

What's on today

Workshop: A workshop on 'Gender Sensitivity: Main Way to Stop Repression on Women' will be held. Venue: Women's Voluntary Association (WVA). Time: 9:00 am.

Meeting: The regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dharamdigh will be held. Venue: Family Lounge, Dhaka Club Ltd. Time: 5:30 pm.

Competition: SOS Children's Village International will hold a song and dance competition for children as part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of SOS Children's Villages. Venue: SOS auditorium at 1, Shyamoli. Time: 4:30 pm.

Khaleda blames govt for destroying salt industry

As country's salt cultivators narrated their plight for a market glut, opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia blamed the government for destroying the industry as the rulers are least bothered about the people, reports UNB.

The government is importing salt although local production is higher than demand. As the country has become a safe haven for smugglers, salt is also being smuggled in, she said to the leaders of salt cultivators when they met her here Tuesday night.

Recalling her tenure when import of salt was prohibited and government used to buy all local output, Begum Zia blasted this government as the producers are not getting fair price and the prospective industry is in the lumps.

How a government that can't protect local salt and cultivators would run the country? the BNP chairperson asked seeking cooperation from the salt cultivators in her anti-government campaign. "No problem will be solved if present rulers remain in power."

She extended her all-out support to the 8-point demand of the Bangladesh Salt Cultivators Action Committee. Their demands include buying 50,000 metric tonnes of salt at Tk 100 per maund from the marginal cultivators in the current season.

The committee leaders informed Begum Zia that they got Tk 120 for per maund of non-refined salt during the BNP regime. "But now we are getting

only Tk 30 per maund while cost of production is Tk 60," they told her.

In this regard, they also informed that a one-kg packet of salt was available at Tk 10 when their per-maund selling price was Tk 120. But a one-kg packet now costs Tk 12 when legal and illegal foreign salt flooded the local markets.

Among the Committee leaders present were convenor Nazrul Islam advocate, general secretary MA Emran advocate and leaders Abul Kalam Azad, Shamsul Alam, advocate Sirajul Haq, Nurul Azam and Akter Kamal Chowdhury, Alamgir M Mahfuzullah Farid MP was also present.

Dhaka flood protection project in final phase

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak said yesterday that a master plan has been taken up to save Dhaka City from the menace of flood is now in the final phase, reports BSS.

Replying to ABM Abul Kashem (AL-Chittagong), the minister said after the devastating floods of 1987 a feasibility study (FAB-88) was conducted with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank on flood control of 260 square kilometres area of Dhaka Metropolitan City, its drainage and development of the environment.

Zillur says

Laws will be altered to make cooperatives more dynamic

Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Zillur Rahman yesterday said the cooperative laws will be reformed extensively to make the cooperative movement more dynamic and effective, reports BSS.

He said the reform was necessary for eradication of poverty, reduction of unemployment and economic emancipation of the people through cooperatives.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of a national workshop on "Reforms of cooperative laws" held at Hotel Sheraton in the city.

Representatives of different cooperative societies at the grassroots level and experts of different government and non-government organisations are participating in the two-day workshop jointly organised by the Ministry of Cooperatives, UNDP and International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The workshop was informed that the draft for reform of cooperative laws has already been prepared in consultation

with the representatives of cooperative societies and organisations all over the country and it would be placed before the Jatiya Sangsad soon along with the recommendations of the workshop.

Zillur Rahman said cooperatives have achieved remarkable success in all sectors including insurance, industries, agriculture, housing and transport. The proposals in the draft reform of the cooperative laws include increase of the term of the managing committees of the cooperative societies from three years to five years, formation of cooperative tribunals, giving more autonomy to the cooperative societies, increase of power of the general members of the societies and increasing the number of primary members of a society from 10 to 20.

President of Bangladesh National Cooperative Union Habibur Rahman Molla MP, Cooperative Secretary Ahab Ahmed, ILO Resident Director MA Hashim and UNDP Deputy Resident Representative Andrew also spoke.

