

## NEWS IN *brief*

### DU signs MoU with Assam varsity

UNB, Dhaka

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Dhaka University and the Assam University, Silchar, India was signed with the objective of establishing and promoting academic exchange and research programmes between the two institutions. Dhaka University Treasurer Prof Dr Mijanur Rahman and Director of National and International Academic Collaboration (NIAC) of Assam University Prof M Dutta Choudhury signed the MoU at the VC's office on behalf of their respective universities. VC Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique and Assam University Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Tapodhir Bhattacharjee also signed the MoU as witnesses. Under the MoU, both the institutions will promote the exchange of students, teachers, researchers, officials and other resources between the two universities. Two universities will take up joint participation in research studies to the particular region in the areas of mutual interest and conduct seminars, workshops and conferences jointly in either of the campuses. Review of the MoU shall be conducted every five years, subject to mutual convenience, said a DU release.

### Chowdhury Alam's wife sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent Hasina Chowdhury, wife of missing Dhaka City Corporation ward councilor Chowdhury Alam, to jail in an extortion case. Hasina was earlier sentenced to ten years rigorous imprisonment in absentia in the case. Judge Hasina Rowson Jahan of the Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after Hasina Chowdhury surrendered to the court and sought bail in the case. On September 12, 2007, the same court sentenced Chowdhury Alam and his wife Hasina to 10 years imprisonment in a case filed for extortion with Paltan Police Station. ASM Alauddin, managing director of The Western Engineering Limited, filed the case against them on April 4 of 2007 for extorting Tk 50 lakh. The investigation officer of the case pressed charges against the two on April 30 the same year.

### Two Indian ships arrive in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Two ships of Indian Coast Guard arrived in Chittagong port yesterday on a five-day goodwill visit to Bangladesh. Twenty-five officials and 155 crewmen were aboard the two ships named Vajra and Raziya Sultana, said a press release of Bangladesh Coast Guard. The Indian Coast Guard personnel will pay courtesy call on high-ranking civil and military officials of Chittagong during their visit. They will also participate in different activities of Bangladesh Coast Guard and conduct a joint sea exercise with the ships.



#### Meeting

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry will hold a consultation meeting; Venue: DCC Auditorium; Time: 12:30pm.

#### Discussion

Ekushe Chetona Parishad will hold a discussion; Venue: Liberation War Museum; Time: 5:30pm.

#### Launching

Karmojibi Nari will organise a book launching; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 3:30pm.

#### Seminar

Dhaka School of Economics will hold a seminar; Venue: PKSF auditorium; Time: 10:00am.

#### Seminar

Palli Karma-Shahayak Foundation will organise a seminar; Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre; Time: 3:00pm.

#### Reception

Jatiya Press Club will hold a reception; Venue: the club premises; Time: 4:30pm.

#### Human chain

Bangladesh Khetmojur Samity will organise a human chain; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: 4:30pm.

#### Convocation

State University of Bangladesh will hold convocation; Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre; Time: 10:30am.

#### Seminar

Centre for Media and Communication



Non-government Primary Teachers' Association stages a sit-in at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding nationalisation of their jobs.

PHOTO: STAR

### UP ELECTIONS Observers asked to apply within May 19

UNB, Dhaka

The Election Commission (EC) has asked the interested election monitoring organisations both from home and abroad to submit their applications within May 19 to observe the upcoming Union Parishad (UP) polls. The UP elections will be held from May 31 to July 5 in 3813 union councils under 414 upazilas in 57 districts across the country, according to second phase election schedule declared by the commission. The local and foreign election monitoring agencies which are registered with the EC will be able to observe the upcoming polls, said a press release yesterday.

"In this context, interested election observing agencies from home and abroad have been requested to apply to the secretary of the Election Commission within May 19," the release said, adding that they would have to mention number of the total observers in the group.

### Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 24th death anniversary of Moham and Nurul Huq, noted economist and social worker, says a press release. On the occasion, milad mahfil will be held and foods will be distributed among the destitute. Nurul Huq and Feroza Huq Trust Scholarship will also be given marking the day. Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to pray for salvation of his departed soul.

## Establishment ministry may be renamed today

### Govt set to redefine its role and vision too

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The government is set to change the name of the establishment ministry and redefine its role and vision as part of its administrative reform initiatives. A proposal suggesting three prospective names of the ministry -- Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Ministry of Personnel Management -- would be placed at the cabinet meeting today, government sources said. The meeting to be chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to opt for "Ministry of Public Administration", sources said. Officials of the ministry said the word "establishment" should be replaced with an appropriate name as the ministry deals with appointments, promotions and postings along with other administrative matters.

