

## News

## President opens surgical congress Physicians urged to uphold professional values

President Shahabuddin Ahmed has urged doctors to continue their efforts sincerely to uphold the dignity and values of the medical profession, reports APB.

"It is a noble profession and doctors should take it as a mission of life," he said expressing the hope that they would prove their sincerity by giving devoted service to patients.

The President was inaugurating the 6th International Surgical Congress and SSSC Meeting at Sonargaon Hotel yesterday morning. The Society of Surgeons of Bangladesh (SOSB) organised it.

Delegates from India, Japan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, USA, UK, Australia, Pakistan, Singapore and host Bangladesh are taking part in the Conference and the Society of Surgeons of SAARC Countries Meeting.

Shahabuddin said self-sufficiency in surgery technology is vital for overall development of medicare service.

He said efforts should be made so that all kinds of operations can be done successfully in the country and more skilled surgeons should be produced for this. "Many patients are go-

ing abroad for various operations."

The President said the role of surgeons is undoubtedly very important to implement the government's programme of Health for All by the year 2000.

He, however, said that the private sector should play a more important role for development of healthcare system.

Justice Shahabuddin happily noted setting up of many clinics and hospitals in the private sector, but said quality of treatment should be ensured in these institutions. More communication and exchange of ideas between the government and the professionals will be helpful in achieving this, he observed.

The President urged the surgeons to get acquainted with the latest scientific and technological developments in this field and to acquire those.

The opening session was also addressed by Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf, State Minister for Health Prof M Amanullah, SOSB President Prof Z Moula Chaudhury, Dr TIMA Faruq and Prof CH Kabir.

## Nat'l water management plan likely by 2001

The National Water Management Plan (NWMP), reflecting the country's long-term needs and specifying the future use of water, is expected to be announced by the year 2001, reports UNB.

"Work on the plan is going on and now we are in the second phase of consultations," said A K M Halimur Rahman, Director General of Water Resources Planning Organisation (WARPO), entrusted with the task of drafting the Plan.

The WARPO arranged a day-long seminar today at the LGED conference room at Agargaon in the city to assemble ideas from experts, practitioners and researchers on water management issues.

Environmental protection, surface water management, flood embankments, river dredging and river erosion, excessive use of underground water for irrigation, coastal management, sheltering those who

lose homes by river erosion are some of the issues discussed by the speakers in four working groups.

Their specific suggestions will be incorporated in the Plan, the WARPO Director General told UNB at the end of the seminar.

The WARPO, a 6.5 million US dollar World Bank-aided project, started in March this year and is scheduled to prepare the National Water Management Plan by 2001.

The Plan will be prepared in line with the ideas of the draft water policy recently agreed by the National Water Council, the DG said.

Summing up the day-long discussions, Water Resources Secretary Dr A T M Shamsul Huda said, "The NWMP should keep in view the changing scenario of water use, which in future might not remain as much agriculture oriented as it is today."

## 'Govt completes formalities for separation of judiciary'

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru yesterday said government is committed to separating the judiciary from the executive to ensure smooth dispensation of justice, reports BSS.

The separation or independence of the judiciary is a must, but there should be a mechanism to ensure the accountability of the judges," he said while addressing the District Judges' Conference '98 as chief guest at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the city.

Khasru said the government has completed all necessary formalities for the separation of judiciary and it is now pend-

ing in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

The Law Minister said the government has taken up a massive programme for reforming the judicial administrative system. He mentioned that the World Bank consultants recently submitted the "Need Assessment Report on the Judiciary of Bangladesh" to the ministry.

Khasru said the district and sessions judges are the key men in the lower tier of judiciary. They should apprise the authorities of the problems they are facing everyday so that government can take steps for its reform, he added.

## What's on today....

**Award ceremony:** Begum Rokeya Padak '98, a national award, will be distributed in a ceremony organised by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs marking Begum Rokeya Day. Venue: Osmani Smriti Auditorium. Time: 11 am. Chief guest: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

**Discussion:** Bangla Academy has arranged a discussion on Begum Rokeya Day. Keynote paper 'Rokeya's thoughts on science' will be presented by Subrata Barua. Venue: Seminar room of the academy. Time: 4 pm.

**Conference:** A conference of Bangladesh Workers Forum for Human Rights will be held. Organisers: Bangladesh Institute of Human Rights and Paralegal Training Services Centre. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10 am.

**Discussion:** A discussion marking World Human Rights Day has been arranged by the Bureau of Human Rights Bangladesh. Keynote paper 'Our role in protecting and advancing human rights' will be presented by advocate Md Shahjahan, secretary general, BHRB. Venue: VIP Lounge, National Press Club. Time: 3:30 pm.

