

Steps being taken to hold free, fair polls

Says Adviser Shoaib Ahmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adviser to the Caretaker Government (CG) Shoaib Ahmed yesterday said the nation will not forgive the CG, if it fails to hold a free, fair and neutral election that all could accept.

"We are taking different measures and we have to do so because the nation will not forgive us if we fail to hold a free and fair election," he said at the concluding ceremony of 12th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF).

The CG has to prove to the whole world that this nation can

solve its problems itself including holding of a neutral election, Shoaib, also the adviser of the Ministry of Commerce, said while speaking as the chief guest at the DITF venue.

He also hoped that the CG would be able to hand over power to an elected and democratic government within the stipulated time.

Referring to the robust export growth of the country, Shoaib said, "We have many failures in various sectors but we feel proud of the export successes of the country."

Secretary to the Ministry of

Commerce Firoz Ahmed, Vice-chairman of Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) Meer Shahabuddin Mohammad, and Vice-president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Dewan Sultan Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

During the ceremony, the EPB gave awards to a pavilion, a mini pavilion and a stall for their decorations.

The month-long DITF ends today. Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government Dr Iajuddin Ahmed inaugurated it on December 2.

CG to take steps to solve remaining problems

Hopes US envoy

UNB, Dhaka

US Ambassador Patricia A Butenis has expressed the hope that the caretaker government will take measures to resolve the remaining minor problems for smooth holding of free and fair elections.

The envoy conveyed this when she made a courtesy call on Finance Adviser Shoaib Ahmed at his office yesterday morning.

At the beginning of the meeting, they exchanged greetings on the occasion of New Year and holy Eid-ul-Azha.

The US envoy, on behalf of her government, assured the adviser of all-out cooperation in holding a free and free election.

"We're very happy as all political parties have come forward to participate in the elections and are announcing names of their candidates and filing nominations," she said.

Different issues of mutual interest also came up in the discussion. The envoy informed the finance adviser that the United States would continue its financial support for economic development of Bangladesh, said an official release.

EID-UL-AZHA DCC initiatives to keep city clean

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has taken up massive programme to keep the city clean during and after the Eid-ul-Azha.

The DCC will employ 3,000 cleaners at 15 cattle markets for three days, 1,000 cleaners at 90 wards and 800 labourers with 160 trucks for cleaning garbage, says a press release.

Besides, 400 containers, 13 trailers, 6 bulldozers, two tire dozers, 22 dump trucks and 8 water lorries will be used for carrying and dumping garbage.

The government decided to set up mobile courts in different parts of the city from January 2 to January 4 to check pollution by cattle waste.

The DCC will conduct the mobile courts.



Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus speaks at a discussion on 'Development thoughts on Chittagong' at the auditorium of Engineers' Institution in Chittagong yesterday. On his left is Dainik Azadi Editor MA Malek and on his right is Prof Md Sikandar Khan.

Eid joy eludes street children

WASIM BIN HABIB

Although Eid brings joy and happiness to people of almost all walks of life, the street children can hardly share this joy and happiness due to their poverty.

While talking to The Daily Star, several street children said they have no respite from work to think about Eid which is just knocking at the door.

They said Eid does not bring any special message for them except that they can earn some extra money by selling flowers, popcorns and water bottles in different places like Shishu Park, Ramna Park, National Zoo and Botanical Garden in the city on that day.

Mita, a seven-year old girl who sells flowers at different traffic signals, said when other children come out of their houses wearing new dresses to have fun on Eid day, she just sells flower to earn some extra money.

With emotion-choked voice she said she never get any new dress for Eid and her mother told her that Eid is meant for the rich people and not for the poor like

them. "While selling flowers, I have seen many happy boys and girls of my age coming out from the market with lots of shopping bags along with their parents. My mother said they are lucky because they are rich," said Mita.

When asked about her plan on Eid day, she said she will sell more flower bouquets and chains on that day and earn some money to buy ice cream.

Sumon, who lives at Hatirpool area and sells popcorn on Nazrul Islam Avenue, said he has no plan for Eid.

"Many children wear new dresses and I just see them," he said, adding, "Sometimes I think if I could wear new dresses on the Eid day and have fun like them."

Raju, who sells chocolate at Shahbagh area, said Shishu Park is the only place in the city where street children can have some free rides on Eid day.

"And that's why I am saving money to visit Shishu Park during the Eid," he added.

"But the Shishu Park becomes so crowded on the Eid day that we

have to struggle with others to enjoy the amusements there," said Miti, a nine-year old girl who sells flower chains at Shahbagh intersection.

However, there are many local, international, government and non-government organisations which have taken various projects for street children's education, health and other well-being.

