

Annan's bid for second term may not go unchallenged

Hasina among possible Asian candidates?

AP, United Nations

Kofi Annan is starting a campaign to keep his job as UN secretary-general with praise from key governments impressed by his determination to combat poverty, war and human rights abuses in the 21st century.

Annan announced he would seek a second five-year term Thursday, saying he would be honoured to stay on if the United Nations' 189 members wanted him to.

"There is a great deal still to be done to make the United Nations this indispensable organisation into an effective instrument of humanity in this new century to fulfill the hopes for peace, development and human rights," Annan said.

"If asked, I am ready to serve."

During his first term, Annan focused global attention on Africa's conflicts, poverty and the AIDS epidemic, trimmed the UN bureaucracy and spearheaded an overhaul of peacekeeping operations.

While winning praise for those initiatives, he was also criticised for others, including launching a divisive debate over "humanitarian intervention" and presiding over the end of UN inspections in Iraq and the bungled UN peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone.

Nonetheless, Annan's chances of winning a second term are good by most accounts, although Asian countries may spoil an unchallenged bid if they put forward a candidate of their own.

By tradition, the secretary-

general's job rotates every 10 years by region, and by the end of this year, Africa will have had 10 years in the seat. Asians are clamouring to have their turn and China's deputy UN ambassador Shen Guofang said last week that some Asian delegations want the next secretary-general to be an Asian.

But diplomats said the region is divided on a candidate, and there is no obvious front-runner.

Asians mentioned as possible candidates include Sri Lanka's President Chandrika Kumaratunga, former Thai foreign minister Surin Pitsuwan, Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the country's UN Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, and Singapore's

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SAARC Writers' Award for Poet Shamsur Rahman

BSS, Dhaka

Poet Shamsur Rahman was yesterday adorned with the First "SAARC Writers Award for Lifetime Excellence" amid cheers and applause of about one hundred poets and writers of the region and a select gathering in the city.

The prestigious award was handed over to the poet at the opening session of the two-day third SAARC Writers' Conference at the Sufia Kamal Auditorium at the National Museum.

Eminent writer and founder Chairperson of Academy of Fine Arts and Literature of India Ms. Ajeet Cour handed over the award to the poet.

Handing over the award, she said, "To know Shamsur Rahman is to know his people and their struggle for liberation and emancipation."

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ASM NURUNNABI

We have been witnessing new trends in a wide range of spheres in our city life. These include urban and suburban housing, shopping malls, fast food joints, privatisation of some public business and fashion.

With the ever shrinking land space, high rise apartment as well as office buildings are the obvious choice. As a result, many two- or three-storey buildings are being pulled down to erect high rises in their place. Some quarters feel that the present emphasis on high-rise buildings in the heart of the city may soon shift to high-rises in suburban areas where comparatively low-cost lands are available in order to ease the pressure of the rising city population.

Another phenomenon is the growing interest of real estate companies to attract prospective customers to invest in the city suburbs such as Savar, Joydevpur, Ashulia, Nabinagar, etc. Although this should have positive effects in

DOWN TO EARTH

New trends in the fast changing city life

easing the population pressure on the city, this is not likely happen soon.

Lately, the print and electronic media with advertisements and commercials galore, inviting booking for space in a good number shopping malls either under construction or still in the planning stage. The existing shopping malls are already under heavy pressure, unable to satisfy the demands of customers. Moreover, lack of parking space around these shopping centres is creating serious traffic situation as vehicles parked in front of these buildings frequently block a

portion of the road.

Another noticeable trend is the rising fast food culture in the city. There are now very few urban neighbourhoods left where fast food restaurants are yet to make their mark.

Chinese food, Mexican food, different kinds of packaged meals, microwavable meals, several different kinds of soft drinks all these are reflections of the unrelenting modernisation of the country.

Privatisation trends are very much visible in every sphere of life. In some areas of the city where there are no traffic policemen, men

have been employed for directing the traffic by private businesses that would have otherwise suffered great losses due to the congested roads.

The security of private property is another sphere in which government agencies have lost their credibility for effective protection. Many companies and individuals sign contracts with private agencies that provide security personnel.

The introduction of courier service for delivery of private mails and packages within the country is another dimension of private

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Frigate to join Navy fleet on May 30

JS body on defence told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Navy will add a 105-million-US dollar frigate to its fleet soon as its construction is nearly complete at Daweoo's shipyard in Okpo, Korea.

A parliamentary delegation that visited the Republic of Korea last month to see progress in construction of the frigate submitted its report to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Defence on Thursday. The report said the frigate will arrive in Bangladesh on May 30 as scheduled, sources in the JS body said.

The committee at its meeting discussed the report, prepared by the delegation, with its chairman Maj Gen (Retd) K M Saifulah in the chair who also led the delegation during its February 23- March 2 visit.

"Equipped with modern apparatus, the frigate will further strengthen the country's naval force," the meeting observed.

Eighty percent of the cost has been paid to Daewoo and the rest will be paid at the time of delivery, meeting sources said.

An Opposition lawmaker in the delegation viewed that there could be complications in delivery of the frigate as the company has become bankrupt.

But ruling party lawmakers said it will not hamper the delivery. "The Korean Defence Minister has assured the delegation of sound delivery of the craft," said an Awami League legislator.

Col (Retd) Shawkat Ali and Muhammad Faruk Khan of AL, Golam Mohammad Kader of Jatiya Party and Prof. Rezaul Karim of BNP were among

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The three-day Thailand Exhibition 2001 that opened at Sheraton Hotel yesterday featured a fascinating display of hairstyle.

