



Workers Party brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting rise in the price of essentials and the anti-people budget. — Star photo

Speakers at seminar on Rice & Media

Crop production has to be almost doubled

By Staff Correspondent

The country should formulate policies regarding agricultural production keeping in mind that as many as 60 million people will add to its 130 million population within next thirty years.

The speakers noted that crop production capacity has to be almost doubled using the same or even lesser amount of land and water to feed the new mouths in an already over populated country.

It is big challenge for such a small country 90 per cent arable land of which has already come under cultivation and there is hardly any chance of land expansion.

This was viewed at a seminar yesterday at the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) at Gazipur. Forum for Information Dissemination on Agriculture (FIDA) organised the seminar on 'Rice and Media' in collaboration of BRRI and International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

FIDA, a new forum of agro-journalists and experts, was also launched yesterday with the holding of its first programme, the 'Rice and Media' seminar.

Interim Deputy Director General for Research of IRRI, Dr Mahabub Hossain chaired the seminar while Dr Kwanchai A Gomez, Executive Officer of Asia Rice Foundation and Dr Z Karim, Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) spoke as special guests.

Five research papers were presented by Dr Farhad Jameel, BRRI Director (Research), Dr Mahiul Haque, Head of BRRI plant breeding division, and Dr

NH Chowdhury, BRRI Director (Administration), Dr Sadiqul Islam Bhuiyan, Bangladesh Representative of IRRI and Dr M Golam Rahman, the FIDA convenor.

Earlier, Director General of the BRRI MA Hamid Miah delivered welcome address while senior BRRI scientists, representatives from different agricultural organisations and journalists from leading newspapers and news agencies took part in the day-long seminar prior to a round-trip to BRRI laboratory and research facilities.

Potentials of available technologies and HYVs (high yielding varieties) had already been exhausted substantially, said they, adding that new initiatives were needed for frontier researches to catch up with challenges of the new millennium.

Both DR Mahabub and Dr Z Karim spoke of providing the resource-poor farmers with more price supports and observed that a bio-safety guidelines needed to promulgate for the sake of advance level agricultural researches.

In this backdrop the speakers

Female ward commissioners call on Zillur

A delegation of elected female ward commissioners of greater Mymensingh district on Sunday called on LGRD and Co-operatives Minister Zillur Rahman at his residence, reports BSS.

ers emphasised on free flow of information regarding every development in the agriculture sector particularly in rice production.

The also underscored the need for diversification of crop cultivation because rice was not an income generating crop. For diversification of agricultural production the rice cultivated land would have to be reduced without lessening the current level of rice production. Almost 80 per cent of agricultural land is devoted to rice production, they observed.

BRRI Director General informed the seminar that BRRI was at an advanced stage of developing a hybrid variety of rice and once it is released, potentials of rice cultivation would augur.

Renowned agriculture economist Mahbub Hossain said that Bangladesh achieve tremendous success in increasing food production over 20 million tones now from a mere 11 million tones immediate after the country's independence during the year 1971.

But challenge is big as the country's population is growing by 1.7 per cent annually. To feed this additional mouths the country will have to grow over 35 million tones of food every year, he said.

Dr Kwanchai A Gomez of Asia Rice Foundation told the seminar that all of the extra rice would have to be produced with lesser land and lesser water availability for irrigation. Urbanisation and industrialisation would take away their shares of land and water.

Aptech opens new centre at Eskaton

APTECH Computer Education, the flagship brand of Aptech Ltd. yesterday opened a new centre at Eskaton in city to expand its network for marketing the latest mode of learning, reports UNB.

The information technology centre was opened in joint collaboration with their business partner, Flora Systems Limited.

Addressing a press conference on the occasion, Mustafa Rafiqul Islam, Managing Director of Flora, said: "APTECH is set to revolutionise the field of IT in Bangladesh by offering a comprehensive and highly flexible range of computer courses."

He said that the new set-up would make computer education an exciting and rewarding experience for students and professionals.

