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PHILIPS

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

By Reaz Ahmad

Rice researchers and news-makers 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 30 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 realise the vision -- "a

prosperous Asia in which all people are well fed and ... its rice-growing land ... be preserved for future generations".

Dr Sadiqul Islam Bhuiyan, IRRI representative in Bangladesh said, with IRRI, headquartered in Manila, working on high-yielding 'Super Rice' right at the moment, the forthcoming conference would definitely cast light on furthering the scientific research.

Another invitee from Bangladesh, Dr Golam Rahman, teacher of mass communication in Dhaka University, feels that rice, the staple food in Bangladesh, the fourth largest rice grower in the world, needs more exposure in local media.

Shykh Siraj, another participant, hopes that the brain-storming in the Thai capital would be immensely beneficial for Bangladesh in increasing rice production.

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.



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

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.

The arrested were identified as Liton, Milon, Abdul Hai, Abdul Majid, Jahurul Islam, Yusuf Hossain, Ebadul, Anwar Hossain, Abdul Rashid, Mohammed Mintu, Khokon, Zaman, Shah Alam, Ratan, Khokon, Sohagh, Akbar Ali, Abdul Mannan, Sujam, Samim, Milon, Asrafur Islam, Abdul Rashid, Chand Miah, Faruq and Ruhul Amin.

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.

### Khulna Divn

## Hunt for criminals today

KHULNA, Nov 30: Police will launch a massive hunt across the ten districts of the division for 'terrorists and criminals' from tomorrow, reports APB.

A high official of the police administration here told the agency that the drive is aimed at improving the deteriorating law and order situation in the division.

Members of the Armed Police and the District Police, under a special arrangement, would take part in the operation to arrest terrorists and anti-social elements, recover illegal arms and check criminal activities, he said.

Earlier in a combing operation in March this year, police recovered 14 rifles, 60 guns, 27 revolvers, 34 pistols, 210 shatter guns and pipe guns. They also rounded up some 300 criminals of the districts.

### PM: Mohila

From Page 1  
with direct election of women in Upazila Parishad and district councils.

The prime minister said in government services, 10 per cent and 15 per cent posts have been kept reserved for women officials and employees respectively while in primary schools the quota for women teachers is 60 per cent.

"We have plans to increase the women quota in primary schools," she said.

Hasina said for the first time in the country's history a woman has become a Secretary to the government. The number of women in other high posts have also been increased in recent period, she added.

The prime minister said day-care centres are being set up in all district towns along with the capital Dhaka, while one such centre has already started working at the Bangladesh Secretariat to facilitate working women. Sufficient numbers of buses have also been introduced in the city for women.

Hasina said half of the beneficiaries of the old age allowance introduced by the present government are women. Besides, a lump sum allowance has also been distributed for poor widows and destitute women recently.

## 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 Representative of International Monetary Fund and Asian Development Bank were present in the meeting.

Later at a joint press briefing, the Finance Minister and the aid officials told newsmen that the rehabilitation programme was going fine.

The total needs for post-flood rehabilitation programme have been estimated at about 941.21 million dollar. However, the UN system verified needs at 741.44 million dollar.

Out of the bailout, the donors have committed to providing US\$620.24 million. The government will spend US\$44.52 million. The gap between the commitments and the verified estimates is US\$ 76.68 million.

However, the need of another US\$199.80 million is yet to be verified by the UN system.

The IMF's quick and substantial response to support the balance of payments to maintain the reserve levels was very much helpful as we are importing lot of rice," Kibria told reporters.

He informed that Bangladesh was set to negotiate the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) early next year.

Replying to a question, the finance minister said the VGF

programme would continue till the end of next month.

He said the country had so far received 767000 MT of wheat and 50643 MT of rice as food aid to feed the flood-hit poor and replenish the stock.

UN Resident Coordinator David Lockwood said the UN system in the country was working hard to help the economy.

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 macro-economic 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 Rhiphit 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

my wife. I did not even call any other members of my family. 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.

I filed the FIR at about 2 am in the night. I went to the police station by a car. My manager Faisal Hossain was with me at that time. There might have been some others with me but I cannot remember now.

Police came to my residence within half an hour to one hour after filing the FIR. My invited guests were certainly in my residence when police came at night.

Nobody informed me of the incident of April 1, 1998 before the murder took place. Nobody told me of that incident even immediately after the filing of the FIR. Police prepared the inquest report at about 3:30 in the night. I cannot say whether police interrogated anybody present in my residence at that time.

The suggestion that I could

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 mention in the FIR that Badal used to help Hasan. I did not also mention in the FIR that Hasan appointed Badal. I did not even mention in the FIR that Badal and Hasan had free access to my residence.

The suggestion that I knew that Badal used to work in the residence of my brother-in-law Iqbal is not correct. The suggestion that Iqbal appointed Badal in my residence is not correct. The suggestion that Hasan did not appoint Badal is not correct.

I did not mention in the FIR that Hasan and Badal appointed Shani Ram as the carpenter. The suggestion that Badal never appointed Shani Ram is correct. He was appointed by Hasan. I cannot say about the working hour of Badal in my residence as he was not my direct employee.

The cross-examination will resume on 11 January, 1999.



