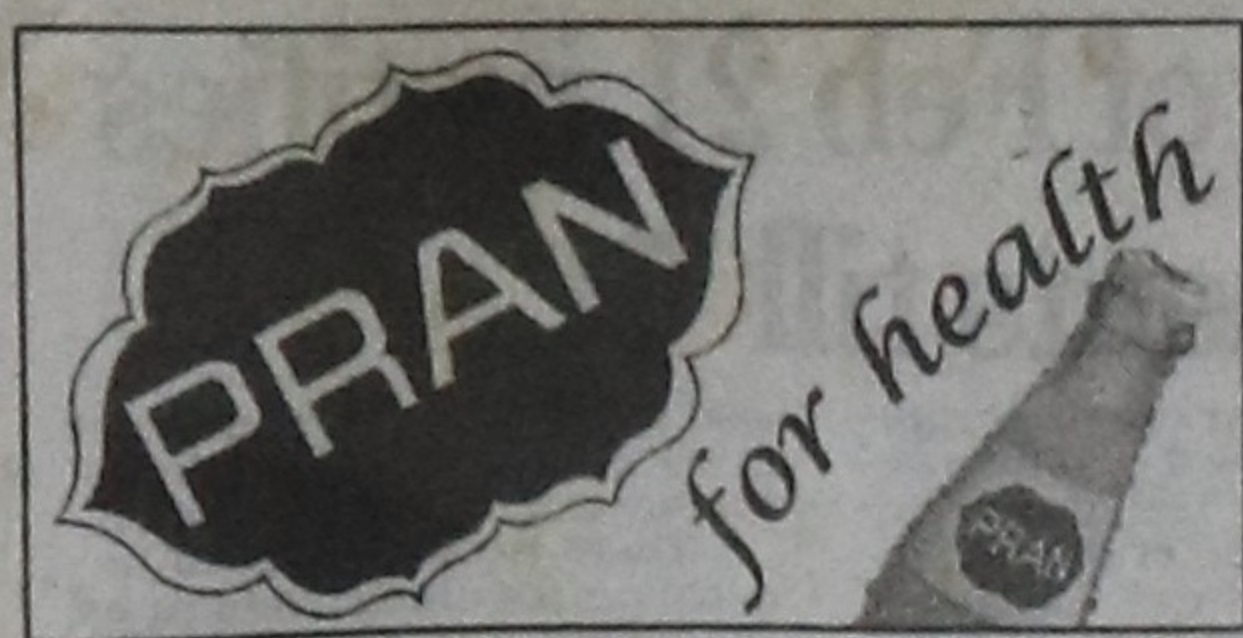




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Ekushey Book Fair opens tomorrow

By DU Correspondent

The 24-day 'Ekushey Book Fair 2000', arranged for commemorating the martyrs of the historic Language Movement, begins at the Bangla Academy premises tomorrow.

This year's fair will be a different one following the international recognition to February 21 in the form of International Mother Language Day.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the fair at about 3 pm on the day as the chief guest. Elite of the city and renowned personalities of the country will be present at the inaugural session.

Preparations for the book fair, which is the first of the new millennium, has almost been completed. The book fair will be held amid a festive and colourful ambience.

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Inside Today

Article

Incredible Passion versus Bulldozing Operation
by Anu Muhammad
Page 4

Star Literature

Book review: A dog's life?; and Essay: India, West Bengal and East Bengal
Pages 6 & 7

Prayer Timings

February 5

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-45	6-15
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-55	5-58
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Policy shift should not hit aid flow

PM's plea to EU

BRUSSELS, Feb 4: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the European Union to ensure that Bangladesh is not adversely affected by the change in its new aid policy, reports UNB.

"My government maintains a flexible attitude towards the new approaches... I would urge that while we together examine what is most suitable for extending aid, we also ensure that flow of resources is not adversely affected," she said.

Delivering a lecture on Economic and Social Development in Bangladesh at the European Institute for Asian Studies of the Catholic University of Brussels, Hasina said quantum of official development assistance declined during the last couple of years and it remains far below 0.7 per cent of the aggregate national income of the developed countries.

Bangladeshi students and

expatriates in Belgium, members of European Parliament, EC officials, scholars, academicians, students of the university attended the lecture.

She said Bangladesh depends on aid for meeting its savings-investment and balance of payment gaps. The members of European Union and other OECD countries are the most important sources of bilateral and multilateral aid.

Referring to the fast changes in modalities of economic co-operation from project assistance to sector-wise investment, the prime minister said: "We feel that the shift to new approaches tends to reduce — if not disrupt during the transition — the flow of resources required for sustaining investment — a minimal condition for growth."

About her government's liberalised economic policy and

See page 11 col 4



Realm of roses

A little girl looks at a bunch of roses with awe written all over her face on the opening day of Rose Festival 2000 at Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex in the city yesterday (story on page 11).

Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

US\$ 40m WB loan for AIDS prevention

Little progress in implementation of previous projects

By Staff Correspondent

The World Bank will provide about 40 million US dollars for the ongoing HIV/AIDS prevention programme in the country.

