

# Mobile soil testing lab to be set up in 6 divisional cities

**STAR REPORT**

A decision to set up mobile soil testing laboratories in six divisional cities to balance soil fertility and boost agricultural production was taken in a pre-budget meeting yesterday.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman presided over the meeting at the finance ministry.

Representatives from the ministries of agriculture and education attended the meeting.

The meeting also decided that the allocation for scholarships for students in class eight is to be increased to Tk 275 from Tk 250 in the next budget.

Saifur asked the ministry of agriculture for a detailed proposal on the costs for the mobile soil testing units.

He also called for proposals to boost countrywide subsidies to 20 percent on the price of electricity for irrigation and 25 percent subsidy on seeds in the budget proposal for FY04-05.

Currently the subsidy on the price of electricity is provided only in the Barendra area in Rajshahi Division.

## AHSANULLAH MURDER Arrest of killers demanded

**DU CORRESPONDENT**

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of the opposition Awami League (AL), yesterday blamed the BNP-Jamaat alliance government for the killing of lawmaker Ahsanullah Master and demanded immediate arrest and punishment of the killers.

BCL made this demand at a rally on Dhaka University campus. Earlier, it also brought out a procession to protest the killing.

The BCL leaders said the government has been killing the opposition leaders including lawmaker in a planned way. The BCL will launch out-governance movement soon if the government failed to nab the culprits who killed Ahsanullah Master, they added.

"The BNP-led coalition government has no moral right to stay in power as they failed to ensure public security," BCL President Liaqat Sikder said. He said the nation was shocked at the killing of Ahsanullah.

## Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Chowdhury Badruddin, former banker, will be held at his residence "Bashati Legacy" at House No-29, Road No-6, Flat C-1, Dhanmondi Residential Area after Asr prayers today, May 12, Wednesday, says a press release.

Chowdhury Badruddin died at his residence on Monday at the age of 63.

He left behind his wife, one daughter and one son.

He was laid to rest at Azimpur graveyard.



PHOTO: STAR  
Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad stages demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding arrest and punishment to the killers of labour leader and Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master.

# Local govt heads reject interim chief provision

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Leaders of local government associations yesterday rejected as undemocratic the government's proposed provision for nominating one of the members of the elected local government body as interim administrator for the period between expiry of its term and holding of fresh elections.

The government move seeking such provision through the 14th amendment to the constitution would go against the spirit of existing constitutional provisions which require an elected local government body to hand over to another elected one, they said at a press conference at a city hotel.

Leaders representing the National Union Parishad Forum (NUPF) and the Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB) presented their views in a written statement, read out by NUPF President Golam Sarwar. The statement said, "Whether a former council member or a bureaucrat takes over the local government office under this arrangement, it replaces the people's democratic mandate at the local level with the mandate of a non-elected administrator."

Every council member loses his or her mandate as an elected representative as soon as the term of his

authority of the central government body expires. So, it is unconstitutional to entrust any one of them with the office for an interim period, the statement said.

The government previously proposed in the amendment that upon expiry of local governments' tenure, the national government would appoint an administrator until fresh elections are held and a new body takes office.

"The newly proposed changes are as bad as the previous one, as it is against the idea of strengthening local government bodies," said the MAB president and Tongi Paurashava Chairman Azmat Ullah Khan.

"The amendment is intended to politicise and bring the local government institutions further under the

## President assents to Narcotics Control Bill

**BSS, Dhaka**

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday assented to 'The Narcotics Control (Amendment) Bill, 2004.'

The Bill was passed in the current 11th session of the eighth Jatiya Sangsad, says an official handout.

## ALAM MURDER CASE Hearing on charge-framing May 26

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

A Dhaka Court has fixed May 26 for hearing on charge-framing against Jamuna Group Chairman Nurul Islam Babul and five others in the Alam Pramanik murder case.

Judge Rezaul Islam of the Fifth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court on Monday fixed the date.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case on April 19 submitted the charge sheet to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka against Babul and his son Shamim Islam, Amir Hossain, Mohammad Ripon, Saidur Rahman and Dewan Ali. Dewan is absconding while the rest except Babul are on bail.

In the charge sheet, 25 people were shown as prosecution witnesses.

# One gets death for killing

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

A Dhaka Court yesterday sentenced one person to death for killing Shafiqul Islam alias Tota of Nawabganj upazila on September 10 in 2001.

Judge Quamrul Hossain Mollah of the Fifth Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court gave the verdict in presence of the convict Ferdous.

The convict can appeal to the High Court against the verdict in seven days, the judgement said.

The victim's mother Arju Begum, wife Runu Islam and his son Ontar Islam were present in the court during the delivery of the verdict. They expressed their satisfaction with judgement.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 16 prosecution witnesses.

The prosecution story in brief is that Ferdous knifed the victim to death at about 4:30 am on September 10 in 2001 at the victim's Jantril residence under Nawabganj upazila in Dhaka district in sequel to a previous enmity.

Following the incident, victim's wife Runu Islam filed a murder case accusing Ferdous the same day. The investigation officer (IO) of the case pressed charges against Ferdous on March 22 in 2001 showing 18 people as prosecution witnesses.

The court framed charges against the accused on November 10 the same year and the trial was completed in 27 working days.

District Public Prosecutor Mohammad Mohsin Miah appeared for the state while Advocate Gurudayal defended the accused.

