

What's on today....

- Discussion:** Swadesh Chinta Sangha will hold a lecture on Dr Lutfur Rahman's "Unnata Jibon". Venue: Dhammondi Residence of late Prof Ahmed Sharif. Time: 10.00 am.
- Film show:** Three French movies, Adieu ma Concubine (Farewell my concubine), Le Reine Margot (The Queen Margot) and Le Feme Element (The fifth element). Venue: Auditorium of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 11.00 am, 4.00 pm and 6.00 pm.
- Discussion meeting:** Col Taher Saqad will hold a discussion on Shaheed Khudiram. The meeting will be followed by a presentation of music. Venue: TSC seminar room at Dhaka University. Time: 5.00 pm.
- Installation ceremony:** Leo District Council and Lions Clubs International Dist-315A1 Bangladesh will hold the installation ceremony of the office bearers of the session 2000-2001. Venue: WVA auditorium, House No 20, Rd# 27(Old), 16 (new) Dhammondi R/A. Time: 6.00 pm.
- Discussion meeting:** Society for Parliamentary Democracy will hold a discussion on "Independence of Judiciary and its Accountability". Chief guest: Prof Abu Sayeed. Venue: CIRDP auditorium, Chamell House, Tophkhana Rd. Time: 4.00 pm.
- Exhibition:** The 3rd solo art exhibition of Kingshuk Das Chowdhury titled "Life and Vision" will be inaugurated. Chief guest: Education Minister ASHK Sadique. Venue: Gallery of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, Mirpur Road. Time: 5.00 pm.
- Ekota reunion:** Ekota, a Bengali weekly, will hold a reunion function to celebrate 30 years of its publication. Venue: Ekota office premises at 21/1 Purana Paltan. Time: 5.00 pm.
- Cultural programme:** A solo cultural programme by Moushumi Bhowmik, known for her rendition of "Jessoro Road" in Mukti Kotha, will be held. Venue: British Council auditorium. Time: 6.30 pm.
- Recitation:** Jiyankathi will present a recitation of Rabindranath Tagore's *Shishuirta*. Venue: Auditorium of Natmandal, TSC, DU campus. Time: 7.00 pm.

Weather

Light rain expected

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind may occur at many places over Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB. Moderately heavy falls are also likely at one or two places over Sylhet division. Met office said forecasting that day temperature may remain unchanged over the country during the period.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 34.5 degree Celsius at Chittagong and the lowest 24.2 degree at Rangamati.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6.36 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.33 am.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.8	26.0	73	72
Chittagong	34.5	25.0	75	73
Rajshahi	32.3	25.5	83	81
Khulna	31.7	26.5	82	90
Barisal	31.5	25.0	89	76
Sylhet	31.3	24.7	95	68
Cox's Bazar	33.2	25.5	74	86

Woman in Parliament

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Ahmed said that the government had already placed a bill before the Jatiya Sangsad for continuation of the current system.

The existing system, which has provision for indirect elections to 30 reserved seats for women in the parliament, would expire on April 4, 2001. But, the fate of the bill hangs in balance because of the absence of main opposition parties from the Jatiya Sangsad. A two-thirds majority is required for the passage of the bill since it calls for amendment to the Constitution.

The minister, therefore, urged the opposition to come back to the parliament and with the treasury bench members, evolve a better bill accommodating aspirations of the participants at the dialogue.

AL lawmaker MS Akbar, BNP legislators Shamsul Islam, MK Anwar, Khurshid Jahan and Advocate Khalequzzaman, Jatiya Party MPs Dr TIM Fazle Rabbi, Barrister Rabeya Bhuiyan and GM Kader were also present at the dialogue to exchange views with women representatives.

Prof Intiaz Ahmed, Executive Director of the Centre for Alternatives, presented the keynote paper at the dialogue, moderated by Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, and Feroz M Hasau, the FEMA secretary general. Munira Khan of FEMA delivered the address of welcome.

Most of the politicians present agreed in principle with the ideas floated by the participants but acknowledged that none of the parties held a clear position on the critical issue of women's representation in the parliament.

MK Anwar said BNP didn't have a definitive stand on the issue but welcomed the move taken by the participants.

