

What's on today....

National conference: The national conference of Bangladesh Registration Employees Welfare Association will be held. Chief guest: Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru. Venue: Supreme Court Lawyers Auditorium. Time: 9:00 am.

BWP consultation: Bangladesh Water Partnership (BWP) will hold a consultation on 'Sustainable Agriculture in Flood Prone Areas'. Venue: BIAM Conference room, 63 New Eskaton. Time: 9:30 am.

Reunion: The 19th reunion of the 61-club of BUET will be held. Venue: Central auditorium complex, BUET. Time: 9:30 am.

Workshop: Zia's Art Galley begins a month-long workshop on water-colour painting. The workshop will be conducted by artist Firoz Mahmud. Venue: Zia's Art Galley, 772, Satmasjid Rd. Time: 3:00 pm.

Film show: Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen two films based on the Liberation war. *Mukta Katha* by Tareque and Catherine Masud will be screened today. Venue: Mukta Mancha (amphitheatre) of Jahangirnagar University. Time: 6:30 pm.

Inauguration: Bangabandhu Square will be inaugurated. Chief guest: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Venue: Bangabandhu Square. Time: 11:30 am.

Roundtable on CHT: Centre for Human Rights will hold a roundtable on 'Rights of Citizens in CHT: Past, Present and Future'. Venue: Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 9:00 am.

Open discussion: An open discussion will be held on 'Hazards and disputes of using polythene shopping bags and looking for alternatives'. Venue: CDL auditorium, House No 39, Rd No 14A, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 3:30 pm.

Discussion meeting: Amra Surjomukhi will hold a discussion meeting on occasion of the birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This will be followed by a cultural programme. Venue: National Museum auditorium, Shahbag. Time: 5:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Exhibition: Altamira present their Eid collection of fashion apparels for men and women. Venue: Auditorium of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 3:00 pm - 8:00 pm.

Seminar: The British High Commission organises the British Consultants Bureau Trade Mission seminar on 'British consultancy, partnership with local firms'. Chief guest: Md Abdul Jalil, Commerce Minister. Venue: Ballroom of Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 1:30 pm.

Book launching: *Abu Taher: His Art Work*, a book on artist Abu Taher will be launched. A 10-day long exhibition of his selected works will also be inaugurated. Venue: Bangla Academy, Gallery Bhaban. Time: 5:00 pm.

Girish Kasaravalli Retrospective: Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen *Kraurya* (Cruelty) on the 1st day of Girish Kasaravalli Retrospective. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium. Time: 6:00 pm.

Film show: Zahir Raihan Film-Society will screen *Iti-haskanya* (Daughters of History) by Shameem Akhtar. Venue: Mukta Mancha of Jahangirnagar University. Time: 6:30 pm.

Weather

Dry weather forecast

Light rain or drizzle is likely at one or two places over Khulna, Sylhet and Dhaka divisions and the regions of Pabna, Bogra, Noakhali and Comilla in next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country during the period, Met Office said.

The country's highest temperature 33.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Khulna and the lowest 14.5 degree Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:03 pm and rises on Sunday at 6:17 am.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	30.5	19.7
Chittagong	29.4	20.3
Rajshahi	31.8	17.8
Khulna	33.0	19.8
Barisal	31.4	21.5
Sylhet	27.9	16.0
Cox's Bazar	30.5	21.0

HERE and THERE

FEMA

Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) and Study and Research Group (SRG) of MSS jointly organised an orientation programme on 'The UP Electoral Law Reform Workshop' for the representatives of FEMA District Committees yesterday at the WV. Auditorium at 10:00 am, says a press release.

Fifty district representatives of FEMA participated in the orientation.

Feroz M Hassan, Secretary General of FEMA, Burhanuddin Ahmed, Former Deputy Secretary of EC and Consultant of FEMA, and S M H Bukhari, National Coordinator of FEMA were present and spoke in the programme.

