



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inspecting a Guard of Honour at BDR headquarters in the city during the annual BDR parade yesterday. — PID photo

## Hasina addresses annual BDR parade

# Remain vigilant to foil push-in attempts

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the BDR personnel to remain vigilant to foil any push-in efforts through the borders, reports UNB.

"We don't believe that any Bangladeshi citizens are illegally staying in India and you have to remain alert so that no push-in attempt can be made through the borders," she said addressing the BDR sector commanders at Pithana last morning.

"The push-in problem was created during the previous government and it was created through signing of a joint communiqué," she said asking the border forces to remain active in checking cross-border smuggling.

Describing trafficking of woman and child as a serious crime, she directed the officials to take special measures in this regard. "One step has already been taken to tackle the problem through joint efforts of the SAARC member countries."

Identifying cross-border smuggling as the root cause of recession and financial instability and debacle, the Prime Minister asked the paramilitary force, Bangladesh Rifles, to check the illegal trade with more sincerity and dedication.

She said this while address-

ing the annual BDR parade at the parade ground of the BDR headquarters earlier on the day.

"You should be more active and dedicated in carrying out the responsibility," the Prime Minister told all rank and files of BDR personnel.

Hasina said, "Checking cross-border smuggling and maintenance of internal peace are vital for any developing country. Smuggling is the root cause of economic debacle, instability and recession."

"We have restored the voting rights of the people. We are now working to ensure political stability in the country and give the democracy an institutional shape. Without a stable democratic system overall development of the country is not possible."

Commending the role of BDR in controlling smuggling, Hasina said a disciplined and competent person could properly perform his duty. "Hard labour and training can help a soldier attain his professional efficiency."

Referring to the problems of BDR, the Prime Minister said the government has already taken up various steps to improve their professional skills and ensure their personal welfare.

Hasina also lauded the role of BDR in helping the distressed people during the natural disasters, particularly the last year's flooding. She also praised their role in controlling traffic in the city.

Recalling the role of their predecessors, the EPR men, who fought for the independence at the call of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, she said the declaration of independence by Bangabandhu was disseminated from Pithana in the early hours of March 26, in 1971 through wireless set.

She said 817 members of EPR embraced martyrdom in the 1971 Liberation War and paid a glowing tribute to the martyrs.

Earlier, the Prime Minister inspected the guard of honour presented by the BDR forces at the parade ground and took salute.

She also distributed seven Bangladesh Rifles Padak and four President's Rifles Padak to eleven BDR personnel for their contributions to the nation and the force.

Home Minister Rafiqul Islam and Director General of Bangladesh Rifles Maj Gen Azizur Rahman were present at the dais during the ceremonial parade of the BDR.

## Gas cylinder burst kills one

By Staff Correspondent

An employee of an ice factory was killed and three others were injured when a gas cylinder exploded at Champatali lane under Lalbagh thana in the city yesterday evening.

The dead was identified as Altaf Hossain, 27, and injured were Hannan, Oli and Ashraf, workers of Madina Ice Factory. According to the police, the accident took place at a Madina Ice Factory of 6/3/B Champatali of Suyaritola at about 3:30 pm, leaving Altaf Hossain dead.

## Benson & Hedges concert Mar 12

Benson & Hedges is back with another grand concert to be held at Gulshan Park behind Wonderland on March 12, says a press release.

This time it will be the biggest ever musical spectacle in the country. In addition to the topmost local bands, Feelings and LRB, there will be international stars Mehnaz, Merilin, Rahul and VJ Laila (famous for hosting 'Close Up Close Encounter') performing at the show.

The concert is jointly organised by Sandani National Eye Donation Society and Theatre School and sponsored by British American Tobacco Bangladesh.

Benson & Hedges introduced their series of concerts to Bangladesh with 'Golden Tones — Dhaka Dhoom Dhara' in March '97 at Sonargaon, followed by 'Golden Tones Extravaganza' concert in December '97 at Sheraton Winter Garden.

From South Africa to Dubai, Benson & Hedges is known for supporting music around the world with their spectacular concerts and now they also aim to bring a different kind of music to the lives of those who require Sandhani's assistance as well as the Theatre School's endeavour to groom drama talent for the country.

The entire proceeds from ticket sales will go to Sandhani National Eye Donation Society and Theatre School funds.

At a simple ceremony on Thursday at the Head Office of British American Tobacco Bangladesh, the tickets were officially handed over to the two organisations. The ceremony was attended by officials from British American Tobacco Bangladesh, Sandhani National Eye Donation Society and Theatre School.

## Two killed in road accidents

By Staff Correspondent

Two people were killed and ten others injured in separate road accidents in the city yesterday.

