

## AL golden jubilee celebrations begin

## PM pledges to eradicate poverty

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday promised to eradicate poverty and achieve economic progress for building a self-reliant Bangladesh, reports UNB.

"My mission is to ensure food and other basic needs of the people," she told Parliament on the occasion of the golden jubilee of Awami League.

Hasina said democracy must be strengthened for a strong base of economy and for that "we want to make Parliament more effective."

The golden jubilee celebration of Awami League coincides with the completion of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's three years in office.

Referring to her assumption of power on June 23, 1996, Hasina said that after overcoming many odds and obstacles, Awami League got electoral mandate to serve the cause of

deprived people.

"In last three years we have resolved many long standing social issues, including the sharing of the Ganges water with India and restoring peace in the CHT," she said.

Besides, she added, her government ensured people's voting rights and change power through ballot.

"The most important thing we have done is the scrapping of the infamous Indemnity Ordinance," the Prime Minister said, clearing the way for the trial of the self-confessed killers of Bangabandhu and restoration of rule of law.

She said: "People now believe that one day the court's verdict against the killers would be executed."

On the post-'75 politics, Hasina said state power was kept confined in the canton-

ment from 1975-96, but the Awami League had returned people's power to the people through a long drawn struggle.

She said Bangabandhu took steps to achieve economic freedom of the people by reconstructing the war-ravaged country. The country's constitution was framed within nine months.

But she deplored that 28 years have passed since independence, the country could not make any real progress.

The Prime Minister, who looked confident, expressed her firm optimism that the country would attain its economic emancipation and emerge as golden Bangladesh.

She sought people's blessings to steer the nation towards its cherished goal.

Briefly narrating the chequered history of Awami

League, Hasina said the party was floated on June 23, 1949 under the leadership of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani and Shamsul Huq.

And that Awami League led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman traversed a long way on the Bengali's struggle for freedom and finally, led the nation to independence in 1971, she said.

There are a few instances in the world of a political party that could observe its 50th founding anniversary, she added.

The Prime Minister recalled the great contributions of Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Qamruzzaman and Mansur Ali who led the liberation war at the directive of Bangabandhu and also of innumerable martyrs who sacrificed their lives for democracy and independence.

## Publishers' Assoc demands cancellation of tender notice

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Book Sellers' and Publishers' Association (BBSA) yesterday threatened to boycott the invitation of tender for printing textbooks if the government fails to streamline the tender process and revive the previous procedure for publishing and distributing books for secondary level students.

Demanding cancellation of the tender called for publishing book for the year 2000, BBSA leaders also demanded punishment of those officials of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) who were responsible for creating "illegal buffer stock," causing a huge loss to the government exchequer.

Addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club, the BBSA leaders cited several "vagueness" in the tender notice published in the newspapers recently. "Publishers are not being able to participate in the tender due to vagueness in it," they said.

The tender did not mention the break-up of number of books for each subject and it also failed to mention the price of newspaper required for publishing of the books," the leaders said.

Among others, BBSA president Kazi Mosharraf Hossain, secretary general Mohammad Abu Taher and member secretary Shah Alam spoke on the occasion.

## JCD observes Sumon's death anniversary

By DU Correspondent

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of opposition BNP, brought out a mourning procession in the city yesterday to mark the third death anniversary of its leader Jafar Ullah Sumon.

Starting from the Dhaka University campus in the morning, the mourning procession ended in front of the National Press Club where the JCD held a rally.

Addressing the rally the JCD leaders threatened to launch a vigorous street movement against the Awami League government if they failed to stop its repression on opposition.

They said that the AL government began their repressive activities with the killing of JCD leader Sumon in Sonapur of Noakhali three years ago. They urged the government to stop such "undemocratic" activities immediately.

Activists of JCD will also stage a demonstration in the city today to protest the national budget for the fiscal 1999-2000.

Presided over by JCD president Habib-un-Nabi Sohel and leaders Nasiruddin Ahmed Pinto, Tarikul Islam Bani, Rafiq Sikder, Sagor Ahmed, A B M Mosharraf Hossain and Manir Hossain addressed the rally.

## ROK envoy calls on Yusuf

South Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Tae Kyu Han called on Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf at his office yesterday, reports UNB.

During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to mutual interest. Han also discussed the management and formal inauguration of a hospital established at Savar with financial assistance from South Korea.



Bangladesh Restaurant Malik Samity brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding withdrawal of VAT imposed on them under the new tax regulations.



Prime Minister and President of Bangladesh Awami League Sheikh Hasina presenting crest to former Indian Prime Minister I K Gujral during the golden jubilee celebrations of Awami League yesterday (top), and artistes performing dance to mark the occasion (above).

## Khaleda visits ailing Justice

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia visited ailing Justice Latifur Rahman in Suhrawardy Hospital yesterday evening, reports UNB.

Now a judge of the supreme Court, Justice Latifur Rahman is likely to head the caretaker government as he is supposed to retire as Chief Justice shortly before expiry of term of the present government in June 2001.

