What's on today

Workshop: A two-day workshop on Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Bangladesh Environmental Operational Strategy will begin. Organisers: Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) in collaboration with ADB. Venue: Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM), 63 New Eskaton. Time

Seminar: A seminar will be held on "what to do in garments industry and human rights in the light of SA8000. Organiser: Bangladesh Garments Workers Association. Venue: VIP lounge of Jatiya Press Club. Time: 10.00 am.

Discussion: Bangla Academy will hold a discussion to mark the death anniversary of poet Jasimuddin. Dr Biswajit Ghosh of Dhaka University will present an article "Poems of Jasimuddin: Rakhal Perspective." Venue: Conference room of the Academy. Time: 11.00 am.

Launching: The launching ceremony of the first Internet Portal Website from Bangladesh will be held. Chief guest: Md Abdul Jalil, Minister for Commerce. Venue: Hotel Purbani International. Time: 11:30 am.

Seminar: A seminar on Food security issues will be held. Dr Per Pinstrap Andersen, Director General of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) will give a lecture on "Emerging International Food Policy Issues and Recent Research Findings." Venue: Conference room of IDB Bhaban (Level-4), Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Time: 2.00 pm.

Discussion: Bangabandhu Parishad will hold a discussion meeting on "Agnijhara March O Bangabandhur Ashahojog Andolon (Turbulent March and Non-cooperation Movement of Bangabandhu." Venue: Ramna Batamul. Time: 3.00 pm.

Talk: Bangladesh-Iraq Friendship Society presents a talk on "UN Sanctions Violate Universal Declaration of Human Rights". Venue: Hotel Rajmani Ishakha. Time: 3.00 pm - 5.00 pm.

Weather

Rain, gusty wind likely

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty to squally wind is likely at few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said.

The country's highest temperature 33.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and the lowest 16.5 degree Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6.07 pm and rises on Wednesday at 6.07 am.

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

			Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	
-	30.3	18.5	85	89
	30.5	23.3	90	77
	30.0	18.8	81	-
	32.6	24.2	79	-
	31.5	23.0	80	75
	23.1	16.9	96	88
	30.5	23.6	73	77
		30.5 30.0 32.6 31.5 23.1	30.5 23.3 30.0 18.8 32.6 24.2 31.5 23.0 23.1 16.9	30.5 23.3 90 30.0 18.8 81 32.6 24.2 79 31.5 23.0 80 23.1 16.9 96

HERE and THERE

IUCN-Bangladesh

The National Committee of IUCN Members in Bangladesh held a consultative meeting on the "Impact of Alien Invasive Species in Bangladesh" on Sunday at the conference room of IUCN-Bangladesh at House #3A, Road #15 (New), Dhanmondi, says a press release.

The meeting focused on the impact of alien invasive plant and fish species in Bangladesh. Prof Mahmud-ul-Ameen of the Department of Zoology of the University of Dhaka talked about the impact of alien invasive fauna on the environment.

Md Farid Uddin Ahmed, Member Secretary of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC), discussed on the impact of alien invasive plant species in the

country. Moniruzzaman Khan of Centre for Sustainable Development (CFSD) presented a case study on the invasive fishes of the Aloy Beel of Kaliakoir thana in Gazipur district. A presentation on the Invasive Species Specialist Group of the IUCN was made by Monirul Hasan Khan of IUCN-Bangladesh.

BCU JU unit

Jahangirnagar University unit of Bangladesh Chhatra Union has formed a 19-member committee with Aniruddha Das Anjan as its president and Meer Ahsan Habib Riyadh as general secretary, reports UNB.

The committee was announced on the concluding day of its three-day conference held at an open stage on the campus Saturday night

Other office bearers include Pavel Partho, Rashed Mehidi, Enamul Haque Shimul and Monirul Islam Munir.

Sakhawat Memorial Girls' High School

Alumni Assoc A meeting of Sakhawat Memorial Girls' High school Alumni Association was held on Friday in the city, says a

press release. Members unanimously elected the following 16 member executive committee.

