

# National unity, political will needed to save rivers

## Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said national unity as well as political will is needed to save the country's rivers from drying.

Environment is getting endangered, as the rivers are becoming extinct due to frequent withdrawal of water from the rivers and decrease of navigability, they added.

Styled 'Save Rivers, Save Country,' the discussion was organised by Nodi Shashon Panj Sangkar O Babohar Sangram Parishad, a platform struggling to save rivers, at the Institute of Diploma Engineers Bangladesh (IDEB) to mark its 15th anniversary.

sary.

The speakers recommended developing proper diplomatic strategies to get the proper portion of water needed for the country from the rivers crossing Indian, Chinese and Nepalese borders.

Speaking as the chief guest, Awami League president member Amir Hossain Amu said Bangladesh government could get 40,000 cusec of water from Padma by signing accord with the then Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, but no successive government after that could do that until Sheikh Hasina signed another deal with India realising 30,000 cusec water.

It is high time to save our rivers,

he said, adding initiatives should be taken immediately in this regard and political parties should also address the problem with high priority.

Presenting a keynote paper at the discussion, Member Secretary of the platform Mohammad Tarikuzzaman Reza said river problem is one of the main national problems and it should be resolved with proper political decision and a national unity is needed in this regard.

"The projects to save the rivers undertaken by any government should not be changed by any other governments and that should be ensured in the country," he added.

Reza also suggested that navigability of the rivers should be brought back by carrying out proper dredging in the rivers and grabbers should be evicted from the rivers.

Former secretary Syed Marhub Morshed said Dhaka city can be made a more livable and environment-friendly if the waterways around the city would have more navigability and threats of floods would be less in the city.

Chairman of Civil Engineering Department at Stamford University Prof Zahurul Islam, Prof Asaduzzaman Khan, Awami League leader Faiz Uddin Mia and engineers Dewan Solaiman Ahmed and Sadar Uddin also spoke.



Abu Naser Khan speaks at a seminar at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Sirajul Islam, Prof Jasim Uddin and Syeda Rezwana Hasan.

# 2,000 industrial units release toxic wastes in city

UNB, Dhaka

At least 2,000 industrial units operating in the city are constantly releasing toxic wastes polluting the environment at an alarming rate that result in spreading of diseases, including cancer.

Director of Environment Mohammad Shahjahan said this at a seminar on 'Threats on environment and public life from industrial waste' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela) and Paribesh Bachao Andolan (Paba) jointly organised the seminar with former vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Jasim Uddin in the chair.

Environmentalists called on the government to ask every industrial unit to set up effluent treatment plant (ETP).

Shahjahan said more than 2,000 industrial units within the city release toxic wastes that are polluting the environment at an alarming rate. They have visited 694 units of which 471 are extremely required ETP.

Abdul Gani, a teacher of Buet, said, "I have tested in the laboratory leaves and edible foods and vegetable plants in industrial area of Savar. Toxic elements like lead, copper, zinc, chromium, cadmium, arsenic, nickel and iron originated from industrial wastes were found in all those tested."

The toxic elements in leaves, vegetables and food items are causing cancer, respiratory problem, kidney infection and such other diseases, he added.

Leaders of both the organisations said few industrial units have

ETPs, but those are kept out of function.

Speakers noted with concern that the government had directed the owners of such industries to submit schedule of setting up ETP by June 30 last. FBCCI had also assured of obeying the government order but failed.

They underlined the importance of making the people conscious of the gravity of health hazards caused by toxic industrial wastes, adding that the govern-

ment should be very strict in abiding by the rule of setting up ETP by industrial units to save the environment from pollution.

They said toxic elements of industrial wastes get mixed with vegetables and foods, causing a number of serious diseases in human body.

Syeda Rezwana Hasan, Abdul Gani and Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah also spoke at the programme.

# Tk 1,200cr project for export infrastructure dev

BSS, Dhaka

An export infrastructure development project worth Tk 1200 crore has been approved to reduce growing pressure of export and import in the Chittagong port.

The project, which includes an inland container depot (ICD) at Dharrashor near Tongi, construction of double railway lines from Chittagong Port to Faujdardhat, and procurement of 10 railway engines and 120 flat wagons, has received the approval of the project committee of the Planning Commission.

