

The Nation

What's on today....

New year programme: Institute of Business Studies, Darul Ihsan University will hold a programme to celebrate the Bengali New Year. Venue: Institute of Education, Darul Ihsan University, House No 85/A, Rd. No 11/A, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 9:00 am.

Film show: Tanvir Mokammel's *Chitra Nadir Pare* will be screened. Venue: Sufia Kamal Public Library auditorium. Time: 10:00 am, 12:00 noon, 3:00 pm, 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm.

Seminar: Mount Elizabeth Hospital and Gleneagles Hospital as part of the Parkway Group World will hold a seminar on "Headache is not always simple" and "Cardiac Arrhythmias - What can be done?". Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 7:00 pm.

Exhibition: The 2nd art exhibition of Shabin Shahrir *Karur Charuta* will be inaugurated. Venue: Zahul Gallery at Institute of Fine Arts, DU campus. Time: 10:00 am.

Annual general meeting: The annual general meeting (AGM) 1999 of the Hemophilia Society of Bangladesh will be held. Venue: 495, West Nakhalpara. Time: 3:00 pm.

Award distribution: Sher-e-Bangla Shikha O Gobeshona Parishad will hold the distribution ceremony of the Parishad's Sher-e-Bangla Gold Medal '99. Chief guest: Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Hanif. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre auditorium. Time: 3:30 pm.

ICAB seminar: Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh will hold a mandatory CPE seminar on "Role of Company Secretary in Corporate Governance". Venue: ICAB auditorium, Chartered Accountant Bhaban, 100 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. Time: 3:30 pm.

Discussion meeting: Sylhet Bibhag Jubo Parishad in association with Chitra will hold a discussion meeting on occasion of Bengali New Year 1407. Venue: 881 Shahidbagh. Time: 6:00 pm.

Rally: Chander Hat, an organisation for children and youth, will hold a rally to celebrate the Bengali New Year and its 26th founding anniversary. Venue: From in front of Jatiya Press Club. Time: 7:00 am.

Cultural programme: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy will hold a cultural programme. Venue: Academy premises. Time: 6:45 pm.

Cultural programme: Shetubandha will hold a cultural programme on occasion of Bengali New Year's Day. Venue: Apartment No 102, House No 30, Rd No 7, Dhanmondi. Time: 7:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Certificate awarding ceremony: Monowara Hospital organises the certificate awarding ceremony of its training course on "Hospital Hygiene and Infection Control" organised with cooperation from ACADE, The School for Specialised Nursing Education Groningen, The Netherlands. Venue: Ball room III, Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 11:00 am.

Discussion meeting: Pabna Samity will hold a discussion meeting on occasion of Bengali New Year's Day and Independence Day. The event will also comprise the Eid reunion of the Samity and will be followed by a cultural show and dinner. Venue: Samity's office at Shantibagh. Time: 3:00 pm.

Seminar: The Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) is association with Study and Research Group (MSS/SG) will hold a seminar on "Women and Political Parties". Venue: Dhaka Ahsania Mission Auditorium, House No 19, Road No 12, Dhanmondi, R/A. Time: 3:30 pm.

Distribution of crests: Institute of Chartered Accountants will hold a ceremony to distribute crests to Language Movement Veterans and Freedom Fighters. Venue: Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh auditorium. Time: 5:15 pm-9:30 pm.

Music: High Commission of India is present an evening of Bengali songs on occasion of *Pahela Baishakh* by students and staff of Sangeet Bhavan Chittagong. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, 754 Satmasjid Road. Time: 7:00 pm.

Seminar: The first-ever national dissemination seminar on REFLECT, an approach to education, empowerment and social change, will be held. Organisers: Forum for Participatory Education and Development (FPED) in collaboration with ActionAid Bangladesh. Chief guest: State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir. Venue: IDP Bhaban.

