

What's on today....

FEJB workshop: Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) will begin a two-day long workshop on 'reporting on biodiversity'. Venue: VIP lounge of Jatiya Press Club. Time: 9.00 am.

View exchange meet: Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS) will hold a view exchange meet on "fundamentalism and Fatwa as obstacles to development of women". Venue: BNPS premises at House No 255, Rd No 19 (Old), Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 10.00 am.

Discussion meeting: MS Forum 2000, a social organisation, will hold a discussion meeting on "Use of Bangla at UN" and the publication of a souvenir *Matribhasha*. Venue: Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, National University, House No 113, Road No 9/A (New), Dhanmondi. Time: 12.15 pm.

Seminar: Bangladesh Astronomical Association, DU branch will hold a seminar on "Universe: A Bird's Eye View". A film show, software and sculpture exhibition will be held before the seminar. Venue: TSC auditorium, DU. Time: 3.00 pm 8.00 pm.

Inauguration: Cardiac Care & Research Centre of Z H Sikder Women's Medical College and Hospital (Pvt Ltd) will be inaugurated. Chief guest: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Venue: Monica Estate, West Dhanmondi. Time: 4.30 pm.

Satyajit Ray retrospective: Zahir Rathan Film Society in association with the High Commission of India presents a French-TV interview with Satyajit Ray (1989) and Ray's *Gono Shatru* (Public Enemy). Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium. Time: 6.15 pm.

Vocal recital: Indian classical music exponent Sulochana Brahaspati will present a vocal recital with assistance from her Bangladeshi students. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi. Time: 7.00 pm.

Reception: Ward Commissioner Al-haj Md Saur Rahman Shahid will be accorded a reception by residents of his ward. Chief guest: Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Hanif. Venue: Jatiya Press Club auditorium. Time: 3.00 pm.

Film festival: A 3-day long documentary film festival "Focus on South Asia" will be inaugurated. Five documentaries will be screened in two sessions. *Thin Air* (India), *Don't Pass Me By* (Nepal) and *Dushomoy* (Bangladesh) in the first and *The Forgotten Army* (India) and *No One Believes the Professor* (Pakistan) in the second session. Organisers: Friends of Travelling Film South Asia, Dhaka in association with Ekushey TV (ETV). The Goethe Institut (GCI) and Steps Towards Development (STEPS). Venue: The Goethe Institut (GCI), House No 10, Road No 9 (new), Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 4.30 pm and 7.30 pm respectively.

..... and tomorrow

Film festival: Four documentaries will be screened on the second day of "Focus on South Asia." *Skin Deep* (India), *A Letter to Samien* (India) will be screened in the 1st session while *Three Women* and *a Camera* (India) and *Pure Chutney* (Trinidad & Tobago) will be screened in the 2nd session. Venue: Goethe Institut, Rd No 9 (new), Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 5.30 pm and 7.30 pm.

Annual district convention: Lions Clubs International, Dist 315 B3 will hold the inaugural session of its 4th annual district convention. Chief guest: Minister for Home Affairs, Post and Telecommunications Mohammad Nasim. Venue: Ballroom of Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 9.30 am.

Meeting: An extended meeting of the central committee of Bangladesh Democratic Lawyers Association will be held. Venue: Supreme Court Lawyers Samity Bhaban's Hall No 1. Time: 10.00 am.

Film Show: Three movies *Coup de Torchon* (Clean State), *Al no Borei* (Empire of Passion) and *Chez ma Tante* will be screened. Venue: 11.00 am, 4.00 pm and 6.00 pm.

Exhibition: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka presents the 3rd solo mixed media exhibition of artist Baish Kadir titled "Virtual Reality in Life". Chief guest: Minister for Foreign Affairs Abdus Samad Azad. Venue: Gallery of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, 26 Mirpur Road. Time: 4.00 pm. The exhibition will remain open from 9 am-12 noon and 4.00 pm-8.00 pm everyday till May 25.

Meeting: Friends and political comrades of late Kazi Akram Hussain, a peasant leader will hold a meeting. Venue: Data Soft premises, 73/D, Airport Road. Time: 4.00 pm.

Art exhibition: Gallery 21 presents a solo exhibition of contemporary artist Showkatuzzaman. Chief guest: DU VC Prof AK Azad Chowdhury. Venue: Gallery-2, 765 Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi. Time: 5.00 pm. The exhibition will remain open from 10.00-8.00 pm till May 22.

