



Over 3 million customers depend on **FedEx** everyday for timely and reliable delivery of their packages and freight to 211 countries worldwide. You will get the same level of world-class service here at **FedEx**.

**Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.**  
Licensee of Federal Express Corporation, 95, Motiheel C.A, Dhaka-1000. E-mail: banex@bangla.net Internet: http://www.fedex.com  
For customer service details, please dial:  
Dhaka (880-2) 9565114, 9884851, 9883927, 894213, 9130647, 9338931, 9345261, 9667462, 808803, 863896, 9010493  
Chittagong (880-31) 712127, 724823, CEPZ 740108 Narayanganj (880-2) 9714336, Khulna (880-41) 725008



**Ideal gift for any occasion.**

Instalment facility available only for purchases above Tk. 7,500

**Transcom Electronics Limited**

Official licensee of Philips Electronics N.V. for lighting products, radio and TV sets.

Dhaka: 815307-10 Ctg: 716353, 723578 Khulna: 720304 Bogra: 6215  
Visit your nearest Philips Display Centre today



## Most rural mothers know least about proper breastfeeding

By Naimul Haq

Despite efforts for protection and promotion of breastfeeding, knowledge about 'proper' breastfeeding is still poor in rural Bangladesh due to various factors, a study said.

More than 90 per cent of the mothers interviewed during the study did not know that colostrum (milk secreted soon after childbirth), should be the 'first and only food' for the newborn.

The ICDDR,B (Centre for Health and Population Research) carried out the study recently to assess the knowledge and practice of rural mothers concerning breastfeeding and the factors affecting it.

The study showed that mothers' knowledge about proper breastfeeding is poor in the rural areas of Bangladesh. Breastfeeding initiation is delayed and the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding is extremely low.

Only about one-fourth of the mothers know that breastfeeding should be initiated immediately after childbirth, it said.

The study covered households in four rural thanas. A total of 2105 women who gave live births were interviewed.

In Bangladesh, 94 per cent of the children under five suffer from various degrees of malnutrition and 47 per cent of the children aged 6-71 months suffer from moderate malnutrition, it said.

Dr Shameem Ahmed, an expert on breastfeeding, said, "Breast milk is the best and safest food for infants for the first six months of life. It provides nutrition for infants and lays the foundation for their

healthy psychological development. Besides, it immunises the child against common infections."

Dr Shamim who works at the ICDDR,B pointed out that in Bangladesh where infant mortality is high, artificially fed infants are 'at least 14 times likely to die from diarrhoea than are breastfed infants'.

"In communities with high prevalence of malnutrition, breastfeeding may substantially enhance child survival up to three years of age. In addition to its direct nutritional value for the infant and young child, breastfeeding contributes to women's health by reducing the risk of premenopausal breast cancer," she added.

A recent national survey said that 55 per cent of the newborns were given breast milk on the second day or later due to the common belief that breast milk does not come down before the third day.

Majority of the mothers who do not feed colostrum believe that it causes diarrhoea or stomach upset, the ICDDR,B study said.

"Giving sweet pre-lacteals like honey is associated with the belief that these will ensure a pleasant personality. More than four-fifths of the mothers said that the baby's first food should be honey, sugar, water and mustard oil."

The study pointed out that Mothers' knowledge and practice regarding the duration of exclusive breastfeeding were poor. Only 43 per cent of infants were exclusively breastfed when they were one month and

only 15 per cent when they were five months.

An interesting observation in the study is that the more educated the mothers are, the less likely they are to breastfeed their infants exclusively for the first five months.

Also, education was related to the use of artificial milk for babies.