Weather

Day temp may rise

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty/squally wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi division and the regions of Dhaka, Tangail, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Jessore and Kushtia and weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Day temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Met Office in a special warning said temporary west/north-westerly Kalbaishakhi squally speed 60-80 kph or more at places with rain or thundershowers is likely over the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Rajshahi, Pabna, Bogra, Dhaka, Tangail, Comilla, Mymensingh and Sylhet during the next 12 hours commencing 6 pm today.

The country's highest temperature 37.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and the lowest 21.0 degree Celsius at Rangamati and Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:20 pm and rises on Saturday at 5:37 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	34.3	24.2
Chittagong	32.7	22.0
Rajshahi	34.7	23.8
Khulna	36.0	23.2
Barisal	35.3	23.4
Sylhet	32.5	21.4
Cox's Bazar	33.4	23.5
	Morning	Evening
	77	51
	72	72
	87	62
	80	—
	67	63
	69	64
	59	68

HERE and THERE

Suriya Sen parishad

By Staff Correspondent

Mastarda Suriya Sen Parishad has called upon various social and political organisations to observe the 70th anniversary of youth uprising and Jalalabad battle against British colonial rule.

President and general secretary of the Parishad, Fayez Ahmed and Subrata Chowdhury, in a statement yesterday recalled the historic incidents that took place between April 18 and 22, 69 years ago.

The Parishad will hold a discussion meeting on the issue at 5:00 pm on April 21 at Dhaka University's TSC intersection.

PWD Diploma Engineers' Assoc

Public Works and Housing Minister Mosharraf Hossain has urged engineers to work with honesty and sincerity for quick implementation of infrastructure development programme undertaken by the gov-

ernment, reports UNB.

Addressing a two-day National Council of PWD Diploma Engineers' Association in the city yesterday Mosharraf said about 1000 flats are being built for the ensuing NAM summit in Dhaka under the supervision of Public Works Department. The engineers are to work with utmost care for maintaining the quality of the construction.

Senior engineers of the Public Works Department, about 1000 councillors and delegates from 64 districts took part in the conference.

Shishu Abhibhabak Forum

The guardian of students studying at the Bangladesh Shishu Academy have floated a new organisation, 'Shishu Abhibhabak Forum' April 8, says a press release.

A 21-member executive committee has also been formed with Prof M A Khaleque as its president and M A Salam as general secretary.

'Common people to have access to Bangabandhu's cell at Central Jail'

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim yesterday said common people will get access to cell number 20 of the older part of the Central Jail where Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was confined by the autocratic Pakistani rulers for a long time, reports BSS.

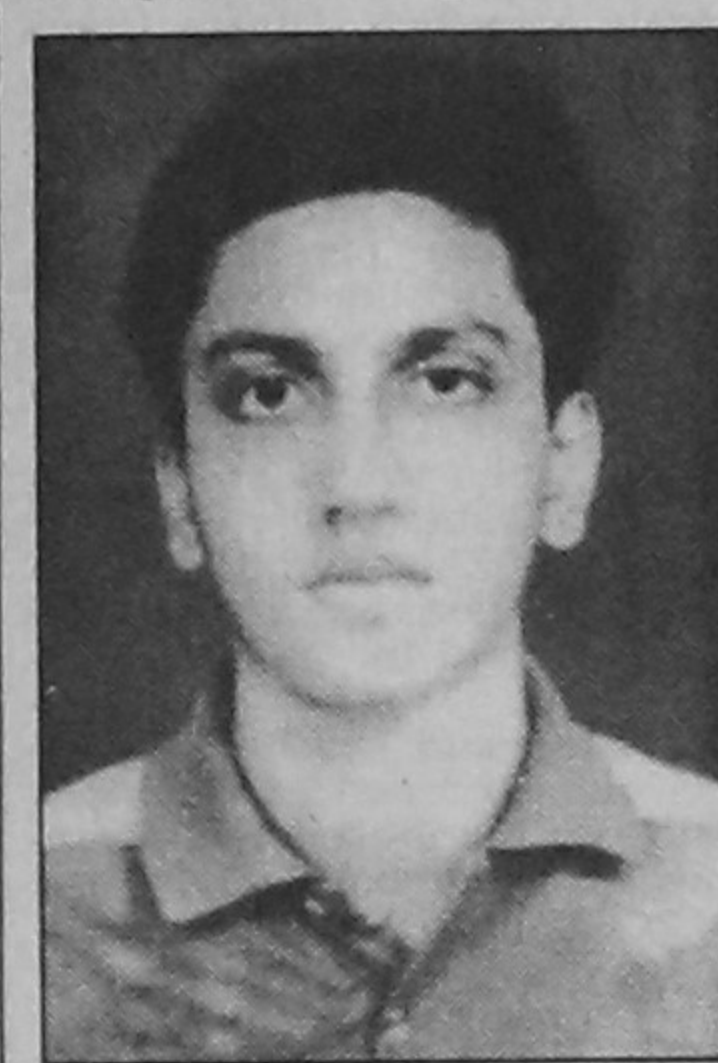
The minister was unveiling plaque of 'Mritun Joye' in the cell number one of the new jail where four national leaders — Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Monsur Ali and A H M Kamruzzaman — were killed in a gruesome way on November 3, 1975.

