beyond. The writer is former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN in Geneva. 10/02/98 B D TO



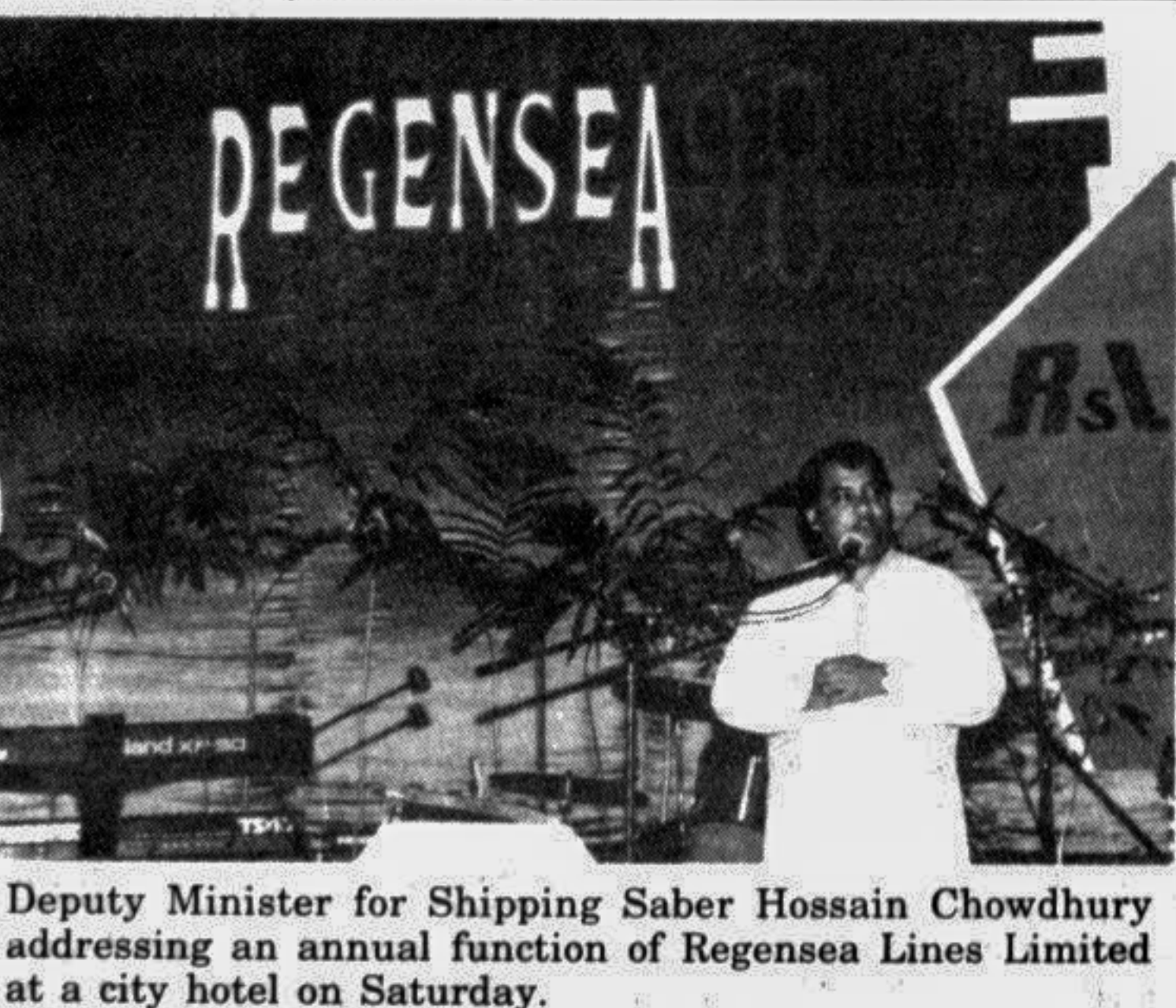
Dr Ashok Seth (AS): I understand that you are here to determine the groundwork of the mission of the SAARC Cardiac Society. Will you please brief us on your progress on the activities of your society. Dr Ashok Seth (AS): I am here for three important purposes. First one is, I have come here as the joint general secretary of the SAARC Cardiac Society. The second reason why I am here is, on an invitation from the National Institute of Cardio-Vascular Diseases (NICVD), to give a lecture on coronary artery constriction and treatment of heart blockages by non-surgical methods using stents. The third, another new dimension, that I am here for is, I have been invited as an honorary visiting professor of cardiology to the Bangladesh Medical College, Gulshan, Dhaka. Here I have come to visit the faculty and deliver my lecture at the college on non-surgical treatment — present

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Steps taken to ensure 25pc quota for women in govt jobs

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Dr Mozammel Hossain yesterday said the present government has taken steps to ensure 10 and 15 per cent quotas for women in the gazetted and non-gazetted posts respectively, reports BSS. "No efforts will be fruitful unless the women are incorporated with the nation building activities," Mozammel said while addressing as chief guest at the two-day conference of district of Jatiya Mohila Sangstha (JMS) in the city. Jatiya Mohila Sangstha organised the conference at the Mohila Samity auditorium. A total of 64 chairpersons from 64 districts and a number of women organisers from all over the country participated in the conference to discuss and review the overall development of the women in the country. Women and children affairs secretary Abdullah Harun Pasha was present on the occasion as special guest. Presided over by Begum Ivy Rahman, chairperson of JMS, the conference was also addressed, by JMS executive member Baby Moudud. Deputy Minister for Shipping Saber Hossain Chowdhury addressing an annual function of Regensea Lines Limited at a city hotel on Saturday.