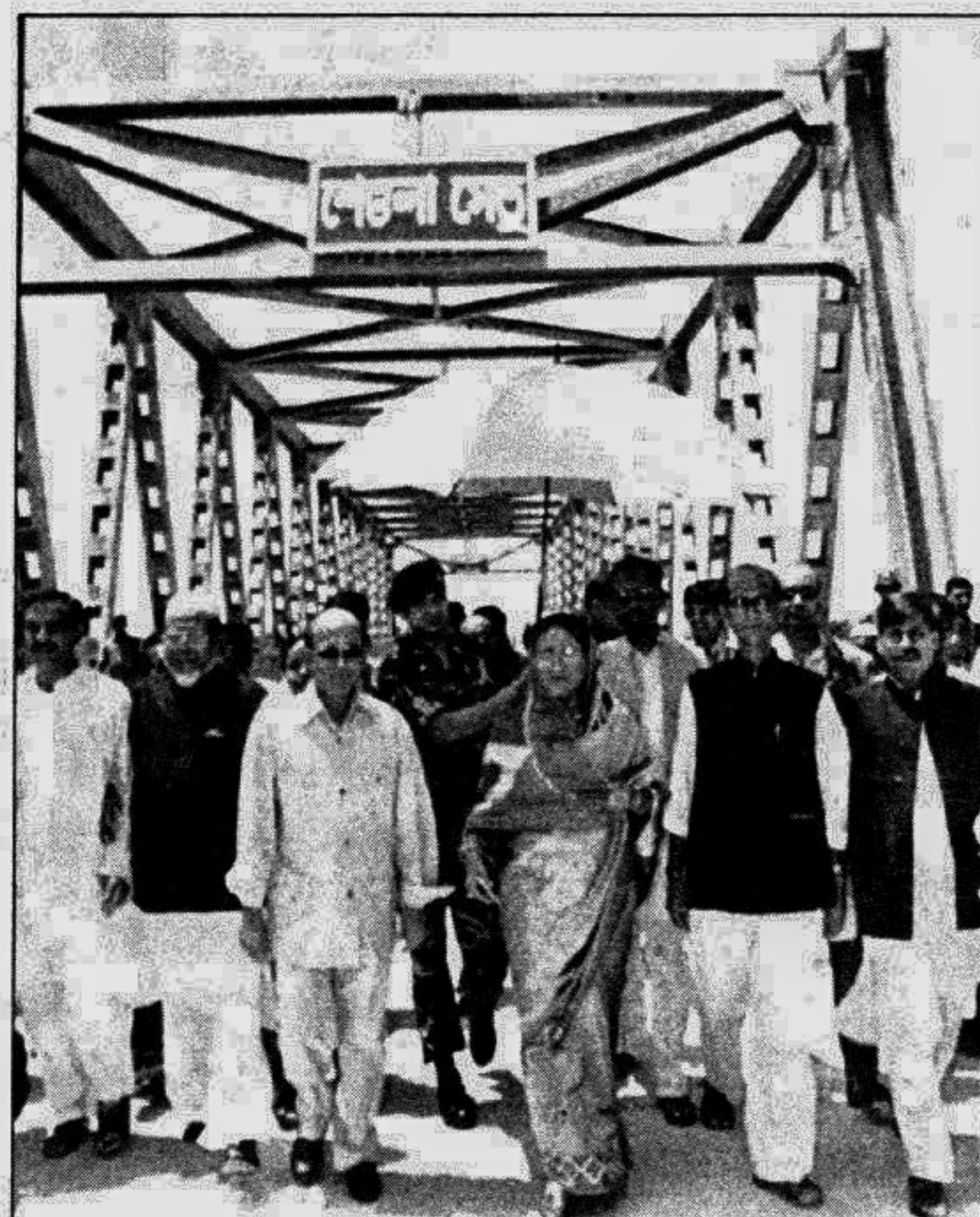
Those who were more educated used those more.

The study said "The breastfeeding programmes have concentrated their activities more in the urban hospitals, training doctors and nurses. Involvement of grassroots workers at the community level is important and that national programmes should be strengthened to address the needs of the community, especially in the rural areas of the country."

It may be mentioned that a national campaign for the protection and promotion of breastfeeding (CPPBF) was launched in 1989. In November, 1991, the President, the Prime Minister and Health Minister signed the 'Dhaka Declaration' pledging to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

Next year, the Unicef launched the 'baby friendly' hospital initiative (BFHI). A CPPBF sub-committee was formed to take responsibility of the BFHI and to cooperate with the health ministry in implementing its initiatives.

The 'Innocent Declaration' recommended for Bangladesh 'Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, continued up to 2 years or more with the addition of home cooked food'.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina walking over the newly-built 'Sheola Bridge' at Beanibazar in Sylhet yesterday.

—PID photo

## PM: BNP approved

From Page 1

coro as royalty.

She said under the proposal Bangladesh transport will carry Indian goods within the Bangladesh territory. "But the BNP government had agreed to allow Indian trucks to carry its goods over the Bangladesh territory," she said. This will also employ huge Bangladesh labourers, she added.

The Prime Minister criticised the BNP for misleading the people by making false statements. She said the BNP government of Begum Khaleda Zia had endorsed the transit by signing the SAPTA agreement in 1993. She said the SAPTA agreement clearly indicates that commodities can be carried through Bangladesh.