The minister saw memorabilia used by the imprisoned leaders and stood in silence for a while. He visited the kitchen, women's ward, clinic and old part of jail and discussed the prevailing problems of the Central Jail with senior prison officers.

The Home Minister assured that quality of the living condition of the convicts and under trial prisoners would be improved. The prison authorities informed the minister that 80 out of 180 recommendations of the Jail Reforms Commission have been implemented so far.

Nasim said an inter-ministerial meeting would review the state of the commission's recommendations. He also said that necessary allocation in the next budget would be made for immediate refurbishment.

Raziuddin Razu MP, Inspector General of Prisons Brigadier Walur Rahman, Additional IG (Prisons) Mohammad Liaquat Ali Khan and Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Abdus Sattar Khan and senior prison officers were present during the visit.



BUET student dies of viral infection

By Staff Correspondent

A first year student of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) died on Tuesday from complications following a viral infection.

According to a press release yesterday Niaz Ahmed, a student of computer science, had stood first in the admission test of 1999-2000 session.

He was hospitalised at National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases Hospital (NICVD) where his condition deteriorated. One of his kidneys was damaged. He was brought back to his house in Azimpur where he died on Tuesday night.

Niaz, a student of Engineering University School stood 11th from Science division in his 1999 HSC exams.

He was buried on Wednesday at the Azimpur graveyard.



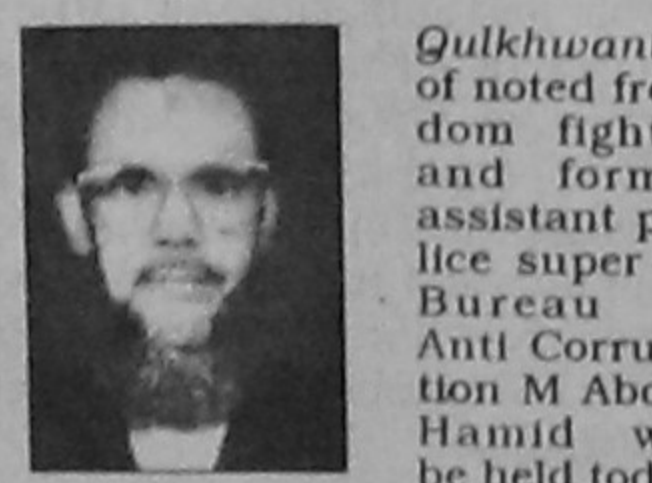
Dr Sanjida Khatun awarded Anannya Literary Award

Anannya, a fortnightly magazine for women, has awarded its annual 'Anannya Literary Award 1407 Bangla' to litterateur, educationist and Rabindra Sangeet exponent Dr Sanjida Khatun, says a press release.

The award will formerly be handed over to her at a ceremony in October on occasion of the founding anniversary of Anannya.

Anannya Literary Award is an annual award given to personalities for their contribution in research in literature.