President - Dr. Nurunnahar Faizunnessa, Vice-presidents -Husna Banu Khanam, Bilquis Nasiruddin, Sabera Sayeed, Kulsum Huda, general secretary - Dr. Sultana Sarwatara Zamna, joint secretary - Mahera Rahman, treasurer -Taherun Nessa Abdullah, literary secretary — Meherun Nessa Chowdhury, cultural secretary - Husne Ara Islam, members -Nurhahan Begum, Latifa Akhand, Dr Badrunnessa, Farrukh Mahal, Mumtaz Jahan Zebunnessa, Feroza Khatoon.

Bandhon

Bandhan's Mass Education Programme was held at the English Department of Dhaka University yesterday with Bandhan's executive president Dr Ahsanul Haque in the chair, reports UNB.

Speaking as chief guest, UNB Chairman and Advisor of the organisation Amanullah Khan laid emphasis on transforming the 65 per cent illiterate people of the country into human resource by imparting education and training to them.

Appreciating the mass education programme of Bandhan, he hoped that it would help to free the country from the curse of illiteracy at a minimum cost said a press release.

Ideal Law College

A reception was accorded to the meritorious students and freshers of the Ideal Law College in the city Sunday, reports

Chaired by president of the college governing body Justice B B Roy, the function was addressed by Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, State Minister for Land Rashed Mosharraf, UNB Chairman Amanullah Khan and founder principal of the college M A Halim Tito.

Emphasizing on the rule of law the law minister said law keeps the society under control. In this respect he also laid stress on the mass awareness to build a disciplined society.

While addressing as special guest Amanullah Khan said without the rule of law, democracy, peace and discipline in a society cannot be established and no country can prosper without democracy.

Sonar Bangla Sangskritik

Political adviser to the Prime Minister Dr S A Malek yesterday called upon the proliberation forces to be united to face the evil designs of the BNPled opposition, reports BSS.

"BNP and the fundamentalist reactionary forces have made an unholy alliance to create law and order situation to destabilise the country," he said while addressing a discussion on "Bangabandhu, Non-cooperation Movement and Today's Reality" in the city.

Organised by Sonar Bangla Sangskritik Parishad, the function was also addressed by State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Zinnatunnesa Talukder, Justice K M Subhan, President of Joy Bangla Sangskritik Jote (JSJ) Salahuddin Badal and General Secretary Abdul Kader. President of Sonar Bangla Sangskritik Parishad M Monsur Ahmed presided over the function.

Dwelling on the non-cooperation movement of March in 1971 Dr Malek said Bangabandhu became the de facto head of the government after A special meeting of the the announcement of non-cooperation movement.

Zinnatunnesa Talukder said Bangabandhu, Bangladesh and the War of Liberation are inseparable. No history can be made in the independent Bangladesh without Bangabandhu.



Commonwealth Student and Youth Organisation brought out a procession in the city yesterday in observation of Commonwealth Day. - Star photo

'Govt committed to establish parliament's watchdog role'

Opposition hindering govt effort to make JS centre of all activities: Tofail

The present government is committed to make parliament the centre of all activities and establish its monitoring role to ensure transparency and accountability of government activities, Industries Minister said yesterday, reports UNB.

Speaking at a workshop of Public Administration Reforms Commission, Tofail drew distinction between Parliamentary proceedings and systems during 1991-96 and the present government.

Introduction of Prime Minister's question-answer hour in the House, live telecast of the proceedings, parliamentary committees with MPs as chiefs instead of ministers are some of the features that make the difference, the minister told the function. "We are interested to be more

transparent and accountable to the people. So we sought sugges tions to make parliamentary committee more effective," Tofail said.

All bills are now being sent to committees facilitating both

Ex-secy Enam

Chow joins BNP

ernment and vice president of

Islamic Development Bank

Enam Ahmed Chowdhury ves-

terday joined the BNP, express-

ing his solidarity with the ide-

als of the party and total sup-

port to the leadership of Begum

BNP's objectives and philoso-

volve in the current anti-gov-

ernment movement to help re-

store democracy in the country.

happiness over his joining to

the party and pledged to work

for restoring democracy and

creating wave of development

under the leadership of Begum

BNP to protest

From Page 12

Last Sunday, it was decided

32 BNP MPs from Chittagong

division would address a series

of public meetings to protest the

indiscriminate arrest and ha-

rassment of BNP activists and

lic meetings in Feni on March

22, Noakhali on March 23 and

Laxmipur on March 24, said

BNP whip Joynal Abedin

The team will address a pub-

over the meeting.

supporters.

