

## Make fish culture a social campaign, says Rob

Fisheries Minister A S M Abdur Rob inaugurated the Fisheries Week '99 yesterday with a call for making fish culture a social campaign to raise the fish production to 20.75 lakh tonnes by 2005, reports BSS.

Inaugurating the week at a ceremony in the city after leading a march through different city streets, the minister said new entrepreneurship must be developed along with modern technology-based plans for the fisheries sector.

He urged the unemployed, particularly rural youths, to come forward to promote the fisheries sector, by utilising the government facilities for planned fish culture.

Fifty farms joined a "Matsya Mela" (Fish Fair) in Dhaka, organised to mark the week. Programmes were also organised in different parts of the country to make the week a success.

In Khulna, Vice-Chancellor of Khulna University Prof S M Nazrul Islam opened the week, while State Minister for Religious Affairs Nurul Islam inaugurated the week in Shariatshahar by releasing fish fries at a local pond.

## Fisheries Week begins in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, July 25: Labour and Employment Minister M A Mannan said here today that development of fisheries resources would not only meet the protein need of the nation but also help earn foreign exchange and alleviate poverty, reports BSS.

He said, the government has formulated a fish policy which envisages protection and increased production of fish resources, meeting demand for protein creation of employment opportunity and earning of foreign exchange.

Addressing a function held in connection with inauguration of Fisheries Week at Muslim Institute Hall here, the Minister called upon the people in general and fishermen and fish traders in particular to co-operate with the government in implementing fish policy of the government. The function presided over by district fisheries officer Hosneara was also addressed by local AL leaders Dr Afsarul Amin and M A Rashid and Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Hasan.

The Labour Minister also called upon the unemployed youths to engage themselves in fish production programme which will help them to beat unemployment and earn money. Earlier, a colourful procession was brought out in the city headed by the labour minister.

Later, the minister attended a meeting of officers of Water Development Board held at the local circuit house.

The Minister directed the Water Development Board officials to take appropriate measures against erosion by rivers Sangu, Halda, Sarta and Karnaphuli. He also asked the officials to remain alert against possible flood in the district. He also visited embankment from Katraha to Kattali near Patenga here.

## Nat'l workshop on human resource dev begins

Minister for Agriculture and Food Begum Motia Chowdhury yesterday called upon the Agriculture Scientists to evolve a long-term plan for human resource development in the agriculture sector in the greater national interest, reports BSS.

"You should also undertake different research programme suitable for the country so that it can face the challenges of the next millennium," the minister said.

She was inaugurating a two-day National Workshop on "Human Resource Development Programme of the National Agriculture System-2020" at Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI) at Joydevpur.

Begum Motia Chowdhury described the role of agriculture sector as very important to meet the food and nutrition demand in the country keeping in mind the rising population.

She said the role of the sector would be significantly meaningful only when research results could be disseminated to the door steps of the farmers through necessary research and extension programmes.

In this respect, she asked the agriculture scientists to keep the continuity of crop varieties with emphasis on High Yielding Variety (HYV) which could be grown on small lands.

## Ahmed Humayun's Qulhwani today

The Qulhwani of Ahmed Humayun will be held at his residence at House no 32, Road no 6, Sector 3 after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

All friends, relatives and well-wishers have been requested to attend the Qulhwani.

## Combining operation 1043 arrested across country

The law enforcing agencies arrested 1043 persons across the country in 24 hours ending this morning, sources in the police headquarters said, reports BSS.

The agencies — Police, BDR and Ansars — in their 94th day of the joint operation known as 'combining operation' recovered 11 illegal fire arms, seven rounds of bullet and four explosives from them, the sources added.



A colourful procession was brought out in the city yesterday marking the inauguration of the Fisheries Week '99. Minister for Fisheries ASM Abdur Rob led the march.— Star photo

## Lankan trade team arrives

By Staff Correspondent

A Sri Lankan business delegation led by Deshamanya Lalith Kotelawala will arrive in Dhaka today on a four-day long visit.

Lalith Kotelawala is the chairman of a leading business conglomerate-Ceylinceo Consolidated.

During their visit, two joint venture agreements are likely to be signed with Integrated Security Services Limited (ISSSL), says a ISSSL press release yesterday.