The dead were identified as Adam Ali Bapari, 50, and Amena Begum, wife of Kalu Mia.

Of the injured, seven were identified as Rahim, 38, Bilkis, 13, Abdul Aziz, 70, Liton, 25, Babu, 35, Abdus Salam, 40, and Hasina, 60.

Adam Ali and ten others were injured when a minibus turned over after a speeding truck hit it from behind near the Science Laboratory Crossing at about 6 am.

In a fatally injured condition, Adam was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died soon after admission, hospital sources said.

In another incident, Amena Begum, a day labourer, was hit by a truck while she was crossing a road at city's Badda area at about 7:30 am. Amena died on the spot.

## Seminar on neonatal care

A seminar on 'Improving Neonatal Care in Bangladesh' was held at the auditorium of Dhaka Shishu Hospital yesterday. It was organised by Dhaka Shishu Hospital and Bangladesh Institute of Child Health, says a press release.

The seminar was chaired by Prof M S Akbar, Member of Parliament and president, governing body, BICH. Keynote paper was presented by Dr M A K Azad Chowdhury while the introductory speech on 'Status of neonatal health in Bangladesh' was delivered by Prof Manzoor Hussain, Director of the hospital.

Prof Manzoor Hussain pointed out that neonatal death rate in Bangladesh is still alarmingly high comparing to other developing countries but because of the success of EPI in current years there is sharp decline of newborn death rate.

Dr M Mizanur Rahman, Dr Md Mahbubul Hoque and Dr Abdul Qader presented scientific papers in the seminar. Eminent paediatricians Prof M R Khan, Prof M N Islam and Prof Nazmun Nahar were among the expert panel discussants. Chairperson Prof M S Akbar, MP stressed the immediate need of establishing neonatal service centre at district level hospital.

## CCHRB report Municipal polls fair and peaceful

By Staff Correspondent

Coordination Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh (CCHRB) in a report released on Tuesday said election to the pourasabhas was by and large fair and peaceful.

The report disapproved of the Opposition's demand for cancellation of results of the municipal poll, saying it would be nothing but a total disregard for the people's verdict and democratic norms.

It also urged the government to initiate a dialogue with the Opposition immediately to resolve the current political situation so that the major opposition parties could participate in the upcoming elections to the local government bodies (city corporations and upazilas).

The report praised the role of journalists and the media, saying that the reports on municipal elections published in newspapers was objective and consistent with the CCHRB monitoring reports.

The election results showed that party affiliation was not a factor in local government elections, the report said.

Generally no complaints were received regarding false voting, rigging and faulty voter lists, it added.

CCHRB teams monitored the polling in 130 municipalities out of 136.