According to the law, immediate past Chief Justice should head the caretaker government and hold general elections.

Begum Zia also visited BNP Treasurer Shah Alam who is undergoing treatment in the same hospital.

## Bangabandhu Bridge Tk 55.17 cr tolls realised so far

Tk 55.17 crore was realised as tolls since the operation of Bangabandhu Bridge started in June last year, reports UNB.

Communication Ministers Anwar Hossain gave the figure in Parliament yesterday replying to M Fazlul Azim (BNP-Noakhali).

In reply to Sarwar Jamal Nizam (BNP-Chittagong), he said air-condition facility would be provided shortly in the newly introduced Subarna Express train on Dhaka-Chittagong route.

The minister told Alamgir Haider Khan (BNP-Chandpur) that several steps were already taken to reduce the loss in Bangladesh Railway.

The steps include improving passenger services, leasing out commercial part of a few trains to the highest bidders, provide "on-board service" in inter-city trains, leasing fibre optic telecommunication of railway to the private sector and introducing commuter trains.



SOS Children's Village, Bangladesh brought out a rally from Shishu Academy yesterday to mark the golden jubilee of SOS Children's Village International.

## CPB observes Demand Day

By Staff Correspondent

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday observed "Demand Day" across the country.

The slogan of the day was "We don't want economy of loot and anti-people budget... we want economy with the spirit of Liberation War."

As part of the central programme, the city unit of CPB organised a rally at Mukhtang in the afternoon with Ashraf Hossain Ashu in the chair. It was addressed, among others, by CPB general secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, city leaders Mahbub Alam, Mahbubul Haq Ripon and Dilip Bepari.

The CPB general secretary in his speech said the present Awami League is not following the economic philosophy of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib instead Sheikh Hasina is running the country by following the policy of Khandaker Mush-taq.

He further said that the Awami League government is also following the economic policy of the previous Jatiya Party and BNP governments.

Mujahidul Islam Selim said the economy which now exists in the country is contrary to the spirit of the Liberation War.

He demanded immediate amendment of the proposed budget and urged a welfare-oriented national budget which would truly help the poor people of the country.

After the rally, leaders and activists of the party brought out a procession and paraded different streets.

Meanwhile, general secretary of Communist Party of India A B Bardhan visited the CPB office yesterday morning and held a discussion with its leaders.

During the nearly two hour long meeting, the discussed various regional and international issues.



Fazle Hasan Abed, Executive Director BRAC, receiving Bangladesh-made arsenic field test kits and refills from UNICEF representative Shahida Azfar.

## What's on today....

**Conference:** The 'World Bengali Personality Conference' will be held. National Personality Awards and National Yearly Awards will be presented during the programme. Chief guest: Abdus Samad Azad, Foreign Minister. Venue: Main auditorium, National Museum, Shahbag. Time: 4.30 pm.

**Memorial Lecture:** Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee will hold "Jahanara Imam Memorial speech" to mark the 5th death anniversary of Jahanara Imam. Venue: TSC seminar room at DU. Time 4.30 pm.

**Meeting:** The regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhannond will be held. Venue: Family Lounge of Dhaka Club Ltd. Time: 5.30 pm.

**Founding anniversary:** A variety show will be held to mark the 6th founding anniversary of Natyadhara. "Ag-nijol" will be staged after the variety programme. Venue: Guide House auditorium. Time: 5.00 pm and 7.00 pm respectively.

**Closing ceremony:** The closing ceremony of the ninth year long certificate course of Theatre School will be held. Venue: Mahila Samity auditorium. Time: 7.00 pm.



Fazle Hasan Abed, Executive Director BRAC, receiving Bangladesh-made arsenic field test kits and refills from UNICEF representative Shahida Azfar.

## UNICEF-BRAC joint research project at Sonargaon

A community based action research programme for arsenic mitigation has been signed between UNICEF and BRAC recently, reports UNB.

Supported by UNICEF, the programme is being implemented in Sonargaon thana of Narayanganj and Jhikargachha thana of Jessore as part of an integrated action research initiative worth 500,000 US dollars.

The programme will cover 500 villages in four thanas under the overall guidance of Research and Development Committee of the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), said a UNICEF press release yesterday.

The programme is aimed at building capacity of the community and to undertake activities that will lead to comprehensive, sustainable and com-

munity-based solutions for arsenic contamination.

It will test tubewells and identify, select and install alternative water supply sources depending on feasibility and sustainability.

Among the options to be considered will be the community based pond sand filter which taps surface water as a source of drinking water as well as rain water harvesting systems which make use of rain water at the household level.

Locally manufactured field kits have been procured by UNICEF and handed over to BRAC to facilitate testing of tubewells.

UNICEF has procured some 150 kits and 200 refills from General Pharmaceuticals. A complete kit can perform 50 tests while a refill can perform 100 tests.

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