

**DHAKA TODAY**

**Workshop on procurement**  
German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) organises a workshop on 'public procurement systems in the context of public sector reforms'. Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 9:00am.

**Seminar on education**  
Bangladesh Shikha O Shikkho Andolon Samannay Forum, a coordinating forum of education and teachers' movement, organises a seminar on 'Single-track education-hope or fear for the nation?'. Muhammad Jafar Iqbal, renowned scientist, author and educationist, will present the keynote paper. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

## AL to nationalise pry teachers' jobs if voted to power: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Describing the next national election as a "great chance to serve the nation", Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said that if elected she would nationalise the jobs of all non-government primary school teachers.

"Awami League is always committed to serve the nation. We can realise how important is the primary education... Inshallah, we will nationalise the job of the primary school teachers if people elect us in the next national election," Hasina said.

She was addressing a representative conference of Non-Government Primary School Teachers Association as chief guest at the Engineers Institute auditorium in the city.

Presided over by Golam Mohammed, the conference was also addressed by AL acting General Secretary Obaidul Qader, presidium member Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and former MP Nurul Islam Nahid.

Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, said the schoolteachers have been deprived of

even basic needs of life where the primary education is the main foundation of a country's education sector. She blasted the government accusing it of conspiring to turn Bangladesh into a nation of illiterates.

"BNP, Jamaat are afraid of education and progressiveness. They don't want to see Bangladesh as an illiteracy-free country. That's why primary school teachers have to take to streets and tolerate police repression to realise their basic needs of life," she said.

Hasina said the teachers' community, after liberation, got several facilities, including nationalisation of jobs and raise of salary and allowances during the government of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and AL's last tenure.

"Bangabandhu, at first, nationalised thousands of non-government primary schools. Following his great example, our government had increased salaries of non-government primary teachers to Tk 2000 from Tk 525," Hasina said.

She criticised Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for increasing salaries of

herself and her cabinet members saying as if the ministers are the poorest people and teachers, farmers and workers are the richest people.

She said her government had introduced different allowances for teachers, freedom fighters and elderly people.

The government had shut down 10,000 community schools while the last AL government had a plan to set up one school in each two-kilometer, Hasina said.

The former prime minister said that BNP-Jamaat government is planning to rig votes in the next election so that they can implement their blueprint to break the backbone of the nation.

"They are conspiring to take revenge for their defeat in the War of Liberation in 1971 and they know well if education sector could be paralysed, their dream would come true very easily," Hasina said.

Alleging that the alliance government has appointed party people to make voter lists for the next election, Hasina demanded new voter list with voters' photo.

## Mobile courts fine Tk 11 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty mobile courts yesterday conducted drives at different parts of the city and realised over Tk 10.66 lakh in fine from shops and factories for producing and selling illegal products and rotten and stale food items.

A mobile court fined Mamun Traders at Shyampur Tk 1 lakh and filed cases against the factory owner for producing harmful chemical used for ripening fruits.

The court led by Magistrate Fazlul Haque also fined a trader Badsha Tk 50,000 for using burnt mobil oil to fry biscuit and chanachur in the same area.

Another mobile court led by Magistrate Nazmul Ahsan fined Milk Vita Factory at Pallabi Tk 1 lakh for not putting the expiry date on the labels of its products.

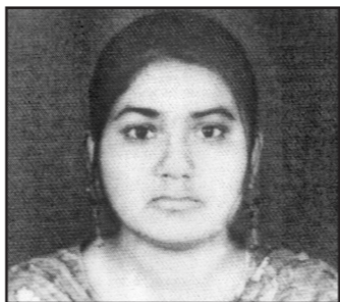
Magistrate Afzalur Rahman of another mobile court fined Tk 5,000 each from the owners of Mukta and Monika Jewelers under Kotwali thana for having no license.

The same court fined six restaurants at Sadarghat Tk 30,000 for selling rotten, stale and adulterated food items.

Another mobile court led by Magistrate AKM Didarul Islam sentenced a bus driver Jamal Uddin to 7-day jail for reckless driving in Mirpur.

Magistrate Sardar Mohammad Keramat Ali of another mobile court also sentenced a driver to 10-day jail for the same offence at Khilgaon.

Another court led by Md Shahjahan recovered rotten meat and curries from the Jiang Chinese Restaurant at Elephant Road and fined Tk 26,400



## Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mukta Akhter, a 16-year-old student, has been suffering from aplastic anaemia, a disorder of bone marrow leading to low count of blood cell, for the last one year, says a press release.

Her father, Mohammad Nurabi, a grocer at Jhigatola in Dhaka, has already spent a lot of money on her treatment but now could not afford to continue such expensive treatment involving about Tk 25,000 a month.

The girl also needs a bone marrow transplant immediately.

