



Sewage spilling out of a manhole near Faridabad Madrassah in the city for the last three to four days, polluting the environment, but no action has yet been taken by the authorities concerned to clean the road. — Star photo

# Child rights should figure prominently in Colombo Summit today: AI

As the SAARC leaders are poised to meet in Colombo Summit today, Amnesty International yesterday said child rights should be placed at the centre of their agenda if they are really committed to a better future for the region, reports UNB.

"To be truly holistic, all governments must address the entire range of abuse that children suffer — in custody, family, community and in armed conflict," it said. All the SAARC governments have made a commitment to uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). At the Male Summit in 1997, the governments agreed to pursue a holistic approach to address the problems of disadvantaged children in the region.

There is a gap between rhetoric and reality. This must be closed if the forthcoming SAARC Decade of the Rights of the Child is to bring about real change in South Asia," said the AI.

take decisive measures to ensure that state officials, businesses, schools and parents do not deny children their rights.

In this regard, the AI mentioned its report released earlier, this year which detailed widespread abuses facing children in the region.

The report highlighted the use of bonded labourers in condition of "virtual slavery" and trafficking of huge number of girls from Nepal and Bangladesh to work in the sex industry in India and Pakistan.

Often with the acquiescence of the state officials, in addition, the report documented how armed groups in the region have deliberately killed, tortured and intimidated children and recruited them to fight as soldiers despite the safeguards in international human rights and humanitarian law which forbid these activities.

The AI called upon the government leaders attending the SAARC Summit to amend domestic legislation to bring it fully in line with international standards, give clear signal to

law enforcement officials that those who violate the child rights will be punished and ensure that funds are available to secure the smooth operation of the judicial process for children.

It also urged the SAARC governments to join international efforts to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers and halt the use of land mines which have devastated consequences for the lives of many children.

The recent preoccupation with the nuclear issue in the region may deflect critical resources and attention away from the needs of the children," said the Amnesty International.

It said: Children are the real key to the region's future. It is only when society ensures the freedom and dignity of children — creating the conditions in which they can develop their potential — that they have the chance to grow to a full and satisfying adulthood and assume a constructive role in the society.

The AI said it believes that ensuring the provision of ade-

quate education, social welfare, health and juvenile justice system is an essential step towards the enforcement of children's fundamental rights.

"SAARC initiatives should address the full range of human rights problems faced by children in each country and should not fall short of obligations governments have made when ratifying the CRC," it said.

The AI said: As frequently recommended by the Committee on the Rights of Child, the monitoring body of experts established under the CRC, governments should fully consult with NGOs in the region to ensure that all initiatives reflect the many dimensions of the problem.

"This year's SAARC Summit take place in the 50th anniversary year of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights," the AI said adding South Asian governments should mark the anniversary by taking concrete action to improve the lives of the region's children, rather than making another round of unfulfilled promises.

## BUET teachers withdraw 'objectionable' comments

By Staff Correspondent

The 13 teachers of Architecture Department of BUET, who had resigned, in a joint letter to the Vice-Chancellor have withdrawn the "objectionable" comments in their earlier letter to the VC seeking withdrawal of their resignation, sources said yesterday.

Along with the joint letter, the 13 teachers also submitted individual letters to the VC for reconsideration of this authorities' acceptance of their resignation, sources said.

"Nothing was written in that letter to hurt any one's feelings. We withdraw all those comments found to be objectionable and hunting," the recent joint letter said.

The 13 teachers had resigned en masse protesting new admission rules in the department. Their resignation was accepted by the BUET Syndicate on April 26.

Classes resumed at the BUET on July 14 but architecture students "have" been abstaining from attending classes demanding return of those 13 teachers on the campus. Classes were suspended on June 17, only three days after the teachers suspended their six-week strike, because a section of students refused to attend classes during the World Cup football.

## AL workers urged to serve flood-hit people unitedly

By Staff Correspondent

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives and General Secretary of Dhaka City Awami League Mofajjal Hossain Chowdhury Maya (Bir Bikram) urged the party workers to serve the flood-affected people unitedly, upholding the ideology of dedication, reports BSS.

The state minister was addressing an extended meeting of Dhaka City Awami Jubo League (South) as the chief guest at the party office yesterday with president of the Jubo League (South) Abul Kashem Mantu in the chair.

Mofajjal Hossain said the politics of Awami League is dedicated to the cause of the distressed, helpless and poor with the spirit of sacrifice.

The meeting was addressed, among others, by the General Secretary of the Unit Amir Hossain Gaji, Abdul Huq Sabuj, SM Hossain Kajor and Abul Kalam Azad.

