

## What's on today....

**Seminar:** Shobar Jamyo Shasthya (Health for All) will hold a seminar on "Tetanus". Keynote speaker: Dr Shalin Ara Begum. Infectious Diseases Hospital (Mohakhali). Venue: Gano Shasthya Nagar Hospital, 14/E, Rd No 6, Dharmomdi R/A. Time: 5:30 pm.

**Film Show:** High Commission of India will screen Udhari Kie Zindagi. Venue: High Commission auditorium, House No 25, Rd No 2, Dharmomdi R/A. Time: 6:15 pm.

**Contemporary Spanish Film Session:** Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen five films each by two world famous post-Bunuel Spanish filmmakers - Carlos Saura and Pedro Almodovar. On the first day two films - *Cria Cuervos* (Raise Ravens) and *Bodas de Sangre* (Blood Wedding) by Carlos Saura will be screened. Venue: Goethe Institut, Road No 9, Dharmomdi. Time: 5:30 pm and 7:30 pm respectively.

**BCU nat'l convention:** The 27th national convention of Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) will be held. Venue: Dhaka University TSC.

## ..... and tomorrow

**CPE seminar:** The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) will organise its mandatory CPE seminar for its members. The seminar will be on "Salient features and implications of changes made in income tax rules and SRO's issued after budget of 1999". Venue: ICAB auditorium. Time: 5:00 pm.

**Contemporary Spanish Film Session:** On the second day of Carlos Saura Retrospective Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen "Carmen" and "Ayi Carmela" by Carlos Saura. Venue: Goethe Institut, Road No 9, Dharmomdi. Time: 5:30 pm and 7:30 pm respectively.

## Weather

### Light rain likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions in next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderately heavy falls is expected at one or two places over Sylhet Division. Met office said predicting day temperature may remain nearly unchanged during the period.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 33.8 degree Celsius at Chuadanga and the lowest 24.0 degree Celsius at Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:46 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	32.1	24.4	80	79
Chittagong	32.6	25.0	78	84
Rajshahi	33.0	26.5	89	78
Khulna	32.6	25.4	81	81
Barisal	32.5	26.0	83	92
Sylhet	28.6	24.0	100	91
Cox's Bazar	32.5	25.0	76	82

## HERE and THERE

### Chhaya

By Staff Correspondent

Chhaya, a humanitarian organisation, set up by seven students of the Chittagong University, has donated Taka ten thousand for the treatment of Saikat Rahman Amit who is suffering from the rare wild polio.

Three members of the organisation handed over the cheque to Amit on Wednesday.

### Workshop

A nine-day workshop for clubs began in the auditorium of Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts in Chittagong yesterday, reports BSS.

The workshop on Techniques of writing reports on different subjects has been jointly organized by Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) and BITA with a view to improving reporting techniques of new comers in journalism.

Editor of The Daily Azadi Prof Mohammad Khaled inaugurated the workshop while CUJ President M Nasirul Hoq presided over the function.

It was also addressed, among others, by the president

of Chittagong Press Club Abu Sufian, general secretary of CUJ Shahidul Alam, Managing Director of BITA Shishir Dutta, regional chief of Action-Aid Shihab Uddin Chowdhury and coordinator of the workshop journalist Omar Kaiser.

Twenty reporters from different dailies and news agencies are taking part in the workshop.

### Tobacco confce

Several healthcare activists and experts from Bangladesh participated in the recently

organised World Conference on Tobacco held in Chicago, says a press release.

Among others, Prof Dr Nurul Islam, Barrister Tania Amir and Kuleh Azad, Secretary General of Bangladesh Welfare Association for Cancer Care and Member of Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance presented papers on the abuses of tobacco and anti-tobacco campaign in developing countries.

Held under the theme, "Celebrating Success", 168 selected scholars from among 4,800 delegates presented papers at the conference.

## Dhaka seeks support of NAM members

NEW YORK, Sept 16: Bangladesh sought support from NAM countries for success of the 3rd UN conference on LDC slated for May next year in Brussels, reports BSS.

Speaking at NAM Ministerial meeting here Thursday at the United Nations Dr Toufik Ali, Secretary (Multilateral) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, advocated for adopting programme which would benefit the underprivileged most who live in Least Developed Countries.

He said for countries like Bangladesh economic issues will continue to dominate in all forums of discussion. Dr Ali lauded the adoption of UN Millennium Declaration at the just concluded Summit which prescribes time framed programme to alleviate poverty mostly

prevalent in the LDCs.

