

## EXERCISE SHANTI DOOT-2

## Boosting efforts to establish global peace

PORIMOL PALMA, back from Rajendrapur Cantonment

The word 'soldiers' creates a picture of fight and casualties in the mind, but the ongoing multinational military exercise at Rajendrapur Cantonment forms a different picture - interaction with general mass and solving their problems through dialogues.

Around 400 soldiers from 11 countries are not only learning the tools to deal with the issues in the conflict-ridden regions of the world but also learning cultures of various regions and ways to make friendship with a view to boosting their efforts to establish global peace and face evil elements disturbing harmonious living.

A number of foreign partici-

pants made this observation to reporters during a visit to the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training (BIPSOT) at Rajendrapur Cantonment yesterday.

The military exercise titled 'Shanti Doot-2', which means peace ambassador, has been organised under the auspices of the US-based Global Peace Operation Initiative (GPOI). It started on April 6 and will end on April 20.

"Our efforts will enhance the availability and capability of these countries to participate in the regional and worldwide UN peace-keeping operations," said Lt Col Edward Tanguy of US Army, commander of the 249th Regional Training Institute in Oregon.

To ensure the exercise matches conditions that participants are likely to encounter during real peacekeeping missions, Bangladesh Armed Forces provided UN-type vehicles for all the scenarios, installed UN checkpoints and hired local people to portray a variety of roles.

"To maintain peace is a great job and we have to learn how to meet the peacekeeping needs of the world," said Lt Col Banita of Nepal. Female soldiers alongside their male colleagues are doing excellent work in the exercise, she said.

Peace has become a vital need in today's world, said Lt Sunil Soni of the Indian Army.

"We the soldiers are trained for fighting, but here it is something different. We are learning how to

deal with people, interact with them and sharing cultures of different countries," said Sergeant Zed Warnock of the US Army.

In the UN missions, peacekeepers have some common tasks. Therefore, they need better understanding and mutual trust among themselves for better results, said Brig Gen Saiful Ali, commandant of BIPSOT.

There are around 8000 Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the UN missions across the world and they are working with reputation, he added.

The countries participating in the 'Shanti Doot-2' include Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Tonga and United States.

## Tk 20 lakh looted from city house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers looted Tk 20 lakh and 10 tolas of gold ornaments from a house at South Dania under Shyampur Police Station in the city yesterday.

Police said a gang of four to five robbers entered the residence of schoolteacher Monzurul Islam Bakul on fourth floor at around 5:00pm. They pressed the doorknob and entered the flat identifying themselves as Bakul's relatives.

Shyampur police said one of the robbers pointed a pistol at Bakul's wife and demanded Tk 20 lakh that Bakul drew from a bank for buying a piece of land. They made off with the money and the gold ornaments.

Bakul was not at the house during the robbery.

## JCI World chief calls on CA

UNB, Dhaka

Visiting Junior Chamber International (JCI) World President Graham Hanlon made a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office yesterday, when he offered his organisation's cooperation with Bangladesh in any need.

JCI, an NGO that has got its activities spread in about 150 countries, focuses on youth empowerment.

During the meeting, the JCI world president apprised the chief adviser of the activities of the organisation and said the government could "feel free to call the JCI in any need for the help of Bangladesh".

Hanlon said positive news of government could also be projected through JCI.

The chief adviser said Bangladesh is well known for women empowerment.

He said the proportion of younger population in Bangladesh is bigger compared to other countries and empowerment of the youth is important for facing the future challenges of the country.

CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munain was also present during the meeting.