Mukta's father and family members have appealed to the generous people to extend a helping hand to save the life of Mukta.

Contributions can be sent to the following account: Nurabi, Savings Account No.-6859, Rupali Bank Ltd., Hazaribagh Branch, Tannery Mor, Jhigatola, Dhaka-1209.

## Obituary

ATM ABDUL MANNAN

Valiant freedom fighter Lt Col ATM Abdul Mannan (Retd) died of kidney transplantation complications at Combined Military Hospital on Saturday at the age of 53, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, a son and daughter and many admirers.

He was buried at Military Graveyard in Banani after a namaz-e-janaza at New DOHS Jame Mosque yesterday.

His qulkhwani will be held at House 419, Road 30, New DOHS, Mohakhali in the city after Zohr prayer tomorrow.

## Khondkar Mansur Qader

Khondkar Mansur Qader, son of Khondkar Hifzul Qader, passed away due to cardiac arrest in Dubai on Wednesday at the age of 52, says a press release.

He left behind his wife and one son.

His qulkhwani will be held at House No 40, Road No 25 in Gulshan-1 in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow.

## James Badal Costa

James Badal Costa, a staff of an advertising agency Triune, died of brain haemorrhage at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning at the age of 35, says a press release.

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

## BOGRA BUS PLUNGE

# 4 more bodies recovered, bus salvaged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Four more bodies were recovered from the Gangeti river in Bogra early yesterday, raising the death toll to 22 in a bus plunge that took place on Saturday afternoon.

Two of the bodies were found trapped inside the bus when it was lifted from the river in the morning. Local people and police feared that more passengers might still be missing.

However, the police put the death toll at 17.

The bus belonging to Sunmoon Travels with about 50 passengers aboard plunged into the river while crossing the Kichak Bhanga Bridge at Kichak in Shibganj upazila at around 2:15pm on Saturday.

In the wake of such a disaster, transport workers have suspended bus services on Bogra-Joypurhat routes fearing attacks on vehicles by agitating people.

All buses were off the roads yesterday, causing suffering to commuters.

Hundreds of people yesterday gathered on both banks of the river and on the bridge in search of their missing relatives.

The bus driver and helper are still missing. But source said the driver had escaped after receiving first aid treatment from the Joypurhat Kalai Upazila Health Complex.

# Media: Whipping boy

FROM PAGE 1

Before we address the substance of their "speak" we want to raise the issue of how and why a meeting of a political party -- which has nothing to do with the government or the state -- should be held on official government premises such as the Prodhmantri Bhaban (Prime Minister's House near the parliament). Can the venerable ministers give any lawful answer? They have broken one of the fundamental tenets of democracy -- that is to keep the party and the government separate. Over the years both BNP and AL have gradually removed all distinctions between where the ruling party ends and the government begins. More and more ruling party functions are seen almost as official events and government facilities are freely used for them. Will somebody tell our BNP leaders how Indira Gandhi's election of 1971 was declared illegal by Allahabad High Court in 1975 because of misuse of official facilities for election purposes.

This blurring of distinction lies at the root of many of the corruption that BNP is plagued with today. As a senior leader and as the party's secretary-general, Saifur Rahman and Mannan Bhuiyan should be aware of it and try to stop it. But instead both these senior leaders are becoming party to it, if not outright encouraging it.

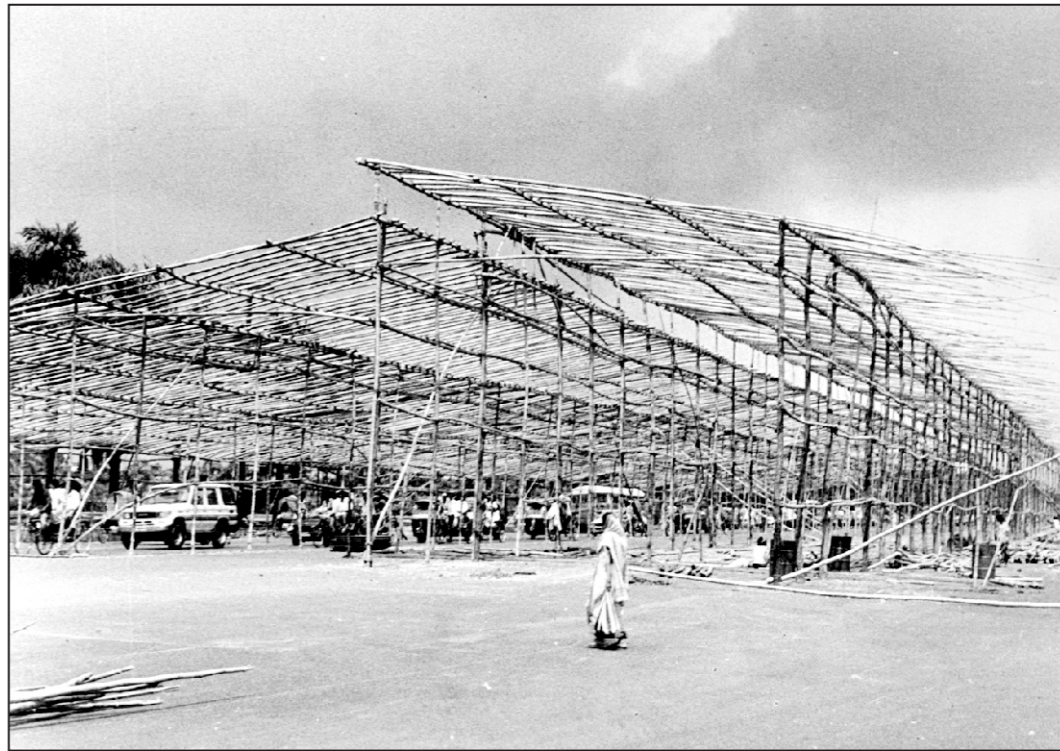
Did it ever occur to our leaders why Clinton, Bush or any US president seeking a second term, do not hold party conventions on the White House lawn? Why Blair had to go to a hotel to address his Labour Party convention?