Shamsul Islam MP said that they would discuss the issue at party forum. Another BNP lawmaker Khurshid Jahan Haq, on the other hand, was a bit critical of the high aspirations of women activists.

"Before we raise the demand for something ambitious, we (women) have to pull up our fellow downtrodden women to our position," she said.

TIM Fazle Rabbi of JP said that he would not subscribe to the idea of keeping seats reserved for women and at the same time holding direct elections.

Rabeya Bhuiyan expressed shock at non-consideration of her bill regarding provision for 100 seats for women.

"Jatiya Sangsad took up my bill for discussion on a day when all opposition parties were enforcing a hartal in the country," she said.

GM Kader said that he was all for direct elections but did not support provision for reserved seats.

"Rather, I would suggest political parties to give 10 to 30 per cent nominations to women candidates," he said.

As many raised voices in favour of keeping 30 per cent nominations for women candidates, Tofail Ahmed explained some practical aspects of women's not getting enough party nomination. He said that parties tried their best to gain as many parliamentary seats as they could to form government.

But women leaders argued that if given chances by the parties, women could earn them more seats in the parliamentary elections.

Earlier, the participants put forward a flexible proposal on increasing women's seats in the parliament. Politicians could decide to reserve a minimum of 64 and a maximum of 150 seats for women.

Representatives who took part in the dialogue included Maleka Begum, Hanida Hossain, Barrister Sigma Huda, Razia Faiz, Farah Kabir, Hajera Sultana, Rokeya Kabir, Monwara Begum, Advocate Nasima Akhter, Shamsunnesa, Jinat Fedous Ara, Laksmi Chatterjee, Rokeya Khatun, Mamtaz Rumi, and Prof Shirin Nahar.

Muscle power in politics, sacrifice of veteran party leaders to make room for newcomers rich as regards nominations and male-chauvinist attitudes of the parties were the other key issues discussed.

Commissioners' course of Scouts begins today

A five-day 25th commissioners' course under the auspices of Bangladesh Scouts will be held at Shams Hall, National Scout Bhawan today at 10 am. 35 National Commissioners and Deputy National Commissioners of Bangladesh Scouts are expected to attend the course, says a press release.

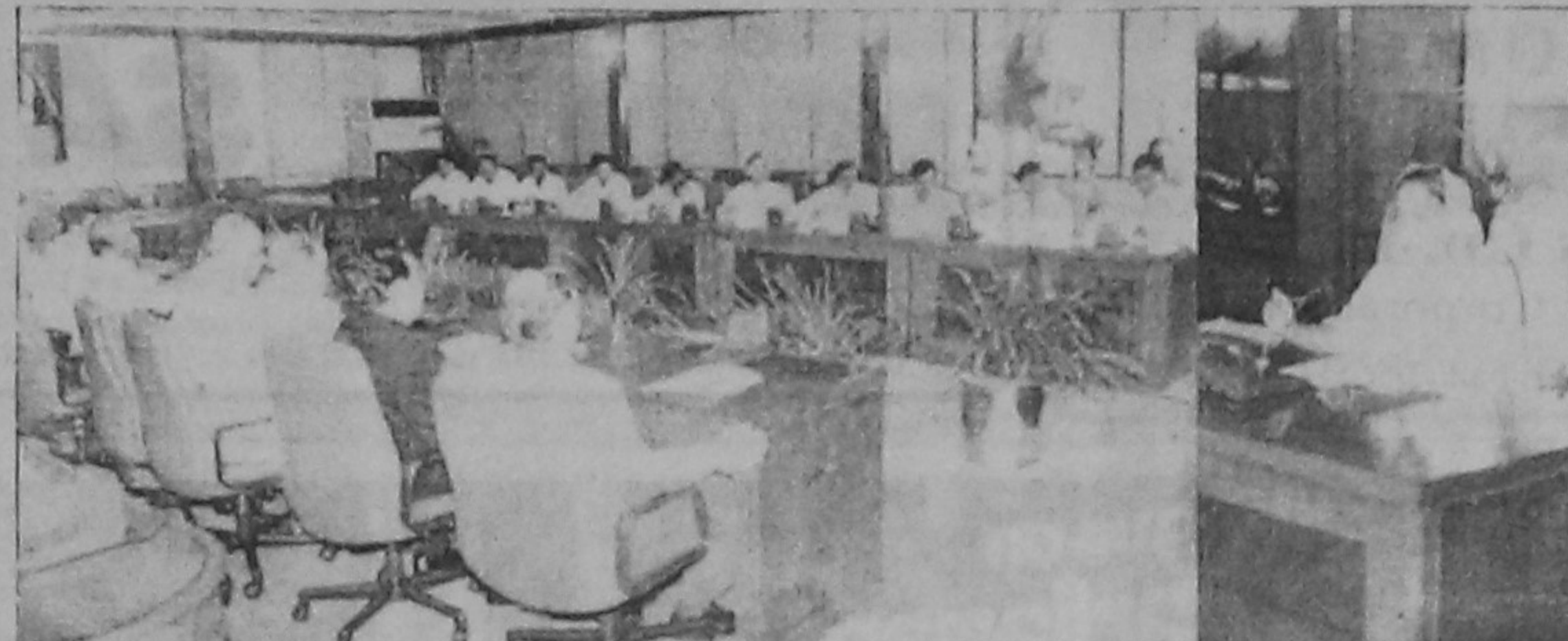
Dr Shah Mohammad Farid, Vice President of Bangladesh Scouts and Member, Planning Commission is expected to inaugurate the course as chief guest, while M Fazul Rahman, Chief National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts will chair the occasion. Md Shah Alam, National Commissioner (Training) will act as course director.

