



Prime Minister Khaleida Zia speaks at the 18th Medical Conference of Bangladesh Medical Association at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

Bangladesh to enter Info Super Highway soon

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh will soon enter the Information Super Highway with the installation of the long-cherished submarine cable, which is already being used by the T&T department on experimental basis.

Prime Minister Khaleida Zia is expected to inaugurate the commissioning of submarine cable project by a month or two.

Works have already been completed in installation of 22,000 kilometres of main cables under the ocean and 1,260 kilometres of branch cables to connect Bangladesh at Jhilonjha point at the Cox's Bazar seashore.

Besides, works on installation of optical link from Cox's Bazar to the port city of Chittagong are also going on speedily, T&T sources said.

Talking to BSS, Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haque said that epoch-making changes would be occurring in telecommunications sector with the installation of submarine cables network.

He said with the installation of this project, the number of international circuits would increase and at the same time voice transfer and data transfer would be easier and speedy. Besides, other services like broadband data transfer, call centre services, software exports, e-government, e-commerce and tele-medicine would be cheaper and easier, he added.

The minister said the PCP for installation of submarine cables was approved in the ECNEC meeting on August 29, 2000 with an involvement of over Tk 921 crore.

However, under the guidance and directives of Prime Minister Khaleida Zia, Bangladesh joined a 14-member consortium for installation of submarine cables that helped the nation save over Tk 266 crore.

T&T secretary Hasan Mahmud Mansur said that steps have been taken to increase 4,000 circuits through upgrading Cox's Bazar-Chittagong microwave links.

The experimental commissioning of the submarine cable networks has been introduced through 240 circuits with the United Arab Emirates and 120 circuits with Saudi Arabia.

Death anniversary

Today is the first death anniversary of Nurjahan Begum, wife of late Dr Abdul Jabbar, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at her Anandapur house, Netrakona after Jhoh prayers today.

Friends, admirers and relatives have been requested to attend.

Marzia Mahjabin

Today is the third death anniversary of Marzia Mahjabin (Zeba), founding editor of Sukanya, a magazine for adolescent girls, says a press release.

All have been requested to pray for the peace and salvation of the departed soul of Mahzabin.

Wahib Muhammad Yasir

Today is the third death anniversary of Wahib Muhammad Yasir Tupu, former student of Dhaka University and second son of SM Nazrul Islam, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his father's Dhanmondi residence in the city.

Friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend.

Taking percentage goes against medical ethics

Speakers tell BMA discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Taking percentage from particular pharmaceutical companies by prescribing their medicines goes against the medical ethics of a doctor, said Prof MD Tahir, pro-vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), at a scientific discussion yesterday.

Speaking as keynote speaker at the discussion, he said, "We will keep in mind that both humanism and professionalism are most important for (doctors)."

Prof Tahir said before sending a patient for diagnostic tests, a doctor must think whether those are really necessary or not.

For the sake of ethical values, doctors should avoid gifts from pharmaceutical companies and financial incentives from diagnostic centres, he added.

Besides, doctors have to uphold their professional responsibilities that include honesty, integrity and confidentiality, Prof Tahir said.

About the patients' rights and responsibilities, he said they have to exercise their medical rights by accepting the informed consequences of a treatment and refraining from practices injurious to health such as drinking or smoking.

The discussion on 'Ethical practices: Patients' rights and responsibilities' was organised by Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) on the occasion of its 18th medical conference at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital.

BMA Secretary General Dr A Z M Zahid Hossain moderated the discussion while BMA President Dr M A Hadi presided.

Taking part in the discussion, Justice Abdur Rouf said, "Ethical practices should be developed within us. Their inclusion in the syllabus of schools and colleges will not bring any change. Instead, some revolutionary steps are necessary which will ensure that none of us tell lie, as lying is the mother of sin."

Abu Muhammad Maniruzzaman Khan, secretary to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, said there is allegation that the doctors often misbehave with poor people at grassroots level.

The medical profession is not like other profession. So the doctors have to have some medical ethics to improve their mindset, he said.

Prof Abu Ahmed Chowdhury, president of Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council, said the doctors must abide by law and medical ethics. About medical tests they have to tell the truth to the patients, it is the right of patients to know about their illness and the treatment required, he added.

Prof M A Majed, former president of BMA, said the ethical practices depend not only on doctors but also on patients.

It cannot be unilateral, he added. "Medical ethics is not legislation. It's a convention. So we must uphold it in our profession," Dr Zahid said.

Dr Khaled Hossain, acting representative of WHO in Bangladesh, also spoke on the occasion.

Cancel uni-track edn, introduce science-based system

Citizens urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Citizens yesterday demanded cancellation of controversial 'uni-track education system' for the interest of the future generation, saying it is not enough to postpone the system for one year.

They also urged the government to introduce secular and science-based education system where all kinds of discriminations will be eliminated through merging three mediums of education systems—Bangla, English and Madrasa—into a single unit.