The process for approval of the export infrastructure development project began in 2003. But the process was delayed and the construction work could not begin by June 2008. Now, the construction work under the project will begin in

November 2009 and will be completed in 2014, Bangladesh Railway sources said.

After completion of the project, there will be a scope for handling 15 percent of the containers in Chittagong through the ICD by 2016 and 30 percent by 2026.

The Shridham ICD under the project will be the country's second ICD with a capacity of 3.54 TEUs (twenty equivalent units). The ICD will be constructed on 137 acres of land at a cost of Tk 500 crore.

The country's first ICD was constructed at Kamalapur in 1987. Its capacity is 90,000 TEUs. Pressure is increasing on the ICD every year since its inception.

In fiscal 2007-08, a total of 82,000 containers were handled in the ICD. But this number is only 10 percent of the containers handled in the Chittagong Port.

# One killed, 26 injured in road accidents

METRO DESK

Aman was killed and 26 others injured in separate road accidents in Gaibandha and Patuakhali yesterday.

Our correspondent in Gaibandha reports: A man was killed and another injured in a road accident on Gaibandha-Sundarganj highway at Paikpara yesterday.

The victim was identified as Afsar Ali, 45, sub-assistant agriculture officer of Sundarganj Upazila, while the injured was identified as Raju Mia. The accident occurred when a speeding bus hit the motorcycle they were riding on.

Raju was rushed to Rangpur Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Our correspondent in Patuakhali adds: At least 25 people were injured in a road accident on Kuakata-Dhaka highway at Bandra under Kalapara upazila yesterday.

The accident occurred when a Kuakata-bound passenger bus from Dhaka lost control and fell into a roadside ditch at about 7:00am.

Ten of the injured were rushed to Kalapara Upazila Health Complex in a critical condition.



# Ruet new VC takes charge

DU CORRESPONDENT

Prof Dr Mohammad Fazlul Bari, the newly appointed vice-chancellor of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet), formally took charge of the office yesterday.

Prof AFM Anwarul Haq, former Ruet vice-chancellor, handed over the charge to Prof Bari at a ceremony at the vice-chancellor's conference room.

President and also chancellor of the university Iajuddin Ahmed appointed Prof Bari, a teacher of Water Resource Engineering department of Buet, as vice-chancellor on August 26 for four years.

# DHAKA TODAY

## Int'l literacy day

The launching ceremony of the International Literacy Day programmes will be held. Venue: Osmani Memorial Auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

## Discussion

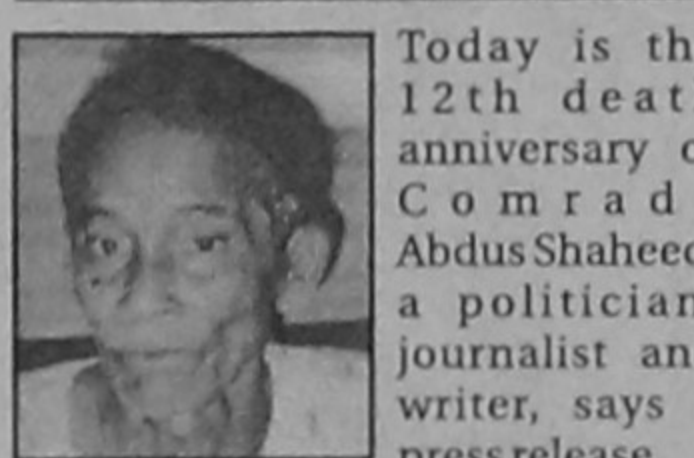
A discussion will be held marking the 12th death anniversary of Comrade Abdus Shaheed. Venue: Taxes Bar Association auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

## Condolence meeting

A condolence meeting will be held to pay respect to lyricist Prof Moniruzzaman. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar premises. Time: 3:00pm.

## Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 12th death anniversary of Comrade Abdus Shaheed, a politician, journalist and writer, says a press release.

