

## Three-day workshop begins in city

### Failure in environment issues can't be afforded for far-reaching effects'

UNDP Assistant Resident Representative Shireen Kamal Sayeed yesterday emphasised the need for enforcement of the existing environmental laws and execution of programmes to help achieve sustainable development, reports BSS.

She was addressing the inaugural session of the three-day workshop on "Environmental Reporting" organised by the Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) with support from the Ministry of Environment and Forest and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam was the chief guest at the inaugural session while FEJB Chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury presided. Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Programme Director of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association and Chairman of Unnayan Sumunnaya Dr Atiur Rahman were the resource per-

sons in two different working sessions. FEJB's general secretary Bakhtiar Rana also spoke on the occasion.

Ms Shireen underscored the need for creating massive awareness among the people about environmental degradation, deforestation and deteriorating pollution.

Anam said so far awareness and policies are concerned, we are more or less successful, but we have failures in the implementation level. However, management of 123 million population on 144,000 square kilometre of land is the greatest environmental challenge for Bangladesh.

Dr Atiur said there was a "crisis perception" in assessing development due to a west-ern-backed "mechanical" outlook among the policymakers and planners to adjust everything with the market order. But there is an "interconnectedness" of all aspects of life including ecology and culture. Economy alone does not decide everything.

He said this interconnectedness was being ignored for "immediate development".

Ms Rizwana underscored the need for launching campaign to sensitize people about their environmental rights. Quamrul Islam Chowdhury said the rules regarding environmental impact assessment should be strictly enforced to maintain ecological balance.

A total of 20 journalists from newspapers and news agencies are taking part in the workshop.



The final agreement for installation of a 450 mw Meghna Chat Combined Cycle Power Plant was signed yesterday at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, Minister for Commerce and Industry Tofail Ahmed and State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir were present at the signing ceremony. — PID photo

## JCD condemns police attack on BCU procession

By DU Correspondent  
Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of main opposition BNP, yesterday brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus in protest of the police attack on the procession of Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) in the city on Monday.

Following the procession, JCD held a rally at the main gate of the Arts Building of the university at noon. Addressing the rally, JCD leaders strongly condemned the attack and demanded immediate action against those involved in the incident.

## Manik

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In the chargesheet it has been stated that the ruling party MP Manik arranged the bomb making in his own house with a view to strengthening his own political position.

Abul Kalam, who was killed in the blast was one of the aides of the MP, the chargesheet added.

## Zillur says at BPTA confce 16 more polytechnic institutes to be set up

Sixteen more Polytechnic Institutes will be set up in the country during the current fiscal for massive expansion of science and technological education, reports UNB.

"Constructions of these new institutes are already under way," LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman said while addressing a 3-day national conference of Bangladesh Polytechnic Teachers' Association (PBTA) yesterday.

He said steps also have been taken to set up 12 science and technological universities, four more BITs, one textile college and 12 vocational training institutes in addition to five women polytechnic institutes to spread technical education among women.

He hoped that development and expansion of technical education would help a good number of the country's youths to play a significant role in the national development during the next five years.

Zillur said the government

is determined to ensure accountability in every sector of the administration, including education system, removing corruption, mismanagement and irregularities.

He alleged that during its five years rule, BNP had destroyed the country's education sector by disparity, corruption and mismanagement like other sectors.

He assured the teachers of polytechnic institutes to meet their logical demand of restructuring their service removing all irregularities created by the previous government.

Khulna University Vice Chancellor Dr S M Nazrul Islam, DG of Polytechnic Education Department Prof M Ziaur Rahman, BCS Coordination Committee Secretary General Chowdhury Khalequzzaman and BPTA Secretary A K M Moazzam Haq also addressed the conference.

BPTA President A K M Zaimul Abedin Presided over the inaugural function.

## Swap transit

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socioation feels that transit might eliminate the advantage of the country's manufacturing sector to tap the market in the seven north-eastern Indian states.

They say that the country should have waited for the industries to capture the untapped market first before transit was given.

President of Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICCI) AKM Shamsuddin said that transit was inevitable but more attention should be given to make customs' clearance at the port quicker. Otherwise, goods will pile up and exporters will suffer.

He also observed that the country's infrastructure, which is still very weak, needs massive upgradation to accommodate the movement of the extra traffic.

"We should now work toward designing a process so that we can maximise our benefit from the transit. Therefore, we should not hurry into anything, but give it more thought."

He also opposed the idea of movement of sealed containers across the country and said international customs' procedures should be followed to inspect the cargo.

"Environment, health and safety questions are now in the forefront. You never know if any toxic waste or radioactive material will be passed through Bangladesh. So, the transport system should not be a blind one," they observed.

