



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited the Oxford Centre, a Bangladesh Festival venue, in the United Kingdom on Tuesday.

— PID photo

## 36 projects for dev of cultural infrastructure undertaken

The government has undertaken 36 projects for the development of cultural infrastructure in the country, reports UNB.

Various departments under the Cultural Affairs Ministry are implementing these projects.

A review meeting on these development projects was held yesterday at the conference room of the ministry with State Minister of Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader in the chair.

The Minister expressed satisfaction over the progress of the implementation work.

The meeting was informed that the construction works of national music and dance centre and national drama centre are going on.

Besides, the implementation of the projects are going on regarding setting up of a museum at Mymensingh to preserve the works of Shilpacharya Joyntu Abedin and a centre at Nabakumar Institute in Dhaka to preserve the memories of martyr Matiur Rahman.

Works are also going on at Tongipara to construct a complex at the mazar of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, another complex at Mujibnagar to preserve the memories of the liberation war and a memorial centre at Pairabanda in Rangpur district to preserve the memory of Begum Rokeya.

Secretary-in-charge of the ministry, Director Generals of Bangla Academy, National Museum, Shilpacharya and concerned high officials were present at the review meeting.

## Make hartal a success: JCD reject it: BCL

By DU Correspondent

BNP backed student organisation Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and ruling party's student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday brought out pro-hartal and anti-hartal processions respectively on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

In support of today's opposition sponsored dawn-to-dusk hartal across the country, JCD also held a rally in front of the DUCSU building at noon.

Addressing the rally, JCD leaders protested the proposed National Budget for 1999-2000 fiscal year and said that the government have placed an 'anti-people' budget.

They urged the country-men and all JCD activists to resist the budget by making the hartal a success.

They also condemned the robbery in the house of Dr Ershadul Bari, Dean of Law Faculty of the Dhaka University, on Tuesday small hours.

Presided over by Manir Hossain, the rally was addressed among others by Monjur Elahi, Nuruzzaman, Sultan Salauddin Tuku and Asaduzzaman Asad.

Beside protesting the hartal, BCL held a rally at the Aparajeyo Bangla on the campus at noon.

At the rally, BCL leaders blamed the opposition for creating unrest in the country in the name of hartals and democratic rights.

## DU MA students ransack dean's office

By DU Correspondent

A section of masters final year examinees of the Dhaka University yesterday ransacked the window panes and flower tubs of the Dean's office at the Arts Faculty, demanding rescheduling of their examinations.

The students, under the banner of Sadharan Chhatra-Chhatra Brindo' (general students) gathered in front of the dean office at around 12 noon and went on rampage at the university authorities did not give any decision in their favour.

The masters final examination is scheduled to begin from early next month.

The students demanded rescheduling of the examinations by at least one month so that they can prepare properly. The students have been demonstrating in support of their demand for the last few days.

## Hasina says Irish problem to be resolved soon under Blair's leadership

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has expressed her firm optimism that the peace process in Ireland initiated by British Prime Minister Tony Blair would be successful, according to a message received here, reports BSS.

Sheikh Hasina, who came to Oxford from London to address a function at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies on 'Bangladesh looks to the 1st century' was replying to questions after the speech. She invited questions from among the audience to which the crowd responded spontaneously.

The Prime Minister was asked whether Bangladesh could play a role in the Irish crisis, in the backdrop of her efforts to solve the long-standing CHT problem in Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina said the nature of problem varied from place to place. She called for spreading education across the country and make the people aware of the menace of population boom.

She said the literacy rate now stood at 56 per cent from 47. "Now we can say that more than fifty per cent of our population are literate."

The function was also addressed by Andrew Smith, Minister for Education and Employment and Director of the Centre Dr Farhan Nizami.

Welcoming the Bangladeshi leader, Dr Nizami explained the activities of the Centre. He said students from 12 different countries have been studying in the centre.

Andrew Smith wished that Bangladesh would be able to march ahead on the path of progress and prosperity under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina. He hoped that Bangladesh would be able to meet the challenges of the new century.

Asked how could she solve the problem of large-scale brain drain from Bangladesh as many talented students had left the country for higher studies and never returned. She said

The Prime Minister later went around the Centre and signed the visitor's book. She also attended a dinner hosted by the Oxford Centre for Islamic studies.

— Star photo



Rickshaw Sramik League brought out an anti-hartal procession in the city yesterday.

## Ctg hartal

From Page 1

All kinds of vehicle except rickshaws were off the roads during the hartal.

City's road links with rest of the country was snapped, but Train service and flight operation were as usual, officials concerned said.

Most of the shops and offices remained closed.

Activities at the Chittagong port were also hampered due to hartal, port sources said.

Hundreds of BCL activists staged demonstrations in the city and rallies held in Anderkilla-crossing, New Market crossing and Probartak areas.

At the rallies, the hartal supporters demanded immediate release of Nasir.

Otherwise, they threatened to go for a massive agitation programme soon.

## Gangrape

From Page 1

Local people rescued the victim from the slum and sent her to the hospital yesterday morning. Doctors said her condition was improving.