Faruque.

Chowdhury expressed his

She also asked him to in-

Former secretary of the gov-

Treasury and Opposition MPs to discuss and reach a consensus, so that implementation does not hamper even after change of government, he

workshop seeking comments from stakeholders on its draft recommendations for public administrative reforms.

sion was on "Strengthening parliamentary oversight and reducing wastage and promoting value for money.

ing Awami League, Tofail lamented the role of Opposition in evolving a parliamentary system and described how the prolonged absence of major opposition parties hindered government's sincere efforts to make the parliament centre of all activities. He said Leader of the Opposi

tion has the privilege to take the floor anytime and make constructive criticism of the government activities. "One such speech will have wider im-

pact than tens of public meet ings and hartals as parliamen tary proceedings are telecast live for the people

Regarding BNP's opposition to the process of disinvestment PARC organised the two-day in state-owned enterprises, the Industries Minister hoped an accommodating and tolerating political culture will prevail some day when political parties Yesterday's concluding ses - would put national interest above their petty party interest.

PARC Chairman A T M Shamsul Haque said the success of the administrative reforms A frontline leader of the rul - depends on the political will of the government and other major political parties. He urged the government to implement those recommendations of PARC which do not involve time and money.

Advocate Fazle Rabbi MP Tasmima Hossain MP, A M A Muhith, Manzoor Ul Karim, M Nurunnabi Chowdhury, Khon dokar Abdul Haq Miah, IMF Resident Representative Ronald P Hicks attended yesterday's sessions of the workshop.

Clinton: US satellite

of honour by a smartly turned out contingent drawn from the three services. A 21-gun salute will be given as soon as his aircraft -- Air Force One-- lands The airport ceremony is likely to last half an hour. BTV plans to televise the ceremony live.

Khaleda Zia, reports BSS. Clinton will leave Dhaka Chowdhury, who held variafter a 12-hour stay. He will reous important posts during his turn to Delhi from where he long bureaucratic career, met would come. with Begum Zia at her Minto He would attend a banquet Road official residence and

and a cultural show at the formally joined the party. Bangabhaban before his depar-In a brief ceremony, Begum Zia welcomed Enam Chowdhury in her party and urged him to promote and highlight the

Accords

Dhaka and Washington are expected to sign several agreements during the forthcoming visit of US President Bill Clinton. The accords would be in the oil and gas sector and also on peaceful use of nuclear power.

Bangladesh will also seek waiver of accumulated debts of around 700 million US dollars under PL-480 and enlarged quota for garments exports.

Briefing newsmen, a spokesman of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sarjil Hasan, who is also Director General of America and Pacific Desk, also spoke about some of the issues that are likely to be discussed during Clinton's trip. DG External Publicity Hossain Komol was also present. Both told newsmen that the visit is yet to be firmed up.

The spokesman said that there would be an hour-long bilateral talks between the officials of the two countries. President Clinton would lead his country's side while Sheikh

There would also be a one-totalks or sign the accords.

Sarjil Hasina said that it was a matter if happiness that US investments which was a mere 25 million dollars five years back had balooned to over 750 million dollars.

The garments industry of Bangladesh, he informed, is now the sixth largest exporter of readymade garments to the US and the volume last year reached 1.9 billion US dollars.

a 20-year agreement on nuclear cooperation, related to the Rooppur Power Plant. "This a renewal of an already old agreement," the spokesman Bangladesh will also make a

plea for regularisation of some few thousands immigrants who are trying to make their stay regular in the US.

