

News



Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad speaking at the inaugural function of the Training Course for newly appointed BCS Cadre (Foreign) officers held at the Foreign Services Academy in the city yesterday.

'Diplomats upholding positive image abroad'

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday lauded the Bangladesh diplomats for properly projecting and promoting the country's interests in different regional and international fora, reports BSS.

"Our diplomats have demonstrated their professional skills and earned admiration at home and abroad because of their active involvement in and positive contribution to matters of regional and global interest and concern," Azad said while inaugurating a training course for the would-be diplomats.

He said they (diplomats) have also been able to create a positive image abroad and secured a place of honour in the community of nations, "one of the cherished ideals of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

The inauguration of the third specialised course for the entry-level officers of Bangladesh Civil Service (Foreign Affairs) Cadre was held at the Foreign Service Academy in the city yesterday morning. A total of 13 BCS Foreign Affairs Cadre officers are taking part in the six-month long training programme.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abu Hasan Chowdhury and Foreign Secretary Mustafizur Rahman were present on the occasion. Principal of the academy ambassador Anwar Hashim read out the address of welcome.

Since diplomacy is a specialised and challenging job, the young officers should be properly armed with theoretical and practical training, the minister emphasised. He also said that since it (diplomacy) is a continuous process, diplomats should continue to work in right earnest to consolidate what has been earned and make efforts to attain new successes in the years ahead.

Referring to the phenomenal changes that occurred in the post cold war years in the spheres of international relations, Azad said diplomacy has earned a new dimension with economic issues playing an increasingly important role in the conduct of bilateral and multilateral relations.

The foreign minister said in the context of changed world scenario, Bangladesh has laid special emphasis on "economic diplomacy" with the objectives of promoting exports, attract foreign investment in the country and secure more employment opportunities for Bangladesh nationals in labour-importing countries. A well-trained foreign service can effectively perform this task, he opined.

While wishing success of the trainees, the foreign minister hoped that the training course would enable them to provide with a solid foundation for a professionally rewarding career.

French envoy hosts reception

French Ambassador to Bangladesh Renie Veyret hosted a reception yesterday evening to celebrate the French National Day, reports BSS.

The reception was attended, among others, by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Finance Minister SAMS Kibria, Shipping Minister ASM Abdur Rob, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abu Hasan Chowdhury, politicians, diplomats, senior officials, journalists and the elite of the city.



Many low-lying areas of the city were inundated in yesterday's incessant rain. Some children and a calf enjoying an outdoor 'bath' at Khilgaon Chowdhurypara. — Star photo

Tk 13 lakh gold chains recovered at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

Customs authorities at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) recovered gold chains worth about Tk 13 lakh from a Bangladeshi passenger of Thai Airways flight yesterday.

Airport sources said the passenger told customs officials that he had 500 grams of gold chains with him.

When the official searched his briefcase, they found gold chains weighing about 2,518 grams kept inside two packets wrapped with scotch tapes.

A departmental case was filed with Customs House in this regard.

Programmes to observe death anniversary of Bangabandhu

The government has taken up an elaborate programme to observe the 23rd death anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15 in a befitting manner, an official hand-out said in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The decision was taken at an inter-ministerial meeting held in the seminar room of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs yesterday with State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader in the Chair.

The programmes include placing wreaths at the portrait of father of the nation at the Bangabandhu Museum, offering *fateha* at the mazar of Bangabandhu at the Banani Graveyard where other members of the family of Bangabandhu were buried and exhibition of paintings and photographs at the National Museum. There will also be discussion meetings.

Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television will put up special programmes and all national dailies will bring out special supplements highlighting the significance of the occasion.

The day will be a public holiday. National flag will fly halfmast atop all government and private buildings on the day.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will place wreaths at the portrait of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Bangabandhu Museum at Dhanmondi at 5:30 am and guard of honour will be accorded by the Armed Forces. The Prime Minister will also place wreaths at the Banani Graveyard.

Bangladesh Television will telecast the programmes live from the Bangabandhu Museum.

A discussion titled "Bangabandhu and Bangladesh" will be held at Tungipara on the occasion. Loans based on self-reliance would be distributed among the distressed and unemployed youths at Tungipara and elsewhere in the country on the day.

Different organisations under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs have chalked out elaborate programmes in observance of the day.

Islamic Foundation and Institute of Fine Arts will organise painting exhibitions.

Hasina felicitates French PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday congratulated Lionel Jospin, Prime Minister of France, for winning the World Cup football, reports UNB.

In a message to Jospin, the Bangladesh Prime Minister said "We have witnessed with great admiration France's remarkable and decisive victory in the World Cup Final held on July 12."

It is a befitting tribute to a great sporting nation like France where the very idea of a World Cup tournament in soccer germinated several decades ago.

BKB disburses loans over Tk 7cr in Chuadanga last fiscal

CHUADANGA, July 14: The Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) disbursed an amount of Taka 7.32,34,000 in agriculture and other loans among people of four thanas of Chuadanga district during the last financial year, reports BSS.

The thanas are Chuadanga Sadar, Alamdanga, Damurhuda and Jibannagar.

The loans were disbursed through ten branches of BKB in Chuadanga district.

According to an official source, the loans were disbursed for cultivation of IRRI-boro, aus, aman, paddy, wheat and sugarcane, for purchase of cattle heads, tractors and for investment in other business.

The disbursement rate of loan during the last fiscal by BKB in Chuadanga district was 102 per cent.

On the other hand, the bank realised Taka 6.94,24,000 in outstanding loans from the district as against its target of Taka 7,65,00,000 during the last financial year.

The outstanding loan recovery rate of the bank during the last fiscal in the district was 91 per cent.

