

## DHAKA TODAY

### Film show

Zahir Raihan Film Society in collaboration with the High Commission of India will screen a film titled 'Antarjali Yatra' directed by Gautam Ghose. Venue: High Commission of India Cultural Centre, Satmasjid Road. Time: 6.30pm.

### Painting exhibition

The first solo painting exhibition of Fahmida Khatun will be inaugurated by eminent artist Prof Rafiqun Nabi. Venue: Zainul Gallery of the Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University. Time: 2.00pm. The exhibition will remain open till July 15 from 11.00am to 8.00pm daily.

### Seminar

The inaugural ceremony of a seminar on 'Impact of Agriculture and Rural Development on Poverty Alleviation in SAARC countries' will be held with LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan as chief guest. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 9.30am.

### Tissue seminar

The inaugural ceremony of a seminar on 'Tissue Banking: Public and Professional Awareness', organised by Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, will be held with Minister for Science, Information and Communication Technology Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan as chief guest. Venue: Auditorium of the Atomic Energy Centre. Time: 9.00am.

### Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony of the New Horizons Computer Learning Centre at UCEP Bangladesh will be held with Vice Chancellor of BRAC University Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury as chief guest. Venue: Plot-2&3, Mirpur-2. Time: 11.00am.

### Rotary Dhaka

Regular weekly meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka will be held. Venue: Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 5.30pm.

### Rotary Ramna

The installation ceremony of Rotary Club of Ramna will be held. Venue: Hotel Purbani. Time: 5.30pm.

### SOS

On the occasion of its 30 years in Bangladesh, SOS Children's Villages organises discussion, prize-giving and cultural ceremony and the release of commemorative stamp with first-day cover. Post and Telecommunication Minister Barrister Mohammad Aminul Haq will be the chief guest. Venue: SOS Children's Village auditorium, Shamoli. Time: 3.00pm.

### Assembly

The Annual Dealers Assembly 2002 of GAZI tanks will be held. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 5.00pm.

## DHAKA TOMORROW Get-together

The Russian Cultural Centre organises a get-together on the occasion of the 4th Foundation Year of Chekhov Theatre. Venue: Conference Hall of the Centre, Dhanmondi. Time: 6.00pm.

### Prize-giving ceremony

The prize-giving ceremony of the UNFPA International Poster Contest 2002 will be held with State Minister for Health and Family Welfare as chief guest. Venue: Shishu Academy. Time: 5.30pm.

### Meeting

Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) organises a meeting to celebrate the conferment of the 'Insignia of Officer de la Legion d'Honneur' on Ambassador Arshaduzzaman. Venue: House-22, Road-7, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.15pm.



PHOTO: STAR

Women professionals hold a seminar titled "Globalisation and Bangladesh" at the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday.

## Dhaka-Bangkok talks

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The Russian Cultural Centre is also a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

Shinawatra assured Khaleda that he would pursue Dhaka's request for inclusion in the ARF, an ASEAN body involved in security cooperation.

The two countries agreed on air service cooperation in wide ranging areas from ticketing to providing kitchen facilities.

The Thai premier will spend a day in Chittagong today to visit the Chittagong Export Processing Zone, the Chittagong Stock Exchange and the Chittagong airport. Later, he will fly to Chiang Mai from there.

"The flight will be of an inaugural nature, and in future, an agreement would be worked out for regular Chittagong-Chiang Mia commercial flights by Thai and Bangladesh carriers," foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mabin Chowdhury told newsmen at a briefing at the Sonargaon Hotel.

He also said Chiang Mai is the most important business, tourist and medical hub in Thailand after Bangkok.

Ambassador to Thailand Hemayet Uddin, Press Secretary to the prime minister Tajul Islam and Director General of External Publicity Zahirul Huq were also present.

"The visit of the Thai prime

minister is a turning point in the Thai-Bangladesh relations," the foreign secretary said.

Responding to a question, he said cash-starved Myanmar will be in a position to build the missing road link for the proposed Dhaka-Bangkok route, now that his country has asked the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to channel some of the excess funds to Yangon for this purpose.

Chowdhury said Bangladesh's role in launching the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) in Bangkok in June was lauded by the other 16 participating countries, particularly by Thailand.

