

### Bhuiyan for responsible Opposition

BSS, Gazipur
LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said a responsible opposition is needed to free the country from poverty and hunger and institutionalise democracy.

parliament receive salaries, allowances and other facilities for doing constructive criticism of the government. He said it is never expected that they will tarnish the image of their own country while paying visit abroad. He said, "It is not correct that we have not achieved anything in 31 years of independence. We have got many things and many things are yet to be attained. We have to achieve what we could not do so far."

### Shilpacharya Zainul's birth anniversary observed

BSS, Mymensingh
The 88th birth anniversary of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin was observed here yesterday in a befitting manner. To mark the day, a discussion was held at the Zainul Abedin Sangrahashala (museum) auditorium yesterday afternoon.

### Biennial confce of Ctg Press Club today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The biennial conference of Chittagong Press Club will be held at the club auditorium at 10.00am today. Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury will attend the conference as chief guest. Later, the annual general meeting of the club will be held at the same place at 3.00pm.



Children staged a drama at the Mahanagar Natya Mancha in the city yesterday as part of the closing ceremony of a programme titled 'Cultural development of underprivileged children', organised by the Theatre Centre for Social Development.

## Govt firm to build a modern, stronger airforce: Khaleda

UNB, Jessore
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said her government is determined to build a modern, stronger airforce as in the present world the role of airforce in every country is indispensable in peace and war.

"Despite various limitations, we are working firmly with this vision. Our belief is that with the combination of application of modern technology and strategy, appropriate training and above all, patriotism we'll also be able to build up a skilled and modern airforce," she said at a function of fresh and old cadets of Bangladesh Air Force.

The Winter Graduation 2002 function was held at the Bangladesh Airforce Academy parade square here in the morning on the occasion of commissioning of the cadets of number 46 GD (P) and number 49 Ground Branch courses. Khaleda said the airforce is involved in overall development of the country alongside performing their tough responsibility of safeguarding country's independence and sovereignty.

The Prime Minister further mentioned that the airmen brought honour and dignity for the country by playing a commendable role joining in UN multinational forces policing peace in different trouble-torn parts of the world.

"Our advanced training arrangements are also acclaimed on the international arena. So airforce personnel from many friendly and brotherly countries are now coming to our military academies for training. It brightens our image abroad...this trend of success will be sustained," she told the cadets.

The airforce alongside army and navy extend their cooperation to people at times of calamity. The airforce also played an important role in air dropping relief goods of the government at home and abroad in emergencies.

This year, 25 cadets—nine from two-year-long GD (P) course of the 46th batch and 16 from six-month-long ground branch course of 49th batch—have graduated. Eight of them are women cadets. Earlier, in the first and second batches, eight and six women cadets were commissioned in the Bangladesh Air Force.

The newly commissioned airforce officers were adorned with flying badges by the Prime Minister at the passing-out ceremony.

She also distributed trophy and medals to the newly commissioned officers for their outstanding performances during training.

Flight Cadet Wing Under Officer Ashiqur Rahman Mallick was presented with the coveted Sword of Honour for his best all-round performance. He also got Osmani Gold Medal for the best performance in academic training and Commandant's Trophy for the best performance in training in general service.

Meanwhile, Cadet Sergeant AKM Towhidul Amin received the Chief of Air Staff Trophy for the best all-round performance in Ground Branch Training. A guard of honour was given to the Prime Minister at the parade square by the cadets. She took salute from a decorated dais and inspected the parade.

Information Minister Tariqul Islam, Industry Minister MK Anwar, Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk, Jute Minister Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, Khulna City Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman, Army Chief Lt General Hasan Mashud Chowdhury, Naval Chief Rear Admiral Shah Iqbal Mujtaba, Air Chief Air Vice-

Marshal Fakhru Azam, Dean of Diplomatic Corps Shahia Zarab, Chinese Charge d' Affaires Duan Zhiqian, Prime Minister's Political Secretary Shamsaddek Ali, BNP leader Shamsunnahar Khwaja Ahsanullah, guardians of the newly commissioned airforce officers, elite of the district and high civil and military officials attended the function.

On her arrival at the Matiur Rahman Airbase, the Prime Minister was received by Air Chief Fakhru Azam and the Commandant of the BAF Academy. In her speech, Khaleda advised the flight cadets to remain always prepared for future leadership of the airforce through arduous training, deep patriotism, obedience, honesty and work.

