

EARTH SUMMIT 2002

Watered-down plan of action adopted

Environmentalists feel "betrayed by governments"

AFP, Johannesburg
World leaders at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg adopted a watered-down action plan to cut poverty and protect the planet after environmentalists staged a walkout in disgust on the last day yesterday of the marathon conference.

The environmentalists also briefly shouted down Colin Powell during a speech by the US secretary of state to show their disapproval of US policies. They said a string of compromises had gutted the 65-page Plan of Implementation and left big business free to pollute the planet.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan told journalists, "You must not expect a conference like this to produce miracles but it must generate political commitment... Johannesburg is not the end of everything, it is a beginning." The leaders, who include around 100 heads of state or gov-

ernment, were due later in the day to consider a political declaration. That draft acknowledges that environmental goals set at the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro have not been met and commits the leaders "to combat terrorism, organised crime and corruption, singly and collectively." Security guards hauled a protester out of the plenary chamber as Powell spoke, and demonstrators unfurled a banner reading: "Betrayed by governments". Powell told the demonstrators, "I thank you very much, I've now heard you. I ask that you hear me," and was then able to finish his speech.

The United States has been under intense fire at the summit, mainly for its rejection of the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, which looks set to become a treaty after Russia's announcement here that it would ratify it "in the very near future". The protocol is designed to reduce the emission of "greenhouse gases" which prevent heat from radiating out into space, causing temperatures to rise worldwide, with resultant droughts and the melting of ice caps, causing sea levels to rise.

The United States' isolation was compounded by President George W. Bush's refusal to attend the meeting. The protest erupted at a point in Powell's speech where he referred to the worsening food shortages that have afflicted six drought-stricken southern African countries, and blasted Zimbabwean President

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia addresses the Khulna-Barisal joint divisional representatives' meeting of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) at the Prodhannontri Bhaban in the city yesterday.

DCC chief health officer faces mayor's wrath

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday blasted chief health officer of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) for failing to contain the current dengue outbreak in the city.

Besides, all the seven health officials from ten DCC zones came under fire at a Nagar Bhaban meeting yesterday for not doing enough and failing to spray insecticide in most of the affected areas.

The mayor was especially angry with DCC Chief Health Officer Dr Mohammad Ashraf Uddin, who had attempted purchase of adulticide through tender that would have taken at least four to five weeks. His action contradicted a mayoral order to buy Malathion (adulticide) from through quotation that consumes less time and was less complicated. "You are trying to sabotage the whole issue," Khoka was quoted as

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

PM renews vow to fight poverty, corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday renewed her commitment to fight poverty, violence, corruption and misuse of the country's resources. "No forbearance, sympathy or mercy will be shown on party or personal grounds," she said. "No one will receive any mercy however powerful or whatever post he may hold."

Khaleda, also the BNP chairperson, was addressing the inaugural session of the joint representatives meeting of the BNP and its different front organisations under Khulna and Barisal divisions.

Some 900 leaders from district, city, thana and municipality units of the BNP and its front organisations from Khulna and Barisal divisions attended the meeting at the Prodhannontri Bhaban in the morning. Ministers in charge of the districts and MPs and central leaders of the two divisions were present. Earlier, the BNP held similar meeting regarding the Chittagong division on August 28.

The prime minister in her speech said the political opponent of the BNP does not believe in democratic values, people's verdict and thus is obstructing the elected government every step in its work.

The prime minister spoke about alleged corruption, violence and crimes committed by the previous govern-

ment during the last five years. She also gave a description of 'nepotism, mismanagement, politicisation of the administration, lawlessness and miserable economic situation' under the regime of the immediate past government. "We will have to face them and defeat them (AL) politically. For that we need a strong and ever active organisation," the prime minister said and called upon the party leaders and workers to expand the party activities in each district, city, thana, municipality, ward and union. She advised the party men to resolve all conflicts within the party and urged them work together. Turning to party affairs, she said the party leadership has decided to make the party more effective and so has arranged training for leaders and workers at all levels. Steps will be taken to ensure stronger communication up to the union level. The BNP chairperson said the central leaders must visit districts and district leaders must tour thana units regularly. Similarly, the thana unit leaders should regularly visit unions and arrange political training and discussion about politics and necessary information. Disciplinary action will be taken if the leaders concerned fail to carry out their responsibilities. Terming the field level leaders the primary source of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