The Bangladesh Delegation sought assurance from the industrialised countries that the means available to reach the target set at the Millennium Declaration are accessible and deployed.

The Summit, in its declaration, resolved to half by the year 2015, the proportion of world's people whose income is less than a dollar a day and the proportion of those who suffer from hunger, he stated.

The meeting, chaired by Dr Diamini-Zuma, Foreign Minister of South Africa, was addressed by foreign ministers of over 40 NAM countries. Of the 114 NAM member states, more than 95 attended the conference.

The theme of the meeting was to focus on the UN Millennium Summit Declaration and how the decisions taken there, may be implemented by the NAM countries. There were several issues of interests to LDCs, including halving of poverty by 50 per cent by the year 2015, market access, debt reduction and increased development assistance.

Dr Ali also called for greater coherence and consistency of international institutions in support of development and a more enlightened approach by private sectors particularly the multinationals, while operating in the LDCs.

Referring to Bangladesh's commitment to NAM, Dr Ali said Dhaka remained steadfast since its joining in 1973 under the leadership of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He said Bangladesh was looking forward to welcome delegates at the 13th NAM Summit in Dhaka next year.

### Qulkhwan

The Qulkhwan of Syed Abul Hasanat Sharfuddin will be held today after Maghreb prayers at his residence at 4/1 Dinanati Sen Road, Gandaria, says a press release.

Son of late Syed Md Musa, Syed Abul Hasanat Sharfuddin died of a cardiac arrest at BIRDEM Hospital on September 14.

He was associated with the student movement during undivided India and was the ex-joint Secretary of All India Student League. Sharfuddin is survived by his wife, two sons and three daughters.

### Sabrina

From page 1

the three South Asian shooters ahead of Sri Lankan Malini Wickramasinghe, who was placed 47th scoring 382 points. Indian Anjali Ramakanta Vedpathak finished overall 7th, scoring 394 points to head the South Asian list.

Sabrina made a good start scoring 97 points and improved her total to 98 in the second attempt, but later scored a miserable 93 and 95.

American Nancy Johnson clinched gold scoring 497.7 points. Cho-hyun Kang of Korea won silver with 497.5 while Jung Gaof of China took the bronze scoring 497.2 points after competing in the final round of eight top shooters.

Sabrina is the lone Bangladeshi athlete who qualified to compete in two Sydney events. She will be in action again on September 20 in her last event - women's 50 metre Rifles Three Position at 11:15 am Sydney time.

Kar Saumendul Islam was eliminated from the swimming competition failing to better his previous record. He was ranked 64th among the 65 participants in the men's 100-metre breaststroke at the Sydney International Aquatic Centre at the Olympic Park.

Samedul clocked 1:14.93 minutes compared to his previous timing of 01:09.51 min.

In Heat Number Two, Samedul was placed last among the six participants. Facinel Bangoura of Guinea who ran behind Samedul in the heat was disqualified.

Doly Akhter from Rajbari district will compete in her lone event - women's 100 metre breaststroke - tomorrow morning along with three other swimmers in Heat Number One at the same venue.

Sprinters Fouja Huda Jui and Mahub Alam will take to the track on September 22 and 27 respectively in the 100 and 200 metres at the Sydney Olympic Stadium.

### Hasina

From page 12

Qader, State Minister for Planning, Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, KM Shahidul MP, Emadul Huq Bhuiyan MP, SM Akram MP, Shamim Osman MP, Shagufta Yasmin MP, and BCL General Secretary Ajay Kor Khokan.

About the opening of national stadium, the prime minister said now the people of Narayanganj will be able to enjoy the games of world cricket stars.

She said not only the biggest national stadium is being constructed here, massive development works are also going on.

About the problems of Adamjee Jute Mills, Hasina said the government has already undertaken various programmes for the welfare of the industrial workers and increased their wages.

She requested the workers to continue the production uninterrupted, saying earning of the mill will be stopped if there is no production. So in the interest of the workers they should continue work.

The prime minister said the government will take more steps for the development of Adamjee and urged the private entrepreneurs to set up industries.

He said Biman will continue to have monopoly on air service agreements and cargo handling and catering services for seven years even after it is turned into a PLC.

He explained that the restructuring and commercialisation of Biman was misconstrued as privatisation. It is not so but it is a process that may lead to privatisation if the government withdraws itself completely from the airlines, he noted.