Mustafa Nurul Islam, Chairman of Flora Systems, said the government had declared IT industry as a thrust sector and a lot of people were needed for this field.

"We did not get any financial help from the government and we do not want either," he said, "but we expect that the government would not be a barrier."

APTECH has ten centres operational in Dhaka and Chittagong. It has even more would be set up in all major parts of the country by the end 1999, they said.

Like the other centres, the new one will offer career-oriented programmes in software engineering, spanning over six months to three years and worth Tk 110 per hour.

The conference was also addressed, among others, by Farun Mitra, Country Operations Head of APTECH, and Rizwan Bin Faruq, Executive Director of Axiom Technologies.

Rathjatra of Dhamrai begins tomorrow

The famous Rathjatra festival of the historic Sri Sri Jashomadhava of Dhamrai begins tomorrow, reports BSS.

Home, Post and Tele-communication Minister Mohammad Nasim and State Minister for Religious Affairs Maulana Nurul Islam will be present on the occasion as chief guest and special guest respectively.

Srimanth Swami Akharamdaji Maharaja will inaugurate the festival while Major General (Retd) C R Dutta, Bir Udam, will preside over the function.

Joya Pati and Thakur Gopal Banik, president and general secretary of Sri Sri Jashomadhava Mandir Management Committee have invited all devotees and people irrespective of religion, caste and creed to attend the festival.

DUTA expresses concern

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) has expressed deep concern over the incident of dacoity at the house of Dr Ershadul Bari, Dean of Law Faculty, reports UNB.

A DUTA executive committee meeting on Sunday chaired by its president Dr AFM Yusuf Haider has urged the authorities to take necessary security measures on the campus.

DUTA also expressed concern over the threat on the life of sculptor and Professor of the Institute of Fine Arts, Shamim Sikder, and urged the university authorities and the government to take steps for her security.

Rajendra Kumar dead

BOMBAY, July 12: Rajendra Kumar, known as the 'king of romance' of Hindi cinema in the 1960s, died of a heart attack early Monday. He was 72, reports AP.

Beginning in 1957, Kumar counted at least 14 blockbuster hits in 23 years in the Bombay-based Hindi movie industry, which produces the world's largest number of films.

Kumar was admitted to a hospital in downtown Bombay 10 days ago after complaining of chest pain. His wife, son and two daughters were with him in hospital when he died.

He was cremated Monday.

