

Inclusion of IT in modern edn underscored

MYMENSINGH, Feb 8: Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim today underscored the need for inclusion of Information Technology (IT) in the modern education and research in the country, reports UNB.

"We have to establish Bangladesh as a model on the world stage by accommodating Information Technology through a befitting combination of modern education and research," he said.

The minister was addressing as chief guest the installation ceremony of the office-bearers of Bangladesh Agricultural University Central Students Union (BAUCSU) here.

Presided over by BAUCSU President and Vice-Chancellor of the university Prof Mohammad Hossain, the function was

also addressed by publicity secretary of Awami League and secretary general of Bangladesh Krishibid Institution Abdul Mannan, district Awami League president Principal Motiur Rahman and local leaders of AL and its front organisations.

Nasim expressed his firm commitment to bringing the entire country under the digital telephone network by 2000. He also expressed determination for installing card phone booths and introducing Internet service at the university.

The Vice-Chancellor urged all to take a fresh vow to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh free from illiteracy, hunger, and malnutrition. He also called upon all to maintain congenial academic atmosphere on the campus.

Scientists discover new ways to combat cancer

Breast tumours can be stopped in their tracks by 'winding up' the clock which tells cancer cells when it is time to die.

Researchers have found a way to switch off an enzyme that helps cancer cells become 'immortal' and keep multiplying, according to a report received in the city, reports UNB.

Normally, old or damaged cells are told to stop dividing and destroy themselves to prevent mutations being duplicated and growing into tumours. But cancer cells ignore these suicide messages.

An enzyme called telomerase is known to be one of the factors responsible for shielding cancer cells from their natural ageing process. It is this enzyme that researchers from Brunel University, West London, believe can be deactivated, said the London Press Service report.

The discovery, published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute, could lead to the development of new anti-cancer drugs and improve the treatment of breast cancer that kills about 14,000 women in the United Kingdom each year.

Professor Robert Newbold, who led the research, said: "All healthy cells in the body have an in-built alarm clock which instructs them to stop dividing and die when they reach a certain age. But cancer cells are able to bypass this mechanism and continue multiplying out of control."

"We already know that telomerase is active in around 85 per cent of cancers and is

probably responsible for kick-starting the process that protects cancer cells from dying. However, our latest research has finally been able to pinpoint a new way to potentially deactivate this rogue enzyme."

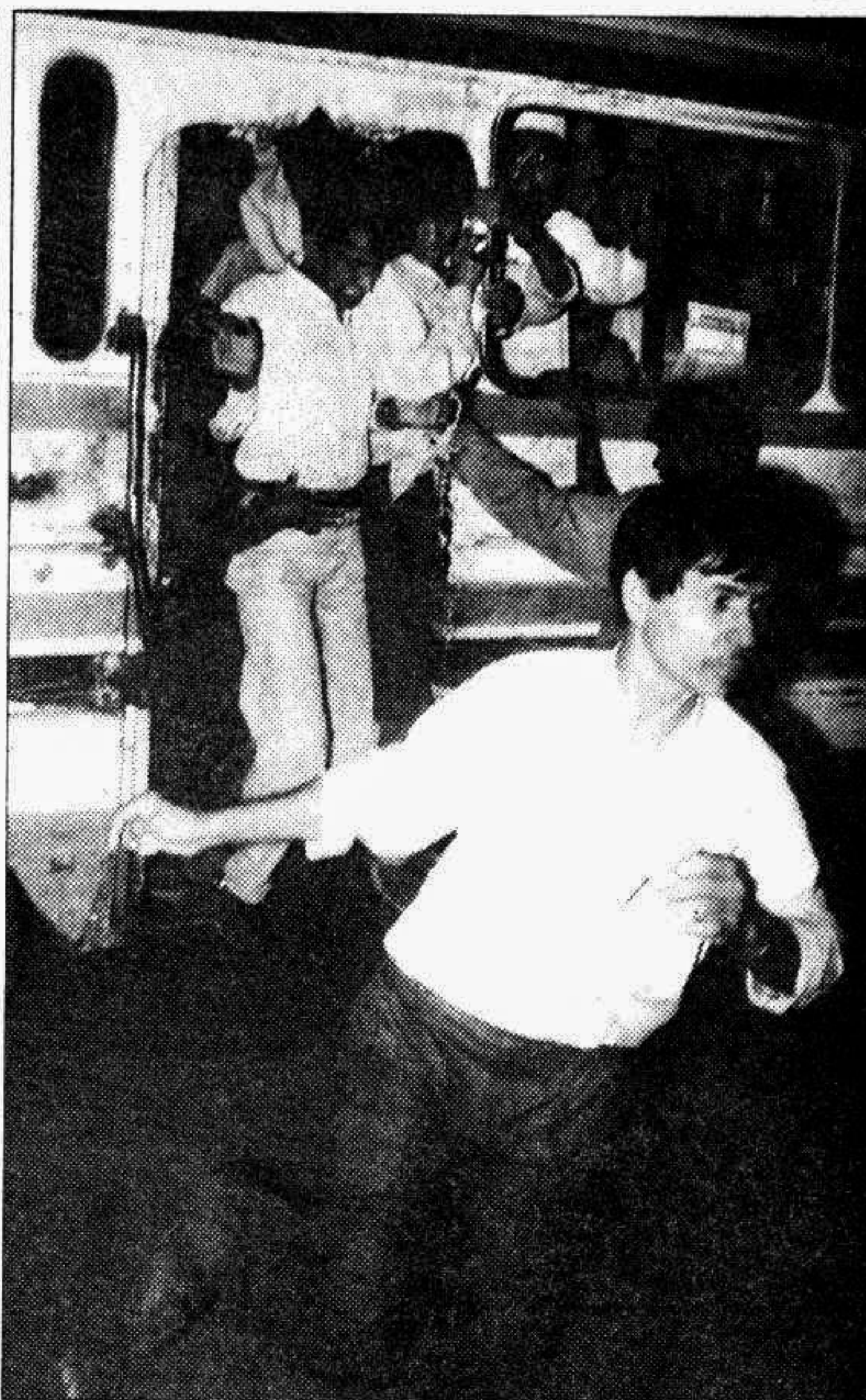
Prof Newbold's team searched extensively for ways to switch off the gene which produces enzyme. In laboratory tests, groups of healthy genes were transferred into breast tumour tissue to find out what combination might block telomerase.

