

The newly-appointed High Commissioner of Pakistan Iqbal Ahmad Khan presented his credentials to President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday. — PID photo

## 'Use of GIS tech may help reduce havoc of disasters'

The use of remote sensing and GIS technology for advance flood preparedness will greatly reduce flood damages and tackle aftermath of flooding, reports UNB.

Noting with delight the benefits of advance technology, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman stressed the need for its application to reduce the havoc of the natural calamity.

The Minister was speaking at the inaugural session of a five-day training programme on 'Use of Remote Sensing and GIS technology in facing the flood and disaster' at LGED Bhaban in the city yesterday.

Some 21 officials from government and non-government organisations are taking part in the training. It was jointly organised by the Local Government Engineering Department and the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand under joint auspices of Japan National Space Development Agency and Japan Remote Sensing Technology Centre.

The Minister expressed hope that remote sensing and GIS technology will provide important information ahead of the calamity. Advance information will facilitate the authorities to take adequate steps for saving lives, lessen the damage to

crops and properties, help conduct relief operation and significantly reduce adverse impact on environment.

The inaugural session was informed that some 20 organisations were using the modern technology in Bangladesh and LGED was playing a key role in introducing GIS technology.

Chief of application centre of ATI Dr Lal Samarakon presented the keynote speech at the function.

Deputy Minister for LGRD Saber Hossain Chowdhury, former advisor of the caretaker government Zamilur Reza Chowdhury and LGED chief engineer Monwar Hossain also spoke.

Zillur Rahman has said that severe flooding often hinders social, economic development and to address this problem, policies must be responsive to the changing resource base.

Deputy Minister for LGRD Saber Hossain Chowdhury said, there is no other way to overcome the situation using latest technology that can yield much benefit for us.

In the keynote speech, Dr Lal Samarakon said, 'It is observed in most part of this region that there is poor understanding among policy-makers and experts working on GIS and remote sensing.'

'One of our objectives is to

bridge the gap between these two groups providing an environment to investigate the utilisation of GIS database and remote sensing data for flood mitigation works,' he added.

Chairing the function, secretary of ministry of water resources, Dr A T M Shamsul Huda Chowdhury said, 'Since 1980 flood we have achieved a tremendous success, both strategically and technically, to address flood but there is lack of coordination among the various related institutions.'

Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury emphasised the need for a national centre for GIS and remote sensing that will help refrain from a lot of duplication that is taking place in different agencies.

Chief Engineer of LGED Monwar Hossain Chowdhury said that GIS Unit of LGED has completed digitalisation of thana base map at 50,000 scale for the whole country which comprise of various layers including administrative boundaries, physical infrastructures, educational institutions, settlement pattern and other agricultural and socio-economic infrastructure.

Now these thana digital data set are being combined to produce district base map at 1:150,000 scales.

'One of our objectives is to

## Pak envoy presents credentials to President

Pakistan's newly appointed High Commissioner to Bangladesh Iqbal Ahmad Khan presented his credentials to President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports UNB.

Welcoming the High Commissioner, the President said Bangladesh and Pakistan enjoy cordial bilateral relations based on common perceptions on the matters of mutual, regional and international concern.

Both the countries share common views, which helped in further consolidating the bilateral relations. There are ample scopes of strengthening cooperation in the fields of trade, commerce, and investment and the private sector have a special role to play in this regard, Shahabuddin said.

Iqbal said Pakistan attaches highest importance to the relations with Bangladesh, which plays a prominent role in regional and international affairs.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the state of Bangladesh-Pakistan relations is excellent. It has become imperative that the two countries do their utmost to promote and strengthen bilateral economic and commercial ties, the Pak envoy said.

Earlier, on his arrival at Bangabhaban, the High Commissioner was given a guard of honour by the President's guard regiment. He took salute and inspected the guard.

## Shifting of courts from Old Dhaka demanded

By Court Correspondent

Speakers at a meeting demanded yesterday at the auditorium of Dhaka Bar Association (DBA) shifting of the courts from the old part of the city.

