



Artists perform at a cultural function in front of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the city yesterday marking the World Rural Women's Day. Equity and Justice Working Group and World Rural Women's Day Celebration Committee jointly organised the programme.

## 5 houses gutted in Ctg fire

CU CORRESPONDENT

Five houses were gutted in a fire in the port city's Bayezid area in the early hours of yesterday.

Sources said the fire broke out at around 3:00am at a semi-pucca house at East Syed Para and soon engulfed four other adjacent houses.

Two fire-fighting units from Bayezid Fire Station rushed to the spot and doused the fire after a two-hour effort.

The fire originated from an oven while the damages were estimated at about Tk 5 lakh, said the sources.

## President seeks Thai help in agro-based industry

BSS, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday sought technical cooperation from Thailand in the field of agro-based industries.

He also underscored the need for enhancing trade and commerce for the mutual benefit of the two countries and called upon Thai businessmen to invest in Bangladesh.

The president was talking to outgoing Ambassador of Thailand to Bangladesh Suphat Chitrakroh, who made a farewell call on him at Bangabhaban.

Iajuddin stressed the need for educational and tourism exchange programmes for promoting people-to-people contact.

The president appreciated him for his sincere endeavours in

strengthening relations between the two countries during his about three-year tenure in Bangladesh.

Prof Iajuddin apprised the envoy that the upcoming general election would be held in a free, fair and credible manner within the time set by the Election Commission (EC) and invited international observers to observe the election.

He stated that the existing bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Thailand are excellent, which would be further strengthened and deepened in the days to come.

The president apprised the envoy that Bangladesh is committed to promoting and maintaining peace, stability and development in South and South-East Asia through Saarc, BIMSTEC, ASEAN and ACD.

He wished the ambassador and his family good health and happiness, and also successful assignment in Bahrain. He conveyed his sincere wishes and best regards to the King of Thailand and also invited him to visit Bangladesh at his convenience, through the ambassador.

The outgoing ambassador stated that the existing bilateral relations between Thailand and Bangladesh are excellent, which would be further strengthened in coming days.

The envoy also expressed his deep gratitude to the government and the people of Bangladesh for providing support and cooperation in discharging his duties in Bangladesh. He said the people of this country are very friendly, hospitable and courageous.

Military Secretary to the President Major General Mohd Aminul Howlader and concerned officials from both the countries were present.

## Rab nabs 7 'muggers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested seven alleged snatchers from three places in Mohammadpur in the city and recovered a revolver, a bullet and sharp weapons from their possession.

As snatching prevention patrol team of Rab-2 challenged Abu Syed and his accomplices who were moving suspiciously at Dhaka Uddyan at 2:45am, the criminals opened fire, prompting Rab members to retaliate. Bullet-hit Abu Syed was arrested while his accomplices managed to escape, said a Rab press release.

A revolver and a bullet were seized from Syed.

The same team also arrested six alleged muggers from Bijli Moholla and Mohammadpur Embankment area and seized six machetes and three knives.

The arrestees are -- Mohammad Harun, 25, Mehedi Hasan, 16, Mohammad Jasim alias Bhagane Jashim, 15, Rustom Hossain Biplab, 25, Badsha, 17, and Shree Uzzal Kumar, 16.

## Medical admission test today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Medical admission test will be held today.

A total of 24,361 candidates will sit for 2,060 seats this year with 12 students fighting for a place.

Twenty seats have been reserved for indigenous people and 40 for the children of freedom fighters.

This year for the first time law enforcing agencies, including Rapid Action Battalion, National Security Intelligence and DGI have been deployed to ensure holding of a free and fair examination.

The examination will take place at 15 centres across the country. Distinct vigilance team has been formed with 5 members for the three centres in the capital.

The admission test will be held from 10:00 am to 11:00 am.

## Bangladesh-US joint air exercise begins

UNB, Dhaka

A weeklong joint air exercise of Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) and US Marine Force began at the BAF Base at Kurmitola in the city on Wednesday.

The main objective of the 'Exercise Sumo Tiger-2007' is to maintain peace and stability in the world through mutual cooperation, said an ISPR release.

One hundred members of Bangladesh Air Force and US Marine Force are taking part in the exercise along with six F-18, one C-130 and one KC-130 aircraft of USA, and F-7 BG and F-7 MB aircraft of BAF.