On the occasion, a discussion will be held at 4:00pm at Taxes Bar Association auditorium in the city.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed distributes relief among the flood-affected people at Chandanbaisha union under Sariakandi upazila in Bogra and Khokshabari union under Sadar upazila in Sirajganj yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

# Social movement a must to eradicate illiteracy

## Speakers say at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday underscored the need for raising a social movement to eradicate illiteracy from the country.

They strongly criticised the lackadaisical role of the government in the sector since the independence of the country.

The speakers blamed illiteracy for backwardness in the rural areas, saying that poverty and illiteracy go hand in hand.

Styled 'Contributions of non-governmental sectors to illiteracy eradication movement,' the seminar was organised by Shakkhar, Education and Research Foundation (SERF) at National Press Club in the city with its President KM Mueenuddin Chisty in the chair.

Speakers said though education sector receives the highest allocation in the national budget, a great portion of the amount is being misappropriated in the name of different projects undertaken by education ministry.

If the allocation is properly spent, salary structures of teachers, including community primary teachers and teachers of non-

government schools, colleges and madrasas, could be changed wooing highly educated meritorious students to come in this sector as teachers to generate meritorious students for the future of the nation.

Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Annisul Huq and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) President Md Fazul Huq were present on the occasion as the chief guest and as the special guest respectively.

Speakers further said continuous efforts involving educated citizens is a must to make a huge number of illiterate people literate in the country.

They also underlined the importance of setting up literacy camps in each union across the country.

Non-government organisations, including FBCCI, press clubs and cultural organisations, should come forward with initiatives at district and upazila levels to remove illiteracy, they added.

They also stressed on spontaneous voluntary service with involve-

ment of teachers of non-government schools, colleges, madrasas and jobless educated youths to reach the goal.

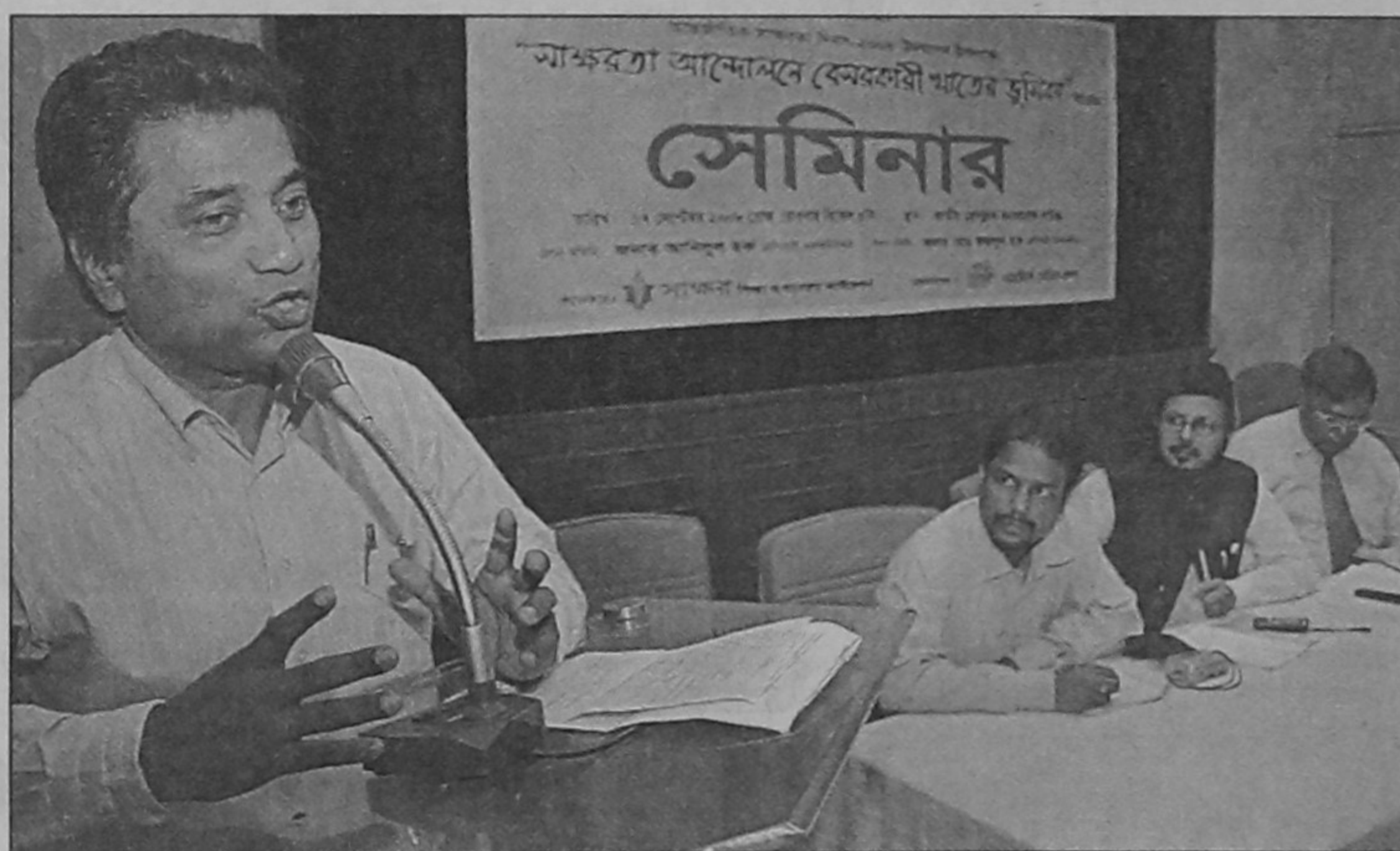
Speakers said the nation cannot be self-reliant leaving a huge number of people illiterate.