## Myanmar trade team meets Faezul

By Staff Correspondent

The visiting Myanmar business promotion delegation yesterday called on State Minister for Jute AK Faizul Haq and discussed matters of mutual interests, reports BSS.

The State Minister welcomed the delegation and said that the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been pursuing a policy of economic liberalisation and market economy.

He told the Myanmar delegation that the government has attached top priority to widen scope for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and export-led growth strategy. Bangladesh now offers a congenial environment for foreign investment, he added.

Faezul Haq also hoped that the Myanmar investors would take the advantage of the investment friendly climate that exists in Bangladesh. He also stressed the need for exploring new avenues between the two countries to increase trade volume.

The delegation was headed by Aik Htun, Vice Chairman, Asia Wealth Bank Ltd. Among others, Ambassador of Myanmar in Dhaka Tint Lwin, Ambassador of Bangladesh in Myanmar, Jahangir Saadat, President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry Maksud Khan were present.

## Newspapers hail Blair's Cabinet reshuffle

By Staff Correspondent

LONDON, July 28: British Prime Minister Tony Blair today was completing a ministerial reshuffle widely interpreted as stamping his mark on government at the expense of his powerful Finance Minister, Gordon Brown, reports Reuters.

A day after he sacked four Cabinet ministers and promoted allies to key positions, Blair was poised to announce a string of junior ministerial appointments that would reward loyalist modernisers.

The reshuffle, the first since Blair swept to power in May 1997, was hailed by British newspapers as a triumph for the prime minister.

By promoting loyal lieutenants to the heart of the government, Blair had made clear that he, not Chancellor of the Exchequer Brown, was the real power in government, the papers said.

"Blair tightens grip as Brown feels the squeeze," said the Independent's front-page headline.

"Blair's scalpel shows Brown who is the boss," was the verdict of the right-leaning Daily Mail. "The authority of the prime minister over the chancellor has been asserted," said the Times. "The Cabinet is now

## Seminar told One million people involved in poultry farms

By Staff Correspondent

Some one million people are directly or indirectly involved in nearly 60,000 poultry farms across the country, reports BSS.

This was told at a seminar on "Soyabean meal utilisation in poultry feed," held in the city with Director General of Livestock Services Dr K A Fattah in the chair.

Jointly organised by American Soyabean Association (ASA) and Bangladesh Poultry Industries Association (BPIA), the seminar was addressed by Regional Director of Asia Sub-continent of ASA Virgil Meidema, Director of ASA Zahid Rasool and secretary general of BPIA Syed Abu Siddique.

They said poultry diet is the major factor for smooth growth of poultry in any country of the world.

The fish meal and bone meal, now used as poultry diets in the country, are costly, they said. But, the soyabean meal is cheaper and it is most widely used vegetable protein source in poultry diets, they added.

The speakers stressed the need for flourishing the poultry industry to meet the country's protein deficiency and urged the investors to invest more in the poultry sector as one can earn profit from this sector through minimum investment.

## Body formed to observe death anniversary of poet Abu Zafar

By Staff Correspondent

A 38-member committee has been formed with Shamsur Rahman and Belal Chowdhury as its president and general secretary respectively for observing the 23rd death anniversary of poet Sikander Abu Zafar on August 5, says a press release.

The committee was formed at a meeting held in the city on Sunday.

The committee titled "Sikander Abu Zafar Saran Utsab Committee" will arrange and coordinate programmes marking the death anniversary of the poet.

An 11-member advisory committee has also been formed in this connection.

The 38-member committee includes Dr Anisuzzaman, Syed Shamsul Haq, Fayed Ahmed, Nirmalendu Gossain, Santosh Saha, Selina Hossain, Santosh Gupta, and Hayat Mamud.

And the advisory committee consists of Begum Sufia Kamal, Kalim Sharaif, Sudhin Das, Dr Abdullah Al-Muti Sharaifuddin, Zillur Rahman Siddiqui and Prof Kabir Chowdhury.

## Govt taking steps for post-flood rehabilitation programme

By Staff Correspondent

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman yesterday said the government has undertaken effective measures to mitigate the sufferings of flood victims through distribution of sufficient relief materials, report BSS.

Talking to newsmen at his office, the minister said that the government was allocating necessary relief materials daily to the affected areas. Proper supply and distribution of relief are also being ensured, he added.

Zillur said the union level Awami League relief committees are working in the flood-affected areas to help the flood victims and they will also take part in the rehabilitation programme for welfare of the common people.

The minister exchanged views with the newsmen about the present flood situation and relief operation in the country as well as the rehabilitation programme to reconstruct damaged rural roads, bridges and culverts, educational institutions and other rural infrastructures.

