

**BUY NOW — PAY LATER**

**Whirlpool**  
HOME APPLIANCES USA

Gas Cooker

Transcom Electronics Limited  
Authorized distributor in Bangladesh for Whirlpool Appliances, USA

# The Daily Star

Canon camera

THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE CAMERA

RANGS GROUP

VOL. X NO. 38 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA SUNDAY FEBRUARY 20, 2000

3rd Millennium

FALGOON 8, 1406 BS

ZILQAD 13, 1420 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE : TAKA 6.00

## Rooppur project Plan to sign 20-yr accord with US

Dhaka and Washington are planning to sign a 20-year nuclear cooperation agreement to revive the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, diplomatic sources told UNB.

The sources indicated that the issue of nuclear cooperation might be raised during US President Bill Clinton's visit to Bangladesh on March 20.

The cabinet recently approved the action plan of the project designed to produce 600-MW of electricity.

The project, initiated in 1962 at Ishwardi in Pabna, was virtually stalled due to lack of interest by previous governments as well as shortage of fund and technological assistance.

Initial cost of the plant is likely to be US\$900 million to US\$1 billion.

A cabinet committee headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is working to push the nuclear plant in action.

Atomic Energy Commission sources said that a 10-year agreement earlier signed with Washington expired in 1992.

The new agreement, which will be the extension of the previous agreement, may envisage transfer of nuclear technology.

All factors are now in favour of setting up such a nuclear plant after Bangladesh signed the agreements on Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Work on the plant is likely to start some time this year. An open tender seeking funds and technical assistance would be floated shortly, the sources said.

The Atomic Energy Commission has already sent documents of the project to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

**Judgement in  
Zainal Murder  
Case today**

From Staff Correspondent  
KHULNA, Feb 19: The judgement in Zainal Khan Murder Case will be delivered by the Special Court here tomorrow.

Of the 10 accused, five including Ershad Shikdar will be produced before the special court to hear the judgement.

Five accused are being tried in absentia. They are Jamai Faruque, Sheikh Ali, Nasir Khan, Zainal Sheikh and Idris Jamai.

Approver Noor-e-Alam will also be produced before the court along with Shikdar, Liakat Lashkar, Tunda Harnon and Nazim Sarder.

The judgement is expected in See page 11 col 8

**Our new numbers**

19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215

Phones : 812 4941, 812 4955

& 812 4966

Fax : 812 5155

**Inside Today**

**Article**

**President Clinton's Visit is a Compliment to Bangladesh**

Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed writes from Princeton

Page 4

**Law and Our Rights**

Public Safety Act: Why is this such a bad law?; and Hearts cannot break prison wall

Page 5

**Business**

Bangladesh should immediately hook to sub-marine cable

UNCTAD seeks better deal for South

DSE, CSE price quotations

Pages 6, 7 & 8

**Prayer Timings**

February 20

Fajr 5:30 6:00

Zohr 12:45 1:20

Asr 4:30 4:45

Maghrib 6:00 6:02

Esha 7:30 8:00

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Pak forces ready to counter any attack

Gen Musharraf warns Delhi against war mongering

ISLAMABAD, Feb 19: Military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf accused uneasy neighbour India of war mongering today and warned that Pakistan would defend itself against aggressive action from across its border, reports AP.

"Pakistan's armed forces are fully prepared to effectively counter any aggression against the motherland," Musharraf was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the army's public relations wing.

Musharraf made the comments while addressing officers in Multan, in eastern Punjab province, some 400 kilometers south of the capital Islamabad. He accused India of war mongering out of frustration.

Pakistan and India regu-

larly trade fire along the disputed Kashmir border, with each side accusing the other of firing the first shot. In recent months the incidents of cross-border firing has increased substantially.

Today Pakistani officials said two women were killed when Indian troops fired a volley of artillery shells into the Neelum Valley. Another seven people were injured, also by Indian shells, in a nearby village, they said.

"We are fully alive to the threats being hurled from across the border," Musharraf said in his address to his troops. "We are vigilant and capable to (foil) any attempt of adventure by the adversary."

Both India and Pakistan

possess nuclear weapons, having conducted tit-for-tat nuclear tests in 1998.

India has been particularly belligerent toward Pakistan since the Pakistan army took power last October, throwing out the civilian government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup.

India has urged other countries to ostracize Pakistan while the military rules.

Relations took a further turn for the worst last December when an Indian Airlines plane was hijacked and taken to Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

AFP adds from Delhi: France and the US this week increased pressure on India to resume a dialogue with bitter r-

See page 11 col 7

## 5 more liquor victims die Negligence of duty by 2 DNC men

By Staff Correspondent

Gross negligence of duty by two officials of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) led to the Feni tragedy in which 56 people died of methanol poisoning till yesterday.