Most of the farmers of the country cannot read out the labels on seeds, insecticides, fertiliser and packs of agro-products, causing improper application of these which very often result in production fall in agriculture, they added.

Criticising the government's insincerity, they further said most times government officials before attending any international programmes show high literacy rate in the strategy paper to ensure foreign aid.

The speakers said as per the government statistics, present literacy rate is 66 percent in the country while non-government organisations (NGOs) projected 44 percent.

The right of education is no longer a privilege for the chosen few. United Nation (UN) has declared education as fundamental right for all, they added.



Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Annisul Huq speaks at a seminar on the role of private sectors in literacy movement at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

# Students, bus staffs clash in city: 10 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people were injured in a clash between the students of Shyamoli Ideal Technical Institute and bus employees at Mohammadpur in the city yesterday.

The angry students ransacked at least 12 vehicles. Police detained three of the students.

Sources said the clash ensued at around 11:30am following a quarrel over the bus fare.

Boarding a Jatrabari-bound bus on route -12, the students offered half the fares, which the bus employees refused and forced them to get down the bus at Mohammadpur Town Hall. It angered the students and started ransacking the buses.

The bus employees and the students clashed each other, leaving at least 10 people injured.

Later, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. They also arrested three students.

Mohammad Hafizul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Mohammadpur police, told The Daily Star that they are trying to

solve the problem.

He said Institute Principal Abdus Sattar and the leaders of bus owners are discussing the matter to reach a solution until 11:30pm police station.

# Indian cloths worth Tk 3cr seized

UNB, Jessore

Task Force yesterday seized cloths worth Tk 3 crore smuggled from India from a godown at Sangkarpur in the town.

A team of BDR and Customs officials headed by magistrate Titon Khisha seized the Indian cloths from the godown of Ruhul Amin Traders.

Godown owner Ruhul Amin said he purchased the cloths in auction from the Khulna Customs and showed the purchase documents.

But Mjor Akram of BDR said Ruhul Amin was involved in selling cloths and goods smuggled from India by showing auction purchase documents.

# BUS ROBBERY BID Bandit killed in police firing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kustia

A robber was killed in police firing in an attempt to dacoity in a passenger night coach at Komtopur under sadar upazila in Chuadanga early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Miru dakat of Bhandardah village under sadar upazila in the district.

According to police, a group of armed bandits stopped an Alamdanga-bound passenger night coach on the Chuadanga-Alamdanga highway by putting up barricade with logs at about 3.30 am.

The gang tried to board the bus pointing guns at the driver.

A three-member police team on duty on the bus opened fire at the robbers killing Miru 37, one of the bandits, on the spot while his accomplices managed to flee the scene.