Satyajit Ray retrospective: Zahir Rathan Film Society presents *Aguntak* (the stranger) by Ray. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, Road No 2, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 6.00 pm.

Drama: Phillips Club will stage Kalyan Mitra's "*Shagor Shicha Manik*". Venue: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University auditorium, Shabbagh. Time: 6.30 pm.

JU reunion: The first reunion of the 19th batch of Jahangirnagar University will be held. Programmes include a tour of the campus, tree plantation cultural programme, concert etc. Venue: JU campus. Time 8.00 am-8.00 pm.

Reception: City University Puja Committee will accord a reception to Maj Gen (Retd) C R Dujta, Bir Uttam. Venue: National Museum auditorium.

Weather

Rain, gusty wind likely

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty to squally wind is likely over the region of Comilla, Noakhali and a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna division till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office said.

The country's highest temperature 37.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and the lowest 23.6 degree Celsius at Rangamati.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6.32 pm and rises on Friday at 5.17 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	35.0	25.4
Chittagong	33.6	26.0
Rajshahi	36.0	24.7
Khulna	35.8	23.8
Barisal	35.0	25.4
Sylhet	33.2	25.5
Cox's Bazar	34.0	26.0

Robbery at city house

Two young men committed a daring robbery at a house in the city's Luxmibazar area last night, reports BSS.

Police said that two unidentified young men entered the house of Mohammad Anwar All at gun point at about 9 pm. They held the members of the house hostage and looted Taka 36,000 in cash and other valuables worth about Taka 1.35,000 from the house.

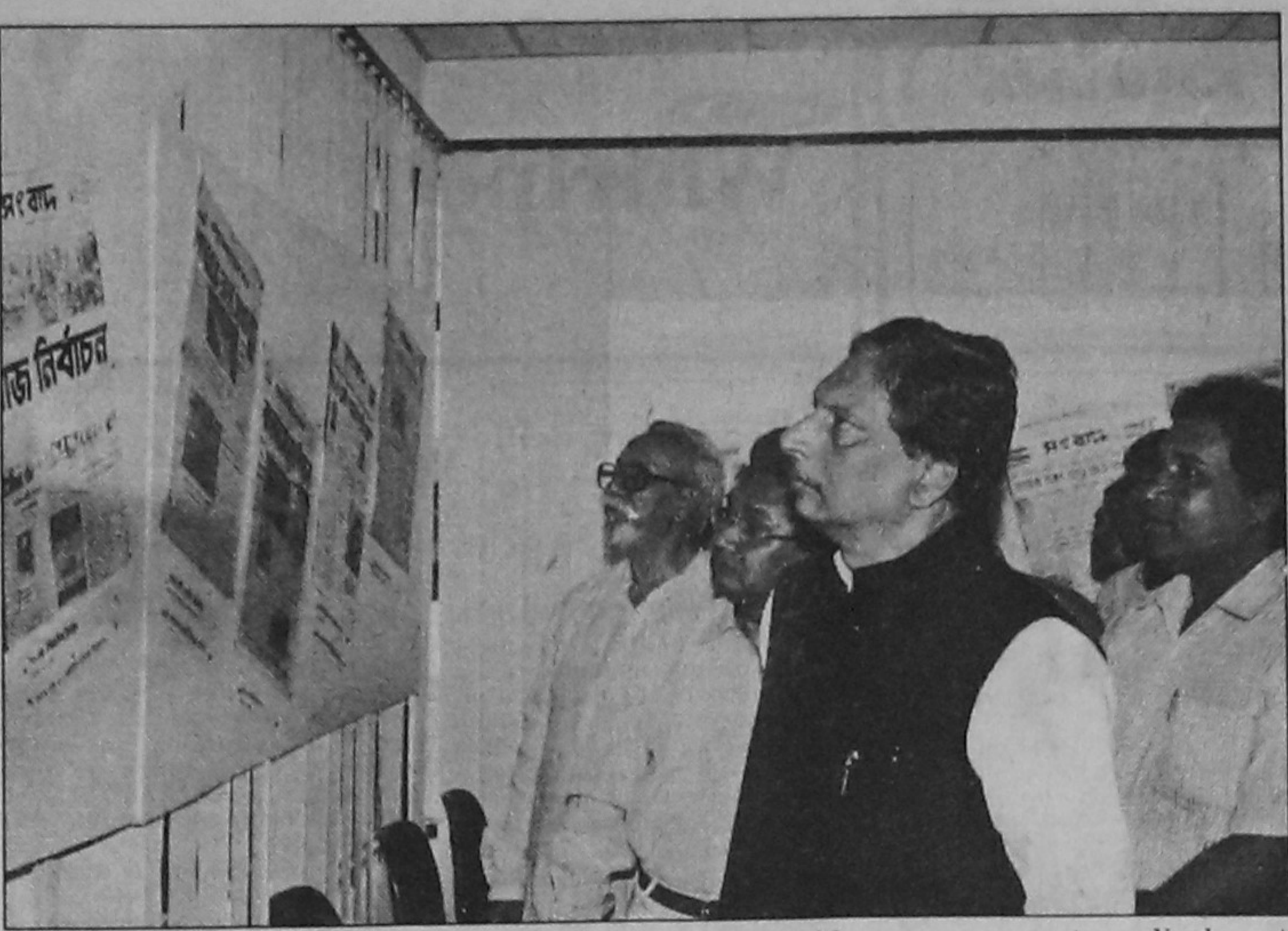
Police lodged a case with Suptapur thana but none has been arrested yet.