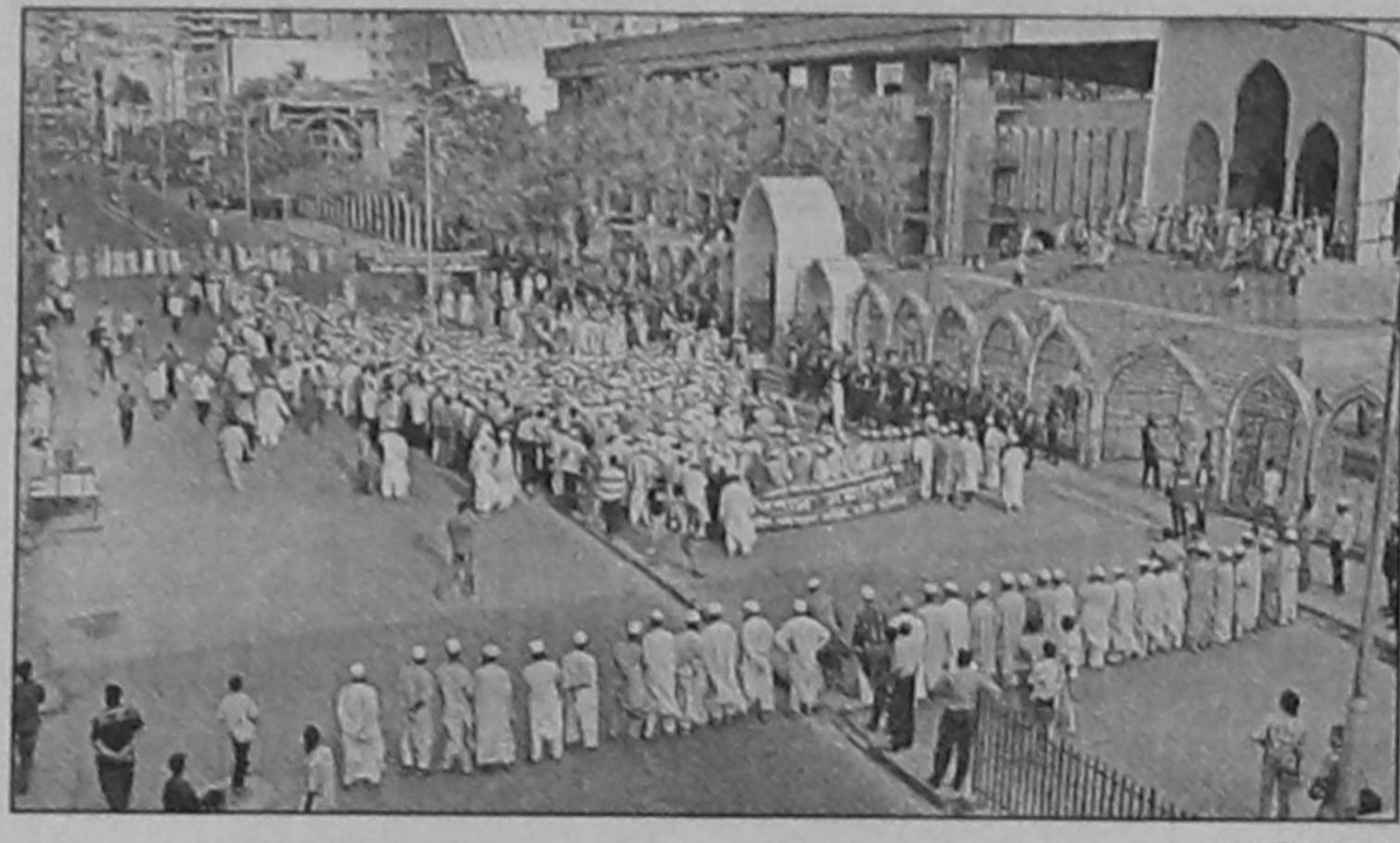
## 20 govt officials get Japanese scholarship

Twenty young government officials have been nominated finalists for this year's Japan Development Scholarship (JDS), says a press release.

It was announced at a ceremony at the NEC Building in the city.

Aminul Islam Bhuiyan, secretary of ERD, Ministry of Finance, and Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Masayuki Inoue were present on the occasion.

The finalists, who have been selected from 302 candidates, will soon leave for Japan for two years to obtain a master degree after finishing a two-month Japanese language training programme that began yesterday.



Islamia Ain Bastabayan Committee holds a rally occupying a road in front of Baitul Mukarram Mosque in the city yesterday, demanding cancellation of the National Women Development Policy 2008.

