

## UNDP, CRC sign agreement

A cooperation agreement between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and CRC-Bangladesh, a socio-legal development research organisation, was signed at the UNDP office in Dhaka on Tuesday, says a press release.

As per the agreement, CRC will provide technical support services to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Person (UNSR), Advocate Sigma Huda, under a funding support from the UNDP Regional Programme on 'HIV and Development Programme for Asia'.

The programme activities focus on research and documentation of important issues on human trafficking and HIV/AIDS, networking and technical cooperation with national and regional bodies in South Asia as well as sharing and dissemination of information in collaboration with the mainstream media.

The project will also establish linkages with the activities being carried out by CRC-Bangladesh through the establishment of a Technical Support Secretariat (TSS) of the UNSRT in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM-Dhaka).

Margaret Goon, resident representative, UNDP Bangladesh, and Dr Rana Sattar, CEO, CRC-Bangladesh, signed the agreement.

Martina Locher, programme officer, UNDP, and Shohela Parveen, Networking and Field Research coordinator, CRC-Bangladesh, were also present.



A cooperation agreement between the UNDP and CRC-Bangladesh was signed at the UNDP office in Dhaka on Tuesday. From left are Shohela Parveen, Dr Rana Sattar, Margaret Goon and Martina Locher.

## One killed, 20 hurt as trawlers collide in river Turag

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A woman was killed and 20 others were injured while two people allegedly remained missing as a sand laden trawler collided with a passenger trawler in the river Turag at Jaluabhati of Kalialoir upazila in Gazipur yesterday.

The dead is Bimola Khatun (45), wife of Abdus Sabur, the headmaster of Rover Palli High School. She was returning home from Thangerband village of Madhyapara Union.

Five people, who were severely injured, were rushed to

the Orthopaedics hospital in Dhaka. Others were admitted to local hospitals and clinics.

Witnesses and injured passengers said that the passenger trawler collided with 'Nur-er-Alo', a sand laden trawler coming from the opposite direction, at Jaluabhati point at about 10 am.

The Shakaswar Bazaar-bound passenger trawler was coming from Bhaawal Mirzapur with 40 passengers.

Meanwhile, sources said, two passengers went missing.

Bimola died on the spot while 37 passengers managed to reach the bank of the river.

## Indian Ocean nations shift stress to tsunami response

REUTERS, Kuta, Indonesia

Indian Ocean nations agreed yesterday on the need to shift the emphasis from setting up a tsunami detection network for the region to ensuring countries are ready to act effectively after a tsunami warning.

For the last 18 months, the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System has worked on how to link up weather centres in member states and place modern tsunami detectors around the region.

The group was formed after the December 26, 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that killed 230,000 people.

Almost all Indian Ocean nations, through their weather centres, are now connected and member states have ambitious plans to float tsunami detecting buoys, place modern seismographs and erect siren towers to signal coming waves.

But experts say a July 17 tsunami that killed more than 600 people in Indonesia showed advanced technology may not be enough to save people without a clear rapid response plan.

"The system is only as good as the response. What to do when we receive the message?" Joseph Chung, a senior regional officer at the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, told a news conference.

An Indonesian minister said top officials received an alert 17 minutes after the undersea quake that triggered the Java

tsunami, but the warning failed to prompt rapid responses due to lack of preparedness at the grassroots level and a rigid bureaucracy.

"The dramatic events of July 17 have highlighted for the first time the dimension of what is needed," Patricio Bernal, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, told reporters.