Under the banner of Shikha Andolon Mancha, teachers, students and guardians from different parts of the country held a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city. Following the rally, they marched towards the education ministry but police intercepted them at the Doel Chatter.

They also demanded to take stern action against the people who gobbled up Tk 500 crore in the name of uni-track education system.

"Education is the right of every citizen but BNP-Jamaat alliance government deprived people of this right in many ways. So-called uni-track education system is one of them," said AAMS Arefin Siddique, former president of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta).

Prof Ajoy Roy presided over the rally where among others Duta General Secretary Prof Akhtaruzzaman, Prof Durga Das Bhattacharyya, Prof Akmal Hossain, Dr AN Rasheda, Ferdousi Priyabhasini, Azizul Islam, Samilita Sangskritik Jote General Secretary Golam Kuddus and Syed Anwar Hossain also spoke.

Leaders and workers of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, Chhatra Union, Charon Sangskritik Kendra, Progatishil Ainjibi Front, Uttaran and Dhaboman also joined the programme.

Ershad also alleged that the CPB activists first attacked his party men, leading to the clash that went out of control.

Begum Rowshan Ershad MP and Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawlader were present at the press conference.

Vice-Chairmen of the IFC M Hossain Khan and Solaiman Bhuiyan, Adviser Dr Gulam Farid Ahmad, and President of the Bangladesh chapter of the IFC Prof. Dr Jasim Uddin Ahmad and General Secretary Syed Irfanul Bari were present.

IFC leaders said the upcoming conference is part of its international campaign for redressing the random diversion of upstream waters causing disasters and ecological imbalance in Bangladesh.

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'Fight together to establish rights of women, children'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The madrasa education system should be changed as a step to ensure justice for disadvantaged women, said President of Lahore High Court Bar Association Justice Fakhar un Nisa Khokher yesterday.

Justice Fakhar was speaking at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city to share her experience on access to justice by the disadvantaged women in Pakistan.

The conference was organised by Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) as a continuation of its second Women Lawyers' Convention.

Justice Fakhar said the people of Southeast Asia have to fight together the bad customs and practices to establish the rights of women and children.

She said, "The West has been trying to brand Pakistan as a conservative country which is not true at all."

"The much talked about 'honour-killing' that took place in some remote areas could not be the measure stick of the situation of women in Pakistan," she said, adding that a law has already been enacted in 2004 against honour-killing which provides stern punishment like rigorous imprisonment.

BNWLA President Sigma Huda said to ensure access to the justice by the disadvantaged women and children in the society lobby would continue to implement the recommendations of the 2nd Women Lawyers' Convention held on December 28-29.

"We will soon send the copy of the recommendations to the Speaker as well as parliament members and discuss the issue with law minister and minister for women and children affairs," she said.

The convention was held on issues of violence against women and children, women's access to justice, personal laws and its effects on women's status and combating trafficking.

The recommendations included review of existing laws relating to women and children, sensitising and training of the law enforcers, establishing a uniform family court and reforms of personal laws.

Executive Director of BNWLA Advocate Salma Ali was present on the occasion.

JP-CPB CLASH

It was not intentional, says Ershad

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad has regretted the Sunday's untoward incident at Paltan in the city.

"It was unintentional," he said about the clash between the activists of the JP and CPB, which left 50 people injured. A young man was also run over by a speeding bus during the clash.

"We didn't do anything to hurt the other political party," Ershad told a press conference at his Banani residence yesterday.

He said the Jatiya Party took permission of the administration for the rally at Muktagong. After the rally, the party leaders and activists came out in a procession but did not know that the CPB was holding a meeting at Paltan.

Ershad also alleged that the CPB activists first attacked his party men, leading to the clash that went out of control.

Begum Rowshan Ershad MP and Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawlader were present at the press conference.

World confce on 'upstream water diversion' Jan 4-5 in city

BSS, Dhaka

The International Farakka Committee (IFC) will hold a two-day International Conference on "Upstream Water Diversion: Disaster for Bangladesh" on January 4-5 in the auditorium of the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) in the city.

Chairman of the IFC Atiqur RK Eusufji and Secretary General Syed Tipu Sultan said this yesterday at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club and called upon all to attend the conference.

Vice-Chairmen of the IFC M Hossain Khan and Solaiman Bhuiyan, Adviser Dr Gulam Farid Ahmad, and President of the Bangladesh chapter of the IFC Prof. Dr Jasim Uddin Ahmad and General Secretary Syed Irfanul Bari were present.

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India urged to abandon dam projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian government should abandon all proposed dams including the Tipaimukh Dam project in the northeastern part considering the adverse effect on both India and Bangladesh, said the speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They suggested an independent international review on the socio-economic and environmental impacts of the 16 commissioned and eight under-construction dams in India.

The seminar on 'Large dams in northeastern India and their implications for Bangladesh' was organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), an NGO working with environmental issues, at the National Press Club in the city.

