

Metropolitan



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina consoling Khuku Rani Chowdhury, wife of Joint Secretary Nikunja Bihari Nath who was killed by muggers on January 11. Nikunja's wife and children called on the Prime Minister at Ganobhaban yesterday. — PID photo

Opposition blamed for making parliament ineffective

Treasury bench members participating in the vote of thanks on the President's New Year address yesterday criticised the opposition members for making the Sangsad ineffective in a bid to impede democratic process in the country, reports BSS.

They claimed that the tenure of the present government was marked by successes in all fronts including economy, development and law and order.

Initiating the discussion in Jatiya Sangsad, Awami League member from Pabna Mohammad Waji Uddin Khan said that the government has revived the national economy which was left shattered by past governments.

He said the power crisis has been resolved to a great extent. And the government has for the first time made natural gas available to the western zone opening up new vista of development prospect of the northern districts.

Dr M S Akbar of Magura criticised the opposition parties for staying away from the Sangsad and said that these parties have failed to win the support of the people for their

illogical movement to undermine the Sangsad. He observed that these parties were always conspiring to undo democracy in the country.

Treasury bench MP from Chittagong A B M Abul Kashem criticised the hartal and other destructive activities of the opposition and said that the opposition has taken recourse to terrorism to achieve their undemocratic objectives. He urged the opposition to end their boycott of the parliament and discharge their responsibilities to the people by taking part in the Jatiya Sangsad.

Speaking next, ruling party MP from Mohila seat (Joypurhat-Bogra) Quamrunnahr Putul listing the success of the present government in different fields said the opposition has been trying to undo these hard earned achievements by resorting to hartals and terrorism.

Participating in the discussion, Jatiya Party (Mizan-Matju) lawmaker from Gabandha Advocate Fazle Rabbi demanded repeal of the Special Powers Act of 1974. He said although the president often speaks about rule of law but

there is no mention about it in his speech.

He demanded trial of those who are responsible for looting of national resources. He also demanded extension of gas supply to the northern region of the country within the current financial year.

Mahmuda Shawgat (AL-women seat) said the Sheikh Hasina government has earned the confidence of the people although a vicious campaign has been launched against it by the opposition which only sheds crocodile tears for the people.

Jahanara Khan (AL-women seat) said the anti-liberation forces in the country have united to foil the achievements of the present government.

She reminded the opposition about the February 15 elections 'without voters' and said it appears ridiculous when the opposition talks about democratic values.

Kazi Sekander Ali (AL-Khulna) joined the motion saying it was a guideline for the government to spearhead the ongoing economic development programme undertaken.

Moulana Nurul Islam (AL-Jamalpur), Minister of State for Religious Affairs said it is during the present government that the pay scale of the Madrassah teachers has been placed at the national pay-scale level.

Global Tiger Forum meeting begins today

The first-ever three-day assembly meeting of Global Tiger Forum (GTF) begins at Hotel Sheraton in the city today, reports UNB.

Forest and Environment Ministry has completed all the preparations for holding the international forum, jointly organised by the government and GTF.

About 40 representatives from five member countries — Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Vietnam and Bhutan — and nine non-member tiger range countries — Nepal, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, North Korea, China, Russia, Thailand — and various international organisations are expected to participate in the meeting.

Forest and Environment Minister Sayeda Sajeda Chowdhury will be present as chief guest.

Indian State Minister for Forest and Environment Babu Lal Marandhi will preside over the meeting.

No food import this fiscal

By Staff Correspondent

The government has dropped its plan to import food in the current fiscal year in view of good harvest of aman and adequate stock of food in the godowns.

This was disclosed by Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu in the Jatiya Sangsad on Sunday.

The current budget (1999-2000) had an allocation for importing two lakh metric tons (MT) of rice and two lakh tons of wheat, he said adding the allocation for the planned import had been revised.

Replying to questions, the food minister further said the country still has a deficit of 11.13 lakh MT of food while the government's stock till December 31 last stands at 15.57 lakh MT.

Until December last year, the official import of food was 7.8 lakh MT, the minister informed the House.