Qulkhwan



Qulkhwan, a noted freedom fighter and former assistant police super of Bureau of Anti Corruption M Abdul Hamid will be held today after Asr prayers at 1/6 East Basabo in the city, says a press release.



Pro-hartal activists burned a tyre at city's Jatrahari area yesterday during the country-wide dawn-to-dusk hartal. — Star photo



Shops at New Market (picture above) as well as other shopping centres across the city remained closed yesterday during the dawn-to-dusk hartal. — Star photo

PAB contradicts

By Staff Correspondent

Pesticide Association of Bangladesh (PAB) has contradicted with the views of a report published in The Daily Star on April 7, under the headline "Greener may not mean healthier".

The PAB chairman Siraj A Chowdhury in his rejoinder claimed that most of the granular insecticides do not harm the environment as these work through systematic action in the plant and the pests that attack the plant.

He said farmers use granules as control pest for a longer period of time minimising the number of application of insecticides. He further said that granular insecticides are very popular amongst rice farmers and recommended by experts all over the rice growing countries.

PAB chairman claimed that the use of granules do not waste farmer's money, that rather helps them in controlling harmful pests to get better harvests.

Our reply: The report focused on the misuse of granule pesticides by the farmers because most of them use it before attack of the pests on their crop.

Pesticide experts and government officials also confirmed that usage of pesticide before pests begin their attack is a sheer wastage of money and harmful for the crop and environment as well. It kills all insects in the field irrespective of them being harmful and beneficial.

The draft agriculture commission report has also blamed the granular pesticide as one of the major problems causing environmental pollution.

Bangabandhu Murder Case 105 DU teachers for execution of verdict soon

The teachers of Dhaka University (DU) in a joint statement yesterday made an appeal to the authorities concerned for announcing the final verdict of the trial of Bangabandhu Murder Case and its execution, reports BSS.

In their statement, 105 teachers of DU fervently appealed for announcing the final verdict by the higher court without wasting any more time in the greater interest of justice and rule of law in the country.

The signatories to the statement include Prof Shamsul Huda Harun, Prof Sayed Giasuddin Ahmed, Prof Akhteruzzaman, Prof Mohammad Maniruzzaman, Dr Nowsher Ali Khan, Prof R I M Aminur Rashid, Dr M A Mannan, Prof Durgadas Bhattacharya, Dr Harun-ar-Rashid, Prof Tofael Ahmed Chowdhury, Prof Nurul Islam, Prof Rafiqul Haque, Prof Sultana Shaif, Dr S M Inamul Haque, Dr Arefin Siddiq, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Prof Raib Humayun, Prof Khandker Ashraf Hussain, Dr Mizanur Rahman, Dr Sushil Ranjan Hawlader, Dr Nilufar Nahar, Dr Rafiqullah Khan, Prof Sajjad Haider, Artist Hashem Khan, Prof Shahjahan Tapan, Dr Sirajul Haque, Dr Abdus Samad, Prof Nurul Islam, Prof Sayed Ahmed Khan, Prof Shanti Narayan Ghosh and Dr Giasuddin Mollah.

Politics is investment

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service of the opposition. In office, the Awami League treatment of opposition workers is the "mirror image of the behaviour of the BNP when in office". As a result, both parties have tended to depend on such quasi-criminal political instruments as political resources, integral for realising their electoral ambitions, it added.

"Opposition complaints of political victimisation are legitimate not because their own affected political workers are honest people dedicated to public service but because of the inequitable enforcement of the law against them."

Thus, both parties have abused the system of law enforcement to protect their own workers and to persecute those of their opponent and have, in the process, exposed ordinary citizens to a system of institutionalised anarchy where they have little relief against the depredations of the mastans, the report added.

Many politicians now increasingly use mastans as a political resource in the contention for political office and state patronage to access public resources, CPD said, adding the resultant nexus between politicians, business, the mastans and the law enforcement agencies is now becoming embedded into the social structures of Bangladesh.