Kibria returns

Finance Minister Shah Y A M S Kibria returned home yesterday after attending the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Board of Governor of the ADB at Chiang Mai in Thailand, reports UNB.

During the visit, the finance minister who led a six-member Bangladesh delegation had separate meetings with ADB President Tadao Chino and Indian Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha to discuss matters mutual interests.

Kibria also called on Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai during the visit.



State Minister for Information Abu Sayeed looking at old newspapers put on display at the 'Newspaper Exhibition' he inaugurated at the Press Institute of Bangladesh Premises yesterday. PIB organised the on-going week-long exhibition to mark the 'Fifty Years of Newspaper in Dhaka'. — Star photo

Newspaper exhibition opens

A week-long exhibition in observance of "50 years of Newspapers in Dhaka" began yesterday at the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB), reports BSS.

A seminar was held in the PIB conference room to mark the occasion with chairman of the PIB Managing Board Advocate Gazul Huq in the chair.

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed was the chief guest at the seminar while news editor of Daily Sangbad Suhrah Hasan presented the keynote paper.

It was also addressed by Director General of PIB Dr Sheikh Abdus Salam, columnists M R Akhter Mukul and A B M Musa, Editor of Bangladesh Observer Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and acting editor of Dainik Sangbad Bazulur Rahman.

The state minister said the government and semi-government organisations were spending Taka 28 crore as advertisements in the newspapers.

He said in context of the present political situation anti-liberation forces were also active in the newspaper industry and the people had already rejected the anti-liberation newspapers.

UNFPA donates instruments to CCC hospital

CHITTAGONG, May 10: The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has donated medical instruments worth one crore taka to four maternity hospitals of Chittagong City Corporation, reports BSS.

City Mayor A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury received the medical instruments from official of the UNFPA at a simple ceremony here today.

City Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury thanked UNFPA officials for the donation saying, CCC maternity hospitals will now be able to render improved maternity services. Computer printers, incubator, microscope, OT light and instrument for surgical operation are among the UNFPA donated instruments.

Selim to attend meeting in Geneva

Minister for Health and Family Welfare Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim left the city yesterday for Geneva, Switzerland to attend the seven-day long 53rd World Health Assembly of Commonwealth Health Ministers meeting beginning there on May 14, reports BSS.

The health minister is expected to return home on May 24.

Hasina

From Page 1

are inter-linked, she said, adding "We must remember that democracy does not permit narrowness, backwardness or ignorance."

She said, "We believe that democracy can guarantee freedom of the expression, thought and opinion of all citizens of the country."

Terminating the opening day of ETV as a unique day for democracy loving people of Bangladesh the Prime Minister hoped that the new television would uphold democracy and free thinking of the people.

"We want to worship the truth, which will not give misconception about life nor stain the history with untruth or half-truth," she said, adding, "We want to establish that truth which would not discredit the Bengalee tradition and culture."

With this conviction in mind the Prime Minister said her government has been endeavouring to establish a free and neutral mass media. "We want an uncontrolled but objective mass media having a sense of self-consciousness and responsibility."