It was decided at the official talks yesterday that Dhaka would look after the poverty alleviation aspect of the ACD.

A memorandum of understanding on accounts trading system (ATS) to facilitate maintenance of trading records in local currency and an agreement on protection of investment were signed between the two countries after the talks.

Bangladesh has also asked for duty-free access of some items like jute products and seafood. In response, the Thai premier has reportedly said, "if we can provide duty-free access to other neighbouring countries, we surely can do the same for Bangladesh." However, this issue would be taken up for consideration by the ministry

concerned upon his return to Bangkok.

### Default loans

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Tk 5,911 crore.

The significant change in the default bank loan trend took place during 1996-2001 when 14.53 per cent of the total disbursed loans was defaulted on. The amount of the defaulted loans during the period stood at Tk 7,400 crore since the loan disbursement during this period was bigger than that of 1991-95, according to sources.

The committee decided to look into the present system of rescheduling the default loans and held that the Bangladesh Bank should not get involved, in any way, in the process of sanctioning of loans by different banks.

As per the present rule, the commercial banks have to take permission before sanctioning loans more than 15 per cent of a bank's paid-up capital. Also, the banks have to take a no-objection from BB in rescheduling the defaulted loans.

The committee also decided to talk to the defaulters to get to the heart of the banking system's perennial problem.

The issue of increasing the paid-up capital of private commercial banks and foreign commercial banks committee, the interest rate of different banks and other issues also came up for discussion at yesterday's meeting.

## 'No law to disqualify Benazir, Sharif'

### PPP, PML vow to face 'any eventuality'

PTI, Islamabad

The Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League (N) have asserted that their leaders Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif would contest the October general polls, rejecting a federal minister's statement that the two former premiers were disqualified.

There is no law so far that can prevent Bhutto from heading the party or taking part in the elections, PPP's acting secretary-general Reza Rabbanai said.

Federal Law Minister Khalid Ranjha has said in an interview to local daily 'Dawn' that Bhutto and

Sharif were disqualified from heading their respective parties and contesting the polls.

Rabbanai alleged that the government can go to any extent to keep the PPP out of power and said the party was prepared for "any eventuality."

The PML (N) said it had no intention to choose a new party president as Sharif was elected to the office only last May.

Party chairman Raja Zafarul Haq said the government was doing its best to keep Sharif out of active politics but "it will not succeed in its designs."

Sharif's convictions did not entail

disqualification from holding any public office, he said.

The Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD), of which the PPP and the PML (N) are major components, is thinking of challenging the constitutional amendments package and the Political Parties Order (PPO) in the Supreme Court.

The PPP, however, said it was willing to hold intra-party elections, including for the chairperson, under the PPO by the deadline set by the government.

The party would decide whether to participate in the polls or not after consulting other ARD members.

## Al Qaida threatens to strike new US targets soon

REUTERS, Algiers

The al Qaida network will strike US targets in America and around the world soon, an al Qaida spokesman said in an interview published yesterday.

"Our military and intelligence networks are assessing and monitoring new US targets that we will strike in a period of time which is not long," spokesman Sulaiman bin Ghaith told the Algerian Arabic daily newspaper El Youm.

The United States blames Saudi-born Islamic militant Osama bin Laden's al Qaida for the September 11 hijacked plane attacks on New York and Washington that killed more than 3,000 people.

"Our suicide militants are ready and impatient to carry out attacks against US and Jewish targets inside (America) and abroad," the spokesman added.

El Youm director told Reuters the newspaper received on Monday by e-mail taped answers to questions that had been sent on Sunday to al Qaida's Internet Web site.

Bu Ghaith warned America to "fasten its seat belts" because his organisation "will hit, with God's willing, from where they will not expect."

"America knows we are men of action and not men of words," he went on saying that attacks were also being planned against the "puppet government" of Afghan

President Hamid Karzai.

In Washington, US President George W Bush said on Monday the war on terror was bigger than Osama bin Laden.

Asked at a news conference whether the fugitive al Qaida leader would be found before the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks on America, Bush replied: "We haven't heard from him in a long time. I don't know if the man's living or the man's dead."

"But one thing is for certain: the war on terrorists is a lot bigger than one person," Bush said. "And as I told the American people, this is going to be... a long struggle."