"You will have to be ready for the best utilisation of equipment and resources procured with the hard-earned money of the countrymen," she told the cadets. The Prime Minister also witnessed a spectacular fly-past by different types of BAF aircraft from the venue. Later, Khaleda visited the officers' mess and exchanged pleasantries with the newly commissioned officers.

### Population control for poverty cut underscored

BSS, Dhaka
Speakers at a workshop here yesterday stressed the need for bringing about a revolutionary change in the field of population control to ensure poverty alleviation.

They said new awareness programmes should be adopted in line with development of information technology and medical science to control population. Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) organised the day-long workshop to chalk-out future strategy of its Family Welfare Education Project (FWEP).

Secretary of the Rural Development and Cooperative Division Dhiraaj Kumar Nath inaugurated the workshop held at the BRDB, a press release said. Project Director and Chairman of the Population Science Department Mohammad Nuruddin presented the key-note paper in the workshop.

Under the project, around 2,24,250 poor women from 7475 cooperative societies are being given training on healthcare, family welfare, nursing of children, immunisation, reproductive health, sexual disease, use of pure drinking water, cleanliness and their social and economic development. A total of 1,49,500 able couples

are being given family planning training in addition to supplying necessary implements. Assistant representative of UNFPA Nurul Amin, Director General of BRDB A F M Mainur Rahman, and about 50 representatives of different ministries, departments and directorates took part in the workshop.