Ceylinceo Consolidated has as many as 77 subsidiaries and associate companies under its banner including a commercial bank, four finance companies, a merchant bank, a development bank and a satellite communication company.

During the visit they will explore the possibilities of co-operation with local companies in various sectors.

## DU Rokeya Hall students demand Provost's expulsion

By DU Correspondent

A section of female students of Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University yesterday brought out a procession and held a rally at the hall on Saturday night demanding immediate expulsion of the hall Provost Prof Noor-un-Nahar Rahman.

They also demanded of the university authorities not to extend his tenure, scheduled to expire on July 30 next.

Resident students said that about two hundred female students of the hall came out from their rooms at about 11 pm and took out a procession at the hall chanting various slogans against the provost.

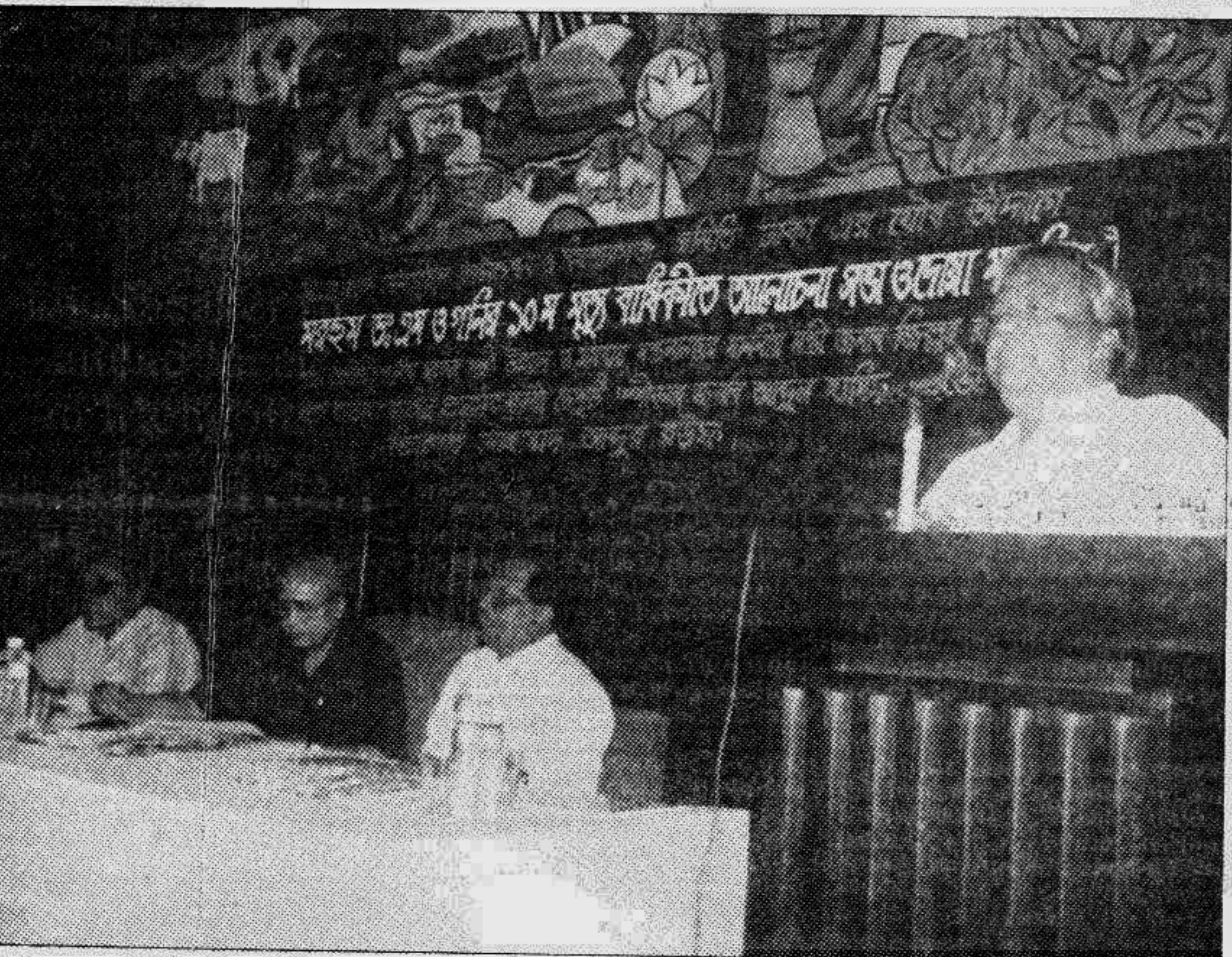
They raised various allegations against the provost, including misconduct with the students, failure to conduct official duties and misuse of money.