President of Biman CBA and Convenor of Steering Committee Mohiuddin Ahmed said as the government after 28 years has decided for restructuring and commercialisation of Biman, people get the impression that all these years the national airlines was not run commercially.

He said Biman incurred a total loss of Tk 65 crore in the last 28 years. The loss was Tk four lakh in 1998-99. However it was Tk 97 crore in 1996-97 and Tk 64 crore in 1997-98. He added, hoping that when Biman's estimate of income and expenditure last fiscal year is finalised, it will show profit.

Mohiuddin also said that Biman came to its present position as it was run as a public utility services organisation, under strict government rules and regulations.

He supported restructuring of Biman by offering 40 per cent share to a strategic partner but retaining the existing corporate status for job security of the existing employees. At the same time, he said, the management should have the



Two women taking a closer look at a plant at a two-day exhibition of orchid plants organised by Orchid Society of Bangladesh that opened at Gulshan in the city recently. -- Star photo

## Star roundtable on Biman

From page 1

concern that they might lose their rights and jobs if Biman is transformed into a PLC. Mueyed said these rights could be retained even in a PLC.

He also noted that to function effectively, an international airline must have recruitment making process and this is one of the major reasons for Biman's failure in commercial competition.

He called for appointment of a professional managing director for Biman and formation of a board of directors consisting of experienced and professional people to run the organisation properly.

Julkar Russel of Biman Flying Service Association said Biman needs to improve its service and new recruits to fill the gaps. For these things, it is not necessary to make Biman a PLC, he added.

Citing the reason for 'failure' of Biman, Habibur Rahman Khan of Biman Sramik League said Biman Board and Management failed to frame appropriate policy in the changing world scenario.

Bangladesh Biman Sramik Union General Secretary Md Solaiman said that Biman was forced to go ahead with raw deals when the government failed to give financial assistance to Biman.

"The government had only given it Tk five crore paid up capital. Since its inception, Biman had 19 administrators at its helm of affairs. Each for a period of six months to three years."

Solaiman further said most of them spent a year to understand their jobs and when they were finally ready to serve the organisation, they were transferred and a new one came in and the process continued. These new ones were often found to sign bilateral Air Service Agreement (ASA) to impress certain quarter although it against the interest of the airline.

Walidul Huq Khandaker, Biman's Director of Project and Planning, stressed the need for restructuring and planning. Since 1972, the government has been a part of the national flag carrier, he noted.

"But now the government does not want to continue with liabilities. It has other businesses to look into such as law and order, providing infrastructure and because of this, the initiative for restructuring and commercialisation has been taken."

Muktijoddha Sansad Commander Anwar Hossain Bhuiyan called for a restructuring plan keeping the interest of employees in mind.

He said that on July 13 this year, three alternative suggestions came from the City Group. But bypassing the first suggestion, importance was given to the second one in favour of Public Limited Company (PLC), causing frustration and anger.

He urged the Biman management to accept the first suggestion and look for a strategic partner with discussions with all the associations.

He said the airline could be turned into a profitable one by having an efficient and neutral management and making them accountable.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya said that before going for a restructuring plan, transparency has to be ensured and criteria should be followed.

Criteria should not be tailor made to fit requirement of any one as it is oligopolistic market. A slight change could make one beneficial," Bhattacharya said.

He said that the price has to be determined carefully and non-tangible assets should also be taken care of. A new regulatory framework has to be devised when the private sector comes in.

He asked how the owners are thinking of selling Biman without involving the Privatisation Board?

Mahmudur Rahman, Biman's Director of Marketing and Sales, said that restructuring was needed as the airline could not progress with the present structure.

He said privatisation is not possible by keeping 51 per cent in the hands of the government.

Privatisation is often stressed saying that it is for better management. But 19 amendments to the existing ordinance are needed for restructuring Biman and bringing in a strategic partner.

President of the Society for Aircraft Engineers of Bangladesh (SAEB) said that Biman was not overstuffed, the loss was not due to fault of employees but it was due to inefficient management and corruption in the organisation.

He also narrated corruption in buying and selling of aircraft.

Director of Customer Service of Biman Abdus Salam, while speaking about his department, admitted the lack of service to customers "due to limitations".

He said there were shortages of equipment and manpower. Biman's procurement rules act as an impediment to better services to customers.