We can guess what the two BNP leaders may say in reply to this piece -- "This is a minor matter. The Daily Star is saying this only to criticize us. This happens in Bangladesh." You are right. This happens in Bangladesh because both our leading political parties care two hoots for democracy and its norms. But there was a time when this would NOT happen here. We recall the 1973 AL party convention, making Qumruzzaman its president when Bangabandhu relinquished his party presidency and remained only the prime minister, was held on the lawn of its party office. Given the post-independence euphoria and Bangabandhu's personal popularity, the AL convention could have been held in any government building without the slightest of murmur. Yet the party versus government distinction was upheld.

In fact BNP itself gave a shining example of respecting this distinction during its first term. May we remind both the leaders that in 1993 BNP held its 3-day party convention under a tent on the Manik Mia Avenue? Though this newspaper criticised it for blocking a corner of the street yet we praised the BNP for upholding the distinction between the ruling party and the government by not holding its party function on any government premises.

So before pointing finger at the media for spoiling the country's image please look yourselves in the mirror and think how your party has changed. Is it the party that late President Ziaur Rahman founded? Is it the party that Khaleda Zia revived after she took over the leadership? Is it the party that came to power in 1991? Compare them all with the party of today and ask (if you can) how much image spoiling was done how, when and by whom. The answer is in the mirror and not in the media.

Fifteen out of 17 BNP district leaders who were allowed to speak on Saturday complained about price rise. On Sunday 10 out of 16 said the same thing. Yet both Saifur Rahman and Mannan Bhuiyan claimed that it was a media creation. Are the BNP grassroots leaders working for the media? We think the most appropriate comment was from Abul Mansur, organising secretary of Brahmanbaria unit



BNP's council session of 1993 held on Manik Mia Avenue: Example of respect for government-party distinction.

of the BNP, who said: "Some responsible ministers including the commerce minister are saying many good words, but we cannot feed the people with those words." Ashraf Huiq Bulbul, president of Saipur unit of the BNP, said he had come for such a discussion a year ago with a lot of enthusiasm. But today he noticed an all round depression among themselves. "What has happened in a year?" he asked. A very good question that should worry party leaders especially the two ministers. Please listen to your own lower level leaders and refrain from blaming others for your failures. As you can verify from what they are saying, media is only reflecting the reality and not inventing it.

In many ways Saifur Rahman and Mannan Bhuiyan are among the BNP's best faces. Once the finance minister enjoyed tremendous respect as perhaps the only politician who could rise above party politics and call a spade a spade. Today's finance minister is a pale comparison of his former self, to put it extremely kindly. Mannan Bhuiyan, once the most sober voice inside the party, sounds increasingly shrill and myopic. Yet they are among the senior most leaders and both the party and the nation expect a lot from them. When people like them go for a frenzied,

incoherent and unfounded attack on the independent media then we really have to worry about the future of democracy in the country. When the Prime Minister herself in her address to the nation admitted steep rise in prices, these two ministers said that the entire hullabaloo is the creation of the media. How pathetic! Mannan Bhuiyan as a politician of the progressive origin has spent a lifetime with the ordinary people before becoming a minister. How can he be so cut off from the grassroots and not be aware of how dear the daily essentials have become.