Later, they held a rally at the hall premises where the speakers threatened to launch a greater movement against DU authorities if their demands were not met immediately.

Talking to this correspondent, an MA class student of Rokeya Hall alleged, "She (provost) has no efficiency to carry out her duties. Rather, she is very well 'skilled' to misbehave with the students."

Early this year, the general students of the hall brought out procession in the dead of the night demanding expulsion of the provost on the same issue. The students then withdrew their movement following DU authorities' assurance to solve the problem.

But the problem was not solved despite repeated allegations by the general students of the Rokeya Hall. The provost could not be contacted for her comments on the matter.



Kishoreganj Samity, Dhaka and Dr Osman Gani Memorial Foundation jointly organised a discussion meeting to mark the 10th death anniversary of Dr Gani, former Vice-Chancellor of the Dhaka University, at the BARC auditorium in the city on Friday. Son of the late educationist, Dr Osman Faruque addressing the discussion while Deputy Speaker Adv Abdul Hamid (L), president of the Samity Syed Aminul Haq (C) and convenor of the discussion council Engr Muhammad Yusuf (R) look on.

## GK sends medical team to quake-hit Moheshkhali

SAVAR, July 25: Gonoswasthya Kendra (GK), a charitable trust and NGO, has deployed its first batch of medical team to provide first-aid to the earthquake victims in Moheshkhali under Cox's Bazar district, a press release said, reports BSS.

The medical team consists of three senior physicians — Dr Liton, Dr Raihan and Dr Mong Kithin Sagar from Savar Gonoswasthya Hospital and four paramedics — Selina Parveen, Sultana Parveen (Shova), Jonaki and Shaheen Akhter.

The team left Dhaka for Moheshkhali yesterday.

It will open a satellite medical service sites at Moheshkhali to cover four badly affected unions of Hoanakh, Shapilapur, Kalamarchhara and Boro Moheshkhali.

The team in consultation with the district and thana level government officials, union parishad authorities and elected representatives will select four to six volunteers from each of the affected unions. They will move from door to door to provide health-care services to the earthquake victims.

## Dy Speaker to attend meet in Mongolia

Deputy Speaker Adv M Abdul Hamid left the city for Ulanbator, the capital of Mongolia, Saturday to attend the meeting of the Asia-Pacific Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, scheduled to begin here today, reports BSS.

Hamid is leading a two-member delegation to the six-day meeting which will be concluded on July 31. Secretary of the Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat Kazi Mohammad Manzur-e-Mowla is the other member of the delegation.

## BRTA introduces new driving licences

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has introduced laminated plastic card driving licences, replacing the earlier paper book driving licences, reports BSS.

Communications Minister M Anwar Hussain yesterday inaugurated this modern and standard driving licence at a formal function at the Motor Vehicle Inspection Centre of BRTA at Mirpur.

He handed over three new licences to the three general licence holders, an official hand-out said.

Earlier, the Minister inspected the process of introducing this new card and directed the concerned officials to make BRTA more dynamic and modernised.

The laminated plastic cards with images of the National Memorial and necessary information have been imported under the authorisation of the BRTA.

Other features include BRTA monogram in holographic top code on the top and the words 'driving licence' pre-printed in four corners of the card, the handout said, adding, photographs of the licence holders and ghost image of the photographs will also act as a security measure.

Red and green numbers of the new card indicating professional and non-professional licence-holders are being issued for five years and ten years respectively.

According to the handout, the introduction of the new card would greatly help stop fake driving licences, check unskilled drivers and reduce road accidents.

## 1st convocation of IUBAT today

The first convocation programme of International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) will be held today at 3:45 pm at Osmani Memorial Auditorium, reports UNB.

The Chancellor of IUBAT President Shahabuddin Ahmed will preside over the convocation.