DNC officials who returned to the city yesterday after investigations in Feni told The Daily Star that two of their officers — Inspector Shahabuddin and Assistant Sub-Inspector Abul Kalam — were not present at their stations for three days from February 15.

Departmental action against them is in process, said a top DNC official.

The tragedy began on February 16 when at least 22 people died and another 50 fell sick at Feni town and some villages in the district after taking rectified spirit.

Since then, the death toll continued to rise.

Some unscrupulous traders mix methanol with rectified spirit whenever they get chance, the DNC officials said. Since the two are of the same colour, people can not understand when these are mixed, they added.

In May last year, 121 people died of methanol poisoning in Narsingdi. After this, DNC had suggested adding a special colour to methanol so that it looks different.

While talking to this correspondent, the DNC officials wondered why the suggestion was not implemented by the authorities concerned.

"Since methanol has got industrial use, it can not be banned but a special colour can be mixed to make it look different," one of the officials said.

The three-member DNC in-

See page 11 col 2

## Young man shot dead in Feni

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Feb 19: A young man was shot dead and his two brothers were injured by unidentified assailants at village Kalidah under Feni thana last night.

Police identified the victim as Babul Chandra Sutradhar, 20, son of Hemanta Chandra Sutradhar. The injured are Midul Sutradhar, 25, and Ranjan Sutradhar.

According to police and family sources, a group of armed men stormed Babul's house at midnight and shot him point blank. He died on the spot.

Babul's two brothers — Midul and Ranjan were beaten up mercilessly by the armed men as they tried to resist the attackers.

Babul's body was sent to Feni hospital for autopsy. The injured were admitted to a private clinic in the town.

A case was filed with Feni thana, but none was arrested till filing of this report at 7 pm today.

## Law Minister tells The Daily Star I'm still confident of neutral application of PSA

By Nurul Kabir



Abdul Matin Khasru

The Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister has welcomed public reaction to certain provisions of the Public Safety Act as it reflected increasing legal awareness of the society.

But the minister firmly believes that the BNP has no moral right to oppose the law 'because the party had gone for a similar law — Anti-Terrorism Act — while in power'.

Abdul Matin Khasru was talking to The Daily on February 14.

Asked whether the Awami League had any moral right to go for the PSA now, while it had opposed the 'similar' Anti-Terrorism Act, the minister said: "Contrary to the BNP sponsored law, there is no provision for capital punishment in the PSA. Secondly, it contains certain safety valves against any possible misuse of the law which were missing in the BNP's Anti-Terrorism Act."

In this regard, the minister referred to certain sections of the PSA providing for punishment to those filing false cases.

Investigating officers failing to produce objective reports, police officials failing to execute warrant of arrests and official witnesses failing to appear before the Tribunal concerned.

Khasru maintained that the special kind of law was essential to combat special types of crime the entire society is now exposed to. "I am sure the com-

mon people want a terrorism-free society and they have no reason to oppose a law made to curb terrorist activities."

On the Presidential contention about a PSA provision that 'prohibits bail during pendency of an appeal against conviction', the law minister said: "The government would show due honour to the President's concerns. An ordinance improving upon even certain other sections of the law would be promulgated soon."

When his attention was drawn to the provision for severe punishment on the basis of written testimony of a prosecution witness without being cross examined before a Tribunal, the minister said: "We are going to add a 'proviso' to the section so that no punishment could be awarded on the basis of such testimony, unless it is corroborative to other evidences."

On the law's silence over the fate of a case due to the Tribunal's failure to complete trial in the stipulated time, he said,

See page 11 col 7

## Reducing maternal mortality Govt still far from target

By Naimul Haq

The government's target of reducing maternal mortality during child birth to three per thousand from 4.5 by 2000 is still far from being achieved.

Sources concerned said that despite having adequate funds and trained manpower for emergency obstetric care (EOC) services, the government has so far failed to provide required equipment, devices and instruments to equip thana health complexes.

Studies by WHO and ICDDR,B said that over 95 per cent of child births take place at homes in the rural areas due to non-availability of facilities.

Major causes of maternal deaths are lack of trained personnel, medicine, equipment and "three delays" — delay in taking decision, reaching a healthcare centre and getting

the required medical intervention.

