

What's on today....

BIBM Seminar: Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) will hold a seminar on "Implications of WTO on Banking and Financial Sector in Bangladesh." Chief guest: Shah AMS Kibria, Finance Minister. Venue: BIBM Bhaban. Time: 9:30am.

BLAST seminar: Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) will hold a seminar on "Hospital Waste Management: An exploration in search of policy, guidelines and rules." Venue: Seminar Room 3, CIRDP auditorium, 17 Topkhana Road. Time: 9:30 am.

Fassinder Retrospective: Zahir Raihan Film Society in association with Short Film Forum and Goethe Institut will screen Lili Marleen and Veronika Voss on the concluding day of the retrospective. Venue: Goethe Institut. Time: 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm respectively.

BC Seminar: British Council (BC) will hold a seminar on the Training and Internal Consultancy (TIC) project funded by Britain's Department for International Development (DFID). Venue: BC auditorium. Time: 10:00 am.

BUET seminar: A seminar on "Influence of Coastal Phenomenon during 1998 flood" will be held. Venue: Seminar room of BUET building. Time: 3:30 pm.

Science Fair : The Science Fair '99 of Dhanmondi International School will be held. Venue: School premises at Rd No 25 (Old, 14/A (New), Dhanmondi, R/A. Time: 8:30 am-3:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Annual Programme : The annual prize distribution ceremony and cultural function of Loreto School will be held. Venue: Bangladesh National Museum. Time: 5:00 pm

Weather

Thundershowers likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna and Barisal divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderately heavy falls is also expected at one or two places over Rajshahi division during the period, said the Met office.

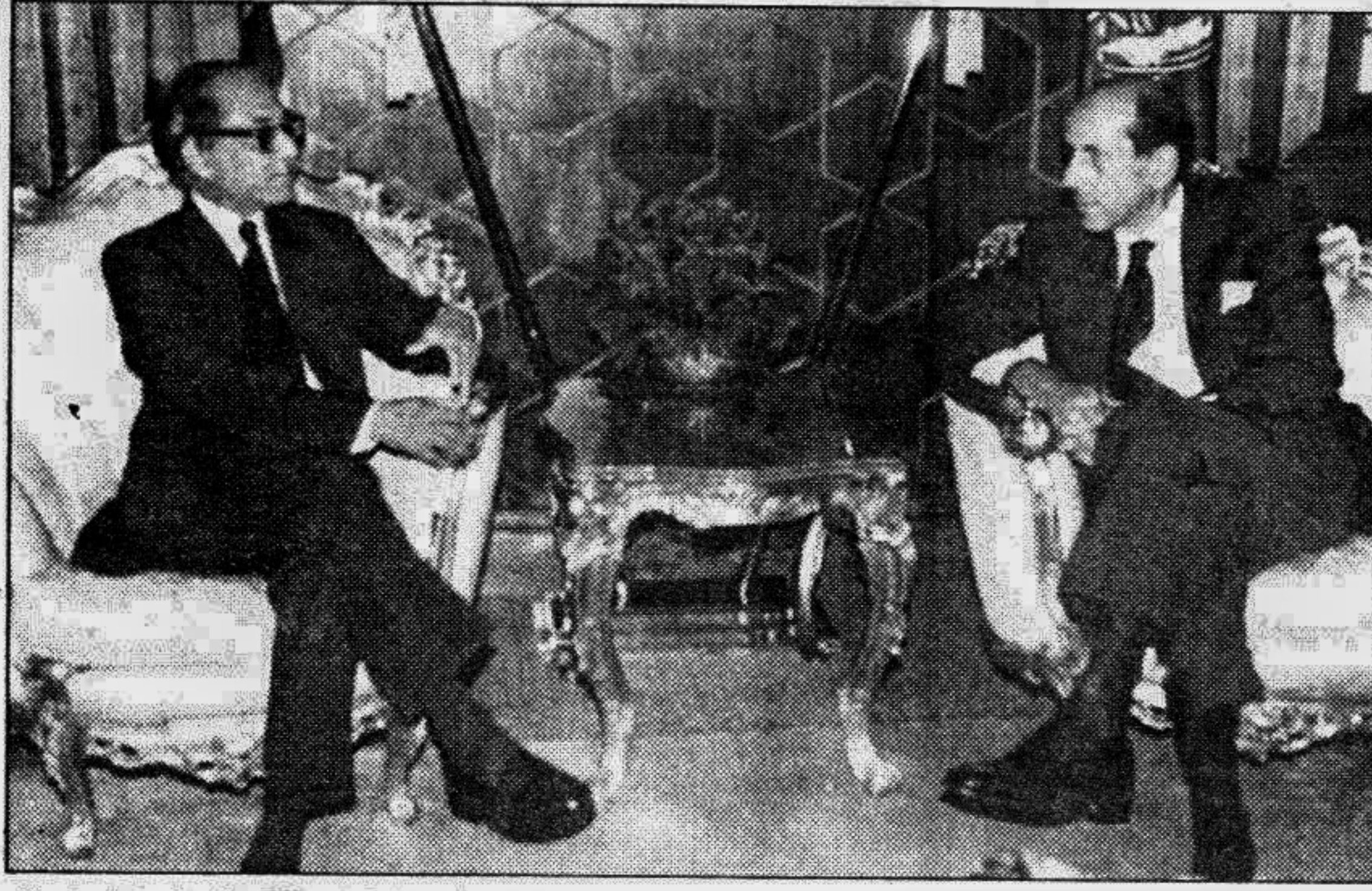
Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, it added.

