

## Biman still scrambles to manage hajj flights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amidst gross mismanagement in hajj flight operations, the national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday chartered one more aircraft and started pursuing the Saudi authorities immediately for a landing permission for the 387-seater Airbus at Jeddah airport.

To carry 40,000 plus pilgrims to Jeddah, Biman requires three chartered aircrafts and it is still one short of the required number while the intending hajis are still passing

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## ASIAN HIGHWAY

# Dhaka's not joining to cost it voting rights

## Escap working group meeting begins tomorrow

RAFIQ HASAN

Bangladesh will lose voting right in the meetings of UN-Escap working group on the Asian Highway unless it signs the agreement or the deadline is extended beyond December 31, keeping the chances of joining the network open, experts said.

A meeting of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission

for Asia and the Pacific (UN-Escap) working group begins tomorrow in Bangkok where an additional foreign secretary will represent the country.

However, there was no sign of efforts as of yet to have the deadline extended at the working group meeting, sources said.

On expiry of the deadline, the signatory countries will acquire the

authority to decide the future course of actions concerning the Asian Highway while Bangladesh will remain only an observer if it does not sign the agreement, the experts said.

They said Dhaka should pursue the extension of the deadline or change in the route, none of which depends any longer on the Escap.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



Blood's wife Margaret

## Nixon admin erred in judging Liberation War Says Blood's son

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family members of Archer K Blood, American consul general to Dhaka during the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

# Right to information way of empowering people

## Roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day conference on right to information started in the city yesterday with a plenary sharing some regional experiences in securing and campaigning for what the United Nations terms a fundamental human right and a touchstone for other rights.

Speakers at the talks asked the government to immediately scrap all restrictive laws like the Official Secrets Act and to enact the draft

Right to Information Act that has been gathering dust with the law ministry since 2002.

Manusher Jonno (MJ), an initiative promoting human rights and good governance in the country, organised the conference titled 'Right to Information: National and Regional Perspective' at the Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (Biam) as a part of its ongoing campaign to institute people's right to know.

The event brought together a number of resource persons from home and abroad, jurists, media leaders and professionals, rights activists, academics, bureaucrats, NGO leaders and other eminent civil society members as well as the partner organisations of the MJ.

"Right to information is the oxygen of democracy," declared Maja Dhun Daruwala, one of the panellists and director of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, India.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia talks to Jatiya Party (Ershad) leaders on the second day of the national dialogue on bomb terrorism at the International Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

## PM'S LETTER

# 14-party meet today to finalise draft reply

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) led 14-party opposition meets today to finalise the draft of a letter to be sent to the prime minister as reply to the PM's invitation for dialogue on militancy.

Two drafts have been written on the prime minister's letter-- one by Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain and another by Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon, opposition sources said, adding that today's meeting will discuss both the drafts.

"We will reply to the prime minister's letter jointly and we will mention why her dialogue will not be meaningful," Rashed Khan Menon told The Daily Star yesterday.

Reiterating the opposition's stance of boycotting the premier's

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## The Daily Star ROUNDTABLE

# Effective advocacy vital to lowering TB prevalence

## The disease kills one every 10 minutes in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Discussants at a roundtable yesterday said due to lack of awareness and social mobilisation, the prevalence of Tuberculosis (TB) in the

country is still on a rise claiming thousands of lives each year.

One person in every two minutes is infected with the bacterial disease and one dies of it in every 10 minutes in Bangladesh, said Dr

Vikarunnessa Begum, programme manager of the National TB Control Programme also the keynote speaker at the discussion in the capital.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## Magistrate court grants bail when appeal pending with higher court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A lower court granted bail to two people accused in a murder case even though a criminal appeal for their bail is pending with a higher court.

As per law no lower court can pass any order if the case is pending with a higher court.

A metropolitan magistrate on

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

# Rich, poor nations at odds over farm trade

AP, Hong Kong

Rich and poor nations were at odds as a World Trade Organisation meeting opened here yesterday, with trade ministers saying a breakthrough is unlikely on the thorny issue of agricultural trade that has held up negotiations for months.

At least 1,000 protesters - mostly South Korean farmers wearing red bandanas - gathered at a downtown

park to chant slogans against the WTO, driven by fears that opening up their agricultural markets would destroy their livelihoods.

Police have blocked off access to roads near the conference site, set up barricades and even glued bricks onto the sidewalks in the hopes of preventing violence that has flared at previous WTO summits.

The six-day meeting was meant

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

