

## Steps taken to build skilled, professional armed forces: PM

UNB, Rajshahi

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said the armed forces are a national asset and the government was always active in the reconstruction, modernisation and raising of its strength.

All necessary measures have been taken to build up skilled, well-disciplined and professional armed forces, she said reassuring of continued efforts for building it up to a time-befitting modern force.

Khaleda said the government steps have helped the armed forces to make its presence felt in a strong way in the international arena. "They have brought laurels for the country through their contributions in different peacekeeping missions of the United Nations."

The prime minister was speaking during the presentation of National Standard to the 1st Battalion of the

Bangladesh Infantry Regiment at Rajshahi Cantonment yesterday afternoon.

On arrival at the venue, the prime minister was received by the Chief of Army Staff Lt. Gen. Hasan Mashud Chowdhury, Bogra Area Commander Major Gen Monjurul Alam and BIRC Commander Brig Gen ANM Shawkat Jamal.

Khaleda said she was proud to recall the silent preparation within the Bengal Regiment along with the political, cultural, economic and social movement waged for freedom during the Pakistani period.

This preparation, she said, helped keep alive the aspirations for the nation's freedom despite the sudden military attack in 1971. "Later, we attained overall military victory."

She termed the infantry as the main pillar of the army and lauded their role in the War of Liberation and in safeguarding the independence and sovereignty and in containing insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

### Care, Bata sign memorandum

Bata Shoe will now be accessible to villagers in remote areas through Care-supported Self-Help Organisations of Women (SHOW) groups in Lalpur Upazila of Natore where Bata stores, agencies and dealers are not available, says a press release.

Care Bangladesh and Bata Shoe Company signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in this regard recently for a period of six months.

This pilot scheme involves women of seven groups, who will sell Bata products from door-to-door and at local markets in selected unions.

This will help increase the income generation capacity of the women's organisations.

Bata will provide marketing training while Care will provide organisational support to facilitate business training.

## DHAKA

### T O D A Y

#### Photo exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of a three-day photo exhibition, organised by Bangladesh Photojournalists Association and the Unicef, will be held with Information Minister M Shamsul Islam as chief guest. Venue: National Press Club Auditorium. Time: 10.30am.

#### Belgian Film session

Zahir Raihan Film Society, in association with the Alliance Francaise, will screen two recent French-speaking Belgian films titled 'Rosetta' (1999) and 'The Son' (2002), both directed by Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne. Venue: Alliance Francaise, Road-3, Dhanmondi. Time: 5.00pm and 7.00pm.

#### Indian film show

The High Commission of India will screen a film titled 'Mohabbatein'. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, House-25, Road-96, Gulshan-2. Time: 6.30pm.

#### Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of a book titled 'Chattagramer Tin Dashaker Natok' written by Khorshedul Alam will be held. Venue: Seminar Room of Bangladesh Mahila Samity. Time: 6.00pm.

#### Discussion

Bangladesh China People's Friendship Association organises a discussion to mark the 55th founding anniversary of the People's Republic of China with Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman as chief guest. Venue: Lake Shore Hotel, Gulshan. Time: 6.00pm.

#### Inauguration

The inauguration of a cardiac centre will be held with Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain as



PHOTO: STAR



German Ambassador Dietrich Andreas called on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan Residence in the city yesterday.

## Save haor to preserve bio-diversity

### Environmentalists tell meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bio-diversity and enormous resources of haor and baor (vast low-lying wet land) are on the verge of extinction in the absence of effective government control, said the environmentalists at a meeting yesterday.

They said unplanned crop cultivation and excessive extraction of aquatic resources year after year have virtually denuded the uniqueness of these wet lands.

The meeting was organised by Haor Bachao Andolok (movement for saving the haor) at the National Press Club.

There is no effective government control and management in protecting the water bodies, said a wildlife activist Shahjahan Sardar of Nature Conservation Committee.

Haors like Tangua, Pashua, Hakaluki, Kawadighi, Hail and Balai in northeastern region of the country are ideal places for wildlife sanctuary and to maintain ecological balance, said Water Development Board Chief Engineer M Enamul Haque in his keynote paper.

But excessive drainage of water for cultivation of high yielding variety of Boro and Aman has rendered the haor and baor devoid of aquatic bio-resources, he added.

Enamul said a total of 44 thousand square kilometre wet land comprising haor, baor, lake, floodplain and river confluence constitutes three percent of the country's total area.

He recommended that haor and baor be declared wildlife sanctuaries to conserve bio-diversity and aquatic herbs.

Enamul said excessive drainage and illegal occupation in the name of leasing have to be stopped.

Former teacher of Chittagong University Dr Ansarul Karim said temporary submersible embankment is a suitable solution to protect crops in the haor from floods.

He called for a national policy to protect the low-lying wet lands including preventive measures against silt deposition in haor and baor.

A number of inhabitants from haor areas in Sylhet, Sunamganj and Kishoreganj, while speaking at

the meeting, demanded cancellation of the lease of haors, adequate afforestation there and involvement of locals in protecting the wet land.

Moderated by former advisor to caretaker government Prof A S M Shahjahan, the meeting was attended by Convenor of Haor Bachao Andolok Abu Naser Khan and Mercantile Bank Advisor Taher Uddin.

### 1,274 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested some 1,274 people on various charges during their nationwide drive in the last 24 hours ending at 6.00am yesterday.

During the period, the law enforcers recovered 36 firearms, 15 other weapons, 363 bullets and filed 17 cases against 57 people under the Arms Act, says a police headquarters press release.



Awami League leader and former mayor Mohammad Hanif speaks at a rally protesting the 'misrule' of the alliance government at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday.

## Mass dialogue in Dinajpur Oct 18

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) and Jatiya Oikyamancha (JO) will jointly launch their Gono Sanglap (mass dialogue) programme in Dinajpur on October 18 to prepare Gono Ishtehar (People's Agenda).

BDB President Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury and JO Convenor Dr Kamal Hossain will attend the programme, said a press release yesterday.

During the programme, people from all segments of society will share their concerns, aspirations, opinions and suggestions with them. Similar programme will be held in Rangpur on October 19.

### Newspaper staffs submit memo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Bangladesh Newspaper Workers' Federation and Bangladesh Federal Union of Newspapers Press Workers met Deputy Minister for Land Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar Dulu at his office yesterday and discussed the allocation of land for their office building. They also discussed the housing problems of the employees and workers and handed over a memorandum to the minister.

The minister assured them of necessary steps to allocate land and solve their housing problem.

Federation leaders Fazle Imam, Abul Hashem, Matiur Rahman Talukdar and Khairul Islam spoke at the meeting.

An advance team of Gono Ishtehar Karyakrom with a programme Coordinator Feroz M Hassan has already left for two northern districts.

Earlier, the BDB and the JO imparted a special training to 20 of

their selected organisers to provide all sorts of assistance during the programme.

Such programmes will also be held gradually across the country where the leaders will listen to the people from all walks of life.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 33.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and lowest 21.8 degree Celsius at Srimangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:34pm today and rises at 5:56am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest 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	33.0	24.8	80	72
Chittagong	33.5	24.2	68	71
Rajshahi	33.5	24.5	81	82
Khulna	32.8	25.6	82	82
Barisal	32.8	24.4	83	89
Sylhet	32.0	23.4	75	81
Cox's Bazar	32.6	25.5	80	82

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country with chances of rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore and Kushtia due to advancing westerly disturbance till 6.00pm today.

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