Country's highest temperature yesterday was recorded 34.6 degree Celsius at Khulna and the lowest 24.6 degrees at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:24 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:37 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.4	27.4	74	75
Chittagong	32.6	26.7	79	81
Rajshahi	33.6	27.5	84	80
Khulna	34.6	26.9	81	77
Barisal	34.0	26.1	78	63
Sylhet	34.0	26.4	78	63
Cox's Bazar	32.6	26.0	78	85



Outgoing Italian envoy Raphael Minero, made a courtesy call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday. —PID photo

Italian envoy makes farewell call on president

The outgoing Italian ambassador to Bangladesh, Raffaele Minero, called on President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports BSS.

President Shahabuddin expressed satisfaction on the valuable contributions of Minero in promoting bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Italy. He mentioned the visit of Italian Prime Minister Professor Romano Prodi to Bangladesh in January 1998 and said that his visit contributed to further solidifying the friendly relations between the two countries.

He mentioned that Italy, one of the highly industrialized countries, had been contributing to the economic development of Bangladesh. The people of Bangladesh will remember the ambassador for his sincere efforts in bringing the two countries closer in friendship and cooperation. He wished him and his family good health and a happy life.

Minero thanked the President for receiving him. He gratefully recalled the sincere cooperation he received from the President, the government, and the people in the discharge of his duties.

PM rules out religious discrimination in country

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said every citizen irrespective of caste or creed is enjoying equal rights in Bangladesh as her government eliminating all forms of disparity, reports UNB.

"There is no religious discrimination in the perspective of enjoying equal rights," she said talking to a 37-member delegation of Jannastami celebration committee of Chittagong when they called on her at her office yesterday afternoon.

The Hindu community will celebrate Jannastami, the birthday of Lord Krishna, on September 2.

Sheikh Hasina said the government was working hard to build the country in line with the spirit of Liberation War and recalled that the people of all faiths fought for the country's independence in 1971. And many of them had sacrificed their lives to earn freedom.

People of all strata of society went to the Liberation War at the call of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, she said.

The Prime Minister hoped that the country would become self-sufficient through establishing the spirit and values of Liberation War for which her government is working with total dedication.

She told the community leaders that her party and the government believe in non-communal politics and urged people of all walks to help the government free the country from hunger and poverty.

In this regard she mentioned various poverty-intervention programmes of the government, including old-age allowance, Ashrayan project, housing for the poor, employment bank for the unemployed youths and the VGF cards for the extreme poor.

"We are doing all this to upgrade standard of living of the masses of people and build a self-reliant Bangladesh."

