

President Shahabuddin Ahmed exchanging greetings with members of the President Guard Regiment (PGR) on the occasion of its 23rd founding anniversary yesterday. — PID photo

President attends PGR Raising Day function

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed attended the 23rd Raising Day function of the President's Guard Regiment (PGR) at Dhaka Cantonment yesterday, says a press release.

The President appreciated the regiment members for their training and efficiency. He advised them to keep themselves alert about the solemn responsibility reposed on them and to obey and maintain rules-regulations and discipline in every sphere of life.

Chief of Army Staff Lt General Mustafizur Rahman and PGR commandant Col. Muhammad Hossain Sadek were present on the occasion.

Envoy of Qatar makes farewell call on President

The outgoing Ambassador of the state of Qatar Atique Nasser Sultan Al Bader made a farewell call on President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday, says a press release.

Appreciating the ambassador's effort towards strengthening the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Qatar President Shahabuddin said that the existing relation between the two countries is very excellent. He expressed the hope that the two countries would work together to ensure further realisation of mutually beneficial objectives. The President thanked the government of Qatar for offering employment opportunities to a big number of workers of Bangladesh.

The outgoing ambassador thanked the President for receiving him. He mentioned the excellent bilateral relation between the two countries and expressed the hope that the existing brotherly relation would be further strengthened in future. He thanked the government and the people of Bangladesh for extending full cooperation in the discharge of his duties.

Dutch aid for HR training programme

The Netherlands government will finance the third phase of human rights training programme of Bangladesh Bar Council, a press release said, reports BSS.

Bangladesh Bar Council started the third phase of its human rights training programme for lawyers on July 1. Dick C B Den Haas, ambassador of the Netherlands to Bangladesh, and Barrister Amirul Islam, Chairman of the Legal Education Committee of the Bar Council, signed an agreement for Taka one crore 37 thousand in Dutch aid for the programme, the release said.

The programme aims at creating awareness and increasing knowledge about human rights among young lawyers. The two-year programme focusses on monitoring of human rights violations.

In addition to organising more than 20 training courses, the council will expand its network and activities of monitoring cells throughout the country. These monitoring cells will cooperate with the local administration and law enforcing agencies to remedy violations of human rights. Publication of a quarterly bulletin and seminars on issues relating to human rights will also form part of the programme.

The council has successfully completed two previous phases of the human rights training programme. The first phase emphasised on familiarisation, while the second phase focused on specific areas of human rights, their violations and remedies available within the country's legal system. Over one thousand young lawyers have been trained, who form the core of the monitoring cells.

PGR members have set up example of devotion: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the members of the President's Guard Regiment (PGR) have set an example of devotion, sense of duty and sacrifice through their sincere services, reports BSS.

Addressing the rank and file of the regiment on the occasion of the 23rd raising anniversary of the PGR, the prime minister said that their discipline, devotion and skills have been reflected in their professional duties. "I am happy and proud of the deep sense of patriotism, high discipline and dutifulness of the PGR members," she added.

Elaborating the necessity of such an important regiment in maintaining safety and security of the head of state and various state functions, the prime minister said that keeping this in mind father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman raised this regiment in 1975, taking selected and disciplined members of the armed forces.

The prime minister said that the responsibility of the PGR members is simultaneously a matter of pride as well as a im-

portance. You get the opportunity of projecting the image of the armed forces as well as the country as a whole through taking part in various state functions, she said and noted with happiness that besides discharging their routine jobs the members of the PGR had also been keeping their ability in other fields.

The prime minister hoped that the PGR members would discharge their responsibility with more courage and devotion being respectful to the leadership and would secure yet more honorable position for the regiment in future.

The prime minister said that she was very much aware of the problems the PGR members had been facing in their day-to-day life. She said her government has already taken a number of steps including increasing their number to redress their problems and sufferings, she noted.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Mustafizur Rahman, Birprotik, also spoke briefly on the occasion. Defence Secretary Syed Yusuf Hossain, and PGR Commandant Col Muhammad Hossain Sadek were present, among others, on the occasion.