Hassan said that for effective functioning of Union Parishad and the reformation of the existing electoral laws the involvement of leaders of civil society is of great importance. He also said that FEMA seeks to encourage conscious balloting and undertakes election monitoring to help ensure free, fair and meaningful elections in Bangladesh.

Aninda

Artists from Agartala and Shilchar along with local artists presented an evening of Tagore song in the city, says a press release.

Aninda, a socio-cultural organisation, arranged the programme at the Indian High Commission Cultural Centre recently.

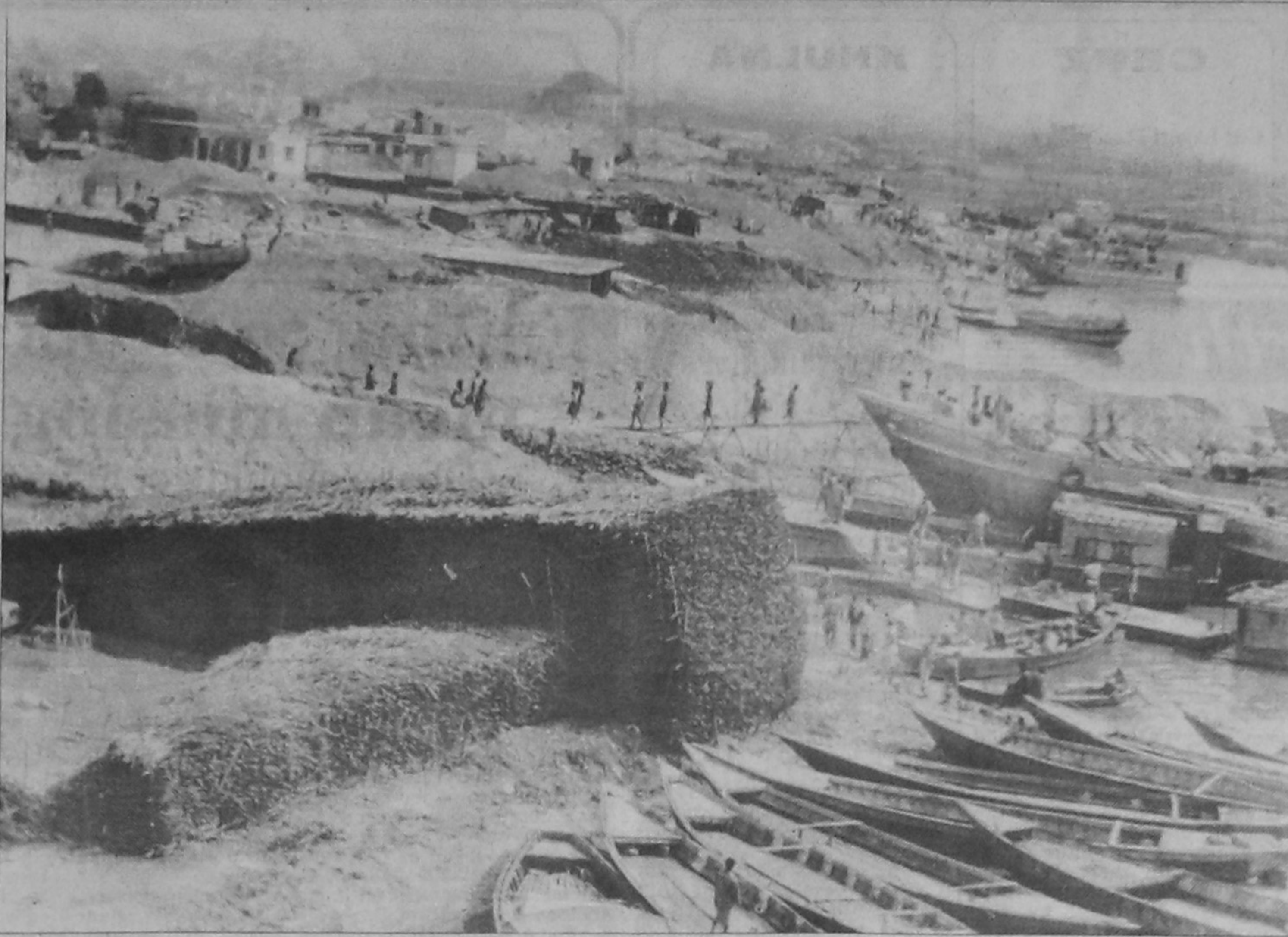
"We know all about Tagore song in Bangladesh and West Bengal ... but little about the people in the eastern region who speak Bengali and sing Tagore's songs," said the organisers. "We tried to interact with them through this programme."