"This nexus between money and politics in large measures derives from the murky nature of party finances. People without wealth, or the patronage of wealth or who do not aspire to wealth, have little prospect of surviving in politics."

Most party financiers hoped to use their support to promote their business fortunes when the party came to power but there were always some party loyalists who invested their wealth in particular parties out of a sense of political commitment, the CPD report mentioned.

"It was particularly visible during the Ershad regime, was manifested throughout the BNP regime and is now seen as an important constraint under the Awami League regime."

Mastans reportedly use their immunity from law enforcement to exact tolls from

business, demand their tithes in particular construction contracts and from most other investment activities. In many areas the claims of the mastans have become a recurrent cost for doing business, the report added.

Ruling party workers increasingly develop either collusive relations with the bureaucracy or conflictual relations when their particular expectation cannot be satisfied, it said adding such tensions constrain the process of governance in various echelons of the government.

"The malfunctioning of parliament has its roots in the degeneration of the principal political parties themselves."

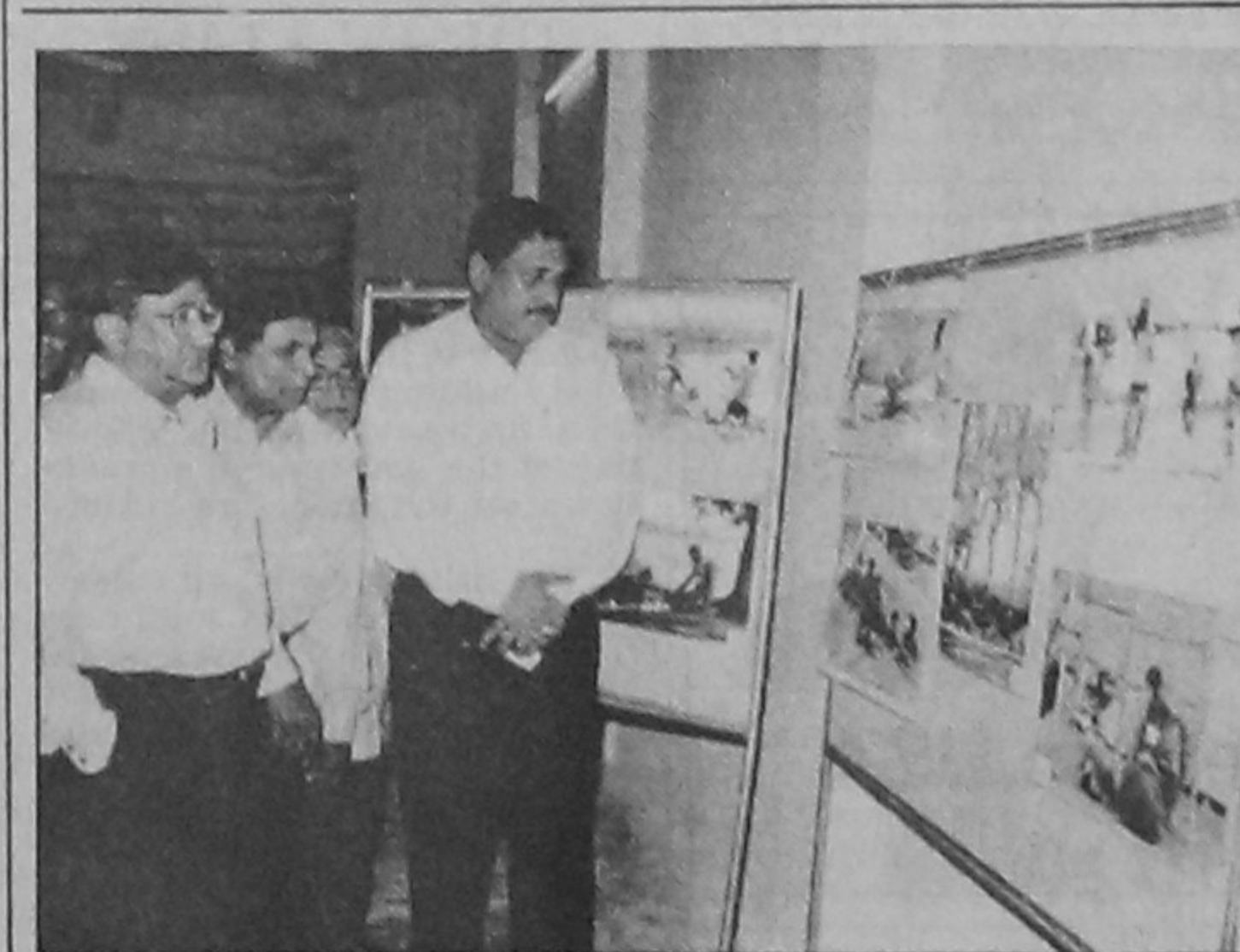
It said party agendas tend to be designed by a few professionals, in consultation with a few leaders, and are rarely exposed to debate within the party or consultation with the rank and file let alone with the public.

