Five-day nat'l fair begins at Sagardari

SAGARDARI (Jessore), Jan 26: The five-day national fair and memorial celebrations of epic poet Michael Modhusudan began here today with the participation of country's poets, litterateurs and researchers, reports BSS.

Education Minister ASHK Sadique inaugurated the colourful fair which will include discussion and cultural functions.

Paying tributes to the poet, the minister said Modhusudan was one of those personalities who had greatly contributed to our society and literature in the 19th century.

Sadique said Modhusudan borrowed western trend to embrace modernism, but he never abandoned the sense of belonging to his roots.

He said the fair has been made a national one under the patronisation of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs to give state honour to the poet.

Two seminars will be held on the works of Modhusudan. Staging of drama and cultural functions will be held everyday.

Int'l confce on mathematical physics ends

From CU Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Jan 26: The fifth 'International Conference on Mathematical Physics' concluded at Chittagong University yesterday.

About 150 scientists from Japan, India, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and host Bangladesh took part at the three-day-long conference.

The inaugural session was presided over by Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam, Director of the Research Centre for Mathematical and Physical Science. Professor Mohammad Shamsul Haque, former chairman of the University Grant Commission (UGC), was present as chief

The speakers expressed the hope that participation of the scientists, academicians and research workers from home and abroad in the conference would promote better understanding among themselves. The conference would help promote research activities of the teachers and students of the country and widen frontiers of knowledge.

Housewife dies of burn injuries

By DMCH Correspondent A housewife, who sustained critical burn injuries when her father-in-law allegedly threw a kerosene stove at her Friday. died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Husne Ara, 30, wife of Billal Hossain, a resident of Old PG Quarter on the DMCH premises.

According to the victim's relatives, Husne Ara had an altercation with Sattar Mia, her father-in-law, at her residence Friday afternoon. At one stage, Sattar threw the burning stove

Ramna police, however could not confirm the incident till the filing of this report last

Wheat grown in 54,500 acres in Panchagarh

PANCHAGARH, Jan 26: Wheat has been cultivated in about 54,500 acres in five thanas of Panchagarh district in the current Rabi season, reports BSS. Mustard has been cultivated

in 6,200 acres in the five thanas this winter season. More than 6,800 acres have

been brought under potato cultivation in the district this year.

According to an official source, target of Boro paddy cultivation has been fixed at about 13,500 acres.

Meanwhile, the agriculture extension department has selected 500 plots in Panchagarh, Tetulia, Boda, Debiganj and Atwari thanas to demonstrate to the peasants modern methods of cultivation.

Body recovered

Police recovered the body of an unidentified man aged about 30 from a dustbin at Nurercala in city's Badda area yesterday, reports UNB.

They sent the body bearing marks of multiple injury to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Qulkhwani

By Staff Correspondent The qulkhwani of Shamsun Nahar Huri will be held today after Maghreb prayers at her Arambagh residence in the city. Shamsun Nahar, wife of late Ghiasuddin Ahmed and sister of Rajiudddin Ahmed Raju MP. died on Sunday at BIRDEM Hospital. She was 63.

Janaza

By Staff Correspondent The namaj-e-janaza of Shamsur Nahar, wife of late AF Shamsur Rahman, former District and Sessions Judge, will be held today after Johr prayers at Elephant Road Katabon mosque in the city.

Her body was preserved at BIRDEM since her death on Saturday to await the arrival of her sons and daughter from

abroad. Her qulkhwani will be held at "Judge Kuthi", 230/1 Elephant Road, tomorrow after Asr prayers.





(Top) BNP activists lie down on the street protesting police action on their procession at Topkhana Road in the city during hartal hours yesterday. (Above) An angry Sadek Hossain Khoka, MP, takes a swipe at the policemen over the attack on the BNP procession.

-Star photo

Vietnam slams US for alleged violations of human rights

claims itself the champion of

human rights elsewhere, was

remove the portrait and flag af-

ter the owners of the shopping

A judge ordered Truong to

HANOI, Jan 26: For the second time in a week, Vietnam on Tuesday sharply criticised the United States for alleged human-rights violations, saying it should clean up its own act before lecturing others, reports

The Communist Party newspaper Nhan Dan (People) said it was unacceptable that "extremists" had been allowed to attack a Vietnamese native who put up a poster of Ho Chi Minh, the late Vietnamese leader, and a communist Vietnamese flag in his video-rental shop.

