

## Seminar on water in city

# Farakka no longer a bilateral issue'

Environment and Forest Minister Albar Hossain yesterday urged the international bodies to consider the Farakka problem as a global issue, reported UNB.

"This is no longer a bilateral issue, it has become a global issue for its adverse impact on the total environment," he said while addressing the inaugural session of a seminar here yesterday morning.

The seminar on "Challenges in Water and Sanitation" at the SPARRSO Building was organised by the NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation in observance of the "World Day for Water."

State Minister for Social Welfare, Fazlur Rahman, UNICEF Representative Rolf C. Carriere, acting Representative of WHO Prof Myo Thew, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Michael Constable and DPHE Chief Engineer Aminuddin Ahmed also addressed the inaugural session. Proshika MUK Executive Director Dr Kazi Faruque Ahmed presided.

The Environment Minister said that the international organisations should come forward to help solve the Farakka problem for saving a part of Bangladesh from desertification caused by unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges water at the upper reaches.

"We want justice, a just share of water in the common river and permanent solution to this man-made problem," he said.

UNICEF Representative Rolf C. Carriere said the major challenge in water sector in the country was the water level declining below the suction level. A large number of suction pumps become non-functional for several months prior to the monsoon rain, he added.

Referring to diarrhoea as another main problem, Carriere said, everyday over 700 children die in the country of this water-borne disease. "This also affects the child's nutritional status and hamper

her or his full physical and mental development."

The UNICEF official emphasised topmost priority to hygiene education, particularly proper hand washing before handling food and after defecation. Proper hand washing can reduce infection by over 30 per cent in the community, he said.

Prof Myo Thew in his speech called for creating awareness about using safe water and ensuring supply of adequate and safe water to reduce the deadly effect of the water-borne diseases.

Michael Constable said water is most vital for human life. Bangladesh has water but the use of polluted water makes this valuable resource dangerous.

Recalling his visit to the Sundarbans, the UNDP official expressed his apprehensions about the negative effects of excessive water salinity on the mangrove forest. A rapid action is a must to save this valuable forest resource, he said.

In his presidential speech, Dr Kazi Faruque Ahmed expressed his concern at the fall of water level in different parts of the country and said the scarcity of water is a serious threat to the people as well as ecology of the country.

Three papers were presented in the working session of the day-long seminar participated by representatives from government and non-government organisations.

The papers presented were: "Water Resources Development in Bangladesh with Focus on Drinking Water Supply" by Dr Mohammad Ali Bhuiyan of BUET, "Environment and Diarrhoea" by Dr Bilqis Amin Hoque of ICDDR, "North South Dialogue on Environment Development" by Dr Saleemul Haque of Bangladesh Centre for Advancement Studies and "Intensifying Good Sanitation and Hygiene Practice: NGOs Can Make a Substantial Difference" by Philip Van of UNICEF.

## Patriot deployment in ROK may lead to war: DPRK

HONG KONG, Mar 22: North Korea said today that US President Bill Clinton's decision to deploy patriot anti-missile systems in South Korea could lead to war, reports Reuter.

"This is a provocative step to lead the situation to extremes by further aggravating tensions on the Korean peninsula," the British Broadcasting Corp quoted North Korean Radio as saying.

The order by Clinton to deploy patriot missiles in South Korea is a grave threat to us. This clearly shows that the United States is leading the Korean peninsula to the situation of war."

The radio said the United States had broken up scheduled US-North Korea talks by strengthening its "military threat" to the North and putting pressure on Pyongyang by reviving plans for the team spirit 1994 joint military exercises with South Korea.

Washington called off high-level talks with the North, originally scheduled for Monday in Geneva, after Pyongyang

refused to allow full inspections of its declared nuclear sites in which the west believes the North is building A-bomb.

The United States decided on Monday to deploy the patriot air-defence missiles in South Korea.

**Diarrhoea claims three more in Barisal**

BARISAL, Mar 22: Diarrhoea claimed three more lives and attacked at least 272 people in four districts under Barisal division during 24 hours till Tuesday evening, reports UNB.

According to official sources, the deaths occurred — one each in Bhola, Barguna and Porojpur.

The sources said since early this month, 21 people died and 3,272 were attacked in Barguna, 5 died and 302 attacked in Bhola, 19 died and 1,048 attacked in Patuakhali and 3 died and 250 attacked in Porojpur.

The book recommends construction of a barrage across the Ganges inside Bangladesh and a Brahmaputra barrage within Bangladesh.

They also called on India to

interfere in solving the water-sharing problem with Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP), the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) of India and the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IDS) of Nepal jointly conducted the research.

Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, in his speech drew a parallel between the attack of Pakistan on Bangladesh and the attack of the Nazis on the

DU VC's office

the voters, assaulting the members of the minority community, influencing the concerned administration and rigging the election.

Tofael Ahmed, giving a detailed account of what he claimed had happened during the meeting between the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the leaders of the various political parties at Magura on the eve of the polls, said that an apprehension of unfair voting had eventually compelled the CEC to return to Dhaka a few hours ahead of the polling.

Tofael, while recollecting his conversation with CEC Justice Abdur Rouf and his staff members at the office of the local Superintendent of Police (SP) Saturday evening, said that EC Secretary Shamsul Alam felt that the CEC could not stay at Magura where there were chances of trouble during the polls.

Replies to my repeated request to stay at Magura, the CEC told me that he does not change his mind once he decides to do something," Tofael informed the newsmen.

Mohammad Nasim said the government headed by Khaleda Zia had resorted to rig the Magura by-election with a view to frustrating the hard-earned democracy.

A dozen Awami League MPs, including Tofael Ahmed, Sajeda Chowdhury, Mohammad Nasim, Shudhanshu Shekhar Haider and A K M Jahangir narrated their respective experiences during the polls.

All the MPs accused their ruling party counterparts of influencing the results by various means that included bribing

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Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhammandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.



Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina speaking as chief guest at the Liberation War Commemorative Festival — '94 at the National Museum — Star photo

## Explore ways to share region's water resources'

By Staff Correspondent

A group of researchers from Bangladesh, India and Nepal have suggested that the three countries should immediately explore the possibilities of regional cooperation in harnessing the water resources of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna basins.

A book titled "Converting Water into Wealth: Regional Cooperation in Harnessing the Eastern Himalayan Rivers" is the first academic effort to create public opinion for regional cooperation and chart a board-based water management and development programme.

The book, which is the outcome of an extensive research by scholars of the three countries, was launched Tuesday at the Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

The launching ceremony was organised to coincide with the World Day for Water observed Tuesday.

If has been suggested in the book that there should be an agreement soon between Bangladesh and India on the lean flow sharing of the Ganges as a step towards removing the "irritants" and mistrust between the two countries.

The water-sharing issue has become complicated and charged with emotion, but it is not an insurmountable problem, given goodwill on both sides, the authors of the book observe.

"Regional cooperation in the harnessing of the rivers — the Ganges, Brahmaputra and the Meghna — home to the largest concentration of the world's poorest, offers to all the countries gains far beyond anything that can be achieved by isolated national efforts," it says.

The authors also suggest a long-term agreement on the sharing of the Ganges water between Bangladesh and India, but speak against the Indian proposal for a Brahmaputra-Ganges link canal to augment the flow of the Ganges.

The book recommends construction of a barrage across the Ganges inside Bangladesh and a Brahmaputra barrage within Bangladesh.

They also called on India to interfere in solving the water-sharing problem with Bangladesh.

In his paper Prof Kabir Chowdhury said that the expectation of the people of Bangladesh to live in an independent and sovereign country has been achieved.

"But the absence of true democracy, the rise of fanaticism and communalism, the spread of violence, breakdown of law and order, constant distortion and disintegration of Bengali nationalism and economic exploitation seem to mock every moment the aspirations and ideals of the Liberation War," he remarked.

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BUP chairman Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad briefed the newsmen about the book. Eminent water expert Amjad Hossain Khan and Dr K B Sajjad Rasheed, Professor of the Geography Department, Dhaka University were also present.

**BNP victory**

From Page 1 Col 3

to establish the family control of the Awami League leader. The people had expressed their confidence in a new leadership for fulfilling their hopes and aspirations for development. The by-election had generated massive enthusiasm among the people of Magura for finding escape from years of deprivation, he said.

Talukder said the massive mass contact of Begum Khaleda Zia turned it into a wave of popular support. This was found reflected in the results on March 20, he said.

Salam Talukder said as usual, this time, too the Awami League leaders spoke of probable rigging before polling, by the opponents and threatened to go for agitation if the Awami League candidate was defeated. After the defeat the Awami League took efforts to implement that threat, he added.

He said if the Awami League had won the polls they would have forgotten everything about "rigging and agitation" as they did in the past.

## Seminar on Liberation War told

# 'India got involved not just to help Bangladesh'

By Staff Correspondent

India got involved in Bangladesh's Liberation War of 1971 not just to help the people of this country but also to protect her own sovereignty, Dr Shantimoy Roy, president of Bangladesh-India Moitree Samiti said at the Bangladesh Liberation War Commemorative Festival 1994 yesterday.

