#### Dr Firdausi to get Christophe Mérieux Prize

UNB, Dhaka

Dr Firdausi Qadri, Vaccine Sciences Director of International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B), became the first Bangladeshi and the first woman to be selected for the Christophe Mérieux Prize 2012.

Fondation Christophe et Rodolphe Mérieux, under the aegis of the Institut de France, recently selected Dr Firdausi for the prize.

It recognises her work to optimise and formulate vaccines and develop strategies for mass immunisation to reduce the burden of diseases due to common enteric pathogens.

Dr Firdausi will receive the prize, carrying € 500,000 and given to support research into infectious diseases in developing countries, at a ceremony in France in June, says an ICDDR,B web post.

"I am overwhelmed with the news," said Dr Firdausi.

"With this prize, I would like to facilitate and carry on with my existing work and continue research that we are involved with and which is the pivotal focus of my activities and my mission in life.

"The prize is a great recognition of the work of my colleagues who are constantly setting the bar higher for all to follow," she said.

Dr Firdausi gained reputation as an international expert in immunology and vaccine science and received a Gold Medal from the Bangladesh Academy of Sciences in 2008 for her contribution to biological science.

# Today's HSC exams postponed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

statement.

Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent examinations scheduled for today have been postponed due to hartal called by the opposition party for a second consecutive day.

Only one paper under Technical Education Board was scheduled for today. There were no examinations to be held under the other boards.

"We postponed the examination on Textile Diploma under the technical board due for tomorrow [today]," Prof

Abul Kashem, chairman of the board, told The Daily Star. A new date for the postponed examination would be published in the media, the education ministry said in a

All exams following the postponed one will be held as per earlier schedule, it added.

The BNP yesterday called for a daylong countrywide shutdown for a second consecutive day protesting the alleged "disappearance" of M Ilias Ali, BNP organising secretary for Sylhet division.

Earlier, the ministry had postponed yesterday's HSC and equivalent examinations under Technical Education Board on the same ground.

Around 9.26 lakh examinees are appearing in the HSC and equivalent examinations that began on April 1.

# Resume classes

Nahid urges Buet teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday again urged teachers of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), abstaining from work for the last 14 days, to resume academic activities. "There is no logic in refraining from taking class for the

demands the teachers are pressing for. They are not doing a proper thing," he told reporters at the ministry. Buet Teachers' Association called the work abstention

from April 7 to press home some demands, including resignation of the vice and pro-vice chancellors. Nahid said the demands for which the teachers have been

refraining from taking class are administrative and can be resolved through discussions. "We will solve your problems but please return to your

classes. Buet is a very important institution of the country and we are concerned about the work abstention," he said. Earlier on April 12, the minister made similar request to

the teachers when the association leaders met him at his Secretariat office.





(Clockwise from top) Police obstruct BNP lawmakers as they try to bring out a procession on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises during hartal hours yesterday. An unusually empty and quiet road before the Chittagong port as no vehicle left the place though activities inside went on in full swing. Two men, arrested on Saturday night on suspicion of being hartal activists, peer out of a prison van at the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in the capital. BNP leaders and activists, cornered at the entrance of BNP's Naya Paltan office as police cordoned off the building, chant slogans in support of the hartal. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: STAR



### Body on political case reconstituted

UNB, Dhaka

The committee, formed to recommend cancellation of the cases filed for political harassment, has been reconstituted. Law ministry yesterday reconstituted the committee, said a handout.

State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam will act as president while State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku as vice president of the reconstituted committee.

Besides, senior secretary, additional secretary (administration, security and immigration, law and planning) and joint secretary (law and planning) of home ministry, representatives (not below joint secretary rank) of home and law ministries have been made members of the committee.

Senior assistant secretary (law section-1) of home ministry will discharge the duty as member secretary.

# 'Form national commission to protect maritime boundary'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The defence ministry was asked yesterday to form a "national commission" which will prepare guidelines on modernising the naval force so as to ensure the security and sovereignty of the country's new maritime boundary.

The commission will also work on preparing the country's maritime policy, setting up an "Ocean Research Institute" and other related activities.

The proposal on the commission's

formation came at a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Defence Ministry at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"We have got a vast maritime area in the Bay of Bengal through a UN landmark verdict and now we need to modernise our naval force to ensure our sovereignty over the area," M Idris Ali, chief of the House panel, told the meeting.

The commission will comprise maritime experts and high officials of the ministry, said Idris, a lawmaker of

the ruling Awami League. Bangladesh, on March 14, won a

landmark verdict at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which sustained its claim to 200-nauticalmile exclusive economic and territorial rights in the Bay of Bengal rejecting the claims of Myanmar.

The verdict of the court went absolutely in Bangladesh's favour and even beyond, as it gave more than what Bangladesh had asked for. The judgment is final and cannot be appealed against.

The committee also recom-

mended the government to take necessary measures for the manufacture of ammunition and other equipment required by the naval force instead of importing those.

"We have several shipyards and we can upgrade those and manufacture modern gunboats and other vessels necessary for the navy," said Idris.

