



## Fazle Hasan Abed receives UNDP award

BSS, New York

Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and chairperson of Brac, received the UNDP Human Resources Development Award-2004 at a function here yesterday.

Administrator of UNDP Mark Malloch Brown handed over the award to Abed at the function at New York Historical Society at Manhattan.

Also, five non-governmental organisations from five countries received the special awards of UNDP.

The government of Indian state of West Bengal got the UNDP award for its land reform and decentralisation programme.

## 5 city roads named after five sector commanders

BSS, Dhaka

Five Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) roads were named after freedom fighters as the country was celebrating 33rd anniversary of its independence yesterday.

Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka announced the names of the roads at a reunion of the freedom fighters, who fought the Liberation War under Sector No. 2 at Nagar Bhaban in the city.

"Initially we are naming five roads after the names of five sector commanders and other roads will also be named after prominent freedom fighters on phases," he said.

Eminent freedom fighters Col (rt) Oli Ahmed, Maj Gen (rt) Mir Shawkat Ali, A K Khondakar, Water Resources Minister Maj (rt) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed and State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Prof Rezaul Karim also spoke.

The road from Mohakhali-Amtali crossing to Gulshan-1 junction was named after A K Khondakar, Bir Uttam, Sonargaon Hotel intersection to Mirpur Road (Panthapath) after Col Nuruzzaman, Bir Uttam, Science Laboratory to BDR gate after Maj Gen Rab, Bir Uttam, Tejgaon Nabisco to Gulshan-2 after Gen Mir Shawkat, Bir Uttam, and Kataban crossing to Sonargaon crossing after Major Gen CR Dutta, Bir Uttam.

## Now dictionary on cellphone

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If you are looking for the meaning of an English word but don't have the dictionary around, a cellphone may come in handy. Only sending a text message can solve your problem!

GrameenPhone, a leading cellphone operator, is in the process to introduce dictionary service, official sources said.

GP will also introduce 'synonym and antonym' service, long cherished by various segments of people, including students and executives.

To get the meaning of a word, one need to go to the message option of the mobile phone and write 'dict' and then the word and send it to 2233. Immediately the cellphone owner will receive a return SMS (short message service) with the meaning of the word.

For synonym and antonym service, one has to type 'synm' or 'antn' instead of 'dict'.

"Infore Limited will provide contents for the service," Mujtaba Sattar Ananto, chief executive officer of Infore Limited, told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

The company has also introduced the country's first ever email service through mobile phone, he said. It will also offer personal website through cellphone.

The company has also a plan to launch job sites on cellphone.

## Obituary

UNB, Natore

Sadar Upazila BNP President and former UP member Niamatullah Nannu died of a cardiac arrest here yesterday at the age of 45.

He left behind two sons, four daughters and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia expressed deep shock at the death of Nannu and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

## DU convocation begins tomorrow

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dr Mahathir Mohamad, former prime minister of Malaysia, will attend the 42nd convocation of Dhaka University as the convocation speaker while 8,069 graduates, including 4,387 female students, will receive certificates at the two-day ceremony beginning tomorrow.

The university will also confer an honorary Doctorate of Law degree on Mahathir, said Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz at a press conference on Wednesday.

A total of 108 gold medals will be awarded to 79 students for their outstanding academic performance at the convocation, the third since independence.