JS budget debate

Analysing the budgetary proposals concerned, Khan showed that the finance minister, contrary to his claim that no fresh tax has been proposed, has designed to collect tk 2,650 crore from the pockets of down trodden people.

Khan also rejected the government claim of providing adequate protection to local industries. "In the last year of BNP rule, the total import was 20.2 per cent compared to the GDP. The amount in the current fiscal year is so high that you did not provide us with the figure. But the figure in FY 97-98 was 22.2 per cent," Khan said to Kibria. "Does it show any trend of protecting local industries?"

Refuting the government claim of 5.2 per cent GDP growth in the current fiscal year, the former state minister said that the rate was much higher than the predictions made by eminent local economists and regional as well as international financial institutions like Asian Development Bank and World Bank. The rate was even higher than the prediction made by the finance minister only a couple of months ago, he said.

"On top of all, how come the growth rate is 5.2 per cent in the previous year, the rate has fallen in 10 sectors out of 11 and some 5/6 sub-sectors in the current fiscal," Khan remarked. In support of his contention, Khan read out certain parts of the "Economic Survey" prepared by the Finance Ministry.

The BNP leader went on "GDP has increased in the fields of economic discipline, terrorist activities, oppression on the opposition activists and so on."

Khan also criticised the finance minister for his 'silence' over the possible GDP growth rate for fiscal 1999-2000 in his budget speech. "We understand why you have not projected the estimate. May be you have the motive of putting a figure later, suiting to your wish and political stance."

Earlier, Nurul Islam Nahid



Parbatya Gana Parishad central committee staged a rally in the city yesterday to press for implementation of 7-pt demand. — Star photo

Parliament passes lowest number of ordinances compared to past

In a bid to strengthen and uphold the image and authority of the Jatiya Sangsad as the nation's sole law framing institution, the lowest number of ordinances has been passed by the present parliament compared to the others in the past, reports BSS.

Parliament records said during the last three years four ordinances were placed in parliament which three were passed as legislative bills. However, the seventh parliament had passed 15 ordinances promulgated during the caretaker government.

On the other hand, during the first three years of the fifth parliament 97 legislative bills were passed of which 87 were ordinances. Forty-four of the ordinances were promulgated by the previous caretaker government.

According to the records, the seventh parliament had passed 68 bills for introducing new laws or amending the existing ones in the 12 sessions during the last three years. One of the remarkable bills was "Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill" which remained a blotch for long time for the nation. The seventh parliament also passed some basic laws like amendment of the "Securities and Exchange Commission Act" and reform of Bank-Company Act, Bankruptcy Act, reformation of

local Government (Union Parishad) Act to ensure direct election of female members to the local bodies and introduction of Awami Parishad.

For the first time the members of Parliament had the scope to scrutinise all the 68 bills which were passed during the 12 sessions of the 7th Parliament.

The parliamentary standing committee of the concerned ministries also scrutinised bills after vetting of the law ministry. Before the formation of the standing committees for different ministries a special committee carried out the responsibility of scrutinising the bills. The committee was formed by the parliament.

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru told BSS yesterday that the present government was determined to make the Jatiya Sangsad effective and give it an institutional shape. The present government was refraining from promulgating ordinances as per the election manifesto of Awami League in which it committed not to bypass parliament in the introduction of law.

To implement the Prime Minister's commitment to the nation no treasury bench bills are being passed without the scrutiny of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on different ministries. One of the four ordinances which were promulgated to in-

crease the time limit of the wage board for the journalists to re-fix their salary allowances. Though this ordinance was presented in Parliament but it was required to pass the ordinance in the form of bill to give it a permanent status. The other three ordinances were promulgated to defer the elections to three district councils of Hill Tracts when the talks were in progress to restore peace in CHT.

In the fifth parliament 119 bills were passed to introduce new laws out of which 93 were promulgated as president's ordinance which got legal effect before passed as bills.