Shakhawat Ullah Chowdhury, divisional co-ordinator of Arise Project under the Directorate of Social Welfare, said they have made special arrangements for street children across the country ahead of Eid-ul-Azha as they did during the Eid-ul-Fitr.

On the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, cattle would be sacrificed on behalf of the project in different shelters and vagrant homes, he added.

He said arrangements will also be made so that street children can celebrate the Eid like other people.

Yet, the number of street children who will pass their Eid without a full meal is greater than those who will have new clothes and foods to be provided by different NGOs.

EID & NEW YEAR World leaders greet Iajuddin

UNB, Dhaka

Heads of state and government of Muslim and other countries, including US President George Bush, have greeted President Iajuddin Ahmed on the occasion of holy Eid-ul-Azha and happy New Year.

Those who have sent messages of felicitations include Indonesian President Dr H Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Chinese President Hu Jintao, Turkmenistan President Saparmurat Niyazov, Afghan President Hamid Karzai, Prime Minister of Bahrain Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa and Bhutanese Prime Minister Lyonpo Khando Wangchuk.

Pope Benedict XIV, the governor general of New Zealand and the president of Senegal have also sent greeting messages.

In their messages, the heads of state and government of Muslim countries prayed to the Almighty Allah for continued peace and prosperity of Bangladesh as well as the welfare of the brotherly people of the country.

They also wished for greater unity, cooperation and cordial relations among the Muslim Ummah.

On the occasion of the happy New Year, the world leaders extended their best wishes and heartfelt congratulations to the president and the people of Bangladesh.

US President George Bush, in a message to President Iajuddin, extended his greetings on the occasion of holy Eid-ul-Azha and the happy New Year.

Diplomats from different countries and representatives of various international organisations also expressed their best wishes to President Iajuddin Ahmed.

Tk 80,000 donated for preserving memories of poet Shamsur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nibedan, a socio-cultural organisation, yesterday donated Tk 80,000 for preserving the memories of the veteran poet.

Nibedan Director Biswajit Roy, along with his colleagues, handed over the cheque to poet Shamsur Rahman's wife Johora Rahman at her Shyamoli residence, says a press release.

Eminent cultural personality Ramendu Majumdar, Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation Secretary General Jhuna Chowdhury, painter Muniruzzaman, daughter-in-law of the poet Tia Rahman were present on the occasion.

Proceeds of paintings sale at a programme organised to pay homage to the poet in the city on September 1 this year will also be spent to preserve poet's memories, the press release added.

Dissemination session of ITC

The International Training Centre (ITC), the latest venture of STS Group, held a dissemination session at Basundhara in Dhaka recently, says a press release.

ITC Director Masuda Reza and her team conducted the session. At the ITC, professional experts will provide internationally accredited programmes and training to young learners as well as professionals on computer and other courses such as spoken English at an affordable cost, said the organisers.

The STS Group has earlier introduced Apollo Hospitals Dhaka and International School Dhaka.

Death anniversary



The second death anniversary of former lawmaker Md Suja-Ud-Daula will be observed on January 3, says a press release.

He was also a former chairman of the then Eastern Mercantile Bank (presently Pubali Bank) and a pharmacist.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his residence. Foods will also be distributed among the destitute at Mirpur Intellectuals' Graveyard.

Mehta Begum



The second death anniversary of Mehta Begum, wife of engineer AKM Siddiqur Rahman, will be observed on January 4, says a press release.

A milad mahfil will be held after Zohr prayers at her Ramkrishnapur village home in Homna, Comilla. Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the milad.



Members of Anti-fundamentalist and anti-militant Conscious Citizens' Society march towards Sudha Sadan in the city yesterday to submit a memorandum to Awami League President Sheikh Hasina demanding cancellation of a deal between AL and Khelafat Majlish.

12 killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least 12 people were killed in separate road accidents across the country yesterday.

Our correspondent in Gaibandha reports: Three motorcycle riders were killed and five pedestrians injured when a speedy truck ploughed into them on Gobindaganj-Ghoraghat highway yesterday evening.

Police said three young men on a motorcycle were coming from Ghoraghat when a goods-laden truck collided head-on with the motorcycle at Kata. The three died on the spot.

The dead were identified as Milan, 24, Babul, 26, and Malek, 22, of Ghoraghat in Dinajpur.

As the truck sped away after the accident, it hit five pedestrians. The injured were rushed to Ghoraghat Health Complex.

The police seized the truck, but the driver and helper of truck escaped.

Our correspondent in Mymensingh adds: Two people were killed when a speeding bus hit their motorcycle on Mymensingh-

Dubaura road in Phulpur in the afternoon.

Monju, 35 and Badal, 38, were riding a motorcycle when the bus rammed it and ran over them at Sutarpara at around 4:00pm, the police said. They died on the spot.