## Overseas labour wings

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Bangladesh has labour wings in 12 countries abroad, with most in the Middle East where a large number of Bangladeshi workers concentrate.

The government is trying hard to increase the flow of overseas employment across the world, said Secretary-in-Charge to the overseas employment ministry Dalil Uddin Mondal.

"But everywhere the demand is for skilled workforce that we lack. In this modern age, no countries want to bear the burden of unskilled labourers."

Germany wanted to recruit 20,000 information technology experts from Bangladesh, but the IT experts here failed to live up to their requirement.

And, Australia wanted to recruit physicians from Bangladesh, but the standard of the doctors here is not up to the mark, he said.

The lack of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between sending and receiving countries of the workers is another hindrance to increasing the overseas employment.

Most developing countries like Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Nepal, India and Bangladesh are trying to sign agreements with developed countries on overseas employment.

Bangladesh looks forward to such agreements with Greece and Italy very soon. Greece will recruit around five thousand marine crew and seamen from Bangladesh after a formal agreement is signed.

Italy also proposed such an agreement on official recruitment of workers from Bangladesh. Since independence, as many as 30 lakh Bangladeshis have left the country for overseas employment.

## Hamid talks in open

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Hamid said that the ban on coverage by private television channels had been enforced since the opposition joined the parliament.

After the bar, the three independent channels - Ekushey Television (ETV), Channel-i and ATN Bangla - used to cover events like press briefings at the opposition chamber or elsewhere inside the building.

On the last working of the parliament's current session, two of these channels were seen covering the proceedings on Sunday from close-circuit television at the press lounge.

As the camera crew was not allowed inside, Hamid along with Suranjit Sengupta, Abdus Shahid, Faruk Khan, Mirza Azam, Bir Bahadur, Razi Uddin Razi, Atiur Rahman, Motaahar Hossain and M Ekabbar Hossain came out of the parliament building and held the press conference under the open sky.

"This government is trying to demolish parliamentary democracy by violating the rules and regulations and preventing the media from covering the proceedings," Hamid told the newsmen.

"What kind of democracy is this where I cannot hold a press conference at my chamber?" Hamid asked.

Referring to the chair's repeated reminder to cut short Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina's speech on Sunday or else he would switch off her mike, Hamid said it was a threat to the opposition leader.

He recalled a 45-minute speech by the then opposition leader Khaleda Zia on point of order and said the chair did not interrupt her. "But, now, we see the chair interferes whenever the opposition leader takes the floor."

He alleged the chair did not allowed many of the notices given by the AL lawmakers related to the unceremonious exit of president, law and order situation, closure of the Asia's largest Adamjee Jute Mills and other issues.

Hamid also termed the abrupt adjournment a motivated move by the chair, carried out as per the ruling party's wish so that the opposition lawmakers could not speak on issues of public interest.

He referred to the recent Business Advisory Committee meeting that had decided the House would run up to July 15 uninterrupted with a seven-day recess upon the passage of the budget.

"None of the MPs pointed out the country's flood in the House. And the Speaker cannot make an unscheduled adjournment of the session without consulting the opposition," Hamid said.

Suranjit Sengupta said the parliament was becoming autocratic and wondered whether the ruling party believed in parliamentary democracy.

Opposition Whip Faruk Khan said the parliament witnessed security breach twice - when the BNP lawmakers went on a rampage and broke TV cameras and when the BNP lawmakers entered the House with candle lights.

### Top corrupt

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The law-enforcement agencies have been marked as the highest corrupt institutions of the government. Abuse of power is highest in the police.

The incidents of taking bribes and intimidation are also remarkable, said the report. The education sector is the second corrupt agency of the government, while the local government, health and forest and environment sectors are marked as the fourth, fifth and sixth. Abuse of power, bribing and misuse of resources were recorded high among the sectors.

The report said that there is almost total lack of accountability in corruption-ridden incidents. It said ten per cent of reports were verified as sample.

In 86.3 per cent cases, the reporters could submit necessary documents. Half the officials admitted that the reports were completely true and 22.5 per cent said partially correct. Only 1.2 per cent claimed that the reports were totally false and produced documents in support of their claims, the Transparency International added.