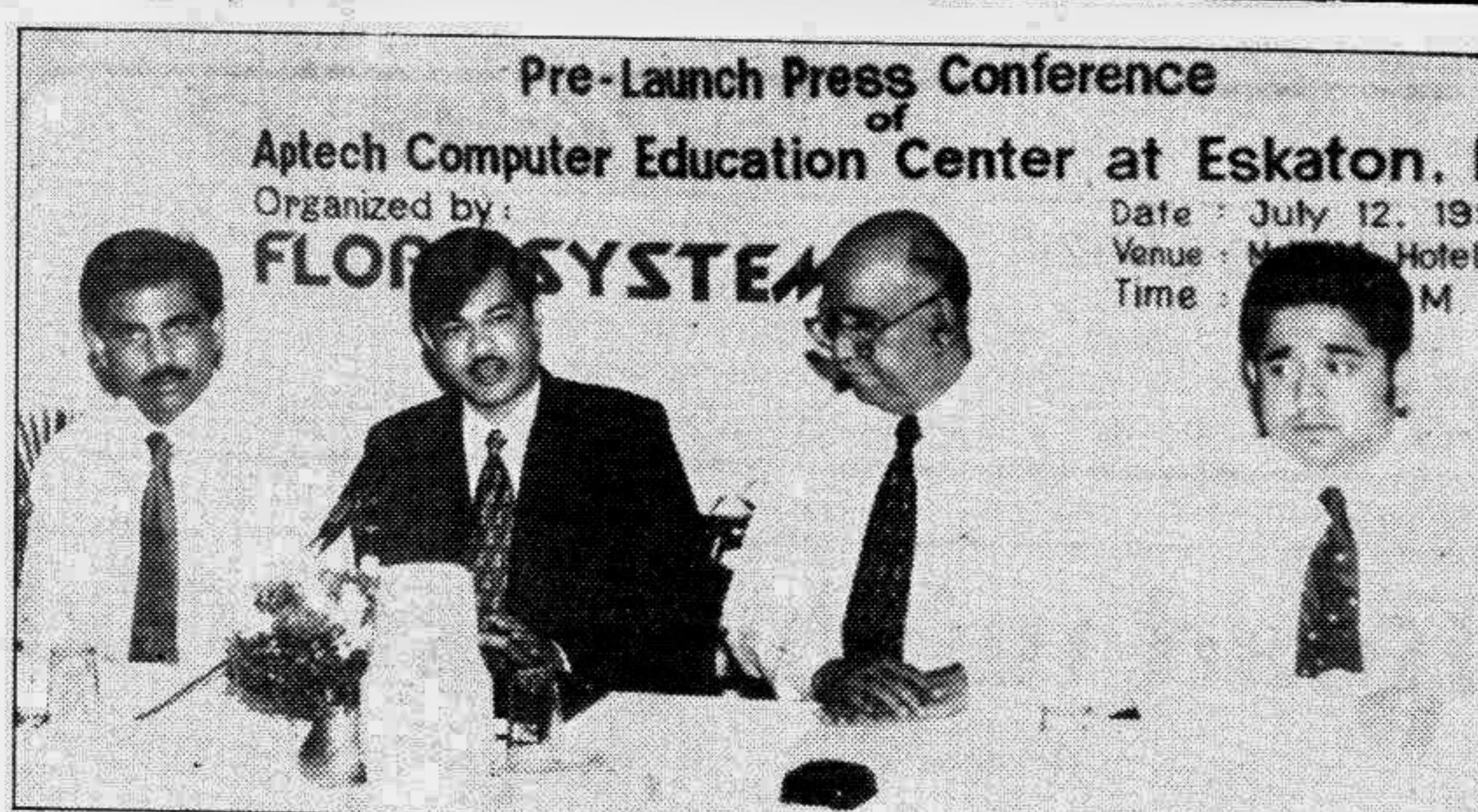
13,500 community clinics to be constructed in 4 years

A total of 13,500 new community clinics will be constructed in about four years from now as part of the government's five-year Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSPP) being implemented throughout the country, reports BSS.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare entrusted the responsibility of constructing a sizeable number of such community clinics in the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED).

The LGED will accomplish construction of these community clinics with its thana engineering set-up in tune with the government's decentralisation policy of development programme.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) to this effect was signed between Dr. Makhduma Nargis, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Monowar Hussain Chowdhury, Chief Engineer of the LGED yesterday. Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare M A Reza was present, among others, on the occasion.



Aptech Computer Education yesterday held a press conference at a city hotel yesterday to mark the opening of a new centre at Eskaton.

DU convocation on Aug 10 likely

'Modernisation of edn system needed to keep pace with times'

By DU Correspondent

Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, Vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, stressed the need for re-vamping educational and research programmes to keep pace with the fast changing world.

"Higher education, particularly the universities, has been facing a serious challenge all over the world in the last few years due to globalisation, internationalisation, free market economy and revolution of information technology. So we should revamp our current educational framework and go for pragmatic steps to cope with the changing world," said Prof Azad.

The VC was delivering a speech before the annual session of the DU Senate yesterday afternoon, which resumed after a 15-day recess, at the Senate Hall of the university. He also chaired the 104-member Senate, the highest policy making body of the university.

The VC said our another major task is fixing of the future work plans of DU to assimilate the university with the changes taking place in universities across the world.

Prof Chowdhury said that universities all over the world are now giving much priority to vocational education to fulfill the demands of time. Deviating

from the previous rigid structure, the VC said that the universities are now preferring education on a flexible line in its curriculum to meet the demands of the age.