"If we look at the whole gamut of governance problems extending from the state of law and order, the default issue, the deterioration in administration, the degeneration of our education institutions, the pervasiveness of corruption, each of these issues has now become embedded into the socio-political fabric of Bangladesh society where executive intervention, through particular administrative actions, remain compromised by the socio-political fallout likely to arise out of such initiatives."

"Such a process of political confrontation should be seen as a symptom of a deeper malaise in Bangladesh's political process, which originates in the structural features of its principal political parties and its consequential impact on the nature of national politics."

Successive ruling parties have demonstrated a high degree of intolerance to the concerns of the political opposition, the report stated.

In response to the perceived unfair behaviour of the ruling party, successive oppositions have moved on to a highly confrontational political path, leading to boycott of parliament, invocation of hartals and relocation of opposition political activity away from parliament and into the streets, CPD said.



A photo exhibition titled "Rupashi Bangla" was inaugurated at the Bangladesh Photo Journalists Association auditorium in the city yesterday. State Minister for Jute A K Fayezul Haque inaugurated the exhibition. — Star photo

Pahela Baishakh today

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In keeping with the age-old tradition, traders and shopkeepers will open *halkhata* (fresh account books) and offer sweets to their customers and clients. Traditional fairs will be the main attractions of the day both in rural and urban areas.

The day is a public holiday. Newspapers will bring out supplements while the Radio and BTV will broadcast special programme highlighting the country's rich cultural heritage.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have given separate messages welcoming the New Year and greeting all on the occasion.

The President said the Bangla New Year has great significance in our social and economic life because it reflects the deep-rooted culture and values. The Prime Minister described *Pahela Baishakh* as the "symbol of life and dynamism of the Bangalee nation". The message of *Pahela Baishakh* inspire the ever-struggling Bangladeshis to fight communalism, terrorism, anarchy and ignorance, she said.

Meanwhile, various socio-cultural organisations have taken up elaborate programmes to celebrate the day.

Students of the Institute of Fine Arts of Dhaka University will bring out a colourful procession in the city in the morning, carrying festoons, placards, posters, banners and wearing masks to welcome the Bangla New Year. They will later hold a cultural programme at the Bakulola on the institute premises.

The institute already started a three-day *Baishakhi Utsab*

yesterday. Bangla Academy, Shilpakala Academy, Nazrul Institute, Nazrul Academy, Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts, Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka Reporters' Unity, Liberation War Museum, Bengal Foundation, Dhaka University Alumni Association and many other organisations have also taken up programmes to celebrate the day.

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel will serve special Bangalee cuisine, followed by cultural functions today. Besides, a three-day fair will begin at the entrance of the hotel.

The Bangla New Year was introduced during the rule of Emperor Akbar for convenience in tax collection from the first of *Baishakh*, the month of harvesting the major crops.

GMG aircraft mishap: CAAB sending Black Box to Singapore

By Special Correspondent
An official of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) was scheduled to leave for Singapore last night with the Flight Data Recorder (FDR) and Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) known as the 'Black Box' of the GMG airline's Dash-8 aircraft now grounded.