Led by President Nonigopal Saha and General Secretary Ranjit Kumar Chakravarti, the committee lauded the bold steps of the Prime Minister for a smooth run of the government. They also appreciated the Prime Minister for signing the Ganges water-sharing treaty, CHT peace agreement and for winning UNESCO peace award and other international laurels.

About various problems of the community the PM said she would look into the matter with deep sympathies.

Discussion meet at bat-tala today

By DU Correspondent

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of ruling party will hold a discussion meeting at the Bat-tala on the Dhaka University campus today to mark the National Mourning Day.

Mohammad Nasim, Minister for Home Affairs, Obaidul Kader, Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs, Bahadur Bepari and Ajay Kar Khokan will take part at the discussion.

Meanwhile, a discussion meeting was held at the Kuwait Moitry Hall of the university yesterday afternoon.

City Mayor Mohammad Hanif was present at the programme as the chief guest while Mostofa Jalal Mohiuddin was also present as the special guest.

The programme was also addressed, among others, by Bahadur Bepari and Ajay Kar Khokan.

Transshipment facility to India suicidal for us: IOJ chief

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Aug 23: Shaikhul Hadis Allama Azizul Haq, Chairman IOJ said here today, "Transshipment is suicidal for us. Awami League government has sold out the country to India. So we oppose the transit shipments agreement."

Shaikhul Hadis, was addressing a gathering in front of Aswini Kumar Town Hall today at about 12 Noon.

He said, if transit is started then Indian arms and contraband items loaded trucks would enter into Bangladesh in the night. As a result, a serious situation would be prevail in the country.

The IOJ chief further said that conspiring with some anti-Islami NGOs Sheikh Hasina is trying to close down madrasah education in the country.

Chaired by Abdul Kashem Sahajahan the gathering was also addressed by Maulana Mufti Fazul Haq Amin, ARB, Abdul Matin, Maulana Latif Nizami, Maulana Saikat Amin and Maulana Khalilur Rahman Nesarabadi and others.

NGOs : Slum demolition

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Dhaka City Committee of the Grassroots' People's Organisations. Earlier on August 15, they made an appeal to the Prime Minister to stop demolition of the slums before rehabilitation of the concerned poor.

However, terming the eviction drive a 'state violence' against the slum dwellers, the letter said, "A good number of slums have already been razed to the ground, rendering 50,000 poor men, women and children homeless and exposing them to the inclement weather in the monsoon. The police, armed hoodlums and bulldozers were wantonly used in this inhuman act of violence on slum dwellers - the most vulnerable section of the urban population."

The NGOs concerned have accused Sheikh Hasina's government of breaching commitment. "On February 18, 1997, the Prime Minister pledged that no slum would be demolished without making proper rehabilitation arrangements for the victims," the letter said. "But unfortunately, the government has now turned its back on the commitment and virtually waged a war against the slum dwellers."

Reluctant to buy the government arguments for the eviction drive, the NGOs said, "Although elimination of crime and terrorism has been cited as the plea for the government crackdown on slums, it is common knowledge that the ordinary slum dwellers are not involved in criminal activities and terrorism. In fact, they are being held hostages by the real terrorists and criminals."

Criticising the government for indiscriminately branding the slum dwellers as terrorists and criminals, the NGOs said, that the attempt amounted to the 'denial of the productive role they are playing in the industrial sectors including garments'. "The dislodging of workers mostly dwelling in the slums will have a telling effect on the overall economy of the country."

Arguing that 'not a single criminal or terrorist has been arrested from the slums demolished so far', the NGOs said that the reality 'raises serious doubts about the professed aim of the operation'. The NGOs find the government argument, 'a hoax'.

The NGOs believe that the real purpose behind the eviction drive is to sell out the land to well-off people. "A recent government decision communicated through a land ministry circular issued on December 11 last year, to sell out state owned land in urban areas to the well-off section of the population confirms this speculation."

The NGOs also said that 'the land mafia in Dhaka are casting a covetous eye on the state owned land, which, they hope, would be up for grabs, once the slum dwellers are ousted'.

"Evicting the innocent slum dwellers without taking effective measures against the real culprits is completely unjust, illogical and unethical," the NGOs observed.