He called for changing such bureaucratic process to save Biman.

Anwar Hossain, Director of Finance from 1988-89 to 95-96, said Biman earned profit except in 91-92. The loss was 24.84 crore in that year. In 96-97 and 97-98, Biman suffered loss as two new aircraft were added to the fleet.

Bangladesh Airline Pilot Association President Captain Mafidul said that in the last 29 years, Biman failed to reach its potential. "By this time, we should have had 25 wide bodied aircraft in our fleet."

So privatisation was needed to reach its goals but the benefits of the employees should be kept in mind, he felt.

The passengers favour service regardless of aircraft. "As we are failing to provide efficient service, they are switching over to other airlines," he said.

Mafidul further said that internationally reputed airlines like Lufthansa and Air France brought in new management from other countries to provide efficient service and make those more profitable.

Biman's Director of Store and Purchase Siddiqueur Rahman said the present management is running its day to day affairs without having the power to hire or fire anyone.

"We have a tendency of not to work but draw our salaries. These are not healthy signs for an organisation and must be done away with."

### Biman's move

From page 1

eration and maintenance costs of DC-10 per person or per kilometre is higher than the debt service liability and costs of a new aircraft, the secretary did not provide any statistics.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director of CPD, however said Biman should be very careful in making future aircraft purchase decisions since one of the reasons for restructuring is its lack of investible capital.

"Whether we should increase our liability to make Biman more valuable to strategic partner is a genuine question," he said.

The discussion at one point focused on alleged corruption in purchasing aircraft and the rationale behind such purchases.

Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, former Biman MD, said purchase decisions are often exogenous and are imposed by the ministry. He also said that Biman was forced to buy ATP aircraft though there was no need.

Bangladesh Biman Sramik Union General Secretary Md Solaiman said that different governments had forced Biman to purchase various aircraft against the interest of the organisation.

He also spoke about behind-the-scenes manoeuvring in purchase and sell of aircraft. Changing of aircraft model also requires training of technical staff, which is a costly affair.

Society of Aeronautical Engineers of Bangladesh President Fakhrul Alam Bhuiyan said the F-27s were once refurbished at a cost of three million dollars and then the same were sold out for six million dollars to add ATPs in the fleet without any plan or consultation.

In the late 80s, he said, the Boeing 707s were sold on the ground that these won't be allowed to land in other international airports. In the 90s, two old series Airbus were purchased ignoring the interest of the organisation. The purchase was not done properly and it later led to legal hassles in court, he alleged.

"And now policies to sell the DC-10s are pursued at a time when they are fully depreciated. Biman has by this time developed expertise to maintain these aircraft. Even the foreign consultants have said that the DC-10s can continue in the fleet."

"So, on one hand the government is busy looking for a strategic partner and on the other it is trying to sell the DC-10s. We want to know why is this haste. Let the partners come and let us sit all and decide on fleet restructuring," Bhuiyan said.

## Different JS session

From page 12

September 14.

What Akhter alone did to the Treasury Bench, which virtually faced no criticism or obstruction in the absence of BNP and its two allies for more than a year now, was unnerving enough to incite ruling party lawmakers including ministers and whips to shout at him.

They sought the Chair's action as Akhter bitterly criticised the government's performance in and outside parliament.

On other days too, Akhter was very vocal in the House. At times, the Treasury Bench even in the presence of the prime minister seemed shaky in tackling the lone BNP legislator.

The defiant BNP deputy did not let the government go unchallenged in a parliament sans opposition. He protested the government's failures and suggested corrective measures, the actions befitting an opposition MP. Akhter came down heavily on the absence or delayed presence of ministers and others despite having scheduled businesses in the House.

The Chair, too, had to exercise his utmost power to tame the revolting MP. Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury once even rose to his feet to stop the BNP lawmaker from shouting while his deputy Abdul Hamid had heated exchange of words with Akhter, who sometimes went beyond parliamentary rules and norms and failed to behave while trying to make a point.

Having once been denied the floor, the angry opposition MP threatened the Speaker with

holding a press conference against him and rebuked the Deputy Speaker in strongly-worded speeches.

His hitching with the Chair aside, Akhter also successfully raised issues involving the interests of his electorate and the grievances of his party as well. Also, he came in aid of the ruling party, at least on one occasion, when the House adopted his suggestion to amend a Treasury Bench resolution unanimously.

