

# 'Civil-military relations amicable'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil-military relations are becoming amicable with a change in the mindset of the armed forces and constant civilian-military interactions on various occasions and issues over the past decade, said general-turned author Muhammad Ibrahim at a lecture yesterday.

Although former president HM Ershad gave all facilities to the military and handpicked all three chiefs of staff, the armed forces did not support him in his semi-disclosed desire to use force to quell political opposition between October and December in 1990, he said.

The decision of the armed forces not to promulgate military rule in 1990 was appreciated by people and dramatically improved mutual relations, he said at Shaheed Jamil Ahmed Memorial Trust Fund Lecture-2003 on Civil-Military Relationship and the Role of the Defence Services in Disaster Management and Peacekeeping.

The former major general observed that the image of the armed forces that suffered because of the assassinations of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman, former president Ziaur Rahman and for coups and counter-coups, has also enhanced over the years.

Intervention of the armed forces in disaster management, peacekeeping missions abroad and development programmes paved the path for civil-military relations and improved their image, he said at the event organised by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh at its office.

He observed that the armed forces could never run a civilian government.

General Ibrahim said governments and people enjoyed the benefits of military assistance in improving law and order and such interactions helped establish people-military amity.

He said governments sought armed forces' assistance at least 52 times in the past 32 years.

Responding to a question, Ibrahim said all officers and soldiers of the Rakhhi Bahini, raised by the Bangabandhu government after independence, were entirely Bangladeshis.

The force that committed some excesses might have some foreign instructors, he said.

The Rakhhi Bahini cannot be held responsible for the excesses, the onus goes to them who created the force, he said.

The creation of the force bred a feeling of discomfort in the armed forces that thought it as their alternative.

In reply to a question what measures are there to make the army democratic, general Ibrahim said the armed forces moved a long way into a democratic culture.

Presently, every cadet is taught democratic norms and attitudes during their training, he said, observing that more democratic values should be instilled into the military.


On showing due honour to assassinated colonel Jamil, he said the manners and mechanism of paying respect to the valiant sons of the soil was inadequate in Bangladesh.

The army may not be inspired to act on its own in such a politically sensitive issue, he added.

Professor M Harunur Rashid presided over the lecture session, also attended by Dhaka University professors Anwar Hossain and Anisuzzaman and wife of Colonel Jamil.



An electric pole on the road divider fell to the ground after being hit by a bus whose driver lost control of the steering at Motijheel in the city yesterday.



## Mild cold wave may continue

**UNB, Dhaka**

Dry weather will prevail over the country and mild cold wave may continue over the regions of Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Ishwardi, Jessore and Kushtia during the next 12 hours till 6.00pm today.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 27.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Chittagong and the lowest of 9.8 degree at Chuadanga.

**The sun sets in the capital at 5:19pm today and rises at 6:40am tomorrow.**

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

| City/Town   | Temperature<br>In Celsius |      | Humidity in<br>percentage |         |
|-------------|---------------------------|------|---------------------------|---------|
|             | Max                       | Min  | Morning                   | Evening |
| Dhaka       | 25.7                      | 14.8 | 63                        | 50      |
| Chittagong  | 27.5                      | 13.8 | 72                        | 47      |
| Rajshahi    | 25.2                      | 11.5 | 77                        | 61      |
| Khulna      | 26.2                      | 11.5 | 73                        | 71      |
| Barisal     | 25.5                      | 11.6 | 76                        | --      |
| Sylhet      | 27.2                      | 14.1 | 78                        | 68      |
| Cox's Bazar | 26.8                      | 15.2 | 73                        | 74      |

## Girl strangled in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 20-year-old girl was strangled and left in Kafrul Thursday night.

The victim's identity could not be known till filing of this report at 8:30 last night.

Clad in black salwar and printed kamiz, her body was abandoned in an open gunny bag in the residential area of Tinshed Colony in Mirpur-13.

On receiving information, Kafrul police recovered the body at 8:30am and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Our DMCH correspondent said the victim's body bore marks of beating injuries in the right eye, cheeks and forehead, while her hands were tied behind with her scarf.

Police said someone beat the girl, strangled her somewhere else and dumped the body there.

Sub-inspector Faruk Mollah of Kafrul Police Station filed a murder case.

# Better coordination needed for effective agri development plan

BSS, Dhaka

Agriculture Minister M K Anwar yesterday called for better coordination among statisticians and agricultural officials to get more reliable statistics in the agriculture sector.

"Reliable statistics are a must for formulating effective development plans in the agriculture sector, which contributes the highest to the GDP," he told a seminar in the city.

Bangladesh Statistical Association (BSA) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) jointly organised the seminar titled "Role of statisticians in achieving Millennium Development Goals" at the IDB Bhaban.

M K Anwar said there should have a clear data about all agricultural produces including onion, spices, pulses and vegetables alongside the statistics of major agricultural items like rice and wheat to get a total overview of the output.

The United Nations has devised the Millenium Development Goals in 1990 as a strategy to alleviate poverty by 2015.

The eight major objectives of

the strategy include arrest of hard-core poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, women empowerment, reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health, prevention of HIV/Aids and other deadly diseases, protection of environment and developing an international participation for global development.

## Noakhali forest robber arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Police arrested Shafi Batainya, one of the five absconding ringleaders of forest robbers of Noakhali, along with his three associates at Patenga, Chittagong yesterday evening.

All the five gang-leaders have been in hiding since the police and the locals raided their safe haven in a forest at Char Clerk in Noakhali on December 7.

In another incident at around 3:00pm yesterday, Nabyachora, another bandit-chief, and his associates abducted five cowhands from Longoliar Char in Noakhali. They were later set free in exchange of Tk 30,000 in ransom.

## Maulana Awal passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Maulana Abdul Awal, co-chairman of religious affairs sub-committee of the Awami League and former DG of the Islamic Foundation, died at a city hospital on Thursday night at 75.

Maulana Awal was also a columnist and Islamic thinker.

Leader of the opposition in Parliament and AL President Sheikh Hasina has expressed condolence at his death.

She visited the residence of Maulana Awal yesterday to pay last respect to him. She placed a wreath on his coffin and spent some time with his bereaved family members.

The Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee also condoled his death.

The committee in a condolence message said Maulana Awal was a devout Muslim and at the same time he was against fundamentalism.

## New committee of Puja Udjapan Parishad

BSS, Dhaka

Chitta Ranjan Majumdar and Jayanta Sen Dipu have been elected president and general secretary respectively of Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad for the next two years.

An 81-member executive committee was also elected at the biennial council of the parishad in the city yesterday.

Anti-British movement veteran Binod Bihari Chowdhury opened the council attended by Major General (Retd) C R Dutta as chief guest and Bimol Roy Chowdhury as special guest.

Outgoing president of the parishad Anil Chandra Nath chaired the function.

UNB, Dhaka

Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan has stressed the need for bridging the 'science and technology divide' between the Western and OIC countries through increased emphasis on biotechnology and information and communication technology.

He was addressing the 11th General Assembly of OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation that began in

Islamabad on Thursday, according to a message received in the city yesterday.

The minister also said science and technology is the most important tool to change the lifestyle of the impoverished and underprivileged in the OIC countries.

Despite being a resource-starved country, Bangladesh is trying its best to compensate the shortcomings by knowledge-based resources, Moyeen Khan said.

He highlighted the commitment of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to scientific and technological advancement with emphasis on ICT and biotechnology.

He identified the lack of comprehension of importance of science and technology in the OIC and developing countries as the major underlying reason that has created the difference between the developed and the underdeveloped countries.