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The government in 2009 took the renaming move as it was facing complexities abroad while dealing with the ministry's affairs. There are even instances when many foreign countries sent official letters, meant for the ministry, to other ministries, added the sources. Prime minister's adviser on establishment and administrative affairs HT Imam dealt with the matter from the very beginning. About the renaming, he earlier said the name "establishment ministry" does not reflect the works it does and should be renamed with a meaningful one. Besides, three others proposals -- formation of Coal Power Generation Company, signing of military treaty between Turkey and Bangladesh and enacting of Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority Act -- would be placed at the cabinet for approval.

## HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES 'Measure women's role to prepare budget'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a discussion yesterday said women's contribution to the national economy through their agricultural and household activities must be measured to prepare a gender-sensitive budget. "The budget is made following cost-benefit analysis. As a result, allocation for women are not given much importance as the non-economic household activities by women are not measured in Gross Domestic Product (GDP)," said Executive Director of Center for Policy Dialogue Dr Mostafizur Rahman. Allocation for women in the budget could not bring any change in their economic condition until women are not included in macro economic activities, he said. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) organised the discussion meeting at the Jatiya Press Club.

Stressing the need for a gender responsive budget, Executive Director of The Hunger Project Dr Badidul Alam Majumdar called for setting up a cell to monitor the allocations and expenditures regarding the women's issues in different ministries to ensure that the allocation for them are used properly. Professor and Director of Centre for Entrepreneurship of Brac Business School Mamun Rahsid suggested reducing tax by 10 percent for working class women. "If it is implemented, employers will show interest to offer more job opportunity for women," he said. Dr Manjur Ahmed, senior adviser, Institute of Educational Development, presented the keynote paper while BMP president chaired the event.



Ayesha Khanam, second from right, addressing a discussion on upcoming national budget and gender equality organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad at the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## 14 domestic helps tortured to death in four months

### Say human rights activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 14 domestic helps, mostly children, were tortured to death while eight were severely tortured by their employers in the last four months in the country, said human rights activists yesterday. Speaking at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club in the city, leaders of Network for Establishing the Rights of the Domestic Workers said employers often escape punishment due to absence of a stern law to protect rights of domestic helps. The network demanded the government to formulate a law to protect rights of domestic helps and prevent oppression on them. The labour ministry last year finalised "Domestic Worker Protection and Welfare Policy 2010" following continuous pressure from the network. But the government is yet to issue any written order to make the policy effective, they said. Quoting a record of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), they said a total of 797 incidents of oppression on domestic helps took place in the last ten years, of which, 398 victims died due to severe torture. More than 20 lakh people are working as domestic helps in the country, 80 percent of

which are women and children, they said. Though Child Rights Act 1974 prohibits appointing children as domestic helps or at any factory and termed it as a punishable offense, reality is different. So it is a must to make the policy effective, they added. They said the government must play a positive role in formulating a document on "Decent work for domestic workers" at International Labour Organization convention in June this year. Their other demands include ensuring security, education, training, wage and fixed working hours for domestic helps and initiating social security and rationing system for them. They also called to punish employers who torture and kill domestic helps and provide legal support from the government to victims. The conference participants later formed a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club to realise the demands. Dr Wajedul Islam Khan, coordinator of Sramik Karmachari Oikyo Parishad; Shirin Akhter, president of Karmojibi Nari; Mohammad Zafrul Hasan, joint secretary general of BILS; and Sultan Uddin Ahammad, the network coordinator, also spoke.



Greha Sramik Odhikar Protistha Network, an organisation that works for establishing domestic workers' rights, forms a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding steps to stop killing and torture of domestic helps.

PHOTO: STAR

## 400 sacks of OMS rice seized, 4 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A mobile court in Joypurhat district yesterday arrested four people and recovered 400 sacks of rice meant for Open Market Sale (OMS). Rice traders Nurul Haque and Shahinur Islam, truck driver Saiful Islam and his assistant Asaduzzaman Liton were caught while they were loading 20 tonnes of rice on trucks, said Lt Alamgir Hossain, commander of Rapid Action Battalion-5. He also said the arrestees admitted to have collected the OMS rice from various dealers in the district. They were transporting it to Khulna, where they planned to sell it. The court sentenced the two traders for a year and 10 months in prison and fined them Tk 25,000 each. It also fined the driver Tk 50,000 and his assistant Tk 10,000.