

Loss of biodiversity threat to sustainable use of natural resources

DU CORRESPONDENT

The loss of biodiversity in the country is posing a threat to the sustainable use of natural resources, said Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan yesterday.

Terming the conservation of biodiversity the most important challenge of the 21st century, he said there has been serious environmental degradation in the country.

As a signatory to the convention on biological diversity, the government is committed to preserving the biodiversity, he added.

The minister was speaking at the

inaugural ceremony of '14th Biennial National Conference 2004' of the Zoological Society of Bangladesh at the Teacher Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University.

The zoology department of DU and the Zoological Society jointly organised the conference, with Society President Prof. Mahmud-Ul Ameen in the chair.

Prof. Mohammad Altaf Hossain of Rajshahi University presented a keynote paper titled 'Biodiversity Conservation and the Zoologists'.

In his paper, Prof. Altaf said the scientists have an ethical role to

play in perfecting a system that is socially acceptable, economically feasible, technologically manageable and ecologically sound.

"We need sustainable management of our environment with rich biodiversity at sustainable level," he said.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof. SMA Faiz, Prof. Humayun Reza Khan, Prof. Kazi Zaker Hossain and Chairman of the zoology department Prof. Gulsan Ara Latifa also spoke.

Meanwhile, a two-day regional workshop on 'Renewable energy: progress and prospects' began at

the Physics Auditorium at Mukarram Bhaban of the university.

Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan inaugurated the workshop organised by Bangladesh Solar Energy Society and the Renewable Energy Research Centre.

Presided over by Prof. Muhtasham Hussain, president of the Solar Energy Society, the programme was also addressed by DU Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof. AFM Yusuf Haider, Prof. Shahida Rafique, and Prof. Neem Chandra Bhowmik, director of Renewable Energy Research Centre.

Four-yr-old boy dies from burns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A four-year-old boy who sustained severe burns in Wednesday's fire at Muktijodha slum in Mohammadpur died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital in the early hours of yesterday.

Farhad, son of Nabi Hossain, was one of the three injured in the fire that broke out at the slum at around 2:00pm. Two others were given first aid.

About 100 shanties were gutted in the blaze.

DU exams postponed

The authorities of Dhaka University (DU) have postponed all course system and traditional system examinations scheduled for tomorrow due to unavoidable circumstances.

The fresh timetable will be announced later.

The dates for other examinations will remain unchanged.



PHOTO: STAR

Thirteen minority families of Sherpur who were evicted from their land pose for photograph at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday. They demanded their rehabilitation, compensation and punishment to those involved in evicting them.

13 evicted minority families demand rehabilitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirteen minority families of Sherpur yesterday demanded their land back, alleging that a government official along with local miscreants evicted them without prior notice.

They also demanded their rehabilitation, compensation and punishment to those involved in evicting them.

"We have been living under the sky for over a month," said Jayantanath

Roy, convener of the Committee for Resistance against Eviction of 13 Minority Families at a press conference at the National Press Club.

He alleged that a land official of Sreebardi upazila with around 20 policemen and local miscreants evicted the families on January 13 and 23.

"During the eviction, the males were at work and we appealed for time, but the official did not pay heed," said Arati, a housewife.

"The miscreants also ransacked our houses and looted all our valu-

ables and belongings," she added.

The then Zamindars gave around 10-katha land to the lower-class residents for serving them some nine generations ago, which is now considered khas land, said the committee members.

The families, comprising about 60 people, also sought help from the district commissioner and the thana nirbahi officer, but no steps have been taken yet to address their problems, they said.



PHOTO: STAR

Daulatdia Padma Setu Bastabayan Parishad formed a human chain at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding construction of Padma bridge at Daulatdia-Paturia point.

Increase 'people to people' contact to strengthen ties

PM tells PML delegation

UNB, Dhaka

A five-member delegation of Pakistan Muslim League led by its Secretary General Salim Saifullah Khan called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday.

During the meeting, Khaleda, the chairperson of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), called for increasing more 'people to people' contact to further strengthen the relation between the two countries.

She said such exchange of delegations would intensify cultural and economic relationship for the welfare of the peoples of both the countries.

The PML delegation informed that they are also visiting other countries of the region as part of their programme to enhance mutual cooperation in various fields.

Saifullah Khan appreciated Khaleda's leadership in carrying forward the development of Bangladesh.

The delegation also lauded her role in promoting peace and cooperation during the recent SAARC summit in Islamabad and particularly mentioned the proposals made by her for strengthening regional cooperation.

Other members of the delegation are Senator Mir Nasir Mengel, Asad Junejo, vice president of the woman front Begum Yakut Jamil and retired

ambassador Taysab Siddiqui.