The meeting was presided over by Special Public Prosecutor Montaz Uddin Mehdi. Among others, secretary of DBA Advocate Abdullahi Abu, former president of the association Syed Rezaul Karim, Sardar Suruzzaman and former secretary Altafuddin Ahmed, Nuruzzaman Nani attended the meeting.

Speakers said that the present court building is located at such a place that is in a corner of the old city. Lawyers and at least ten thousands of people, who gather at the court premises for litigation purposes from different parts of the city, have to face huge traffic jam everyday at the surrounding areas of the court premises.

This jam causes waste of time, money and suffering of the people who come to the court for litigation purposes, the speakers said.

They urged the government to shift the courts at a suitable place in the city.

## Outer anchorage

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Several hundred mechanised boats are engaged in carrying the smuggled goods to Patenga, Sitakunda, Anwara, Patiya, Muralighat and Cox's Bazar. The smuggled goods are unloaded from the mechanised boats whose owners have 'secret deals' with police also, the sources claimed.

Most of the city markets here are flooded with smuggled goods, which are also supplied to Dhaka and other places.

## Heads of dev missions visit Rangamati today

RANGAMATI, July 20: The heads of development missions in Bangladesh are due here tomorrow on a two-day visit to look at the development activities being carried out in the region and possible expansion, reports BSS.

The heads of World Bank, Asian Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Children Emergency Fund and World Food Programme missions in Bangladesh were stated to be in the entourage of Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria during his two-day visit to the hilly town of Rangamati.

Meanwhile, Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Kalpa Ranjan Chakma, Chairman of the task force on repatriated tribals and internal refugees rehabilitation affairs, Dipankar Talukdar, MP and Chairman of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board, Bir Bahadur, MP have already reached here to receive the visitors.

According to the tour programme made available to BSS, the team would likely to exchange views with the chairman and councillors of Chittagong Hill Tracts regional council tomorrow at the beginning of the team's business.

## Population Day observed in Bheramara

BHERAMARA, July 20: International Population Day was observed here recently in a befitting manner. Health and Family Planning Department and different non-government organisations arranged various programmes to mark the day, reports BSS.

A discussion meeting was held at Bheramara Thana Parishad premises on the occasion of the 12th founding anniversary of Agragami Samajik Sangskritik Gosthi.



The outgoing French Ambassador to Bangladesh Renee Veyret made farewell call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday. — PID photo

## Gas exploration inadequate

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Unocal/Occidental, Ocean Energy/UMC and Tullow/Okland hardly ensure an additional production of 300 mcmcf of gas by 2004-2005.

'Power sector is the major consumer of natural gas. It consumes around 44 per cent of the total gas produced now. In the coming years, we are also expecting growth in the industrial sector that is currently consuming 10 per cent,' said another expert.

Considering growth in other sectors, including the fertiliser sector that consumes 36 per cent, the additional demand for gas may exceed 600 mcmcf in 2005, he maintained.

'The demand for power and gas grows by 10 per cent per year. This means a lot. A demand for 5000 MW increases to 5500 MW in the next year and to 6050 MW in the following year and so on. The demand rises at an ever increasing rate,' the expert said.

The government is now pursuing a number of private or independent Power Projects (IPP) which will generate 1330 MW of power by 2003-2004. Government agencies are also going on with a number of gas-based projects which will produce 1179 MM of power.

Beside these, the government is negotiating with some private companies four setting up of four more gas-based power plants with 400 MW generation capacity.

'To generate 100 MW of power for 24 hours, we need 25 mcmcf of gas. So we will be needing 332.5 mcmcf gas for all these private sector power plants to generate 1330 MW,' said a source.

But as per practice, the plants will operate at 75 per cent capacity on an average and we will require around 232 to 250 mcmcf gas,' said the

source.

'All these power plants are being built for 25 years. So we will have to ensure gas for all these plants for 25 years.'

'We are hoping that foreign oil companies working in blocks 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 21 will discover and develop at least a few new gas fields within the next five years so that the power projects do not become crippled from the beginning,' the expert said.