Funds allocated for improvement of the situation in health sector were poorly utilised. In the first year—1998-99—of implementation of the Operational Plan for Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSPP) only around 10 per cent of the allocated funds could be utilised due to lack of planning. In the second year, utilisation has increased but it stands at only about 30 per cent in nearly eight months of the year.

Earlier, the government had taken up two costly pilot projects under the Fourth Five-Year Health Project.

Lessons from the projects proved useful but are yet to be utilised. Both the projects were to study ways of reducing maternal mortality rate during

labour and improving hospital care in rural areas.

One of the two projects, the Pilot Project for Maternal and Neonatal Health, funded by WHO, was launched in fiscal 1994-95 following the Nairobi Conference on Safe Motherhood and completed by 1998.

The project, in 31 thanas of five districts, cost the government about Tk four crore.

The project, managed by the Obstetric and Gynaecology Society of Bangladesh (OGSB), was also being implemented simultaneously. But as the HPSPP was launched in July 1998, the project activities came to halt.

The third project, a well designed one with more efficient manpower, is now being implemented but equipment crisis is badly affecting it.

See page 11 col 1

## Reception to veterans of Language Movement

By DU Correspondent

Sammilita Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) hosted a reception to the veterans of the historic Language Movement at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday, the last day of its 12-day programmes marking February 21, the International Mother Language Day.

The veterans were presented bouquets, honorariums, and crests for their role in the Language Movement. The veterans include KG Mustafa, Advocate Alauddin Hossain, Abul Mal Al Muhit, Abdul Matin, Sarder Fazlul Karim, Mahbubul Alam Chowdhury, Dr. Sharifa Begum, Gazul Haq, Dr. Suha Ahmed, Syed Kamruddin Hossain, Dewan Farid Gazi, MR Akter Mukul, Walidul Haq, Sved Badruddin Hossain, Kamal Uddin Ahmed, ATM Shamsuddin, Aminul Islam and Abdul Jalil.

The SSJ also honoured Abdul Latif with an honorarium

See page 11 col 7

See page 11 col 7

## Amar Ekushey programmes

By Staff Correspondent

All is set for observance of the Amar Ekushey (Immortal Feb. 21).

The nation will pay tributes to martyrs of the historic Language Movement tomorrow, the Shaheed Day.

This year's 'Ekushey' has a special significance in view of world recognition of February 21 as 'International Mother Language Day'. Countries across the world will observe the day for the first time this year.

People across the country will pay homage to the martyrs and take a fresh vow to translate in to reality their dreams of a democratic order, a society free from exploitation and economic emancipation of the masses of people.

This year's Ekushey would be the 48th anniversary of the epoch-making event that had led to the recognition of Bengali as the state language in the then Pakistan and eventually the emergence of an independent Bangladesh.

On February 21, 1952, the heroic sons of the soil, includ-

ing Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Zahir and Shafiq had made a supreme sacrifice for upholding the dignity of the mother tongue. They embraced martyrdom when police opened fire on the students demonstrating under the banner of the All-Party Students Action Committee against the conspiracy of the Pakistani rulers to impose Urdu as the only state language.

The day is a public holiday and the national flag will fly at half-mast. All government and private buildings.

With the clock striking 00:01 Sunday's bare-footed people wearing black badges will throng the central Shaheed Minar to pay respect to the martyrs. They will sing "Amar Bhayr Rakte Rangano Ekushey" (Can I forget February 21, a day immersed in the blood of my brothers), set to tune by martyred vocalist Altaf Mahmood and written by Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury.

The Dhaka University authorities, which supervise the Shaheed Day programmes at

the central Shaheed Minar every year, have finalised elaborate programmes to mark the occasion.

As per the programmes drawn up by the Central Coordinating Committee, President Shahabuddin Ahmed will be the first to place wreaths at the Shaheed Minar at one minute past midnight Sunday.

The President will be followed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her cabinet colleagues.

The Shaheed Minar and its surroundings have already been decorated and members of the law enforcing agencies have asked all concerned to maintain law and order along the routes leading to the Shaheed Minar.

A joint procession of members of the Dhaka University teachers, students and employees, led by Vice-chancellor will start from Aparajeya Bangla at 6:30 am to pay respect to the martyrs at the Azampur graveyard and then lay wreaths at the central Shaheed Minar.

See page 11 col 2

## 'PSA to overburden IOs, affect quality of investigation'

By Staff Correspondent

Filing of cases under the Public Safety Act (PSA) will increase the load of police officials and may affect the quality of investigation, some top police officials said.

In addition to routine duty, an Investigating Officer (IO), who is usually a Sub-Inspector of a thana, now simultaneously deals with 30 to 35 cases in the city. At times, the number goes up to 50, they told The Daily Star.