Terms of the loan are being finalised and an agreement will be signed soon, sources in the local WB office, health ministry and health directorate said.

The loan, being given in view of an 'AIDS epidemic' in South East Asia, will be utilised mainly for creating awareness about prevention of HIV/AIDS.

The loan will also be used for ensuring safety in blood supply through promoting voluntary blood donation, screening of blood donated and rational use of blood components, counselling services and HIV/AIDS surveillance to assess the present situation and determine the magnitude of the problem in future.

But there is no indication whether the loan money will be

utilised to contain spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD).

The sources said there has been little progress in implementation of earlier programmes for HIV/AIDS prevention although funds were provided by donors including UNDP.

The donors had provided 7.75 million dollars but only seven per cent of it was utilised in the first year (1997-1998 financial year), they said.

The funds also provided for 'special treatment' of HIV/AIDS patients in the country, totalling about 30,000 now. But no step has yet been taken in this regard, the sources said.

The National AIDS Committee formed in 1985 suggested ways for prevention of HIV/AIDS, but there has virtually been no step to implement its suggestions, the sources said.

According to studies, prevalence of HIV/AIDS among people is less than one per cent in the country now. The highest rate of 2.6 per cent is among intravenous drug users, followed by less than 0.6 per cent among commercial sex workers and 0.4 per cent among STD patients.

The HIV/AIDS situation in the country is "not less worrying" because of the "behavioral and migratory pattern" of those infected and a high incidence of the disease in neighbouring India and Myanmar, they observed. With every passing day, more and more people, particularly of the high-risk 15-45 age group, are getting infected, they said.

India has the world's highest number of HIV infected people, totalling over five million now. The disease is spreading fast in Myanmar and Thailand.

Blank voter ID cards being issued BSEHR alleges

By Staff Correspondent

The process of issuing voter identity (ID) cards is 'full of irregularities' and 'blank cards' with signatures of officials concerned are being issued in some areas of the country, Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) has alleged.

Addressing a press conference in the city yesterday, leaders of the organisation said that the blank cards were being given "only to selected persons" who were filling up those with 'names and pictures at will'.

They showed some faulty ID cards at the press conference. Those who spoke at the press conference included BSEHR leaders Barrister Nazmul Huda, Barrister Sigma Huda, Gias Kamal Chowdhury and Abdur Rob.

They called for evolving a sound method for issuance of ID cards and said BSEHR would come up with some suggestions in this regard.

The organisation will launch a campaign in the divisional headquarters, starting from Sylhet on February 19.

BAU VC killed in car crash

Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University Prof Mohammad Hossain was killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Chittagong highway yesterday morning. He was 60, report agencies.

Prof Hossain was seriously wounded when the Land Cruiser jeep carrying him skidded off the road and fell into a ditch at Madanpur near Katchpur bridge under Bandar police station of Narayanganj. He died on the way to a nearby clinic. Seven other companions in the jeep received minor injuries.

He and his relatives were going to his village home in Sitakunda, Chittagong.

He is survived by his wife, one son, two daughters, friends, students and a host of relatives. After autopsy at Narayanganj General Hospital, the body was handed over to his daughter Nahid Hossain Nabbie.

Born at village Mahmudabad under Barakunda thana of Chittagong district on August 16, 1939, Dr Hossain took over the charge of Vice-Chancellor of the university on November 14, 1996.

He obtained postgraduate degree in Biochemistry from the Dhaka University in 1960 and joined the Agricultural University as lecturer in 1962.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed has expressed deep shock and profound sorrow at the sudden and untimely death of Prof Mohammad Hossain, Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), Mymensingh.

In a message of condolence yesterday, the President recalled his contribution in the development of Agricultural University since his joining in the institution in 1962.

He prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed his sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday also expressed her deep shock at the death of Prof Mohammad Hossain.

The Prime Minister, now on a state visit to Belgium, in a message said, the nation has lost a dedicated educationist at the death of Prof Mohammad Hossain.

Alliance chiefs to address jt rally in city on Monday

In a major development in the anti-government movement, the chiefs of the four-party opposition alliance will address a rally in the city on Monday, reports UNB.

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia, JP chairman H M Ershad, Jamaat chief Prof Golam Azam and Islami Oikya Jote chief Shaikhul Hadid Azizul Haq will jointly also lead a street march in the capital after the rally demanding scrapping of the Public Safety Act and resignation of the government.

The rally will be held at Paltan Maidan at 3 pm, the alliance announced last night.

BNP sources said the decision was finally endorsed at a meeting of BNP senior leaders with Khaleda Zia in the cha at 29 Minto Road last night.

The decision was conveyed to a meeting of the liaison committee of the alliance which was in a meeting at the same venue.

Briefing newsmen at about 9.30 pm Anwar Zahid said the four top leaders would join the joint procession and address the marchers prior to its launch.