Speaker Sircar BSS adds, the PML delegation also called on Speaker Muhammad Jamir Uddin Sircar at his office here.

During the meeting they discussed issues of mutual interests, international issues and Muslim Ummah.

The Speaker apprised the PML delegation about the structure of Bangladesh Parliament, constituencies and the interests of the parliament members.

2 mobile phone traders mugged in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of muggers shot and injured two mobile phone traders and snatched Tk 12,000 from them at Tajmahal Road in Mohammadpur yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Arju, 26, and Mohammad Masum, 28.

They were waiting for a taxicab at Tajmahal Road at 1.30pm when four muggers riding motorbikes held them at gunpoint and snatched the money.

As the victims shouted for help, the muggers fired two bullets that hit Arju in right knee and Masum in left thigh.

The victims are undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

No case was lodged till filing of this report at 6.00pm.

Attack on Hasina's motorcade protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Keraniganj upazila Awami League organised a meeting at Agargaon yesterday protesting attack on the motorcade of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at a launch ghat on way to Barisal from Bhola.

The speakers at the meeting condemned the attack on Hasina's motorcade and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits involved.

Presided over by Keraniganj Upazila Awami League Convenor Nasrul Hamid Bipu, the meeting was addressed by Dhaka district AL leader Haji Abu Siddique and Haji Shahin Ahmed, Upazila leaders Haji Mojibar Rahman, Haji Nizamuddin, and Upazila BCL President Mohammed Sayeed and General Secretary Salahuddin Liton.

CU admission test for Uma unit held

CU CORRESPONDENT

The admission test for first year honours course under 'Uma' unit (law faculty) of Chittagong University (CU) was held yesterday.

Around 5,000 candidates appeared at the test that began at 10.30am.

Fifty-two candidates have vied for each seat. The faculty has 100 seats.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. AJM Nuruddin Chowdhury and Pro-VC Prof M Shamsuddin visited different examination halls.

A fake candidate named Shamsul was caught during the test.

People divided over Padma bridge site

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A citizens' committee in Manikganj yesterday demanded that the proposed Padma bridge be constructed at Paturia-Daulatdia point while another committee from greater Khulna observed a token hunger strike demanding construction of Padma bridge at Mawa.

Our Correspondent from Manikganj reports: the Committee for Implementation of Padma Bridge at Paturia-Daulatdia organised a huge rally at Paturia ferry ghat at around 11.00am to press for its demand for construction of Padma bridge at Paturia.

Presided over by Ataur Rahman Ata, the rally was addressed by SA Kabir Zinnah, Kazi Rayhan Uddin Tuku, Golam Abedin Kaiser and Rafiqul Islam.

The committee members also staged an hour-long sit-in at the ferry ghat until 12.00noon, leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded on road to the ghat.

Our staff correspondent from Khulna adds: the Greater Khulna Development Action Coordination Committee and Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) jointly observed a token hunger strike yesterday demanding construction of Padma bridge at Mawa.

The committee and the KCCI will also jointly hold a public meeting at Mawa on March 5 and observe an hour-long programme on March 8.

Drug peddlers trade fire at Ctg slum: 6 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A case was filed against eight hoodlums under the Speedy Trial Act yesterday in connection with Wednesday's gunfight between two groups of drug peddlers at a slum near Kadamtali Bus Terminal here that left six people injured.

Fruit trader Swapan Kumar and his two children - Madhbai, 9, and Sohag, 11, - were among the six injured in the crossfire. The other injured are Shaymal, 36, his wife Shetali Rani, 30, and son Shanta, 7.

Swapan lodged the case with Doublenmooing police against eight alleged criminals of the 'Barisal

Colony' slum in the city's West Madarbari area, police said.

The accused are Mohammad Shahjahan, Badal, Jasim, Jasimuddin, Lokman, Humayun Kabir, Al Amin and Mohammad Selim.

Police picked up Al Amin, 24, and Selim, 22, from the spot after the gunfight on Wednesday afternoon and sent them to the court yesterday.

According to witnesses, armed hoodlums belonging to 'Shahjahan Group' and 'Noor Group' exchanged about 20 rounds of bullets during the half-an-hour gunfight over drug peddling, establishing supremacy and extortion at Barisal Colony.

"We are trying to nab the criminals involved in the gunfight," said Mohammad Shafiquddin Chowdhury, assistant commissioner (detective branch) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police yesterday afternoon.

The two arrestees would be taken on remand and quizzed to extract information about the gangs, he said.

The slum has long been known as a 'safe haven' of notorious criminals and drug peddlers. A powerful syndicate comprising CMP-listed top-notch criminals, in collusion with a section of police, controls the slum area, police sources said.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Poultry Industry Coordination Committee took out a procession in the city yesterday protesting the propaganda of bird flu in the country.