Workshop on election law reforms Changes in rules for appointment of CEC suggested

MYMENSINGH, July 5: Speakers at the fifth divisional workshop (Dhaka) on election law reforms here on Saturday suggested changes in the rules for appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and the authority of announcing election results be shifted from the Returning Officer to CEC, reports UNB.

They also suggested changes in existing laws for making the election process more transparent and for an effective role of election observers.

The day-long workshop held at the District Council was organised jointly by FEMA and Study and Research Group of Human Aid Agency.

Former Vice-Chancellor of Agricultural University Dr Shah Mohammad Faruque,

Prof Matiur Rahman, Prof Ameer Ali, Prof Shah Mohammad Farid, Prof Shamsul Islam, Firoz M Hasan, Barharuddin Ahmed and Advocate Firoz Uddin Ahmed were among those who took part in the discussion.

Most of them felt that Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners should be appointed from among the retired judges of the Supreme Court. Returning Officers should also be drawn from the judiciary for ensuring the polls free and fair. Number of women seats may be increased, they added.

The speakers stressed on the need for appropriate laws for observers to monitor the polls, counting of ballots and announcement of results.

What's on today . . .

Workshop: A workshop on "Local Level Disaster Action Plan" will be inaugurated. Organiser: Disaster Management Bureau. Venue: James P Grant Conference Room of UNICEF, (Sheraton Hotel Annex Building, Time: 10 am.

Seminar: A seminar on "Micro Leasing: The Grameen Bank Experience" will be held. Organiser: Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh (CDR'B) Venue: Women's Voluntary Association (WVA) auditorium, Rd No 16, House No 20, Dhanmondi. Time: 4:30 pm.

Inaugural ceremony: A fortnight long programme on the occasion of Eid-e-Miladunnabi will be inaugurated. Organiser: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh. Chief guest: Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament. Venue: Baitul Mukarram National Mosque. Time: 5:30 pm.

Theatre: Lok Natyadal will stage its comedy drama "Bahana" to celebrate its founding anniversary. Venue: Mahila Samity Mancha.

Thai food festival from today

A six-day long "Thai Food Festival" begins at the Cafe Bazar restaurant of Sonargaon Hotel in the city from today, says a press release.

The Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel is sponsoring the food festival in collaboration with the Thai Embassy in Dhaka and Thai Airways International.

Ambassador of Thailand Pithaya Pookaman will inaugurate the festival at 6:30 pm today.

DRU computer training course

By Staff Correspondent

Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) has asked interested members to register their names for computer training by July 12, says a press release.

The training course for second batch will begin in the third week of this month and participation fee for the course has been fixed at Tk 1000.00.

DRU arranges the training course in collaboration with news agency ABAS.

Ashray Bhaban PM likely to lay foundation stone in Gazipur July 8

A rehabilitation centre, *Dustha Mayeder Nirapad Ashray Bhaban*, for distressed mothers will be set up at Master Bari in Gazipur soon, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to lay the foundation stone of the *Ashray Bhaban* on Wednesday.

State Minister for Social Welfare and Women Children Affairs Dr Mozammel Hossain will be present as special guest.

Social Welfare Ministry and Bangladesh Shishu Raskha Samity will organise the programme.

WFP to initiate food assistance programme in CHT soon

The World Food Programme (WFP) will initiate its food assistance programme in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region soon, reports BSS.

A special team of WFP has visited the CHT in this regard, said Dr Werner Kiene, the newly appointed Resident Representative of the WFP.

Dr Kiene said this when she called on Minister for Food and Agriculture Motia Chowdhury at her office yesterday. They discussed in detail the food situation of Bangladesh.

The WFP representative told the minister that Bangladesh is given 10 per cent of the total food assistance under WFP's extends under its development programme which is the organisation's highest allocation for a country. He said development through this programme depends on proper utilisation of the foods.

BSB realises Tk 96 cr loan during last fiscal

Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB) has realised a loan amount of Tk 96 crore, including Tk 69 crore long-term loan, during the fiscal 1997-98, reports UNB.