"It was a test for India," The Indian historian observed at a seminar attended by intellectuals, members of the diplomatic corps at the National Museum. "The very presence of the Seventh Fleet in the Bay of Bengal posed a severe threat to India's independence and thereby prompted India to help Bangladesh," he elaborated.

Dr Shantimoy recalled the role of the late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in mobilising international support for a sovereign Bangladesh.

He also observed that Bangladesh now needs to wage another war against degraded values which are also common in India and Pakistan.

The British High Commissioner Peter J. Fowler, however, noted that the new war should be aimed at eliminating poverty, illiteracy and repression of women.

These observations were made at the seminar on "Aspiration and Achievement of the Liberation War," with Prof Kabir Chowdhury presenting the key-note paper.

The seminar, organised as part of the commemorative festival was also addressed by British MP Lord David Ennals, Ambassador of the Russian Federation Edward Shevchenko, Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Attorney General Aminul Haq, Ami Hossain Amu, Indian Deputy High Commissioner Amitava Tripathi, Dr Mahmud Hasan with Justice K M Sobhan in the chair.

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Four Sector Commanders of the Liberation War were introduced at the inaugural session attended by Col Shawkat Ali MP, Indian High Commissioner K Raghunath, Ambassador of Bhutan, Deputy Chief of Italian Embassy and other members of the diplomatic corps.

The festival was rounded off with a colourful cultural programme.

From Page 1 Col 4

him of bias and partisanship.

The leaders also said they would boycott the Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) polls under the present vice chancellor.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka University Syndicate and the Election Committee, in separate meetings yesterday, condemned the attack on the VC's office.

The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and the Montu-backed Chhatra League also blamed the pro-Awami League BCL for creating anarchy on the campus to mar the DUCSU polls, he said.

The JCD held a protest-rally around 1:30 pm in front of the Arts Faculty building while the Montu-backed Chhatra League held a rally in front of the DUCSU Bhaban at the same time.

The JCD rally was addressed by its central leaders Nazimuddin Alam, Moniruzzaman, Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anny and Shahjahan Hawlader Sujon.

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## Aid package

From Page 1 Col 4

bursement 1595.1; in 1985-86 commitment 166.4 million and disbursement 1306 million; in 1984-85, commitment 1974.9 million and disbursement 1269.5 million; in 1983-84 commitment 1695.1 million and disbursement 1268.4 million; in 1982-83 commitment 1522.6 million and disbursement 1177.3 million; in 1981-82, commitment 1922.8 million and disbursement 1239.6 million; in 1980-81 commitment 1559.3 million and disbursement 1146.5 million, in 1979-80 commitment 1153.2 million and disbursement 1123.1 million; in 1978-79 commitment 1760.2 million and disbursement 1630 million, in 1977-78, commitment 1147.8 million and disbursement 833.9 million; in 1976-77 commitment 726.9 million and disbursement 534.8 million; in 1975-76 commitment 958.9 million and disbursement 800.5 million; in 1974-75 commitment 1266.7 million and disbursement 901 million; in 1973-74 commitment 555.1 million and disbursement 461.2 million; in 1973-72 commitment 878.4 million and disbursement 551.5 million and in 1971-72 commitment 610.8 million dollars and disbursement 270.8 million dollars.

## Directive to supply quality newsprint to newspapers

Information Minister Nazmul Huda yesterday underscored the need for supplying improved variety of newsprint to the newspapers and directed the organisation concerned to take effective steps in this regard, reports BSS.

Nazmul Huda was presiding over a meeting on proper allocation and supply of newsprint to the newspapers at the Information Ministry.

The meeting was informed that production and supply position of newsprint at present in the country was normal and satisfactory.

The meeting reviewed the demand and supply situation and decided to give priority to newspapers in case of supplying newsprint.

Information Secretary Nuruddin al-Masud, president of Bangladesh Sangbad Pratidin, Prof Majidul Islam, secretary general A Q M Zainul Abedin and representatives of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation attended the meeting.

A three-member review committee has been formed to ensure proper use of newsprint taken by the newspapers and to examine regularly any shortage of newsprint allocated to newspaper concerned.

3 killed as storm hits Rangpur, Gaibandha

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Mar 22: A severe cyclonic storm swept over Rangpur Sunday night leaving two persons dead and five hundred injured. Ten thousand houses were damaged and many trees uprooted.

The deceased were identified as Sakina, 69, of Pirogacha and Mahimuddin, 25, of Gangachara. They died because of house collapse.