## Plan for flood-flow zones

**FROM PAGE 12**  
built-in facilities for sewerage, drainage of storm water and for lakes and afforestation." There are also allegations that developers are selling plots even before buying lands and many innocent buyers are waiting for years after making necessary payments, he mentioned.

The minister noted that the Department of Environment (DoE) issues Environment Certificate to developers without its inspectors visiting the sites.

Tawfiq M Seraj of REHAB said that for approval of plan for a nine-storey building - a developer is given seven forms to be filled and countersigned by seven organisations including the fire brigade, police and WASA.

"Introduction of Environment Certificate means that earlier corruption would take place at the DoE and now it has spread to seven other places in the process of obtaining the certificate," he alleged.

Rajuk Chairman Iqbaluddin Choudhury suggested that such certificates should be given through a board of experts.

When the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka said a developer has grabbed more than 73 acres of public lands in Ashuliya, the chairman of the company flatly denied the charge.

The state minister for housing said, "The panic of land piracy must be removed from the society and it must be ensured that none is allowed to destroy the landscape."

Developers appealed for immediate zonal planning and a clear guideline for them. They said Rajuk should be able to say where to approve a plan or not.

There are many projects which have Rajuk approval, they noted. One of them pointed out that by developing the 6000-acre Jewelmeel project, it is filling up a vast area in the city's periphery.

The works secretary showed the participants a set of aerial photos, clearly showing how Ashuliya and Gulshan-Baridhara-Banani Lake is being narrowed down due to land filling.

Some participants said the pressure of population has forced developers to seek low-lying lands around the city. If there is a guideline

and these lands are demarcated, it would help avoid many troubles, they felt.

### Flood situation

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Crops in some 24 hectares of land in Chowhali, Belkuchi, Shahjadpur, Kazipur and sadar upazilas went under floodwater, said Agricultural Extension Department sources.

In Bogra, the overall flood situation worsened with fresh areas inundated today amid continuous rise of water levels in the Jamuna and Bangali.

The worst affected areas of the district included Harikhali, Namajkhali, Hasraji, Satbeki, Sonakania and Charpara in Sonatola upazila and Huduanki, Ramchandra villages in Sariakandi upazila.

In Manikganj, sharp rise of water levels in the Padma and the Jamuna, caused inundation of fresh low-lying areas.

Erosion by the two surging rivers as well as by the Daleswari, Kaliganga and Isamoti also took a devastating turn.

## Gas committee report

**FROM PAGE 1**  
payment scenario.

The committee findings completely contradict the statements of the oil companies and the international donors that the country will not be able to pay for the IOC gas without pipeline gas export and that gas export will improve the balance-of-payment scenario.

In broader terms, the committee believes that the country's energy consumption scenario is an area with complex problems and recommends multiple approaches to resolve these.

In a meeting yesterday, the committee finalised its recommendations on gas utilisation amidst strong protests from three of its members - two from the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and another from the Dhaka University.

These three members especially expressed their reservation about the committee's non-export recommendation.

Among them, the two BUET professors maintained that to develop the gas sector the country could not depend entirely on internal financing. That is why, to attract foreign investment, limited export should be encouraged.

They also criticised the suggestion that to mobilise internal finances for this sector the government could follow the Jamuna

Bridge surcharge model.

However, majority of the committee members felt that payment for the IOC gas from domestic fund was very realistic and to ensure it, if necessary, the government could introduce extra-surcharges as was the case with the Jamuna Bridge project.

In the past, the government actually invested very little in the energy sector, although it contributed immensely to the economy, they observed.

"There are nine members in this committee and none can expect that there would not be any disagreement," said a source.

The committee headed by former energy secretary Azim Uddin Ahmed comprises Petrobangla Director (Finance) SR Osmani, Petrobangla Director (Operations) Dr M Ismail, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Chartered Accountant MA Hafiz, chemical engineering professors of the BUET M Tamim, Dr Ijaz Hossain and Professor Montajuddin Ahmed of Dhaka University.

Another member BIDS Research Director Dr KAS Murshid was absent as he was on a tour abroad.

The committee took into account a proven gas reserve of 15 trillion cubic feet (tcf) and the

country's gas demand growth till 2020 and made many complex economic analyses before laying down the recommendations.