Parliament secretariat source said excluding two bills for amending constitution, the lawmakers got no scope for examining any of the 172 bills presented to form the 11-member CDS committee during five year rule of BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party). According to the history of Jatiya Sangsad, the first parliament passed 154 bills the second 65, the third 39 and the fourth passed 142 bills.

The sixth parliament annexed the latest amendment to the constitution. This bill, a product of massive campaign of the former leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina for the establishment of a free and fair electoral system in Bangladesh, paved the way for a neutral caretaker government.

Political interference in CDS

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(CSE) was abroad at that time.

There was nothing official about it, just a phone call," said a source of CDS. "We were not even sent a letter, which the chairman is required to do. We were also not aware of the agenda. The meeting was called improperly violating all norms of a company."

But the sponsors came to know that the meeting was called to remove Chowdhury from the head of the organisation.

In the absence of the private sponsors, the decision was taken to replace Chowdhury with Khan, sources said.

However, members are now challenging the legality of the decision. They say that the Sonali Bank MD had no legal right to convene a meeting and no notices were given for that. Moreover, a requisition meeting was needed to remove the chairman.

"I was surprised to know the matter," said Samson H Chowdhury, member of the CDS. "The removal of the chairman was illegal. Removing the chairman is an important matter for which we should have been sent notices in advance. In my view, Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury was the right person to head this organisation."

DSE Chairman Rakibur Rahman who was present in the meeting told The Daily Star that he was there for a few minutes and did not know what happened. "If the board decides to remove him (Chowdhury),

what can we do?" he said. "But many point out that the DSE chairman had a hand in the matter who has close links with government."

Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury had been vocal about forming a CDS for a long time and he even brought a private members' bill in parliament in this regard as the government was cold shouldering the matter.

Later, the government also set up a CDS committee to study the subject and the issue was sent to the parliamentary standing committee. Chowdhury played a key role in fixing the modality of the CDS in both committees.

When the government brought a bill on CDS in parliament, this was passed.

According to sources, Chowdhury also scouted for sponsors and contacted the present members to form the 11-member CDS committee. He convinced the private members, while the governor of the Bangladesh Bank convinced the nationalised banks to participate in it.

However, the minutes of the first meeting held under the chairmanship of Sonali Bank MD M R Khan is yet to reach the members.

The private sector members now say that with such a treacherous decision, the CDS has lost all credibility and this has given a very wrong signal to investors.

"This should have been a private-sector led organisation to boost the share market," said a member of the CDS. "This re-

Australia-SA match

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that Australia handles the big game better than South Africa.

"Good teams have to play well under pressure — that's what makes a good team, winning the big points," he said. "I think we are putting it together at the right time now."

South Africa coach Bob Woolmer, who withdrew Tuesday as a potential candidate to replace David Lloyd as England coach, said his team would be more focussed at Edgbaston in a game where there was much more at stake.

"At Headingley we were 20 runs short and our fielding could have been better," he said. "It's a case of everyone concentrating on the job."

"We have played better than we did on Sunday. We never put them under pressure and we were beaten by a fantastic innings from Steve Waugh."

But his Australian counterpart Geoff Marsh said his three aspects of Australia's performance in the last match which could be dramatically improved, particularly the bowling after South Africa scored 88 runs in the last 10 overs.

Marsh, a member of Australia's 1987 World Champion team along with Steve Waugh and Tom Moody, said losing the last World Cup final to Sri Lanka after a come-from-be-

hind semifinal win over the West Indies would be enough motivation for his team.

"I think 1996 hurt a few of the guys," said Marsh. "So I don't think they'll be complacent at all."

The Australians, on a five-game winning roll, will face a strengthened South Africa team bolstered by the expected return of allrounder Jacques Kallis. The Proteas possess the four leading allrounders in the tournament, with Lance Klusener in peak form with the bat and the ball, plus Shaun Pollock. Kallis and skipper Hansie Cronje.

The bonus for Australia is the runcoring form of the Waugh twins Mark and Steve, the return to form of leg-spinner Shane Warne — a big game player according to Marsh — and the fact that fast bowler Glenn McGrath is overdue to take wickets.