Believe the country's first privately owned Ekushey Television would be able to accomplish this desire of the people," she told the ceremony.

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed, Information Secretary Akmal Hossain, Ekushey TV chairman Abu Sayed Mahmud and its managing director Saimon Dring spoke at the function. Politicians, intellectuals, journalists, artists and the elite were present.

The Prime Minister said people must enjoy the right to know the truth to ensure their freedom of thought. Indomitable desire to unveil the truth without hesitation should be the basis of mass media.

Referring to her pre-election commitment to provide autonomy to radio and television, Hasina said her government took one step forward by allowing independent and neutral mass media in the private sector.

"This pride is not for ours only, this pride is for all who believe in democracy, she said adding a new history has been created in the sub-continent with setting up of this television network."

The Prime Minister said while she was in the opposition they had to depend on foreign media to know about the news of the country. After coming to power, she said, her government wanted to project the opposition news through radio and television, but people know why and for whose non-cooperation this democratic initiative could not succeed.

She said, out of five crore television viewers of Bangladesh, only 15 per cent could get satellite connection. Describing ETV as the network of the commonmen she hoped that it would project Bengalee culture and tradition, social values and real picture of Language Movement and struggle for independence to the people.

The Prime Minister hoped the ETV will project the activities of the government and the political parties. It will also help accelerate the pace of development activities of the government and ensure its transparency and accountability, she said.

She said ETV will also take steps to project information with neutrality, credibility and responsibility as well as real picture of everyday happenings to the people.

A S Mahmud in his welcome speech, said the slogan of ETV is "commitment to change". We want positive change for changing the destiny of the millions of people of the country and we hope to make significant contributions to achieve this goal.

"We shall make positive contributions to free thinking and establishment of transparent society," he said.

Simon Dring, who had witnessed the atrocities, mass killing and the reign of terror let loose by the Pakistani military junta on the black night of March 26, 1971, said through taking part in the freedom struggle he had become a Bangladeshi. "I should not be called a foreigner," he said in broken Bangla while addressing the function.

Trade & transit

From Page 1

Bangladesh Lhatu Wanchuk said their foreign minister is coming on a goodwill visit and official talks will have an "open ended agenda."

He said the visit would help strengthen the ties between Bangladesh and Bhutan which are very "friendly neighbours". Bhutan was the first country to recognise Bangladesh in 1971. Bhutan being a landlocked country also looks forward to Bangladesh's support and cooperation in opening a new overland land route for its exports and imports.

About the opening of a new transit route between Bangladesh and the Kingdom, the Ambassador said the route has been identified and agreed to by both Dhaka and Thimpu and that permission from India is now being awaited for opening the route. Both Dhaka and Thimpu have approached Delhi for this, he added.

Dhaka has agreed in principle to allow use of the Dalu-Nakugaon route. Dalu is on the Bhutanese side while Nakugaon is on the Bangladesh side. The distance from Dalu to Dhaka via Gasapur-Gobrakura of Indian territory is about 199.76 km.

Bhutan now uses only one land route for trade with Bangladesh through Burimari border point in Lalmonirhat. Bhutanese trucks transport cargo up to Burimari and then get those transhipped to Bangladesh trucks for transportation to different areas of the country.

Burimari route has constraints for Bhutanese cargo as trucks have to negotiate long distance. The route mainly caters to cargo from the eastern region of Bhutan.

Delhi's consent is required for getting access to part of the Indian territory for operating the new land route.

The proposed transit route would enable the landlocked kingdom to have access to the outside world using Chittagong and Mongla ports.

Presently, Bhutan mainly uses Indian land routes and has to depend solely on Calcutta Port for its import and export.

A high powered Bhutanese trade team is also due to arrive in Dhaka shortly after the foreign minister's visit to discuss ways of expanding bilateral trade. The team will also examine the possibility of carrying larger volume of cargo by air using the Bhutanese airlines, Druk Air.

Thimpu is planning to export to Dhaka fresh and exotic vegetables by Druk Air during the monsoon when there is a scarcity of vegetables. The exotic vegetables include fresh asparagus, fresh mushroom and strawberries.

Druk Air operates regular weekly flights between Dhaka and Paro despite some losses incurred by it and Thimpu has decided to continue the flights to encourage growth of trade and people to people contact.