The NGOs have found the government expectation that the evicted slum dwellers would duly return to their villages "utterly ill-founded." "The poor people took shelter in the city slums after losing all their assets and access to livelihoods in their ancestral villages."

"They also found the government announcement for post-eviction rehabilitation of the

Agreed minutes

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Development Board (PDB) and SNC-Lavalin will study the technical, environmental, commercial and financial aspects of the projects in the next six months with Canadian assistance.

After the feasibility study, PDB may sign contracts under which SNC-Lavalin will install the projects on turnkey basis. The two 100 MW plants will be installed at "suitable" locations, the press release said.

As per preliminary estimate, the projects may cost about 135 million US dollars.

The Karnaphuli plant was commissioned in 1962 with an installed capacity of 230 MW.

HC: Squatters

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stayed eviction of slum dwellers.

A group of evicted slum dwellers took shelter in front of the residence of Dr Kamal Hossain at 2 a.m. on Saturday.

But the squatters at the Supreme Court compound said yesterday that they were unaware of the court order.

During a visit to the area yesterday evening, this correspondent saw one person, Abdul Khaleque, identifying himself as a leader of the Bastuhara Samity, recording names of the squatters for what he called their rehabilitation. When asked about the court order, he said he would not comment on it.

At about 10-30 p.m., Abu Yusuf, another leader of Bastuhara Samity, said there that the squatters would leave the court premises following the order. He said a list of the squatters was being prepared under instruction from the Dhaka district administration but could not say whether it was for their rehabilitation.

He said some policemen visited the area earlier in the evening and asked the squatters to leave the court premises.

But when contacted at 10-30 p.m., a duty officer at Ramna thana said they were yet to receive any order from the authorities to remove the squatters.

Nirmul Committee blasts demand to change national anthem

Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee yesterday strongly condemned the demand for changing the national anthem by some speakers recently at a discussion organised by the BNP-Jamaat backed "Swadhinata Forum", reports BSS.

Expressing deep indignation, President of the Advisory Council of Nirmul Committee Prof. Kabir Chowdhury, President of the Executive Committee Poet Shamsur Rahman and General Secretary Qazi Mukul in a joint statement said the defeated forces of the war of liberation are hatching conspiracy against Bangladesh even after 28 years of independence.

Some local lackeys of Pakistan are involved in a conspiracy to implement the blueprint of Pakistani ideology in the independent Bangladesh in the same way the Pakistani rulers were engaged in the evil design of destroying the thousands of years old Bangalee culture, heritage and ideology, they said.

They said Bangladesh was liberated as an independent country through a bloody struggle in 1971 with a view to building a non-communal and democratic country based on Bangalee nationalism.

"We think that the demand for changing the national anthem is being raised after 28 years of independence as part of a series of conspiracies of the anti-liberation elements to destroy that dream and ideology of non-communalism and democracy," the Nirmul Committee leaders said.

They said the collaborators of 1971 in the name of Swadhinata forum backed by Jamaat-e-Islami and some of their like-minded political allies are indulging in evil activities to mislead the new generation.

They regretted that Awami League which led the country's War of Liberation was not taking any action to stop the evil activities of those anti-liberation elements.



Dr Kamal Hossain coming out of the High Court after the hearing of the writ petition on the eviction of Slum dwellers in the city yesterday. —Star photo

Nuree Mosque site More bones unearthed

By DU Correspondent

Liberation War Museum (LWM) in co-operation with Bangladesh Army yesterday recovered some 34 small and large bones, some iron foils, a plastic made money bag and some cloths, following an excavation at the Nuree Mosque premises at Mirpur in the city, said a LWM press release.

A new spot of the killing field has been identified while excavating the southern side of Nuree Mosque. The LWM hopes to recover more mortal remains of the martyrs from the newly identified spot.

JU student bodies demand punishment of rapists, killers

By JU Correspondent

Gonotantrik Chhatra Oikkyo (GCO) and Sanskritik Jole (SJ) of Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday brought out separate processions and held rallies on the campus demanding expulsion and cancellation of certificates of the students responsible for rapes, killings, terrorism and extortion on the campus during the last couple of years.

