

## Bangla Academy elections Friday

Forty-one candidates are contesting the first ever direct election of Bangla Academy. The election will be held tomorrow, reports BSS.

The candidates will be contesting for seven seats of the executive committee of the 44 year academy. The election is taking place after a gap of eight years. The last election was held in 1991.

A source at the Academy said this is for the first time that all the voters with identity cards will have to be present at the Academy premises in person to cast votes. The casting of votes will begin at 10 am and will be continued till 5 pm without any interruption, the source said adding none would be allowed to cast vote without ID cards.

The number of voters in the election is 1873.

## Police action condemned

Gano Forum yesterday protested the police atrocities against a woman and journalists during the hartal hours in the city Tuesday, reports UNB.

In a statement, Gano Forum acting president Adv Zahurul Islam and general secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik also demanded exemplary punishment to the policemen responsible.

The Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights in a separate statement also condemned the police action on journalists during the half-day hartal and demanded punishment for those responsible.

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) yesterday protested and condemned the police attack on journalists during Tuesday's hartal and demanded punishment for those responsible.

The demand came from a meeting of the CPJ held at the National Press Club with CPJ convenor Ataus Samad in the chair. It also demanded compensation from the government for the injured journalists.

The CPJ members said the police attack and their threat to open gunshots have made it difficult and risky to perform the professional duties of the journalists, said a press release.

"Police atrocities perpetrated years after years have been endangering the lives of the people, pushing the country towards shameful situation and the government into trouble," said the CPJ meeting.

The CPJ congratulated the photojournalists and reporters for collecting picture and covering the "assaulting of a woman in the street by policemen during the hartal" ignoring difficulty and physical torture.

Hasan Syed, Syed Kamiluddin, Golam Tahar, Faisal M. Khatun, Md. Rashed Khan, Chowdhury Joyntul Abedin, Farid Hossain, Jaynal Abedin, Chinmoy Mutsuddi, Salim Samad, Golam Mohiuddin Khan and CPJ member secretary Sawkat Mahmud were present.

## Student body for 8pc allocation of GDP for edn sector in nat'l budget

By DU Correspondent

Jatiya Chhatra Dal, a left-leaning student organisation, yesterday brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus demanding allocation of eight per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for education sector in the forthcoming National Budget.

To press home their demand, the Jatiya Chhatra Dal also held a rally at the main gate of Arts Building at noon.

## WDB

From page 1

mind of the public. The para four and five of the news item narrates: "Some sources in WDB office, however, claimed that the WDB officials themselves created the opportunity for the 'terrorists' to press for awarding contracts for renovation of Rajshahi Town Protection Embankment."

"They (officials) cancelled the lottery system of judging tenders and introduced the previous system of lowest rate with five per cent below or above. Some contractors took the new system as an opportunity to press the WDB officials for giving them work," one source said.

These remarks are absolutely baseless and untrue. The proposed renovation work on Rajshahi Town Protection scheme is being financed by the World Bank. They do not allow their work to be done by lottery system and the work order must be given to the lowest evaluated bidder as per bank guidelines.

Therefore, the question of Water Development Board officials involvement in creating the opportunity for the terrorists to press for awarding contracts does not arise.

The allegations made in para-3 that BWDB officials were not Rajshahi on May 11 are also incorrect. The Chief Engineer and the Superintending Engineer did their office works in their offices in Rajshahi on 11.05.1999. They were attending the honourable Minister's programme at Gaibandha on 8th and 9th May. The Chief Engineer had to come to Dhaka on official duty on 10th May and returned to Rajshahi the same day. The Executive Engineer was officially on leave up to 11.05.99 and has resumed his duties on completion of his leave.

In para 1 and 2, it was alleged that the terrorists again attacked and ransacked the Divisional Office of BWDB on 11.05.99 and took away the keys of office rooms. This is also not true.