## Ibne Sina medal distribution ceremony today

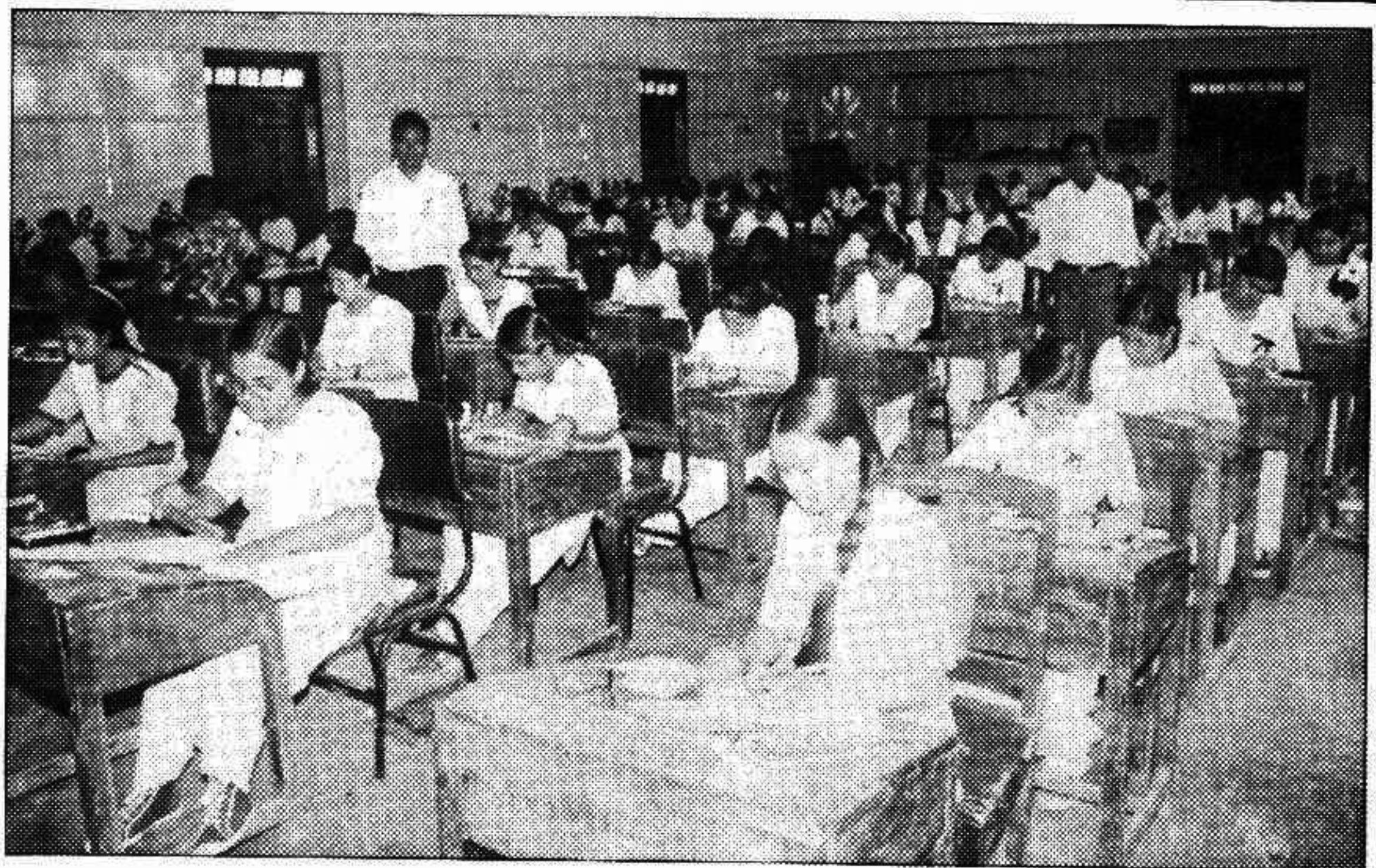
Ibne Sina medal distribution and Ibne Sina Medical Imaging Centre's inaugural ceremony will be held at its Medical Centre premises in the city's Dhanmondi area today, reports UNB.

Dr R J Gurst, National Professor Dr M R Khan, Major Gen (ret'd) M R Chowdhury TGA and Dr M Nabi Alam Khan have been selected for the medals for their special contributions to medical science.

## Admission

Little Theatre School, the first ever training-school of performing art for children, has invited applications for admission to its second batch, reports UNB.

A viva voce for the intending candidates, aged between 8 and 15, will be held at Bangladesh Shishu Academy at 4 pm today.



Students appear in the SSC examinations at a city centre. The exams under five education boards began yesterday. — Star photo

# Incidents of murder on rise in city

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam

Incidents of murder have marked a sharp rise in the city, but the total number of murders across the country has marginally declined during the month of February, according to police and newspaper reports.

During the period, 28 people were killed in Dhaka city, up from 24 in January, while the country saw a total of 190 murders including 30 women victims. The total number of murders in the previous month was 193.

There were 143 murders in December, 164 in November, 187 in October and 189 in September last, the reports showed.

According to a survey by Bangladesh Women Lawyer's Association (BNWLA), the incidents of violence against women took an upward turn in the first two months of the year — 43 women were killed and 54 were raped in January while 46 women were raped and 30 were murdered in February.

The Institute of Democratic Rights has reported 48 cases relating to violence against women, including eight murders for dowry in February against nine murders in the previous month. The number of dowry-related deaths was eight in December, 12 each in October and November and 15 in September.

Five women also suffered acid burns in February. The number was 21 in January, nine in December, 21 in November, 17 in October and 10 in September, the organisation said.

In February, at least 45 people allegedly committed suicide, down from 50 in January. The

number was 35 in December, 48 in November, 62 in October and 63 in September.

The number of people abducted last month was 62 and it was 45 in January, 28 in December, 46 in November, 49 in October and 48 in September.

The most sensational murder was that of Kazi Aref Ahmed, who was gunned down along with his five partymen at Kalidaspur primary school of Daulatpur under Mirpur thana of Kushtia on February 16.

The most talked-about murder in the city was the killing of Sajal Chowdhury, a graduate student, who was killed at Science Laboratory intersection on February 9 during the hartal allegedly by gunmen who descended from a ruling-party anti-hartal convoy.

Rafiq, a police informer, was killed by unidentified gunmen in front of sweeper colony under Lalbagh thana on February 1. Police recovered two bodies from Hazaribagh and Ramna area on the same day.