Referring to the obligations of the International treaties, Sheikh Hasina said it was obligatory for any government to honour international agreements of the previous governments.

Sheikh Hasina alleged that the BNP always stands against the development activities of the governments. She said her

government has to confront with the opposition whenever it embarks upon development programmes.

Chaired by Beanibazar Thana Awami League President M A Aziz, the meeting was also addressed by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Dewan Farid Gazi, MP, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Adviser to Prime Minister Mr Suranjit Sengupta, Mr Nurul Islam Nadeed, MP, Abu Naser and A N M Shaifur Rahman.

Referring to the remark of former finance minister Saifur Rahman on repression on women, Sheikh Hasina advised him to find out the loopholes in his own party. In this regard, she mentioned the death of Yasmin at Dinajpur and said the BNP government tried to hush up the incident by issuing a Press Note.

### Sheola bridge opens

Earlier, the Prime Minister opened Sheola bridge on river Kusharia.

Constructed by the Roads and Highway Department with local contractor and workers, the 226-metre long and 10-metre wide bridge was built with pre-stressed concrete garter and steel on bored pile foundation, officials said.

The bridge on Sylhet-Sutarkandi highway connects Sutarkandi with Sylhet. It was constructed with a provision of 10-metre vertical and 86-metre horizontal clearance from the highest flood level.

The bridge will facilitate about 25 lakh people of the area, including Sheola, Dubagbazar, Beanibazar, Baralekha, Sutarkandi, Golapganj and Baraiganj, to travel directly to the divisional headquarters, Sylhet and the capital Dhaka.

### JU dormitories

From Page 1

siege to the Administrative Building.

They also submitted a memorandum to the VC demanding arrest of the rapist and his supporters, who captured the halls.

Meanwhile, the JU authorities yesterday formed a four-member task force headed by Prof Mohammad Amir Hossain, Director, Students' Welfare and Advisory centre to ensure normalcy on the campus, a press release said last night.

The decision to form a task force was taken in an emergency meeting of the syndicate in the afternoon with Vice-Chancellor Prof Alauddin Ahmed in the chair.

The meeting also formed a vigilance team headed by the proctor of the university.

## Beanibazar Gas Field inaugurated

BEANIBAZAR, Sylhet, July 31: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today inaugurated the Beanibazar Gas Field saying that the gas will be used for meeting the domestic demand, reports UNB.

"We have huge demand of gas and we can use this valuable natural resource by setting up gas-based industries," she said while addressing the inaugural function of the gas field in Jaldubara.

"There is increasing pressure for exporting gas, but the local demand is still strong. I suggest the entrepreneurs to invest in gas-based industries," she said.

"We may consider gas export if found surplus after meeting domestic demand," the Prime Minister added.

From the two wells of Beanibazar Gas Field Petrobangla will extract 40 million cubic feet of gas and 640 barrels of condensate every day. Reserve of gas in the field is estimated at 114 billion cubic feet and condensate 1.82 billion barrels, officials said.

Sylhet Gas Field Company Limited, a subsidiary of Petrobangla, is extracting the gas from Beanibazar field using the local technology and experts.

## Incident at Sect 2 leaders of Class Four employees arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested two leaders of Class Four employees yesterday on charges of vandalism at the Secretariat in the capital. At least 30 people, including policemen were injured on Thursday.

The arrested were Mizanur Rahman, an MLSS of Establishment Ministry and Alaiddin, an office assistant of LGED Ministry, police said.

A case was filed with Ramna thana Thursday night accusing a number of Class Four employees of the Secretariat, including the arrested two, on charges of attacking police, vandalism and unlawful gathering inside the Secretariat, police said.

Alaiddin, president of Chaturtha Sreni Karmachari Parishad, was arrested from his Azimur residence at about 9 pm while Mizanur Rahman, secretary general of the same organisation, was arrested from his Mirpur residence in the afternoon.

They were detained at Ramna thana till filing of this report last night.

## Fry catchers

From Page 1

authorities provided some catchers with additional bowls and some monetary assistance to stop the practice. Local people said the catchers went on with idea for about a week, but once the monitoring was no more there, they went back to the old practice.

Reazuddin Ahmed, deputy director of Department of Environment (DoE) in Dhaka, warned that such plundering of the sea and the rivers could deplete all sorts of aquatic life and unleash a "terrible consequence" on the environment.