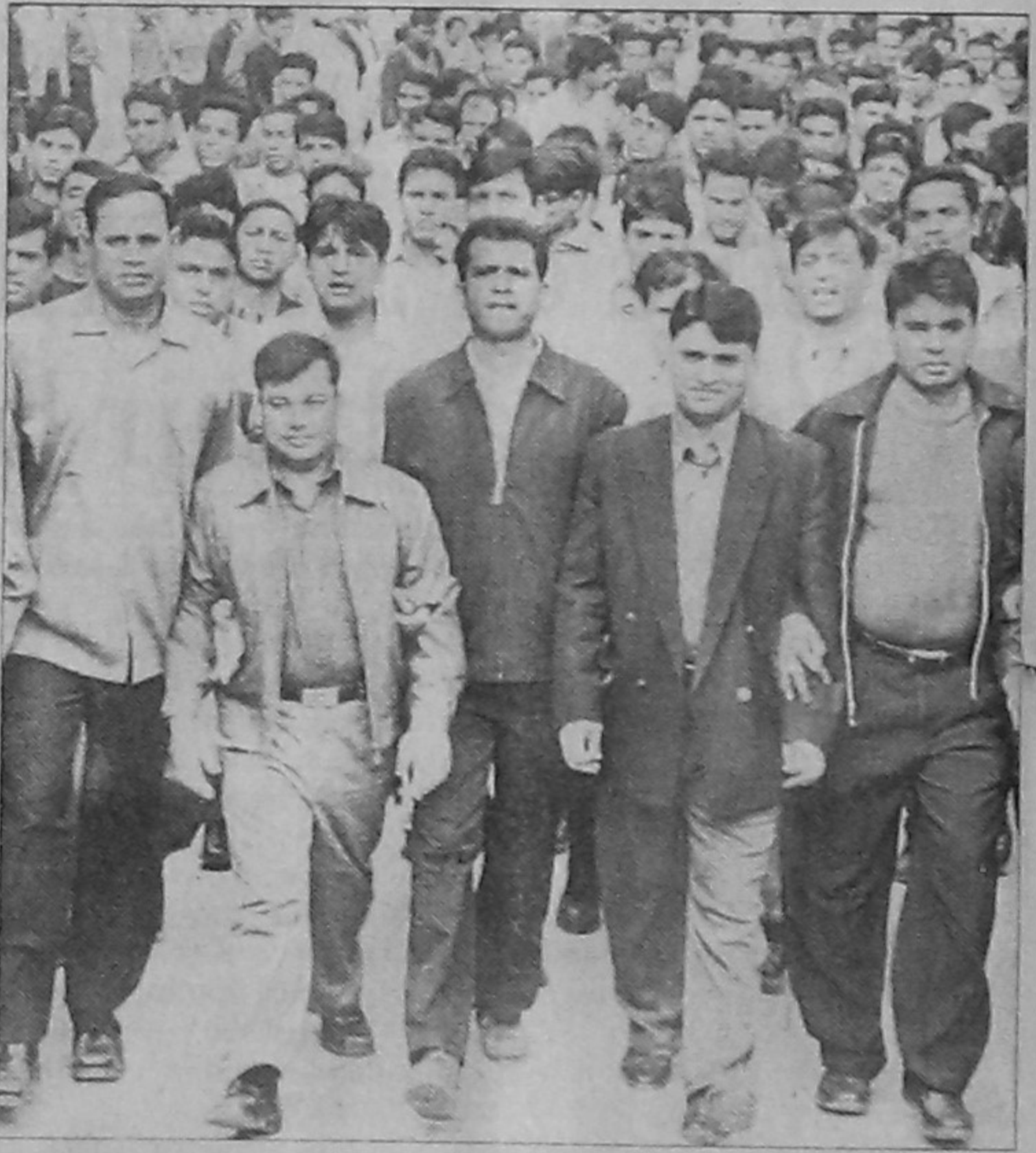
### ROK envoy meets DU vice chancellor

BSS, Dhaka
South Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Kyu-Hyung Lee met Dhaka University (DU) Vice-Chancellor Prof S M A Faiz at his office yesterday.

He was accompanied by Resident Representative of Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Sae-Chul Oh, a DU press release said. During the meeting, they discussed matters of mutual interest, particularly the academic activities of Dhaka University and the universities in Korea. They also discussed the existing friendly ties between the two countries. The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Korean envoy for his interest in the academic activities of Dhaka University.



The Bangladesh Chhatra League took out a procession on the Dhaka University Campus yesterday hailing the reelection of Sheikh Hasina as the Awami League president.



The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal took out a procession on the Dhaka University Campus yesterday with a call to make its council scheduled for January 1 a success.

### Madaripur AL leader dead

UNB, Dhaka
Abdul Mannan Mir, vice-president of Madaripur district Awami League, died of a cardiac arrest at a city clinic on Friday night at the age of 62.

He is survived by his wife, one son and one daughter. Local MP Shahjahan Khan and district AL president and general secretary have expressed deep shock at the death of Mannan Mir. They prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

### Pakistan frees Jaish leader Masood

REUTERS, Multan, Pakistan
Pakistani police on Sunday ended the house arrest of militant leader Maulana Masood Azhar, wanted in India on charges of terrorism, police officials said.

Police were removed from the house of Azhar, leader of the outlawed Jaish-e-Mohammad, on a court order, they said. Azhar was under house arrest since December 2001 in the Pakistani city of Bahawalpur, 500 km south of the capital, Islamabad.

"Police was removed from his house today," a police officer in Bahawalpur told Reuters by telephone.

A Pakistani court had ordered his release on December 14, but the order was implemented only on Sunday, his father Ustad Allah Baksh told Reuters by telephone. "It is a day of freedom for us. A day of freedom for me and a day of freedom for my son," said Baksh, a retired government school teacher. Azhar was one of three Muslim

militants released by India in 1999 in exchange for the freedom of passengers on a hijacked Indian Airlines flight.

Soon after his release, Azhar formed Jaish-e-Mohammad, which is a key guerrilla group fighting against Indian rule in Kashmir. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf banned Jaish-e-Mohammad and several other Islamic groups early this year as part of a campaign to stem Islamic militancy in Pakistan.

## Aboriginal art vanishing fast

BSS, Rajshahi
The indigenous aboriginal art, drawn on the walls and floors of the mud houses without using any artificial chemical dye, in the Barind region is vanishing fast for various reasons.

The Barind region is home to about 33 tribal communities who are now struggling to protect their ethnic and religious entity.

The conversion to Christianity, migration due to poverty and invasion of alien culture are threatening the aboriginal art.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and local unit of Adibashi Unnayan Sangstha (AUS) and Jatiya Adibashi Sangstha (JAS), there had been 259,204 adibashi population in greater Rajshahi districts (including Barind areas) of Naogaon, Natore, Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi in 1991. The figure increased to 349,924 in 2001.

So far, 33 communities of aboriginal population have been identified in the northern region. The communities are Santal, Urao, Rajbangshi, Munda, Murari, Mahali, Malo, Paharia, Malpahari, Pahan, Rajaur, Turi, Buna, Kole,

Kheroar, Mecho, Muchi, Karmaker, Harijan, Khaira, Teli, Lura, Rukhia, Mushar, Rai, Lohar, Bhuiyan, Bhumij, Bhumali, Missir, Murier, Koch and Ramdas.

Most of these communities had their distinct indigenous languages, dresses, house patterns, ornaments, religious practices and cultures.