Up to 500 Vietnamese natives protested for several days last week against the action by Truong Van Tran in the Little Saigon neighborhood of West minster, California. He was as-

saulted at one point. Southern California is home to about 300,000 Vietnamese immigrants, two-thirds of them clustered around Little Saigon. Many of them fled South Vietnam after it fell to the commu-

nists in 1975. "The violence by extremists against Mr Truong Van Tran in US territory is a gross violation

Mosharraf meets

Amir of Bahrain

Bin Salman Al Khalifa has ex-

pressed happiness over the state

of brotherly relations that exist

between his country and

Bangladesh, according to a

message received in the city yes-

terday from Manama, reports

when the visiting Bangladesh

Minister of Civil Aviation and

Tourism Mosharraf Hossain

personal greetings to President

Shahabuddin Ahmed and

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

stressed the need for promoting

and strengthening bilateral re-

lations for mutual benefit. He

emphasised the importance of

high level visits between the

two countries and praised the

services of Bangladesh nation-

als who are working in

Amir for providing opportuni-

ties to Bangladeshis to work in

Bahrain. He also renewed the

invitation to the Amir to visit

Bangladesh at a convenient

also called on Prime Minister

Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al

Khalifa and exchanged views on

Bahrain, Mosharraf was re-

ceived by Transportation Min-

ister Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa Al

BSC AGM tomorrow

annual general meetings of the

share-holders of Bangladesh

Shipping Corporation (BSC) for the years 1996-97 and 1997-98

will be held at corporation's

head office here on January 28.

a BSC press release said yester-

The AGM of 1996-97 and

1997-98 will be held at 3 pm and

4 pm respectively, the press re-

and Chairman of the Board of

Directors of BSC Mofazzal Hos-

sain Chowdhury Maya will pre-

side over the two AGMs.

State Minister for Shipping

day, reports BSS.

lease added.

CHITTAGONG, Jan 26: The

Earlier on his arrival in

issues of common concern.

Khalifa.

The Bangladesh minister

Mosharraf thanked the

Bahrain, the message said.

The Amir who conveyed his

called on Amir on Monday.

The sentiment was expressed

Amir of Bahrain Shaikh Isa

mall where his shop is located sought a court order, complaining the display was disruptive

to other businesses. A Foreign Ministry statement, quoted by the Vietnam News Agency, said Truong was acting in conformity with US and international law.

not prevented.

"Truong's acts should be protected by US law-related agencies, particularly the administration of the place where Truong lives," the statement

Nhan Dan used the incident to take a swipe at Washington for its continuing operations in

"It is ironic that Americans use warplanes and weapons in a country tens of thousands miles

of human rights, causing proaway to protect human rights, but they remain silent and even found discontent." Nhan Dan said in a commentary. ignore the brazen violation of "It is sad that the obstinate human rights right in their action, taking place right in a country which loudly lectures country (others) on human rights and

"Closing their eyes intentionally before this truth could only be understood as an attitude of tolerating crimes

Nhan Dan said the incident was not conducive to promoting cooperation between Vietnam and the United States and would be condemned by public opinion in both countries and the world community.

The US State Department has included Vietnam on its list of countries with human-rights violations.

Nhan Dan last week slammed Washington for alleged human-rights violations against migrant workers at US companies in Saipan.

The criticism was based on three lawsuits filed Jan. 13 that claim Saipan workers face beatings, forced abortions, vermin-infested quarters, barbed wire and armed guards while making clothing tagged "Made in the USA" for American retailers.

Withdrawal from S Lebanon

Israel reiterates readiness to comply with UN resolution

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 26: Israel reiterated its readiness on Monday to implement a 1978 Security Council Resolution calling for its withdrawal from southern Lebanon and blamed Lebanon for not cooperating, reports Reuters.

"Israel has repeatedly stated its willingness to implement Security Council Resolution 425 (1978) in its entirety," Israeli UN envoy Dore Gold said in a letter to Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

"The resolution did not only call for the withdrawal of Israeli forces! but also for the restoration of international peace and security and the return of the Lebanese government's effective authority in the

Referring to the Iranianbacked Hizbollah and a number of other Lebanese and Palestinian guerilla groups, Gold added: "Lebanon's continued readiness to allow terrorist operations from its soil is totally incompatible with these last two provisions of the resolu-

Gold said the Lebanese govermment "has failed so far to respond to Israel's proposals, and therefore it alone bore the blame for the continuing status quo and its consequences."

Israel first announced its readiness last April to implement Security Council Resolution 425, adopted after an Israeli incursion into southern Lebanon in 1978 to attack Palestinian guerillas. A UN peacekeeping force was established to help restore the Beirut government's authority over the area. After another invasion in

1982, Israel retained a so-called security zone along the Lebanese side of the border. Lebanon and Syria, the

aided by its allies of the South Lebanon Army militia, to block attacks against northern Israel. main powerbroker in Lebanon.

insist on an unconditional Israeli withdrawal, without negotiations.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in Jerusalem on Monday that Israel had been conducting secret talks for a long time over its military involvement in Lebanon.