## Bus routes will be reduced to 40 to end city traffic jam

BSS, Dhaka

The government yesterday decided to reduce the bus routes to 40 from the existing 129 to avert traffic jam in the city.

The decision came from an inter-ministerial meeting held yesterday to implement the recommendations of a committee constituted to develop traffic management for reducing traffic congestion in the metropolis.

LGDRD and Cooperatives Adviser M Anwarul Iqbal presided over the meeting in the conference room of the Local Government Division, said an official handout.

The meeting reviewed the progress of implementation of the

short, medium and long-term recommendations.

It directed the owners of the CNG stations to install several supply lines for increasing supply capacity and also to install own generators.

The Dhaka City Corporation was directed to prevent the inter-district buses from entering the city to carry passengers. The meeting also decided that the inter-district buses should procure fuel from the bus terminals.

Local government division Secretary Sheikh Khurshid Alam, committee convener and director general of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics AYM Ekramul Haque and high officials of various ministries and divisions attended the meeting.

## South Korea doubles workers' quota

Says adviser

UNB, Dhaka

The recruitment quota for Bangladeshi workers in South Korea has been doubled this year.

"The quota for Bangladeshi recruits for jobs in Korea during March 2008 to February 2009 has been raised to 8000, which will be a cent percent increase over the previous year," Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, also in-charge of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry, said yesterday.

The foreign adviser expressed 'satisfaction' over the increase and also directed the relevant authorities in Bangladesh for 'speedy and transparent selection process under this Employment Permit System Scheme'.

Stressing the need for 'upgrading skills', the adviser said, 'If we

can adequately meet this demand to the satisfaction of the employers in the Republic of Korea, next year our quota can be raised. We must bear in mind that these jobs call for some specific skills.'

"This progress is in line with our new seven-point policy for expatriate workers," Iftekhar observed.

"Also this is a reflection of our excellent relations with the Republic of Korea," said the adviser, who had visited Seoul last year and had meetings with the Korean leaders.

The adviser hoped that this relationship would expand to include much larger economic cooperation. "The Republic of Korea is becoming a key partner, a development that will bring great benefits to both countries," Iftekhar further stated.

## Vehicle owners, drivers defy new traffic system in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The owners and drivers of city service buses were asked to drop or pick passengers from specific bus stops. Commuters were also asked to buy tickets in advance from their specific counters prior to making their journey.

But the owners, drivers and staffs of the 840 city buses, 13,000 CNG-run auto-rickshaws and 2,000 tempos flouted the new rule in an organised way much to the frustration of the passengers.

Sources said the bus owners, in a bid to thwart traffic department's new initiative, suddenly started withdrawing their vehicles from the city roads after 10:00pm causing immense sufferings to the commuters.

Under the new rule introduced on the first day of Bangla New Year, no passengers were said to be allowed to sit beside drivers of CNG-run auto-rickshaws or tempos in the CNG areas. Besides, commuters were prohibited to travel standing on the back of a tempo.

The drivers of city service buses were asked to drop or pick passengers from specific bus stops. Commuters were also asked to buy tickets in advance from their specific counters prior to making their journey.

The DC said, "It was an uncalled-for act of the owners against the public interest which is tantamount to violation of law. They were given route permits to run their buses on the city roads. Those who would deviate from the traffic rule or try to take undue advantage would be sued and, if necessary, their route permits would also be scrapped."

Agitated passengers vandalised

bus counters and clashed with the bus staffs in Fakirhat, Anderkilla and New Market areas. They also pelted brickbats on some speeding buses.

CMP Deputy Commissioner (traffic) Mohammad Ali Mia said tougher legal actions will be taken against those who violated the new rule.

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Presenting field-level studies, Sirajul Karim said the schools should be provided with necessary infrastructure like toilet, facilities

of safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation.

Besides, raising awareness about primary healthcare among the students is also needed so that they can remain unaffected from diseases, he added.

Medical Adviser to the 9th Infantry Division GOC Col M Sirajul Karim said this yesterday at the inauguration of an advocacy programme on school health for the area which is under the jurisdiction of the 9th Division.

