

BANGLADESH-INDIA EDITORS' DIALOGUE ENDS

'Promote objective journalism for better Indo-Bangla ties'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh-India Editors' Dialogue on 'Rising above the Divide' ended yesterday with a fresh vow to promote objective journalism, particularly in the fields of security, illegal migration, water and trade so that a congenial atmosphere is created for better relationship between the two neighbouring nations.

Organised by South Asian Free Media Association (Safma) at a city hotel, the dialogue, first of its kind, also decided to continue dialogue of the editors and reporters of the two countries to interact with each other to dispel all the mistrusts and suspicions for healthy cooperation on common interests.

The dialogue also adopted a proposal of forming 'India-Bangladesh Editors' Forum' with interested editors of the two countries that will meet annually and discuss issues of common interests to deepen mutual understanding. Such regular discussion will help dispel the atmosphere of distrust that now exists.

Safma could also set up a common resource centre so that media could use information from the centre to avoid all types of misunderstandings.

The recommendations came following widespread discussions on the misunderstanding that exists between the two countries on security, illegal migration, smuggling and trade deficits.

Talking on media's role in resolving bilateral irritants Ambassador Faruque Sobhan said taking formal and informal trade amounting to US\$6 billion or more a year and the fact that two lakh Bangladeshi students are studying in India while about 1 lakh Indians are working in Bangladesh with or without permission, all this amounts to a big source of the country's foreign exchange earning, but that is not recognised by India.

Blaming media's role, Faruque Sobhan, also former foreign secretary, said media of both the countries talk of huge problems, but not of their solutions. Indian media never investigated the claim of insurgent camps in Bangladesh, and branded the country as a likely failed state.

In different summits India made many commitments to Bangladesh, but has not fulfilled



PHOTO: STAR

Safma Secretary General Imtiaz Alam speaks at the Bangladesh-India Editors' Dialogue on 'Rising above the Divide' at a city hotel yesterday. On his left is eminent Indian journalist Kuldeep Nayar and on his right are Safma President Reazuddin Ahmed, Ambassador Abul Ahsan, Ambassador Faruque Sobhan and Indian journalist Nehal Singh.

those, he pointed out.

There are so many Indian television channels in Bangladesh, but how many Bangladeshi channels are there for the Indians to view, he asked.

Despite existence of number of obstacles, Bangladesh made tremendous progress in its export and growth, so why should India not recognise it and change its attitudes towards Bangladesh, he questioned.

Emphasising easing visa regime of both the countries he suggested appointing more journalists in each other's country for more positive and authentic news and meeting of senior journalists on regular basis for more interactions to dispel all misunderstandings about each other.

Speaking on media's role in confidence building measures Ambassador Abul Ahsan said unfortunately Indian media has a tendency to portray Bangladesh as a threat to India, and this perception is dominating the larger overall attitude towards Bangladesh.

"We have to recognise that the issue of insurgency is nothing new. India has to take initiatives to resolve the problem," he pointed out.

Easing visa regime and circulation of positive news of Bangladesh in India will build confidence among the people for the interests of both the countries, he said.

In his presentation The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam said people of both the countries have very little knowledge about each other's diversity, complex economy and volatile politics. There is also little knowledge about the changes that have occurred in these two countries, he said.

India is now far more driven by economic interest than before, he said, adding that the country has taken a new pragmatic approach towards its relationship with its rivals Pakistan and China.

Dramatic changes have occurred in Indo-Pak and Sino-India relations. Large Indian investment is taking place in China, which was unimaginable a few years ago, he said.

"So if India can change its attitude towards Pakistan and China, why can't she change her views about us?" he asked.

"We need to improve our communication with Indian opinion makers, and exchange among editors would be a very useful

step," he said.

Bangladeshis have been disappointed by Indian attitude towards market access and water issues. So many agreements have been made, but not much has happened on the ground, Mahfuz Anam noted.

Eminent Indian journalist and columnist Kuldeep Nayar said Bangladesh has anti-India feelings mainly because of economic reasons. On the Indian side anti-Bangladesh feelings persist due to absence of deeper understanding of issues here.

He, however, said it is the bureaucrats and the politicians who really play the game behind the scene, where journalists have very little influence.

Another Indian journalist Nehal Singh said present picture of Indian journalism is not so good. It is too urban centred and focuses mainly on the rich and powerful.

Safma Secretary General Imtiaz Alam, The Bangladesh Observer Editor Rabul Sobhan Chowdhury, The New Age Editor Nurul Kabir, The New Nation Editor Mostafa Kamal Majumder, among others, spoke at the dialogue chaired by Safma President Reazuddin Ahmed.



Jahanara Imam's anniversary of death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 12th death anniversary of Jahanara Imam, popularly known as Shaheed Janani (mother of the martyrs).