Awami Sechchasebak Bahini rally today

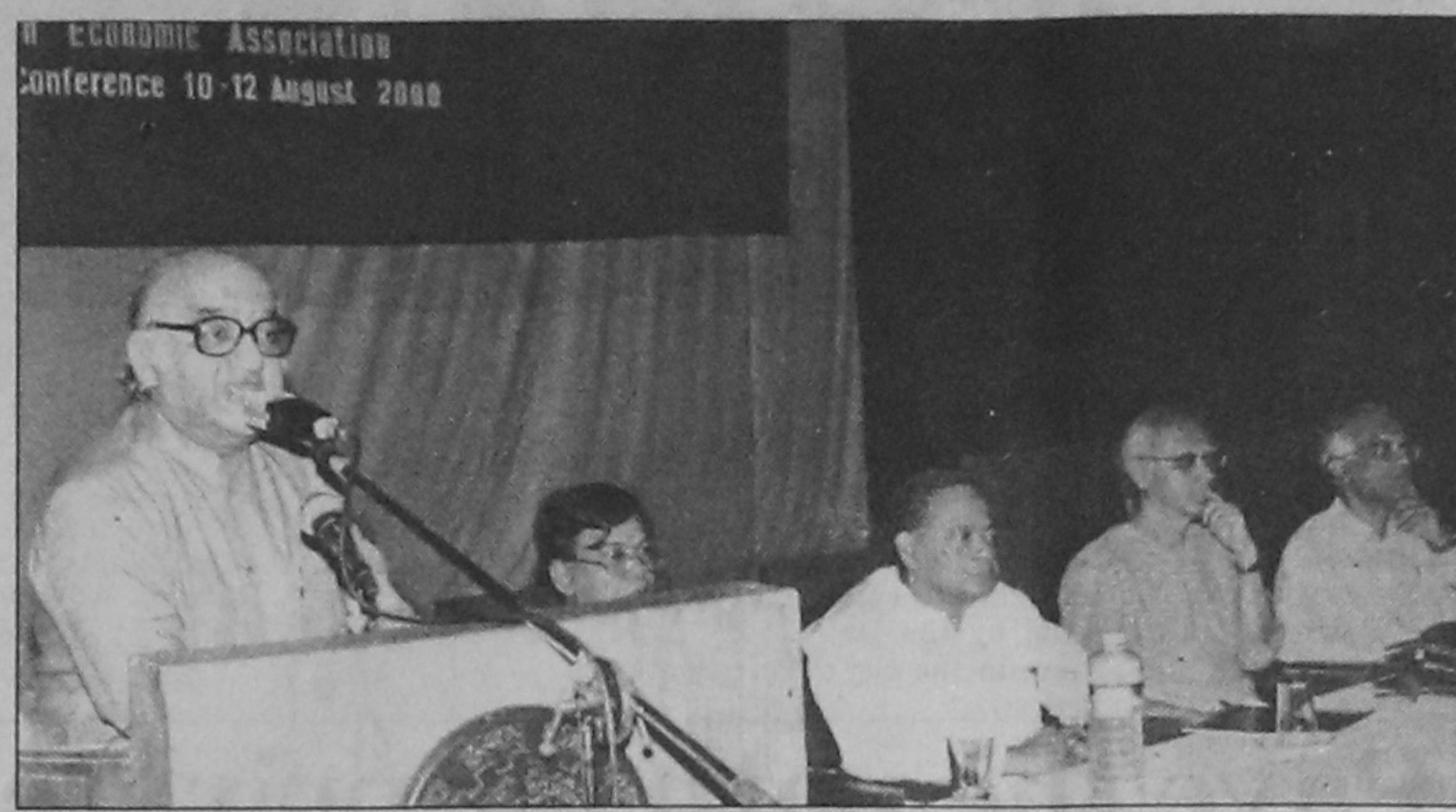
Bangladesh Awami Sechchasebak Bahini will hold a rally today at 3 pm at Paltan Maidan to protest attempt on the life of Prime Minister and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, reports BSS.