It is projected that demand for power will exceed 4500 MW in 2005. With a safety margin of 20 per cent more power than the demand, 5500 MW will have to be generated at that time. The projects now under implementation will only keep the generation at the level of the projected demand after five years.

'Yet, it is surprising that PSC operators like Shell, Unocal and UMC as well as the World Bank and the US Ambassador are openly advocating for gas export,' said an expert of Petrobangla. 'They have also suggested that we export 2 trillion cubic feet of gas in the next 20 years.'

Due to the influence of oil companies, a 'gas utilisation study', sponsored by the USAID, is underway to 'justify' gas export, the Petrobangla expert maintained.

'We have to be down to earth regarding gas export. Of course gas export will earn us Dollars. But while we are energy starved, why should we export gas before addressing our problems?' said a local representative of an oil company.

'We need to concentrate on more economic returns from gas which will be extracted under PSCs. Other than power plants, we should also concentrate on export oriented fertiliser plants. In this way, gas can not only earn dollars but also ensure more employment

than in pipeline export of gas.'

'We also need huge investment in developing the gas infrastructure for local consumption. If we concentrate on gas export now, investment will be diverted to building pipelines for gas export and soon we will be left with a situation where power plants will not be able to generate power due to gas shortage,' said a source in the energy ministry.

## Bangladeshi Co

From Page 1

pipeline. It is looking for gas pipeline developer for this purpose, the sources said.

Mohona has already convinced the authorities concerned in Myanmar and is negotiating with the Indian oil company, ONGC, on the project.

Myanmar Foreign Minister U Win Aung in an interview with The Daily Star Sunday said that Myanmar was willing to sell gas to India through pipeline.

Myanmar is looking for foreign investors to explore and produce gas there as well as to construct pipeline for export. However, Myanmar will only allow a company to construct pipeline for gas export if it invests in setting up 166 miles of 36 inch diameter pipeline from a major gas field to Yangon for domestic consumption and in the downstream gas sector.

These conditions may also be applicable to Mohona, which reportedly got green signal from Myanmar authorities regarding the project.

Besides, Mohona may face fierce competition from US company Unocal that built a major pipeline from Thailand to Myanmar and has an ambition to set up a sub-continental pipeline system, the sources observed.

## Textbooks

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'solvency certificate' and 'line of credit' as required by the tender.

Moreover, presses shall have to pay in advance 30 per cent of the total cost of papers. They will have to pay Tk 1000 for each rim of paper though the government acquired it at a rate of Tk 500 per rim, printers say.

From the four largest packages, each of the 107 packages needs 6000 rim papers, POA leaders said.

The amount of the bid security money has also been raised to Tk 10,000 from Tk 4,000.

There are around 700 presses across the country with double duty and double crown size off-set printing machine suitable for printing the textbooks, the POA sources said.

A POA leader said the WB and the ADB have set the conditions of the tender taking advantage of project financing. The tender was called without assessing the real situation and capacity of the printers, he said.

'This tender will help foreign printers to come here and take over the printing market,' he said.

Shah Alam, general secretary of the association, accused the NCTB of creating the mess and uncertainty in printing the textbooks.

'Despite knowing the fact about the capacity of our printing industry, NCTB officials did not discuss the matter properly with the government policy makers and the development partners.'

'Some of the NCTB officials are out to satisfy their evil motive by designing the tender in such a way that no local printer can participate in the bidding. They have set the terms and conditions of the tender in a way so that it discourages participants in the bidding. This will help increase the tender price from which the NCTB officials will be benefited.'

'More than one lakh families of the workers involved in the press industry are now exposed to uncertainty as the NCTB has sold out the national interest to the WB and the ADB,' the POA leader said.

Rabbani Jabbar, general secretary of Bangladesh Book Sellers' Association, said the NCTB officials feel that the present conditions of 'tender tender' is motivated.

He said the present tender proposal was not feasible for the printers.