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.

Bangladesh knitwear and sweater exporters will now get two-tier GSP (Generalised Systems of Preference) 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  
body 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

From Page 1

Congress is not too eager to display that they would push for any 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 its 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? Nayar 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."

## Interne doctors start 72-hr work stoppage today

By DMC Correspondent

The interns of the eight government medical college hospitals go for a 72-hour work stoppage starting today to press home their six-point demand including doubling of remuneration.

The young doctors under the banner of Young Doctors' Movement Council said they will also hold rallies at the corresponding medical colleges and submit memorandum to the principals.

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 Haidgan 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.

## 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 condoled 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 Bangla language.

Born in Sirajganj on January 1, 1930, Dr Sharfuddin obtained his post-graduate degree in Physics from Dhaka University and later did Ph.D. in Chicago University, USA.

A former secretary of the science and technology ministry, Sharfuddin had a long chequered career and led an illustrious life. He served his country in various capacities -- member of the Kudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission, National Education Committee, president of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, and president of Bangla Academy.

He was actively involved with various organisations like the then Pakistan Shahitya Sangsad, Progati Lekhak Sangha, Kendrio Konchi-Kancher Mela, Bangladesh Shishu Academy, Biggan Sangskriti Parishad, FREPD, Human Development Foundation.

At one stage of his life, Dr Sharfuddin had links with leftist movement. He was imprisoned twice, in 1948 and in 1954.

Dr Sharfuddin, winner of Independence Day Award and 'Ekushey Padak', had many other prestigious awards added to his feather. Those include Bangla Academy Award, Shishu Academy Award, Abul Mansur Ahmed Literature Award, IDE Award, UNESCO Award, Dr Kudrat-e-Khuda Gold Medal, Agrani Bank Award, Shahidul Kaiser Memorial Award, Kazi Mahubulullah Award and Rishiz Award.

A prolific science writer, Dr Sharfuddin has scores of books to his credit. Most of those books are well read and very popular. His writings have played a great role in familiarising general readers of Bangladesh with interesting things of the science world.

Some of his most popular books are: 'Esho Bigganer Rajye' (come to science world), 'Abak Prithibi' (strange world), 'Rohoshyer Shesh Nei' (endless mystery), and 'Biggan O Manush' (science and homoplasms).

Abdullah Al-Muti Sharfuddin also proved his worth in the diversified area of journalism by editing a book on 'Sangbadpatre Bangla Bhasha' (Bengali language in newspaper) and also translated many books into Bangla from other languages.

## 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 the basement of Nagar Bhaban on Thursday, sources concerned said.

The officers were caught 'red-handed' and also man-handled 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 said.

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 Camerons -- were arrested on Wednesday from the city hotels on the charge.

## HC vacation bench set up

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 Fazul 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.

## Jail Killing Case Hearing of bail prayers begins

The hearing of the bail prayers of Obaidur Rahman, MP, Nurul Islam Manjur and Shah Moazzem Hossain, accused in Jail Killing Case, began before a division bench of the High Court Division yesterday, reports APB.

The counsel for petitioners Obaidur Rahman and Nurul Islam Manjur argued that they had not been named as accused in the FIR of the jail killing filed on November 4, 1975.

Counsel Khandker Mahbubuddin Ahmed pleaded that Obaid and Manjur were not involved in any way in the killing of four national leaders inside Dhaka Central Jail.

He said their arrest on charges of being involved in the case was 'absolutely politically motivated'.

Khandker Mahbubuddin further argued that the petitioners had been 'falsely implicated' in the case just before submission of the chargesheet with an intention of harassing and humiliating them.

He went on to argue that on November 4, 1975 both Obaid and Manjur resigned from the Mushtaque cabinet and as such they cannot be implicated in the Jail Killing Case.

Shah Moazzem's counsel Habibul Islam Bhuiyan also argued in the same manner and pleaded for granting bail.

The bench comprising Justice Mohammad Abdul Karim and Justice ABM Khairul Haque will resume hearing of the prayer today.

Khandker Mahbubuddin was assisted by advocate Humayun Kabir Bipul while Advocate Zafar Ahmed, Habibul Islam Bhuiyan for the petitioners.

Deputy Attorneys General M Farooq and KM Saifuddin Ahmed represented the state.

## Share scam

From Page 1

Three of the accused companies challenged the order of taking cognizance by the Metropolitan Magistrate in the court of Sessions Judge, Dhaka and prayed for quashment of the cases. The District and Sessions Judge then sent those to the High Court for reference.

A High Court Division approved the cognizance taken by the Metropolitan Magistrate. The accused went to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. The Appellate Division, after a full-bench hearing, upheld the judgement of the High Court Division and sent the cases to the lower court for trial.

The accused, filed bail petitions and discharge petition in the court yesterday under Section 265c of the CrPc. Hearing the defence lawyer, the court granted them bail.

The prosecution opposed the discharge petition and prayed for time for charge hearing. The court did not take any decision on the discharge petition as the next date for framing charge has been fixed on January 3 and 4 next year.

Senior Advocate Sirajul Haq and Mosharraf Hossain Kajol appeared for the accused while Syed Rezaur Rahman appeared as Special Public Prosecutor.

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