The government has fixed a target of procuring 0.73 MT of paddy and two MT of rice in the current harvesting season, he told a hostener.



Noted Indian artist Gonesh Halui presenting a lecture at a discussion held at the Shilpakala Academy gallery yesterday. — Star photo

No plan to extend retirement age of government employees

Minister for Industries To-fail Ahmed yesterday said the government has no plan at the moment to extend retirement age of the government employees up to 60 years, reports BSS.

The matter is important and it is already under active consideration of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. We will take a decision in this regard in time," he said while replying to a call attention notice in the Jatiya Sangsad.

It was brought before the House by Abdul Latif Mirza of Awami League from Sirajganj while he pleaded for extension of age-limit in government service — up to 35 years for the new entrants and 60 years, for those who will go on retirement.

The Awami League Lawmaker referred to India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka where retirement age of government employees has already been extended up to 65 years.

Tofail referred to hundreds of post-graduates coming out of the universities each year and said the door of their jobs would be narrowed if the retirement age is extended. Besides, promotion of government officials at lower levels will be halted or delayed, he added.

However Tofail assured that this issue should be considered with importance.

Birth anniversary of German poet Goethe tomorrow

Goethe-Institut has taken up an elaborate programme to celebrate the 250th birth anniversary of great German poet, novelist and playwright Johann Wolfgang von Goethe on Wednesday, reports UMB.

The programmes include a lecture on 'Goethe and Tagore: An Evaluation and Inspiration,' an exhibition on 'Goethe as Universal Genius' and screening of a movie on Goethe's theory of colours, 'The Light, the Dark and the Colors.'

There are 150 German cultural institutes across the world, named after Goethe who was born in Frankfurt on August 28, 1749. He is acclaimed as the national poet of German, according to a press release.

4-day int'l seminar begins in city
Pragmatic family planning programmes needed: Health Minister

Health and Family Welfare Minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim yesterday called upon all population scientists and researchers across the globe to work unitedly aimed at developing efficient family planning programmes for the new century, reports BSS.

A pragmatic family planning programme should be developed in line with the ICPD goals for better reproductive health of women and men specially for the poor people," he said.

The minister was speaking at the opening session of a four-day international seminar on Family Planning Programmes in the 21st Century. International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), ICDDR,B, Centre for Population Research and Partners in Population Development are jointly organising the seminar being held at the ICDDR,B auditorium in the city.

A total of 70 population scientists from around the globe are participating in the seminar.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Prof Dr M Amanullah, Health Secretary

Sayed Alamgir Farouk Chowdhury, Prof John C Caldwell of IUSSP and Balla Musa Silla, Executive Director, Partners of Population and Development, spoke at the inaugural session while Dr Amir Mehryar was in the chair.

Highlighting different programmes undertaken by the government, Selim said it (government) has introduced 13,500 Community Health Clinics across the country to bring the health and family planning services to the

doorsteps of the people. "We have already finalised a health policy and have taken initiatives to formulate a population policy for building a healthy nation under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," he said.

He also said that the Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSP) embarked on an integrated provision of health and family planning services was launched at a cost of 3.37 billion US dollars for the period of 1998-2003.

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Notice for Appointment of Consultant

Technical & Financial offers in two separate sealed envelopes for Planning, Design & Supervision of proposed multi-storied Campus Building for Independent University, Bangladesh at Basundhara, Dhaka to be built in phases, are invited from reputed & experienced Consulting Firm (Architectural & Engineering) in the prescribed form available in the office of the Director, Planning & Development, Independent University, preceding the bid opening date.

The Offers, both 'Technical' and 'Financial' in 2 separate sealed covers, with the name of the firm & type of the offer (Technical/Financial), clearly written on the cover, must be dropped in the tender box kept in the office of the Independent University, Bangladesh, House 3, Road 10, Baridhara, Dhaka-1212 upto 12 noon on 28th February, 2000 and opened on the same date at 12:30 PM in the presence of the bidder who may remain present.

The Financial offer of those firms will only be opened once their Technical offer are found to be responsive.

Towhid G. Kazi
Director
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