## Gulf War victims

# UN pays compensation to 14,977 Bangladeshis

The United Nations Commission on Compensation paid another tranche of reparation money to 14,977 Bangladeshis repatriated from Iraq and Kuwait during the Gulf War, reports UNB.

Each of 13,536 returnees in 'A' category and 1,441 in 'C' got cheque for 2500 US dollars in the fifth phase.

Labour and Employment Minister Abdul Mannan handed over cheques to them at the auditorium of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training in the city yesterday.

The UN Commission has given compensation to 4,551 Bangladeshis in the first phase, 13,269 in second and 13,543 in the fourth phase. No Bangladeshis got the money in the third phase.

Speaking on the occasion

the Labour and Employment Minister asked government officials to be transparent and accountable in their function as a present government believes in accountability.

He, however, praised bureau officials for their sincerity to get the compensation money from the United Nations.

At the same time, the minister cautioned officials about any "corruption."

Presided over by Labour Secretary Mohammad Ahsan Ali Sarker, the function was also addressed, among others, by Joint Secretary M A M Reza-e-Elahi, Dalil Uddin Mondal, Bureau Director Mahbubur Rahman and president of Iraq-Kuwait Returnees' Welfare Association Mohammad Ali Ashraf.

# Daffodil computer fair stirs much enthusiasm

By Staff Correspondent

One can avail the opportunity to save up to 15 per cent of the budget for a personal computer at the computer fair organised by Daffodil Computers, a pioneering computer firm in private sector.

About 50000 visitors thronged the week-long exhibition at the Daffodil's Head Office at Kalabagan in the city. Eight leading computer companies are taking part in the fair.

"The main objective of the fair was to reduce the gap between the country's two main computer expositions, the Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) and Comtech computer show," said an official of Daffodil Computers.

He said, "Another objective is to introduce new products to the computer enthusiasts as the main computer exposition is held after a long gap, usually in November-December each year."

A huge number of visitors thronged to the stall of JAN Associates which offers various types of printers at a liberal price. Daffodil Computers offered their own product Daffodil PC at an introductory price ranging from Tk 28,500 to Tk 38,500.

Hi-Tech Professional is offering home theatre package at Tk 80,000. Their multi-media "Kobi" was highly praised by visitors. VAS Digital, an internet service provider, has offered

## DU debating society polls tomorrow

By DU Correspondent

Election to the Dhaka University Debating Society (DUDS) will be held at its TSC office tomorrow.

A total of 51 members will cast their votes to elect new president and general secretary of the 17-member executive body of DUDS.

Four candidates are contesting for the two key posts. Contestants for the president post are Tariqul Islam Litol of Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall and Moniruddin Ahmed of Ziaur Rahman Hall, while Shaikh Intiaz of Bangabandhu Hall and Subrata Sarkar Puru of Jagannath Hall are vying for the post of general secretary.

internet connection only at Taka 500, while Computer Barta, a computer-related magazine, has offered subscription at a reduced price.

The Safe Works Computer has come up with a Bangla multi-media encyclopaedia which includes a dictionary of 17,000 words, mythological stories, biographies of world veterans and many other things.

BD Tech has presented a multi-media CD ROM on learning prayers (nama). It also offers Intel Pentium PC at the lowest price of only Tk 21,400.

Bangladesh expects to earn 100 million U.S. dollars through export of computer software in 1999-2000, an official of Bangladesh Computer Samity told the Daily Star at the computer fair.

This figure was five times higher than the export target for the current fiscal, he said.

"We also expect to earn up to 100 million dollars by exporting software in the next fiscal. Although it sounds too ambitious at this moment, I think it can be achieved," he said.

This year for the first time Bangladesh is exporting software to the United States and Britain.

Bangladesh has already earned over 7 million dollar and it is expected that the earnings would stand at around 20 million dollar at the end of the year.

Some 800 companies are doing computer business in Bangladesh, including 10 in joint venture and five foreign companies. And about 100,000 people have been involved in computer business.

