

## Child experts vow to reduce infant mortality rate

Country's child experts yesterday vowed afresh to keep the infant mortality rate within a reasonable limit, reports BSS.

They said it at the biennial conference of Bangladesh Paediatric Association (BPA) beginning yesterday at a local hotel here.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr M Amanullah inaugurated the two-day conference. Chaired by BPA President Prof M N Islam, the inaugural ceremony was addressed, among others, by Chairman of Jatiya Sangsad Standing Committee on the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Dr M S Akbar, Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University Prof M A Kadir, leading child specialist National Professor M R Khan, BPA general secretary and Director of Dhaka Child Hospital Prof Manzur Hussain and Prof Nazmun Nahar of Dhaka Medical College.

Dr Sayeed Afroza read out the message of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while Dr Nazmun Nahar received the "BPA M R Khan Gold Medal" on behalf of Prof Maleka Khatun for her glorious contribution to the field of paediatric medical practice in the country.

Dr Amanullah observed that for a total development, humans must be kept healthy and happy, as a nation's most important wealth is its population, specially the younger generation.

He said for government's integrated efforts, rate of infant mortality has been decreased significantly but it should come down further.

The state minister said government has developed community health services focusing child and mother care to reach the basic health services to the doorsteps of the common people.

The inaugural ceremony was followed by scientific sessions where several doctors presented research paper on different aspects of child health and child health management.

## 2,173 Bangladesh army personnel engaged in UN forces in 7 states

Some 2,173 members of Bangladesh army — 227 officers and 1,946 jawans, are working on UN peacekeeping missions in seven countries of the world, Parliament was told yesterday, reports UNB.

The missions are UN Iraq Kuwait Observer Mission in the Referendum in Western Sahara, UN Disaster Mission in Georgia, UN Transitional Assistance Mission in East Timor, UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone, UN Observer Mission in Congo, UN Guard Contingent in Iraq and UN Mission in Kosovo.



Bangladesh Bastohara Samiti (association of landless people) brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding their rehabilitation. —Star photo

## More allocation urged for IT sector

Discussion on budget at JS

The ruling party MPs yesterday called upon Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria to revise upward the allocation for IT sector to link telecommunications with submarine cable line, reports UNB.

"It's not possible for BTTB to bear the expenses of connecting the IT backbone," said Abul Kalam Azad, taking part in the general discussion on the proposed budget for 2000-2001.

He said that the capacity to transmit data should increase up to 2000 kilobytes per second for exploring country's software potentials against present capacity of 56 KB per second. "To raise this capacity, we must get connected with the fibre optic cable line."

Azad also urged for revising the allocation of Tk 15 crore for developing computer program-

mers. The amount can be utilised for setting up a university for IT education, he suggested.

Taking part in the discussion, the treasury bench members mainly dwell on comparative economic progress and development in last four years of Awami League government.

Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil said the tariff structure has been rationalised for development in industry, agriculture and other potential sectors.

As per the present structure, he said, only 5 per cent duties will be charged on primary commodities, 15-25 per cent on intermediate goods and 37.5 per cent on finished products.

He said import duties on raw materials and equipment for industry and agriculture has also reduced significantly.

The minister said the export grew nine per cent in the first three quarters of the current fiscal (1999-2000) after overcoming the setback occurred due to 1998 flooding.

The growth would be higher at the end of the fiscal, he added.

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Prof Rafiqul Islam, State Minister for Information Prof Abu Syeed, State Minister for Forest and Environment H N Ashique Rahman, Kazi Sekander Ali, A B M Abul Quasem, Mohammad Rafiqul Anwar, Meher Afroz, Khan Tipu Sultan and Habibur Rahman Mollah also participated in the budget discussion.

## Environment minister tells JS

## Steps taken for preservation of natural beauty of Sundarbans

The present government has undertaken several steps for protection and preservation of the natural beauty of the Sundarbans which was declared as the world's 798th heritage in 1997, reports BSS.

"The UNESCO declared the Sundarbans as the world's 798th heritage in its 21st meeting on December 6 in 1997 at the sincere efforts of the government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Minister for Environment and Forest Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury said while replying to a question from Kazi Sekander Ali of Awami League from Khulna in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

The total area declared as the world heritage is 1,39,700 hectares with three wildlife sanctuaries in the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove on the South-East fringe of Bangladesh along the Bay of Bengal. The steps were undertaken for preservation of the wildlife and increase in their population, protection of biodiversity and development of the whole area.

In her written reply, the

minister said various avenues have also opened up for international help towards development of the Sundarbans after Bangladesh entered as member into different international conventions. They are: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Washington, 1993; Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Paris, 1982; Convention of Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat, Ramsar, 1971 and the Convention on Biological Diversity, Rio De Janeiro, 1992.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opened the world heritage plaque on February 4, 1999, thus stepping up the measures for preservation and development of the Sundarbans and the rare wildlife species as well as trees there.

Sayed Sajeda Chowdhury said that management plans for the three wildlife sanctuaries have already been formulated

under the Forest Resources Management project financed by the World Bank. Besides, she said, an Environment Management Division has been created for the management of the protected areas.

The minister said that the present government has introduced the "Integrated Forest Management plan for the Sundarbans reserved forest for 1998-2010" for protecting this beautiful mangrove from scientific point of view.

## Prothom Alo reception for SSC students today

By Staff Correspondent

Leading Bangla daily the Prothom Alo will accord a reception to the top talents of this year's secondary school certificate (SSC) exams today, said a press release.

Students who secured the top five positions in merit lists of SSC examinations held under different boards of the country will be given the reception at 3 pm at CIRDAP auditorium in the city.

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## One held with phensidyl in Chittagong

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 22: Detective Branch police of the city arrested one Delwar Hossain with 140 bottles of contraband phensidyl syrup from Nazir Ahmed Road in front of Eidgah Primary School under Double Mooring thana at 10 am today.

The accused was held while carrying the phensidyl from Reazuddin Bazar Tinpoler Matha boarding a baby taxi.

## Withdraw cases against JCD leaders: Khaleda

By DU Correspondent

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia has demanded immediate withdrawal of the cases filed under Public Safety Act against Dhaka University unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) general secretary Mostafizul Islam Mamun and organising secretary Asaduzzaman Asad.

In a statement yesterday, she also demanded immediate stoppage of police harassment on them since filing of the cases.

Terming the cases "false and motivated," Khaleda Zia alleged that police was harassing the JCD leaders to halt their democratic and peaceful movement on the campus. She alleged that police arrested one JCD leader instead of the armed terrorists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) who had unleashed attack on a procession of JCD in presence of Khaleda Zia on the campus on March 12.

"Police filed a case under PSA against Mamun thought he was not present on the campus during the incident," she regretted.

She also alleged that the AL government had introduced the "controversial" act with a view to only continuing its repressive measures on the opposition BNP and its front organisations.

"Cases so far filed under PSA are all against the BNP and its other front organisations," Khaleda claimed.

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