"(Warne) was down for a couple of games there, but he's a champion bowler and in big games they normally come through," Marsh said.

McGrath propelled Australia into the second stage with a devastating five-wicket haul against the West Indies in a make-or-break match at Old Trafford. He said that, after a slower than expected start, the Australians were starting to peak at the right time.

US Action Plan

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formulated by then. At that time, three agreements were signed relating to US Trade and Development Agency programmes. These involved a total of over 880,000 dollars of assistance to Bangladesh.

The first of the three Energy Data Exchange Agreement between the US and Bangladesh. It will facilitate exchange of energy information and development designed to improve collection of energy data for Bangladesh.

The second one is an agreement for gas utilisation study, signed between the Energy Ministry and James Chemical Engineering. The study will examine a wide range of priority projects and investment options for development of the country's natural gas reserves.

The third one is a grant agreement to provide technical, legal and financial support to Bangladesh to implement the strategically important Western Region Integrated Project (WRIP) or Unocal.

The WRIP proposes integrated development of gas resources in south-western region of the country, centring on the Shahbazpur gas field. It includes gas development, construction of a gas transmission pipeline and construction of four power plants to generate 400 Mw of power.

HC verdict

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sel of the writ petitioner. The other judges were Justice Latiur Rahman, Justice Bimalendu Bikash Roy Chowdhury and Justice AM Mahmudur Rahman.

A Division Bench of the High Court on March 21 in a verdict, following a writ petition by Advocate Idrisur Rahman declared the appointment of Shahiduddin Ahmed as CMM illegal. The court further observed that the subsequent appointments and postings of the CMMs, Dhaka were made in flagrant violation of the mandatory provisions under Article 116 of the Constitution.

Shahiduddin Ahmed was appointed on February 26, 1992 and two CMMs were appointed successively after the transfer of the respective predecessors. The Court also observed that the President of the Republic should frame rules regarding the appointment of Magistrates exercising judicial function in accordance with the provision of the Constitution.

The present government filed the application seeking appeal against the High Court Judgement. The Supreme Court, after hearing the application, finally dismissed it upholding the High Court judgement.

Attorney General Mahmudul Islam moved for the government to withdraw the writ petitioner.

Journalism

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but there is no alternative to authentic journalism, he observed.

Chief Editor of The Financial Express Rezauddin Ahmed said journalists have now become weak because of their division. He said a clear political division among the journalists surfaced after 1975. "Each and every profession in the society is now highly politicised and newspaper is not isolated from this politicisation."

Eminent journalist ABM Musa said the government will obviously use advertisement as a weapon if the newspapers depend on the government advertisement. He said the freedom of press has been curbed in many times as a section of journalists always supports the ruling party.

Prof Jashimuddin Ahmed said readers always expect authenticity from the newsmen and hoped that journalists would look into this matter seriously.

A number of senior journalists, lawyers and politicians also took part in the discussion.

Amnesty

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Dhaka street.

"The minister's son threatened to punish the three men and they were later arrested from their homes by police accompanied by relatives of the minister's son. While in custody the officer-in-charge of the police station, reportedly, allowed the elder son of the minister and two other armed men to enter the room where the three men were detained and beat them. In February the three men were released after the home minister withdrew the SPA detention order and dropped the charges," narrated the AI Annual Report.

The report dwelt on Rubel murder case briefly and said, "A judicial inquiry into the case confirmed that Shamim Reza's death was not accidental, although the full finding of the commission was not made public by the end of the year (1998)."

At least three cases of rape in custody by the security forces were reported in 1998, the AI report said, adding that there were no report of any police officer being tried or convicted of rape during the year.

Besides, the report also touched upon issues like the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) treaty implementation, Taslima Nasrin case, clashes between supporters of ruling and opposition parties, and Bangladesh's accession to some international human rights instruments.

Yasmin Sultana, vice president of AI Bangladesh Chapter and other office bearers were also present at the press conference.