The government has declared software export a thrust sector and allowed duty-free import of computers, commerce ministry officials said. Import of computer in Bangladesh is also collateral-free.

## Heart camp in Bagerhat

A day-long 'heart camp' will be arranged in Bagerhat district on Friday, reports UNB.

Ten cardiologists from Dhaka Suhrawardy Hospital will go there and see the patients from 8 am to 5 pm.

# Larma hailed for taking charge of CHTRC

RANGAMATI, May 12: Different organisations and individuals today congratulated the chairman-designate of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council (CHTRC), Jatirindra Bodhipriyo Larma for taking charge of CHTRC to implement the CHT peace accord, reports BSS.

Chairman of the Task Force on Repatriated Tribal and Internal Refugees Rehabilitation Affairs and member of the CHT Peace Accord Implementation Committee Dipankar Talukdar MP, congratulated the chairman of CHTRC Jatirindra Bodhipriyo Larma for taking over the charge of CHTRC today during an interview with the BSS over telephone.

"Decrepitude and despondency developed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts due to delay in taking over charges of CHTRC has been removed today and I am very happy for it," Dipankar said.

Dipankar conveyed his thanks to Shantu Larma for his intention to share the government in implementing the peace accord by taking over charges of CHTRC, expressed in a press-briefing at Khagrachhari on Monday.

The unwanted delay in functioning of the CHTRC had created an impasse in restoration of peace and carrying out development activities in the insurgency-battered Chittagong Hill Tracts, Dipankar said. "We are now to work with utmost sincerity to create such an atmosphere so that people, irrespective of caste, creed and religion can live here with their due rights in communal harmony," he added.

Rangamati Municipal Chairman Habibur Rahman in his instant reaction told BSS over telephone today that the keys of office rooms. This is also not true.

Samity (PCJSS) has admitted the reality, though late, through taking over charge of CHTRC. Implementation of the CHT peace accord will be become easier now, he said.

CHTRC will play a vital role in restoration of peace, stability and carrying out development activities, Habib hoped, adding that the functioning of CHTRC will materialise the hopes and aspirations of the people of CHT. He thanked the chairman of CHTRC and its Councillors.

President of Rangamati Press Club and Editor of local daily the Giridarpur AKM Maquid Ahmed thanked the president of the PCJSS for assuming the responsibility of CHTRC.

Convenor of the Rangamati Nagorik Committee and a traditional tribal leader of the district, Gautam Dewan congratulated the president of the PCJSS for assuming the responsibility of CHTRC. He said CHTRC will play a positive role in implementation of the peace accord. Gautam hopes while expressing his reaction to BSS over telephone.

President of Rangamati Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kazi Nazrul Islam said the uncertainty which was prevailing after formation of CHTRC on September 6, last year has been removed through taking charges. CHTRC will relentlessly work for restoration of peace and expansion of commerce and industries in the region, Kazi hopes.

A young tribal leader, Advocate Pratim Roy Pampoo while expressing his pleasure in his reaction said that the able leadership of Shantu Larma in cooperation with the pro-people government, will succeed in restoring peace, both for tribal and non-tribal people, living in this region.

## Ensuring status of refugees in SAARC countries

# Need for establishing regional convention stressed

Speakers at a workshop in the city yesterday underscored the need for establishing a regional convention to ensure the status and protect the rights of refugees in the SAARC countries, reports BSS.

They said there were regional conventions in Africa, Europe and in USA for ensuring dignity of the refugees in exile. But it is still absent in the SAARC region due to lack of sincere initiatives, they observed.

Political advisor to the Prime Minister Dr SA Malek attended the concluding session of the workshop as the chief guest while vice president of Bar Council and Chairman of the SAARC law Barrister Amirul Islam presided.