Food Minister and member of the Awami League presidium Amir Hossain Anu will be chief guest at the rally.

A procession will be brought out after the meeting.



A delegation of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday. (Story on Page 1). — PID photo



Rehman Sobhan addressing the biannual conference of Bangladesh Arthaniti Samity (Bangladesh Economic Association) at the Engineers Institution auditorium yesterday. — Star photo

Muktir Katha Year-long screening opens

State Minister for Information Prof. Abu Sayeed on Wednesday called for building unity of all pro-liberation forces to resist the heinous design of the evil elements, reports BSS.

There are existence of pro-liberation forces as well as anti-liberation evil elements in the country. So there is no question of remaining neutral," he said while inaugurating a year-long screening of film "Muktir Katha" at a function at the British Council.

Poet Shamsur Rahman presided over the function while it was also addressed by Tarek Masud, a proprietor Ekushy Television. A S Mahmud, Mostafa Monowar and Prof Zilur Rahman Siddiqui.

Muktir Katha, a film on the War of Liberation was made by Tarek and Katherin Masud.

Prof. Sayeed said those who worked for establishing the spirit and values of the War of Liberation are respectable to all. He thanked Tarek and Katherin Masud for making the film -- Muktir Katha.

Srinagar Bridge inaugurated

Communications Minister Anwar Hossain yesterday inaugurated the Srinagar Bridge in Munshiganj on Dhaka-Khulna highway, reports UNB.

The 79.3-metre long and 8.84-metre wide bridge on Srinagar canal was constructed by the Roads and Highways Department at a cost of Tk 2.85 crore.

Communications Secretary Syed Rezaul Hayat, Additional Chief Engineer of R&H Department AN Atiqullah and Superintendent Engineer of Dhaka Circle M Nurul Huda were present on the occasion.



Obituary

M Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, a civil servant and son of late Khan Bahadur Hemayet Uddin Ahmed of Barisal died of cardiac arrest at his 54, New Eskaton, Property Enclave yesterday. He was 86, says a press release.

He left behind six sons, four daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-Janaza was held at Eskaton Garden Mosque yesterday after Zohr prayers and he was buried at the Mirpur Intellectuals' Graveyard.

His kulkhwani will be held on Sunday after Maghrib prayers at the residence of his eldest son, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Executive Vice President of Al-Baraka Bank Bangladesh Limited at 54, New Eskaton (1 floor).

Death anniversary

The third death anniversary of Ahmed Ishaque Abdullah Kauak will be observed today, says a press release.

He died in a car accident in Redwing Minnesota, USA on August 11, 1997.

His family has organised a *milad mahfil* after Asr prayers at his residence in Uttara to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Criminals: JS seats

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Politics is the fastest growing business in Bangladesh now. But the stakes are high for the society as well, Prof Mahmud observed.

He said Chittagong port has earned ill reputation as one of the most inefficient ports in the world, not because of lack of physical facilities but because of unhealthy trade union activities.