The Black Box would be decoded in Singapore to find out what happened when the aircraft with 37 passengers on board land at Zia International Airport (ZIA) on a Sunday night and why its nose wheel was damaged, a CAAB source said.

A three-member probe body formed by the CAAB is investigating the incident.

The two Romanians pilots of the aircraft have been suspended by the CAAB. An inspector from CAAB is going to Romania and Sweden soon to check documents relating to qualification of the nine Romanian pilots employed by the GMG, the source said.

CAAB is also investigating various allegations against some of its officials made by GMG.

GMG has denied that the aircraft had broken its nose wheel or that there are irregularities in appointment of pilots.

Prokrichi-BCS council expresses resentment

By Special Correspondent
The Prokrichi-BCS Central Coordination Council has expressed its resentment over what it termed the failure of the government to implement the memorandum it had submitted to the Prime Minister containing its eight-point charter demands to remove anomalies in the administration.

The Prokrichi also expressed its concern on the continued efforts by a 'certain quarter' to upgrade 321 posts for the Administrative Service cadres and urged the authorities again not to do so.

A press release by the Prokrichi also said that the organisation has urged the government to repeal a decision in this regard without further delay.

It also decided to hold a national council of Prokrichi in Dhaka on July 22 and urged all upzila, zilla and divisional units to complete their conference and elect committees to better organise the Prokrichi.

Paris meet

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its position on administrative and legal reforms. Kibria said it was working for establishing the office of Ombudsman. He apprised the donors of the progress on work of the Public Administration Reforms Commission and the Law Commission.

Turning to banking reforms, the finance minister said amendments have been initiated to the Bank Companies Act and Financial Institution Act to strengthen recovery of loan, penalty for default and greater effectiveness of bankruptcy proceedings.

Loan classification and loan loss provisioning rules have been tightened, bringing down non-performing loans in private banks to 29 per cent in September 1999 from 45 per cent in December 1994, he said.

However, the position of NCBs, burdened with huge due money overdue from the borrowers, was not mentioned. Kibria briefed the development partners about the government's multidimensional approach to poverty reduction to ensure coherence of strategies, maintain policy consistency at all levels and promote a pro-poor environment.

"Growth with equity and social justice remains the basic agenda of the government."

The government's pro-poor policies resulted in decline in incidence of poverty, from 47 per cent in 1996 to 44.7 per cent in 1999.

He also mentioned important supplementary role of the NGOs in addressing poverty. The amount of micro-credits disbursed by the NGOs during 1970-1999 (up to June) is estimated at Tk 77.35 billion and 85 per cent of borrowers are women.

The finance minister assured the donor representatives of Dhaka's sincerity in ensuring representative local government, saying the system is reorganised in light of the 1997 recommendations of the Local Government Commission.

Rejoinders

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encroachers, but PWD authorities failed to take action as valid documents were produced by T Hussain.

The Master Plan clearly reveals that T Hussain occupies about 4.5 *kathas* of lakeside land. PWD officials said that it was an "extended allotment" offered to the government official.

Al-Haj AKM Melaluddin of House 300c at Road 25 in Dhanmondi residential area said that he bought seven *katha* of land from Md Golam Mustafa in 1985. On February 2, 1985 Md Golam Mustafa was allotted 1.14 *kathas* of additional lakeside land by the Ministry of Housing and Public Works for an amount of Tk 93,750. "So my plot is legally out of any encroachment whatsoever."

Our Reply: The Daily Star report under the headline "2 six-storied buildings escape demolition" published on April 6 pointed out that the building was encroaching on the lakeside land but the owner obtained allotment from the ministry concerned.

TB

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gards detection of infected cases is below 30 per cent against the WHO target of 70 per cent, he said.

The rate of full cure of detected TB cases is 90 per cent in Sri Lanka and Bhutan, he said.

He however said, "The programme has covered 90 per cent of the population in the country. The 10 per cent remains in the urban areas where the disease is more pronounced. To address the issue, we must strengthen collaboration between the LGRD and the Health Ministry"