Enhancing cooperation between the United States and Bangladesh, exchange of training and skill, improvement of training standard of BAF and presenting the skills of BAF on the world stage are the main purpose of the exercise.

Practice Division, Air Interception, Force Package Mission and Dissimilar Air Combat Training are included in the exercise.

## 'Raise mass awareness to deal with leprosy'

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts yesterday underscored the need of mass awareness about leprosy, a chronic infection disease caused by bacteria, as the disease is still surrounded by social stigma and false fear among the people.

Leprosy is curable with medicine but the healing process remains incomplete until the leprosy-affected people regain the social and economic status that allows a dignified life, they said at a national advocacy seminar.

The Leprosy Mission Bangladesh (TLMB) organised the seminar on 'Leprosy is Curable: Social Discriminations Has no Place' at Mohammadpur YWCA Bhaban in the capital.

Fear of the disease, which often causes rejection and exclusion from one's home and community, can often do more damage than the

disease itself, speakers said at the seminar.

Leprosy-affected people have to face different types of discriminations even after being cured from the disease as most of the people do not have clear knowledge about the disease, Bishwa Sahitya Kendra founder Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed said.

He urged the government, NGOs and human right organisations to take concerted efforts for creating mass awareness about leprosy.

Rev Martin Adhikary, director of Advocacy & Promotion of TLMB, said that there are around 30,000 leprosy patients in the country while poverty and dirty environment are the main causes for the disease.

Bert van der Waal, country director of TLMB, said leprosy is a chronic infectious disease caused by a bacteria Mycobacterium leprae and over 95 per cent people are immune.

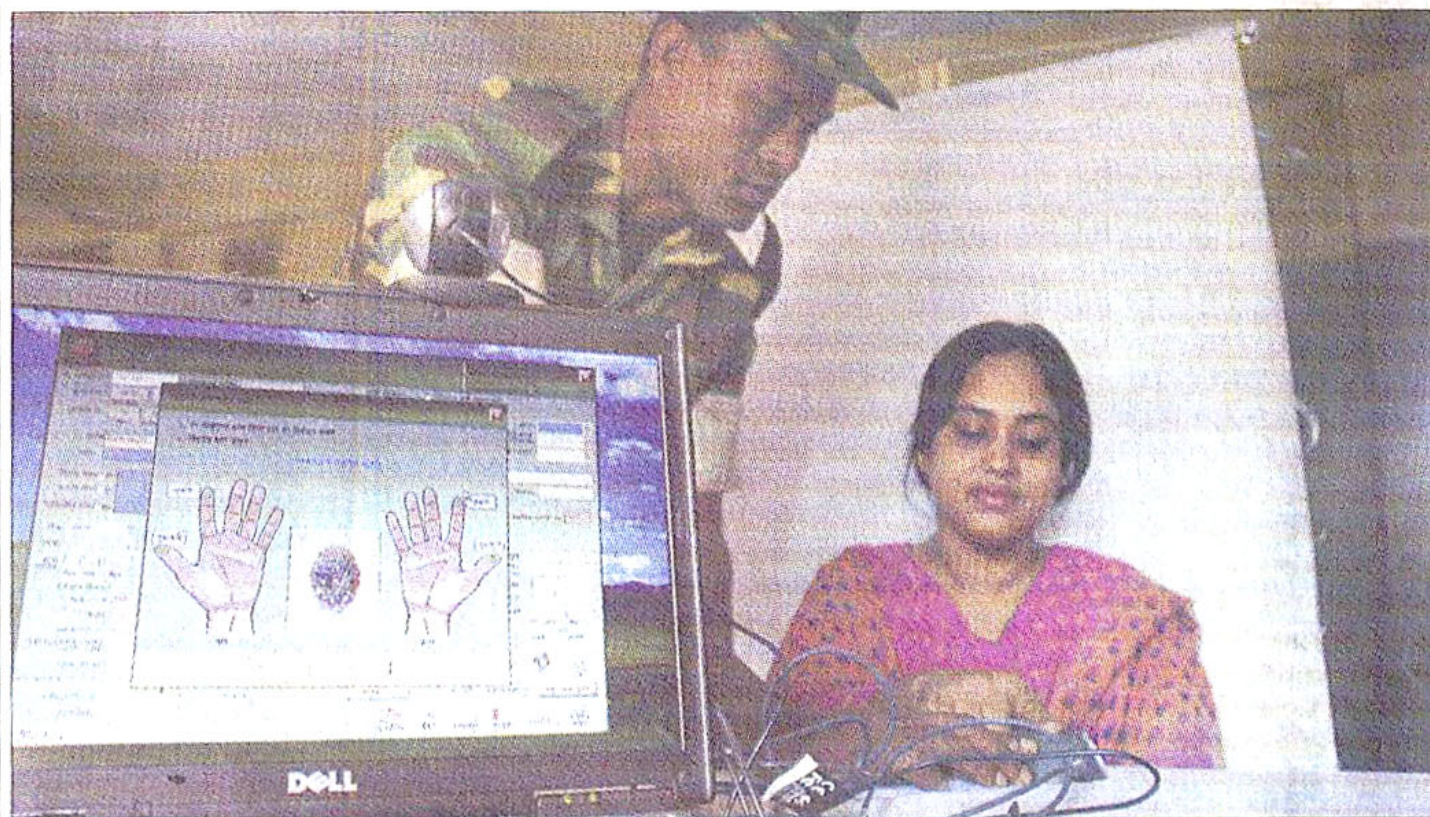
Dr David Khan, director of TLMB, said the first outward sign of leprosy is a patch on the skin, usually associated with the loss of feeling.