Bangladeshis travelling to Bhutan do not require visas and both the countries have a reciprocal agreement to allow entry of visitors without visas.

The two countries have extended reciprocal zero tariff facility to each other for goods. Trade volume between the two countries is picking up fast. The government of Bhutan has allowed 11 business houses to import goods from Bangladesh without duty.

Bhutan imports from Bangladesh ceramic ware, melamine products, garments, edible oil, milk products, leather goods, cosmetics and pharmaceutical products.

Bhutan exports several types of fresh fruits and canned fruit products, wood products and marble to Bangladesh.

"We could also export huge quantity of boulders as Bhutan has plenty of those. There are enormous potential of trade between Bhutan and Bangladesh. We have several exportable items of world class including marble, wood, wood pulp products, timber products, ferro-silicon, limestone and coal," said the Bhutanese ambassador.

Wage hike create

From Page 1

will be a number of other allowances including washing allowance.

Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) says, a 68 per cent increase in wages and benefits will involve an additional expenditure of Tk 1042 crore per month, as the total increased wages bill will amount to Tk 2,582 crore from Tk 1,540 crore now.

"Such massive increases will be beyond the capacity to pay of the public sector enterprises," a BEF position paper says. "It will involve the government in further borrowing from the economy, which persistently increased during the last 3 years. The borrowings amounting to Tk 4,000 crore from the banking sector and Tk 1,000 crore from other sectors during the first nine months of the current fiscal year. This will have a distinct impact on the economy, including the government's spending on development activities and improvement of social sectors."

"The right approach for the NWPC was to link wages increase to productivity increase but it did not do even the rudimentary exercise to establish such a linkage," BEF said. "As a result, either the government will have to subsidise the entire wages increases or products of public sector enterprises (PSEs) will further lose their price competitiveness. Our representative in the Commission gave a note of dissent and explained in detail the reasons for which such a huge wages increase is uncalled for."

BEF is not against wage increase of PSE workers but it strongly feels that it must be on the basis followed in the private sector, capacity to pay and some linkage with productivity.

"When the NWPC was set up, we had the fear that these two principles would be ignored in the same way as it was done earlier. The apprehension has come true," BEF said.

BEF however urged the government to make a token implementation of 10 to 15 per cent increase and then set up an Expert Committee to recommend sectoral basis of linking extra wages with productivity.

The Daily Star talked to Dr Nasreen Khandaiker, a member of NWPC. She said productivity does not depend on workers alone.

"It depends on availability of power, raw materials and quality of capital machinery. It is possible to increase productivity if BMRE (balancing, modernisation, rehabilitation and expansion) is properly done," she added.

The Commission considered minimum cost of living of workers, poverty level, wages in some other countries and inflation rate in the country since 1991 because the last NWPC awarded was given in 1991. Nasreen pointed out:

"Basic wage is not linked with productivity in other countries. Productivity may be linked in a limited way through incentive," she said.



Leaders of Bangladesh Awami Jubo League staged a token hunger strike at Paltan Maidan (ground) yesterday to demand immediate execution of the verdict of Bangabandhu Murder Case. — Star photo

HERE and THERE

Aga Khan School

The Aga Khan School (AKS) with a vision of being a centre of excellence where young people receive quality education has initiated a Teacher's Training Programme, says a press release.

Under the programme, trainers are brought from the Institution of Educational Development (IED), at the Aga Khan university in Karachi, Pakistan.

The visiting trainers help upgrade the teachers at the school, many of whom have also gone through the masters graduate programme at (IED) and become Professional Development Teachers (PDT).

IED was formed in partnership with the Universities of Oxford, United Kingdom, University of Toronto, Canada and the European Union and upgrades in-service teachers. It focuses on quality improvements in classrooms and schools, mainly through teacher development, improved management, curriculum and assessment.

Nazmul Karim Study Centre

By DU Correspondent

The Nazmul Karim Study Centre of Department of Sociology of Dhaka University was inaugurated yesterday at the seminar room of Teachers and

Students Centre (TSC) of the university.

Prof A K Azad Chowdhury, Vice Chancellor of the University inaugurated the centre in the afternoon while Prof. Rangalal Sen of the department delivered the keynote speech at the programme.

Presided over by Prof. Mahmuda Islam, chairperson of the department, the inaugural ceremony was also addressed, among others, by Pro-VC Prof. Sahadat Ali, Dean of Social Science Faculty Prof. Asaduzzaman, and convener of the Study Centre Prof. Syed Ahmed Khan.