Israel and Syria have held inconclusive talks, suspended since 1996, on the future of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights amid speculation a deal would smooth the way for a Lebanon

King Hussein returns to US for urgent treatment

AMMAN, Jan 26: King Hussein lest for the United States on Tuesday for urgent medical treatment after suffering what his doctor described as a possible recurrence of cancer, reports

Hussein, 63, returned home only seven days previously after six months of treatment for non-Hodgkins lymphoma at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

Lt Gen Samir Farraj, Hussein's private physician, said the monarch suffered from "low blood counts and fever and I, as well as doctors from the Mayo Clinic, though it is best to send him back to the clinic for checkups and treatment."

Farraj spoke to The Associated Press before his departure with Hussein. He declined to provide other details, saying a detailed statement would be issued later by the palace.

The official Petra news agency said the king's symptoms became evident Jan 19. the day of his return home.

JCD, BCL hold rallies on DU campus

By DU Correspondent Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal JCD), the student wing of BNP. brought out a pro-hartal pro-cession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday while the Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) brought out an anti-hartal procession.

Both the student organisations also held rallies after' marching through the campus. At the JCD rally, the leaders condemned the ruling party for

repression of the opposition ac-tivists throughout the country. They alleged that the Awami League government after assuming power began to arrest the JCD leaders and workers.

JCD leaders Monjur Elahi; ABM Mosharraf Hossain, Manir Hossain and Mostafizur Rahman Mamun addressed the At the BCL rally, the leaders accused the opposition parties

of hatching conspiracy to grab power through creating anarchy in the country. They also alleged that the opposition parties were calling hartal to destabilise the country's democracy and peaceful

atmosphere. The BCL leaders urged the oppositions to refrain from such undemocratic activities for the sake of the country's economy.

BCL President Bahadur Bepari, General Secretary Ajay Kar Khokan and Sajjad Hossain addressed the rally."

Home Minister visits injured rickshawpuller

Home Minister Rafiqul Islam visited the injured rickshawpullar Mohammad Ali at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) last night, reports BSS.

The rickshawpuller was in-jured in an attack during the hartal hours yesterday.

The minister assured him of all medicare facilities and providing his family expenses dur-ing the treatment period from his (minister's) own fund. He also gave Tk 2000 to Mohammad Ali while enquiring about his condition.

The minister instructed the police to arrest the persons responsible for the attack on Mohammad Ali in the city.

Clash over land in Barisal: One killed, 15 hurt

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Jan 26: One person was killed and 15 others injured in a clash over land dispute at village Sarisha in Agailjhara thana of the district this afternoon.

According to witnesses, two rival groups of villagers were locked in the clash over harvesting paddy on a disputed land that left one Lalanpike, 28, killed on the spot and 15 others

injured. The seriously injured six people were admitted to Barisal SBMC hospital.

Indian envoy hosts reception Indian High Commissioner

to Bangladesh Deb Mukharji and Mrs. Purobi Mukharji held a reception yesterday evening in observance of the Republic Day of India, reports BSS.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Finance Minister S A M S Kibria, Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, politicians, diplomats, journalists and the elite of the city attended.

Australian envoy hosts reception The High Commissioner of

Australia to Bangladesh Charles Stuart, and Mrs Stuart held a reception here yesterday evening in observance of the Australia Day, reports BSS. Ministers including Foreign

Minister Abdus Samad Azad Environment Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Finance Minister S A M S Kibria, Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury diplomats and the elite of the city attended the reception.

Fresh violence in Sierra Leone: **60 Killed** FREETOWN, Jan 26: Some

60 people died in a weekend attack some 20 kilometres southeast of the Sierra Leonean capital, residents and military sources told AFP today. Residents in Waterloo, where the rebel attack took place Sun-

day, said an estimated 25 civilians were killed, including a 17year-old handicapped man. Some 17 houses were burned down by rebels fleeing an advance by the Nigerian-led West African intervention force,

ECOMOG. Guinean sources from ECO-MOG told AFP that 35 rebels were killed during the clashes. Waterloo lies at a strategic point on the main road leading from the Freetown peninsula

ECOMOG's strategy has been to trap rebels, who first invaded Freetown on January 6, within the peninsula. On Monday, ECOMOG claim-

into the Sierra Leonean inte-

ed to have trapped rebels in areas southeast of Freetown. The rebels were said to be present in Wellington, some 5 km southeast of Freetown, and to be surrounded by ECOMOG soldiers.



in the city yesterday. - Star photo

Zillur blasts comments of B Chy Awami League General about the former president's speeches.