Unidentified gang hurled crackers at the Ramna police compound on February 2. An alleged kidnapper, Charlie Liton was killed while four others, including three policemen, were injured the same day.

Afsana Akther, 18, was stabbed to death just a day before her marriage reception at their house at Agakhan lane in the city's Kotwali area. A young man, Mamun was shot dead allegedly by police in the Kabi Nazrul Islam College in the old part of the city. Both the incidents took place during hartal on February 10.

Tazuddin, a police constable,

succumbed to his injuries at hospital on February 11. He received injuries when a cracker was thrown from a building at Ray Shaheb Bazar in the city on February 9 during the opposition-called hartal.

Three armed cadres of an outlawed party were killed and two others severely injured in an attack by the villagers at Balarampur under Terokhada thana of Khulna district on February 12.

Uzzal, a minor boy, was killed when a woman hit him with an iron rod at Shipaibagh of Goran under Khilgaon thana in the city on February 22.

An army jawan was shot dead by unidentified assailants in the city's Hamjarbagh of Chittagong on February 23.

Nurul Houque, a leader of Rickshaw Sramik League, was killed when a bomb was thrown at him at Shapla Chattar in Motijheel while he was leading an anti-hartal procession on February 23.

A BCL activist Harun and a JSD activist Manwar were killed in separate gunfights at Feni and Kushtia respectively on February 24.

Helal, a fruit vendor, was stabbed to death at Purana Palatan area in the city on February 25.

A college girl was shot dead and her brother received bullet injuries when some unidentified gunmen stormed into their residence in Luxmipur area of Faridpur on February 26.

Mohammed Ayub Ali, 30, a BCL leader, was beaten to death at SK Das road under Sutrapur thana in the city on February 28.

## What's on today . . .

**Convention:** A 4-day 43rd Convention of the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh will begin. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the convention as chief guest. Venue: IEB Headquarters, Ramna. Time: 10 am.

**Japanese film show:** Akira Kurosawa's two films 'Doomed' and 'Sanjuro' will be screened as part of the Japanese Film Festival. Venue: Multipurpose Hall, Cultural Section, Embassy of Japan, Plot No: 5&7, Duttachowdhury Road, Baridhara. Time: 3:30 & 6:30 pm respectively.

**Tagore Song Festival:** Different organisations will present Tagore songs, recitation and dance as part of the 10th National Rabindra Sangeet Utsab. Organiser: Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium. Time: 10 am and 7 pm.

**Rally:** International Women's Day Celebration Committee has organised a women's rally and a procession to mark the day. The rally will be held at Manik Mia Avenue at 8:30 am. A cultural programme and an exhibition will also be held.

**Prize giving ceremony:** The prize giving ceremony of the National Drawing Competition for Children '99 will be held. Venue: Gandaria Kishorey Kachi-Kanchar Mela premises, 15, Denanath Sen Road. Time: 4 pm. A child procession will begin from the Kendriyo Kachi-Kanchar Mela at 9 am and will be concluded at the Shishu Academy.

**Installation ceremony:** The installation ceremony of the newly-elected executive council of Mirsarai Youth Forum will be held. Venue: Banquet Hall of Hotel Rajmoni Isha Khan. Time: 3:15 pm.

**Film show:** Alliance Francaise de Dhaka will screen three films — 'Raining Stones', 'Quai des Orfèvres' and 'Richard III'. Venue: Alliance Francaise auditorium, 26 Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi. Time: 10:30 am, 4 pm and 6 pm respectively.

**Drama:** 'Tak Duma Dum Dum', 'Mukta Bihanga' and 'Rup Bodoler Ropkatha' will be staged as part of Jatiya Shishu Kishore Natyautsah '99. Organiser: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in cooperation with People's Theatre Association. Venue: Central Public Library auditorium. Time: 4 pm, 6 pm and 7:30 pm respectively.

**Discussion:** Shaheed Abdur Rob Serniabat Smriti Parishad has organised a discussion meeting on Serniabat. Venue: Plasma Plus, House No 48/6, Road No: 9A, Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi. Time: 3 pm.

**Memorial meet:** Colonel Taher Sangsad has organised a memorial meeting on Prof Ahmed Sharif, its founder convenor and former president. Venue: Shaheed Dr Milon Chattar, TSC Road Island, DU. Time: 4 pm.

**Award giving ceremony:** The Shilu Abed Handicrafts Awards giving ceremony '99 will be held. Venue: BRAC Centre, Mohakhali. Time: 4 pm.

**Discussion:** Bangladesh Private Medical Practitioners Association has organised a discussion meeting on the occasion of the Independence Day. Chief guest: Awami League president member Amir Hossain Amu. Venue: BPMA conference room, 215/A Baro Maghbazar. Time: 9 am.