The political leadership must realise that certain strategic sectors of the economy must be kept free from the grip of such politics.

To remain competitive, we have to pay serious attention to ports, telecommunications and other vital infrastructures. We need to have inexpensive access to the global internet backbone, the BEA President said.

Prof Anisur Rahman said 'criminalisation of society' is taking place. Not only politicians but also the elite are responsible for this situation. Luxury of the elite encourage terrorism in society, he added.

Quality of service sectors has fallen drastically both in the public and private sectors. "Service sector has morally collapsed", he said citing medical and education sectors.

Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir stressed the need for more investments in industries to remove poverty.

Savings have increased but around five to six per cent of those are misused due to lack of proper banking system. This needs to be addressed to increase the GDP.

Cultivable land has been reduced by about 19 per cent and if the trend continues, it will have negative impact on food production, he said.

Later, addressing the working session of the conference, Finance Secretary Dr. Akbar Ali Khan said the main problem in development in our country is misuse of resource, not lack of resource.

Vested quarters are behind misuse of resources and poor maintenance of government infrastructure. They capitalise on "inefficiency of the government", he said.

Abu Abdullah of BIDS presided over the session. It was also addressed by economists Dr. Atiur Rahman, Prof. Mahbub Ullah and Prof. Ashraf Uddin Chowdhury.

Regarding the huge losses in state owned enterprises, he said some people think that this is due to inefficiency of government officials.

"But this is not true. Those officials are not fools. They are very clever and they do what they wish," he said.

Political decisions are needed to deal with the vested quarters, he added.

Dr. Atiur Rahman said poverty is not due to lack of resources but due to lack of education and security.

Ali Senior Rep

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Africa before becoming Head of Operations, Gulf. He took over as Chief Executive, Bangladesh, of Standard Chartered Bank in early 1999.

Standard Chartered Bank announced the completion of the US 1.34 billion acquisition of Grindlays Bank and the associated Grindlays private banking business from Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd. on July 31 this year.

In the coming weeks, the name of ANZ Grindlays Bank will be Standard Chartered Grindlays Bank. There will be no changes in the existing services offered by either of the banks, for the time being.

In Bangladesh, Grindlays Bank with its 95 years of presence and Standard Chartered with its 50 years already represent an extensive branch network. Standard Chartered Bank has more than 570 branches in over 50 countries. Grindlays has over 115 branches in 13 countries in Middle East and South Asia.

MBA Students Forum holds meet with BOU

The first formal meeting between MBA Students Forum and Bangladesh Open University authority was held at Dhaka RRC of BOU on Wednesday, says a press release.

Vice-Chancellor Prof M Aminul Islam, Prof Moinul Islam, Prof Shanti Narayan Ghosh, MBA Program Coordinator, other faculty members of Business of School and student representatives from each semester were present in the meeting. They exchanged their views on various issues relating to the on-going MBA program.

Norwegian envoy calls on REB chairman

Norwegian Ambassador to Bangladesh Ms. Gerd Wahlstrom yesterday called on the Chairman of Rural Electrification Board (REB) and Additional Secretary Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, reports BSS.

During the meeting Norwegian government's assistance for the Rural Electrification Projects was reviewed. REB Chairman thanked the envoy for Norwegian financial assistance in rural electrification programme.

The ambassador appreciated REB's success and assured their co-operation in future.

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Norwegian Ambassador to Bangladesh Gerd Wahlstrom paid a courtesy call on the Chairman of Rural Electrification Board (REB) and Additional Secretary Mesbah Uddin Ahmed at the REB office yesterday.

Dengue not a killer disease, says minister

"Dengue is not a killer disease but a mind of virus fever. There is no reason to be panicked by it," Minister for Health and Family Welfare Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim said this at a roundtable discussion yesterday, reports BSS.

He mentioned different government measures so far undertaken against current dengue fever and said 120 doctors were trained on an urgent basis and sent to different hospitals to treat the dengue patients.

Besides, he said, we are bringing four dengue specialists from Thailand to train our doctors here to treat the dengue patients in different hospitals.

The roundtable discussion was organised by Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) at its office on the current state of dengue fever and the future plan to face it.

Taka devalued

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Thursday.