President's speech boycott

Secretary and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman yesterday termed the comments of BNP leader Badruddoza Chowdhury on boycott of the President's speech in parliament as "unparliamentary, misleading and a blatant lie," reports BSS.

In a statement, he said former President Abdur Rahman Biswas in an interview with UNB on Monday gave details of how the President's speech was prepared during the BNP

Badruddoza was the deputy leader of parliament when Biswas was the president, Zillur Rahman said, adding it is not unknown to the BNP leader how the president's speeches are finalised in parliamentary sys-

tem of government. The minister said Biswas's interview proves that the BNP

idential form of government intact in their party's constitution.'

"In fact B Chowdhury and

his party do not believe in par-

liament and parliamentary

democracy as they have

emerged from undemocratic

process and represent autoc-

racy," Zillur said, adding "their

main target is not to protect

democracy but to destroy it.

This is why they have kept pres-

In another statement, the Awami League general secretary expressed deep concern at the killing of Mohammad Ripon, publicity secretary of Jessore Noapara Rajghat High School unit Chhatra League, by BNP hitmen.

He urged all to build up united resistance against such anti-democracy and anti-social leader made false utterances

Drought hits 4m in Thailand

BANGKOK, Jan 26: More than four million people have so far been affected by Thatland's worst drought in decades. reports quoting the Civil Defence Ministry said today, re-

A total of 4.57 million peo- rains. ple have been hit in 34 provinces across the country by the drought which has prompted officials to ration water for farmers and reduce water pressure in some areas, the ministry said.

A ministry report showed orders for farmers to restrict the year's second rice crop had been ignored as paddies under cultivation were equal to 180 per cent of permitted limits, The Bangkok Post said.

The drought followed a longer than normal rainy season and low rainfall over Thailand last year which some experts have attributed to the El Nino weather phenomenon. Thailand imposett water fationing on Monday as the drought tightened its grip on northern provinces and farmers warned their rice crops would soon die without fresh

Around 4,000 northern farmers reportedly rallied on Monday to demand a cancellation of the rationing which they say will ruin their crops.

Under the rationing rotation, farmers will be able to water paddies for three days and then stop for six days.

The capital Bangkok has also been feeling the heat. A number of roads have caved in along dried up canals and a million households have already suffered from reduced water supplies in a pilot project which could be expanded as water becomes even more scarce later in the year.

Colombia

From Page 1 Manizales, he said. Without refrigerator trucks to store the hundreds of rotting corpses,

epidemics could break out, worried Giraldo. Guiza said 60 per cent of the city was destroyed. Worst hit were the poor southern dis-tricts. Some 340 bodies were collected at a makeshift morgue but it would be hours before hundreds more could be recov-

ered, he said. "There's no way to measure this crisis," said Alvaro Patino,

Armenia's mayor.
As Colombians reeled from the worst temblor to hit the country since a 1994 earthquake killed 800 people, relief efforts continued through the

Landslides - which had slowed the arrival of rescue equipment and supplies — were cleared, and convoys of government vehicles with cranes and other heavy equipment converged on the disaster zone.

An air force plane shuttled rescue equipment

rescue equipment, medical supplies, food and blankets to the region late Monday.
Schools and stadiums were converted to makeshift shelters

and morgues. More than 350 people were treated at the Southern Hospi-tal in Armenia, where blood smeared the floors and walls and patients spent the night huddled on rusted gurneys. Doc-tors said at least 40 people had been pronounced dead at the fa-

Armenia's three-story fire station tumbled in pieces onto its 14 vehicles. At least nine people were killed when the building's concrete floors and pillars came crashing down. Officers were also feared killed in the collapse of a police bar-

Five members of the Colombian professional soccer club Atletico Quindio - three Argentines and two Brazilians - were also feared dead in the ruins of a hotel in downtown Armenia.

"There isn't a point in the city's geography which was not affected by this horrific tragedy," Patino told RCN radio. "We need everything ... medicine, clothes ... electric generators," he said, urging Colombians in the United States to send aid.

Monday's quake was the deadliest since 1975, when about 1,000 people died in a tremor near Cucuta, a border city with Venezuela.

Angolan forces shell UNITA positions

MALANJE, Angola, Jan 26:

"We want to push them (UNITA) out of Malanje region. They do not stand a chance, we are much more powerful," said the commander as heavy artillery fire echoed across

Angola, an oil-rich southern African country battered by more than 20 years of civil war, has seen fighting between government and rebel forces in the past month that has shattered a

Last week, UNITA seized a key bridge over the River Kuanza. Opening a route from the rebel headquarters at Andulo in the south through Malanje towards the fortified west coast capital held by the government.

