



PHOTO: STAR

A group of firefighters along with fire fighting equipment remains stranded on the river Buriganga after the engine boat went out of order yesterday. They were going to Keraniganj to extinguish a blaze that broke out at Char Khejurbagh, killing four children.

Confrontational politics major obstacle to dev

Saifur tells consultative meeting on 'Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper' in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday called for stern action to curb lawlessness and said that the government would not tolerate anarchy in the name of politics.

Confrontational politics is a major obstacle to development, he said, adding that whenever the government starts development activities, the opposition launches agitation programme to hinder it.

"We have asked the civil administration and police to go tough on the trouble-makers to maintain law and order," the minister said at the inaugural ceremony of a day-long consultative meeting on the 'Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP)' in Sylhet.

Held at the Rural Development Training Institute, the function was also addressed by Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury MP, Planning Commission Secretary Fazlur

Rahman, Planning Commission Member Dr Mesbah Uddin Ahmed and Additional Divisional Commissioner Mohammad Ali. Divisional Commissioner Abdus Salam Khan presided.

Government officials, NGO activists, educationists, chairmen and commissioners from the four districts of the division took part in the meeting.

Criticising the role of newspapers, the minister said they do not reflect the true picture of the country. The newspapers highlight only the negative things, which tarnishes the country's image abroad, he added.

Achievements of the government are not published in the newspapers, Saifur said.

Despite the destructive activities of the opposition and adverse global situation, growth in the economy and other sectors is much better, he said.

"Our achievements and successes are now being replicated in other countries," he added.

But the intellectuals do not praise the government's successes, Saifur said, adding that they always criticise the government activities.

The finance minister said that fundamental changes would be brought to the tax structure.

Bangladesh is the only country where people are unwilling to pay taxes, he said. "How can you expect development without money?"

Later, the minister opened a five-day computer exhibition, organised by the Bangladesh Computer Council.

He also inaugurated the Zestat Holiday Resort, a private concern, in Doloipara area on the outskirts of the city.

4 killed in road accidents

AGENCIES, Dhaka

Four people were killed and five others injured in road accidents in Barisal and Pabna on Wednesday night.

Two people were killed and two others injured seriously in a road accident at Shimultala Mollikpara in Santhia Upazila on Bogra-Nagarbari highway Wednesday night.

Police said the accident took place at about 9:30pm when a

Pabna-bound microbus coming from Dhaka crashed into a truck, killing two people, Anwara Islam, 65, wife of industrialist Alhaj Shaikatul Islam, and microbus driver Mozammel Haque, 37, on the spot.

Industrialist Alhaj Shaikatul Islam and his domestic help Milon Hossain were shifted from Santhia Upazila Health Complex to Pabna General Hospital as their condition deteriorated.

The truck driver managed to

escape.

BSS from Barisal adds, two persons were killed and three others injured critically on the Barisal-Dhaka highway at Bashtala in the district on Wednesday night, police said.

They said, a truck hit a tempo coming from the opposite direction at Bashtala of Kashipur union under sadar upazila killing two persons on the spot and injuring three others critically. The tempo was thrown off the road by the impact and fell into a roadside ditch.

The dead were identified as tempo driver Zakir Hossain, 30, and an unidentified person aged about 35. The injured, Majbar, 40, Jalal, 30, and Alim, 30, were admitted to SBMCH in critical conditions, hospital sources said.

1565 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested a total of 1,565 people from different parts of the country in last 24 hours ending at 6am yesterday.

During the countrywide drive, they also recovered seven firearms and six other weapons and filed 12 cases against seven people under the Arms Act, says a police headquarters press release.

DHAKA TODAY

Bird-watching tour

A summer bird-watching tour, organised by Bangladesh Bird Watchers Society, will be held. Venue: Mirpur Botanical Garden. Time: 3.00pm.

Seminar on birds

Bandhu, an association of youngsters working for the betterment of the Earth, will hold a seminar on 'Birds in the coastal zone' with M A Muhi of Bangladesh Bird Club as the key speaker. Venue: Bandhu office, 15/10 Madhubagh, Maghbazar. Time: 10.00am.

Lion convention

The inaugural ceremony of a two-day Annual District Convention 2004 of Lions Clubs International District-315A2 will be held with Law Minister Moudud Ahmed as chief guest. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 9.30am.

Film show

The Academy Film Society will screen three American films titled 'The French Connection' (1971), 'Monster' (2003) and 'Henry and June' (1990). Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 3.30pm, 6.30pm and 8.30pm.

Movie show

Bishwasahitya Kendra will screen a film titled 'Rope' directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Venue: Bishwasahitya Kendra auditorium, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. Time: 5.00pm.

Odhikar workshop

An international workshop on the 'International Criminal Court', organised by Odhikar will be held. Venue: BRAC Centre Inn auditorium, Mohakhali. Time: 9.30am.

Seminar on dowry

Rapport Bangladesh Limited will hold a breakfast seminar on 'Socio-economic impact of dowry system in Bangladesh: Problems and remedies'. Venue: Rapport Seminar Hall, Zeenat Bhaban, 41/1 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. Time: 8.30am.

Foundation day

The foundation day ceremony and freshers reception of the summer semester of Eastern University will be held with Speaker Jamiuddin Sirkar as chief guest. Venue: University campus, Dhanmondi. Time: 4.00pm.