Artists who participated from Agartala and Shilchar included Modhurima Bhattacharya, Debashish, Sanghamitra Nandi, Rita Chatterjee, Uday Shankar Bhattacharya, Chiradip Ganguli and Shuvaprasad Nandi Majumdar.

Artists from Bangladesh were: Fahim Hossain Chowdhury, Salma Akber, Sajed Akber, Nargis Chowdhury, Mohabeb Ghosh, Sabina Monir, Protima Roy and Mokbul Hossain.



Mokbul Hossain, President of Aninda, presenting gifts to visiting artists Sanghamitra Nandi of Agartala and Shuvaprasad Nandi Majumdar of Shilchar after a cultural programme in the city recently.



Unauthorised shops dealing in sale of bricks and sand have been set up on the banks of the dying River Turag.

—Star photo

AL joint meet today

By Staff Correspondent

A joint meeting of Awami League presidium, secretariat and advisory council will be held today at 5 pm at Ganobhaban.

Prime Minister and President of Awami League Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting, says a press release.

Congratulations

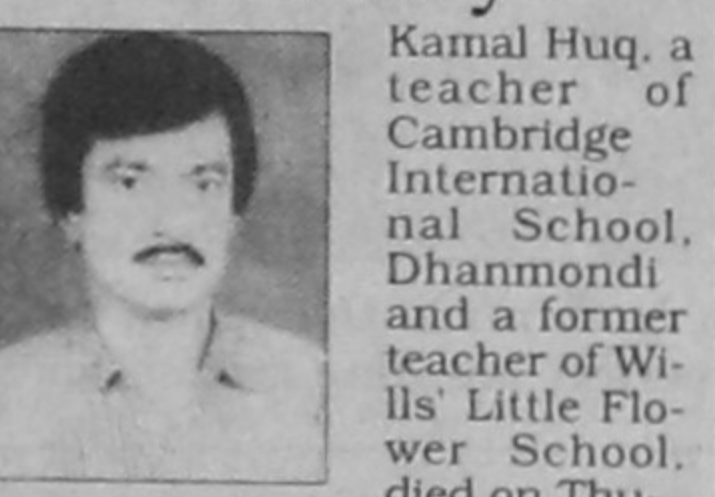


Sanjida Hossain (Reema) stood first class first among the girl students and second in the combined merit list in the M Com final examination of Management Department from the University of Dhaka, says a press release.

The result was published on February 29. She also obtained first class in the B Com (Honours) examination from the same university. She also passed the SSC and HSC examinations with outstanding results.

Reema is the only daughter of Sharif M Afzal Hossain, an industrialist, President of APO Society for Bangladesh, Director of Shilpa Bank, former president of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries and Begum Shakhayat Banu.

Obituary



Kamal Huq, a teacher of Cambridge International School, Dhanmondi and a former teacher of Willis Little Flower School, died on Thursday after a series of strokes and other complications, says a press release.

He was buried at the Azimur Graveyard the same day.

He left behind his wife, only son and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

His *qulhuani* will be held today after Asr prayers at his 122, Bashiruddin Road (4th floor), Kalabagan residence.

Cholera epidemic looms in flood-hit Mozambique

MAPUTO, Mar 3: A cholera outbreak is looming in Mozambique's capital after weeks of floods elsewhere in the country, a health ministry official warned today, reports AFP.