Activists of SJ, a conglomeration of 30 cultural organisations of JU, brought out a silent procession from the central cafeteria. The SJ activists were carrying placards containing anti-rape, anti-killing, anti-terrorism and anti-extortion slogans. The procession ended at the Arts Faculty premises.

GCO brought out another procession from the central cafeteria to press their seven-point demand including expulsion and cancellation of certificates of rapists, killers and extortionists. Marching through the campus, the procession ended at the Academic Building.

SJ organised a cultural function at the foot of Amar Ekushey as a part of their protest programme. They also screened two films - 'Nine Months to Freedom' and 'Zoo' there.

Addressing a rally at the front of the GCO office, GCO leaders reiterated their demand of expulsion and cancellation of certificates of all seven rapists and their six abettors and all others who were involved in killings, collection of tolls and arms-hoarding on the campus during the last years.

Among others who addressed the rally, were Aniruddha Das Anjan, organising secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) and Ariful Haq, president of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front



Dr Swaminathan, visiting Indian agriculturist speaking to members of The Hunger Project and its volunteers at a local hotel yesterday.



Members of the Retired Armedforces Welfare Association have launched a tree plantation programme in line with the national tree plantation drive. Flying officer Golum Mortuza and Secretary general Col Khalid Azam inaugurated the drive by planting a sapling at the RAOWA Club premises recently.

BNP leader Mohan's Janaza today

The namaz-e-Janaza of BNP leader Advocate AKM Shamsul Bari Mia Mohan will be held in front of the party's central office at 11 am today, reports UNB.

Another Janaza of late Bari, a member of the national executive committee of BNP, will be held at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Zohr prayers, said a party press release yesterday.

Advocate Shamsul Bari died at Madras in India on Friday.

Obituary

Subash Chandra Chowdhury, a shift-in-charge in the Teleprinter Section of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha, died of lung cancer at his residence at Dogai yesterday. He was 48, reports BSS.

Chowdhury is survived by his old father, his wife, three daughters, two brothers and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He had been suffering from lung cancer for a long time.

Transshipment

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ganas, India, Mongla-Ruhanpur (Bangladesh)-Sinhbad (Maldah, India), Shabbajpur (Bangladesh)-Mohishasan Landing (Assam, India).

The Benapole-Petrapole transit route is under construction now.

Besides, Bangladesh and Nepal have railway transit through Indian land starting from Biral (Bangladesh) via border point Radhikapur up to Jogbari in Nepal. The route stretches 218 km, including 208 km through Indian territory.

Bangladesh sent 4.35 lakh MTs of commodities to Nepal through this route from 1993-94 to 1997-98 fiscal year.

Year-wise break up are: 81,440 metric tons carried in '93-94, 106,020 MTs in '94-95, 103,320 MTs in '95-96, 88,600 MTs in '96-97 and 56,400 MTs in '97-98.

Rivals murder

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some of his accomplices went to Tongi to attend a religious programme Sunday night. Jalil found there some members of Moti group including Jahangir and Nazrul.

They apologised to Jalil for the previous rivalry and requested him and his men to return to Dhaka with them to Dhaka.

They brought Jalil to Dhaka in their motor vehicle in the early hours of yesterday. They then took Jalil to a shanty of one Rafiq in Lalkuthi area and killed him there, police said.

The body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Parul Begum, 22, who was inside an adjacent shanty during the killing, was also injured in the leg when a stray bullet fired by the killers hit her. She was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Writ disposed of

From Page 1

dwellers should not be driven out without any notice or respect for their human rights and without arranging their rehabilitation. He was also critical of the government contention that slum dwellers are criminals.

Attorney General Mahmudul Islam argued that the slums had become dens of extortionists and criminals dealing in arms and drugs. He apprised the court that the government had taken up a massive plan for rehabilitating the slum people in their rural homes with the help of banks and other financial institutions. Besides flats are being raised for them at Mirpur in the city and other places.

Transport strike

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tinations.