Using advanced genetic techniques, the scientists were able to locate the key genes to a small region of a particular chromosome. Scientists will now try to mimic this group of genes. It is hoped this will lead to the synthetic production of drugs that can stop the action of telomerase.

Prof Newbold said: "An international race to find the natural inhibitor to telomerase has been running for many years and this latest discovery has really put UK scientists a step ahead."

The team was funded by the Cancer Research Campaign. The charity's director-general, Professor Gordon McVie, said: "This research really is a major step forward in the hunt for new and improved treatments for breast cancer patients."

"Finding new ways to combat the 'immortality' of cancer cells is fast becoming a vital part of cancer research and is proving crucial to the development of future anti-cancer treatments."



A scared passenger runs for safety when pro-hartal activists started damaging vehicles during a procession they brought out in the city yesterday to drum up support for Feb 9-10 shutdown. (Below) A damaged car. — Star photo



Train-bus collision Death toll rises to five

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Feb 8: The death toll in Sunday's train-bus collision in the town rose to five as another victim died in hospital here on Sunday night.

Four of the dead were identified as Kanai Lal Saha, 45, of Narayanganj; Abdul Majid, 38, of Kurigram; Abus Sahan, 35, of Mymensingh; and Hazrat Ali, 45, of Pabna. The other victim could not be identified.

Meanwhile, the railway authority has formed a four-member committee to investigate the cause of the accident. Headed by Divisional Transportation Officer Anwarul Kabir Khan, the committee comprises Divisional Engineer SM Liakat Ali, Divisional Mechanical Engineer Anwar Hossain and divisional Signal and Telecommunication Engineer Mizanur Rahman. It has been asked to submit report within three days.

Railway DG Atiqul Hossain Khan who visited the spot today told this correspondent that the gatekeeper was present at the level crossing during the accident and one of the gates was closed at that time. The gatekeeper could not shut the other gate as a bus and a truck had already crossed the gate of the level crossing before the train passed the area, he said.

High officials of the Railway and a joint secretary of the Ministry of Communications also visited the spot today.

DUTA team meets DU Pro VC

By DU Correspondent

The executives of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) made a courtesy call on the newly appointed pro-Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University Dr M Shahadat Ali yesterday.

They congratulated the Pro-VC and assured him of all cooperation in the development and academic activities of the university.

DU Treasurer Prof Shamsul Haq and Registrar Mohammad Selim were present during the meeting.

Ziaur Rahman Hall champion in DU debate competition

By DU Correspondent

Ziaur Rahman Hall of the Dhaka University became champion in Inter Hall Debate Competition '98, held yesterday at the Teachers and Students Centre (TSC) of the university.