Another top industrialist said the north eastern states were keen to buy goods from Bangladesh as they are almost cut off from the Indian industrial hub. For them, Bangladeshi goods are cheaper. When a Tripuran trade delegation headed by a high level minister visited Bangladesh early this year, they were eager to take Bangladeshi goods. Even now, Bangladeshi goods get across the border informally.

But once the transit is given, this market will be lost to the country, he said.

DCI President M H Rahman told the Daily Star that before implementing transit facility, the government should make the issue transparent so that people know on what conditions this was allowed to India.

"We have a huge trade gap with India and without curbing imports we have no option to develop our service sector. We can earn foreign exchange without compromising national safety and security, why won't we allow them transit?"

In return, we should demand Indian commitment about uninterrupted access to our enclaves and zero tariff access of some Bangladeshi products to Indian market.

Floor-crossing

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Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury and Opposition Chief Whip Khandokar Delwar Hossain filed the writ against the decision of the Speaker who had refused to refer the matter of floor crossing to the Election Commission as demanded by the BNP in Parliament.

A division bench of the High Court comprising Justice K M Hasan and Justice Mohammad Latifur Rahman in its August 27, 1998 verdict directed the Speaker to refer the dispute to the Election Commission within 30 days.

The government had preferred to move the Supreme Court against the verdict.

Before taking the matter to the Court, the BNP leaders had twice requested Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury in writing to refer the dispute to the Election Commission.

In their letters to the BNP leaders said that the action was a violation of Article 70 of the Constitution.

The Speaker in his ruling in the House said Article 70 is not applicable in the matter as Alaiddin and Hasib have not forfeited their membership of Parliament by joining the Cabinet.

Article 70 of the Constitution reads as: "A person elected as a Member of Parliament in an election at which he was nominated as a candidate by a political party shall vacate his seat if he resigns from that party or votes in Parliament against that party."

Challenging the ruling of the Speaker, the BNP preferred to file the writ with the High Court.

Secretary of Parliament being the respondent Number 2 to the rule had moved the Appellate Division against the verdict of the High Court.

Agrabad Commerce College BCL factions clash

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, July 29: At least 20 people were injured in a gunfight between two rival factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) on Agrabad Commerce College campus today, police and witnesses said.

The injured were admitted to hospital and local clinics for treatment.

Police and witnesses said the gunfight began at around 8 am between Nasir and Kader factions of BCL over control of college campus.

The clash ensued when the activists of Kader faction tried to drive Nasir faction out of the college campus. The clash lasted for about an hour, police said.

The BCL activists also exchanged fire with police when they chased both the groups. Police arrested two BCL activists and recovered one gun with bullets.

Later, the BCL activists damaged some vehicles, police said.

Another top industrial body chief told on condition of anonymity the country's export and import may be hampered as the ports are in shambles. These should be taken care of before giving transit, he said.

"We are not totally ready to absorb the transit impact. It might create more problems than good."

Anisur Rahman Sinha, president of BGMEA, said unless the ports are improved, transit may create problems for garments' exports.

He said the mode of operation for transporting goods across Bangladesh from one point of India to another could be applied for importing raw materials for the ready made garments' sector as well.

"We should also be allowed to bring raw material in sealed containers and have them customs' checked at Dhaka. This would effectively reduce our lead time."

Meanwhile, FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo in an interview with BSS said Bangladesh can earn an additional 70 million dollars annually through bilateral trade with the seven north-eastern Indian states.

The movement of goods from one Indian point to another by Bangladesh transport will generate income and employment for the country, he added.

Moreover, the export of items that have a strong production base in Bangladesh will not create an uneven competition, the FBCCI leader said.

He said it is not always correct that a country benefits only by exporting products. Sometimes it can gain by importing things also.

The seven north eastern Indian states, also known as seven sisters, could be a good source of cheap raw materials for manufacturing finished products for exports, he said.

## Khaleda

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present government turned Bangladesh into a vassal state by signing agreements one after another against national interest.

Referring to the Ganges water treaty, Khaleda said the government had compromised Bangladesh's legitimate share of the river waters while relinquished a tenth of the country to "terrorists" through the CHT accord.

The former Prime Minister said India had been pressing Bangladesh for long to get corridor in the name of transit.

"Now this government has sacrificed national interests at the altar of hegemonist India," Khaleda said what is surprising is that the government did neither raise this important matter in Parliament nor consult the opposition.

Moreover, she said, this "anti-people" government did not feel it necessary to seek mandate from the people on this issue.

The BNP chief said after getting the transit India would be able to carry military hardware to suppress rebellion in seven Northeastern States of India.

"The transit would pose a dangerous threat to our political and economic system. This will not only jeopardize our national security, but Bangladesh would get entangled in internal affairs of India."

Khaleda further said transit would also threaten the trade prospects between Bangladesh and Northeastern States of India.