Officials said the real effective exchange rate (REER) showed that taka was getting stronger against its partners in the currency basket which needed correction.

But dealers pointed out that the recent surge in dollar rate in the kerb market may have inspired the government to go for such a big devaluation. The difference between the official and kerb market rates was about Tk five a dollar. As a result, instead of depositing dollar in the banks, customers were preferring to sell the greenbacks in the informal market.

After coming to power in 1996, the Awami League government devalued taka 17 times from the level of Tk 41.75 for one dollar.

According to bankers, yesterday's devaluation was a major one in magnitude because there had not been any adjustments since November last year. They said the central bank should analyse whether it should go for big adjustments or small dose corrections for the market to absorb the jerk.

Contempt

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But the problem is the two were elected from two panels. The President received support from pro-opposition lawyers while the Secretary was backed by pro-government lawyers.

Mainul Hossain yesterday met Barrister Syed Ishaque Ahmed to discuss the issue in detail.

Sources said they discussed whether filing of the contempt petition would be of any use if the Prime Minister sticks to her stand, as she has reiterated during the past few days.

Having an appointment with the Chief Justice to discuss the issue was also discussed.

Flood situation

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Many hats and bazaars went under water and prices of daily necessities also shot up following disruption of road communications of Daulatpur, Gheor, Harirampur, Balirtek of Singar and Sauria upazilas with the district headquarters.

Ferry movement on Aricha, Daulatdia and Nagarbari routes turned risky for surging waves in the two mighty rivers.

The Kalganga, Bongshi and Turag rivers that flow into the district caused flooding of many places, including industrial areas of Dhamral and Sagar and western part of the capital.

The affected people suffer a lot with the spread of various diseases, like diarrhoea and dysentery. District administration has so far allotted only 15 metric tons of rice for the flood-stricken people.

Many educational institutions have been hit by floods and declared closed for indefinite period.

In Shariatpur, flood situation further deteriorated with at least 30 units submerged rendering about two lakh people marooned by the swelling Padma waters.

Flood waters started entering the district town while road communications were disrupted as most of the roads went under water.

In Pabna, some 200 families were rendered homeless in last 24 hours by erosion of the river Padma in Sadar upazila.

Dwellings, two schools, one madrasah and one mosque of Madhupur Char Bhabanipur and Khaschar were devoured by the turbulent river.

Flood situation deteriorated in Munshiganj further with the inundation of fresh areas.

About 10,000 people have been reported marooned in six upazilas of the district. Flood waters also swamped Deobhog, Idrakpur and Monibankur areas of the town.

The worst affected upazilas are Laujhajing, Tangbari, Srinagar and Sadar.

Meanwhile, erosion by river Padma has taken a 'serious turn' in Panchankhola area of Tangbari that rendered about 100 families homeless.

With rise of 7 cm water in the last 24 hours the Dhaleswari river was flowing 6 cm above danger level while the Meghna touched the red mark today.

A vast tract of lowlands was inundated as the Padma and the Sitalakhyia were flowing 75 cm and 36 cm above their danger marks respectively.

Hasina: Judiciary

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movement, hampering the total process," she said.

The Prime Minister lamented that the killers and terrorists were "Patronised by the state power under the post-75 regimes" that ultimately increased crimes, killing and terrorism.

"How the people will get justice in a country where killers got protection from the state, where the killers were not tried?" she asked, referring to the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina said the post-75 government rewarded the killers of Bangabandhu and established them in society. "Now I am facing death threats when I am trying to hold the trial of those killers." The main objective of the opposition movement is to protect the killers, she alleged.

The government has arranged the trial of those killers at the normal court and with the help of existing laws, not by any special tribunal, she said. "The law will prove that they are the guilty."

"But for protecting the killers a vested quarter is continuing all its efforts. Even they will not hesitate to kill me, Hasina said indicating the re-

RU clash

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den.

The JCD leaders also demanded probe into the incident and resignation of VC, Pro-VC, Proctor and Student Advisor.

They claimed that seven of their men identified as Shamul, Rentu, Shaju, Korban Ali, Rahim, Nazrul and Anwar Hossain received bullet injuries.

Chhatra Leaguers at a rally on the campus after the violence blamed JCD and Shibir for the clashes. Later at a press conference at 2 pm they also demanded probe into the incident.