"We are on the verge of a cholera epidemic in Maputo," Jose Chivale, a ministry of health epidemiologist said.

Chivale told a regular daily meeting of aid workers that cholera cases had risen from a previous six per week to 23 per week.

Some 1,086 cholera cases and six deaths have been reported in the country's two provinces of Sofala and Maputo since January.

Chivale indicated that his ministry was experiencing problems airlifting medicines to areas affected by floodwaters, especially oxygen, which could not be transported on normal flights.

The southern African country has been operating for weeks with fewer than 20 helicopters to rescue thousands of stranded people, an operation that has taken priority over deliveries of food and other supplies.

Tofail says Priority given to uplift of infrastructure

BHOLA, Mar 3: Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed today said here the government has given priority to the improvement of infrastructure facilities all over the country with a view to linking all villages with the national economic activities, reports BSS.

He said this while inaugurating the renovated Kharapal bypass road here.

This road, constructed in 1973, has been inoperative for lack of renovation.

Disclosing that the bypass will become a regular road very soon, the minister said the government is pledge-bound to make available adequate infrastructure facilities, including health, education and electricity to people.

He said the government has enacted the Public Security Act (PSA) to eradicate terrorism of all forms. Manipulation in tender process has been stopped by the government, he said adding, henceforth the work will be allotted through lottery.

Later, the minister laid foundation of Bhola Town Committee Secondary School, which is expected to be completed this year with an estimated cost of Taka 17 lakh.

In the afternoon, Tofail launched the construction work on Anilsadur Bari Road under

Tajumuddin thana.

When completed at an estimated cost of Taka 1 lakh, the road will smoothen the communication of four lakh people of the adjoining areas.

The minister also opened the construction work on a 60-meter bridge on Kunjerhat Moazzemhat Road. The estimated cost for construction of the bridge is Taka 52 lakh.

Addressing a big public gathering at Phulkachia on this occasion, the minister said the government of Sheikh Hasina has identified the villages as focal point of development.

He said the rural people have got a new lease of life after getting benefit of the VGD, allowance for the distressed and elderly people, food for work, and Ashrayan housing projects.

Tofail said Bhola has never got the development before which the district has been receiving since June 1996.

He said power plants and fertiliser factories will be established in Bhola soon and electricity will reach every household of the district by 2003.

Paribahan Samik Union Abdul Wadud Nayan, Executive President of Dhaka-Shariatpur Minibus Owners Samity and Jubo League leader Liaqat Hossain Liaqat.



Artistes of Srimongal Mela performing the traditional 'Dhamyil' dance at a Kendriya Kachi Kanchar Mela, programme in the city yesterday.

US balloonist lands safely in Myanmar

YANGON, Mar 3: US balloonist Kevin Ullassi landed safely in Myanmar when his bid to circle the world solo ended in failure, a US embassy official told AFP.

"We have heard that he landed safely," said the diplomat. Ullassi's balloon the J. Renee came down close to Nang U township, 11 kilometres (seven miles) east of the popular central tourist town of Bagan, officials said.

Brothel

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staying at a 'safe home'—both near the brothel and run by KKS.

There should be more safe homes for us. Otherwise, we might have to take up the profession of our mothers," 11-year-old Sumi said at the conference.

Another girl said, "We have every right to grow up in a healthy environment. Children born in brothels should be accepted by the society."

Liton, a teen-age boy said he has learnt various technical work but failed to get any job because he was born in a brothel.

Many others narrated similar experience and demanded that the society should accept treat them like any other human beings.

Books handed over

By Staff Correspondent

Central Kachi Kanchar Mela, a Children's juvenile organisation yesterday arranged a function for handing over of books and cash sponsored by Human Development Foundation (HDF) to three branches of the mela.

Khandokar Ibrahim Khaled, president of Central Kachi Kanchar Mela and a Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank handed over the books and cash to the presidents of the three branches.