Held in the Bangladesh Bar Council Auditorium, the workshop titled "Refugee Law Training Programme" was addressed, among others, by

UNHCR local representative Wilbert Van Hovell, president of the Bar Council executive committee Shudhangshu Shekhar Halder and Prof Shamsul Huq of Open University.

Dr Malek described the long history of refugees in the globe, especially in South Asia and South-East Asia and said the cause of the overall refugee problem in the region was the absence of legal framework to protect them. He said no nation of South East Asia has signed the convention of 1951 and the protocol of 1967. "Besides, there is no regional deeds to restore the rights of the refugees", he observed.

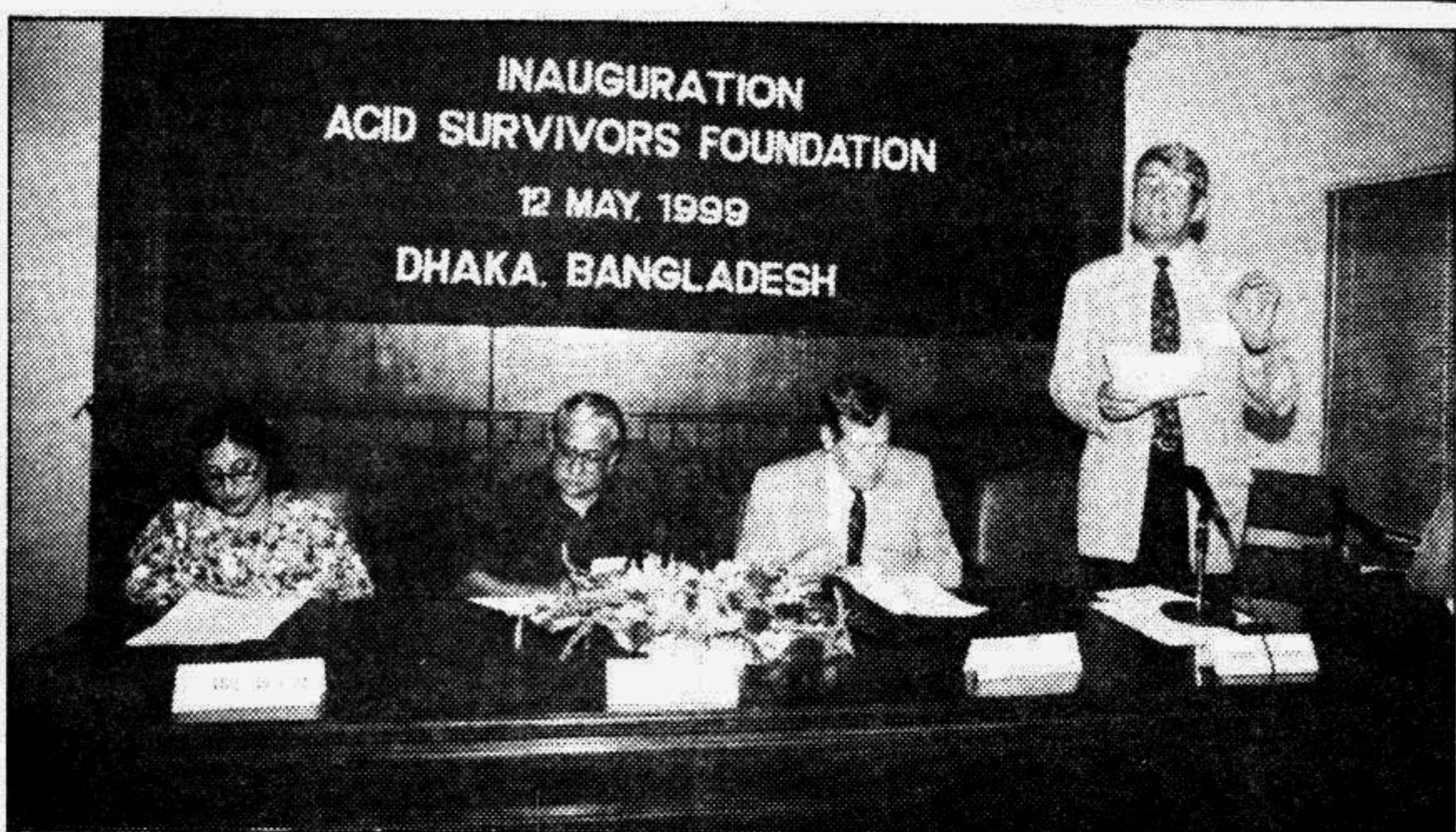
He, however, acknowledged that the formulation work of the regional convention on refugee law for South Asia was going on under the supervision of Chief Judges of SAARC countries and concerned lawyers. He requested Barrister Islam to fi-