'Under the present tender conditions, a very few printers may participate, but for the sake of quick printing of the textbooks, large participation is required,' said Rabbani.

NCTB chairman Mohammad Shaokat Ali brushed aside all the excuses and allegations of the POA, saying, 'as far as I am concerned, they will participate in the tender.'

The printers are creating undue pressure on the NCTB to have the tender according to their will so that they can make more profit, he said.

Regarding the alleged 'ill motive' of the NCTB officials in handling the tender process, the chairman said, 'It was totally transparent and the NCTB officials cannot find any interest in the printing process because the books are not for sale. Moreover, there is no scope for irregularity as the NCTB books are audited regularly,' the chairman said.

## Mosharraff

From Page 1

matter today. I also failed to get an appointment with her, on the day, due to my preoccupation with an urgent affair of the land ministry. I hope to meet her sometime tomorrow,' Mosharraff told The Daily Star last night.

The state minister also reiterated that he would not react to the issue. 'I trust the party leadership, the prime minister in particular, to resolve the problem. I can't behave as the district leaders have done. I must follow the party's discipline.'

## Sohel Chy

From Page 1

claimed himself to be Arafat Islam. But at one stage of the police interrogation, he disclosed his identity.

Police yesterday produced Mamun before the CMM's court. Mujibul police and Detective Branch of police in separate petitions prayed for placing Mamun on a total of 17 day remand.

Film actor Sohel Chowdhury was shot dead in front of Club Trumps at Banani on the night of December 18 last year.

## Block-7

From Page 1

tion Sharing Contract (PSC) in favour of gas export, the sources said.

Shell and Maersk are insisting on inclusion of a clause in the PSC for gas export. Shell is negotiating for blocks 5 and 10, and Maersk for blocks 19 and 20.

Unocal and Petrobangla have also agreed to share the profit at 28:72 ratio in Block 7. The negotiations began on Monday.

## Training course on basic pry treatment ends

NARSINGDI, July 20: A three-day training course on Basic Primary Treatment concluded at Mouli Tofazzal Hossain High School on July 17, reports BSS.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Narsingdi district unit arranged the training.

Sanwar Jahan, Assistant Commissioner, Narsingdi collectorate inaugurated the training course.

Ataur Rahman, Secretary, Narsingdi District Unit of Red Crescent Society, distributed the certificates among the trainees at the concluding session.

## US Army Gen leaves

Commanding General of US Army Pacific Lt Gen Edwin P Smith left yesterday after a four-day goodwill visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman and other senior military officers saw him off at the Zia International Airport, says an ISPR press release.

The Charge d'Affairs of the US Embassy in Dhaka Theodore A Nist and other embassy officials were also present at the Airport.



## Kaikobad's death anniversary today

By DU Correspondent

The 48th death anniversary of the great poet Kaikobad will be observed today with due respect.

A poet of Bengali nationalism and Muslim renaissance, Kaikobad was born in a village of Nowabganj thana in the district Dhaka in 1857.

Kaikobad wrote 13 verses, of which eight were published in his life-time and five after his death in 1951, said a press release.

To mark the day, Kaikobad Shahittya Mojilsh will organise a discussion on July 24. Poet and researcher Abdul Mannan Syed and poet Al Mujahed will be the discussants at the function presided over by Dr Ashraf Siddique.

## Sayed to open Bangla TV channel in London July 25

Bangla TV Limited (BTL), a London-based Bangla Television channel, will be launched on July 25 in fulfillment of the long aspirations of Bengali community living in Europe and North American states, reports BSS.

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed will formally inaugurate the channel, putting on air the BTL programmes and news bulletins to be produced on the basis of the current happenings. Prof Sayeed left here for London last night, an official handout said.

The BTL, as per an agreement signed here in February last with the government, will purchase entertainment programmes from Bangladesh Television (BTV) for telecast.

'With this, the revenue income of BTV will increase,' the handout said adding, BTL will telecast daily news bulletins and programmes on current events free of cost.