As the country would face severe energy shortage in the near future, it should go for exploration and development of gas fields, the committee recommended.

One analysis shows that till 2020, a small amount of the revenue budget is required for gas purchase from the IOCs under the existing contracts.

The projection is based on the trend growth rate of revenue budget for 1995-2001.

In 2020 the government would have to pay \$428 million to the IOCs which would be two per cent of the projected \$8,480 million revenue budget.

In 2002, the government's payment to the oil companies would stand at \$154 million, or three per cent of the \$4,637 million revenue budget.

The other analysis shows that the payment to the IOCs for gas purchase till 2020 would hardly affect the country's balance of trade, contrary to the claims of the IOCs, the World Bank and other donors.

The IOC payment in 2020 would be only 0.64 per cent of the exports. In 2002, it would be only 2.35 per cent of the exports.

## UPDF activists New home minister

FROM PAGE 1

They called the PCJSS activists to come out of their house. When they refused, the gang broke open the door.

Unable to find the activists, they dragged out Rula and Chu Rai to the yard of their residence and shot them point blank in the head, police said.

Being informed, police team from Betbunia camp rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies.

Wife of slain Rula Anwar filed a murder case with Kawkhali police station.

**FROM PAGE 12**  
try fearing they may involve themselves in massive corruption, sources said.

BNP insiders said Industries Minister MK Anwar who agreed to hold the portfolio on some conditions, is likely to become the next home minister although the prime minister is yet to approve of it.

A section of the BNP policymakers feel that MK Anwar certainly has the administrative efficiency required, but fear, he does not have enough command over other party leaders and activists, even though he is one of the vice presidents in the party.

Party leaders feel that Anwar, who joined the BNP ahead of the 1991 elections, is still considered a newcomer.

Meanwhile, continued speculations over the possible reshuffle of

the council of ministers have led to intense tension among a number of cabinet, state, and deputy ministers. This has caused a slowdown in administrative activities in the secretariat. A substantial number of officials are now passing time to inquire about their promotions.

The members of the council of ministers who are afraid of being ousted, have continued lobbying to remain in the cabinet.

Sources said, most junior ministers are frequently seen at the Prime Minister's Office and particularly in the rooms of two political secretaries.

Sources said about five to seven cabinet ministers, 50 per cent of the state ministers and two deputy ministers are all in a panicky situation from the apprehension of being dropped from the council.

### Cricketers

**FROM PAGE 1**  
takes place at the Premadasa Stadium on August 7.

This will be Bangladesh's second meeting in the five-day version of the game since the Second Asian Test Championship, which the Test infants lost inside three days despite a valiant maiden century by 17-year-old Mohammad Ashraful.

Since getting into the elite Test club, Bangladesh have played 11 Tests, losing 10 and managing a draw against Zimbabwe at home thanks to heavy downpour.

### Hasina

**FROM PAGE 12**  
it was a courtesy meeting that held in a cordial atmosphere.

Zillur Rahman told journalists that the two sides discussed the existing friendly relations between the two countries.

He said the meeting also discussed issues relating to improvement of air, sea and road communication links between Bangladesh and Thailand.

### Budget blind

**FROM PAGE 10**  
authorities to reduce the expenditures of the departments by controlling appointments and increasing students.

The university has 1300 acres of vast land property. Only 300 acres are used for the administrative and the academic purposes of the university. By ensuring maximum use of the rest 1000 acres land property, the university could increase its income from the internal resources.

The income from the internal resources of the university is also decreasing day by day. In 2000-01 fiscal, the income was Tk. 320.93 lakh and the 8.91 per cent of the total budget and in the proposed budget, this year (2002-03) it reached at Tk. 2.2 crore and the 4.80 per cent.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) increased the allocation for CU only 0.67 per cent more than the last year. The UGC granted Tk. 36.37 crore for the university last year while it grants Tk. 36.60 crore against the demand of Tk. 45.66 crore this year. So the deficit of the university is increasing day by day. Now the deficit of the university reached at over Tk. 7 crore.

In order to make up the deficit, the chief comptroller of the university advised the authorities to increase the income from internal resources of the university and to control the expenditure through increasing fees of the students.

### Ashuliya