Syed Shaikh Imtiaz of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall became the best debater.

Organised by the Dhaka University Debating Society (DUDS), the competition began on December 26, 1998.

The award giving ceremony of the competition will be held on February 15.

Opposition urged to exempt rotarians from hartal

Rotary International (RI), Bangladesh yesterday urged the opposition parties to exempt the rotarians from hartal to facilitate them to participate in the three-day annual conference of RI district 3280 beginning on February 11 in Chittagong.

Addressing a press conference at a city hotel Mohammad A Awal, district governor of RI, Bangladesh said more than 4000 rotarians including 100 from abroad and their spouses have already been invited to participate in the conference. He said VV Mani will represent the conference on behalf of RI president James L Lacy.

Describing various humanitarian and social activities run by the RI worldwide Awal said the conference is likely to take some important decisions for RI operation in Bangladesh, especially for providing low-cost housing among the distressed in different districts of the country.

Among others, the conference was also attended by rotarians M Jamal Uddin, Iqbal Ansari Khan, Rafiqul Islam, Ozair Faruq, Hasan Moniruzzaman, Quazi Humayun Kabir and Quazi Rownak Hossain.

Minister visits fire ravaged Muslimbagh slum

State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Talukder Abdul Khaleq visited the fire ravaged Muslimbagh slum at Kamrangirchar yesterday and distributed some relief materials, reports BSS.

He also gave them money. The slum was gutted on Saturday. Cooked food were also being served for two days. Local MP Hazi Mohammad Selim was present.

Confce on in-depth reporting begins today in Jessore

A three-day conference of journalists on "In-depth Reporting on Gender Issues" begins in Jessore today, reports UNB.

A total of 27 journalists from various national and local dailies will take part in the conference.

The conference will focus on techniques of writing news feature and in-depth reporting on gender issues, said a press release in the city yesterday.

Re-use of disposable syringe posing severe threat to public health

Rampant re-use of disposable syringe in the country is posing severe threat to public health with high risk of infection by deadly diseases like AIDS and viral hepatitis, physicians said, reports BSS.

The indiscriminate use of single pack syringe and lack of strict enforcement of mandatory use of "blister" or "ribbon pack" syringe has created such an alarming situation in the nation's medicare system, Drug Administration sources told BSS yesterday.

The sources said single pack syringes, having easy scope to be reused, are being sold randomly in the market by unscrupulous traders although this type of syringe is banned both at home and outside world for a long time. Despite strict order of the Drug Administration to use only blister or ribbon pack syringe, the authorities are yet to enforce it strictly because of its various shortcomings and limitations.

More alarming is the illegal import of such used syringe from foreign countries which might contain germs of various

deadly diseases. It was reported that dishonest traders are indulging in importing such used syringes in a bulk quantity by ships and later selling it in the local market pouring those in single packs.

Besides, used syringes are being collected by the "lokals" and dishonest traders re-sell those in the market. It was gathered that the cost of a machine for making single pack syringe is only Taka five hundred and the cost of printing those polythene packs in various brand names is also much cheaper. This encouraged the black-marketeers to indulge in such a corrupt business at the risk of patients being infected by various diseases.

On the other hand, the cost for making blister or ribbon pack syringe involves a huge amount which is almost out of reach of the unscrupulous traders.

Meanwhile, the companies and people involved in import, manufacture or trade of safer blister or ribbon pack syringe have been thrown in inconve-

nient situation as they cannot compete with the spurious syringe manufacturers who can sell their product at much cheaper price. An used syringe after repack can be sold at Taka one while the production cost of a blister or ribbon pack syringe is over Taka four to five.

To cope with the situation, healthcare professionals suggested that side by side with taking punitive actions against retailers of single pack syringe a campaign for creating mass awareness among the users should also be launched.

They also said the physicians could play a significant role by destroying the syringes immediately after their use.

Although there are provisions for destroying the used syringes by burning in government hospitals and health centres, there are reports of pilfering of used syringes from such hospitals through different channels. And this malpractice should be checked and prohibited strictly for public health safety, the professionals suggested.

Controlling demand of water in city

WB suggests metered connection to every household

The insatiable demand for water in the metropolis is ironically due to the easily available supply that is not determined by price and income of the public utility service, says a World Bank study report, reports UNB.

It says the current and prospective future unmanaged demand for water in Dhaka clearly outstrips the available and planned supply of water by a large margin. This is because under the particular circumstances of Dhaka water supply system the level of consumption is not governed by price and income.