He said there must be a shrimp farming policy to regulate catching of shrimp fries. Moreover, a consistent monitoring of the process of shrimp farming should be present.

"Nature often makes up the loss by automatically generating more, but there is a limit to it. For years, plundering is going on in the guise of shrimp fry catching. You won't have to wait for long before all life, including the fries, disappear from our sea," Reazuddin said.

The Deputy Commissioner of Patuakhali, Abdus Samad told The Daily Star that he was aware of the problem. During the Fisheries Week recently, the matter was discussed at an official level. "We will go to villages and try to motivate people, we are also planning to use loudspeakers to tell the fry catchers to throw back the remaining water with other marine life," Samad said.

## Jamiat to back Cong in Lok Sabha polls

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, July 31: Jamiat-ul-ulema-i-Hind, an organisation of Muslim clerics with pockets of influence in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states, has thrown its weight behind India's main opposition party Congress in the coming parliamentary elections.

At a convention held yesterday, Jamiat members adopted a resolution in the presence of Congress chief Sonia Gandhi stating that at the national level there "is only one party which is capable of checking the advance of the BJP."

The convention, called to preserve the secular fabric of the country, also said in a politically significant resolution that "to talk about the third front (consisting of non-BJP and non-Congress parties) is mere wishful thinking."

The Jamiat has always supported the Congress since independence but in 1992 the organisation switched support to the Samajwadi Party led by Mulayam Singh Yadav.

The Jamiat has a network of Islamic institutions and schools, including a university at Deoband in Uttar Pradesh. It is headed by Syed Asad Madani, a former Rajya Sabha member of Congress, and his son Mehmood Madani joined the

Congress with Sonia Gandhi making the announcement about this at the convention.

Asad Madani told the convention that the Congress has "accepted" most of the points raised by Jamiat.

The resolution specifically referred to the Congress' assurance against any move to change Muslim Personal Law.

Sonia Gandhi, in her brief speech at the convention, said the unity and integrity of India could be protected only if everyone was given an equal opportunity and pointed out that she has been a member of the family which "never compromised on secularism."

She said the Congress election manifesto would promise to work for welfare of minorities and look after their safety, education and progress.

Sonia Gandhi had recently called on the ailing Islamic scholar and President of Muslim Personal Law Board Maulana Ali Mian at Lucknow, a visit viewed in political circles as Congress efforts to woo Muslim votes.

The resolution at the convention said "Muslims should avoid division of their votes and take care that their votes are not wasted."

## Degree (Pass) results

From Page 1

5,050 second division and 1,230 third division.

A total of 29,242 candidates appeared in the Bcom (Pass) Examinations. Of them, 12,392 came out successful. The percentage of pass is 42.38.

Among the successful candidates, ten got first division, 5,383 second division and 6,999 third division.

The total students appeared in the B Music Examinations were 21. Of them, only six students came out successful securing second division. The percentage of pass is 28.57.

A total of 2,951 students appeared in the Certificate Course Examinations. Of them, 1,191 came out successful. The percentage of pass is 40.36.

Mohammad Maksudur Rahman of Government City College of Chittagong topped the merit list in Bachelor of Arts (Pass) securing 737 marks. Mossammat Sabana Begum of Mirpur Girls' Ideal College, Dhaka, secured second position with 690 marks while Mohammad Nazmul Hussain of Narsingdi Government College obtained third position with

689 marks.

Monuara Begum of Hathazari College topped the merit list of Bachelor of Science (Pass) securing 713 marks. Naorin Jahan of Nazim College became second in the list securing 681 marks while Mohammad Akbar Hossain of Swarupkathi College secured third position obtaining 679 marks.

In the merit order of Bachelor of Social Science (BSS-Pass) Salma Begum from Nangalcourt Hasan Memorial College topped the list securing 622 marks. Sahin Akter from Kazi Noman Ahmed College of Muradnagar became second obtaining 617 marks while Mohammad Humayun Kabir of Nangalcourt Hasan Memorial College secured the third position with 612 marks.

In the Bachelor of Commerce group, Shofura Akter of Mohammadpur Mahila College, Dhaka, topped the merit list securing 641 marks. Reza Ur Rahman Mahmud of Dhaka City College secured second position with 639 marks while Abdullah Al Mahmud from Dhaka City College stood third securing 635 marks.

## Subsidy to agriculture

From Page 1

They say, the volume of subsidy that many developed nations are providing to their farmers, currently would be downsized drastically in compliance with WTO regulations. Such downsize in subsidy volume would have direct bearing on cereal and milk prices.