It is still easy to differentiate a house of Urao people with that of Santals by watching the outer wall art and pattern of their houses. So is applicable for other community people as well.

The wall art of the aboriginal people found scattered in villages are unique creation of adibashi people. Besides wall art, there are floor art, floor decoration, house decoration, handicrafts and exquisite ornaments. These art bear their sense of aestheticism.

In order to preserve these near-extinct art works, the Bangladesh Women Journalists' Society (BWSJ), a Rajshahi-based organisation for women journalists, has taken up a project to record those arts in photography, CDs and video tapes. But the project could not take off due to want of required fund and logistic support.

Due to utter poverty, most of the adibashi people are now reluctant to paint their house walls and decorate their floors.

The floods of 1988, 1996 and 1998 have also broken the backbone of the adibashi people.

In the Barind areas, nearly 100 per cent rural houses were built with mud. But the floods changed the rural habitats. Instead of making mud houses, comparatively well-off people turned to corrugated tins and the poor inclined towards bamboo, straw and jute-sticks.

The adibashi people used to paint art on the walls of their mud houses. The changing housing pattern is a major cause of vanishing wall art. Another cause had been migration of adibashi people to towns in search of work.

In recent years, however, there has been a sort of stability of the adibashi people. Nowadays, the adibashi people do not migrate to other places as there are ample scope of employment in rural areas. As a result, they are getting enough time to devote themselves to artistic pursuits. The wall and floor arts of the

adibashi people are not painted by male members but by the female members of a house. Often, there had been some master artists in the village who were called by other female members of the village to teach them the art of paintings. The adibashi people have upheld their tradition for centuries, generation after generation.

Most of the wall art of the adibashi people belonged to floral motifs and geometrical designs and ornamentation. No form of animals is depicted in such art. To paint the walls, the aboriginal people use red-soil, black soil, sand-soil, sand, charcoal, juice extracted from tree barks and leaves, ashes and many other natural items.

Prof. Jogenranath Saren, an adibashi leader of Rajshahi, said that the wall and floor art of the aboriginal people can be preserved through recording those on Compact Discs, photographic plates and through video recording.

He also laid emphasis on training and financing of the rural female master artists to preserve the century-old tradition.

### 2 get Bangla Academy Fellowship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Begjadi Mahmuda Nasir and Prof Jamal Nazrul Islam have received Bangla Academy Honourary Fellowship-2002 for their outstanding contributions to female education and mathematics and physics respectively.

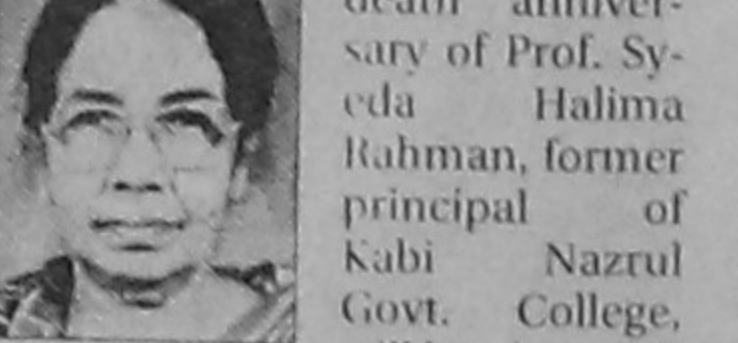
They received the fellowships at the 25th annual general meeting of Bangla Academy in the city on Friday. Bangla Academy confers this honorary fellowship to noted

persons of the country every year for their contributions in different fields.

Prof Begjadi Mahmuda started her career as an English lecturer of Kumudini College in Tangail in 1951. Then she established the Central Women's College in Dhaka and became its principal in 1954. The college turned into a university in 1992 and she is now the chairman of the university.

Prof Begjadi Mahmuda was the first woman member of the Syndicates of Dhaka and Jahangirnagar Universities and she received Zebunnesa Mahbuballah Trust Award in 1990 and Begum Rokeya Padak in 2001.

Prof Jamal Nazrul Islam, director of the Research Centre for Mathematics and Physical Science of Chittagong University, had served in different universities of the USA and the UK. He joined the Mathematics Department of Chittagong University in 1984 and had received the Science and Technology Padak, Ekushey Padak and Zebunnesa Mahbuballah Trust Award.



today, says a press release. On the occasion, a mild mahfil will be held at her residence at 339 Jafarabad (Shankar), Dhanmondi after Asr prayers.

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