**Torch lighting ceremony:** Bangladesh Human Rights Coordination Council will light fifty torches commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Universal Human Rights. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 5:30 pm.

**Theatre:** 'Ekti Shironamhin Natok,' a play directed by Ashish Khondoker and produced by SARC, Bangladesh, will be staged. Venue: Gallery 21, Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi. Time: 7 pm.

**Concert:** Expatria, a vocal octet, will give a concert of choral music. Venue: American International School, Baridhara. Time: 7:30 pm.

**Closing ceremony:** The closing ceremony of a week-long programme organised by National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled (INFOWD) marking the 7th International Day of the Disabled will be held. Venue: IDB Bhaban auditorium, Shere Bangla Nagar. Time: 4 pm.

**Seminar:** A sub-regional seminar on 'Formulation and implementation of national book policies: South Asian experiences' will be held. Organisers: National Book Centre and UNESCO. Venue: Sufia Kamal Auditorium, National Museum. Time: 9 am.

**Lecture:** A lecture on 'Regulating agencies and their roles in the 21st century on food safety' will be given by Dr Sher Ali, head of Method Sector, US Department of Agriculture (USDA). Organiser: Bangladesh Academy of Sciences. Venue: BARC auditorium, Farmgate. Time: 11 am.

**BSM conference:** A two-day 16th annual conference of Bangladesh Society of Microbiologists (BSM) will begin. Venue: BCSIR auditorium. Time: 5 pm.

**UML dealers conference:** Uttara Motors Limited will hold its annual dealers conference. Venue: Hotel Rajmoni Isha Kha. Time: 5 pm.

**Rotary Club meet:** The weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Eskaton Dhaka will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 5:30 pm.

**Rotary Club meet:** The Rotary Club of Dhaka Buriganga will hold its weekly meeting. Guest speaker: Ronald Hicks. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.



ICFTU-BC Women Committee brought out a procession in the city yesterday after a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar marking the Free Trade Union Rights Week. — Star photo

## Revenue loss of Dhaka WASA stands at Tk 54 cr a year

The revenue loss of Dhaka WASA stands at Tk 54 crore per annum due to pilferage of water bills, reports UNB.

Disclosing this at a workshop yesterday, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman said the pilferage in the name of system loss would not be tolerated.

He asked the officials concerned to take tough measures to check the system loss.

Dhaka WASA organised the workshop on 'Current revenue collection of Dhaka WASA and strategies for increasing the income.'

The income is expected to reach Tk 100 crore by next year. It was also informed in the seminar that the revenue income would rise by 20 per cent if the proper billing could be ensured.

Presided over by WASA chairman Dr A T M Zahurul Haq, the function was addressed, among others, by LGRD Secretary A H M Abdul Hy and Managing Director of WASA Dr Khandakar Azharul Haq.

The Minister said the government has taken up initiatives to implement a massive water supply infrastructural development project involving Tk 3,000 crore to meet the growing demand of water by the city dwellers.

Zillur said there is no alternative but to increase revenue income through internal mo-

bilisation of resources to implement such giant project as the scope for getting foreign aid is shrinking gradually.

On completion of the ongoing programmes, water supply would be increased up to 140 crore litre per day and sewerage facilities would be expanded by 80 per cent, he said.

The seminar was told that at present the revenue billing of WASA has exceeded Tk 100 crore and overall income exceeded Tk 85 crore.

The income is expected to reach Tk 100 crore by next year. It was also informed in the seminar that the revenue income would rise by 20 per cent if the proper billing could be ensured.

Presided over by WASA chairman Dr A T M Zahurul Haq, the function was addressed, among others, by LGRD Secretary A H M Abdul Hy and Managing Director of WASA Dr Khandakar Azharul Haq.

The Minister said the government has taken up initiatives to implement a massive water supply infrastructural development project involving Tk 3,000 crore to meet the growing demand of water by the city dwellers.

Zillur said there is no alternative but to increase revenue income through internal mo-

## Govt employees demand new office time

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of Bangladesh Government Employees Coordination Council (BGGCC) have urged the government to reschedule the existing office time and change their service status.

The demands were made at a press conference yesterday at the Jatiya Press Club. It was addressed, among others, by Noni Gopal Das and Mohammad Iqbal Hossain, president and secretary general respectively of BGCC.

The leaders said government employees were deprived in all respect during the rule of the past government and under the present government.

They also demanded transfer of all jobs under development sector to revenue sector, increase of 30 per cent dearness allowance, implementation of new wage commission, reduction in service length from 25 years to 20 years, new office time from 8 to 2 and one day weekly holiday.

The leaders said if their demands were not met by Eid-ul-Fitr they would launch a greater movement against the government.

### Newspaper holiday

Newspapers offices will remain closed on December 16 on the occasion of Victory Day, reports BSS.