On this day in 1994, she died at a hospital in the USA after prolonged suffering from cancer.

Different political organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to mark the death anniversary of Shaheed Janani.

Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee (committee to eliminate killers and collaborators of 1971) has also chalked out daylong programmes today.

They will place wreaths at her grave at Mirpur Martyrs-Intellectuals Graveyard in the city at 8:00am.

It will also arrange "Jahanara Imam Memorial Speech" and "Jahanara Imam Smriti Padak (memorial crest)" at 4:00pm at WVA Auditorium in the city.

Justice KM Sobhan will deliver the "Jahanara Imam Memorial Speech" on "Trial of war criminals and the Constitution of Bangladesh" with Prof Kabir Chowdhury in the chair.

Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid and Somoy Prokashon will be awarded "Jahanara Imam Memorial Crest 2006" at the programme.

Nirmul Committee acting president Prof Muntazir Mamun, vice president Prof Anwar Syed Haque, adviser to the committee Kamal Lohani, committee central leader Rabul Hussain and advisory council member of Awami League Prof Shamsul Huda Harun will take part in the discussion.

Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) and left wing student fronts including Samajtantrik Chhatra Front and Progotisheel Chhatra Jote will place wreaths at her grave at 8:00am and 9:00am.

Owners of rehab centres demand amendment to proposed rules

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Owners of private sector rehab centres yesterday demanded amendment of the newly proposed rules on establishment and operation of drug addiction rehabilitation centres under private authority.

They also observed that the new rules proposed by the home ministry would increase the cost of drug addiction treatment and most middle and lower class families might not be able to afford it.

Private drug addiction rehabilitation centres, CREA, Apon, Baraka, Bangladesh Youth Fast Concern (BYFC) and Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) jointly organised the press conference at the National Press Club in the city demanding amendment to 'The rules on establishment and operation of private drug addiction counselling, treatment and rehabilitation centres, 2005'.

"The Section-4 (1) (Kha) states that there must be at least 80 square feet floor for each drug addict patient' but arrangement of this provision will increase the treatment cost, he said.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Nurul Islam, director communication of DAM, said "The addicts do not need maid as they themselves can cook and do other activities, which are part of their treatment."

The speakers pointed out that peer counselling, group therapy and self-development activities are more important than a psychiatrist, as the addicts are not mental patients.

Father Kamol Coria, Brother Ronald Drahojal CSC chairman of Baraka and Tarun Kanti Gayen chairperson of CREA also spoke on the occasion.

Children's involvement in drugs increases alarmingly

Int'l Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As a wholesaler of writing slate in old Dhaka, once he had sufficient income from his business, but now he has nothing.

The business of Alamgir Hossain started ruining keeping pace with his growing level of addiction to heroin.

For the last few years his wife and school-going son and daughter have been living as dependant of his elder brother.

Alamgir, now 36 years old, started taking heroin at the age of 18.

He has just recovered from free treatment at Modhumita Treatment Centre of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (Dam).

"Now I can realise how big loss I had incurred in last 18 years. I request all to keep themselves thousand miles away from drugs," said Alamgir while talking to The Daily Star at a seminar organised to observe the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking today.

The Dam in collaboration with Family Health International (FHI) organised the seminar at its auditorium in the city yesterday.

In a keynote paper former additional inspector general of police

Shahidullah Khan said the drug abuse has become a global problem and human tragedy.

"Growing drug abuse has invaded home, workplace and educational institutions affecting individuals of all ages and classes," he added.

Shahidullah said although there is no exact figure, the total number of drug addicts in the country has been estimated at 2.5 million.

Of them the most affected age groups is 15-29, he added.

Shahidullah said Bangladesh has become a transit as well as user country for its geographical location.

Chaired by former inspector general of police Dr M Enamul Hoque, the seminar was addressed by Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, Deputy Director of FHI Tara Nichole O'Day, Deputy Director of Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) Abu Taleb, Programme Director of Aparajeyo Bangladesh Wahida Banu and Dam President and Chief Executive Kazi Rafiqul Alam.

The speakers said involvement of children in drug abuse is increasing alarmingly.

According to yearly report that the DNC submitted to the UN in 2002, among the all drug users in the country six percent were chil-

dren. In 2003 this percentage increased to 13 and it remained the same in 2004. But in 2005, the percentage was again increased to 17.87.

According to the reports, street children living at slums, bus and truck stands, railway stations and lunch terminals are most vulnerable to drug abuse.

A good number of children in the age group of eight to 12 are widely used to sell drugs.

The speakers said parents, teachers, community leaders can play a vital role to protect the children from drug abuse.

They called for inclusion of articles on ill effects of drugs in school textbooks.