The branches are Srimangal Anirban Kachi Kanchar Mela, Motlob Suryamukhi Mela and Rajendra Agnibina Mela.

Later, members of the branches and Central Kachi Kanchar Mela participated in a cultural show.

'Situation in West Timor refugee camps untenable'

JAKARTA, Mar 3: A visiting senior US official today called the prevailing situation in camps holding tens of thousands of East Timorese in Indonesian West Timor since September 'untenable,' reports AFP.

"The situation in West Timor (refugee camps) is untenable," US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering told a press briefing here.

One killed in Indian firing in Azad Kashmir

MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan administered Kashmir, Mar 3: Indian troops opened fire today into several border villages on the Pakistani side of Kashmir, killing a civilian and injuring another, police said, reports AFP.

The deceased, a 25-year old man, was killed in the village of Balakot in Nakyal sector along the Line of Control (LoC) that divides the state between Pakistan and India, said police official Sheikh Tahir Gayyum.

Another man was wounded in the village of Bandala in Samahni sector, he said.

Rival armies face each other in Kashmir, over which the two countries have fought two wars since their independence from Britain in 1947. Tension between the two countries is currently running high.

6 judges

From Page 1

The district and sessions judge of Gopalganj, Sudhendu Kumar Biswas, has been posted in the special tribunal of Rajshahi Division while the special judge for women and children repression prevention court of Jessore, Mirza Sirajul Islam, in the special tribunal of Khulna Division.

Meanwhile, the amended ordinance of the PSA has not been put in the agenda of next Cabinet meeting scheduled for Monday, the officials said and added that it is likely to be covered under the Miscellaneous agenda.

Sylhet: Hartal

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A ple of law enforcing agencies in Zindabazar area where a grand rally of the Muktioddha-Janatar Mancha was going on.

Samad Azad was the chief guest at the rally held at the Registry Maidan in support of naming of the halls and buildings of Shahjalal University.

The Action Committee on February 29 burnt the effigy of the foreign minister protesting his visit to Sylhet along with the prime minister.

They also held a rally which was addressed by the local leaders of BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat, IOJ and others.

The district unit of Awami League held a joint meeting with the leaders of its front organisations last night decided to accord a reception to the foreign minister on March 5 at the Registry Maidan.

CHT: Timber

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Every morning, tribesmen and settlers carrying logs and firewood on their back arrive at the Bazaar and traders usually buy those paying nominal prices to the poor people who walk miles with the loads.

The logs, specially of teak and rain trees, are in high demand in the country.

The trucks take little hindrance as they have copies of the special permit given by a committee consisting of officials and public representatives, authorising sale of timber from private wood lots.

Under the cover of the permit, thousands of cubic feet of timber are finding their way to different parts of the country.

Even people carry the timber on roofs of public buses.

The situation is getting out of control, admitted a local official preferring anonymity.

"It is a Mafia style operation continuing for the benefit of a section of people of various categories — forest department staff, public representatives, law keepers and security personnel," he said.

Officials concerned in Dhaka also admitted that the situation is alarming, but expressed their inability to improve it in the near future.

But for how long? asked some social workers, NGO activists and environmentalists.

DCC-WASA row

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Officials of WASA's Drainage Circle said that considering the urgency of the matter, they temporarily suspended their pipeline project work and filled up the ditch. After the presidential visit, the work would be resumed. The Superintendent Engineer said that they were doing the 'compaction as per specification' and that they also informed the DUTP director.

But DUTP officials alleged that WASA has violated agreements reached during a joint site inspection and dug up the middle portion of the Mirpur Road, instead of the side of the road, for their pipeline project.

The DUTP engineer said that WASA would incur an estimated loss of Tk 30 lakh if the road has to be reconstructed after Clinton's visit. They would then impose a penalty of Tk 30 lakh on WASA.