The Earth Summit action plan

Main points

- Environment:** Climate change a "source of concern"; states that have ratified Kyoto "strongly urge" others to follow suit
- Development aid:** Rich countries to make "concrete efforts" to increase aid to 0.7% of GDP
- Politics:** Promote democracy, rule of law, human rights, peace and security
- Water:** Halve, by 2015, numbers living without access to drinking water
- Energy:** Extend access to electricity, increase global share of renewable energy
- Business:** Encourage businesses to be more socially environmentally responsible

Women commissioners hamstrung by policy inadequacies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 64 women commissioners of four city corporations, elected to the reserved seats, are unable to keep the pledges they had made to their constituents as they are confronting numerous difficulties thanks to the government policy. They are not having any opportunity to play any effective role to meet the need and interests of their female constituents as well as to carry any developmental work in the area, observed speakers at a press conference yesterday in the city.

However, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has allocated Tk 3000 in office allowance for each of its 30 women commissioners. But there is no such initiative for the commissioners of the other three city corporations. They went on describing their difficulties to move, as they do not have any convenient transport although they already applied for it. "We need it desperately since we have to move among the people more than the MPs do," said Syeda Rehana Kabir, a ward commissioner of the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC). However, the women commissioners noted the lack of coordination between the general ward commissioners and them as the worst problem they encounter. They do not receive any assistance from their male counterparts in any issue, they complained. "We want to work together with them but they do not think us worth it," said Lovely Chowdhury of the Dhaka City Corporation. "We are thought as nothing more than the people to meet them at their home."

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

WHEATGATE SCAM

AL probe body not allowed to enter food godowns in Mymensingh

UNB, Mymensingh

A parliamentary inquiry committee of the opposition Awami League formed to investigate wheat scam was not allowed to visit the three food godowns here yesterday. The members of the committee told local journalists that they were barred from entering the three food godowns at Khagadhor, Sadar and Trishal at the instruction of the ministry concerned. The members of the committee are Mirza Azam and Abdul Matin. Later, the committee members met the Deputy Commissioner Jafar Ahmed, who is also the president of the district foodgrain procurement committee. The Awami League lawmakers said they got some important information regarding purchase of substandard Indian wheat in these godowns.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Mixed reaction over Iajuddin's nomination

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of different political parties and professionals have expressed mixed reaction over the nomination of Prof Iajuddin Ahmed as presidential candidate of the BNP-led ruling alliance. The main opposition Awami League's (AL) presidium member Abdul Jalil, MP, criticised the nomination of Iajuddin Ahmed, saying he is not a 'non-partisan candidate'. He is a candidate from the BNP, nominated by the four-party alliance, Jalil said. He expressed doubts about the fate of the new presidential candidate in view of the exit of immediate past president Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury. He said Prof Chowdhury was removed unconstitutionally and in violation of laws of the land. Abdul Jalil stressed that the president should be a neutral person, as was the case during the AL rule. Asked why the AL kept off the presidential race, he said his party did not contest as the ruling alliance has two-thirds majority in the parliament. "It is meaningless to compete with them," he said. General Secretary of Workers Party Rashed Khan Menon welcomed the nomination of Iajuddin as presidential candidate of the four-party alliance. "I welcome the ruling alliance's decision as it has not nominated a candidate from its component

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Illegal rickshaws back on roads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of unlicensed rickshaws have poured back onto the city streets over the last few days, playing on the shortage of public transports. A large number of rickshaws went off roads with the restriction on their movement in force over the last one year. There were nearly five lakh rickshaws, hardly one lakh of them licensed, when the government made many streets off-limits to them. Sources in the Traffic Department of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) said the authorities would not clamp down on the unlicensed rickshaws as long as they are much demanded. Rickshaws and motorised vehicles get snarled up at the crossings, mostly at the Science Laboratory, Shahbagh, Mowchak

around two thousand four-stroke three-wheelers -- Mishuk, nearly one thousand CNG-run auto-rickshaws and more than three thousand taxicabs are also plying, with most charging passengers far more fares than the normal. The September 1 ban on 12,500 two-stroke three-wheelers has resulted in a shortage of vehicles in the city. The government exempted 5,500 auto-rickshaws from the ban until December 31. To fill the vehicular vacuum, the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) has launched 100 buses so far and the Bangladesh Railway started its shuttle train services on the Dhaka-Tongi route. But the alternatives are far short of the requirement. Taxicab drivers have stopped