Beyond the boundary

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while before Akhtar tore through his defences. It was a question of time before the Pakistanis could break through. Fittingly, it was Shoab Akhtar that made the crucial difference. The skipper gave him three spells and he picked up a wicket in each. The outcome of the match was determined by some searing pace from this young man, who had decided at the very outset that the day should belong to him. And so it certainly did.

Roger Twose and Stephen Fleming put up some semblance of resistance to suggest that the Kiwis were not ready to go down tamely. When Chris Cairns also chipped in with forty odd runs, the total reached some respectability. It was the highest total that Pakistan would need to score in the second innings of a match. Since the fate of their World Cup campaign hinged on achieving this total of 242 runs, even the bravest of punters could have been forgiven for hedging their bets. Pakistan did well with the ball, especially Akhtar Razaq and the captain himself. The fielding was atrocious and the 47 extras they gave was cause for concern. It was left to the batsmen now to ensure Pakistan's presence at Lord's.

To the horror of the Kiwis, and the utter and unmitigated surprise of all and sundry, Saeed Anwar and Wasti strung a partnership together, that all but made this match the most one-sided and foregone, as far as this competition was concerned. While Saeed Anwar, fresh from his exploits against Zimbabwe and with his wealth of experience at this level, was expected to perform in this match, it was his young batting partner, who was actually the revelation. Wasti has certainly been the find for Pakistan. He has a mature head on his young shoulders. Added to a compact defence and an ideal technique against the new ball, Wasti also has a temperament that com-

pensates for the maverick nature of the antics of the middle order. He was singularly unfortunate to have missed out on a hundred. Not so the old and seasoned pro Anwar, who dutifully and methodically chalked up his second consecutive ton. In the process, they totally shut New Zealand out of the match with a partnership of 194.

Pakistan then coasted at leisure for a place in the final, far easily than they themselves had surmised several hours earlier. New Zealand paid heavily for having an attack that was too thinly spread. Medium pace bowling on a good batting track is not really the recipe for cooking up an upset. Geoff Allott was the quickest of the Kiwis, but even that was not good enough to test the determined and water-tight technical expertise of the Pakistani opening pair. The rest of the bowling was pedestrian and with Allott unable to make the early breakthrough, the New Zealanders were resigned to accept the inevitable.

It was an absorbing contest in as much as the target was concerned. The outcome was never in doubt once the Pakistanis got past the first twenty overs without losing a wicket. Old Trafford was not quite expecting an anti climax today. The legs of Pakistani fans would have not had it any other way. Wasim Akram was a more than pleasantly surprised man himself.

Today's combatants would do well to keep in mind the new found resurgence of the Pakistani side. They have stamped their mark on this World Cup in no uncertain manner and would like nothing better than to lift the trophy for the second time. While it is even more concerning for the remaining finalist is that this Pakistani side has the necessary self belief to carry out their threat.

Once again, my predictions came wrong. I had merely thought Pakistan just might make it. Oh well, we live and learn.

Mandela retires

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Africa and will obey, observe, uphold and maintain the Constitution and all other law of the Republic," he said.

After Mbeki had raised his hand and said "So Help Me God", Mandela, 80, got up from his high-backed wooden chair and, with a broad grin, offered it to his successor.

Mbeki, his voice cracking with influenza, began his presidency with a poetic appeal for concern for South Africa's poor and a call to unity in the country divided for centuries by often brutal segregation that became known as apartheid.

"Our nights cannot but be nights of nightmares while millions of our people live in conditions of degrading poverty. The ceremony on the 23rd anniversary of the biggest black uprising against white rule marked Mandela's retirement one month ahead of his 81st birthday."

Officials said Mandela and his wife, Graca Machel, widow of Mozambican President Samora Machel, would leave immediately for a short holiday in an undisclosed foreign country.

Gaddafi and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat were among foreign leaders who attended the ceremony to say farewell to Mandela, the political prisoner turned president who won the hearts of millions at home and abroad.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad led a two-member Bangladesh delegation to the ceremony.