Professor Dr Roger Bamsly, President of the University College of Cariboo (UCC) Kamloop, Canada will be present as the Convocation Speaker and Dr John Richards of Simon Fraser University (SFU), Canada as special speaker.

## LDF warns against handing over of all gas reserves to foreigners

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) yesterday issued a strong warning for the government not to hand-over oil and gas resources of the country to foreigners, reports UNB.

Its leaders sounded the warnings at a meeting at Muktagang in the capital with Front coordinator Nirmal Sen in the chair.

They demanded cancellation of all "unequal agreements" signed with the foreign companies on exploration of oil and gas in Bangladesh.

"If necessary, the Left Front would paralyse the country to press home its demand," the left meeting warned.

Regarding the eviction of the Narayanganj brothels, the left leaders said it was just to establish political influence of a party.

Among others who addressed the meeting were Dilip Barua, Bazlur Rashid Perro, Abdus Salam, A F M Mahbubul Haq, Saiful Haq and Morshed Ali.

## BNP demands polls

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uled to address rallies at four other places including Madhupur, Dhanbari, Shariatshahar and Jamalpur today.

Begum Zia is scheduled to address 26 public meetings during the three-day campaign.

People of various age groups, most of them male, were seen waiting for the BNP chief along the road for the entry-points of different venues in certain places, arches were erected to welcome the leader.

Putting forward arguments for ousting Hasina's government, Khaleda Zia told the gatherings that it had already lost its moral right to rule the country as, according to her, it has failed in all sectors. Painting a gloomy picture of the country's economy, she said, "During three years of AL rule, not a single fact has been set up, rather the factories established during the BNP period are gradually closing down. Peasants are producing crop but they are not getting just price for their produce."

Khaleda Zia also accused the government leaders of plundering people's wealth and handing over the natural resources of the country to 'foreign' powers. "People are the owners of the natural resources. The Awami League has no right to do anything it wishes to do."

Referring to law and order, the opposition leader said that there is no security of life these days. "Besides, women are being harassed by the law enforcers in broad day light."

She also told her audience the government of Sheikh Hasina has withdrawn almost all facilities the BNP government had offered to educate the girls, while the student wing of the AL has created a reign of terror in the educational institutions across the country.

The government of Awami League has already proved itself a government of Awami League leaders and activists not of the people in general," she said. "If you want to educate your children, if you want to have jobs, if you want to see the nation to emerge independently, you have to oust the AL government and immediately replace it with the of the BNP. But the AL is reluctant to relinquish power. So you have to oust it through movement."

Deputy leader of the opposition and BNP standing committee member Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury said that the AL came to the power by bluffing people. "Before the last general elections, Sheikh Hasina wore Hizab and carried Tasbeeh. Where have they gone now. Rather, the allegations are out to close madrasa education."

"He also accused the AL of lying all the time, both in and out of parliament. BNP's secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan observed that the government of Sheikh Hasina would always be remembered in history due to its "breach of election pledges".

"The party had promised peasants that if voted to power, it would ensure taka five hundred for each maund of jute. The party had promised autonomy to the state run electronic media and so on. But the government has failed to live up to those commitments."

Referring to the deteriorating law and order situation, Bhuiyan said that thousands of BNP leaders and activists had so far been arrested. But the situation has not improved. "It proves that all the criminals belong to the AL these days. Since they enjoy government patronage, the law and order is at its worst."

Another standing committee member of the party Saifur Rahman said that the government has pushed the country's national economy almost to the brink of destruction. Criticising the government for imposing fresh taxes of Tk 15000 crore, the former finance minister said only a few weeks after increasing the price of electricity by budgetary measures, the government has once again increased the price the other day. "AL is indifferent towards the sufferings of common people and that is why we want immediate elections."

Three other partners of the BNP-led alliance — Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote (IOJ) also began simultaneous march, the second of its kind within two months from Dhaka to different destinations of the country to also protest "Awami misrule, corruption, repression, killing of opposition activists, subservient foreign policy and anti-national activities."

"We have taken up the road march programme to project the failures of the government before the people. We will also apprise the people how the government resorted to loot, corruption, repression and misrule," the BNP chief said while addressing a huge gathering at Azampur bus stand before the march began.