## Madrasah

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1997-98 and 6,087 in 1998-99. The number of Madrasah students rose from 18,37,013 in 1995 to 20,20,040 in 1996, 21,09,761 in 1997 and 22,06,810 in 1998.

In 1998-99, a total of 646 junior high schools, 402 high schools, 200 higher secondary colleges and 213 madrasahs were brought under the MPO. Monthly allocation was Tk 17,000 for a junior secondary school, Tk 12,500 for a secondary school, Tk 75,000 for a higher secondary college and Tk 36,000 for a madrasah during the financial year.

Madrasahs are privileged in staff pattern also. The government approves 14 teachers and 3 employees for a Dakul madrasah, 19 teachers and 3 employees for a Alim madrasah, 20 teachers and 7 employees for a Fazil madrasah and 18 teachers and 10 employees for a Kamil madrasah.

On the other hand, government approves 12 teachers and 3 employees for a secondary school and 16 teachers and 7 employees for a higher secondary college.

Bodies of diplomat's wife, son arrive

Bodies of the wife and son of Bangladeshi diplomat in Ankara Brigadier Shariful Islam reached here yesterday evening, reports UNB.

Representatives of Foreign Ministry and concerned military officials received the bodies at the airport. A special Turkish military aircraft carried the bodies from the Turkish capital.

Major Ehtesham, younger brother of Defense Attache Brig Sharif, accompanied the bodies from Ankara.

Kismat Islam, wife of the Sharif and his 14-year-old son Sirajul Sohel, were stabbed to death allegedly by their house servant, Hafizur Rahman, at their residence in Ankara on July 12.

The servant also injured Brig Islam and later fled by a taxi.

Begum Islam and her son will be buried at the Banani army graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at the Dhaka Cantonment Central Mosque after the Jumma prayers today.

## School for retarded children in Mirpur facing closure

By Morshed Ali Khan

A high school committee in Mirpur has cut off the gas, electricity and water supply connections to a special school for mentally handicapped children run by SCEMRB in a bid to make it vacate its premises following row between the two parties.

The disconnection since June has caused sufferings for the more than 45 students attending different classes including Special Education and Vocational Training Classes. With the most vital amenities disconnected, the children at the school who are in constant need of special attention are terribly distressed and some have not since turned up at the school. Sources said that the

tual three-storied building, donated by late Zahurul Islam, which accommodates the high school is situated nearby.

The SCEMRB had been awaiting allotment of the three-room second-floor premises under a government scheme to rehabilitate handicapped people through education and medical care in the premises of its primary schools.

According to teachers and officials of the SCEMRB school, the SCEMRB had been paying rent of Tk 36,000 annually to the high school committee since 1984 'not being aware' about the complications in its ownership. In 1997 the high school committee asked the school to vacate the premises as

Islam High School, Alaiddin Ahmed told this correspondent that he was not aware of the fact that it was the decision of the school committee to disconnect electricity and water supply lines to the SCEMRB school. He said the gas supply to the entire premises of the school had been snapped as bills were long overdue.

Alaiddin categorically denied that they were trying to evict the school for handicapped children and said that in fact the committee had offered the school two rooms for use at its new premises.

"You see the high school is paying Tk 5,000 for my house rent whereas the SCEMRB school is occupying my living



Some of the students of the SCEMRB school for mentally handicapped children in Mirpur.

high school committee had even shut the main gate on June 26, stranding the children outside in rain, before an official took them back to their homes.

The school for the mentally retarded children is run by the Society for the Care and Education for the Mentally Retarded, Bangladesh (SCEMRB) at the premises of Pallabi Government Primary School. The committee of the Pallabi Majedul Islam Model High School 'illegally' built first and second floors over the primary school and claimed that the entire upper floors belong to them. The high school was the private initiative of late business magnate Zahurul Islam and the school has been named after his brother, Majedul Islam. The ac-

it (the high school committee) wanted to turn it into a residential quarter for the headmaster of the high school.

"The Headmaster of the primary school as well as officials of the Ministry of Education asked us not to pay any rent to the Majedul Islam High School since the premises actually belong to the primary school," said an official of SCEMRB.

The SCEMRB school stopped payment of rents from January 1998 hoping that the Ministry of Education would process the necessary papers establishing the proper allotment of the premises to 'serve the handicapped children'. They however paid off a Tk 6,000 gas bill recently.

The Headmaster of Majedul

quater," Alaiddin said. Dr Abu Solaiman Mandal, President of the SCEMRB school, said that if they agreed to go to the premises of the high school, their very existence would be at stake. "The committee could then at any time take up a resolution to evict us. However, if there is a written agreement we would respect it," Mandal said.

Meanwhile the children who used to study at the school continue to suffer.

"Like others in the school my child is also suffering due to this problem. And I have no other alternative to this school," said, Mahmuda Akhtar, mother of Hasan Mahmud Siddiqui Pavel a student of the SCEMRB school.