From Page 1

Hasina would lead the Bangladesh team. one meeting between the two leaders at the International Conference Centre. It was likely that three US Secretaries would be accompanying Clinton and they may also participate in the

"We are still working out the details, and all the points are still under the process of discussion.

Dhaka is also hoping to sign

The foreign ministry

spokesman when asked by a reporter if defence cooperation would be discussed as printed in this newspaper, he replied, "defence cooperation between the two countries is already there." Pressed further, he replied, that he was not aware."



Terry Budden (right) President and Managing Director of Unocal Bangladesh Ltd briefing journalists at his residence in Dhaka regarding Unocal's operation in the country.

Fuel prices

From Page 1

He said that the central bank governor had provided him with these figures and there was no scope to deny these. "So, I stand by my claim which was wrongly communicated to different quarters."

The minister said growth in working capital loans was 42.75 per cent, reflecting good performance by the industrial

Inflation

Kibria said that the point-topoint inflation rate was stable at 3.80 per cent in December. "It is more or less the same for January and February and is unlikely to exceed five per cent'

Import, export and remittance

The import sector grew by 9.9 per cent, rising to US \$ 3151 million during July-November this fiscal from US \$ 2867 million in last fiscal's corresponding period, he said. Imports dur-ing July-November in the last financial year included four million tonnes of food grains,

he added. The good performance of the economy is also reflected in the export sector, which grew by seven per cent during July - January this financial year. Export earnings totalled US \$ 3187 million during the period against last year's US \$ 2980 million, the finance minister

During the period, remittances increased by 16.71 per cent to US \$ 1125.19 million from US \$ 964.05 million in last fiscal's corresponding. Remittances were around US \$ 196 million both in December and January, he said.

This was due to actions taken against Hundi business. Kibria said that the foreign currency reserve was also sound with US \$ 1.67 billion in Febru-

Revenue and government borrowing

The finance minister however said that the shortfall in revenue was about Tk 1200 crore till February, which, he hoped, would improve in the coming days.

He said the government had to give price support to farmers to keep the market stable in view of good production of food grains. "Originally, we had a budget of around Tk 500 crore to buy food grains but it was increased to Tk 1100 crore. We had to borrow additional money from banks."

Regarding the annual development programme (ADP), the minister said that government did not cut the Tk 15500 original plan despite shortfall in revenue.

SC Bar polls

From Page 12

Presided over by Barrister Shafiq Ahmed, the meeting was attended, among others, by Mashuk Hossain Ahmed, Saidur Rahman, Nikhil Kumar Saha, Nizamul Haque Nasim and A K M Asaduzzaman Babu. The election candidates also

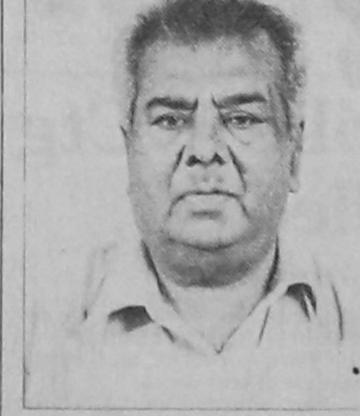
addressed the meeting. Earlier, the final list of the candidates was published. According to the lists, Presidential candidates are: Abdul Baset Majumder, Moinul Hossain, Sirajul Islam Khan and Yaar

Candidates for the post of vice-president are: Abdus Salam, A K M Shamsul Karim, Farug Ahmed and Aftab Hos-

The secretary candidates are: Golam Arshed, S K Siddque and Dr Tareg M R Chowdhury while the treasurer candidates are: Amatun Nur Begum Panna, Saifuddin Ahmed Chowdhury.

The assistant-secretary candidates are: A K M Morshed, Abdur Rashid, Gias Uddin Mithu, Mokhlesur Rahman Zahid and Mohammad Abdullah. The member candidates are:

Abdul Baten-2, A M Mahbub Uddin, B A Rashid, Borhan Uddin, Golum Mohammad Bhuyan, Goitum Kumar Roy, Zahirul Islam Bhuyan, Abdul Kader Talukder, Ataur Rahman, Harun-ar Rashid, Ibrahim Mollah. Shahadat Bhuyan, Nilufar Yesmin Mali, S M Emdadul Haque and Zulfigur Ahmed.



