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## Asian Media and Rice conference begins in Bangkok Dec 3

By Reaz Ahmad

Rice researchers and newsmen from the world's leading rice producing countries will meet in Bangkok on December 3-5 to take the challenge of meeting the rising global food demand.

An international conference titled 'Asian Media and Rice' will draw some 300 media men from 11 countries and rice researchers and experts in the Thai capital to discuss prospects of increasing rice production and the role of media.

International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and Asia Rice Foundation (ARF) are jointly organising the meet in the backdrop of the reality that an additional 10 million tonnes of rice will have to be produced every year to face the growing demand. ARF is a new regional body set up to provide long-term and sustainable financial support for rice research and development.

"With more than 90 per cent of the world's rice grown and consumed in Asia and an expected 1.4 billion new rice consumers to be added by 2025, efforts towards increasing rice

production must be sustained," says a press release issued by IRRI on the eve of the conference. A copy of the press release was made available to The Daily Star.

Three participants from Bangladesh including this correspondent, and also from India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, China, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam would be joined by representatives of public and private sectors in Thailand to discuss all aspects of rice - research, trade and culture.

Thrust would be given to look into the issue of policy-makers' giving lesser importance to rice than what it actually deserves, says IRRI.

Kwanchai A. Gomez, a long-time IRRI veteran now heading the ARF told this correspondent through an E-mail from Bangkok that she hoped the upcoming conference would foster a more cordial professional relationship among all participants bearing in mind the need to help realise the vision -- "a

Mentionably, cultivation of hybrid rice has started in Bangladesh. The government allowed four private companies to import hybrid varieties from China and India this year.

Twenty-six boys aged between 10 and 15 were arrested allegedly for stealing valuable goods from the Customs godown at ZIA International Airport yesterday.

Sources at ZIA and police said Biman security personnel caught the boys when they were fleeing after stealing the goods.

They told police that they had entered the airport area Sunday afternoon through the export gate of ZIA, got on the roof of the godown and stayed there for about eight hours. They got down at the back side of the godown at about 2 am and entered it without any obstacle.

The boys also told police that one Bahar, leader of a gang involved in thefts in the airport, sent them inside the airport to steal goods.

Bahar gave them a picture of the airport, the godown and possible escape route, they said.

Earlier five alleged thieves were arrested from the Customs godown area on November 27, sources said.

Separate cases were filed with Cantonment thana in connection with the thefts.

It may be mentioned that security agencies including Police, Ansar, Customs Intelligence, Biman Security, Airport Security and Civil Aviation Security are working round-the-clock at ZIA.

**Two DCC staff find job on the line for 'theft'**

By Staff Correspondent

The security officer and social welfare officer of Zone-2 of the DCC have been put under 'suspension' for allegedly stealing relief goods from a store on Thursday, sources concerned said.

The officers were caught "red-handed" and also managed by members of the DCC's Employees' Association as they were loading a truck with relief goods at about 9:30 p.m., the sources added.

A DCC official said that a departmental enquiry was underway and that nothing could be said until the investigation was over.

Theft at the Nagar Bhaban is not new. Over the last one year, toilet fittings, expensive sheds, furniture, office equipment and many other valuables of the DCC have disappeared from the Nagar Bhaban, officials said.

The security officer, Abdur Rahim, had previously faced several charges of theft but got away with them, sources added.

**Two Liberians held in city**

By Staff Correspondent

Detective Branch of police arrested two Liberians from the city's Gulshan area and recovered forged dollars from their possession yesterday evening.

The two are Ismeil, 28, and Hinton, 30, DB sources said.

Following their arrest on suspicion, they were taken to a Gulshan rest house where they used to reside and forged dollars and dollar-sized carbon papers were recovered from there.

With this, 14 Africans were arrested from different parts of the city in a week on charge of currency forgery.

Twelve Africans — 10 Liberians and two Cameroons — were arrested on Wednesday from the city hotels on the charge.

**HC vacation bench set up**

From Page 1

The Chief Justice has set up a vacation bench for hearing and disposal of emergency matters during the vacation of the High Court December 13-31, reports UNB.

The bench, comprising Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim, will sit for hearing emergency matters from 10:30 am to 1 pm on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays during the vacation.

**Cabinet**

From Page 1

The Cabinet found the SEC arguments justified, and revised the original section of the draft law, providing the SEC with the right to formulate rules under the law when necessary.

Under the approved draft, the SEC would be able to make rules. But before that, it has to advertise the proposed rules at least in two national level dailies, seeking objections or recommendation from different quarters concerned.

After the process is over, the SEC would publish the new rules in the government gazette notification.

**Kuldip: Communal agenda**

From Page 1

Activists of Jatiyatabadi Mahila Dal parade the city streets yesterday to protest new taxes and increase in prices of gas and essentials.

—Star photo

## EU relaxes rules of origin

The European Union has relaxed the rules of origin in Bangladesh's knitwear and sweater export to the European countries, BGMEA sources said, reports UNB.

Bangladeshi knitwear and sweater exporters will now get two-tier GSP (Generalised System of Preferences) facility.

