



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League yesterday formed a human chain in front of the Matsa Bhaban protesting felling of trees in the city and pollution of environment.

Echo launches second Disaster Preparedness Programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (Echo) South Asia formally launched its 2nd Disaster Preparedness Programme (Dipecho) at a function in the city yesterday.

Head of the Echo South Asia Francesco Cristiano Mandra presented the outlines of Dipecho Bangladesh programmes to be carried out by its partner organisations to raise awareness about disaster among the vulnerable groups.

The Echo will spend 18 million Euros to promote disaster management preparedness in four countries-Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The Dipecho is a one-year programme intending to reduce damage to lives and properties taking actions prior to disasters caused by earthquakes, typhoons, floods and droughts through its national and international partner organisations.

The 2nd Dipecho action plan includes, among other things, emergency response programme, advo-

cacy and public awareness, early warning systems, dissemination of information, training and capacity building and mitigation work.

The Echo Strategy-2004 has a total budget of 443 million Euros for Dipecho programme, 10 percent of which is reserved for meeting primary emergency needs.

Disaster Management and Relief Minister Kamal Ibne Yousuf inaugurated the Dipecho Programme-2004. "Bangladesh is synonymous to disasters and preparedness is of paramount importance in mitigating the loss of lives and properties," he said.

The programme aims at coordinating disaster management preparedness of the government, donors, NGOs and individuals.

At the inaugural ceremony, the Dipecho partners-ActionAid, Oxfam, DCA, IFRC, and TDH presented highlights of their share in the disaster management programmes.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil speaks at the city unit meeting demanding resignation of the government at Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday.

Body to oversee implementation of wage board award

BSS, Dhaka

The government has constituted a nine-member committee to oversee progress of implementation of the 5th Wage Board Award in different newspapers and news agencies.

The committee led by the additional secretary of the ministry of information, was formed following allegations from all unions and federations of the journalists, general employees and press workers that the 5th Wage Board Awards were not implemented in many newspapers and news agencies for long period.

Members of the committee are: Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Secretary General Ruhul Amin Gazi, Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) General Secretary Abdus Shahid, Bangladesh Federal Union of Newspaper Press Workers Acting President Asad Ullah, Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Press Sramik Federation President Motiur Rahman Talukder, The Dainik Jugantor Chief Reporter Saiful Alam, and one representative from PID and one from DFP, and senior assistant secretary (press-2) of the information ministry will act as member secretary of the committee.

The committee will conduct inquiry into different newspapers and news agency offices and will give a report on the implementation of the 5th Wage Board Award to the government within 60 days.

Reunion

A daylong grand reunion of Dhaka University Political Science Department Alumni Association (DUPDAA) will be held on April 30, says a press release.

The programme will begin at the TSC of Dhaka University at 9:30am.

Former students are requested to collect registration coupon from the following persons by April 25: Dr Md Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan (966-1920-59 Ext 4469), Rezaul Haq Chowdhury Mushtaq (935-0869, 934-3815), KMA Bari (881-2165, 885-2703-4), Shah Jalaluddin Firoj (712-1263), Rafiqul Islam (955-4043), Rezaul Mannan (712-6162) and Mahub Alam Chandan (712-6162).

ABDUCTION OF MAGURA BUSINESSMAN Tk 10 lakh ransom demanded for his release

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Abductors of Sanatan Kumar Paul, a leading businessman of Magura, sent a message to his family on Wednesday night demanding a ransom of Tk 10 lakh for his release, sources said.

However, his younger brother Subhash Kumar Paul denied receiving any such message.

Negotiations between the gang and his family have been going on to secure the release of the businessman, said a relative of the victim and a businessman yesterday seeking anonymity.

Wholesale grocer Sanatan Paul, 45, was kidnapped by an armed gang from his home at Natun Bazar in the town at about 11.00pm on Tuesday.

Law enforcers have failed to make any headway in rescuing him in the last two days.

Police said they were trying to rescue the businessman.

"I have already sent a police team to Sheikhpara in Kushtia to find out the addresses of the owner and driver of the microbus the gang used during the abduction," said Mirza Sanafat Ali, officer-in-charge of Sadar police station. Police seized the vehicle at Abaipur village in Sailakupa upazila of Jhenidah

'Name 5th RU hall as Ila Mitro Hall'

RU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) yesterday urged the Rajshahi University (RU) authorities to name the 5th women's hall of the university as 'Ila Mitro Hall'.

To press for its demand, the BCU brought out a procession on the campus led by its central committee Vice-President Hafizur Rahman and RU unit President SM Chandon.

It also held a rally in front of the main gate of the university after the procession.

Speakers at the rally said the contribution of Ila Mitro to 'Tevaga' and other anti-British movements is enormous. So in order to give recognition to her contribution, a university hall should be named after her name, they added.

The speakers also demanded immediate arrest of those responsible for the attack on Prof Humayun Azad and the release of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) President Khalekuzzaman Lipon.

BCU RU unit General Secretary Imran Hossain Joy and its City unit President Adu Sayem were also present at the rally.