In another road accident, a trolley driver was killed at Payari in Phulpur when his vehicle crashed into a roadside tree, police said.

The dead was identified as Sirajul Islam.

Police sent the bodies to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

A correspondent in Pabna reports: Two girls and a man were killed in separate road accidents in Pabna.

The victims were identified as Mithi, 4, daughter of Zaharul of village Nazirpur, Sadia, 5, daughter of Shafiqul Islam of village Kashipur, and Abu Hossain alias Abul Doctor, 45, of village Chinakhora.

Mithi along with her mother were travelling in a rickshaw in the morning when a human hauler 'Nasimon' hit their rickshaw at Tikori on Pabna-Pakshey highway,

leaving the girl seriously injured. She died on the way to hospital.

Sadia died in a similar accident at Kashipur Bottola Mor.

In another accident, a Nasimon ran over Abul Hossain when he was crossing the road at Chinakhora. He died on the spot.

UNB adds: Three people were killed and 20 others injured in two accidents on Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Shibpur in Narsingdi in the morning.

Two of them were killed as a Bhairab-bound bus from Dhaka plunged into a roadside ditch at Hajibazar at about 7:30am, police and witnesses said. Twenty other passengers were also injured.

The dead were identified as Mamun, 20, and Jewel, 25.

Eight of the injured were sent to Dhaka in a critical condition.

In the other accident, a young woman, Piaru Begum, 25, was crushed under the wheels of a speeding bus at Sristighar, 100 yards from Hajibazar, at about 8:00am.

Police sent the body to Sadar Hospital morgue. Separate cases were filed with Shibpur police.



Shawkat, Sabuj elected JPC president, secy

Bss, Dhaka

Shawkat Mahmud and Kamal Uddin Sabuj have been elected president and general secretary of the Jatiya Press Club (JPC) respectively.

The biennial election to the executive committee of the club was held on Friday.

Other office-bearers are Farid Hossain - senior vice-president, Abdur Rahman Khan - vice-president, Kazi Ranwak Hossain and Bakhtiar Rana - joint secretaries, Syed Abdal Ahmed - treasurer, and members - Parvin Sultana Musa Jhuma, Nurul Hasan Khan, Badul Alam, Nurul Huda, Mostafa Kamal Majumder, Khaled Haider, Rozy Ferdous, Shehab Uddin Ahmed Nafa, Mamta Bilki Banu and Farida Yasmin.



Yanan, Kallol OCAB president, gen secy

Huang Yanan of Xinhua News Agency and Qadir Kallol of BBC have been elected president and general secretary of the Overseas Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (OCAB) respectively for 2007, says a press release.

The election was held at the National Press Club on Saturday.

Other elected office-bearers are vice-president - Moslem Uddin Ahmed (Gemini News Service, UK), joint secretary - Khondker Hasnat Karim (Millat Gazeette/Turkish Daily, Turkey) and treasurer - Bashudeb Dhar (Dainik Statesman, Kolkata).

And the members are Ahmed Matir Rahman (Qalam Weekly, Kolkata), Farid Ahmed (Inter-press Service, Philippines), Hassan Shahriar (Newsweek, USA), Rahman Jahangir (Saudi Gazette, KSA), Sk. Enamul Hoque (Radiance Views Weekly, India) and Shamim Ahmad (UNI, India).

Cattle markets abuzz with customers but price very high

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The city cattle markets witnessed a flood of customers yesterday busy buying sacrificial animals with the Eid-ul-Azha knocking at the door.

The 14 cattle markets of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), which didn't see much sale in the last few days, became vibrant with the buying and selling of cows, goats, buffaloes and other cattle.

Cows are sold between Tk 25,000-35,000 and larger sized

goats between Tk 15,000 20,000, said the traders.

Goats whose price ranges between 2,500-5,000 have the highest demand, added the traders.

The soaring prices of sacrificial animals have gone beyond the average capacity of middle and lower middle class income group, complained the customers while visiting different cattle markets in the city.

"Though there is a huge supply of sacrificial animals, the price is still

too high for us to pay," said a buyer disappointed to see the sky rocketing price of animals.

The traders however said the high costing of cattle rearing is the prime cause of the price hike.

"We would rather prefer to bring the cattle back home than to sell them at a low price in the market," said a cattle trader, unwilling to compromise the price.

Supply of cattle to the city markets however continues to rise.

JP can't take part in polls without Ershad Party leaders tell EU delegation

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Party (Ershad) yesterday informed the visiting election observation mission from the European Union that they could not take part in the elections without

DU ALUMNI ASSOC Manzur Elahi, Raquibuddin re-elected president, secy

Syed Manzur Elahi and Raquibuddin Ahmed have been re-elected president and secretary general of DU Alumni Association respectively, says a press release.