The bank regularised loan accounts of 33 projects by rescheduling Tk 162 crore during the period, said a BSB statement yesterday.

It also liquidated loan accounts of 26 projects realising Tk 12 crore, said the statement.

Besides, the bank has disbursed Tk 96 crore during the last fiscal against various projects on priority basis.

BSB has so far allocated loan to the tune of Tk 2,757 crore to 3058 projects during the last 26 financial years till 1997-98. The projects include those undertaken before independence.

Loan accounts of 1400 projects out of the total 2000 financed by the bank have so far been liquidated.

Int'l Cooperatives Day observed in Khulna

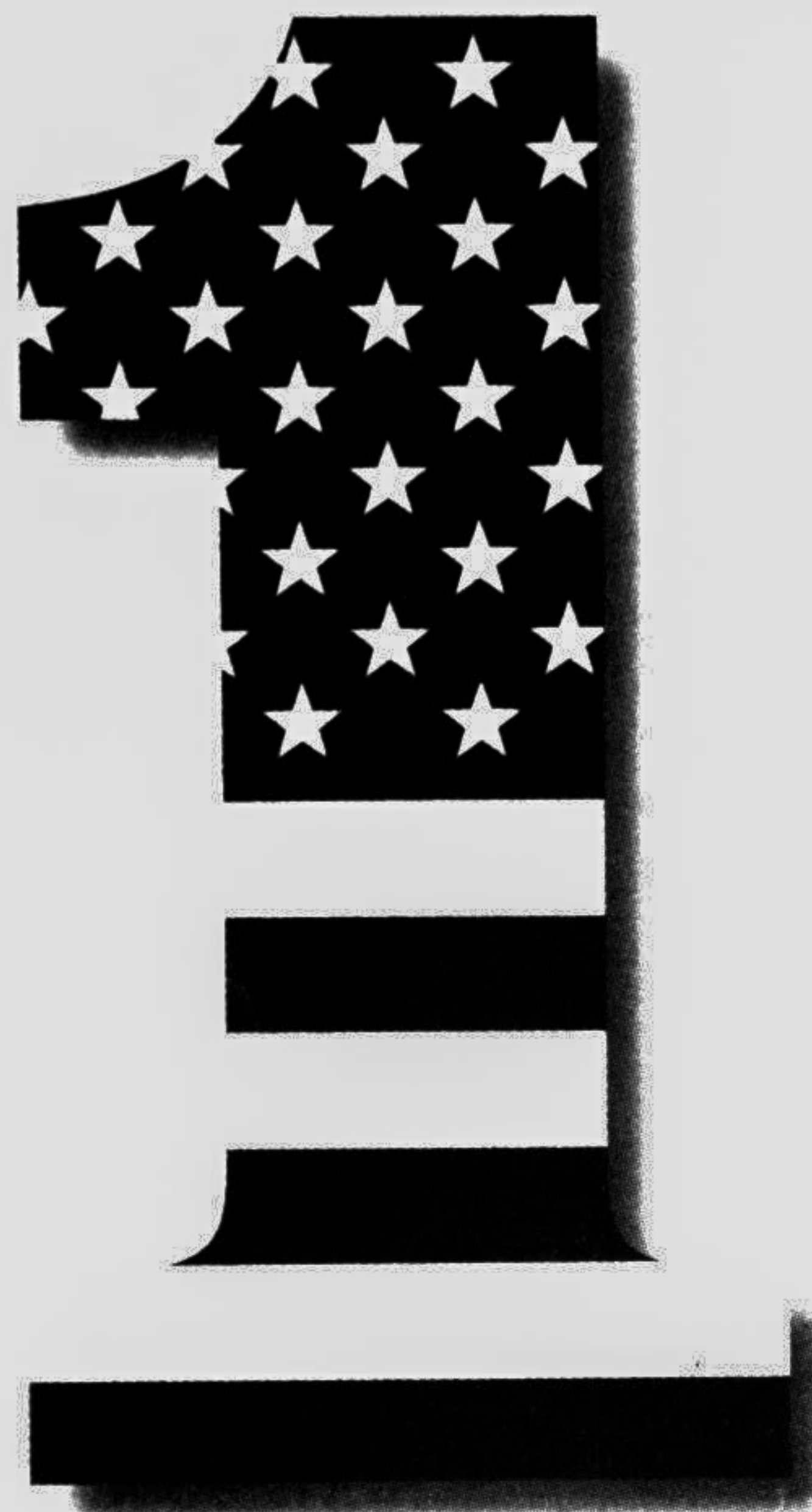
KHULNA, July 5: The 76th International Cooperatives Day was observed here yesterday as elsewhere in the country and across the world in a befitting manner, reports BSS.