Other than the Akhter episode, the latest session of parliament had another exception in terms of attendance of the lawmakers. Unlike the previous sessions, especially those boycotted by the mainstream opposition, the session did not suffer quorum crisis thanks to the warning from Leader of the House and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Eight bills, six of them bringing about changes to the laws about three hill district councils, were passed in the session. The two other were about protection of open space and water bodies and a welfare trust for the non-government primary school teachers.

The much talked-about bill on retention of women's reserved seats in parliament, however, was not placed before the House despite the time limit for its scrutiny ended long ago.

Besides, two more BNP lawmakers and another of Jatiya Party (Ershad) registered their token attendance to protect their parliament membership.

## Australia 'Thorpedoes' US

From page 1

final shot.

France and Japan joined Australia and the United States in picking up two gold medals each by the end of the day.

Flipper feet

Thorpe, powered by his size 17 "flipper" feet, gave Australia victory in the 4x100m freestyle relay and ended American Olympic domination of the event since it was first held in 1964 in Tokyo.

Thorpe, who earlier had won the 400m individual freestyle, touched in three minutes 13.67 seconds after Michael Klim had led Australia off with a 100m world record time.

Klim took Australia out on the first leg in 48.18 seconds to better the 48.21 mark set by Alexander Popov in 1994.

Chris Fylder held off American Neil Walker but the US was gaining and the lead was a mere 0.25 seconds when Ashley Callus, of the Third Australian swimmer, handed over to Thorpe.

Thorpe, in full bodysuit and urged on by deafening shouts of "Thorpe, Thorpe", clawed back arch US rival Gary Hall to win.

Hall had needed the Australians before the Games when he said the US would smash them "like guitars". Klim gave his answer with a gleeful display on an air guitar.

"It was pretty amazing... in front of my own crowd and it was just fortunate I was able to perform well in front of them," Thorpe said. It really was a dream come true.

The evening had started with a world record in the women's 400 metres individual medal by 18-year-old European champion Yana Klochkova of

Ukraine, who clocked 4:35.59 to beat the 4:34.79 mark set in Shanghai in October 1997 by China's Chen Yan, who failed to qualify for the final here.

A second Chinese world record crumbled when Amy van Dyken, Dara Torres, Courtney Dyer and Jenny Thompson won the women's 4x100 metres freestyle relay in 3:36.61 to beat the 3:37.91 set at the 1994 world championships in Rome, where China won 12 of the 16 women's titles less than a month before seven of the nation's swimmers tested positive for drugs.

Turkish champion

Mutlu, the defending Olympic champion, snatched 135 kg to beat his previous world record of 137.5 kg set at the world championships in Athens in November 1999.

Roared on by around 500 Turks at the Sydney Convention Centre, he then hoisted 167.5 kg above his head in his second attempt at the clean-and-jerk to eclipse the world best of 166.5 kg he set at the European championships in Sofia in April this year.

The first of 300 gold medals on offer were awarded in shooting and triathlon, giving the winners a brief "15 minutes of fame" before the high-profile stars seize the headlines.

Brigitte McMahon of Switzerland took the gold in the women's triathlon - making its first appearance in the Olympics - in an event that showcased Sydney's Opera House with its sailboat-like roofs.

Divers armed with special electrical impulse devices patrolled Sydney harbour to ward off sharks for the swimming leg around Farm Cove.

## 'Build social movement against corruption in edn sector'

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a discussion yesterday underscored the need for a social movement for removing mismanagement, discrimination, and corruption in the education sector.

They said the widespread corruption in education sector was destroying social values and pushing the society towards uncertainty and destruction.

Bangladesh Economic Society organised the discussion on "Discrimination, corruption and unrest in the education sector" on the eve of Education Day.

Identifying political party-based student politics as one of the major causes of violence, terrorism, tensions and corruption in the education sector, the speakers called for separation of student politics from the national politics to save the next generation.

Building a social movement against corruption and mismanagement is the only way to save the nation and restore human values, they observed.

Former adviser of the caretaker government Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud, Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Prof Anisur Rahman and Dr Kholiquzzaman took part in the discussion while Dr Atiur Rahman of BIDS, Anu Mohammad of Dhaka University, Dr Mahmudul Alam and Mohammad Enamul Haque, presented key-note papers.

Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud regretted that the quality of education has declined to a miserable stage. "One third of students who seek admission into universities cannot express themselves either in English or in Bangla."