Obituary

By Staff Correspondent Moqbular Rahman, a leading industrialist and tea planter of Bangladesh died yesterday. He was 78.

Rahman came from renowned tea planting family. He was the son of late Khan Bahadur Mukhlesur Rahman and nephew of Nawab Musharrai Hossain of Jalpaiguri. He left behind his wife Ja-

hanara Begum (Ruby), one son, two daughters and a number of grand children and a host of relatives and friends. even in England. Rahman was buried at the Banani graveyard. His qulkhwani will be held tomor -

row at his 6, Circuit House resi-

I dence, after Asr prayers.

Contract negotiations

'It will be disaster if govt doesn't protect interest'

By Staff Correspondent

Production sharing contract market, which would create negotiations could lead to natural gas exports that don't con-Bangladeshis. sider the country's reserves or future needs, says a group of

versity, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and Jahangirnagar University issued the warning during a discussion at Dhaka University In addition to the teachers,

university teachers.

two noted geologists, Prof. Badrul Imam and Dr. Quamrul people became poorer.

Hasan, and Dr. M. Shamsher The speakers estimated the Ali, former vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Open University, also spoke at the event. Speakers said it would be a

n't protect the country's inter-

ests during contract negotia-

tions with foreign oil and gas

without developing a domestic all.

jobs and generate income for

to foreign companies, leaving Teachers from Dhaka Uni- domestic customers in the dark.

they said. The teachers criticised the government's move to export gas when 95 per cent of the country's population didn't have access to gas. Gas exports would benefit local agents and politicians, while the rest of the

country's gas reserves would be exhausted in 25 to 30 years, since demand was expected to rise quickly. They said the curdisaster if the government did- rent and former government couldn't negotiate and wasn't committed to national interests, since both leased out gas blocks and agreed to allow for-They said foreign companies eign companies to export gas if wanted to export natural gas the government failed to buy it

Round Bidding. The US oil giant

is also negotiating for the West-

ern Region Integrated Project

includes proposals for devel-

opment of Shahbajpur gas field,

setting up of three power plants

in the Western Zone and laying

of 155 kilometres gas pipe line

up to bordering Kushtia with a

total investment of US\$ 300

Clinton's visit, we intend to

sign a PSC for Block 7," Budden

Where docs

From Page 1

"Most doctors trying to avoid

since 1998, but none of the doc-

posts outside the capital operate

private clinics or attend to

"clinic business" after their

Doctors who begin courses or

hospital duties," said an offi-

accept "academic" positions

also create staffing problems at

rural hospitals. According to

the health directorate's records,

about 200 doctors have com-

pleted their courses in the last

two years but have not reported

turned recently from abroad

after eight years, although their

academic training ended after

five years," said a health min-

istry official. "High officials

have been instructed to discour-

"I know two doctors who re-

to the authority.

tors have been punished.

"During US President Bill

The WRIP in its first phase

From Page 1 is now operating in 31 countries in the world, has so far invested around US\$ 330 million in the country since 1996.

The Unocal MD said his company will submit to the

largest gas field the company drilled in its 110 years' history. The field has a proven reserve of 4 to 5 trillion cubic feet (TCF) extractable gas and can supply Bangladesh, he said.

possible to produce as much as 800 million cubic feet (mcf) of gas per day. We are not planning to drill any more well till gas from these wells go to the mar-

fields, he said. Jalalabad gas field which

ity of 125 mcf. As per initial assessment, its reserve is 1.1 TCF. "If there is some investment it (Jalalabad gas plant) can sup -

day." Budden said. Unocal is operating in blocks 12, 13 and 14 and initialled Production Sharing

Hazari

From Page 1

sions on Badhon, a young girl who was sexually assaulted on the Dhaka University campus during the New Year's celebra-

night during the month of Ramadan? Was it wrong that the drunk young men jumped on the lady who was dancing on the street with half of her body exposed?" he asked.

treated this way," Hazari told the House. Our Staff Correspondent adds: A four-member team of Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha handed over a memorandum to the Speaker of the

parliamentary proceedings. The Nari Pragati Sangha representatives protested the indecent and sexist remarks Hazari made on that day and told the Speaker that such vulgar statements undermined the stature of the parliament and

offended the country's women. Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury assured them of expunging the statements as per the rules.