District Commissioner of Rangpur Mohammad Moazzem Hossain told The Daily Star that normal life was paralysed by the strike. He however alleged that the transport leaders did not turn up for a meeting with the district administration scheduled on August 20.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reports: Normal life in the district was disrupted by a transport strike. Buses, trucks and other vehicles remained off the road.

Meanwhile, Moidul Islam, former minister in the Ershad cabinet, in a statement yesterday demanded immediate government intervention into the impasse.

Masum Murder: Case filed against 14

From Our Correspondent

BARISAL, August 23: A case was filed following the Masum murder against 14 persons including a Poura Commissioner last midnight.

Masum's father Berek Sikder filed the case with Kotwali police.

Masum, allegedly, a Juba League Cadre, was murdered Saturday midnight at Charbaria, some 4 kilometre off Barisal town.

Battlelines drawn

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Congress has been its inability to set the agenda of electioneering. The issues which dominated the campaign speeches of leaders on both sides of the political divide is India's military standoff with Pakistan in Kargil.

The projection of Atal Behari Vajpayee by the media as well as BJP-led combine as a "tried, tested and trusted" leader and India's "man of the moment" especially after Kargil conflict has contrasted sharply with Congress' hesitation to go full blast in the same manner in the case of Sonia Gandhi as its Prime Ministerial candidate.

In speeches at successive election rallies, Vajpayee has showcased his credentials as the person to lead India into the next century, riding high on the nationalistic mood that has set in India in the wake of Kargil.

National security and last year's nuclear tests at Pokharan have formed the core of Vajpayee's speeches not only in the electioneering but also in customary Independence Day address to the nation.

The Prime Minister chose to interpret the Kargil conflict and the intrusion of Pakistani forces in Kargil as the vindication of his government's nuclear policies and the need for a minimum nuclear deterrence as a measure of self-defence.

Secondly, Vajpayee also conjure a nationalistic vision while referring to Kargil conflict.

Soldiers from Nagaland, from Assam, from Tamilnadu and from almost every state were fighting for the country. "There was not the slightest distance between them on account of caste or religion or region," he said asserting "this is the real India for which we have to live and die."

Unable to get out of the BJP-led alliance's agenda, the Congress adopted the strategy of seeking to pick "holes" in the ruling combine's main plan: Kargil.

Congress leaders, led by Sonia Gandhi, contended that Pakistani forces' intrusion in Kargil "exposed" the Vajpayee government's "failure" on matters relating to national security.

The government, Congress alleges, had information about Pakistani infiltration in Kargil and yet failed to act on time.

Besides, Kargil, Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin and controversial Bofors gun deal signed during Rajiv Gandhi's reign as Prime Minister in late Eighties are emerging as BJP's poll planks.

Bofors is one issue which was at the heart of the opposition, including BJP campaign in 1989 general polls which saw the defeat of Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress government.

The opposition alleges huge kickback in Bofors deal.

Ironically, it was the Congress which let go the first salvo on Bofors issue only a few days back. Sonia Gandhi, while releasing the party manifesto for coming elections, said Congress, if voted back to power, would take the Bofors issue to its "logical and legal conclusion," providing grist to the issue.

The Congress leaders also mentioned the role of Bofors mountain guns in the Kargil conflict saying these weapons played a key role in defeating the Pakistani intruders there.

The BJP promptly responded to this with Vajpayee stating at the release of ruling alliance's poll manifesto that he would ask the Central Bureau of Investigation to file the chargesheet in the court in connection with the Bofors payoff case once the last set of documents relating to the deal arrives from Switzerland where kickbacks were allegedly paid in banks. The documents, he said, would arrive soon.

Start from Kargil, BJP and Congress are also trying to hard sell the ---- of stability. The Congress manifesto projects the party's record of providing stable governments and attached the "inherent weakness" of the BJP-led alliance.

Acutely conscious of its experience with its allies during the 13-month rule of Vajpayee government, the BJP has taken certain steps to argue that a coalition government can run full five-year term.

The decision to go for a common manifesto and a pre-polls alliance are steps seeking to drive home the theme of stability. Moreover, the manifesto of BJP-led alliance promises to amend the Constitution to provide for a full term to a government.