The VC told the Senate that the DU authorities took various programmes to modernise its curriculum.

He said integration in academic field has reached such a level that in some universities there was no traditional department but they run their activities with some highly specialised laboratories. "If anyone is interested to be an expert on Cognitive Neuroscience he should have a vast knowledge on linguistics, expression style, computer literacy, composition of human brain and electronics."

He further told that an academic audit system would be introduced and academic calendar would be reintroduced to assure the accountability of teachers, researchers, officers and employees of the university. "Ground work for making a code of conduct for them has already started."

"We have been able to eliminate terrorism from the campus but the financial limitation is yet to be solved," he added.

The VC however admitted that the proposed budget was

very limited to carry out the education support activities in the university.

Responding to a question, the VC informed the Senate that the first ever convocation of DU after the independence would be held on August 10 and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen was expected to attend the ceremony as special guest of honour.

"We are working for the convocation and expect that we will be able to hold it on August 10," the VC said while replying to a question of Advocate Syed Ahmed. Prof Azad said that Amartya Sen had been invited to attend the function.

Taking part in the discussion, the Senate members stressed the need for immediate holding of DUCSU and hall union elections to bolster cultural activities of the university.

Among others, pro-VC Prof Shahadah Ali, Syed Badruddin Hossain, Advocate Sayed Ahmad, Prof M Akhteruzzaman, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Prof Khandakar Bazul Haq, Prof AKM Sirajul Islam Khan, Prof Ali MP, Prof Mostafa Chowdhury, Prof Sultana Shahi and Prof Yusuf Haider took part at the discussion.

Shell to drill

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JMC meeting. Petrobangla officials would visit Dubai and Singapore to see the rig and other drilling equipment and certify those before those are brought to Bangladesh.

The purpose of these visits was not to certify anything. It was a kind of vacationing for Petrobangla officials, he claimed. "However, as they could not make up their minds who would be making these trips, they did not go to Dubai or Singapore. Meanwhile, Cairn brought in the rig. This did not violate the agreement. Cairn chose not to wait as there was no legal compulsion to do so."

Cairn handed over its operatorship in blocks 15 and 16 to Shell on July 1. Shell now owns the assets, liabilities and oil-gas exploration work programmes of Cairn. Cairn remains a partner of Shell on 50 per cent equity basis in Bangladesh, the Shell official clarified. "It is not true that Cairn sold all its concerns in Bangladesh," he said.

Regarding the allegation that Cairn spent huge resources behind a lobbyist to obtain government's approval of transfer of its operatorship, the Shell official categorically denied bribery by any oil company concerned at any stage.

"Shell will never bribe anyone for any purpose. It strictly follows the principle of honesty and integrity. If any employee or contractor of Shell is involved in bribery, Shell will him or them."

"Shell was pursuing the transfer of operatorship for the last three months. So far my knowledge goes, Cairn did not bribe any one or provide funds to its lobbyist to bribe anyone," the official said.

Road march

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The planned road march, which will cover Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Netrokona, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Narasingdi and Narayanganj, also aims at mobilising public support for the opposition cause. Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Ojra Jote, key partners in the BNP-led alliance, are also due to organise similar marches. But they are yet to finalise destinations.

Besides the listed ones, other leaders and supporters of the main opposition party can also participate in the road march with their own transport and arrangement, according to a circular issued yesterday by BNP.

The participants in the campaign have been instructed to arrange food and transports. They have to enlist their names with BNP joint secretary general Abdullah Al Noman and give registration numbers of their vehicles to the same by July 20. Details of the road march will be announced later, the circular added.

To make the road march a success, BNP has constituted a number of sub-committees with party secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan as chief coordinator. Selima Rahman, a joint secretary of the party, will act as assistant coordinator. Mirza Abbas, Sadek Hossain Khoka, Amanullah Aman, ZA Khan and Hafizuddin Ahmed have been assigned to coordinate the three-day road march, and chalk out route, site for roadside rallies, formation of convoy and other activities.