"All these work will be undertaken as soon as the flood waters recede," he said adding that the government is taking all-out measures for post-flood rehabilitation programme.

Zillur Rahman called upon the people to face the flood situation with courage and fortitude and urged the affluent section of the society to extend their help for the flood victims.

## CU defends tuition fee hike

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 28: The Chittagong University authorities have defended the enhancement of tuition fees at the university, saying the increase was necessary to ensure the quality of education.

The CU authorities resolved that the increase in tuition fees and other charges was justified, said a press release issued Monday.

It noted that the current monthly tuition fee is Taka 12. It was fixed in 1966 when the university was started. The residential charge for each student was Tk 8 per month but the actual cost for each student is Tk 363 per month.

The press release also noted that the university has to spend Tk 25,566 per student every year.

It said the tuition fees and other charges for students of the Arts, Law and Social Science faculties have been increased to Tk 664, Science Faculty Tk 775 and Commerce Faculty Tk 669.

The university pays Tk 6 lakh every month for transport purpose, the press release added.

## Press Council verdict News on Rina Sultana false

By Staff Correspondent

Rina Sultana Kibria in a statement on Monday said the Press Council has said that the news published in the Banglabazar Patrika on her was false and baseless, reports UNB.

"The council in a verdict on July 23 said the news was published to tarnish my image and that of my relatives, especially of my father-in-law Finance Minister SAMS Kibria," she said.

She said the council said that the news saying that Reena Sultana had earned a lot of money in the share market scam was a violation of ethics of journalism.

## BOU SSC exam results soon

By Staff Correspondent

Results of the SSC examinations of the first batch of students under Bangladesh Open University is expected to be published within a week.

Official sources told BSS that in the first batch 16,000 students were enrolled under the SSC course while 1,000 of them appeared in the examination.

## More organisations condemn killing of Rubel

By Staff Correspondent

More organisations yesterday condemned the killing of Shamim Reza Rubel in DB police custody Thursday and demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits responsible for the incident.

Condemning the killing, Gano Forum (GF) said exemplary punishment to the killers is a must to achieve people's trust and to contain the eroding law and order situation. GF at a meeting yesterday also urged the government to take steps to ensure its transparency, accountability and rule of law.

The news concerning the killing of 35 persons in police custody and in jails as well as the fact of police torture on an average 80 persons everyday in the city justify the allegation that the law enforcing agencies have been unleashing administrative terrorism, GF said.

In another statement National Legal Aid Network condemned the killing of Rubel and urged the government to ensure punishment to the persons involved. "Torture by police in the name of maintaining law and order is a gross violation of human rights," the statement said.

Meanwhile, the Institute of Democratic Rights (IDR) in a statement stated the killing of four persons by police firing at Baburabad in Satkhira on Monday.

"The incidents of violating laws have been increasing and the people in law enforcing agencies are involved in abusing their positions, IDR said.

Demanding a probe into the incident, IDR urged the Home Minister to intervene into the matter and provide the aggrieved family with compensation.

## Bus dacoity in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, July 28: A daring bus dacoity was committed Monday at Dashedani under Bagerhat Sadar thana.

The alleged dacoits numbering eight looted over Taka eight lakh in cash and gold ornaments worth over Tk one lakh at gun point from the passengers who included 11 rice traders and six women. The rice traders were coming to Khulna for buying rice from wholesalers. All of them hail from Pirojpur district.

The alleged dacoits boarded the bus from Shirghat baily bridge in the guise of passengers and committed dacoity at Dashedani by overpowering the driver at gun point, police said.

Later, they escaped with looted money and gold ornaments in a white microbus that was waiting there.

Five passengers including driver Noor Mohammad and conductor Akbar were injured when they tried to resist the dacoits.

## BDRCS starts relief distribution

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) yesterday started its first phase of flood relief activities in the affected areas across the country, BDRCS officials said, reports BSS.

At least 20,000 flood-affected families in different districts will receive assistance under the first-phase operation.

Each family under this programme will receive 10 kilograms of chira and two kilograms of gur.

The BDRCS officials said after completion of the first phase activities, the society will cover 80,000 flood-hit families across the country and each affected family will get 30 kilograms of rice and five kilograms of pulse in the second phase.

BDRCS chairman Major General (ret'd) Abdus Salam, MP, has directed the officials concerned and volunteers of the society to distribute the relief materials properly.

Meanwhile, two teams of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) yesterday visited flood-hit areas in the Dhaka, Tangail, Sirajganj and Pabna districts.

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## Speaker will visit flood-hit areas in Sylhet tomorrow

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, July 28: Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Alhaj Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury will visit the flood affected areas in Sylhet division on Thursday.

