



A three-day honey fair jointly organised by Bangladesh Association for Social Advancement and Bangladesh Mou Chashi Samity began at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

## ADB lauds anti-graft steps

### FROM PAGE 16

According to the outlook, the country will post a 6.5 percent GDP growth in the year 2007 while 7 percent in 2008. Trends in the first half of fiscal 2006-07 point to a turnaround in economic activities.

Analysing the recent developments, Karim said the growth prospect for Bangladesh economy is bright.

He said the current economic progress is the result of growing remittance and 28 percent growth in readymade garment export. He, however, said the recent bird flu outbreak might constitute a major risk.

Macroeconomic stability must be maintained and tax-GDP ratio increased for maintaining the growth rate, he observed.

The ADB outlook reads, "Despite internal and external shocks, steady growth record of Bangladesh economy provides a sound basis for its medium-term prospects."

"Driven by the robust performance in industry and services and a further

increase in workers remittances the gross domestic product (GDP) is forecast to grow steadily," it adds.

According to the current account balance in 2007 is expected to record a surplus of 1 percent of the GDP.

In the report, inflation is projected to decline to 7 percent in 2007 from 7.2 percent in the previous year. It is likely to dip further to 6 percent in 2008.

The ADB pointed out that corruption holds back the country from tapping its potential for higher economic growth and faster poverty reduction.

The caretaker government has taken some extensive anti-graft measures and accordingly, shortcomings of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) too will have to be addressed through giving it greater independence, scope and resources, it added.

Upgrading physical infrastructure, augmenting efficiency in the financial sector, stimulating FDI inflows and strengthening governance are the key development challenges confronting the

country. The multilateral development institution suggested that the Chittagong port should be privatised. It proposes the country increase its power generation capacity to meet the burgeoning energy demand and establish a healthy and efficient financial system.

Power remains the biggest logjam in physical infrastructure. Only one-third of the population has access to electricity, notes the ADB report.

It forecasts a moderate growth of 7.7 percent in 2007 and 8 percent in 2008 for the South Asian economies.

Tight monetary policy in several countries in the region in 2006 is expected to dampen consumption with investment and growth in developed countries easing, the report continues.

The service sector might drive the economic growth in South Asia supported by accelerated growth in manufacturing sector, it says.

## Restore Nat'l Women Dev Policy '97

### Speakers tell Rajshahi seminar

#### RU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday demanded restoration of National Women's Development Policy 1997 to change the fate of women in Bangladesh.

They said the four-party alliance government brought a drastic change in the policy in 2004 by making it simply ineffective for realising the goal of women's development.

The daylong seminar titled 'Necessity of restoring National Women's Development Policy 1997' was organised by rights-based NGO Association for Community Development (ACD) at Rajshahi Parijatan Motel.

Speaking as chief guest, eminent litterateur Prof Hasan Azizul Haque laid emphasis on the empowerment of women.

"Property is accumulated in the

family by exploiting women's talent and strength, but they are deprived of their rights on property," he lamented.

Prof Haque said the women should have equal rights on property.

The keynote paper on 'The revised women's development policy 2004: a reflection of downward theory' was presented by Sadikur Rahman.

The speakers said all political parties should frame a unified development policy on women's development and must not change it for petty party interest.

With ACD Director Salima Sarwar in the chair, the seminar was attended by women's leaders, lawyers, journalists and NGO personalities.

## 20 Ctg RMG workers injured in clash with cops, ansar

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 20 garment workers were injured, three of them bullet-hit, during a clash with police and ansar at Nasirabad industrial area in the port city yesterday.

According to witnesses, the clash erupted when the ansar opened fire on the workers of Sunman Group, who were staging demonstration to realise their demands that include payments of wages as per actual basic, festival bonus and cash instead of breakfast and wage payment on piece rate basis.

However, Deputy Secretary of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) M Moiuddin said the workers' demands include cash payment instead of breakfast and wage payment on piece rate basis.

He claimed that neither salaries nor bonuses were unpaid in three units of Sunman Group owned by Liberal Democratic Party leader Major (retd) MAMannan.

Of the injured, five were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital in a critical condition. They are Rabeya, Imam Hossain, Shohag, Alauddin and Maruf, a tempo helper.

Rabeya, Imam and Maruf were bullet hit in leg, waist and abdomen, hospital sources said.

The BGMEA formed a three-member committee headed by former first vice president MA Salam to probe the matter in three days.

Sources said the workers of Sun Knit, one of the three units, were in a negotiation with the management regarding their demands since last week.

The workers of two other units joined their colleagues in the demonstration launched at around 11.00am and ransacked the factories, damaged vehicles and blockaded the road for two hours.

At first, a team from Bayezid Bostami Police Station rushed to the spot and tried to calm the situation, but failed. Then the ansar opened fire on the agitating workers injuring a few of them.

However, the situation cooled down when a Rapid Action Battalion team reached the place and assured

the workers of taking initiatives to fulfill their demands, sources said.

Major (retd) GM Khan, general manager (administration) of Sunman Group, in a statement said a group of unruly workers of Sunman Sweaters Ltd aided by outsiders ransacked four factories of the group.

"Only casual knitting operators of two sweater factories made several illegitimate demands, which were not in conformity with the practices in the sweater factories," the statement added.