One MOA report prepared in 1997 acknowledged that, "under the new trade regime the expected price increase in food and other agriculture produces in international markets may call for modifications in national food security policies and strategies including consumer price policies for food."

"Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (ASCM) has widened the definition of subsidies beyond what is practised in Bangladesh. Taking advantage of ASCM, Bangladesh will have to develop a subsidy policy in the areas of agriculture where Bangladesh may have a comparative advantage," resolved the paper.

"So food security issue becomes more important now than ever before for countries like Bangladesh, which have to import foodgrains at the expense of hard-earned foreign exchange," says one expert adding that there will be nothing like it if the country can attain self-sufficiency in food production.

Many experts consider that there should be more subsidy and price support for country's agriculture so that it can flourish, optimally, as long as it does not over-exploit the 'Green Box' facility under WTO. The Green Box measures give special facilities to least developed countries (LDCs) that are not available to the developed and developing countries. For example, as a LDC, Bangladesh can give price support on storage and freight charges of processed food.

"Bangladesh provides minimal domestic support to agriculture and agribusiness. No direct price-distorting subsidies are provided to exports of primary and processed commodities; indirect support measures are also minimal and consistent with the WTO (Uruguay Round Agreement for Agriculture). In fact Bangladesh can and should use the Green Box measures and other exemptions of the URAA to promote sound agriculture and agribusiness development," says an expert of International Fertilizer Development Centre (IFDC).

Many experts, specially those keeping constant watch on fast marching globalization process, feel that Bangladesh should reassess its aggregate measure of support (AMS) in agriculture before the URAA comes under review next year.

Mobilising enough investment for cultivation for better yield is impossible for the resource-poor farmers, who deserve adequate price support, experts observe.

In Bangladesh, only 18 per cent of the population possess farmland over an acre while an overwhelming majority of 82 per cent are either landless or possess less than one acre land.

## 27 sex workers 'freed'

From Page 1

During a visit of the Kashimpur vagrants' home, this correspondent witnessed the process of hand-over of the sex workers to their 'guardians'. The sex workers whose personal data matched with those given by their so-called guardians were handed over.

But many of the sex workers and local people expressed doubt whether the persons taking away the sex workers were their genuine guardians. Most of the 'guardians' are former mistress or pimps of the sex worker, they said.

When asked, Deputy Assistant Director of Kashimpur 'home' Abul Fayez said, "We have no option. It is not possible for us to verify data about all the sex workers through investigation outside the vagrant's home. So, we are handing over them if the information given by the sex workers and their guardians match."

To another question, Fayez said they are still undecided about those whose guardians have not yet come.

The official said they detected two fake guardians from Narayanganj yesterday. When challenged, the two managed to flee, he added.

Reshma, 18, was married to Mohammad Hossain, a vegetable trader at Narayanganj before she was released from Kashimpur 'home' yesterday. The officials arranged the marriage after Reshma claimed that she loved Hossain and that he was the father of her baby.

Meanwhile, two sex workers Sumana, Shampa, were injured when they tried to fight the Kashimpur 'home' by scaling the 12 feet wall last night. They were given treatment, guards at the 'home' said. But officials denied.

Talking to this correspondent and some local newsmen through an opening in the main gate, sex workers' leader Sathi apprehended that some of the girls might have escaped because of poor security arrangement.

Despite the process of releasing, the sex workers continued their agitation for 'unconditional release' without guardians. But there was no allegation of torture.

Some of the sex workers repeated their earlier allegation that they were being given food mixed with toxicants. "We feel drowsy most of the time and have forgotten that once we were sex workers," said Rina from atop a tree inside the 'home'.

It was learnt that a police constable came under the wrath of the sex workers at Kashimpur 'home' in the early hours of yesterday. A group of sex workers attacked the policeman while he was going to toilet for allegedly torturing them earlier.

Finding him alone in the garden, the sex workers stripped him and kept him naked for half-an-hour. Later, they returned the uniform.

When asked, several sex workers and the on-duty policeman admitted the incident. He said, "We stay in a makeshift barrack outside the 'home'. But we had to use the toilet inside the 'home' because there was no toilet in our barrack. After the incident, we now respond to nature's call at open places."

Meanwhile, many local people said they were facing problems because of the sex workers. "We can't sleep at

night because of shouting by the sex workers. Besides, many unknown people move about in the area," said Dipak Kumar, a sweetmeat trader.