DU reunion

The fourth reunion programme of Dhaka University Political Science Department Alumni Association will be held. Venue: Teachers Students Centre of the university. Time: 9.30am.

BCS reunion

A reunion of the 13th batch of

Bangladesh BCS Forum (all cadres) will be held. Venue: BIAM auditorium, New Eskaton. Time: 4.00pm.

Convention

A regional convention (greater Dhaka-Mymensingh region) of Jatiya Mukti Council will be held. Venue: Dhaka District Sports Association auditorium, Motijheel. Time: 11.00am.

Biennial meeting

The biennial general meeting of Jamalpur Association, Dhaka will be held with State Minister for Finance and Planning Anwarul Kabir Talukder as chief guest. Venue: Jute Research Institute auditorium, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Musical evening

The High Commission of India in association with the Indian Council of Cultural Relations will organise a musical evening by a light classical musical group led by Penaz Masani. Venue: Osmani Memorial auditorium.

DHAKA TOMORROW

May day programme

In observance of historic May Day, May Day Uddjapon Parishad has taken up a programme of discussion, mass-song, recitation and drama. Noted cultural bodies like Udichi, Wrisshijo and Kranti will take part in the programme. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 4.00pm.

Aranyak programme

Aranyak Natyadal organises a cultural programme that includes music, recitation and drama to mark the May Day. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 10.00am.

May day rally

In observance of May Day, Jatiyatabadi Samik Dal organises a rally with LGRD and Co-operatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan as chief guest. Venue: Paltan Maidan. Time: 3.00pm.

Film show

The Academy Film Society will screen two American films titled 'America's Sweethearts' (2001) and 'Doctor Zhivago' (1965). Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 3.30pm and 6.30pm.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League presidium member Motia Chowdhury speaks at a gathering at Bangabandhu Avenue after police prevented the opposition leaders and activists from marching in a procession during hartal hours yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Supreme Court Bar Association President and Sammlita Ainjibi Samannaya Parishad (SASP) leader Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud speaks at a press conference at the Supreme Court Bar Association hall room in the city yesterday.

Barapukuria Plant to operate from Sept next year

Minister informs parliament

UNB, Dhaka

State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud told Parliament yesterday that Barapukuria Thermal Power Plant would come into operation from September next year.

He said various measures, including introduction of pre-paid meter system, have been taken to reduce system loss of power.

The system loss was 35 per cent

when the present government took over and it has been brought down to 28 per cent, Iqbal said, replying to a question from SA Khaleque (BNP-Dhaka).

He told Ilyas Ali (BNP) that the government had taken up a plan to set up two power plants in Fenchuganj and Sylhet.

Replying to Prof Shahidul Islam (BNP), he said that at present 25 power plants were producing 4,710

MW of electricity- 3,420 MW by 18 power plants in public sector and 1,290 MW by seven plants in the private sector.

He told the Jatiya Sangsad that investment has been made this fiscal year (2003-04) for a power plant in Tongi to add another 80 MW of electricity.

Residential scheme on 50 acres of land in Cox's Bazar

UNB, Dhaka

A planned residential scheme on 50 acres of land at a cost over Tk 15.75 crore will be taken up at the Cox's Bazar town.

There will be 507 residential plots and 2.44 acres for commercial plots in the project to be financed by the National Housing Authority.

This was disclosed today at a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Housing and Public Works Ministry at the Sangsad Bhaban with its chairman Shahjahan Chowdhury in the chair. The meeting was told that the

project awaits its final approval by the ministry.

Committee members, Kazi Muhammad Anwar Hossain, Muhammad Alamgir Haider Khan, Prof Joinal Abedin, Alamgir Muhammad Mahfuj Ullah Farid, Muhammad Sultan Mahmud Babu and Muhammad Abdul Muttalib Akhand attended the meeting.

Relief distributed among tornado victims

BSS, Netrokona

NEPC Consortium Power Ltd. and the JCI Bangladesh distributed relief among the tornado victims in Netrakona on Wednesday.

They also donated money and food to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital and Netrakona Sadar Hospital where a large number of injured people are undergoing treatment.

A joint team of NEPC, which runs a 110-mw plant at Haripur, and the Junior Chamber International (JCI), an affiliate of Junior Chamber Inc., conducted the relief operation in Trimohoni, Chaparkola, Kanchanpur, Dattagram and Dhalpur villages.

They distributed rice, pulse, powdered milk and money among the victims. Equipment for installing tubewells and sanitary latrines were also given.

18 dailies published from Khulna

BSS, Dhaka

Information Minister Tariqul Islam yesterday informed the Jatiya Sangsad that 18 dailies were coming out from Khulna city of which 11 were media enlisted.

Replying to a question from treasury bench member M Nurul Islam, he said that the present government has allowed publication of two daily newspapers from Khulna. The newspapers are: Dainik Janatar Khabar and Falafal (from weekly to daily).

Giving a break-up of advertisements (including supplements) which the media-enlisted 11 dailies received during 2001-2002, 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 financial years, Tariqul said that Dainik Anirban got Tk 17,00,416, Dainik Prabartan Taka 9,98,784, Dainik Purbanchal Tk 9,38,538, Dainik Probah Tk 8,00,818 and Dainik Janmabhumi Tk 7,89,493.

Russian embassy holiday

UNB, Dhaka

The Russian embassy in Dhaka will remain closed on April 30, May 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9 due to the national holidays of the Russian Federation, says a press release.