"In an ideal situation, an IO investigates eight to ten cases at a time in addition to his or her routine job," an official said.

The routine job of an IO includes patrol and security duties, executing warrants and maintaining law and order. Besides, they need to concentrate more on serious cases like murder, he said.

The number of piled up cases under an IO will swell when filing of cases under the PSA will increase, he said.

"Special tribunals are being set up for dispensation of quick justice but there has hardly been any mention about increasing the number of IOs and their logistics," another top police official noted.

"Cases filed under the PSA

See page 11 col 1

## 'Golam Azam was never a language hero'

Jamaat-e-Islami chief Prof Golam Azam was never an activist in the Language Movement of 1948 and 1952, despite his party's claim that their leader is a "language hero".

Language veteran Abdul Matin said as the general secretary of the then DUCSU in 1948, Golam Azam read out a citation before the then visiting Pakistani prime minister Liaquat Ali Khan, but in person he opposed the inclusion of the demand for Bangla as a state language.

"I knew him very well, he was a resident of Fazul Haque Hall, where I also resided. He had opposed the DUCSU's demand for declaring Bangla a state language," Matin told BSS.

The respected language hero added: "He (Golam Azam) disagreed with the contents of the citation and opposed DUCSU's demand for declaring Bangla as the state language of Pakistan."

He was, however, forced to read the citation as the vice president of DUCSU Arabinda Bose was not preferred to read the citation for his religion."

Several records and documents also suggest that Golam Azam was selected for presenting the citation before Liaquat Ali Khan instead of the then vice president of DUCSU Arabinda Bose on religious grounds.

See page 11 col 8

By Staff Correspondent

A meeting of the Dhaka city liaison committee of the four party opposition alliance yesterday directed leaders of the component parties to form All-Party Action Committee (APAC) units at all thanas of the metropolis by February 23.

Chaired by Sadeque Hossain Khoka MP, Convenor of the city APAC, the meeting was attended by, among others, Abdus Salam of BNP, Saffur Rahman and Tavebur Rahman of Jatiya Party, ATM Azharul Islam and Jasimuddin Sarker of Jamaat-e-Islami and Maulana Abdur Rab Yusuf of the Islamic Oikkyo Jote, said a press release of city BNP.

The meeting in a resolution expressed deep concern at the law and order situation in the country and said the government has enacted the Public Safety Act (PSA) to suppress the opposition. "People have already rejected the law," it said.

In another resolution, the meeting reiterated the opposition demand for withdrawal of the PSA without further delay. "Otherwise, the Awami League government will be forced to quit through movement."

See page 11 col 2

## Directive to form city APACs by Feb 23

By Staff Correspondent

A meeting of the Dhaka city liaison committee of the four party opposition alliance yesterday directed leaders of the component parties to form All-Party Action Committee (APAC) units at all thanas of the metropolis by February 23.

Chaired by Sadeque Hossain Khoka MP, Convenor of the city APAC, the meeting was attended by, among others, Abdus Salam of BNP, Saffur Rahman and Tavebur Rahman of Jatiya Party, ATM Azharul Islam and Jasimuddin Sarker of Jamaat-e-Islami and Maulana Abdur Rab Yusuf of the Islamic Oikkyo Jote, said a press release of city BNP.

The meeting in a resolution expressed deep concern at the law and order situation in the country and said the government has enacted the Public Safety Act (PSA) to suppress the opposition. "People have already rejected the law," it said.

In another resolution, the meeting reiterated the opposition demand for withdrawal of the PSA without further delay. "Otherwise, the Awami League government will be forced to quit through movement."

See page 11 col 2

## Police using 'condemned' vehicles

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam

Violating law, police are using "condemned and unfit" vehicles for routine duty, official sources said.

"These vehicles can not be withdrawn immediately due to resource constraint," said a top police official when asked why police, being law enforcers, were themselves breaking law.

A total of about 164 police vehicles were declared "condemned and unfit" by the authorities concerned at the end of last year but many of these are still being used, he added.

These vehicles are minimum 10 years' old. Many are even 20 years' old.

Of those vehicles, 60 belong to the DMP. The rest are being used by police in districts.

He said DMP's condemned vehicles are kept at Rajarbagh Police Line and are not used

See page 11 col 1

## Notice

### Change of date of Annual General Meeting Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons

Due to unavoidable circumstances the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS) will be held on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2000 instead of 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2000. Any inconvenience to the fellow is regretted.

*Mobin Khan*

Prof. Mobin Khan

Honorary Secretary

BCPS