Tipai Mukh Dam will not harm Sylhet region Says Veena Sikri

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Veena Sikri has said it will take time to start the physical works of Tipai Mukh Dam although the foundation stone of the mega project has already been laid down in Manipur state.

When asked about the hydroelectric project at an informal discussion in Sylhet City Corporation office yesterday, she told The Daily Star that the tender process is now going on.

The envoy had a stopover for about an hour in Sylhet on her way to Karimganj, a town in the Indian state of Assam.

She paid a courtesy call on city Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Karan and visited Bholananda Night School and Sylhet Pura Pathagar.

When her attention was drawn to probable disastrous effects of the project in greater Sylhet region, the high commissioner said such apprehension is totally wrong.

This is not a barrage, this is only a hydroelectric project, she added.

Veena Sikri claimed that with the implementation of the project Bangladesh would be benefited in early monsoon and lean period.

She said there is enormous scopes for the Sylhet region to do business with seven Indian states.

6 abducted by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) abducted six Bangladeshi nationals, including two women, from near Challishpara border point at Daulatpur in Kushtia yesterday.

According to 9 Rifles Battalion of BDR, a BSF team of Charchhadra camp of Murshidabad district entered into Bangladesh territory through border pillar no154 and kidnapped the Bangladeshis working at a peanut field at gunpoint at about 8:00am.

The abducted are Anwar Hossain, 25, Mahiuddin, 34, Tengir, 40, Lion, 22, Raba, 36, and Halima Khatun, 30. All of them are day labourers and residents of

Ramkrishnapur village in the same upazila.

Abdul Aziz, commanding officer (CO) of 9 Rifles Battalion, admitted the incident.

The BDR also sent a letter protesting the incident and asked to return the Bangladeshis, but the BSF did not respond as of 4:30pm yesterday.

Earlier on Friday, the Indian border guards gunned down three Bangladeshi citizens at Sathkhira border and injured another four at Jessore.

Sources, including the BDR, alleged that the BSF has been on a rampage along 85 km long southwestern border in recent times.



PHOTO: STAR

THIS IS WHERE HE BELONGS: Milly Rahman, wife of Birsreshtho Matiu Rahman, pays tribute as the remains of the Liberation War hero is buried at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard at Mirpur in the city yesterday.

DHAKA TODAY

View exchange

Karmajibi Kari organises a view exchange meeting on 'rights of agricultural labourers'. Venue: Hotel Imperial International. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar

Office of the Iranian Cultural Counsellor and Nazrul Institute organises a seminar on 'Umar Khayyam's philosophy in the works of Kazi Nazrul Islam'. Venue: Nazrul Institute auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

Seminar

Embassy of the United States of America organises a seminar on 'Role of citizens in addressing corruption'. Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 10:30am.

Discussion

Bangladesh Institute of Human Rights will hold a discussion on 'Civil society and the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture'. Venue: Institution of Engineers auditorium, Ramna. Time: 9:30pm.

Dialogue

Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum will hold a dialogue on 'Civil society and the working children'. Venue: Biam. Time: 9:30am.

Ceremony

The foundation laying ceremony of the new building of Dhaka Badhir High School will be held. Venue: Bangladesh Jatiya Badhir Sanstha. Time: 10:00am.

13 killed, 63 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least 13 people were killed and 63 were injured in separate road accidents in different districts yesterday.

Our Correspondent from Brahmanbaria reports: Five people were killed and 50 others injured, 12 critically, in a road accident when two passenger buses collided head-on at Chandura Bus Stand on Brahmanbaria-Sylhet Highway at Sadar upazila yesterday.

Of the dead, three were identified as Md Mazid Mia, 25, Md Jahirul Islam, 18, and Sharmin Akter Doly, 25, while identity of two others -- a man and a woman -- could not be known immediately.

The accident occurred when a Sylhet-bound bus from Brahmanbaria and a Brahmanbaria-bound local bus from Madhabpur collided head-on while passing the Chandura Bus Stand. The buses also crashed a tempo during the accident.

Twelve people were admitted to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital in critical condition. The rest were given first aid at the same hospital and three private clinics.

Seriously injured ARE Safique Mia, 28, one unidentified man, 25, Fayez Ali, 20, Jalal Mia, 35, Kamal Mia, 25, Year Hossain, 25, Sami Akter, 12, Jarina Begum, 30, Rangu Mia, 25, Abul Fayez, 40, Ahsan Mia, 30, and Sultan, 22.

Our correspondent from Sirajganj adds: An unidentified pedestrian was crushed under the wheels of a truck at Bayoitara inter section area on the Dhaka-Bogra highway in Sirajganj yesterday.

The accident took place at around 1:00pm, when a Bogra-bound speeding truck coming from Dhaka

with goods hit him from behind leaving him dead on the spot while he was crossing the road.