EU has allowed Bangladeshi exporters to utilise the two-tier facility in exporting knitwear and sweater to the European countries by importing yarn from any other country.

With the new facility, Bangladesh's export to the European Union is likely to increase significantly.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association President Mostafa Golam Qudus in a statement yesterday congratulated the Prime Minister and the Commerce Minister for the achievement.

### BCL boy

From Page 1

One person was kept at the hospital morgue.

Babu was first taken to DMCH and then shifted to a city clinic, police said.

Two persons were arrested from the college premises following the incident. Police also raided six college hostels but could not recover arms.

No case was filed till the filing of this report last night at 9:45.

**Kuldip: Communal agenda**

Nayak felt bitter about the Congress also. The people in India tried and experienced the Congress for 45 years. It was always non-performing and will not be able to deliver --- so there is really a need for a third force. Eighty-eight per cent of India's population live on a meagre two dollars a day.

The columnist said BJP is not seeing anymore. It definitely has disillusioned the voters. The BJP's fate would be even worse if it goes ahead with its plans to create problems in Varanasi and Mathura".

About India's nuclear explosion, the leading journalist said that it has not helped boost the image of India or the BJP much, because Pakistan also has it.

Going back on the dismal performance of BJP in governing and at the recent polls, Nayak quoted Prime Minister Vajpayee as admitting that his party did not have sufficient experience and they did not know what to do.

About the present Indian political scene, Kuldip Nayak observed, "Congress party does not have a leader and Vajpayee does not have a party."

### Dr Sharfuddin

From Page 1

His *namaz-e-Janaza* will be held at Dhaka University Central Mosque after Zohr Prayers today.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock at the death of Dr Sharfuddin.

In separate messages they condole his death and said that in the death of Dr Sharfuddin the country lost an illustrious son of the soil who made immense contributions to field of science education in Bangali language.

They also vowed to launch an indefinite strike if their demands are not met within December 13.

During the work stoppage, an emergency squad, however, will work to treat patients in the emergency wards.

### One beaten to death in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Nov 30: One person was beaten to death allegedly by his relative at village Haidgaon under Patia thana here today, reports BSS.

According to police and family sources, Abdul Majid and his relative Shahidul Islam were locked in an altercation, but at a certain stage Shahidul started beating Majid and left him critically injured.

Majid was rushed to local thana health complex where doctors declared him dead.

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**Kuldip: Communal agenda**

From Page 1

Congress is not too eager to display that they would push for certain actions. The strategy of Congress seems to be: "Let us sit back and let things worsen and public support would swing back to us on it own."

Congress, he said, would still have to look for support from other parties, including the left to form the next government. In the Lower House of Rajya Sabha comprising 546 seats, the Congress would need 274 seats to form a government. That strength, he felt, the Congress could not garner in the near future without seeking support of smaller third parties.

What about the future of the Congress? Nayak feels that although its performance would not be any better than its previous record, the chances of Congress swinging back to power is enormous.

"In India, the ideal party could be a coalition of third force-- a third force where the left would play an active role. We need a political combine which is not blatantly communal like the BJP or non-performing as the Congress."



SINNED OR SINNED AGAINST: Boys after being caught stealing at Customs godown at ZIA yesterday. Star photo

### ZIA Customs godown

## 26 boys held for stealing

By Staff Correspondent

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## Donors 'impressed' by govt drive to dress up deluge damage

International donors who have so far committed 620.74 million dollar in quick-fix flood-rehabilitation aid of the country met with the government yesterday for further need assessment, reports UNB.

The meeting was held in the National Economic Council conference room in the afternoon. Finance Minister SAMS Kibria briefed the donors on the rehabilitation needs and progress in the rebuilding operation.

High Commissioners and Ambassadors of Canada, Japan, France and European Commission (EC) and UNDP Resident Coordinator, Country Director of World Bank, Resident Representatives of International Monetary Fund and Asian Development Bank were present in the meeting.

Praising the government activities for dressing up the damage caused by the recent deluge, new World Bank Country Director Frederick Temple said he was impressed to see the drive.

He said that WB had committed US\$ 465 million to help deal with the post-flood rehabilitation programme, balance of payments, for funding imports and maintaining the macroeconomic stability.

IMF Resident Representative Ronald Hick told the journalists that the IMF is funding rehabilitation under its emergency assistance programme.

To a question, he said: "It is not true that the IMF has imposed conditions in sanctioning the emergency funds."

ADB Resident Representative Rhiphat Supaphiphat hoped the government would be able to cover up the damage done by the disaster.

**N'ganj hospital docs, nurses go on strike**

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 30:

The doctors, nurses and employees of Narayanganj Hospital started an indefinite strike tonight demanding action against some local goons who attacked and critically injured a hospital employee at around 6:00 pm today.

Shazneen's father

From Page 1

not give the police correct information is not true. On April 21, Shazneen told Hasan that she would tell her father Latifur Rahman to teach him a good lesson.

But nobody informed me of the incident before filing of the FIR. I did not inform police of the incident before filing the FIR. I was not in a mental position to do so. Someone of my residence might have informed the police. I saw some policemen in my residence then. They might have been petrol police.