Their panel also made a landslide victory securing all the 33 posts of the executive committee for the period of 2007-09. The election was held on Friday.

The Annual General Meeting of the association was also held before the election at the TSC auditorium, with its President Syed Manzur Elahi in the chair. More than 1000 alumni members attended the meeting. Dr Zahidul Islam, Abul Mal Abdul Muhit, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, Mahub Talukder and Abdus Salam took part in the discussion.

Other elected office-bearers of the association are vice-presidents - AF Shahed Ali, Selina Khaleque and Md Abdul Quayyum.

Earlier, Abbasuddin Ahmed was elected treasurer unopposed.

Liberation War Museum closed from Jan 1 to 3

Liberation War Museum will remain closed from January 1 to 3 on account of Eid-ul-Azha, says a press release.

The normal activities of the museum will resume on January 4.

Execution of Saddam condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political parties and student organisations yesterday condemned execution of Saddam Hussein, former president of Iraq.

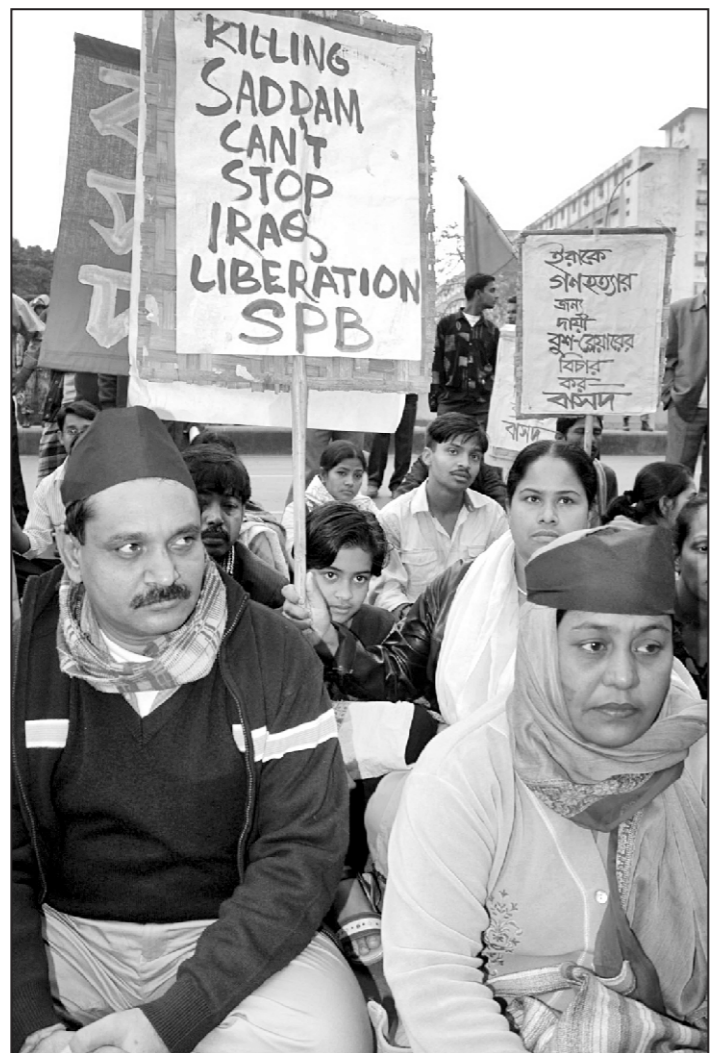
Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Manjurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Muzahidul Islam Selim in a statement said the US government has no right to execute Saddam through a farcical trial, rather US President Bush should be executed first for the sake of world peace, security and justice.

Workers Party of Bangladesh staged a demonstration and held a rally at Mukhtangan in the city condemning execution of Saddam.

Leaders of the party urged the nation and global citizens to be united against US imperialism.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JCD) Executive President Prof Md Shafik and General Secretary Abdul Malek in a statement said the politics of violence has been instigated through the farcical trial of Saddam.

Other political parties, including 11-party, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Chhatra Maitree, Bangladesh Jubo Maitree, Jatiya Sramik Federation Bangladesh, Citizens' Rights Movement, Gonosanghati Andolon and five-left leaning party also condemned the execution of Saddam.



Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal stages a demonstration at Mukhtangan in the city yesterday condemning the execution of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

WEATHER TODAY graphic with sun and clouds.

Fall in temperature likely

Weather will remain dry over the country with moderate to thick fog over the river basins in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may also occur elsewhere over the country during early morning, Met Office said in a forecast.

It said that slight fall in night temperature is expected over the country.

Highest temperature 26.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 11.1 degree Celsius at Srimgangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:22pm today and rises at 6:42am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with columns: City/Town, Temperature, Humidity in percentage.