'Yes! leprosy is curable with Multidrug Therapy (MDT), a powerful combination of two to three drugs: clofazimine, rifampicin and dapsone. Mild, non-infectious cases of leprosy need treatment with two drugs for six months. More severe infectious cases need all three drugs for up to a 24-month period,' he said while presenting a keynote paper on the causes and consequences of leprosy.

Every year two lakh to four lakh new cases of leprosy are found around the world, 70 per cent of which are in India.

In 2005 the World Health Organisation reported over 296,000 new cases of leprosy.

In Mozambique, Indonesia, DR Congo and Brazil new cases of leprosy continue to increase each year.



An eligible voter gets her fingerprint recorded at a voter registration centre at Dania University College in the city as voter listing with photographs started in the area yesterday.



A five-day border conference between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and India's Border Security Force (BSF) began at BDR headquarters in the city yesterday. BDR Director General Major General Shakil Ahmed and BSF Director General Ashish Kumar Mitra are leading their respective teams.

## CAREER OPPORTUNITY

SQ Quantum Clothing Limited, a Joint Venture company is looking for experienced, young, dynamic and versatile professionals for the following positions.

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Criteria for the position:

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We are open and flexible about compensation packages for the deserving candidates. Interested candidates are requested to apply with complete resume and a recent passport size photograph by November 05, 2007 to the following address.

Senior Manager, HRD

SQ Group

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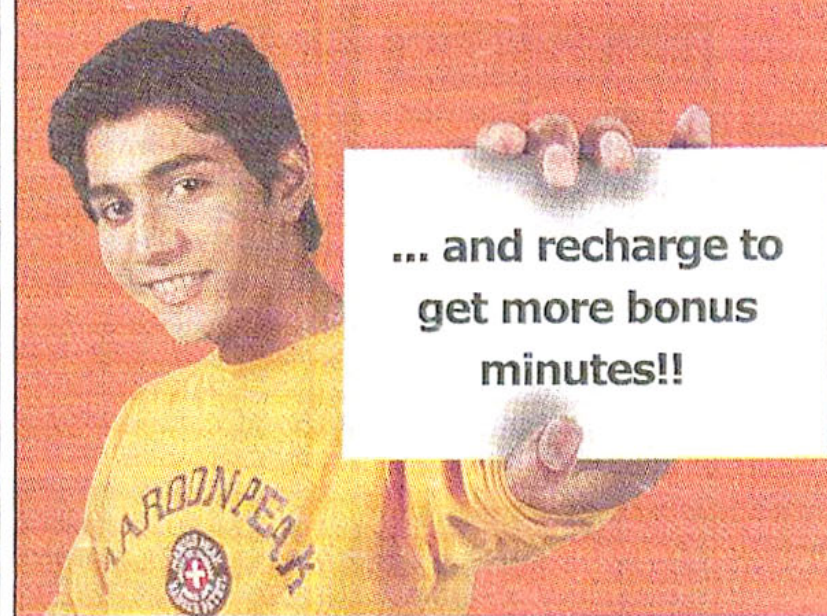
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see inside page for details



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