"Fake" candidates caught at JU

By JU Correspondent
Some 21 fake candidates were caught red handed during the written test for admission into the Honours classes of Jahangirnagar University under the session 1998-99.

The 'fake' candidates were barred from taking part in the test and the candidates for whom they appeared in the examinations, will be punished, officials said.

Written tests in Geological sciences, Mathematics and Physics will be held in two shifts today.

Jhalakathi Foundation inaugurated

JHALAKATHI, July 12: Awami League Presidium Member Amir Hossain Amu today said his party believes in the welfare of people and the country, reports BSS.

Whether AL is in the power or not, the party will not be refrained from doing well-being of the people," he said while inaugurating the Jhalakathi Foundation — a socio-welfare organisation of the area.

Presided over by Jhalakathi Deputy Commissioner Bimal Kumar Kundu, the inaugural function was addressed, among others, by acting president of the district Awami League Betayet Hossain, General Secretary Advocate Fazul Huq, principal of the local government college Rustam Ali, local press club president Shamsul Islam Chand and the local Police super.

Shibchar Thana Samity to award scholarship

Shibchar Thana Samity Dhaka in its recent meeting has decided to award scholarships to meritorious students of the thana now studying at different educational institutions in the city, says a press release.

Students studying in medical colleges, BUET, universities and different colleges at graduate and post graduate levels will be given one scholarship. Interested students have been asked to collect scholarship forms from 60/D, Gulshan (South), Road No-131, Dhaka-1212 or contact phone number 601014 by July 30. The last date of submitting the scholarship form is August 10.

The decision in this regard was taken at a meeting of the executive committee of samity with the President Engineer Sayed Mosharrar Hossain.

The meeting was addressed among others by Mosleh Alam Chowdhury, Principal Mujibur Rahman, Lutfur Rahman and Sheikh Abdus Salam.

HDI: Bangladesh

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the 56th position, tops the list. It is followed by Thailand — 67th, Sri Lanka — 90th, the Maldives — 93rd, Indonesia — 105th, Vietnam — 110th, India — 132nd, Pakistan — 138th, Nepal — 144th and Bhutan — 145th position. China was ranked at the 98th position.

Canada with 16,525 US Dollars per capita GDP topped the human development list, followed by Norway with 27,620 dollars, the United States with 21,541 dollars, Japan with 25,084 dollars and Belgium with 16,809 dollars. Other rich countries on top of the list are Sweden — sixth, Australia — 7th, the Netherlands — 8th, Iceland — 9th, United Kingdom — 10th, France — 11th and Switzerland — 12th, the report said.

Potraying both the negative and positive aspects of globalisation, the report underlines the need of giving globalisation a human face and termed the results of the current globalisation process as "grotesque." Present trend of globalisation is causing dangerous polarisation between people and countries benefiting from the system and those that are merely passive recipients of its effect. The report says that the current pace of globalisation should be changed as it is dominated by the market bringing benefits for some and marginalising many.

Due to the current type of globalisation, people's lives are becoming less secure. Job insecurity is increasing, people feel culturally threatened by its predominant one-way flow and disparities are glaring, the report said.

A fifth of the world's population living in the highest income countries have 86 per cent of the world's GDP, 82 per cent of world export markets, 68 per cent of foreign direct investment and 74 per cent of telephone lines, it said.

The number of internet hosts rose in a decade from under 100,000 in 1988 to over 36 million in 1998. The income gap between the richest fifth of the world's people and the poorest fifth, measured by average national income per head, increased from 30 to one in 1960 to 74 to one in 1997. Industrialised countries hold 97 per cent of all patents, worldwide, the 200 richest people in the world more than doubled their net worth in the four years to 1998 to one trillion US dollars; women occupy more than 30 per cent of parliamentary seats in only five countries, in 31 they occupy fewer than five per cent, the report said.