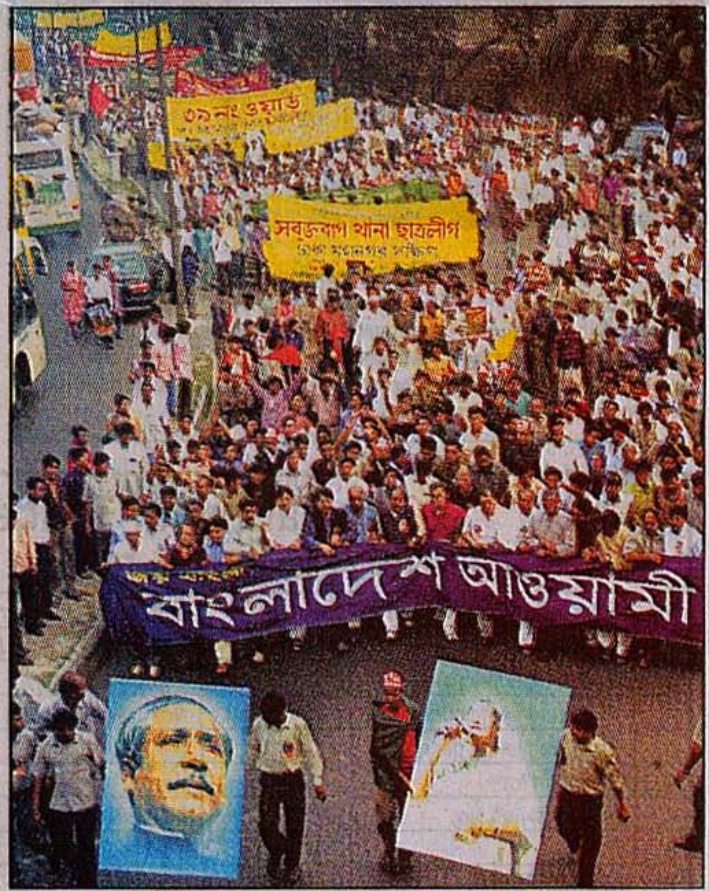
"I am hopeful that the convocation will be held every year from now on," the VC said.

All the classes and examinations scheduled for December 18 and 19 have been postponed and fresh dates for the examinations will be announced soon.

Asked about an allegation that a number of graduates did not get the invitation letter for the convocation, the VC said the authorities made a contract with a courier service to deliver the letters but if any student fails to receive the letter, he will be given a duplicate letter.

He urged the graduates to contact the registrar's office in this regard.

The authorities urged the graduates and the guests to be present at the convocation venue by 8:30am and 9:00am respectively. There are separate gates for the graduates and the guests. Nobody will be allowed to carry any camera, cellphone or handbag.



Leaders and workers of Awami League and its front organisations march down the streets in a colourful Victory Day procession in the city yesterday.

## INDIAN RIVER-LINKING PROJECT Int'l confce begins in city today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An international conference on 'Regional Cooperation on Trans-boundary Rivers: Impact of the Indian River-linking Project' begins in the city today.

The three-day conference will be inaugurated by Water Resources Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed at Osmani Memorial Auditorium at 9:30am.

The main objective of the conference is to enable the experts, policymakers, administrators and members of the civil society to reach a consensus on sharing the common natural resources among the neighbouring countries, said the organisers.

Around 500 registered persons including water experts, environmentalists, activists, former administrators and equal number of non-registered persons from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the

United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and Spain will attend the conference.

A number of non-resident Bangladeshis from USA, Finland, Singapore and other countries will also take part in the programme.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will be the chief guest at the concluding session.

The conference is being organised jointly by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, Bangladesh Environment Network, Bangladesh Economic Association, Institution of Engineers Bangladesh, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, and University of Dhaka (DU) in collaboration with Bangladesh Water Partnership, Bangladesh Geographical Society, Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad, Bangladesh National Geographic Association and Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

## 'Bangladesh has highest pry enrollment in dev countries'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Child friendly academic institutions and favourable homes are important preconditions for quality primary education, said experts and high officials at a seminar on Wednesday.

They said learning environment must be interesting for children and in anyway it will be place of intimidation.

The seminar was organised by the United Nations Children Fund (Unicef) in collaboration with the government to mark the completion of a project titled 'Intensive District Approach to Education for All', a project that was taken up under the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP).

"Primary education is perhaps the first formal gateway for a child to the world outside his/her family and it plays a crucial role to the child's physical and mental development," said Australian High Commissioner Lorraine Barker.