Bangladeshi gets Democratic Party nomination for State Senate in US

NEW YORK, July 14: Moshed Alam, a first generation Bangladeshi-American, has made history by securing Democratic Party nomination for the New York State Senate, reports UNB.

Alam became the first South Asian to be elected to New York city's community education board two years ago.

If voted to the State Senate in the election scheduled in November, he will be the first South Asian ever to join such an exclusive club normally reserved for national and state level power brokers.

Alam is very confident about his chances. "I know this will be an uphill battle, but you can't count me out," he told UNB in an exclusive interview.

Getting nominated by the Democratic Party, one of the two major parties in USA, was indicative of the support he enjoys. His position was further bolstered after he won endorsement from the Liberal Party, a small but nationally influential party.

Alam will face a stiff challenge from Frank Padavan, a Republican senator, Padavan has won this seat 12 times, making this seat "rock solid" for the Republican party.

This is not a "sacrificial seat" for the Democratic Party, Alam claimed. "In fact, I have quite realistic chances of winning," he said.

If the current coalition of the Democratic and Liberal parties holds a enough black and immigrant voters come out on the election day, we may create a genuine history," added Alam.

Unlike his Republican opponent, Alam is running on a pro-immigrant and pro-affirmative action platform. His campaign platform calls for greater unity among New York's different ethnic groups. He is also for strengthening city's public school system and increasing fund for public hospitals.

Alam's candidacy has generated great interest among South Asians, especially Bangladeshis, living in New York. Several fund raising events have so far been held to assist Alam in his campaign.

"His victory will be a victory for all South Asians," said Dr Sabhyasachi Dasgupta. An immigrant from West Bengal and fellow school board member, Dasgupta told UNB that Americans of Indian and Pakistani origin were fully supporting Alam.

"But we need the blacks and other minority groups to make this happen," he said.

National workshop on health held

A national workshop was held at the IJO auditorium to finalise and acquire technical guidelines for child survival interventions of the government and NGO sector as part of the newly developed Essential Services Package (ESP), says a press release.

The government has started these workshops with the aim of implementing the newly developed Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSP).

Ershad to visit Barisal tomorrow

Jatiya Party chairman HM Ershad will pay a three-day visit to Barisal from Thursday, reports UNB.

The JP leader will address a meeting of local party leaders and workers and exchange views with local journalists on the way.

He will also address a public meeting at Bell Park premises on Friday, said a party press release.

Vegetables retailing at double wholesale prices in city markets

By Govinda Shil

The vegetable retailers were charging high prices, often more than double and triple the wholesale prices, in the city's kitchen markets, this Daily Star correspondent found in an investigation yesterday.

At Kawran Bazar wholesale market, five kilograms of green chilli was selling at Tk 65 to Tk 70, meaning Tk 14 per kg of chilli. However, it was found selling at Tk 40 to Tk 50 per kg at the Kawran Bazar retail market, only 100 yards from the wholesale market.

Similarly, one kilogram of onion in wholesale market was selling at Tk 18 to Tk 22, while in retail market the price varied from Tk 26 to Tk 28.

The wholesale price of brinjal was found to be Tk 8 per kg, while it was retailing at Tk 12 to Tk 14.

The price disparity for lady's finger was almost double. It was selling at wholesale rate of Tk 7 to Tk 8 per kg, while the retail price was Tk 12 to Tk 14.

The prices of essentials registered a sharp increase in the city's kitchen markets in the last ten days, market sources said.

They said price of green chilli might rise further from its current price of Tk 40 per kg due to scarcity of the item.

"Chilli plants have been uprooted because of sudden heavy rains," said a wholesaler at Kawran Bazar, the largest kitchen market in the city.

A green chilli wholesaler, Golam Mia, said one kg of the item was selling at Tk 10 to Tk 12 in Pabna, a centre of kitchen items in the country. "The growers have cut the chilli plants as sudden heavy rain flooded their farms," he said.

The wholesaler said that chilli price might rise soon when stocks run out in 15 days. "You will have to buy at Tk 70 to Tk 80 a kg after 15 days," he said.

An onion wholesaler, Isha Haq, said its price might fall by next week. "I am selling at Tk 20 per kg and I hope it would go down to Tk 15 or Tk 16 in the next seven days," he said adding that the price of onion increased mainly due to the sudden rain which rotted a huge stock.

Rice prices have also increased by 50 paise to one taka per kg. One kilogram of IRRI rice is selling at Tk 14 against last week's price of Tk 13.50. Paizam of Dinajpur was selling at Tk 16.50 to Tk 17 against previous week's price of Tk 16 to Tk 16.50.

Last week, one kg of *nazir-shail* was selling at Tk 17, while it has gone up to Tk 17.50 to Tk 18 this week, market sources said.

Meanwhile, talking to The Daily Star, Commerce Secretary Alamgir Farouk Chowdhury said the government could not fix the prices of essentials in a free market economy.

"Prices fluctuate depending on supply and demand position of a particular item," he said.

When his attention was drawn to the huge price difference between wholesale and retail markets, he said the government could only urge the traders not to go for super profits.

Wednesday 15th July

(All programmes are in local time but subject to last minute change)

BBC
8:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 8:30 Asia Today 8:40 World Business Report 9:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 9:30 Asia Today 9:40 World Business Report 10:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 10:30 World Focus: Reporters 11:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 11:30 World Living: The Travel Show 12:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 12:30 World Focus: Reporters 3:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 3:30 World Focus: Reporters 4:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 4:30 World Focus: Reporters 5:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 5:30 World Focus: Reporters 6:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 6:30 World Focus: Reporters 7:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 7:30 World Focus: Reporters 8:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 8:30 World Focus: Reporters 9:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 9:30 World Focus: Reporters 10:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 10:30 World Focus: Reporters 11:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 11:30 World Focus: Reporters 12:00 BBC World 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