About the alleged breach of agreement, the WASA Superintendent Engineer said that it was impossible to select the side of Mirpur Road because six electric lines including a 132 KV line is situated on that part of the road. "We had talks with DESA about the lines and we had no other alternative."

Asked whether DUTP could complete the road within the stipulated time, its engineer said if WASA does the compaction with sand in a day or two, the road could be completed.

"But we will not give them permission to dig up the road any more after we have worked on it. Instead, they would have

to choose the alternative — the shoulder of the road — to install their pipeline," he said.

A top official of WASA said this is an example of lack of coordination among service organisations in the city. "In every development project, we are facing acute lack of coordination among all these organisations and the members of the public ultimately suffer for this," he added.

Clinton

From Page 1

"If the foreign gas companies want to export, they can make value addition by producing power and fertiliser from gas and export those."

Multinational oil giants exploring hydrocarbons in Bangladesh are involved in hectic lobbying for gas export they have struck for quick returns on their investments, which put together run up to one billion US dollars.

To a question about the itinerary of the presidential tour, the state minister said agenda of the Hasina-Clinton talks had not yet been fixed up. "We're still talking about talks."

Asked what benefit Bangladesh intends to get out of the Clinton visit, Chowdhury said: "We're not to make cost-benefit analysis on a visit by the head of a friendly country. I consider it both cynical and demeaning to think of it in that light."

Commenting on Dhaka-Washington relations, Chowdhury said: "We enjoy excellent relations with USA."

Reforms

From Page 1

distributed by Grameen Bank and Palli Karma Shahayak Foundation, as well as the loans provided by commercial banks to different NGOs.

The report said the government's goal is to achieve 7 per cent growth and 21.3 per cent savings in the third year of the fifth five year plan (1999-2000). The government will continue to implement infrastructural reforms to achieve this goal.

However, a senior official from the ERD said it will be difficult to woo the donors by saying we would continue to reform in different sectors unless we show some results.

Frederick Temple, country director of the World Bank, said governance, institutional development, transparency, poverty alleviation strategy, aid situation and reforms programme would top the agenda of the Paris meeting.

The ministry stated in the report financial and banking reform is a continuous process taking place in conformity with the time and circumstances.

The report also mentioned that steps have been taken to reform the financial sector, some of which are in the process of implementation.

The report also mentioned a technical project, funded by the World Bank, that will help restructure the commercial banks.

Another World Bank project will reform the country's central bank. The cabinet is considering a proposal to upgrade the status of the central bank's governor to that of Comptroller and Auditor General, the report said.

Malaysia

From Page 1

urged Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad to end a 'campaign of intimidation and harassment' against Harakah, the paper of the Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) which has made strong gains against the ruling party.

The Committee to Protect Journalists, in a letter to Mahathir, called on him to restore Harakah's licence to publish twice weekly and to drop sedition charges against its editor and publisher.

The New York-based group, in the letter released late Thursday, said the curbs on Harakah's circulation 'appears to be the latest example of your administration's efforts to curb the opposition press in Malaysia.'

The Home (Interior) Ministry, which licenses all newspapers, Wednesday renewed Harakah's publication licence only for two issues a month instead of two a week previously.

Local rights group Aliran said the move smacked of 'political vindictiveness' and called it a 'terrible blow to the freedom of the press.'

It said in a statement the government had finally conceded defeat — "that it is no match to counter opposition criticism."

Shell MD

From Page 12

Asked whether US President Bill Clinton would be talking on energy sector with Bangladesh leaders, he said: "I don't know, but I believe the issue will be high on his agenda."

Asked if Bangladesh could be robbed by multinational companies as is the case with Nigeria, Vaughan defended the foreign oil explorers, saying the Nigerians are now running the industry and same will happen in Bangladesh.

He is informed that Shell has already started decreasing expatriate officials here and locals were being trained up to replace them. "Someday Shell will really be a Bangladeshi company."

Vaughan told the newsmen that Shell has invested 450 million dollars, while the total capital invested by all such companies in the sector stood at one billion dollars.