Manpower export

From Page 1

taken to the KSA against the need for only 100 people in a company there.

The report virtually said nothing like this happened. Ruling party lawmaker Fazlur Rahman Khan, who brought the issue to the notice of the parliamentary committee, rejected the report terming it 'incomplete', said Alimgir Haidar Khan, a member of the committee who attended its meeting yesterday.

Labour Minister M A Mannan was not present at the committee meeting yesterday and Chairman of the body Abdul Latif Mirja could not attend it due to illness, sources said.

The committee will again meet on May 23.

HC showcase

From Page 1

guage Movement, the Liberation War and the mass upsurge for democracy in 1990.

But student politics is now being manipulated and abused by political parties for their own vested interest, he said.

Mentioning newspaper reports, the lawyer said student politics now amounts to nothing more than capturing university campus or residential halls, extortion, kidnapping, hijacking, strike at educational institutions, assaulting and raping women, cheating in examinations and murdering fellow students.

Although everybody is aware of this, most of the political parties are directly or indirectly inducing students to the so-called student politics, he said.

The government side did not raise any objection to the petition.

Barrister Omar Sadat assisted by K S Salauddin and Mazharul Islam Nayyan represented the petitioner. Deputy Attorney General Syed Mahmud Hassan and Assistant Attorney General Dr Kazi Reaz-ul-Haque represented the government side.

Bangladesh Academy of Sciences

Bangladesh Academy of Sciences held a discussion meeting to commemorate the birthday centenary of late Dr M Qudrat-i-Khoda, the renowned scientist of the sub-continent and the founder president of the Academy, on Tuesday at the Academy, says a press release.

Kotchandpur: Gangsters

From Page 1

and his 'agents' under the shelter of organised gangs, took away over Tk 1,200 crore from people in and around Kotchandpur and different parts of the country. He also collected money from people outside the country, they said.

Kajol however confessed that he and his 'agents' collected more than Tk 100 crore from people, police said.

The illegal transactions, termed *hundi* business by local people, continued despite several reports from different government agencies to the authorities concerned and a combing operation against terrorists in the south-western districts.

About 200 additional policemen have been deployed at the thana headquarters to avoid any untoward incident. Police were found guarding the residences and business establishments of Kajol and his agents.

Some people these correspondents talked to said an organised group is still looking for scope to loot property of the 'agents', which may affect innocent people of the area.

Asked about the gangs' grievances against journalists, they alleged that they (journalists) were responsible for the fall of the *hundi* business. But they did not explain.

There are allegations that some local officials, policemen and professionals were also involved in the illegal business.

Shoebur Rahman, DC of Jhenidah, said a committee headed by Kotchandpur Poursabha Chairman Sirajul Islam alias Siru Mia has been formed to realise people's money from Kajol and his agents. The committee which includes officials and the local elite is preparing an account of the money, sources said.

The DC along with the SP

was holding a meeting of the committee at the Poursabha chairman office (ill writing of the report this evening).

The Additional SP and the UNO of Kotchandpur said measures have been taken to maintain law and order.

Local people requesting anonymity said two young men, Sariful Islam of village Post Office Para and Zamir Hossain of Saderpara under Jibanagar thana were killed at Kakildaha village in Mohepur thana as they claimed their money back from Kajol. But police are trying to prove that they were killed for their involvement in gold smuggling, they alleged.

Several victims of the *hundi* business said they have lost everything. "Yesterday, I was moving with lakhs of taka but I do not have any money today", Rafiq, General Secretary of Kotchandpur unit of Sechhabasik League said. "I and my family lost Tk 1.5 crore".

Prodeek Kumer, General Secretary of the local unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League who was moving inside the thana compound told the correspondent that 99 per cent of the local people were involved in the illegal business. He said he lost Tk 44 lakh, of which Tk 27 lakh was handed over to Kajol and the rest to his agents.

He said he had handed over Tk 1.5 lakh to Kajol on December 10 last year and got Tk 8.5 lakh as interest in about a year.

Some local people blamed the local authorities for delay in taking necessary step against the illegal business, which resulted in the present situation.

Some quarters however said that had the media not detected the illegal transactions, it would have resulted in a disaster like the one in the stock market.