JP leaders and workers led by its chairperson HM Ershad left here for greater Barisal on a 4-day launch procession. Jamaat led by party Ameer Gollam Azam started its march from Bogra to Shibganj in Chapai Nawabganj while IOJ headed by Moulana Azizul Haq began march to Chittagong from the capital in the morning.

She said the government has completely betrayed its election pledge and started looting people's wealth. The corrupt party leaders and activists of the party in power have started plundering public property. Even rivers, canals and marshes are not being spared.

Begum Zia alleged that the Awami League ministers and leaders have started a hectic move to loot the natural resources, including gas, as if this resource is their own property. The BNP Chairperson said the latest RAJUK plot scam by the Awami League government is a glaring example of how they are plundering the country's wealth.

The opposition leader said her party has launched movement against this "autocratic" government to free the people from the clutches of the looters, restore democracy, rule of law, rescue people from repression and oppression and protect the heard-earned independence and sovereignty.

Turning to CHT, she alleged that the Awami activists in collaboration of terrorists after signing the CHT agreement have started looting the property of non-tribal people side by side evicting them from their permanent homes. Besides, they are also looting forest resources of the CHT.

The road marchers appeared enthusiastically seeing big gatherings at different places on the way to the first day's destination. Hundreds of local people, who had been waiting for hours on both sides of the road and greeted the road march convoy.

Begum Zia and the marchers will halt at night in Myemensingh yesterday and today. She is scheduled to address meetings at Tarakandi, Fulpur, Haluaghat, Nakla, Nalitabari, Tiani bazaar under Jhenaidha thana and Bajitkhila under Sherpur thana sadar today.

Minister to attend workshop in Nepal

Deputy Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Saber Hossain Chowdhury left the city yesterday for Kathmandu to attend a regional workshop on "Decentralisation of Efficient Urban Management", reports BSS.

Chowdhury is leading a six-member delegation to the three-day workshop scheduled to begin yesterday. Ministers, senior government officials and resource persons from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Asian Development Bank and host Nepal are taking part in the workshop. The workshop is being jointly organised by Regional Urban Development Office (South Asia) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Calcutta-based the Times Research Foundation (TRF).

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The other members of Bangladesh delegation included Chairman of the University Grants Commission Prof ATM Zahurul Haq, Joint Secretary of the LGRD Ministry Nikunja Bihari Nath, Director General of the National Institute of Local Government Khitish Chandra Kunda, Chairman of Centre for Urban Studies Prof Nazrul Islam and Prof Ghulam Murtaza of Khulna University.

## Nirmul Committee discussion meet today

The city unit of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee will hold a discussion in the city today to commemorate the martyrs of July 26, 1994 who were killed by the armed forces of the Jamaat-Shibir in Chittagong, reports BSS.

The discussion will be held at the seminar room of TSC, Dhaka University. Barrister Shafique Ahmed, journalist Shafiq Kabir, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Prof Mahfuza Khanom, Prof Muntasir Mamun, Prof Zarina Rahman Khan and Kazi Mukul will participate at the discussion, a committee press release said yesterday.

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## Defiant drug officials

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that the plasticiser DEHP is unsafe for use in PVC medical products even among persons who use the products most frequently.

The World Health Organisation in Geneva, New Delhi and local office were contacted through e-mail to find out how does WHO classify DEHP. After more than eight day wait there was no reply from any of the WHO office.

Following the DA's claim the Daily Star through e-mail asked experts and relevant organisations including HCWH and the International Greenpeace in the US and Europe for additional factual information on the issue. The following are some of the facts.

Damaging effects of DEHP have been demonstrated in peer-reviewed studies of dialysis patients, as well as in animal studies that are designed to gauge safety or risk to humans. DEHP has also been found in premature infants who received respiratory therapy through PVC tubing.

DEHP has been identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a probable human carcinogen. Scientific research has also shown that it may damage the heart, liver, testes, and kidneys, as well as interfere with sperm production.

Plasticizer - di-ethylhexylphthalate (DEHP) is used to make plastics (PVC) soft and flexible. Because it is not chemically bound to the plastic in the intravenous (IV) bag or tubing, DEHP migrates into the solution it contains.