**Reunion:** A reunion of Ex-Students' Association of Adamjee Cantonment College (EXSAACC) will be held. Chief guest: Air Vice Marshal Jamaluddin Ahmed. Venue: College auditorium. Time: 7 pm.

## Weather

### Dry weather forecast

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged across the country during the period, Met Office said.

Country's highest temperature 34.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and the lowest 12.1 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets today at 6.03 pm and rises on Saturday at 6.17 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.0	15.2	47	34
Chittagong	32.5	17.0	59	52
Rajshahi	31.8	12.7	53	44
Khulna	32.5	15.4	54	41
Barisal	32.2	13.6	60	41
Sylhet	34.3	15.8	56	39
COX'S BAZAR	33.5	18.5	57	59



Children brought out a colourful procession in the city yesterday to mark the opening of National Shishu Kishore Drama Festival '99. — Star photo

## British brass band to perform in city

By Staff Correspondent

The Wallace Collection, a brass ensemble from the UK, will perform in the city on March 8 and 9 and in Chittagong on March 6. This group with an international reputation for innovative programming has some of the best brass players in London.

The group was founded by John Wallace in 1986 who is acclaimed as a virtuoso trumpet player. He was awarded an OBE in recognition of his contribution.

The other members of the group are Paul Gardham (Horn), Robin Haggard (Tuba), John Miller (Trumpet), Roy Bilham (Trumpet) and Simon Gunton (Trombone).

Their visit has been arranged in association with the British Council.

## Ila Mitra in city

Veteran of historic Tebhaga Movement Comrade Ila Mitra arrived in the city last afternoon from India to attend the Golden Jubilee celebration programmes of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), reports BSS.

Party sources said during her stay in Bangladesh she is expected to attend the public rally at the historic Palatan Maidan as the special guest tomorrow, the 50th founding day of the CPB.

## Workshop on marketing at JU

A day-long workshop on "Strategic Marketing" will be held at the university's central auditorium at 10 am today, reports APB.

The workshop has been organised by the Department of Business Administration of the university.



Members of The Wallace Collection, a brass band from the UK, held a press conference in the city yesterday. They will perform in the city on March 8 and 9 and in Chittagong March 6. — Star photo

# About 15m people at risk of health hazard due to arsenic

An unusual number of abortion cases was found among rural women affected with arsenic poisoning in Bangladesh, says a US expert, reports APB.

Dr I Harding Barlow, an American toxicologist, disclosed this while presenting a paper on 'Old and new aspects of toxicology of arsenic and some other trace elements' at the concluding day of the three-day symposium at LGED conference room yesterday.

Ghosh Research Associate (GRA), a California-based consultative body, organised the symposium on 'Reducing the impacts of toxic chemicals and pollutants on public health, the ecology and the environment of the Bengal basin.'

"We need to find co-factors behind this phenomenon in addition to the problem of arsenic to prevent it," she said expressing the hope that the solution should be simple and fairly easy to adapt so that a reasonable remedial measure could be

found. On the possibilities of cancer due to arsenic, Dr Barlow said if large number of arsenic poisoning prevails, then we may have lot of cancer cases after 20 years.

She, however, lauded the recent development in the treatment of dermatological effect of arsenic in Bangladesh and said "it is fairly a hopeful sign".

The American expert referred to three types of mercury pollution such as metallic, inorganic and methyl. Of these, metallic mercury pollution may cause brain damage, she apprehended. The toxicologist also observed that tanneries in Bangladesh have chromium problem.

Quoting a World Bank-Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) survey, M Nazrul Islam, Director Operation of Geological Survey of Bangladesh (GSB), said 54 districts out of a total of 64 are affected by groundwater arsenic

pollution. "About 15 million people of the country are at the risk of health hazard due to arsenic," he said adding, it is not known how the arsenic is released.

GRA Director Dr R B Ghosh said production-aquifers, the source of high-quality drinking water, should be properly protected.

"We have to maintain the aquifer at any cost and can use deep production-aquifer as underground storage tank," he suggested.

Presided over by Director (Technical) of the Department of Environment Ahmed-Al-Faruke, the session was addressed, among others, by LGED Chief Engineer Quamrul Islam Siddiqui.

Dr G Neimi, Professor of the Department of Biology, University of Minnesota, USA, presented a paper on "Water impacts of toxic chemicals on public health, environmental health and economic welfare."



Artists rendering songs from old days at an evening of Classics Unplugged at Muktiyuddha Museum in the city yesterday. The event was organised by Nescafe. — Star photo