"The situation is unlikely to change appreciably, at least in the near future," the foreign experts observed in the report, suggesting control of demand by price through metering, billing and tariff policies.

Necessary reform in this regard is being undertaken under the Dhaka Water Resources Management Programme (DWRMP), a component of the Fourth Dhaka Water Supply Project of Dhaka WASA, funded by the World Bank, officials said.

The survey found that a vast majority of the consumers do not pay Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (DWASA) directly for their service. Particularly, the multitude of new apartment blocks springing up all over Dhaka aimed

at the middle and upper-income groups, typically with only one connection for each block.

Some households who have their own metered connections pay directly, but these are increasingly a minority. The remainder pay a flat charge to their landlords for a share of the combined water supply service.

"Metered water charges to DWASA are of little relevance to the vast majority of consumers who will have little incentive to conserve water," it said identifying the lax water management as the major cause of wastage and crisis of water.

Indeed, in a situation of uncertain supply, as is at present, the system may actually encourage them (consumers) to take as much water as they can when it is available.

So the experts suggest that each household should have its own metered connection. "But there does not appear to be much possibility of this happening, especially where new blocks of apartments are being constructed with 20 or more dwellings per connection."

The current DWASA charge amounts to little more than Tk 0.5 per person per day and is forecast to rise less than Tk 1 per person per day by 2001.

Customers who rely on tankered water supplies or water carriers, who are typically the poorest, already pay many

times this rate, while the high-volume water users who are usually in the higher-income groups are unlikely to be inhibited by any foreseeable price increases in the near future, they observe.

The condition of standpipes, particularly in the old city area where by over 75 per cent have no stopcock, contribute to excessive waste and also prevents the system running at full capacity since the Chandighat Water Treatment Plant has to be shut down at night to prevent excessive wastage through these open standpipes.

"Unless action is taken soon to reduce loss through leakage and wastage, these problems will become very much more serious when Saidabad WTP comes with greater volumes of water being pumped at higher pressure."

The report assumed that there are an average of 25 consumers per connection in the DWASA supply and this figure is likely to rise to 30 by year 2001. At present DWASA supplies water to about 5.1 million people through approximately 1,60,000 connections in its existing service area.

Currently nearly 552 million litres of water per day (mld) is consumed from DWASA system and this will rise to 1,416 mld by 2025.



The bank employees who were sacked in 1981 began a fast-unto-death at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday demanding their reinstatement. — Star photo

Timber trader, truck driver kidnapped

RANGAMATI, Feb 8: A timber trader along with his truck driver were kidnapped at gun point by tribal terrorists on their way to Karnaphuli Paper Mills from Rajshahi Sunday afternoon, police said, reports UNB.

Driver Faiz Ahmed was soon released with a written demand of Tk 1 lakh in ransom for the release of Abdur Rashid, the timber trader.

It is believed that Rashid was taken to deep forest in Bandarban.

Police and army have jointly launched an operation to secure the release of the trader.

The tribal terrorists kidnapped 5 people on January 28 and 2 others on December 22 in the district for extracting ransom.

Examination date changed

The written examination for enrollment in the Bar Council as advocates for December, 1998 session, postponed earlier, will now be held on March 12 at 9 am at Motiheel Government Boys and Girls High School in the city, a Bar Council press release said yesterday.

Anti-hartal procession

Hundreds of workers of Dhaka inter-district bus, microbus and minibus and members of road transport employees union yesterday brought out a procession and marched through the streets of the capital chanting anti-hartal slogans, reports BSS.

The anti-hartal protesters paraded different roads of the city holding banners and placards which read "hartal man-na, man-bo-na (we do not believe in hartal)... gonotanter shotrura kushiar-sabdan (down with enemies of democracy)".

The processionists fed up with general strikes also raised slogans saying "garir chaka ghurbey... bus truck chobey (the wheels would roll on... buses trucks would ply)".

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Dokan Malik Samity expressed their concern over the opposition's 48-hour hartal call and said such programme would cause a huge loss to businessmen and workers associated with different business.

The samity in a press statement said that frequent hartals broke down the economic backbone of the nation. "There is no issue that can justify hartal at the present moment," the samity said.

Nirmul Committee slams move to build market at Shialbari

Ektattur Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee has strongly condemned the move to build a market at a place at Shialbari in city's Mirpur area which had been used as a slaughtering house by Pakistani occupiers' forces during the Liberation War, reports UNB.