There are two dangerous aspects of their media bashing. One, that they are making the media a scapegoat and are not likely to take any steps to control the prices since these are only 'figment' of media's imagination. Secondly, their inability to face reality and the resulting rising possibility of hiding behind media bashing for what is essentially their failure to govern. Both these tendencies are serious shortcomings for democracy and development. One blocks imagination and the other prevents capacity for action. So what is left? Only rhetorics and we know we have an oversupply of it.

## US Coastguard team visits Ctg port

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A four-member team of the USA Coastguard, who are also members of International Port Security, yesterday arrived at Chittagong and inspected the port activities.

The delegation, on a two-day tour in the city, came to Bangladesh on Monday last to inspect the security measures taken at the country's some Key Point Installations (KPIs) including premier seaport Chittagong and Mongla under a project named International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) code, sources said.

The team led by Douglas Egglston yesterday inspected the activities at different port jetties, multi-purpose berth (MPB), silo jetties, handlings of cargoes and the overall security systems of the port.

Other members of the team are: Richard J Kavanaugh, Jessrey R Morgan and Bruce Tweed.

The USA Coastguard team will compare the ISPS code implementation processes of Bangladesh and the USA and see the present state of implementation at Chittagong and Mongla ports.

After inspection, they will submit a report on the security of the country's KPIs, especially the Chittagong Port, to the USA Coastguard head office, sources said.

Port sources expressed confidence that the visit might have no negative impact as the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has already implemented the ISPS Code in the port.

## Death anniversary

Today is the first death anniversary of Prof Sheikh Saleh Ahmed, a former principal of Pirojpur Government Suhrawardi College, says a press release.

On the occasion, a Qurankhatam will be held at his Rampura residence in the morning and a milad mahfil will also be held at Jame Mosque of Block A of Banasree in the city after Asr prayer today.

## Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of eminent artist Shawkatuzzaman, professor of Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University (DU), will be held at Bhaban No 93, Fuller Road, DU residential area after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Students, colleagues, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the qulkhwani.

# Check Monga: CPB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) staged countrywide sit-in demonstrations yesterday with the slogans titled 'Resist monga, reduce price and save life.'

CPB and Bangladesh Khetmojur Samity organised the sit-in demanding permanent steps to resist monga, a famine-like situation, in northern areas.

Addressing a rally organised at Irfani Bazar in Savar on this occasion, CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan said price hike of essentials coupled with flash flood in northern region made the monga situation worse this year.

But the government is unwilling to admit the reality, he added.

Criticising the prime minister's speech 'purchasing power of people has increased,' the CPB chief said without taking any steps to resist monga, the prime minister rather started mockery with the poor people.

He urged all to strengthen the out-government movement to root out the misrule of BNP-Jamaat alliance.

Manjurul warned that the CPB, Khetmojur Samity and other organisations would launch stern programmes across the country if the government does not take any steps to stop monga and let people die from hunger.

The rally was also addressed by Shahidullah Chowdhury, Syed Abu Zafar Ahmed, Shah Alam, Muniruzzaman, Shahadat Hossain,

Ruhin Hossain Prince and Prof Azharul Islam, said a press release.

Speakers at other places made a 15-point demand that included setting up of griel kitchens in monga-affected areas, distribution of Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) cards to real destitute, permanent rationing system in rural areas, and reopening of closed industries.

The sit-in demonstrations faced resistance from police at Panchagarh, Dinajpur, Gazipur and Thakurgaon, the release added.

## Trader killed in road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young trader died yesterday evening in the city when a bus ran him over at Motijheel in the city, prompting the passers-by attack on several buses in the area.

A bus hit Kahu Sheikh, 20, when he was crossing the road in front of Bangladesh Biman office at around 7:00pm, killing him on the spot, a Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) source said.

The passers-by around the accident spot chased the bus but could not catch it. The angry mob then hurled brickbats at a number of buses. Motijheel police station, when contacted, expressed ignorance of the incident.

## WEATHER TODAY

### Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over all the six divisions of the country till 6:00pm today.

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

Highest temperature 35.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Barisal and lowest 23.0 degree Celsius at Hatia.

**The sun sets in the capital at 5:30pm today and rises at 5:57am 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	26.4	75	75
Chittagong	34.5	24.5	75	80
Rajshahi	32.2	25.0	74	--
Khulna	34.0	26.4	--	73
Barisal	35.0	25.4	73	75
Sylhet	33.8	25.0	77	83
Cox's Bazar	33.2	25.0	83	77

### Khondkar Mansur Qader

Khondkar Mansur Qader, son of Khondkar Hifzul Qader, passed away due to cardiac arrest in Dubai on Wednesday at the age of 52, says a press release.

He left behind his wife and one son.

His qulkhwani will be held at House No 40, Road No 25 in Gulshan-1 in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow.

### James Badal Costa

James Badal Costa, a staff of an advertising agency Triune, died of brain haemorrhage at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning at the age of 35, says a press release.

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