"The government is strengthening the existing school health programmes giving it much priority and extending its area from 23 districts to all over the country at the primary school level," he said.

The 9th Infantry Division, Local Health Department, Dhaka district administration and other government organisations jointly organised the programme at the Mahanagar Natty Mancha in the city.

A memorial meeting will be held to mark the 25th death anniversary of Justice Sayed Mahbub Murshed.

Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

Tex Bangla

The inaugural ceremony of the TEXBANGLA-2008 will be held at the Tex-Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 10:00am.



British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury and Asian Development Bank Country Director Hua Du share a happy moment with a cultural team during the inaugural ceremony of the Dhaka-Kolkata train service at Dhaka Cantonment Railway Station on Monday.

SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN  
City AL demands unconditional release of Hasina  
DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka city Awami League yesterday demanded unconditional release of detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina before ending of their on-going mass signature campaign, says a press release.

The AL leaders made the demand at a workers' meeting at Lalbagh to make a success of their on-going signature campaign.

City AL Acting President MA Aziz said the demand for the release of Hasina has become a demand of heart of the people.

The popularity of Hasina has reached at top. People would not wait anymore. The voice of people could not be gagged for long, he added.

He also said price spiral of essentials going beyond people's ability. If such situation continues a mass explosion might be occurred.

He said millions of people have participated in the mass signature campaign demanding release of Hasina. He urged government to understand the expectation of people's mind and demanded release of Hasina for the development work of the country.

Acting General Secretary of City AL Advocate Kamru Islam also demanded release of Hasina before ending of the signature campaign. He said there are no alternatives of Hasina's release for the sake of democracy and development of the country.

Meanwhile, Bangabandhu Sainik League (BSL) yesterday staged a token hunger strike demanding release of Hasina and proper treatment of her illness.

Senior AL leaders expressed their solidarity to the programme held at central office of BSL.

Expressing solidarity to the programme AL Presidium Member Abdur Razzak demanded unconditional release of Hasina and said people of the country are not thinking anything but Hasina's release.

Prakashtalee Parishad Meantime, Bangabandhu Prakashtalee Parishad (BPP) on Monday launched a mass signature campaign at the Sudha Sadan in the city demanding release of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina.

Dr Wazed Miah, husband of the detained AL chief, inaugurated the mass signature campaign.

Meanwhile, Awami League has launched another mass signature campaign demanding release of the former premier on April 5.

## BSF returns 3 Bangladeshis

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Border Security Forces (BSF) of India yesterday handed over to Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) three Bangladeshis who spent 13 months in a Kolkata jail after they had been trafficked to India in February last year.

Sources in BDR and police said human traffickers trafficked Noor Islam Mollah, his wife Taslima Begum and his brother Yasin Mollah through Sadiqpur border of Benapole, promising them of good jobs in India.

BSF arrested them at Haridas border of India on February 28 last year and put them in Kolkata Presidency Jail.

The victims, who hail from Barakpur village at Zibarapur Police Station in Khulna, are now under custody of Benapole port police.

## Obituary



says a press release.

Mahbub, eldest son of late Qazi Matabuddin Ahmed of Cheora Kazi Bar of Comilla, left behind his mother, wife, one son and two daughters to mourn his death.

He was buried at Banani Graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at Bakshi Bazar Ground after Asr prayers.

His qulhwani will be held at his Bakshi Bazar residence after Asr prayers on Friday.

## Death anniversary



Today is the second death anniversary of MA Bashir Joarder, former joint secretary to the government and freedom fighter.

On the occasion, Qurankhwan and mild mahfil will be held at his residence.

## Chehulum

Chehulum of L M Mahmud, a former police official, will be held on Friday, says a press release.

Mahmud passed away due to old age complications on March 10 at a city hospital at the age of 80.

On the occasion, a mild mahfil will be held at Banamalipur Madrasa premises under Boalmari upazila in Faridpur.

## 5.28 lakh children suffer from night blindness'

BSS, Dhaka

A total of 5.28 lakh children have been suffering from night blindness in the country mainly due to ignorance in taking vitamin-A enriched food including fruits and vegetables.

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