In a written speech, she said Bangladesh has one of the largest primary education systems in the world with over 18 million children eligible to attend primary schools.

The country has an enrollment rate of 81 percent, one of the highest primary school network among the developing countries, she said, adding that it has also achieved a gender parity with 49 percent of girl enrollment and 51 percent boy

enrollment.

The government of Japan contributed US\$ 1.99 million and other inputs to the project attaching due importance to the indispensability of quality education for a bright future of any society, said Japanese Ambassador Matsushiro Horiguchi.

Safe learning environment was developed under the project to address health, hygiene and other issues related to primary education, said Unicef's Chief of Child Development and Education Section James Jennings.

Teachers were motivated to take responsibility for children's learning, he added.

"Access to education is a basic human right directly related to social and economic development," said Swedish Ambassador to Bangladesh Borje Mattsson.

But mere access is not sufficient, Mattsson said, adding that efforts must be made to address the issues of quality education and project benefits for both the parents and children.

Bangladesh government has been making untiring efforts to live up to its commitment to the Dakar Conference, Millennium Development Goals and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper to achieve the goal of quality education for all, said acting Primary and Mass Education Secretary Md Rafiqul Islam.

## Ahsania Mission gets AGFUND award for environment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Tunis

Starting as a small localised initiative to fight pervasive illiteracy some 50 years ago, Dhaka Ahsania Mission yesterday came to the global limelight when it was awarded the prestigious AGFUND International Prize for Pioneering Development Project.

The Arab Gulf Fund for UN Development Organisations has made it an annual event since 1999 to award two organisations and an individual from around the globe for their contribution towards human life improvement.

This year Dhaka Ahsania Mission got the US \$100,000 award in national category for its contribution to environmental improvement in Bangladesh along with the Near East Foundation of the USA in international category and the CD1 of Brazil in the individual category.

Saudi Prince Talal Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, who is also the president of AGFUND, distributed the prizes at a pre-dinner ceremony at Tunis.

"We have learnt the lesson that when we are in indignity, we need a united helping hand," said the prince. "Injustice and oppression are going on in our sisterly countries. I call upon everyone to rise to fight indignity. In the darkness, we should not despair."

In an oblique reference to the Middle East situation, the prince said: "How could we amuse ourselves while our brothers are being subjected to the worst forms of disgrace? How could we bring ourselves to rejoice when a happy moment has become a scarcity... when aggression, injustice and oppression overshadows our brotherly countries, disgracing their people, who were once dignified citizens."

"I am here addressing the external powers and occupiers of our countries, but I make no exception to those kinsmen who instil anger in our hearts, targeting the innocent and spreading fear among people as they destroy homes," Aziz said in a painful voice.

Walking to the podium after receiving the award, Kazi Rafiqul Alam, president and chief executive of Ahsania Mission, said, "The award will give new encouragement to Ahsania Mission to work for the betterment of humanity. Bangladesh with the huge population pressure needs more work for environment."