## Nat'l Recitation Festival begins

By DU Correspondent

The four-day long fifth National Recitation Festival began yesterday at the Shaikh Osman auditorium of Central Public Library in the city yesterday afternoon.

Wahedul Haq, a noted journalist, a musician and phonetician, inaugurated the programme while Obaidul Quader, State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs was present as the special guest.

Presided over by Asaduzzaman Noor, the inaugural ceremony was also addressed, among others, by Syed Salauddin Zaki, Director General of Bangladesh Television, Golam Quddus and Hasan Aref.

Different cultural organisations from the city and across the country will participate in the festival organised by Bangladesh Abriyya Samannay Parishad (BASP).

## AL MP's house attacked

MYMENSINGH, July 29: Armed hoodlums unleashed another attack on the residence of ruling party MP advocate M Moslemuddin in the town on Wednesday night, reports UNB.

Inmates of the house at 16, Naha Road, said the terrorists hurled abuses and tried to break the door after they were denied entrance. They also damaged windowpanes.

As police reached the spot after being informed by the wife of Moslemuddin, the MP of Mymensingh-6 (Fulbaria), the attackers left the place.

## Corruption case against Khaleda: Hearing Aug 12

By Court Correspondent

Dhaka Divisional Special Court yesterday fixed August 12 for hearing of charges in a corruption case against opposition leader Khaleda Zia filed by Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) with Ramna thana in January 1997.

Following a time prayer by the defence lawyers the court adjourned the proceedings after hearing the both sides.

An official of ACB lodged the case accusing former prime minister Begum Zia and her then PS Shahabuddin Ahmed for misappropriating Tk 63 lakh for decorating and renovating her Dhaka Cantonment residence.

Khaleda Zia did not appear before the court as the court had earlier allowed her to be represented by her lawyer.

The judge Mohammed Fazlul Karim adjourned the hearing of charges till August 12.

## Dr MR Choudhury's Chehlum today

By Staff Correspondent

The Chehlum of Maj General Dr MR Choudhury will be held today, says a press release.

A milad mahfil will be held after Magreb prayers at Cantonment Central Mosque (Alahu Mosque) at Dhaka Cantonment, the release said.

## DU Book Exhibition '99 tomorrow

By DU Correspondent

A two-day long Dhaka University Book Exhibition '99 will begin tomorrow at the Teachers and Students Centre (TSC), to introduce the books and journals written by the teachers and officials of the university.

More than 1222 books and journals of 238 teachers from different faculties of the university will be exhibited at the programme, which will be inaugurated by Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, Vice Chancellor of the university.

It was disclosed in a press briefing at the administrative building yesterday afternoon.

Addressing the programme, Prof Shahadat Ali, Pro-Vice Chancellor said that the exhibition will be open for all and it has been organised to introduce the books to students, guardians, researchers and as well as the general people.

The books and journals have been published from different publishing houses at home and abroad including the Dhaka University Frakashana Sangstha (DUPS), different departments, institutes, research centres and bureau of the university, he added.

A 24-member committee was also formed for the preparation of the exhibition.

Among others, Muhammad Selim, registrar, Prof Anisuzzaman, Prof Abul Kashem Fazlul Haq, Director of DUPS and Dr Bimal Kanti Guha, Member Secretary of the Preparatory Committee were also present at the programme.

## Two soldiers killed in road accident in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 29: At least two soldiers died on the spot and 30 others injured in a road accident on the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway at Sankania point this morning, police said.

The injured persons including seven soldiers were rushed to the CMH at Chittagong Cantonment and Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Police and security sources said the accident occurred at 8 am today at Nayahat of Sankania point when a pick-up carrying Army personnel bound for Chittagong from Bandarban, collided head-on with a passenger coach bound for Cox's Bazar.

The rest of the injured persons were coach passengers, police said.

## Rajshahi Nursing Instt students asked to vacate dormitories

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, July 29: The students of Rajshahi Nursing Institute under Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) have been asked to vacate their dormitories by 10.00 am tomorrow (Friday).

The decision was taken in an Academic Council meeting held at the office of the Director of RMCH on Wednesday evening following an indefinite strike called by the nursing students on July 18 to press home their demands for withdrawal of three tutors of the institute.

Meanwhile, the nursing students have rejected the decision of RMCH authorities and brought out a procession in the city protesting the decision.

The processionist paraded the main thoroughfares of the city chanting slogans demanding immediate withdrawal of

## UN body grants ASA spl status

The United Nations Economic and Social Council has granted special consultative status to ASA, a leading NGO in the country, reports UNB.

The decision was taken in its 1999 session, said a press release of ASA yesterday.



The employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs staged a demonstration in the city yesterday to press home their 19-point demand. — Star photo