It is expected that BTL will be able to uphold the image as well as values and spirit of the War of Liberation, culture, tradition and heritage of Bangladesh abroad through its programmes.

## Dhaka Collegiate School honours 7 ex-students

Dhaka Collegiate School has honoured its seven former students of 1961 Matriculation Batch who have earned fame at home and abroad, reports BSS.

The school at a function on July 15 honoured Asif Ali, Controller General of Accounts, Habibur Rahman Khan, Chairman of Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation, Dr A M Shafiqul Alam, Professor of Chemistry of Dhaka University, Musharraf Hussain, Vice-Principal of the Academy for Planning and Development, Engineer Hafizur Rahman, now in United Kingdom, working with the United Nations in Vienna and Manjurul Ahsan Khan, president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB).

## 16 get life term for murder in Sherpur

SHERPUR, July 20: A court here today sentenced 16 people life imprisonment with a fine of Tk 2,000 each, in default to suffer one year more rigorous imprisonment in a murder case, reports UNB.

The convicts were Joinuddin, 77, Khoyrudin, 50, Chooyerdin, 70, Akkas Ali, 68, Sultan Miah, 30, Chan Miah, 40, Mustafizur Rahman, 28, Golum Mostafa, 25, Altaf Miah, 40, Tofazzal, 65, Alaluddin, 25, Helaluddin, 20, Motaleb, 50, Mofiz, 35, Jomsed Ali, 35 and Miaz Ali 32.

The District and Session Judge Court also acquitted two other accused — Kala Miah, 30, and Sajjad, 22 — as the offence was not proved against them.

According to the prosecution, the accused people attacked Mizanur Rahman at Bihariapur village in Noka thana when he tried to prevent them from harvesting crops from his paternal land on March 31, 1996.

## Kibria to address CHT Regional Council meet today

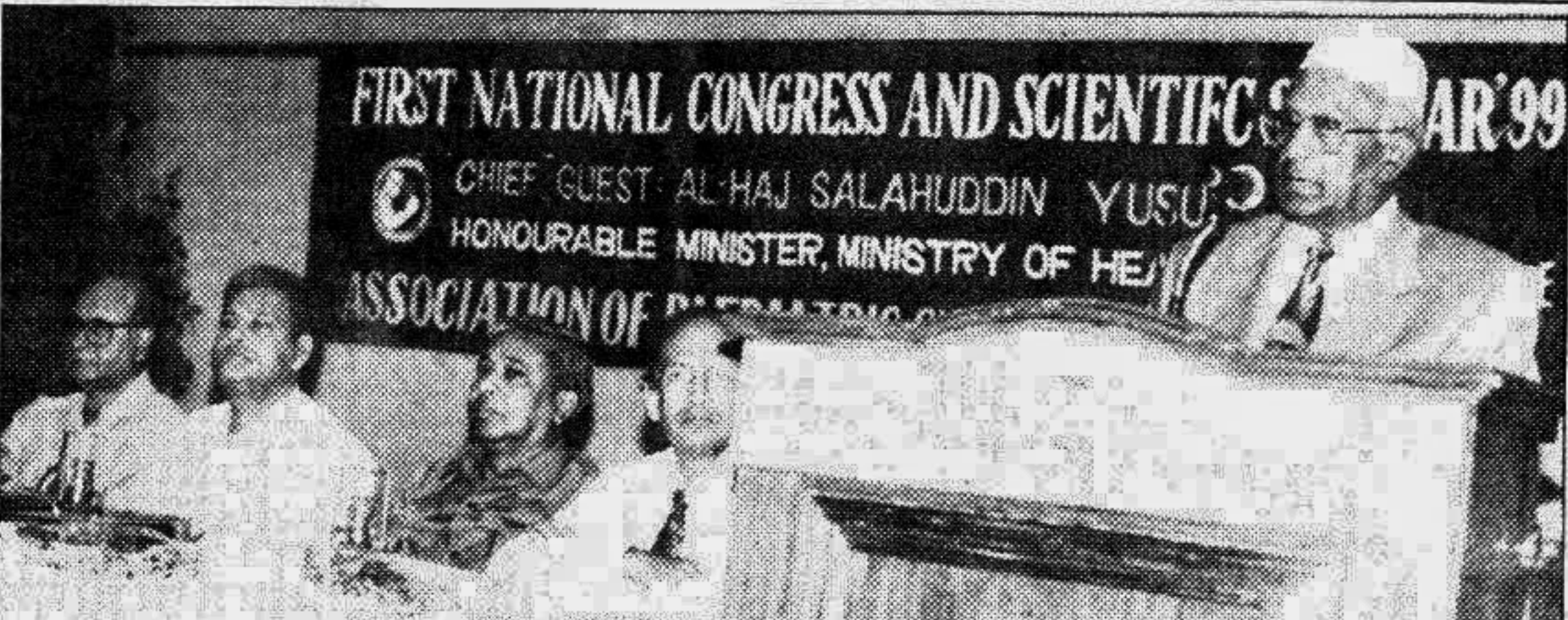
CHITTAGONG, July 20: Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria arrives here tomorrow morning on his way to Rangamati, a PID handout said today, reports BSS.