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Akuli Rani was raped, confirms medical test

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The medical test of Akuli Rani has confirmed that the 40-year old former UP member was raped. Headed by Dr Nazrul Islam, resident medical officer (RMO) of Bagerhat Sadar hospital, a three-member team of doctors of the hospital conducted the medical test on Tuesday and submitted the report to the officer-in-charge (OC) of Mongla thana yesterday. Three persons arrested earlier on charge of raping Akuli Rani were sent to the district jail yesterday. Sources said Akuli Rani and her alleged rapists joined the BNP on August 28, presenting a bouquet to the party's district president Selim MP. Earlier on August 25, they met Mongla upazila BNP secretary Jalil Molla expressing their desire to quit Awami League. A Christian by birth, Akuli Rani is the wife of Nirmla Mistry, a carpenter

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

One awarded death penalty, 5 life term for killing schoolgirl

UNB, Feni

A young man was yesterday sentenced to death and five others were jailed for life for killing a schoolgirl four years ago. Mollah Yunus Azad, the main accused, was sentenced to death in absentia for killing Aklima Akter, a student of Class IX, at village Arkaim of Sonagazi thana in July 1998. Additional District and Sessions Judge Akter Uddin in a crowded court also awarded life imprisonment to Mizanuddin Milani, Jamaluddin, Nasiruddin (in absentia), Alamgir Hossain and Banu Begum -- all accomplices of Yunus Azad. According to the prosecution, Azad, a house tutor of Aklima, developed a relationship with her and she

Agitation at BUET on 12 hunger-striking students fall sick

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 12 hunger-striking students of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) fell sick as their fast unto death programme to press their seven-point demand entered its third day yesterday. A group of about 60 BUET students under the banner 'BUET Students Unity Against Atrocities' began their hunger strike at 8:00am on Monday demanding acceptance of the seven-point demand. Students of the university have been demonstrating on the university campus since August 11 in support of the seven-point demand. The demands include trial of the killers of BUET student Sabequn

Nahar Sony, withdrawal of the expulsion order on 12 students, cancellation of BUET ordinance of 1961 that bars political activities on campus, naming of the women's hostel after Sabequn Nahar Sony and withdrawal of police from campus. About 800 BUET students abstained from classes yesterday and brought out a procession on the campus in support of the movement. Boycotting all classes after 10:30am, the students gathered in front of the central cafeteria where the hunger-striking students are staying. At about 11:00am, they brought out a procession on the campus and

OSD returns computer, PMO seeks report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Prime Minister's Office yesterday sought report from the Ministry of Food on the recently-made officer on special duty (OSD), who took his office computer home on Tuesday. Additional Director General Entajul Huque, made an OSD for his involvement in the wheat procurement, took his office computer home after working in private on Tuesday. Official sources said, upon the PMO directive, food secretary sought a report on the matter from the director general of the food

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

JUTA demands polls dates within a week

SHAMIM ASHRAF

The Jahangirnagar University Teachers' Association (JUTA) has demanded of the university authorities to announce within a week schedules of the election of VC panel, senate, syndicate and deans of faculties and all other elections 'due for a long time.' Giving the ultimatum, the JUTA at a meeting on Tuesday warned of a tough agitation programme if the demands are not met before expiry of the deadline. The meeting attended by 160 teachers also criticised the present university authorities' role since they took over in November last year. Chaired by JUTA President Prof Amin Muhammad Ali, the meeting decided to launch a teachers' movement to press the demands if the authorities fail to accept those. A number of teachers alleged that the JU authorities are patronising one faction of the ruling party-backed Jatityatadabdi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and this has led to bitter feuds between the two JCD factions, resulting in a volatile

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4