Dams stop the flow of water and as a result rivers dry up and die, the speakers said, adding that there are now only 250 rivers while once there were 1000 rivers in the country.

As Bangladesh is a downstream country, the effect will be more adverse here than other countries of the upstream, they added.

Presenting the keynote paper, Prof Md Khalequzzaman of Lock Haven University, USA said in order to produce 50,000 MW hydroelectric power, Indian government is constructing dams on northeastern rivers, but there are many shortcomings of large dams in terms of flood control, hydroelectric power generation and changes in environment and ecosystems in both upstream and downstream countries.

He suggested all stakeholders belonging to a watershed to formulate a Regional Environmental

Treaty within the framework of newly proposed disaster management and poverty alleviation agenda set forth in Dhaka declaration of Saarc 2005.

Dr Debabrata Roy Laifungbam, an environmentalist of Manipur of India, said the Tipaimukh Dam will create adverse effect for both the countries.

Prof Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University, President of Bangladesh Economic Association Dr Kazi Khaliquzzaman, Bapa Vice-president Prof Nazrul Islam, Editor of the New Nation Mostafa Kamal Majumdar and Political Advisor of Indian High Commission Gaddam Dharmendra also spoke.

The seminar was presided over by Abul Mal Abdul Muhit, former minister and founder president of Bapa.

Govt wants to use militants to cling to power: AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-Jamaat alliance government wants to cling to power by using the militants, speakers at a roundtable said yesterday.

They also said the militants have increased their strength in the country with the government patronisation.

"The government wants to use the militants for its gains in the next election after giving amnesty to them," AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed said.

The AL organised the discussion on "The rise of militancy and social degradation" at the National Press Club in the city.

"A total of 119 days of remand have been granted for JMB commander Sunny, which is unprecedented, even after he confessed to his involvement with the militants attacks," Tofail said, adding the government is also trying to shift the focus away from Mufti Hannan who attempted to kill Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina and later confessed to such attempt.

The AL leader also criticised the Election Commission (EC), saying that it has engaged the BNP-Jamaat men to prepare the voter list.

The defeated forces of the liberation war got the opportunity to rear its head again through killing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, said AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil.

"If we now fail to resist the defeated forces, our future generation will no longer see a Bangladesh for which 30 lakh

people scarified their lives," he said.

Jalil also called on the pro-liberation forces to be united to step up the anti-government movement.

"Today's militants are more organised than the militants of 1971 as they are now part of the ruling coalition," said AL joint secretary Obaidul Quader.

He called on the students as well as cultural activities to play a vital role in uprooting the militancy.

AL presidium members Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and Motia Chowdhury, former Dhaka University vice-chancellor AK Azad Chowdhury, former Chittagong University vice-chancellor Prof Abdul Mannan and Barrister Tania Amir also spoke.

ATTACK ON RALLY

CPB demands arrest of Ershad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday at a rally demanded immediate arrest and punishment of Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman H M Ershad and other JP activists for the attack on CPB rally on Sunday at Purana Palatan in the city.

They also demanded a judicial inquiry into the incident.

Addressing the rally at Purana Palatan Crossing in the city yesterday, CPB President Manjurul Anwar Khan said the character of dictator Ershad has not changed even after he had spent several years in jail.

He said that the JP activists led by Ershad assaulted hundreds of leaders and activists of CPB, killed an innocent bystander, looted the party office, damaged the nearby shops and set fire to them on that day.

CPB President vowed that his party would continue movement to oust Jamaat and other communal parties from power.

He demanded compensation for the family of Kabir who died on Sunday's incident and treatment of the injured.

CPB Presidium member Shahidullah Chowdhury, Acting General Secretary Md Shah Alam, central leaders Ruhin Hossain Prince and Ahsan Habib Lablu also spoke at the rally.

Meanwhile, Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee leaders Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Shahriar Kabir, and Kazi Mukul, Sammilito Samajik Andolon President Prof Ajoy Roy and General Secretary Prof Hayat Mambud, Former Minister ASM Abdul Rob, Srani Krishna Samajbadi Dal General Secretary Nirmal Sen, Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samik Union President Rafik Ahmed and General Secretary Abdul Odud Nayan, Bangladesh Khetmajar Samity President Shamsuzzaman Selim and General Secretary Advocate Sohel Ahmed in separate statements condemned the attack on CPB rally.

WEATHER TODAY

No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins in the early morning, said Met Office in a forecast. It also predicted that night temperature may remain nearly unchanged.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 28.7 degree Celsius was recorded at Sitakundu and the lowest of 8.7 degrees at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:24pm today and rises at 6:42am tomorrow.

The 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	27.2	13.2	66	53
Chittagong	28.4	14.3	89	85
Rajshahi	25.8	12.8	--	70
Khulna	26.8	13.1	84	78
Barisal	27.3	11.5	87	84
Sylhet	27.7	12.0	69	61
Cox's Bazar	27.2	14.4	75	63