"We are scared of pimps and brokers who may trap innocent girls of our village. We are also facing questions from our children about suspicious movement of these strangers," said Shambhu Nath, a school teacher.

### Tofail

From Page 1

vestment was inadequate. While the private sector was coming up in providing computer education, he said, their quality should be monitored.

Prof Chowdhury added that in order to develop the sector a local IT market must be created and that the government had a big role to play there.

Aftabul Islam of Bangladesh Computer Samity said that he was optimistic about the future of IT in Bangladesh. "Over 350,000 youths visited the Computer Mela last year. And this means we have reasons to be hopeful. It cannot be a shame for us if we cannot give this young generation the right direction now."

APTECH Bangladesh chief Tarun Mitra, sharing the Indian experience in IT, said that India was now earning over US\$ 4 billion from software exports after more than three decades of sustained efforts. India now targeted US\$ 100 billion in IT exports in 2010, he said.

Rizwan Bin Faruq of Axiom Technologies said that Bangladesh must set its IT target now. He said that it was possible for Bangladesh to capture an IT market worth at least one billion dollar by 2004.

In the next millennium, he said, Bangladesh could knock the following IT sub-sectors: e-commerce or digitalisation of global economy, coding and testing facilities and data entry etc.

In order to move in this direction, Bangladesh must produce 120,000 IT professionals by 2004. "We must, therefore, expand education and infrastructure facilities immediately," he added.

It was a fast changing industry and time was a critical factor here, observed Mahfuz Anam. "Good policy is necessary, but that needs implementation in time."

### Posts of secy

From Page 1

instead of waiting for creation of vacancies in normal way.

The meeting, held at the commerce ministry, was chaired by Mohammad Shahjahan Mia, Convenor of the Forum, a press release said yesterday.

It said all posts of the Joint Secretary should be filled up by deputy secretaries on the basis of seniority and merit, doing away with the cadre-based quota system because the posts of Deputy Secretary were filled up from all cadres of civil service through quota-based promotion. "This is one of the reasons for disruption in the chain of command," it said.

It urged the government to implement the Prime Minister's order of December 9, 1996 to raise the pay scale of deputy secretaries to Tk 7100-8700 from Tk 6300-8050 as per the National Pay Scale. Some senior scale assistant secretaries are getting more than deputy secretaries following upgradation of their scale to Tk 6300-8050, it noted.

### President

From Page 1

of powers to the local government bodies.

"Unitary character of the state cannot be changed as it is one of the main pillars of the Constitution," he said, stressing the need for strengthening the local government system.

The President, however, cautioned against taking any hasty decision on it might yield negative result.

"Remember, public administration is not without the members of the public. So, you will have to give due respect to their views and aspirations."

The President referred to recommendations by previous commissions and regretted that some of the good ideas were not implemented.

The existing commission set up two years ago has put forward some good suggestions that are under consideration. The government is considering reintroduction of six working days a week, from 10 am to 5 pm, he said.

The function was presided over by Dr Kazi Faruque Ahmed, Chairman, Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB), while Dr Ataur Rahman presented the keynote paper.

A T M Shamsul Haque, Chairman of the Public Administration Reforms Commission and Shamsul Huda, Director of ADAB, also spoke at the inaugural function held at CIRDAP.

Dr Ataur Rahman in his paper pointed out some problems of public administration as revealed in a study conducted by ADAB at the grass roots level.

The problems include lack of transparency and accountability, inefficiency, corruption, excess manpower and absence of monitoring and people's participation.

Referring to another study, he said people think that the service of the judiciary and the police are the worst in this country.

"The public administration is very much centralised, non-responsive, not accountable, suffers from incision and wastage," he said.

### Khaleda

From Page 1

The government, she said, totally ignored the parliament in taking various important decisions and signing agreements, including the Ganges Water sharing treaty and CHT accord.

"India will be greatly benefited by this corridor facility, but our government is totally silent on the question of benefit of our people and country," Begum zia said.

The High Commissioner said that there were lot of difficulties regarding movement of transports between Canada and USA prior to signing of an agreement. But complex issues and difficulties were finally resolved through long discussions and signing of final agreement between the two countries took a long time, he added.

"The USA as a big powerful state has given a huge concession to its neighbour Canada in this bilateral agreement on transport movement," Ethridge said.

The envoy thought that people of this region would be benefited if the transportation or transit is multilateral. "It will be better for the people if the SAARC countries made arrangement for transit on multilateral basis," he said.

### 86 postmen