nalise the regional convention to play an important role in solving refugee problems in the region.

Hovell lauded Bangladesh and the present government for providing supports and hospitality to UNHCR to repatriate a major part of Rohingya refugees migrated in the country from neighbouring Myanmar. He expressed the hope that Bangladesh would start further talks to Myanmar for repatriation of the rest of the refugees.

Terming refugee problem as a regional and sometimes as global one Hovell said there must have a consensus on the status of refugees. He said civil society, NGOs, media and the lawyers can play the pivotal role in solving the refugee problem globally.

Barrister Islam underlined the need for the convention for the refugees of the region.



The Acid Survivors Foundation was formed in the city yesterday. (From left) Ms Shahida Azfar, Unicef country representative, Kazi Fazlur Rahman, Chairman of Board of Trustees of the Acid Survivors Foundation, Nicholas Etheridge, Canadian High Commissioner, and Dr John Morrison, Unicef Consultant, at the signing ceremony held at the National Press Club. — Star photo

## FENA welcomes decision to reopen Dhaka-NY flight

By Special Correspondent

Flight Engineers and Navigators Association (FENA) welcomed the decision to reopen the Dhaka-New York flight of Bangladesh Biman as announced by the Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism.

In a statement, the president FIE Engr Abdullah Mohibuddin renewed the organisation's suggestions for hiring a Boeing 747-300 aircraft to operate the route on purchase or on dry lease to ferry more passengers and make it profitable at low seat-mile cost.

It suggested that the wide-bodied aircraft could also be used on flights to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

## Nepalese envoy visits AIUB

Nepalese Ambassador in Bangladesh Madhu Raman Acharya visited the AMA International University Bangladesh (AIUB) campus at Banani yesterday, says a press release.

He went round different departments of the university and showed keen interest in the excellent facilities for quality education.

## Action plan to improve project implementation

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB) have reached an understanding on an action plan to improve project implementation capabilities and efficiency, a bank press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

The decision to take up the action plan was taken on Tuesday at a joint review meeting on country portfolio performance-1999.

Delegating adequate financial and procurement authority to the project directors, strengthening the selection and appointment criteria of project directors, instituting project guiding mechanism and simplifying land acquisition and resettlement procedures will be addressed under the action plan.

The other issues to be covered under the action plan are: streamlining recruitment of consultants, improving expertise in procurement, strengthening projects auditing system and ensuring greater participation of the implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) in project supervision.

Meanwhile, Asian Development Bank is planning to provide financial assistance

to Bangladesh for the proposed Second Small Scale Water Resources Development Project (SSWRDSP), says a press release.

Government of the Netherlands and IFAD also expressed interest to provide financial assistance with ADB. The proposed project will be nationwide and will be implemented through LGED.

A workshop was held at the LGED Bhawan to discuss various aspects of the proposed project. Participants, included representatives from various ministries, departments, NGOs, academics, as well as from various irrigation sub-projects of LGED.

Toshio Kondo, Mission Head of ADB stated that he was happy to note that a candid discussion took place among the participants leading to an improved project design. He highly appreciated the achievements of SSWRDSP. He said that ADB is contemplating to launch second phase of the project which will cover vast areas of Bangladesh.