PSA: Lawyers

From Page 12

Dr. Nilufar Begum, Director

of the Directorate of Women

and Children Affairs, Dr Sul-

sity, singer Rehena Ashiqur Rahman and Fouzia Haq also spoke at the seminar. The state minister said tough laws are necessary to maintain peace and ensure public safety in a society gripped with insecurity and an-

archy. He said criminal of-

fences like extortion and ten-

der-tampering have been reduced to a large extent since the PSA came into being. K M Sobhan criticised those who spoke about abuse of the law even before it was enacted. He however said none could guarantee that the law would not be abused in a country like

said the PSA has frightened those doing politics of arms and terrorism.

Saturday under the Second

(WRIP).

If there is a "free and open market", 2,000 to 3,000 wells could be drilled in the country by all the companies in a reasonable time-frame, which would ascertain the actual reserve of gas, he added.

Some 25 to 30 wells can be drilled for "full development" of Bibiyana and Moulavi Bazar

started operation in February last year is now producing 85 mcf gas per day out of its capac

ply 210 to 250 mcf of gas per

Contract (PSC) for Block 7 on

With many in the House taken aback, Hazari had said Badhon must be punished. "How could a Muslim woman go for an outing in the dead of

He didn't stop there. "It was only natural that she was

Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, urging him to expunge the statement of Jainal Hazari from the

tana Shafi of Dhaka Univer-

ours and mentioned several cases of abuse of similar laws

Sudhangsu Shekhar Haldar

Prices will skyrocket once the gas fields were handed over

Unocal won't expand

government a development plan for Jalalabad gas field within a few weeks and two other plans for Bibiyana and Moulavi Bazar gas fields later in the year. Budden said Bibiyana is the

the entire demand o "Unocal has already drilled two wells at Bibiyana. By using sophisticated technology, it is

age foreign training due to such problems." Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, minister of Health and Family

Welfare, said the vacancies are a serious problem. "About four to five doctors are present against nine in thana health complexes," said

lines for postings, either. Sharif From Page 1

Selim. "There aren't any guide-

ernment has offered Sharif's defense lawyers additional security to return to Karachi. Sultan says that's not good enough. He said in a telephone interview that it is impossible to guarantee the lawyers' safety in Karachi, a city of 14 million people and Pakistan's most violent wrecked by relentless eth-

nic and religiously motivated violence. "The murder of Iqbal Radh has sent shock waves not only through this country but also internationally," Sharif said in a statement issued in court. "It exposes the government's failure to provide security not only to the lawyers defending us but

His brutal killing was meant to quiet a brave voice," he said. The case will resume tomorrow when the prosecution is expected to ask the judge to allow the case to go ahead.

to the common people.

protest the shooting death of

Meanwhile throughout Pak-

istan lawyers were on strike to

BNP: Polls From Page 1 The leaders observed that JP has turned into a 'region-based party' and its organisational

structure across the country has totally broken. Beside the seat sharing issue. the alliance leaders are also were special guests while discussing the issue of contest-Khaleda Begum was in the ing the polls with a single elec-

> tion symbol or their respective party symbols. Meanwhile, the alliance plans to intensify the current one-point movement gradually from the first week of April. It may also call a hartal on

> March 29 or 30, an alliance leader said But many BNP leaders have suggested suggested that instead of calling hartal this month. they should first warm up the political situation by going for mass contact, demonstration. procession, protest rally and

> sit-in-demonstration at thana

and district levels. Sources said the BNP Chairperson will begin mass contact on March 21 from Natore. She is likely to lead two three-day road marches -- Dhaka to greater Sylhet and Chittagong to Teknaf in the first fortnight of April. Her programmes outside Dhaka may end by April

Later, the alliance is likely to announce a series of programmes.