



A colourful procession was brought out in the city yesterday to mark the 'GrameenPhone Zainul-Kamrul International Children's Art Competition'.

PHOTO: STAR

More playgrounds for children demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a rally yesterday demanded more playgrounds for children in the capital as well as across the country. They said there should be at

least one playground for every school to encourage games and sports among the children.

Expressing concern over the decreasing number of open space and playgrounds, the speakers said if their illegal occupation is not

stopped immediately, a day will come when the next generation will not find a piece of land for their recreation.

They urged the government to take necessary steps to retrieve the city's open space and playgrounds

from illegal occupation and maintain them properly.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Green Voice, two environmental organisations, organised the rally and a token sports exercise in front of the National Museum in the city to articulate the demands.

Addressing the rally founder Chairman of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra (World Literature Centre) Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed said regular exercise and sport is essential for mental and physical growth of children.

But open space and playgrounds in cities are being grabbed by unscrupulous people leading to an unhealthy environment for children, he added.

Prof Sayeed said it is a matter of regret that there is no proper authority to look after the existing open spaces and playgrounds as most of the time these are used for political, commercial and cultural purposes.

Besides, lack of open space and playground fails to inspire the children and youths for games and sports, he observed.

Presided over by Prof Nazmul Ahsan Kolimullah of Dhaka University, the meeting was also addressed by former advisor to caretaker government ASM Shahjahan, Bapa Vice-president Prof Nazrul Islam and sport personalities Zakaria Pintu, Rokibul Islam and Sheikh Md Aslam.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon and Green Voice form a human chain in front of the National Museum in the city yesterday demanding adequate number of playgrounds across the country.

Ctg port container auction June 20

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong Customs Authority is going to put several thousand containers on sale in the biggest-ever auction in Chittagong port on June 20.

The authority has taken the initiative to ease container congestion at the yards and consequent congestion of vessels at the port.

In the backdrop of serious container congestion, the customs

authority in a circular in April urged all consignees for taking delivery of containers within the next 15 days.

The short notice was given as four-time penal rent on containers staying for over 30 days also could not succeed in easing the container congestion at the port, sources said.

Chittagong Customs Commissioner Farid Uddin and other officials would hold a meeting with C&F agents to discuss different aspects of the auction on Monday.



No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Sylhet, Rajshahi, Dhaka and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Khulna and Barisal divisions in the next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged, Met Office said. Yesterday's highest temperature of 36 degree Celsius was recorded at Ishwardi and the lowest of 22.4 degrees at Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:48pm today and rises at 5:11am 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	34.4	27.6	74	74
Chittagong	33.0	26.3	80	87
Rajshahi	35.5	25.2	80	78
Khulna	35.2	26.5	82	70
Barisal	34.0	28.0	86	84
Sylhet	29.0	22.8	97	76
Cox's Bazar	--	26.0	78	--



Death anniversary of Akikunnessa Ahmad today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 24th death anniversary of Akikunnessa Ahmad, a noted writer and pioneer in progressive women movement in late 40's, will be observed today, says a press release.

She was the wife of renowned litterateur, journalist and politician of the sub-continent Abul Mansur Ahmad and daughter of eminent Islamic thinker and litterateur Maulana Ahmad Ali Akalavi.

Her significant literary works include 'Adhunka Stree' (Modern wife) and 'Adhunik Swami' (Modern husband).

Special prayers were held at her children's homes on Friday to mark the death anniversary.

Roundtable on economic growth of Ctg today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A roundtable will be held in Chittagong today to discuss different aspects of economic and business activities.

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry and The Daily Star jointly organised the roundtable titled 'Economic growth of Chittagong: Prospects and challenges' beginning at CCCI auditorium at 12:30pm.

NEW COUNTRY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

Japan identifies 12 sectors to help reduce poverty

'Political feud a major destabilising factor'

UNB, Dhaka

Japan has identified 12 priority sectors, including private sector and power sector development, under its new country assistance programme to help reduce poverty in Bangladesh.

Japan, the single largest bilateral donor of Bangladesh, reaffirmed its support on the "recent high economic growth" in Bangladesh despite political and governance challenges that hinder the growth potentials.

"Its new assistance programme reaffirms that Japan will continuously support Bangladesh's self-

help efforts in development in accordance with the PRSP issued by the Bangladesh government in October last," said a statement on Thursday.

The statement was issued marking the release of Japan's new Country Assistance Programme (CAP) issued on May 19.

Other priority sectors are information and communication technology (ICT), tourism, transport, agriculture and rural development, education, health, environment, arsenic mitigation, disaster management and governance.

The new CAP puts three priority goals -- economic growth, social

development with human security and governance -- with the ultimate target of poverty reduction.

"Japan believes that the implementation of PRSP will bring to Bangladesh the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)," the statement said, adding that the CAP also highlights the importance of cooperation with other development partners like the World Bank, ADB and DFID.

According to the CAP document made available yesterday, problems of governance, such as discontinuity in government policies, persisting corruption and worsening law and order, have become serious under a bipolar political confrontation.

"As a result, Bangladesh cannot maximise its potential for development and economic growth," it said, referring to the setbacks caused by recurrence of hartal, which are carried out by the opposition parties as part of their anti-government campaign.

"Hartals not only directly hit the lives of common citizens, especially those who live under the poverty line, but they also serve as an obstacle to investment and education," it said.

The document adds: "The continuing confrontation between the two main political parties even after three peaceful regime changes since 1991 is a major destabilising factor for people's livelihood and social stability in Bangladesh."

On the governance problem, the document pointed out that dealing with various issues of governance remained a great challenge in realising development, including economic growth and improvements in social indicators.

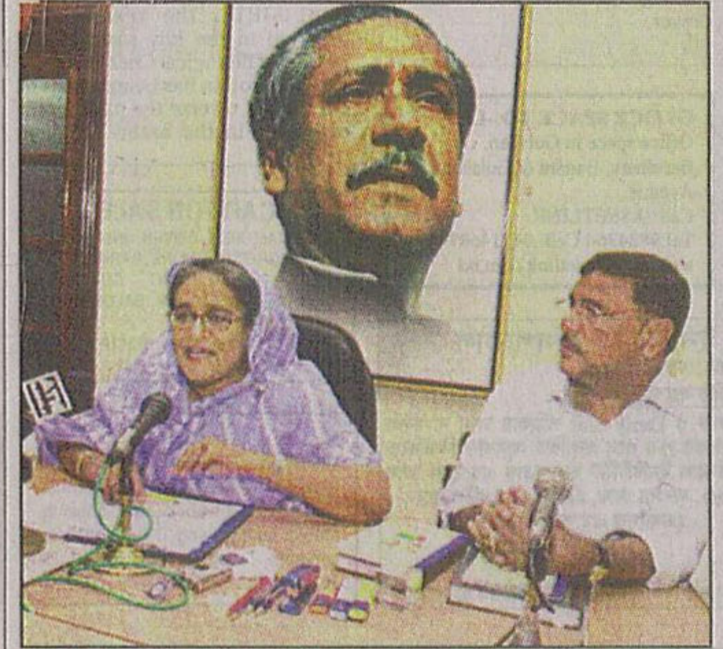


PHOTO: STAR

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina speaks at a meeting with the party leaders from Chittagong and Cox's Bazar at the party's Dhanmondi office in the city yesterday.

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