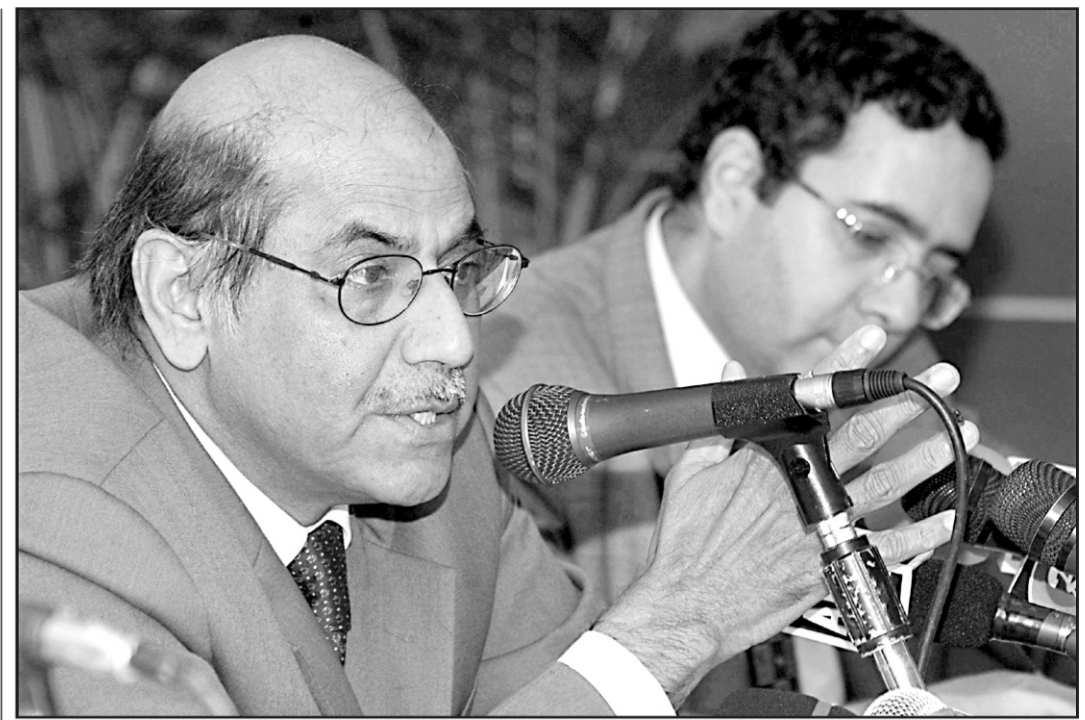
Jan Sopaheluwakan, vice chairman of the Indian Ocean tsunami warning group, said scientists must devise warnings that could be understood at the grassroots level.

"We have to start from turning a message that comes from technical, scientific information which is rigid and cold to something understandable without giving room for interpretation," the Indonesian geologist told Reuters.

"The system must focus on the human side. The decision makers, the regents, the mayors, the legislators must understand a tsunami early warning system is not a magic box that will work instantly after it is in place."

The Java tsunami was a wake-up call for some local administrations, including the Bali government which will run tsunami drills this week at two popular tourist beaches.

Indonesia also plans to place sirens on around 500 cellular phone towers in vulnerable areas in the world's largest archipelago and assign 75 seaports to send signals in case of a possible tsunami.



Indian External Affairs Secretary Shyam Sharan speaks at a press conference at Hotel Sheraton in Dhaka yesterday at the end of the 27th session of Saarc Council of Ministers.

## India bans employing children as domestic helps

AP, New Delhi

The Indian government has banned the employment of children under age 14 as domestic servants or in hotels, restaurants or small tea-shops in a bid to protect the rights of poor children.

The government issued a notice on Tuesday saying the ban on employing children would come into effect October 10.

Tuesday's order also prohibits the employment of children in spas, motels, tourist resorts or other recreational centers, the Labour Ministry said in a statement.

The government had earlier banned government officials from employing children to work as domestic servants.

According to government figures, there are nearly 13 million child workers in India.

A Labour Ministry committee that reported on child workers in India said it recommended the ban because children were often subjected to physical violence, mental trauma and sexual abuse.

"Invariably such incidents go unnoticed and unreported" the report said. The committee said that "children employed in roadside eateries and highway restaurants were the most vulnerable lot and were easy prey to sex and drug

abuse as they came in contact with all kinds of people."

Violators could face up to two years imprisonment, a fine up to 20,000 rupees (US\$ 425, euro355) or both.

Although India has laws banning child labour in hazardous industries, regulations are widely ignored and tens of thousands of children continue to work in factories manufacturing matches, incense sticks, firecrackers and in the carpet weaving industry.