Therefore, no newspapers will be published on December 17, a press release of Bangla Sangbad Patrika Parishad said yesterday.

**Prof Anisuzzaman nominated to board of Encyclopedia Britannica**

Prof Anisuzzaman of the Bangla Department of Dhaka University has been nominated as a member of the South Asian Affairs Editorial Board of the Encyclopedia Britannica, reports BSS.

Other members of the board include Dr Kapil Batsayan, Prof Satyesh Chakrabarty and Ramlila Thapar of India and Prof Ralf Nicholson and Prof Frederic Ashar of the USA.

The newly nominated members of the board will review and rewrite the recent entries on South Asia.

Prof Anisuzzaman was a fellow of the United Nations University Research Project and a visiting fellow of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies and Oriental Language and Civilization Institute of Paris University.

The board of Encyclopedia Britannica set up an editorial office in New Delhi recently to collect information on South Asian affairs.

**82,600 VGF cards allocated for Pabna flood victims**

PABNA, Dec 8: The government has so far allocated 82,600 Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) cards for the flood affected people of the district.

The district administration sources told BSS that 71,000 VGF cards have been allocated for 71 unions of the district and 11,600 cards for six pourasavas.

Each card holder will get eight kg of rice and eight kg of wheat a month.

A three-member vigilance team headed by a first class magistrate has been formed for each thana to check any irregularity.

Besides, under the on-going Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme some 9,830 card holders are getting 30 kg of foodgrains each every month.

**New president of Dhaka YMCA**

Augustin Dipak Karmakar, a chartered accountant by profession, was elected president of the Dhaka YMCA for the year 1998-99 at a meeting of the board of directors of the organisation, report BSS.

The meeting was held at its head office in the city recently.

The YMCA is a charitable, humanitarian organisation engaged in the education, welfare and vocational training for the slum children.

Tarcisius Palma continues as the general secretary of the organisation.

### Urs

The annual Urs Mubarak of Dadajee Kibla Shamsul Ulema Hazrat Moulana Saifullah (RA) will be held today at 78, Shantinagar in the city, reports APB.

## Hasina's call to BNP

# Work for nat'l uplift instead of enforcing shutdown

MANIKGANJ, Dec 8: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today criticised BNP for calling hartals "without any reason" and asked it to work for national uplift instead of enforcing shutdown, reports UNB.

"Now there is no necessity of hartals as the people's rights, including the rights to vote has been restored," she told a big public meeting at Dhanbari High School ground in the afternoon.

Referring to her "no-hartal" call, Hasina said in the past Awami League called hartals in the interest of people, for ensuring their voting rights.

She said now the country is striving to recoup the losses caused by the recent devastating flood and the government is busy with post-flood rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes. "At this time, calling hartal will only mount the misery of the people."

Referring to the recent comments of BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia questioning Awami League's contribution to the nation, the Prime Minister called it an imbalanced state-

ment. "Awami League earned independence for the nation and it is now struggling to bring economic emancipation of the people," she said.

Hasina claimed that Awami League is fulfilling its election pledges one after another, it has established the country's rights on the Ganges water through a treaty with India, restored peace in the CHT and established the voting rights of the people.

She contended that BNP was born out of the politics of coup, killings and conspiracy. Its founder President Zia captured the state power through illegal means and later tried to legalise it through another illegal means by vote rigging.

"BNP was born through vote rigging," she said adding that even in 1996, Begum Zia tried to consolidate her power through vote rigging, but the people did not tolerate that and she was overthrown through a vigorous movement.

"Now she (Begum Zia) is spreading venom against Awami League and trying to

confuse the people by telling lies," said Hasina. "Before 1996 election the BNP leader said that Azam would never be heard that Azam would never be heard."

"But that did not happen, that was a lie ... BNP is also spreading similar lies now to confuse the people," she said.

Referring to the February 15 election of 1996, she said, "Those who tried to cling to power through vote rigging should refrain from tall talks against the election."

Awami League Presidium member Amir Hossain Amu, State Minister for Land Alhaj Rashed Mosharraf, Awami League leaders Col (Retd) Abdul Maleq, district Awami League president Moslem Uddin Khan Habib Mia, Moriam Begum, MP, Dhakora UP Chairman Obaidullah also addressed the meeting presided over by Saturia Thana Awami League president Arshed Ali Chowdhury.

Organisers said over 2000 leaders and workers of BNP led by Krishnapur Union Parishad Chairman Mohammad Abdul Hamid joined Awami League at the meeting.



## An evening with writers

By Staff Correspondent

An evening of reading of excerpts from Commonwealth writers was held at the British Council auditorium yesterday.

The programme was arranged by The Commonwealth Writers Prize, Eurasia Region, in collaboration with the British Council.

Speaking on the occasion, Tom Cowin