The report stressed on a code of conduct for multinational corporations, establishment of independent Legal Aid Center and Ombudsman, international public program to fund the development of bio, information and communication technologies.

The report suggested establishing mechanisms in every country to coordinate policy on globalisation and a complete overhaul in governance.

Barisal AL leader dead

Tarun Dev, joint secretary of Barisal district Awami League, succumbed to stroke at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. He was 51, reports UNB.

He left behind his mother, two brothers and three sisters to mourn his death.

Hearing the news, Chief Whip Abul Hasanat Abdullah rushed to the hospital to pay last glimpse and stayed some time beside the body.

In a condolence message, the Chief Whip expressed his deep shock at the death of Tarun Dev. "The country lost a valiant freedom fighter and social worker at his death."

He prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Obituary



M. Abdur Rahman Bhuiyan, a senior cataloguer of the central library of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), died Sunday night at 2 am at the National Hospital in the city. He was 43, says a press release.

His nama-e-janana was held in front of Dr. MA Rashid Bhawan of BUET at 11 am yesterday. He was buried at his family graveyard at village Jangalia, PS Arhaihajar, Dist. Narayanganj. He left his wife and two sons.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Alhaj Lutfur Rahman Sikdar of Muradnagar Comilla will be held today after Asr prayers, says a press release.

A retired Air Force Officer, he served in then EPIDC's different industries like Khulna Shipyard, Mohini Mills (Kushtia), Mahimaganj Sugar Mill (Rangpur), Clinker and Cement Factory (Chittagong) and Chhatrak Clinker & Cement Factory (Sylhet) as Senior Officials. He is survived by his wife, five sons, three grand sons and five grand daughters.

Family members have requested his relative and friends to attend his qulkhwani to be held at his eldest son, renowned film-maker Badal Rahman's residence at 3G Eastern Housing Apartments (Near Ramna Police Station) at Sidheshwari.

8 resign from CA Student Council

Eight executives of Bangladesh CA Student Council have tendered their resignation for "autocratic, anti-organizational and anti-student activities" by its president, reports UNB.

Those tendered resignations are: Mohammad Yasin—Senior Vice President, M Nazmul Arefin Saju—Vice President, M Mamunur Rashid Mamun—General Secretary, Iqbal Rashedin Tarun and Ali Ahsan Bhuiyan—Joint Secretary, M Sahidul Bari Shahid—Student Welfare Secretary and Fatema Haq Zunu and M Mobarak Hossain—members, said a press release.

Action taken for presenting Rabindra Sangeet in distorted manner

The authorities have taken necessary actions against the concerned producer and artist for presenting "Rabindra Sangeet" in a distorted manner in a Band Show programme telecast by BTV on July 4, an official handout said yesterday, reports BSS.

Action has been taken immediately against the producer and the artist has been asked to explain reason for presenting the song in such a distorted manner.

The BTV asked all concerned to remain alert so that such incident does not occur in future.

Reception accorded to Aly Zaker

Ratanpur Unnayan Parishad, Dhaka accorded a reception to Aly Zaker who was awarded the Ekushey Padak at the Poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium of the National Museum at Shahbagh in the city recently, says a press release.

Secretary general of the organisation, Qazi Humayun Kabir, Dilara Harun MP, Asaduzzaman Nur, Sara Zaker, Gias Kamal Chowdhury, Abdul Kader and Kazi Shauddin Ahmed spoke on the occasion. The meeting was attended by large number of the inhabitants of village Ratanpur of B'Baria now residing in Dhaka and adjoining areas.



Andre Klap, Country Director, UNDP and UN Resident Coordinator Kiene Wierner seen at the launching of the Human Development Report commissioned by UNDP yesterday.



The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Local Government Engineering Department signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding construction of 13500 community health clinics. Dr Makhduma Nargis, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Monowar Hussain Chowdhury, Chief Engineer, LGED signed the MOU on behalf of their respective sides. Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare M A Reza was present, among others, during the signing ceremony.