Meanwhile, university authorities in a press release said the Student Advisor, three assistant proctors, two policemen and some students were injured in the clashes.

Left-leaning Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikya staged a demonstration in the city protesting campus violence and police action.

Two killed

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ants.

Their rivals intercepted them near Mital Mridhabari bus stand in the afternoon and asked them to return a pistol given to them earlier. When they refused, the gang shot them and fled the spot, police said quoting witnesses.

The two were then rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where Shahajahan was admitted in a critical condition and his companion was declared dead.

Police said none was arrested in this connection till last night.

In another incident, Mansur Ali, 28, was stabbed to death by his step brother Idris Ali at Dohi Road under Ramna thana, police said.

The murder took place following a dispute over some ancestral land in the area.

The victim was hit in his chest with a broken bottle at about 5 pm. He was rushed to DMCH where doctors declared him dead.

Elder brother of the victim filed an FIR accusing Idris Ali of the murder, police said.

None was arrested till last night.

Unocal

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export gas, it will take at least eight years to ensure bank loan, collect further data on gas reserve and construct pipeline and gas processing plant.

The company also showed much gas. Bibiyana really has the unocal official said. "We have given all the data to Petrobangla. As per our assessment, the proven gas reserve (which is estimated after it is marketed) is zero, probable reserve is 2.4 trillion cubic feet (TCF) and possible reserve is 5.5 TCF. The quantity of gas in place is 6.6 TCF."

Petrobangla, which received the technical report on Bibiyana gas field late last month, only agreed on the quantity of gas in place. It has not agreed on the data on proven, probable and possible gas reserve. Petrobangla sought some time to scrutinise the report.

"We used sophisticated technologies including three-dimensional survey in collecting data at Bibiyana field. Such technologies revealed data which no traditional method could do," he said.

"In fact, we have reasons to believe that Petrobangla's claim of 10 TCF proven gas reserve in Bangladesh is wrong," he said. Petrobangla's last survey on gas reserve was in 1989. If it conducts a fresh study with modern methodology, the reserve will go up by 3 to 4 TCF, he claimed.

The Bibiyana field also has a reserve of 30.7 million barrels of condensate, he said.

Govt seeks

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to probe criminal charges and appeal for rejection of bail prayers, respectively.

The Attorney General, the Inspector General of Police and the public prosecutors (PPS) of four lower courts in Dhaka were, among others, who attended the meeting. Improper role of public prosecutors, who are mostly from the ruling party, and the investigating police officers were also discussed.

The meeting pointed out that in many cases the PPs do not attend courts regularly as they are preoccupied with political jobs, while the police in under-hand dealings with the criminals do not submit necessary information against the accused, which makes easier the job of the criminals to get bails.

The meeting also discussed a home ministry report on the status of bail for those facing charges for terrorism and other sensational crimes.

The report has been prepared in a bid to defuse the latest controversy triggered by the prime minister's remarks about the role of the court on granting bails to notorious criminals.

According to the report, the High Court has so far granted anticipatory bails to 259 people facing criminal charges, including murder, rioting, bombing, and killing and trafficking of women and children. Some of them were later found to be absconding.

Besides, 3,590 people accused in 2227 cases in connection with killing, rape, robbery, rioting, carrying illegal arms, and trafficking of women and children got bails from different courts across the country from January 1998 to June 2000, said the report.

In the Dhaka metropolitan area alone, 191 accused in 205 cases were absconding after they were granted bail by the High Court and lower courts during the same period. However, the government is going to seek cancellation of bails of the 191 alleged criminals, including some top terrorists the city.

Business

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Giving his comments after the contract signing ceremony DHL Country Manager Desmond Quiah said: "We are delighted to announce the partnership between DHL Worldwide Express and The Daily Star." He introduced the Bangladesh Business Awards. It is an endeavour that aims at recognising both individual and organisational excellence. We hope the business community of the country will share, learn and benefit from the experience.

"In order to excel in the business world, we need to create, promote and nurture the environment that is conducive to the development of such qualities."

Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam thanked DHL for being a partner to recognise the contribution of the corporate world. This will surely be a prestigious award to encourage the business community and entrepreneurs in this part of the world also.