Without modernising the navy, the country will not be able to ensure its right over the wealth under the vast seabed of the new maritime boundary and gather those, said the committee members.

### Dhaka clarifies news item on Iran's N-energy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday contradicted a news item of IRNA which quoting Information and Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad as saying that "Bangladesh is proud of Iran's nuclear achievements and capabilities."

In a press release yesterday, the foreign ministry said the information and cultural affairs minister met his Iranian counterpart Sayed Mohammad Hosseini in Libreville, Gabon on April 20, on the sidelines of the 9th session of Islamic Conference of Information Ministers. "They discussed matters

relating to mutual interests of the two brotherly countries. During the meeting, the Bangladesh minister emphasised on cooperation among the OIC member countries under the purview of Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) for the development of science and technology. The Bangladesh minister, during the meeting, reiterated Bangladesh's stand in favour of peaceful uses of nuclear energy," said the foreign ministry press release. The news item by IRNA, in

this respect, is a deviation from the fact, the press release added. IRNA is the official news

agency of Iran.

#### AL joint meet today STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League (AL)

will hold a joint meeting today to prepare for a labour rally in Tongi of Gazipur, the outskirts of the capital, on May 1 marking May Day where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will address as the chief guest.

The AL's associated bodies, its district units adjacent to Dhaka, lawmakers, district council administrators and chairmen and vice chairmen of upazila parishads of Dhaka, Narayanganj, Narsingdi and Gazipur will be

present at the meeting. The meeting is scheduled to be held at the AL president's political office in the capital's Dhanmondi at 5:00pm with AL General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam in the chair.

Syed Ashraf, also the LGRD and Cooperatives minister, urged all to attend the meeting on time.



**Participants** at a dialogue on poultry sector organised by The Daily Star at its office in the capital yesterday. (Story on Page 20 and B1)

PHOTO: STAR

### RIVER SAFETY WEEK BEGINS TODAY

### Call to ensure safe river routes

BSS, Dhaka

River Safety Week-2012 begins today with a mission of creating mass awareness about safety on the country's river routes.

The slogan of this year's River Safety Week is- Training and Awareness Ensures Safety in Navigation.

Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan will inaugurate the week at BIAM auditorium in the capital in the morning, officials said yesterday.

Marking the day, Department of Shipping in collaboration with all stakeholders will bring out a colourful procession today from Jatiya Press Club premises.

Meanwhile, President Md Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the eve of the day.

The president, in his message, stressed creating mass awareness and imparting training to masters (captain) and assistants involved in navigation to ensure safety on the river routes.

He described the initiatives in observing the week during the monsoon as a time befitting one. He wished all the success of the week.

The prime minister, in her message, expressed the hope that awareness about river routes' safety will be created among all through observing the week.

Mentioning the role of river transpor-

tation in the country's development, she said after assuming office, her government had implemented various programmes to bring back navigability of the country's 53 rivers and saved rivers from illegal grabbers.

Besides, she said the government had strengthened dredging activities of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) to ensure navigability of the river routes along with enhancing capacity of Chittagong and Mongla sea

Hasina hoped that concerned institutions and organisations would be more active to ensure environment-friendly and secured river journey. She wished all the success of the week.

### Washing factory fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) fined a washing factory Tk 12.5 lakh at Mirpur Section No-2 in the capital yesterday for polluting the nearby Rupnagar

DoE Director (Enforcement) Mohammad Munir Chowdhury directed the authorities of the factory, Mohammadi Washing Project, to shift the factory from the place within one month, said a press release.

The factory has been running since 2009 without the clearance certificate from the department and waste treatment plant. The DoE also warned of

filing case and disconnecting gas and electricity lines if the factory authorities did not comply

# Dhaka for expansion of Asian **Productivity Organisation**

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has proposed widening the periphery of the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) to boost up productivity in industrial and service sectors of the countries in the Asian region.

APO Bangladesh Country Director and Industries Secretary KH Masud Siddiqui made the proposal during the 54th session of the APO governing body held in Singapore from April 17 to 19, officials said yesterday. Masud, in his proposal, said economi-

cally developed countries of the world's different regions need to be incorporated in the APO to utilise the scope of sharing mutual experiences and transferring technology.

When Bangladesh proposed incorporating China, Myanmar, Africa, Australia, New Zealand and other countries, it was unanimously accepted.

APO Secretary General Ryuichiro Yamazaki appreciated the role of Bangladesh's present grand alliance government in boosting productivity in the country's industrial and service sectors by taking various initiatives. State Minister for Trade, Industry and

National Development Affairs of Singapore Lee Yi Shyan and Chief Executive of SPRING Singapore (an agency under the Ministry of Trade and Industry) Png Cheong Boon also spoke on the occasion. Director General of Small and Medium

Enterprises Promotion and Development Office of Laos Somdy Inmysai presided over the inaugural session. Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran,

Japan, North Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam took part in the event, while Turkey joined it as an observer.



PHOTO: STAR

The authorities of Dhaka University chopped the branches of a tree, damaged during the storm on Saturday night, into pieces at Faculty of Fine Arts of the university yesterday.