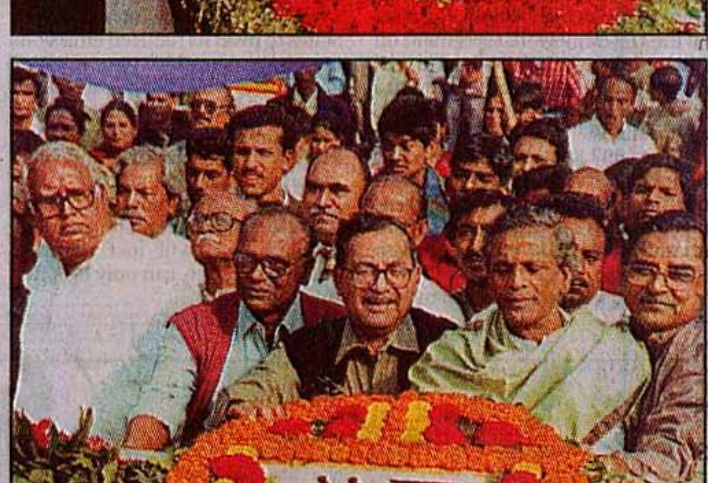
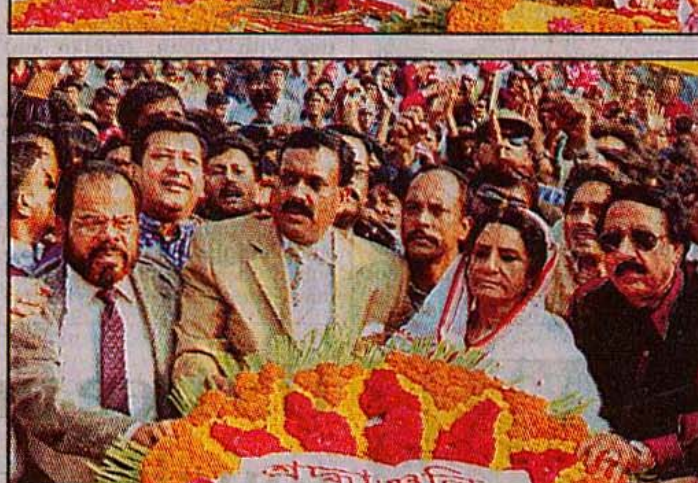
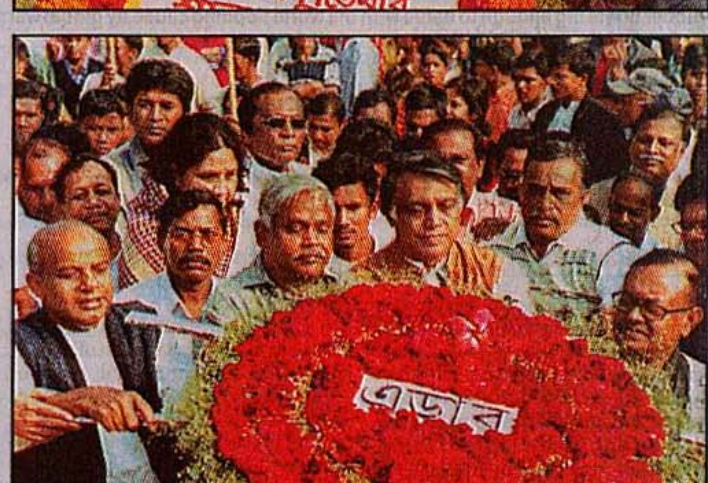
The Mission got the award for working with 15 million people in its environment promotional activities. It has distributed 16 million saplings, planted 1.9 million trees, raised 560 nurseries and set up 98 environment resource centres.

For safe water and sanitation, the Mission has installed around 95,000 sanitary latrines and 35,000 shallow and deep tubewells. To fight arsenic contamination, it screened 161,000 tubewells and made alternative water supply arrangement.

"Awarding of this year's Nobel Peace Prize to an environmentalist emphasised that enhanced understanding of the environment and security interface can be an important tool in promoting social harmony and peace. However, the scale of environmental services which Ahsania Mission has implemented over the last several years is no less in scale and magnitude for which Ms Wangari has received the Nobel Prize," said Alam.

Tunisian Minister for Social Affairs Rafi Dakhel and President of Islamic Development Bank Ahmed Mohammed Ali also spoke.

## Victory Day in picture



Different political parties and organisations placed wreaths at National Memorial at Savar yesterday to pay homage to the martyrs of the Liberation War. Clockwise from top left: Bangladesh Nationalist Party, Bangladesh Awami League, Australian Bar Association, Jatiya Oikya Mancha, Bangla Academy, Adab, 11-Party, BKSP, Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, Jatiya Party, Khelaghor, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, Injured freedom fighters and vice-chancellor of Dhaka University.