Children's rally in city

A colourful rally of children and juveniles was brought out in the capital yesterday on the occasion of the 78th birth anniversary of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports BSS. State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader led the rally, which was participated by about ten thousand students of different educational institutions of Lalbagh area. Starting from Azimpur Girls High School, the rally paraded different city streets before terminating at Bangabandhu Museum at Dhanmondi. Quader placed a wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as a mark of respect to the late leader. Hajeer Mohammad Selim, MP, was also present on the occasion. JCD urges DU authorities to withdraw cases Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday urged the Dhaka University authorities to withdraw the cases filed against its leaders in connection with the incident of Central Shaheed Minar on February 21, reports UNB. JCD brought out a procession on the campus and held a rally in front of the administrative building in support of their demands.

17th Rabindra Sangeet Sommemon ends at RU

RAJSHAHI, Mar 15: The 'Saptadosh Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Sommemon (17th National Tagore Song Conference) concluded last night at the 'Sabash Bangladesh Chhatra' on the Rajshahi University campus here. The two-day conference began on March 13 with placing wreaths in the morning at the mazar of Dr Shamsuzzoha, who laid down his life in the movement against autocratic rule in 1969. The conference was formally inaugurated by cultural activist Nazim Mahmud by lighting lamps at 'Sabash Bangladesh Open Auditorium.' The ceremony was also addressed by Vice Chancellor Prof Abdul Khalique, Prof Khanam Mamtaz Khan, eminent writer and National Tagore Song Council executive president Waheedul Haque, and its secretary Papiya Sarwar. On the opening day, a seminar on 'Rabindranath O' Swadesh Chinta' was held at Kazi Nazrul Islam auditorium with Hasan Azizul Haque in the chair. The keynote paper, prepared by Prof Sanath Kumar Shaha, was read by Mazniful Islam Tuku. Later, a delegate council was held, chaired by Waheedul Haque. The annual report of the Tagore Song Council was presented by Papiya Sarwar at the meeting. A cultural programme was also arranged, where local songs of Rajshahi, recitation and dances, and Tagore songs by artists from 35 districts were presented. On the concluding day yesterday, a function was held at 'Sabash Bangladesh Chhatra,' where singers from all over the country, including 'Chhayano' cultural group from Dhaka, rendered songs. A reception was also concluded to eminent cultural worker and dancer Bazur Rahman Badal at the 'Sabash Bangladesh Open Auditorium.' Freedom fighter Air-Vice Marshal (ret'd) K Khandakar was the chief guest. Weather Dry weather forecast Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB. Slight rise in day temperature is expected across the country during the period, according to Met Office. The sun sets today at 6:08 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:06 am.

BHRC to probe incident of raping of housewife

By Staff Correspondent Bangladesh Human Rights Commission (BHRC) has decided to investigate into the alleged incident of raping a housewife by a sub-inspector of police in Chittagong, says a press release. The Commission has formed a three-member investigation committee headed by its Chittagong unit general secretary Advocate Kamrunnahr Begum. The committee will start investigation in a day or two, the press release said. The Human Rights Commission in the press release said that Delwar Hossain, a sub-inspector of police working at the Chittagong Court building allegedly raped a housewife recently at a city hotel. Anybody having knowledge of the incident have been requested to contact at the 186/232 Hem Sen Lane, Kotwali, Chittagong office of the Human Rights Commission, phone-031/618880. Meanwhile, the Human Rights Commission condemned the alleged rape of the housewife by the sub-inspector of the police. JS body on Law Ministry meet held A meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry was held at Sangsad Bhawan yesterday, reports UNB.

Obituary

Atiqullah, an employee of Arab Bangladesh Bank Limited died of cardiac arrest early hours of yesterday. He was 28, says a press release. His namaj-e-Janaza was held at bank head office and his body was sent to village home of Lakshipur district for burial. Ameenah Khatoun, wife of Shamsur Ali, Secretary, Gandaria Jame Masjid, died in the early hours of today at Bangladesh Medical College Hospital following renal failure. She was 74, reports BSS. Dr Moniruzzaman, chairman, Department of Bengali, Jahangirnagar University, is the eldest son of the deceased. The qulhwani of Ameenah Khatoun will be held on Tuesday after Asr prayers at Rowshan Manzil, 102/A, Dinanath Sen Road, Gendaria. Chehlum of Hamida Mohiuddin, wife of M. Mohiuddin, member Board of Directors, Bangladesh Bank and mother of Rashida Mohiuddin, TV newscaster and Director, Public Relations, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel will be held today after Asr prayers at her residence, House No 5/1, Road No 13, Kalyanpur, says a press release.