The sources quoting the victim said that she had lost her parents during the 1988 floods. She was living with one Alaudin at Joydevpur, but she was forced to leave the house.

Later, she started living with Ziarul at Ramma Park Staff Quarters. Ziarul takes care of horses at Rajarbagh Police Lines.

When contacted, Khilgaon thana duty officer said last night that they had not heard about the incident while Ramma thana police said that an officer had gone to the place of occurrence.

None was arrested till filling of this report late last night.

## Kibria

From Page 1

But, he said the government would reach some sort of understanding with them.

Road links between the capital and several northern districts remained cut late Wednesday because of a transport strike against the tax measures.

The minister justified tax measures by saying the budget was prepared under the 'shadow' of last year's floods, the worst in a century, and there was a need for raising revenue collection.

The government spent 16.6 billion taka (332 million dollars) in deficit financing during the last fiscal year because of the flood and if that is criticised, do you mean to say that we let people go hungry?"

Defending the recent purchase of Mig-29s, he said: "If one does not want to have an airforce, army or navy then I don't agree with them."

He brushed aside any lack of transparency in the deal.

Kibria said the Mig purchase will not strain ties with the United States despite Washington's criticism of the deal.

"The relations between Dhaka and Washington will not be strained by the purchase of the Migs," he assured.

"In fact I had long talks with US ambassador John C Holzman this week and the topic never came up," he said.

— Star photo

## Ctg customs earn record revenue of Tk 1286 cr

CHITTAGONG, July 7: Customs, Excise and VAT Commissioner of Chittagong earned an all time record revenue of Tk 1286.49 crore during the last fiscal (1998-1999), reports BSS.

The Commissionerate earned the revenue out of its internal resources (VAT, excise duty, supplementary duty surcharge and turn over tax) with a surplus of Tk 3.99 crore during the fiscal against the targeted amount. The earnings was Tk 93.08 crore higher than that of the corresponding period of the previous fiscal (1997-1998), said Commissioner of Chittagong Customs Mohammad Shahiduzzaman Hossain in a crowded press conference in the Commissionerate's Conference Room here this afternoon.

The Commissioner said in the fiscal 1996-97 and 1997-98 revenue collection from the above sources was Tk 1173.36 crore and Tk 1193.41 crore respectively, against targeted amount of Tk 1171.03 crore and 1373.30 crore with a growth rate of 10.82 per cent and 1.71 per cent respectively.

But in the last fiscal the target was enhanced by Tk 89.09 crore than that of the previous year's actual collection with a growth rate of 7.47 per cent, he said.

In spite of the various adverse situations like devastat-

## NGFF

From Page 1

area, they said.

The factory is also facing acute space problem in its godown due to stockpiling of the unsold fertilizers. The total storage capacity of NGFF is only 30,000 metric tonnes. The factory has 22,000 metric tonnes of fertilizer in its 11 rented godowns in northern and southern districts, stored under buffer stock programme.

The NGFF authorities recently took a number of steps to sell fertilizer in the northern and southern districts. But due to high transportation cost the factory is incurring a loss of Tk 400 on one ton of fertilizer, said a factory official. At present, Tk 900 is being spent for transporting one ton of fertilizer to those areas.

But only Tk 500 is charged from the dealers. Thus the factory is incurring an annual loss of about Tk 1.5 crore on this account only.

The demand for fertilizer in Sylhet region rises to over 10,000 tonnes per month during the peak season but it comes down to 2,000 during the lean period.

Previously, sugar mills, Tea Research Institute, Barendra Project and Rice Research Institute used to buy huge quantities of fertilizer from this factory. But now they have stopped buying fertilizer, the official informed.