"Fresh action programmes" will be announced from the rally to intensify the movement, he told the reporters.

Bangabhaban brushes aside Jamaat claim

The Bangabhaban brushed aside the allegation of Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday as misleading saying it "deliberately" hid information at a press briefing regarding an appointment with the President, report agencies.

Saying that Jamaat-e-Islami did not speak the whole truth, Bangabhaban made it clear that Golam Azam's name was dropped from the list but there is already an appointment for a delegation of the party.

The proposed meeting of a Jamaat delegation with President Shahabuddin Ahmed on the Public Safety Act is scheduled for February 6 at 10.30 am.

In an official release, Bangabhaban said Jamaat-e-Islami assistant secretary general M Kamaruzzaman while briefing newsmen on the matter "intentionally hid the fact" about the proposed meeting.

Kamaruzzaman in a briefing on Thursday had told reporters that party chief Golam Azam didn't get an appointment with the President to talk the PSA. But he didn't inform that there is already an appointment for a

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The Daily Star Anniversary Supplement

The Daily Star will bring out a 40-page Special Supplement on February 9, 2000 to mark its entry into the Tenth Year of publication. The Supplement which is designed to focus on the first quarter of the new millennium will carry scholarly writings about the directions we need to take as well as reports of our own correspondents highlighting some positive trends in specific areas of national life.

The price of the 56-page Daily Star anniversary issue, inclusive of the normal 16-page spread-out, remains unchanged at Tk 6.00.

We have Moved

Offices of The Daily Star have moved to its new premises at **Karwan Bazar** Friday night. Please send in your mails and contact us at the following address and telephone numbers:

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Sequel to family feud?

Mystery shrouds Azimpur killing

By Staff Correspondent

Police suspect involvement of a close relative in the killing of Faisal, 18, son of a high government official, during a dacoity at their Azimpur residence in the city on Wednesday.

None was arrested in connection with the incident till writing of this report last night. Labagh Police said that the FIR in this regard was in process, but gave no details.

Leader of the 12-member gang was a close relative of the victim. The gang leader was earlier 'disowned' by his father in his anti-social activities, police said after preliminary investigation.

Faisal was hit on his head and neck with a flat stone used for grinding spices. He was not shot dead as claimed earlier, police said.

He was hit when he tried to prevent the dacoits from taking away valuables. The maid was hit when she started screaming and calling the gang leader by name, police said.

Sources at the DMCH forensic department also said that Faisal died of 'blunt injury in his neck and head'.

Anwar Hossain, Project Director of Crop Diversification Programme and his wife Tanzin Saleha, Principal Offi-

cer of Prime Bank, found their son Faisal and house maid Parul, 22, lying on the floor when they returned from their offices at about 6 pm Wednesday, police said.

They were taken to DMCH where doctors declared Faisal dead and admitted critically injured Parul, who was hit with sharp weapon like a machette.

Faisal's body has been kept at the BIRDEM mortuary. The body will be buried on Sunday at a graveyard in Mirpur after arrival of his brother from Bhopal in India, family sources said.

Death of a dream

Devastated couple accuses on-duty doctor of negligence

By Naimul Haq

Nasrin Sultana, 34, and her husband, Alau Haq, were without a child for long 11 years. Sick and tired of futile attempts, the couple decided to stop searching for a medical treatment to reverse infertility. But God smiled on them and after a long wait, Nasrin finally conceived.

The news was an omen of good fortune for the couple. The mother was extremely cautious about herself and the unborn child.

The couple chose to see Dr. A.K.M. Hafizur Rahman, an obstetrician, gynaecologist and expert on infertility and high-risk pregnancy management.

During a routine check-up, Nasrin's blood sample contained elevated sugar levels, a common feature in high-risk pregnancies. However, the sugar posed no immediate dan-

ger and was controlled as per doctor's advice. Based on medical reports and the rate of foetal growth, Rahman predicted the baby would be born around February 18.

Nasrin, a lecturer at Eden Girls College, became very sick the day after Eid (January 10) and was rushed to the Mother and Child Care Centre in Dhanmandi, the clinic where Rahman attends to his patients and operates regularly.

Rahman admitted, the centre, an old house turned into a clinic, had no incubator, or laboratory facilities.

The couple was advised to return on January 22 after an ultrasound. The ultrasound showed the baby wasn't positioned properly in the womb. It also weighed just 1.9 kilograms — below normal weight — and that worried the doctors.

On January 22, Rahman said the baby was not underweight and stood by his earlier predicted date of delivery of February 18, despite an ultrasound to the contrary. He told the couple it was a high risk pregnancy and that they must take care and watch for any abnormalities.

"As it was a very highly desired pregnancy, my wife and I took extra care, even at dead of night," said Alau Haq, a senior assistant secretary in the textiles ministry. "I would stay awake while my wife slept."

The couple's doctor decided not to risk waiting until February 18 and scheduled a caesarean section for January 29. However, Nasrin's "water broke" on January 25. The baby had been in the womb for just 36 weeks.

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