# DUTP hands over 16 motor vehicles to DMP

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP) handed over 16 motor vehicles to the traffic department of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) at a function at Nagorbhaban in the city yesterday.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka handed over the keys of five patrol cars, five pick-up vans, two jeeps and four wreckers to DMP Commissioner Ashraf Huda.

"As a poor country it is very difficult for us to collect these expensive vehicles. So our traffic police must take enough care of them and make sincere efforts to create a model traffic system in the city," said Sadeque, also the chairman of Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB).

He urged the DMP to restore its fame by discharging duties with further devotion and honesty.

DTCB Executive Director Kamrul Islam Siddique, who chaired the function, expressed his satisfaction over the development of the traffic system in the capital.

He said there will be further improvement of traffic system if more traffic police are trained up and at the same time our people and motor drivers show more civic sense regarding driving and road crossing.

The DUTP, financed by the World Bank, has been working in Dhaka Metropolitan area to improve urban transport infrastructure and services and strengthen institutional and policy framework and address long-term transport planning and coordination issues through the city corporation.

Sources said the DUTP has so far handed over 115 motorcycles, 100 walkie-talkies, two TATA buses, 287 helmets, metal detectors and trained at least 300 traffic police.

Representatives from DTCC, DUTP, DCC were present at the function.

**WEATHER TODAY**

## Thundershowers likely

**UNB, Dhaka**

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Tangail, Mymensingh and Comilla till 6.00pm today.

Weather may remain nearly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met office said.

Mild to moderate heat wave over Khulna division and parts of Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions may continue, it added.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 41.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and the lowest 23.4 degree at Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:33pm today and rises at 5:17am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in Celsius		percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.6	28.0	72	65		
Chittagong	34.0	27.6	76	77		
Rajshahi	41.2	28.5	73	51		
Khulna	36.0	28.5	78	66		
Barisal	33.8	27.4	77	69		
Sylhet	34.0	24.1	76	88		
Cox's Bazar	35.4	28.0	72	77		

## BLOCK 9 Tullow accepts share transfer to Niko

**UNB, Dhaka**

Irish Tullow Oil has accepted the transfer of US energy giant Chevron-Texaco's 60 percent share in the country's Block 9 to Canadian Niko Resources Ltd.

But the required official approval is yet to be given by Petrobangla, the state-run oil, gas and mineral corporation under the Energy and Mineral Resources Division.

The approval process of transferring Chevron Texaco's share was under process, according to officials at the Petrobangla, which deals PSCs (production sharing contracts) with IOCs (international oil companies).

"We have to follow certain procedures. We can't complete the formalities as rapidly as the contractors can do," said a senior Petrobangla official.

He said the transfer would be approved shortly by Petrobangla and then the matter would be sent to the Energy and Mineral Resources Division for final approval.

Earlier, the Petrobangla sought clarifications from ChevronTexaco several times as the US oil giant made announcement of selling its interests in Bangladesh to Niko Resources Ltd.

## Election tribunals formed

**BSS, Dhaka**

The Election Commission (EC) has constituted election tribunals to settle disputes relating to the just concluded pourasabha polls.

The district magistrates of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban and joint district judges of the respective districts have been appointed tribunal chiefs, an EC press release said yesterday.

According to the election regulations, within 30 days of the gazette notification, the candidates or their representatives will file the dispute cases with the tribunals after depositing Tk 500 with any of the branches of Sonali Bank or government treasury in favour of the respective returning officer to meet the expenses of the cases.

**DHAKA TODAY**

- Film show**  
Dhaka Film Society will screen a Russian film titled 'Russian Ark' directed by Akesandr Sokurov and a Spanish film titled 'Women on the Verge of Nervous Breakdown' directed by Pedro Almodovar. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.30pm and 6.00pm.
- Academy film show**  
Academy Film Society will screen a British film titled 'Romeo and Juliet' (1968). Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.
- Film festival**  
As part of the programme of Bangla Film Festival-2004, Dhaka University Film Society will screen four films titled 'Jukti Tokko Galpa', 'Ashikkhito', 'Sare Chuattur' and 'Nil Akasher Niche'. Venue: Teachers Students Centre.
- Discussion on Tagore**  
Bangladesh-Bharat Moitree Samity organises a discussion to mark the birth anniversary poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Venue: CIRDP auditorium, Topkhana Road. Time: 4.00pm.
- Discussion**  
In observance of International Nurses
- Day, a discussion on 'Nurses working with the poor against poverty' will be held with Health Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain as chief guest. Venue: Shaheed Dr Milon Auditorium, Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Time: 9.00am.
- Meeting**  
Saarc Tuberculosis Centre organises a meeting on partnership programme with press media on Tuberculosis control programme within Saarc region. Venue: Hotel Abokash, Mohakhali. Time: 5.30pm.
- Seminar**  
Vantage Technologies organises a seminar on 'Repair-not replacement-The Eutectic Way' with Industries Minister M Motiur Rahman Nizami as chief guest. Venue: Hotel Purbani. Time: 11.00am.
- Prize giving ceremony**  
Dhaka Shishu (Children) Hospital organises a prize distribution ceremony for the winners of the lottery to raise fund for its development. Venue: Hospital auditorium. Time: 10.00am.
- Workshop**  
National Museum of Science and Technology organises a workshop with Vice-Chancellor of South East



City University Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. M. Shamsul Haque and Tauheed's Academy Principal SM Tauheedur Rahman signed Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of their respective institutions yesterday.