## President assents to five bills

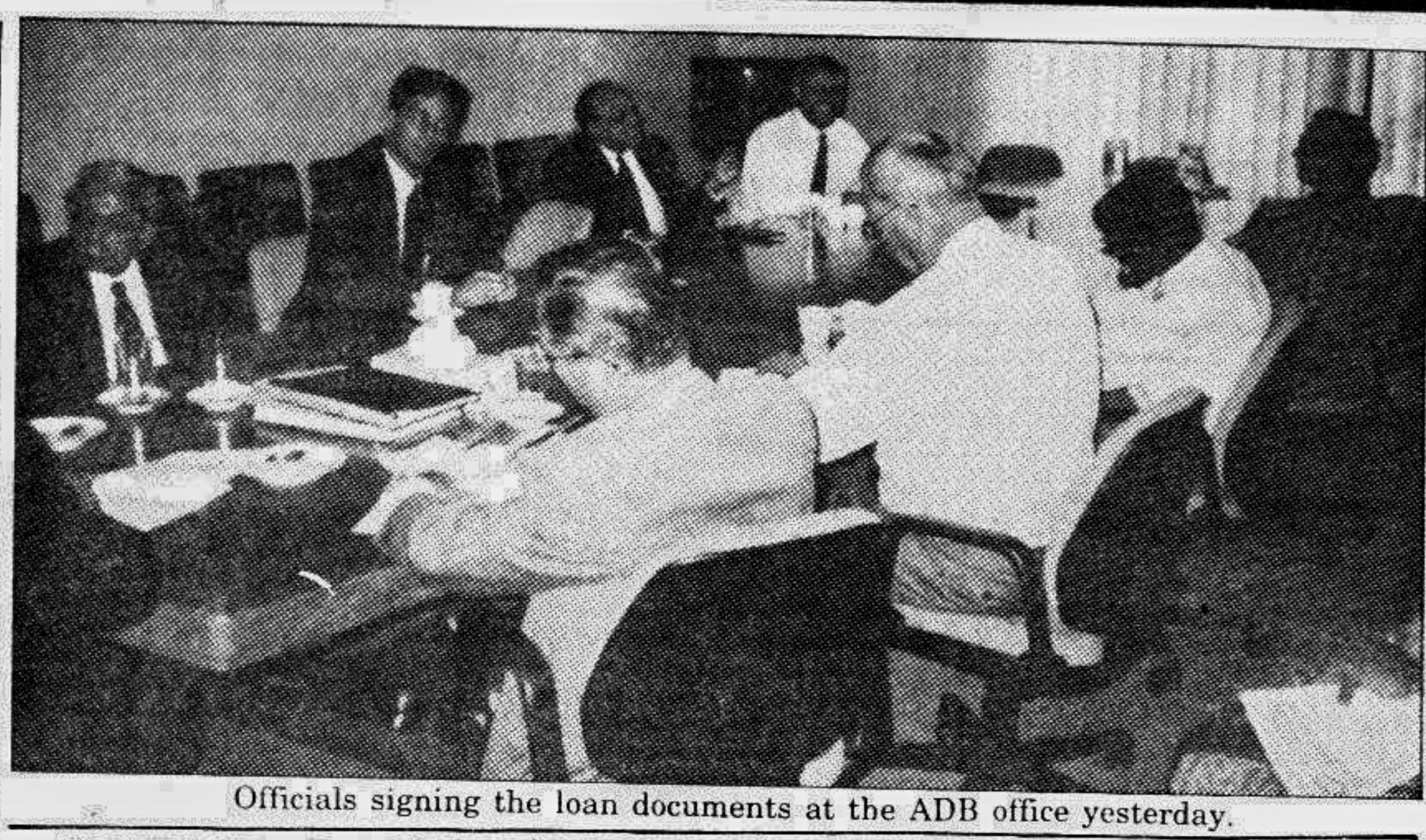
President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday assented to five bills passed in the current session of the 7th parliament, reports UNB.

The bills are The Dhaka City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1999; The Chittagong City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1999; The Rajshahi City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1999; The Khulna City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1999; and Upazila Parishad Amendment Bill, 1999, said an official handout.

Sadeque said that of the 6,132 MPO enlisted Madrasas, registration of only 126 Madrasas and some classes in 125 Madrasas were suspended for certain irregularities.

He said there are 6,847 Madrasas in the country with 1,26,058 teachers and employees. Of the total 1,12,447 MPO enlisted teachers and employees, allowances of only 1,047 were suspended, which is less than one per cent.

He said Tk 329 crore was spent on development of MPO listed madrasas in the last fiscal year.



Officials signing the loan documents at the ADB office yesterday.

## Weather

### Temperature may rise

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at many places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy falls at places over Barisal and Chittagong divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met office said day temperature may rise slightly over the country during the period.

The country's highest temperature 33.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Bogra and the lowest 23.9 degrees at Sandwip.

The sun sets in the city today at 6:50 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:17 am.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min	
Dhaka	30.3	26.4	86
Chittagong	30.0	24.5	87
Rajshahi	32.8	26.1	81
Khulna	31.0	24.6	90
Barisal	30.5	24.4	86
Sylhet	29.7	25.8	84
Cox's Bazar	29.0	24.5	100

— Star photo

## GrameenPhone signs agreement with IFC, ADB, CDC

GrameenPhone Limited, the largest mobile telephone operator in the country, has signed a 55 million US dollar financing package agreement with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) yesterday.

Immediately after the statement, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad stood up and took the floor, but the Chair did not allow him to speak.

Later, none from the ruling party sought the floor till adjournment of the House at 1:30 pm, yesterday.

## PM's tour

From Page 1

that comes from poor people of the country. The big team looks more like a pleasure party," said Major Hafiz, who is also one of the whips of the opposition BNP.

He said there are persons in the entourage who are bank debtors and own newspapers and news agencies but do not pay salaries to journalists and employees for several months.

These defaulters, who do not even repay the huge bank loan, have contributed a handsome amount of money to the "insignificant" Bangladesh festival only to please the prime minister.

Hafiz claimed that the expatriate Bangladeshis do not have any involvement with this festival and instead the event has created a negative reaction among them.

The BNP lawmaker called such an "insignificant" visit not only a waste of government money but it is also damaging the image of the country. "People cannot accept this type of picnic or attend any marriage ceremony of prime minister's close relation for which the poor people have to pay," he added.

Immediately after the statement, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad stood up and took the floor, but the Chair did not allow him to speak.

Later, none from the ruling party sought the floor till adjournment of the House at 1:30 pm, yesterday.