Samad Azad handed over two sets of letters to President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to President Mbeki and Mandela.

Mandela was the face of South Africa's freedom struggle around the world and his magnanimity towards former white-minority rulers earned him a moral authority challenged by few.

He shared the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize with former President F W de Klerk, who surrendered white rule after more

than three centuries, and his name has been attached to streets, bridges, parks, flowers and even a molecule.

Mandela steered the negotiations with former white-minority rulers to draft a new constitution that could unite all South Africans — which the ANC could have amended if it had won just one seat more in its landslide election victory.

A recent meeting with foreign journalists, Mandela told them: "I have in a small way done my duty to my country and my people."

"I welcome the possibility of revelling in obscurity as I am going to do when I step down," he said.

Mandela spent a total of 18 years at the Robben Island penal colony for opposing white-minority rule before being moved to mainland prisons prior to his release in February 1990.

Pakistan beat NZ

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the brilliant but unpredictable Pakistanis.

But the left-handed Anwar, who finished with 113 and right-handed Wasti began the run chase as if they had an urgent evening appointment to keep.

Nash went for 26 off his first four overs as Anwar smacked him for a string of boundaries.

Wasti, after a slow start, hit consecutive boundaries off Allott's fourth and fifth overs, his trademark shot a front-foot square drive.

After scoring just one of the first 21 runs to come off the bat, he reached his half-century in 84 balls as 107 came up in the first 25 overs.

Next over, Anwar joined him, celebrating his 50 with an extra-cover boundary off Nathan Astle.

Wasti's 84 contained 10 fours and one six off 122 balls. Anwar hit eight boundaries. New Zealand's innings had contained no such fireworks, their fragile top order failing to fire yet again.

Roger Twose, with 46, and skipper Stephen Fleming, with 41, managed to re-build the innings after it had slumped to 58 for three.

But neither they nor allrounder Chris Cairns, coming in at number six and cracking an unbeaten 44 off 48 balls at the end, could go on to make a major score.

Significantly, the highest individual score of the innings came from the 47 extras conceded by Pakistan.

The 23-year-old Akhtar, whose quickest delivery was recorded at 94 miles per hour, was Pakistan's enforcer.

Opener Matt Horne edged two streaky fours off his over gully and slip, with another boundary coming off a bounce that also cleared wicket-keeper Moin Khan, before Akhtar began to make his mark.

He had three spells and took a wicket each time, never allowing New Zealand's batsmen to settle. Akhtar was later adjudged man-of-the-match.

SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN: S Anwar not out 113 W Wasti c Fleming b Cairns 84 I Ahmed not out 33 Extras (lb, w, nb) 47 Total (for 1 wicket, 47.3 overs) 242

Fall of wickets: 1-194

Did not bat: Inzamam-ul-Haq, Abdul Razaq, Moin Khan, Wasim Akram, Azhar Mahmood, Saqlain Mushtaq, Shahid Afridi, Shoab Akhtar

Bowling: O M R W Allott 9 0 41 0 Nash 5 0 34 0 Larsen 10 0 40 0 Cairns 6 0 33 1 Harris 6 0 33 0 Astle 7.3 0 41 0 McMillan 2 0 19 0

CMC vehicles remain mostly inoperative

From Our Correspondent CHITTAGONG, June 16: All the vehicles of Chittagong Medical College Hospital including staff cars and even ambulances have remained non-operational for the last five days resulting in utter disappointment among the patients as well as physicians and other staff members.

Movement of these vehicles has to be suspended due to lack of fuel. The authority has failed to solve this problem.

When contacted, the director of the hospital who has taken over only this week said that the crisis arose as the fund allocated in this regard has already been exhausted. He said that the problem could have turned worse three months back had the supply of fuel not been balanced.

The medical vehicles have been stopped as the petrol pumps refuse to sell fuel on balance any longer.

As such the hospital authority has failed to provide emergency patients with ambulances and cars.