Over 1500 held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,591 people during their ongoing countryside drive in the last 24 hours ending at 6.00am yesterday.

They also recovered 12 firearms, 16 other weapons and 11 rounds of bullets and filed ten cases against 20 people under the Arms Act, said a police headquarters release.

district.

During the abduction, the gang also injured Biswajit Saha, 25, with gunshots as he tried to resist them. Biswajit, who worked for the businessman as a staff, is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Blast at RHD office in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A powerful bomb went off on the compound of the office of the RHD executive engineer today, damaging two motorcycles and windowpanes.

However, no-one was hurt in the explosion that took place at around 12.30pm, creating panic among the employees and contractors. The office is located adjacent to Khulna district jail.

According to OC Mosharaf Hossain of Khulna thana, the bomb was kept in an abandoned water tank on the office compound many days ago but it exploded due to the heat of the sun.

Executive engineer Rezaul Karim was at the office during the blast but he could not give any clue about the bomb.



Maj Gen Matiur awarded BAS gold medal

Maj. Gen. Dr ASM Matiur Rahman, commandant of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, has been awarded BAS-Dr Sultan Ahmed Choudhury Gold Medal Award 2004 for his outstanding contribution to Medical Science, says an ISPR release.

Bangladesh Academy of Sciences (BAS) conferred the award.

Dr Matiur received the award from President Iajuddin Ahmed at a ceremony on March 16.

A Commonwealth Scholar, he obtained D.Bact and M.Sc degree in Microbiology & Immunology from the University of Manchester, UK.

A Fellow of Bangladesh Academy of Sciences, Dr Matiur was also awarded 'Leader of the Profession' by the University of Science & Technology, Chittagong.

Born at Raipur of Laxmipur district in 1944, Dr Matiur is also the chairman, Technical Committee of National AIDS Committee, and president of Bangladesh Society of Microbiologists.

Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of Professor Dr. Nurunnahar Fyzunnesa, former Provost of Rokeya Hall and teacher of Institute of Education and Research (IER), will be held today after Asr prayers at her eldest sister's residence, says a press release.

Dr Nurunnahar died on Wednesday at the age of 72.



PHOTO: PID

Twelve Jatiya Party (Ershad) lawmakers led by Rawshan Ershad called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday.

Stop violence against women for sustainable development

Chief justice tells convention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain yesterday called for an end to violence against women to achieve sustainable development.

Equal rights of women in every sphere of the society and protection from all forms of violence and abuse are preconditions for ensuring human rights, he said at a women lawyers' convention.

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) organised the convention at Sheraton Hotel in the city to celebrate its 25th founding anniversary.

The chief justice called on all to put an end to violence against women to uphold the Constitution as it has guaranteed equal rights for all citizens.

He also put emphasis on a change in attitude towards women to successfully combat violence against them.

Speaking as special guest, Swedish Ambassador Borje Mattsson called for promoting gender equity to achieve development.

Although many countries across the world have accepted the gender equity as a tool for development, equal rights of women are yet to be established in every sphere of national activities, he said.

"Despite a rise in women's participation in various sectors of Bangladesh, we still see everyday in the newspapers that women are being tortured in various ways," the ambassador said.

Borje Mattsson also stressed the need for raising awareness about violence against women. Presenting a keynote paper,

BNWLA Advisor Fawzia Karim Firoze blamed the lack of proper enforcement of laws for repression on women.

Violence against women at work-place, including sexual harassment, have increased alarmingly, she said and called for a change in the method of investigating women repression case to ensure justice.

In another keynote paper, Chandreyi Alam, advocate of Calcutta High Court, said cases involving violence against women must not be dealt with as adversarial litigation but on a social aspect.

A judge should consider the case

on the basis of its social context, Alam said.

Executive Director of BNWLA advocate Salma Ali delivered the welcome address while its President Sigma Huda presided over the inaugural session.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, Advocate Ernestine Christine Pintoo of Pakistan and Norwegian Ambassador Aud Lise Norheim also spoke.

Ctg port golden handshake begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

One hundred and ten dock-workers submitted their resignation on the first day of the golden handshake programme that began at the Chittagong Port yesterday.

Under the programme, some 1,500 dock-workers will be retrenched, port sources said.

The Chittagong Port Authority launched the programme as many dock-workers were found inefficient or invalid due to old age complications.

Many were also found to allow outsiders to work as 'substitute workers' using their booking numbers keeping the authorities in the dark, sources said.

The programme is scheduled to continue till April 30. Meanwhile, the authorities arrested one fake worker identified as Md Rafiq for giving proxy of a registered dock-worker Harunur Rashid.

Besides, 48 dock-workers remained absent from the work yesterday.

The port authorities suspected them as fake workers and decided to slash one-day salary from each of them.



PHOTO: STAR

Local people observe mourning day at Kamrangirchar on the outskirts of the city yesterday protesting killing of Gram Sarker head Haji Mizanur Rahman.