The central committee of the organisation at a meeting yesterday urged the government to preserve the slaughtering ground so that the new generation could know about the brutality of the Pakistani Occupation Army and their local collaborators.

The meeting also decided to hold its central conference in Dhaka on March 19-20. A 51-member conference preparatory committee was formed with Dr Anwar Syed Haq as its convenor and Kazi Mukul member secretary.

Date changed

By Staff Correspondent
The viva voce for the candidates of 19th BCS (special) scheduled for February 10, has been changed to February 18 due to unavoidable reasons, said a PID handout yesterday.

Confce on 'Violence Against Women' concludes

By DU Correspondent

The three-day long International psychological Conference on "Violence Against Women and Children" concluded yesterday at the British Council auditorium in the city.

The conference was jointly organised by the Department of Psychology of Dhaka University and British Council.

Delegations from home and abroad — USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Egypt, Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Philippines, Pakistan and India — and organisations including UNICEF, BIRPERHT, TEAC, CARE, Naripakkho and Women for Women attended the conference.

Samad, Rob condole death of King Hussein

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad has expressed profound grief and shock at the death of King Hussein of Jordan, reports APB.

"King Hussein was a symbol of peace and stability," the foreign minister said in a message of condolence yesterday.

Paying rich tributes to the late monarch, Azad said King Hussein played a key role in brining about peace and stability in the Middle East and took far-reaching decisions for welfare of the Muslim Ummah.

BSS adds: Jatiya Samantantrik Dal (JSD) president and Fisheries and Livestock Minister ASM Abdur Rob condole the death of King Hussein of Jordan.

In a condolence message, Rob said, King Hussein was the source of inspiration for peace-loving people of the present world.

Maid commits suicide

By Staff Correspondent

A teenage maid allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling at her master's residence at Gulbagh under Motiheel thana in the city on Sunday evening.

Police identified the maid as Fatema, 18, daughter of Chan Mia of Narshingapur under Netrakona district.

The incident took place at the residence of Additional Superintendent of Police, Netrakona in between 5 pm and 7 pm while the landlady and her daughter went out for shopping.

When they returned home, they found the entrance door of the house locked from inside. They called the neighbours and broke open the door and found Fatema hanging from the ceiling with a scarf.

Police sent the body to the Mitford Hospital for autopsy. Police, however, could not ascertain the reason behind the suicide.

A case has been registered with Motiheel thana in this connection.

8 Myanmar citizens held in Teknaf

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 8: BDR

men in a drive arrested eight Myanmar nationals with a cargo boat laden with 14 tonnes of paddy from Shahpurir Dwip in Teknaf thana Saturday.

They were allegedly trying to smuggle the paddy into Bangladesh from Myanmar, the BDR sources said.

The arrested were identified as Abu Siddique, 27, Hafiz, 25, Sufian, 26, Nur Mohammad, 25, Nurul Karim, 22, Abdus Sukur, 23, Abdur Rahman, 25, and Eutusa Rakhain, 28.

Canadian envoy visits Bandarban

BANDARBAN, Feb 8: Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Nicholas HR Ethridge today visited the district to see the overall situation after signing of the CHT peace accord, reports UNB.

He exchanged views with tribal and non-tribal people. CIDA director John Jackson accompanied the envoy.

Termining the peace accord a unique one, the High Commissioner said it has created a great opportunity to establish peace in the hill districts.

He said the overall development of the area would be accelerated with joint efforts of the government and NGOs.

JS body on Shipping Ministry meets

A meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Undertaking in the city yesterday reviewed the progress of implementation of various pledges made in the Fifth Parliament on Shipping Ministry, reports UNB.

Presided over by the committee President Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, the meeting also discussed the causes of failure in implementing some of the pledges by the ministry.

Committee members — State Minister for Textiles AKM Jahangir Hossain, Dr Mohammad Selim and Mosharraf Hossain Mongu were present at the meeting.



Two Jordanian girls mourn the death of King Hussein outside the King Hussein Medical Centre in Amman, where the monarch died after a seven month battle with cancer Sunday. — AFP photo



Russian spokesman Sergey Baznikin (L), French foreign office spokeswoman Anne Gazeau-Secret (2nd L), US spokesman Philip Reeker (2nd R) and British foreign office spokesman Charles Hay Hold a press conference in Rambouillet, outside Paris, on the second day of the Kosovo peace negotiations Sunday. Representatives of the US, the European Union and Russia are mediating the negotiations between Serbs and Kosovars at the Rambouillet Chateau. — AFP photo