Philippine Senate begins hearing on US visiting forces agreement

States, which ruled the Philip-

pines as a colony for nearly

MANILA, Jan 26: The Philippine Senate began hearing Tuesday on the ratification of an agreement that would allow US troops to resume largescale joint military exercises in the country, reports AP.

The Visiting Forces Agreement, signed last year by US and Philippine officials, provides legal protections to US troops in the Philippines. Critics say it would severely limit the Philippine government's right to prosecute American soldiers who commit crimes and also would promote prosti-

Outside the Senate, about 200 protesters shouted "No to US bases" as government officials urged the senators to approve the pact. "In a perfect world, our coun-

try would not need a Visiting Forces Agreement," said Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado. "Unfortunately, ours is not a perfect world."

The Senate hearings are scheduled to continue until March. Military ties with the United

half a century, have remained a sensitive topic since the Philippine Senate forced the closure of the last US base in 1992. The VFA generally gives the United States jurisdiction over US soldiers who commit crimes while on duty in the Philip-

pines, and the Philippines jurisdiction over crimes committed while off duty. The United States halted major exercises in the Philippines and visits by US military ships in December 1996, when the Manila government ended a legal loophole that had shielded US military personnel from

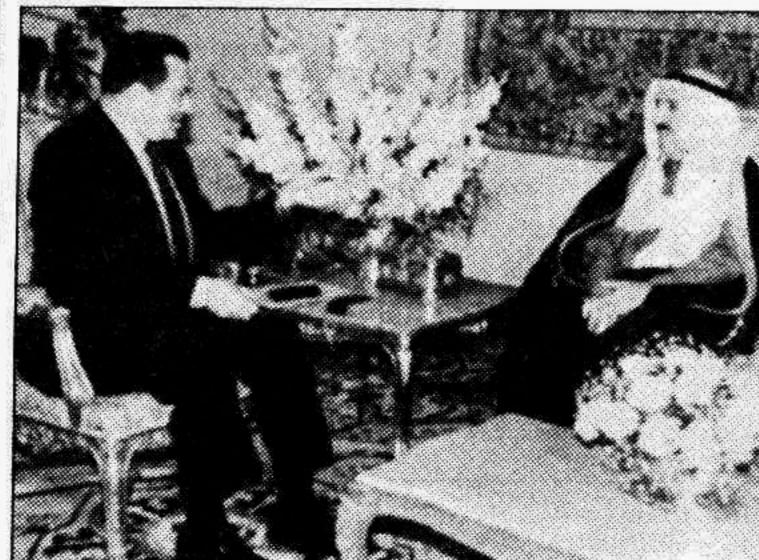
prosecution by the Philippines for crimes committed here. Senator Blas Ople, chairman of the Senate foreign affairs committee, said Monday the

antee it will come to the aid of the Philippines in any military confrontation with Beijing over the disputed Spratly Islands in

fend the Philippines in any confrontation over the terri-

The Spratlys, a string of islands, reefs and atolls straddling vital sea lanes in the South China Sea, are claimed in whole or in part by the Philippines, China, Vietnam,

"This ambiguity of the US position is of course creating a problem for the ratification of



Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, Sheik Sabah al-Ahmed al-Sabah (Right) meets with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Monday, the day after Arab League foreign ministers met in Cairo to discuss the Iraqi crises.

Government forces fighting to regain the upper hand in Ango-la's month-old renewal of civil war shelled rebel UNITA positions outside the northern city of Malanje today, a senior commander said, reports Reu-

Malanie.

four-year-old peace accord.

Senate might reject the VFA if the United States does not guar-

the south China Sea. The United States has not taken sides in the competing territorial claims to the Spratlys, and the 1951 US-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty does not clearly state whether Washington would de-

Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei. the Visiting Forces Agreement," Ople said.

Russia's main arms exporter won't increase sales MOSCOW, Jan 26: Russia's chief arms exporter will not increase sales this year because of

more competition on the world market and Russia's economic troubles, the company's director said in an interview published Tuesday, reports AP. Rosvooruzheniye. Russia's state-owned arms exporter, does not expect to make more than 2 billion dollars in arms sales abroad in 1999, similar to

levels it reached last year, com-

pany director Grigory Raporta

said in an interview with the daily Kommersant newspaper. Raporta said exports would

remain unchanged because the world arms market is shrinking and remains highly competitive, and Russia's economic troubles have forced it to pro-- UNB/AP photo duce less arms.