Police sources said, in a recent move, police have been on guard on passenger night coaches of long routes.

# Release Khaleda, withdraw cases against Tarique

US BNP demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US chapter of BNP and its front organisations demanded immediate release of party chairperson Khaleda Zia and withdrawal of all cases against Tarique Rahman, reports US-based news agency News World.

In a statement they also said they would stage demonstration in front of the White House if Khaleda is not released immediately.

The former premier was detained irrationally during the month of Ramadan, the statement added.

They also protested the 'assault' to some BNP leaders on the day of Tarique's release and urged the BNP leaders and activists to remain united.

# Project to improve quality of university edn

METRO DESK

The government and the World Bank have recently appraised the proposed Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project which is expected to improve the quality of teaching and research environment in universities, strengthen the institutional capacity and effectiveness of the higher education sector and raise connectivity of the universities both among themselves and with the academic communities abroad, says a press release.

The proposed project would provide support mainly in three areas. First, the project would support initiatives by universities and their departments aimed at improving quality and relevance of teaching and research and quality of learning facilities.

This support would be provided through an Academic Innovation Fund, a flexible instrument awarding additional resources, on a competitive basis, to departments and universities submitting the best proposals to improve programmes and university-wide facilities. Participation in this competition will be totally voluntary.

Safeguards will be built to ensure a level playing field for different categories of universities. Both public and private universities would have access to the Fund, provided well-defined eligibility criteria are met.

Besides, departments, participating on a voluntary basis, will also have the opportunity and support to assess their own strengths and weaknesses and act accordingly to improve quality of provision of education.

Secondly, the project would help build capacity both at UGC and in universities enabling them to fulfil their respective missions.

Activities in this area would include building strategic planning capacity at UGC, developing a strong sectoral monitoring, evaluation and planning system, including a Higher Education Management Information System both at UGC and at universities, developing a digital library to create access to global electronic publications for universities, providing training facilities to universities so that they can access Innovation Fund and make use of it effectively, if granted.

Thirdly, the government and the World Bank have also agreed, after extensive consultation with the universities, on the establishment of a Bangladesh Research and Education Network (BdREN).

Under this component of the project, a high performance Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) network will provide high speed connectivity among higher education and research institutions in both the public and private sector to enable academicians, scientists, researchers and students engaged in higher education and research to communicate with their peers.

BdREN will also be connected with other regional and transcontinental RENs and thus link faculty and students of Bangladesh to the global academic community and learning resources. It is expected to facilitate international collaborative research and catalyze innovation in the country.

# Cardiac patients receive free consultations at Birdem

BSS, Dhaka

Around 100 cardiac patients received free consultations at 'Free Heart Camp' at Birdem Hospital in the city on Saturday.

Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital and Research Institute of Bangladesh Institute of Research and Rehabilitation in Diabetic Endocrine and Metabolic Disorder (Birdem) organised the medical camp for heart patients.

Apart from the consultations, special discounts were offered for some tests and open-heart surgery.

Chief Executive Officer of Birdem Prof M Maksudul Haque, senior consultants, nurses and technicians took part in the camp.

# Obituary

DU CORRESPONDENT

Kazi Shamsul Alam, father of Kazi Hasan Bin Shams, superintending engineer of Chittagong Development Authority, passed away at a hospital in New York, USA on Saturday at the age of 72, according to the American News Agency (ANA).

He left behind his wife, three sons and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

He will be buried today after reaching his body for USA.

## Hazrat Ali Debol

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Hazrat Ali Debol, a cultural figure in Tangail, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Tangail General Hospital on Saturday at the age of 46.

He left behind his two wives, three sons and one daughter to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard.

Activists of different cultural organisations in Tangail expressed deep shock at his death.



# Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy rainfalls are also likely at places during the period, Met Office.

Highest temperature 35.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 23.0 degrees Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:10pm today and rises at 5:42am 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	33.3	26.6	72	63
Chittagong	32.0	25.5	69	86
Rajshahi	33.4	25.2	82	81
Khulna	34.2	26.4	81	77
Barisal	33.4	26.1	78	80
Sylhet	34.5	24.5	73	61
Cox's Bazar	32.6	25.5	63	83