SSC exams: Expulsions less than last year's

STAR REPORT

The number of examinees expelled in the SSC examination has dropped this year in comparison with that of last year following steps taken by the authorities to stop copying in examinations, sources concerned said.

More than 5000 examinees were expelled on the first day of SSC examination last year and the number was 3,185 this year.

The Chairman of Dhaka Board, on behalf of the seven education boards, had launched a massive campaign against adoption of unfair means in public examinations.

The authorities also advertised in different national dailies calling upon examinees, teachers and guardians

to remain vigilant against unfair means in examinations.

"We have started to see positive results of the massive campaign against cheating this year," said the Chairman of one board, who did not want to be named.

Board officials said the government has decided to reward the teachers checking adoption of unfair means in the examination.

"We are going to reward the Magistrate who was stabbed by an examinee on the first day of SSC examination," a senior official of Dhaka Board said.

Mosharrif Hossain, Assistant

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Fire at a Bata warehouse at Lily Plaza near Mouchak market in the city gutted shoes, leather worth Tk 5 lakh yesterday.

'Technical education of women vital for their empowerment'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Minister for Fisheries and Livestock ASM Abdur Rab has said technical education of women is vital for their empowerment and economic emancipation.

He mentioned that five of the 23 polytechnic institutes in the country are for women and there is women's quota in all the institutes.

The minister was speaking at a seminar on "Role of technical education on poverty alleviation, development and empowerment of women: problems and prospects" in the city yesterday.

Held at the Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh (IDEB), on the second day of its national conference and 25th council session, the seminar was chaired by Director General of Secondary and Higher Education Directorate Dr Ayesha Khatun.

Chairman of Bangladesh Technical Education Board Saiful Huq presented the keynote paper. Participants included Brahma Dutta, chief advisor to the All India Federation of Diploma Engineers; Mashuda Khatoun Shefali, executive director of Nari Udjog Kendra; Rafiqul Islam, President and AKMA Hamid, General Secretary of IDEB.

Rab said the entire nation must be turned into a skilled workforce through technical and vocational education.

Instead of resorting to hartals, meetings and demonstrations without reasons, IDEB has set an example of positive movement through more work, the minister said.

Political parties loudly advocating empowerment of women, he

said, have failed to take any move to retain 30 reserved seats for women in parliament.

Saiful Huq in his keynote paper said non-evaluation of women's work means exploiting them and this leads to poverty. Technical education for all including women is the best way to ensure use of technology which is the basis of economic emancipation of a nation, he added.

Brahma Dutta said the problems facing Bangladesh and India are similar. There is no alternative to

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Ctg AL leader Mannan dead

BSS, Ctg

A.K.M. Abdul Mannan, founder general secretary of Chittagong south district Awami League died at Chittagong Medical College Hospital here yesterday. He was 75, party and family sources said.

A dedicated AL leader and close associate of late AL leaders M.A. Aziz and Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury, Mannan had been suffering from prolonged illness.

He left behind his wife, one son and five daughters, a large number of political colleagues and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

The first namaz-e-janaza was held at Kazem Ali High School ground after Asr prayers.

Leaders and workers of different political parties including Minister for Labour and Employment MA Mannan, Civil Aviation, Tourism,

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Customs officials at ZIA yesterday seized heroin worth Tk three crore from three black polythene bags hidden inside baskets of betel leaf. The basket were being sent to London.

Tk 3 crore heroin seized at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials at Zia International Airport yesterday seized three kilograms of heroin worth about Tk three crore from betel leaf baskets which were being sent to London.

Acting on a tip-off, the officials searched four baskets of betel leaf and vegetables and recovered one kilogram of heroin each from three of those, wrapped in black polythene bags and hidden inside betel leaf bundles.

The consignment of 46 baskets was sent by Messrs Turag Enterprises of 24 Mohini Mohan Das Lane in the city.

It was addressed to Sylhet Fresh Vegetables, 41/A Sussex Street London, E 13, 8 QE.

The heroin was tested in presence of high officials of customs, police and the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC).

A top official of DNC said chemical test proved that those were good quality heroin.

One person -- Harunur Rashid, son of late Abdul Khaleq Talukder of Kolakopa in Bhola -- was arrested in connection with the incident and handed over to Cantonment police.

A case was filed under the Narcotics Control Act. The seized drug was kept at the customs warehouse at ZIA.

Earlier, in the biggest heroin haul in the country so far, DNC recovered

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Blasts at Khulna Ahmadiya mosque: No progress yet in investigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

There has been no progress in investigation into the bomb blasts at a Kadiani mosque in Khulna even after 17 months of the incident and change of four investigation officers.

Army explosive experts are also yet to submit their report to police.

The blasts inside Nirala Ahmadiya Muslim Jamaat mosque on October 8 in 1999 left six persons killed and several others injured.

The then O.C. of Khulna thana Abul Khair filed a case as complainant on October 9. Police arrested one Motaleb as suspect.

The case was handed over to DB

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Tk 5 lakh shoes, leather gutted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shoes and leather worth about Tk five lakh were gutted when a fire broke out at a Bata shoe warehouse near Mouchak market in the city yesterday.

Fire brigade sources said the fire originated from a short circuit at about 8 am and engulfed the whole godown at the Lilly Plaza.

Eleven firefighter units from five fire stations rushed to the spot and extinguished the fire after about three hours.

Two firefighters received burn injuries while trying to extinguish fire.