The workshop was presided over by Ataulah Bhuiya, Additional Chief Engineer of LGED.



A Jamat-e-Islami Bangladesh procession protesting the police action on a BNP procession and assault on journalists during Tuesday's hartal. — Star photo

## DU Senate polls GOP leaders exchange views with journalists

Leaders of Ganatantrik Oikya Parishad (GOP) of the registered graduates of the Dhaka University called on editors and senior journalists of the Daily Ajker Kagoj, Bhorer Kagoj, Pratham Alo and Mukta Kanta on Tuesday night, reports BSS.

They discussed different aspects of the coming Senate election. The GOP leaders urged the journalists to extend all-out support to the pro-liberation

GOP panel to the Senate election to be held on June 6 to 16.

Led by Prof Shamsul Huda Haroon, the GOP delegation included, Syed Badruddin Hossain, Dr Rangalal Sen, Adv Syed Ahmed, Dr Haroon-or-Rashed, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Prof Mahfuza Khanam, Khaleda Habib, Habibur Rahman Khan and Ramendu Majumder.

## Paved road network grows 100 times in 50 years

The paved road network grew by more than 100 times in the country, except for towns and cities, in 50 years since partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, reports BSS.

"It also registered almost five-fold growth in the post-liberation period," a seminar was held yesterday.

The country now has 21,854 km of paved roads in the categories of national highway, regional highway and feeder road, compared to nearly 4,500 km road network the country had just after liberation.

Of the roads, 3,153 km are classified as national highway, 1,746 km as regional highway and the rest are feeder roads.

The roads — both paved and unpaved — covered only 2,635 km on this part of the sub-continent in 1947.

"Paved among the entire road network in 1947 was less than two hundred km," said Abdul Wadud, chief engineer of the department of roads and highways department, in his speech to the seminar titled

'Roads in Bangladesh — the next millennium'.

The seminar was arranged to mark the launching of phase three of the Institutional Development Component (IDC3), an important element of the Road Rehabilitation and Management Project (RRMP) assisted by the World Bank and Department For International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom.

Communications Minister Anwar Hossain inaugurated the seminar which was also addressed by Syed Reazul Hyat, secretary of Roads and Railways Division (RRD) and David C. Walker, British high commissioner in Dhaka.

Bill Hodgkinson, team leader of IDC3, made a presentation about the objectives and methods of achieving the goal on road safety and management within five years.

Eng. Md Nurul Azam Khan, project director RRMF3, said at the time of partition, there were only a few paved roads outside the capital.

## Mobile phone

# Probe body to investigate irregularities

A sub-committee to probe the alleged irregularities in the services of the privately owned mobile telephone companies was formed yesterday at a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, reports BSS.

A Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat press release said the sub-committee headed by Whip Mizanur Rahman Manu, will also investigate the service standard and activities of the mobile phone companies.

The sub-committee will look into the possibilities if employment opportunities for young can be created by setting up PABX telephone lines in different areas.

Whip Mizanur Rahman Manu, Mohammad Shahabuddin, Sharif Khasruzzaman, Advocate Fazle Rabbi, Lutfur Rahman Khan (Azad), Advocate Mohd. Nadim Mostafa and Barkat Ullah Bulu were present in the meeting presided over by the committee chairman Kamal Ahmed Mojmudar.

## Acid survivors foundation launched

By Staff Correspondent

A foundation for the acid-burnt victims was launched at a simple ceremony at the National Press Club yesterday.

The Acid Survivors Foundation has been established to tackle the problems of increasing acid-throwing incidents against women and to coordinate support activities for the survivors across the country.

A document of the Foundation was signed by the board of trustee members including its chairman Kazi F Rahman, Dr S L Sen, Plastic Surgeon Consultant at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Stephen Turner, Deputy High Commissioner, British High Commission, and Begum Ivy Rahman of Jatiya Mahila Sangstha.