DEHP and other phthalate plasticizers have been under scrutiny because they have been found to leach out of children's toys as well. In fact, research released last week by Greenpeace that the levels of DEHP in vinyl medical products were similar to, and in some cases exceeded, the levels of phthalates found in vinyl children's toys.

Makers of PVC intravenous products admit that DEHP in IV solutions can reach concentrations of five parts per million (ppm) — more than 830 times higher than the amount of DEHP permitted in drinking water (6 parts per billion).

The chemotherapy drug Taxol, used to treat AIDS-related Kaposi's sarcoma, ovarian and breast cancer, comes with a warning that the medication should not be used with PVC because of DEHP leaching. Some other drugs in US come with a similar warning.

"IV bags and tubing materials made with PVC unnecessarily expose patients to a leaching chemical," said Charlotte Brody, co-coordinator of Health Care Without Harm. "We want hospitals to provide PVC-free products so no patient has to be concerned about being exposed to DEHP from their PVC intravenous bag."

Alternatives to PVC bags are available known as polyolefin and cost-competitive. One company, B. Braun McGraw, has 20 percent of the U.S. market with

its polyolefin IV bags. US company Baxter Healthcare also markets a non-PVC bag in Europe.

Universal Health Services, the America's third largest hospital manager, says that polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic may result in damage to the environment. UHS plans to investigate the amount of PVC it is currently using and formally ask its suppliers to develop non-PVC alternatives.

After a 2 year investigation, the international environmental group Greenpeace has concluded that PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride) plastic, commonly known as 'vinyl' by its # 3 symbol is the worst plastic for the environment.

Greenpeace released a series of reports on July 7 as evidence that burning (incineration) of PVC or vinyl is a leading source of dioxin fallout in the environment. Vinyl manufacturing and disposal by incineration create dioxin — one of the world's most toxic chemicals.

Various governmental bodies in the European Union (EU) have taken precautionary measures against environmental pollution caused by polyvinyl chloride (PVC). "Within only one week we have seen three official initiatives on PVC which highlight the environmental hazards caused by PVC plastic" said Axel Singhoven from Greenpeace.

The EU initiatives include: The release of a sustainability report by the German Federal Environmental Agency (UBA) which recommends the phase-out of soft PVC <#>ones</>.

The release of the second environmental assessment report by the European Environmental Agency (EEA) which lists various environmental problems of PVC <#>two</>.

The order of the Italian government to shut down a major PVC factory near Venice, due to the release of highly toxic vinyl chloride monomer (VCM), the building's stone for PVC <#>three</>.

This follows the recent proposal by the Danish government for a plan to restrict and tax the use of PVC. Additionally, the UK Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions recently published a buyers' and suppliers' guide, which advises against the use of PVC.

"The verdict on PVC is out across Europe: it has no place in a sustainable society. We call on the European Commission to come forward with effective EU-wide phase-out plans for PVC now," said Axel Singhoven.

Health Care Without Harm works to transform the health care industry so it is no longer a source of environmental harm by eliminating pollution in health care practices without compromising safety or care.

The campaign has more than 175 member organizations in eight countries, including 41 hospitals, such as Beth Israel Medical Center, New York; New England Medical Center; and the hospitals of Catholic Health Care West.

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## New envoy presents credentials to Venezuelan President

Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Anwarul Karim Chowdhury has presented his credentials to President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela as the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Republic of Venezuela, reports BSS.

The official ceremony took place on Thursday at the Presidential Palace in Caracas, according to a fax message received in the city yesterday.

The Bangladeshi envoy conveyed the warmest greetings from President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to President Chavez and to the government and the people of Venezuela. He reiterated that the government of Bangladesh deeply value the bond of friendship and excellent relations between the two countries. As members of the United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, Bangladesh and Venezuela work together to build a more equitable and peaceful world.

Chowdhury flew to Caracas from New York to present the credentials.

President Chavez reciprocated the greetings from the Bangladesh leaders and mentioned that in Venezuela Bangladesh is known for its people for peace and development. The Venezuelan president showed keen interest in benefiting from the experience of Bangladesh in the field of micro-credit. Referring to the future chairmanship of Bangladesh in the Non-Aligned Movement, President Chavez mentioned that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina should consider him as "her ally in this leadership."

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