A fax message sent from the Speaker's office yesterday afternoon said, the Speaker will be accompanied by the Prime Minister's Parliamentary Affairs Advisor Suranjit Sengupta MP, State Minister for Relief Talukder Abdul Khaleque and Chairman, Standing Committee on Ministry of Industry Dewan Farid Gazi MP.

The young physician was suffering from leukemia for the last two and half years.

Ikrumul Karim was the son-in-law of martyred intellectual Dr Abdul Alim Chowdhury and head mistress of Udayan High School Shaymoli Nasreen Chowdhury.

His qulkhwani will be held after Asr prayers at his Uttara residence today. All his relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the programme.

Meanwhile, Ekatturer Ghatok Dallil Nirmla Committee has consoled the death of Dr Ikrumul Karim, son-in-law of his central committee member Shaymoli Nasreen Chowdhury.

## Beg's qulkhwani today

From Staff Correspondent

Eminent photographer 'Alochchit' MA Beg's qulkhwani will be held after Asr prayers today at Beg Art Institute, Laboratory Road, says a press release.

Family members have requested all of his well-wishers, friends and students to attend the qulkhwani and pray for the departed soul.

## Law minister leaves for Morocco

By Staff Correspondent

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru left Dhaka yesterday for Morocco to attend the Al-Quds conference of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), reports UNB.

King Hasan of Morocco is expected to inaugurate the day-long meet tomorrow at Casablanca city. Foreign Ministers of 16 other member countries will also participate in the conference.

Khasru is leading a 2-member delegation in the conference.



Democracywatch brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting the killing of Rubel. — Star photo

## HERE and THERE

By Staff Correspondent

### BIBM

A 15-day training course on "international trade finance" concluded in the city yesterday at the Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM), reports BSS.

Dr Muinul Islam, Director General, BIBM, presided over the concluding session and gave away the certificates among the participants.

A total of 65 officers from different banks and financial institutions participated in the course. The course was designed with a view to familiarising the participants with different foreign exchange market operations, exchange rates determination, managing foreign exchange risks and operation of different foreign currency accounts.

The course also dealt with the techniques, laws, principles, documentation and procedures followed in financing foreign trade of the country.

### Seminar on HR in Bangladesh

Chief Executive of Bangladesh Foundation of Human Rights and researcher of the Institute for Intercultural Formation and European Studies

Principal Delwar Jahid said violation of human rights cannot be stopped until alleviation of poverty and the rule of law are ensured in Bangladesh, says a press release.

He said a democratic government should enforce the rule of law. Black laws, like the Special Powers Act cannot ensure rule of law and there is no justification to the existence of this law in a democratic country.

Principal Delwar was speaking as chief guest at the seminar, organised by the Bangladesh Community in Offenburger, Germany on "Democracy and Human Rights in Bangladesh" on Sunday.

Presided over by Aminul Hoque Babul, the function was addressed, among others, by Tarikul Islam, Fazlul Hoque, Ali Azam, Mizanur Rahman Milon, Dananjay Kumar Chakma and Zakir Hossain.

Referring the report of US State Department on human rights situation in Bangladesh, Principal Jahid also said that, there are many forms of unacceptable child labour exist in Bangladesh. Exploitation of women and children must be stopped.

The speakers of the seminar demand for a civil secular society in Bangladesh to uphold democracy and human rights.

### Admission to BOU HSC programme begins Aug 3

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Open University (BOU) has introduced a two-year formal course for Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) from this year, reports BSS.

Over 16,000 students will be enrolled under the programme this year and admission of the first batch of students will begin on August 3, official sources said.

Qualification for admission to this course is SSC or equivalent level pass but there is no age limit for the students.

Preparation for student-support materials like publication of books and recording of cassettes have already been completed and the classes will start in the beginning of September, the sources said.

The books are written to suit the instruction system of BOU but followed the HSC curriculum of the existing public education boards, the sources added.

"Fertilizer supply situation satisfactory"

The Advisory Committee on fertilizer distribution at a meeting yesterday observed that the supply, stock and price situation of fertilizer in the country is satisfactory, reports UNB.

Committee Chairman Food and Agriculture Advisor AM Anisuzzaman chaired the meeting held at the conference room of the Agriculture Ministry.

The meeting directed the officials concerned to ensure proper management of the stocked fertilizer.

It also asked them to gear up the ongoing campaign about the utility of DAP fertilizer and its utilisation.

Food and Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Political Advisor to the Prime Minister Suranjit Sengupta, Alhaj Tazul Islam, Agriculture Secretary Dr AMM Shakwat Ali and senior officials were present.