The day began with the hoisting of the national and the cooperatives flags in the morning at all the cooperatives offices in the district.

The theme of the day this year is: cooperatives and economic globalisation.

Elaborate programme were taken up in observance of the day. A joint discussion of all the cooperatives unions was held in the evening at the premises of Sundarban Fisheries Cooperative Samity with the president of the samity MA Malek in the chair. Those who participated in the discussion included president of Khulna District Cooperatives union Mohammad Sahajan, secretary Khandaker Sahajamal Bablu, Vice-President of Sundarban Fisheries Cooperatives Samity GM Maqbul, secretary Abdul Hakim.

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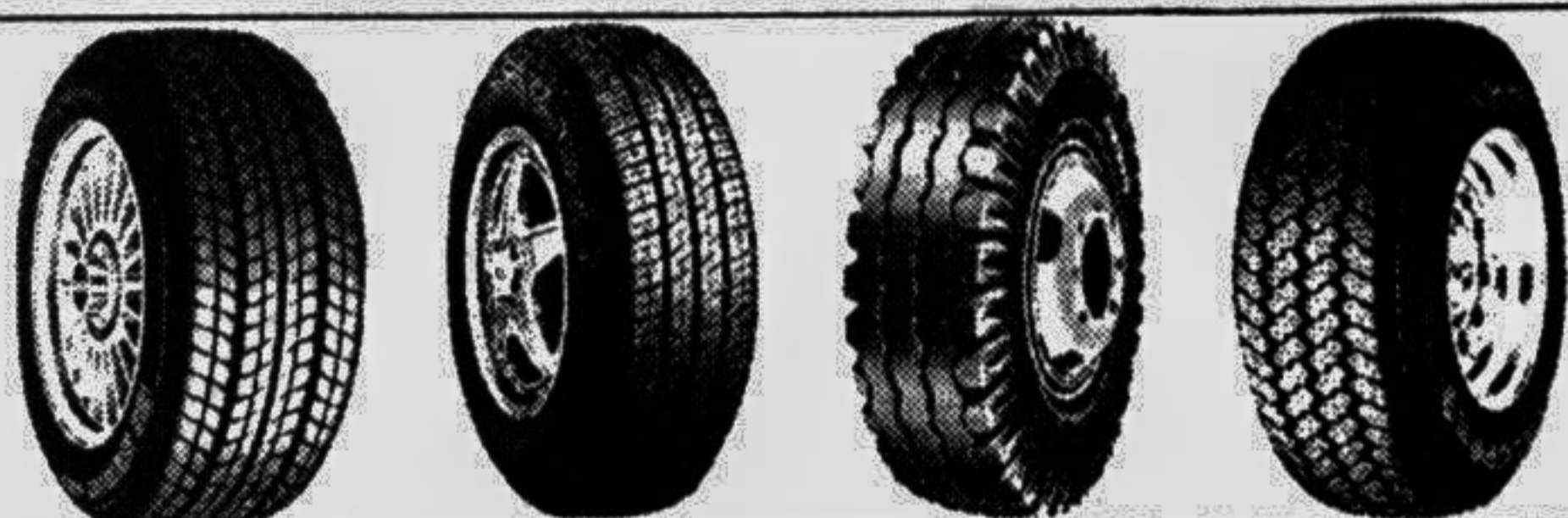
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