In his opening remark, Dr John Morrison, a Unicef consultant, who put a lot of effort in the formation of the Foundation said, "The idea of the foundation is to eliminate the dreadful tragedies suffered by many victims who need help."

Unicef Country Representative Ms Shahida Azfar told the function: "In addition to many of the responsibilities taken up by Unicef to address the problem, we hope to support awareness activities. This is one area we are very concerned about."

The consequences of acid attacks are traumatic — physically, psychologically and socially. The impact of acid burn is catastrophic, it causes skin tissue to be eaten away, leaving the adjacent bones exposed. The victims lose one or both eyes in many cases.

The Foundation will work with local NGOs, the government and the international community to provide assistance in the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration into the society of survivors by identifying and improving existing services.

The Foundation will provide survivors with better access to quality medical care, legal aid, and counselling.

The Foundation, which has a board of 15 members, would also arrange safe shelters, training, employment and education for the victims.

## Dental Society urges govt to withdraw VAT

Bangladesh Dental Society (BDS) yesterday urged the government to withdraw Value Added Tax (VAT) from private practice by dental surgeons imposed in this fiscal, reports BSS.

"If the VAT is not withdrawn, dental treatment will be more expensive and it will be impossible for the government to implement 'health for all' programme by the year 2000," they said at a press conference at the National Press Club.

They said dental treatment is very expensive as surgeons have to pay huge amounts of taxes to import equipment from abroad.

They said that VAT was not imposed on any medical practice, except for dental surgery.

President of the society Prof Dr Anwarul Alam, Secretary General Dr Abdul Malek Bhuiyan and other office-bearers Prof Ashraf Hussain, Mirza Ali Haider and Mostaq Hasan Sattar addressed the press conference.

## He commits suicide for failing to marry fifth time

BARGUNA, May 12: Failing to marry for the fifth time, a day labourer has allegedly committed suicide at Amtali in the district, reports UNB.

Amtali thana sources said Mosharaf Hossain, the day labourer, earlier married four women of whom two divorced him knowing his penchant for polygamy.

His third wife, Shahinur, also stayed away for a long time living with her parents.

Mosharaf used to live with his fourth wife, Rahima, at her parent's house at the Amtali slum.

On Tuesday, he went to his village home and expressed his wish for a fifth wife. But getting no sympathy from the villagers, his parents and other relatives, Mosharaf took poison.

He was rushed to Amtali Health Complex, but died there at noon today.

## UNDP to help establish HR institute

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has agreed in principle to provide financial support to the government for setting up an independent Human Rights Institute in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

UNDP Resident Representative David Lockwood disclosed this in a meeting with Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru yesterday.

The main objective of the proposed institute is to impart training to police and other law enforcers on human rights and make them conscious about the issue, the Law Minister said.

He said the institute would play an important role in the backdrop of establishing a strong and neutral National Human Rights Commission.

## Breast clinic to have mammography machine

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) is going to install a mammography machine at its newly established breast clinic soon to accurately diagnose breast cancer, reports BSS.

The university sources said the machine would enhance it is the facilities of the clinic. Set up a year ago, it is currently treating 15 to 20 patients a week, with the number is increasing fast.

The university has been running the clinic since August last year at its outdoor, university sources said.

The clinic was launched after the Institute of Postgraduate Medical Research (IPGMR) was turned into Medical University. A pool of surgery specialists, oncologists, radiologists, pathologists and other specialised doctors are treating patients at the clinic.

The clinic remains open on Wednesdays from 2:30 pm to 4 pm, the university sources said, adding that the poor are treated free.

## Some changes in administration

The government has made a number of important changes in the administration, said an official handout yesterday, reports UNB.

Retired Secretary M A Sayeed has been appointed Chairman of the Securities and Exchanges Commission on contract basis for three years.

The one-year contract