The identity of the deceased could not be known immediately.

Our staff correspondent adds: A man and his wife were killed and their teenage daughter was severely injured when a bus crushed an auto-rickshaw at Sonargaon area in Narayanganj yesterday.

The auto-rickshaw driver and a relative of the family were also injured in the accident.

The dead were identified as Hossain Ahmed, 45, an employee of Janata Bank and his wife Zaheda Akter, 40. The injured are Salma Akter, 14, Mojibuddin Mollah, 60, and the auto-rickshaw driver.

The accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound bus rammed a three-wheeler from behind at Madanpur leaving Zaheda dead on the spot.

The injured were rushed to a local clinic and Hossain Ahmed was later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

tion where he succumbed to his injuries around 2:00pm yesterday.

Our Correspondent from Tangail says: At least four people, including a teenage girl, were killed and 10 others were injured in a road accident on Sakhipur-Sagardigheer road in the district yesterday.

The dead were identified as Mohammad Arman Miah, 55, of Protima Banki village, Arfan Ali, 45, of Debol Chala village, Rita Akter, 14, of Gar Govindapur village, and Abdul Hamid, 60, of Bitsharee village under Sakhipur upazila.

Police and witnesses said the accident took place when a Sakhipur-bound speedy bus from Sagardigheer collided head-on with a Sagardigheer-bound three-wheeler Nasim from Sakhipur on Sakhipur-Sagardigheer road at Kachua Pukur Par at around 2:00pm, leaving three Nasim passengers dead on the spot and 11 others injured.

Locals rushed the injured to Sakhipur Upazila Health Centre. Of them, critically injured

Nasim passenger Abdul Hamid died on the way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Later, police took the bodies to Sakhipur Police Station.

Police seized the bus but its driver and helper managed to escape.

Our staff correspondent from Chittagong adds: One truck driver was killed in a road accident at Sitakunda in the district yesterday.

The accident occurred when a Chittagong-bound goods-laden truck skidded off the road and dashed a tree in front of Baro Aotulia area at around 6:00am, sources said.

The truck driver identified as Md Alauddin 32, was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where he succumbed to his injuries at around 9:00am, sources said.

The helper was driving the truck when the accident occurred, sources added.

Police seized the truck but the helper managed to flee.

Maj Gen Ahsan passes away



Maj Gen (ret'd) Ahsan Nazmul Amin passed away yesterday due to a cardiac arrest, says a press release.

Born in 1949, General Ahsan was educated at Faujdardhat Cadet College before commissioning from Pakistan Army on April 18, 1971. He served the Bangladesh Army in various capacities, including the Chief of General Staff (CGS) and Adjutant General (AG) at the Army Headquarters.

He also served as the Ambassador of Bangladesh to Qatar.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia expressed deep shock at Gen Ahsan's death. In a message, the PM prayed for the salvation of his departed soul and conveyed sympathy to his bereaved family members.

The Namaj-e-janaza of Gen Ahsan will be held at Dhaka Cantonment Central Mosque after Zohr prayers tomorrow.

WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Khulna and Barisal divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places, said Met Office in a forecast. It said that day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 34.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and Khulna and lowest 24.8 degree Celsius at Srirongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:13am 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	31.8	27.5	85	73
Chittagong	32.2	27.2	76	80
Rajshahi	34.0	26.5	92	80
Khulna	34.5	27.5	79	79
Barisal	33.0	26.8	84	87
Sylhet	32.8	25.4	88	94
Cox's Bazar	32.5	26.2	73	83

Quader protests Bhuiyan's comment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) acting General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the BNP-Jamaat coalition has finalised all 'conspiracies' to remove the incumbent President from his post to cling to power.

Protesting BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan's remarks about Hasina, Quader in a statement said that the BNP chairperson, not Hasina, does politics for power.

"To retain the power, the coalition government had removed the president who was a founder member of BNP and has finalised all 'conspiracies' to remove the incumbent president by showing his illness," he said adding that the government has set up an example in the world by creating existence of two presidents in a country violating constitution.

Death anniversary



Today is the 25th death anniversary of Aduddin Ahmed, former central minister of Pakistan, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at House No. 6, Road No. 15 new (28 old) at Dhanmondi Residential Area in the city.

Bongshi Saha



Today is the 6th death anniversary of Bongshi Saha, former president of Narayananj Press Club, says a press release.

He had worked for the daily Sangbad and daily Mukhtakantha during his career.

On the occasion, his family members have arranged elaborate programmes including reciting Gita, distributing Prashad in different temples and destitute feeding.

Mubar Uddin Ahmed

Today is the death anniversary of Mubar Uddin Ahmed, a former district judge, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at Banani graveyard mosque after Asr prayers.

All have been requested to pray for salvation of his departed soul.