The Minister will leave M A Hannan International Airport for Rangamati by road after his arrival.

He will address a meeting of CHT Regional Council at the council office and review the development activities of three Hill Districts at a meeting of the government officers and autonomous bodies at the Rangamati Zila Parishad Hall in the afternoon.

On July 22, the Finance Minister will exchange views with the local people at Golachhari and discuss with the local representatives and the high government officials about the progress of work of different development projects at the local Circuit House.

He will return to Dhaka in the afternoon.



The Minister for Health and Family Welfare Salahuddin Yusuf addressing as chief guest the first national congress, scientific seminar of the Association of Paediatric Surgeons of Bangladesh (APSB) at Hotel Sheraton yesterday. — Star photo

## BNP denies party conflict

From Page 1

party.

The BNP also claimed that none of the central leaders had any role, public or secret, behind party MP Manzurul Ahsan Munshi's attempts to resign from the party twice.

Reporter's reply: Our report on the conflicts in the Comilla BNP and the party chief's warning against some top leaders was based on information from well-placed sources in the main opposition party. We went back to our sources and confirmed that our story was correct.

Here, we would like to cite some fresh examples that clearly show the existence of conflict in the Comilla unit of BNP. First, party chief Khaleda Zia herself hinted disciplinary action against those responsible for any anti-party activity.

She sounded the warning during her discussion with Laxmipur leaders of her party on July 14.

The meeting over, BNP Chairperson's Press Secretary quoted Khaleda Zia as saying that none will be spared if found violating party discipline and getting involved in anti-party activities. 'Such a person must face punishment, no matter how big leader he is,' she was quoted as saying.

Besides, Comilla BNP MP Manzurul Ahsan Munshi had accused some central leaders of acting against the party interests in his district in his July 15 resignation letter to the party chief, which he withdrew later.

Munshi categorically stated that his resignation was to protest anti-organisational activities by some central leaders of BNP. Munshi later told the press that he preferred not to name those central leaders and added 'their names were known to all'.

Our sources added that Khaleda Zia herself took up the matter relating to Munshi's resignation, and instructed the party secretary general to take steps as demanded by Munshi.

Furthermore, a close aide of the BNP chief reported that she became very angry with a standing committee member. According to that aide, she also found the Standing Committee member trying to harm others finding his weakened base in his own constituency. In our report, we however did not mention the name of that standing committee member.

Another instance also indicates crisis in Comilla BNP. Secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan held at least three meetings to resolve the crisis after Munshi's first attempt to quit the party in mid-June. But the central leaders Bhuiyan invited did not attend two of the three meetings.

That the crisis in Comilla BNP still exists is proved by the latest development in the district BNP. According to press reports, the supporters of Advocate Abu Taher Sarkar, who has been removed from the district committee following Munshi's demands, organised protest rallies at Devidar and Chandina thanas on Monday.

From Page 1

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