



Health Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain hands over a prize to a meritorious student at the launching ceremony of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh at Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday. On his left are Vice-Chancellor Kazi Shahid Ahmed and Prof Rafiqul Islam and on his left is State Minister for Education Ehsanul Haq Milon.

## UNIVERSITY OF LIBERAL ARTS LAUNCHED Pvt varsities urged to give up commercial attitude

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon yesterday criticised the private universities for low standard of education and called for giving up their commercial attitude.

The government permitted the universities to accommodate increased number of students and develop a quality education system, but the entrepreneurs could not meet the demand, he said at the launching ceremony of University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) at a city hotel.

Now the government has become strict in approving private universities, he said, adding that however, if any entrepreneur comes up with the vision of imparting standard education, the government will welcome them.

Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said the private universities also do not follow the guidelines properly.

They do not have own campuses and most of them start functioning with only two subjects, he added.

The minister also said these

institutions mainly depend on part-time teachers.

Only a few, out of 52 private universities, maintain a minimum standard of education, he said.

However, both of them appreciated the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, saying that this is the only university that started the academic session on its own campus from the very beginning.

Prof Rafiqul Islam, pro-vice chancellor of ULAB, said the university aimed to impart indigenous knowledge in global context to prepare the students to face the challenges of globalisation.

The institution will give special emphasis on basic research and publications, he added.

Vice Chancellor Kazi Shahid Ahmed said three more campuses of the university are under construction in Savar, Rayerbazar and Panchagram.

The university awarded more than 100 students who secured GPA-5 in HSC examination this year.

### Hopes awards scholarships to 54 students

UNB, Dhaka

Helping Organisation for Poor & Energetic Students (Hopes) has awarded scholarships to 54 students to help them pursue higher studies at the university level.

The scholarships were awarded at the 5th annual general meeting of the organisation held at the Sports Zone in the city on Thursday.

Hopes, a non-political social organisation, was established by some businessmen to provide support to meritorious but poor students.

The awardees were selected from different public universities and specialised institutions.



Renowned artist Rafiqun Nabi (right) inaugurates the Art and Soul Gallery at Gulshan in the city yesterday. On his right are Nabila Rahman, executive director of the gallery, and Jurg Casserini, charge d'affaires of Switzerland. Actor and writer Aly Zaker was also present as special guest.

## 'Fiscal management in Bangladesh is the best among LDCs'

BSS, New York

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman said Bangladesh would achieve the United Nations (UN) millennium goals for 2015 in primary education and women empowerment by 2005.

He quoted reports of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as saying that the financial management in Bangladesh is the best among the least development countries (LDCs).

The minister was speaking at a function organised by the Sonali Exchange on the occasion of the inauguration of its online money transfer service here on Thursday.

Saifur was critical of those who were spreading propaganda at home and abroad against the country by terming it a non-functional state.

"Bangladesh by any extent could not be termed a non-functional state and the BNP is not an ineffective political party. Rather, those who suffered debacle in the general

AL holds milad for grenade victims

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prayers were offered at a milad mahfil in the city on Thursday for the salvation of the departed souls of those who were killed at the August 21 grenade attack on Awami League (AL) rally.

Thousands of people joined the milad organised by the main opposition Awami League on the occasion of holy Shab-e-Barat in front of the party office.

They also prayed for early recovery of the injured people and expressed sympathy for the members of the bereaved families.

Speaking at the milad mahfil, AL leaders said the grenade attack was not possible without the backing from the high-ups in the government.

They called on all democratic, progressive and pro-liberation forces to unite to oust the government.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said people are passing their days amidst a sense of insecurity due to repeated incidents of bomb and grenade explosions.

AL leaders Mohammad Hanif, Jilur Rahman and Amir Hossain Amu were present at the milad.

## Agriculture accounted for 22.8 pc of GDP in last fiscal Experts tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture accounted for about 22.8 percent of GDP in the last fiscal and the rice production dominated the crop sector with an average share of 71 percent of gross output value of all crops, experts said yesterday.

The total demand for rice in 2005 will be 26.67 million metric tons and production requirement of paddy will be 39.80 million metric tons, they said at a seminar on 'Present status and future demand for rice in Bangladesh'.

The Bangladesh Rice Research Institute organised the seminar in Gazipur to mark the International Year of Rice 2004 and the National Rice Day (proposed).

The required production of paddy would stand at 48.69 million metric tons in 2025 to meet the growing demand, the experts said.

They also suggested adopting both short-term and long-term strategies to increase production.

As short-term measures, varietal replacement through modern variety rice, increasing supply of quality seeds and application of improved management practices at farm level can be used to enhance rice production, they said.

They also called for developing hybrid rice variety.

Agriculture Minister MK Anwar attended the seminar as chief guest and Dr AR Gomostha presided over it.

Mohammad Ismail, chairman of BADC, Nurul Alam, chairman of BARC, and Dr M Mohiul Hoque, director general of BRRI, also spoke.

The BRRI also took out a colourful procession to celebrate the day.



Visitors flip through books at a month-long Penguin Book Fair that began at Etc. bookstore in Gulshan yesterday. The exhibition will continue till October 31.

## SAIC meet begins tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

The three-day 18th meeting of the Governing Board of Saarc Agriculture Information Centre (SAIC) will begin at Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council Complex here tomorrow.

Members of SAIC Governing Board from the seven nations of Saarc—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka—will take part in the meeting.



Bangladesh Rice Research Institute took out a procession in Gazipur yesterday to mark the International Year of Rice 2004.