



PHOTO: STAR

Different types of fruit-bearing trees drew visitors at the National Tree Fair at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city yesterday. The fortnight-long fair began on June 1.

Daily Star-Astech English debate final today

CU CORRESPONDENT

The final of The Daily Star-Astech Group Inter-School English Debate Competition will be held at the Muslim Institute Hall in the port city at 9:30am today.

After preliminaries and semi-finals, two finalist teams have emerged from nine participating English medium schools and they will battle for the championship today.

The motion for the debate is 'Political parties should focus mainly on economic development', with Cider International School (affirmative side) competing against Sunshine Grammar School (negative side).

Drishty, a debating and cultural organisation, has arranged the competition.

Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, will attend the final as chief guest and poet Abul Momen, resident editor of the Prothom Alo,

Farid Ahmed Chowdhury and Ali Ahmed, former presidents of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Safia Rahman, principal of Sunshine Grammar School and College, will be present as special guests.

Professor Dr Mohit Ul Alam, chairman of English department of Premier University, will preside over the session.

Before the final, another debate will be held to select the second runners-up.

The motion for the debate is 'Corruption is the main problem of third world countries', with Oxbridge International School competing against Bay View School.

The competition began on May 14. Other participating schools are William Cary Academy, Chittagong International School, Bangladesh Elementary School, Presidency International and James English Medium School.

College student killed in road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Raju Biswas, a student of first year of Rampal Dagree Collage was killed and ten others were injured in a road accident at Katakhali crossing under Fakirhat upazila of Bagerhat district yesterday.

The injured were sent to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH).

The accident occurred when a Mongla-bound passenger bus collided with a truck coming from opposite direction.

Police seized the bus.

PBCP cadre shot dead in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Ranajit Kumar Mondol, an armed cadre of M-L faction of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), was shot dead by unidentified assailants Wednesday night at Pabla under Daulatpur thana.

Police recovered his dead body. The slain outlaw was wanted in two murder cases. He was son of late Akhil Chandra Biswas.

Ranjit was killed by the cadres of Janajuddho faction of PBCP.

Indians held from Biman sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The five Indian nationals, who were arrested on May 23 from a Bangladesh Biman aircraft at Zia International Airport (ZIA) were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

Pargas Singh, Nirmol Singh, Manjeet Singh, Mangas Singh and Sandeep Singh, all aged between 25 and 30, were found hiding on the roof of a toilet 16 hours after the Biman flight had arrived from Hong Kong on Friday night.

The arrestees were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on completion of the 10-day remand.

Police in a report forwarded to the court said they have elicited important information from the arrestees during the remand and now are verifying those.

The arrestees need to be confined in jail till the investigation completes and they might even have to be remanded further, police added.

The law enforcers currently are interrogating two Biman officials and owner and manager of Euro Resthouse where the five Indians used to stay while in Bangladesh.

The police report claimed the arrestees holed up in the Biman flight to carry out subversive activities against the national flag carrier.

The aircraft was scheduled to fly for London and the prime minister was to fly to China by the same plane two days after its return from the UK capital, said Biman officials.

A high official of police, however, quoting the arrestees, said a gang was to send them to London in exchange for a hefty sum of money.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Nasir Uddin in an interview with the BBC yesterday said the aircraft carried 76 passengers from Hong Kong to Dhaka. Of them, 71 disembarked but the rest hid themselves on the roof of a toilet.

Biman suspended four crew and the chief purchaser for neglect of duty.

The five, all of whom are Sikhs, first came to Dhaka from Kolkata by road last month. They went to Hong Kong on May 18 and flew back to Dhaka in a week, sources said.

Conference postponed

Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad has postponed its triennial national conference which was scheduled to be held in the first week of this month, says a press release.

However, a meeting of the



Dist governor, vice governor of Lions Clubs

BH Sharif and MS Shekil Chowdhury have been elected district governor and vice-district governor of the Lions Clubs International, District-315B1, Bangladesh, for 2004-2005, says a press release.

Chairman of Nerob Group, Sharif hails from Faridpur district. He is also the Chairman of Bangladesh Lions Foundation.

Shekil Chowdhury, who hails from Zakiganj of Sylhet, is a director of Sylhet Chamber of Commerce & Industry and conve-

TROOPS TO IRAQ Legal notice on govt not to sign deal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two NGO activists served a legal notice on the government asking it not to sign any agreement on sending troops to Iraq during the forthcoming visit of US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

"If the government signs any agreement to send troops to Iraq, that would be a violation of the constitution, Army Act and the United Nations charter," said the legal notice served by Farhad Mazhar and Farida Akhtar on Wednesday night.

Advocate Asaduzzaman, counsel for the HR activists, told The Daily Star yesterday, "If the government does not refrain from signing any such agreement, we will file a writ with the High Court to protest the violation of the constitution."

The legal notice was sent to the Prime Minister's Office and secretaries of the cabinet division, defence ministry and foreign ministry.

The officials are also asked to inform them about the matter within three days of receipt of the notice.

The legal notice said they came to know that during the visit of the

US defence secretary an agreement would be signed to send troops to Iraq outside the umbrella of the United Nations.

The Army Act 1952 also does not authorise the government to send troops to Iraq, the notice added.

As a signatory to International Criminal Court (ICC), Bangladesh cannot send its troops as the civil societies across the world accused the occupation soldiers in Iraq of war crimes, said Advocate Asaduzzaman.

If Bangladeshi troops join the occupation forces, anyone can file case with the ICC accusing them of war crimes, he added.

AL to observe Six-point Day

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Awami League will observe the historic Six-point Day.

The day's programme will begin with hoisting of national and party flags at the party offices throughout the country in the morning.

Wraths will be placed on the portrait of Bangabandhu at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum.

A discussion will be held at the Institution of Engineers', Bangladesh auditorium.

Renowned intellectuals and national leaders will address.

AL General Secretary Mohammad Abdul Jalil has called upon all like-minded people including the leaders and workers of the party and its front organisations to observe the day with due respect.

ATTACK ON INDIAN TRUCK DRIVER Truckers observe strike at Bhomra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A six-hour transport strike was observed at Bhomra land port in Satkhira and at Shojadanga across the border in India yesterday in protest against an attack on an Indian truck driver at the land port.

On Wednesday night, a gang of unidentified hoodlums beat up truck driver Abdul Gafoor who crossed the border to unload imported goods.

To protest the attack, transport

workers of both the land port and Shojadanga enforced the strike.

However, they in a joint meeting called off the strike at 12.00 noon after police assured them of arresting the culprits.

Meanwhile, police recovered the body of an elderly woman from Bhomra land port area yesterday morning.

The identity of the woman could not be known. Police suspected that the victim was strangled to death.

Take up eco-friendly projects for sustainable dev

Speakers urge govt at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called upon the government to take up eco-friendly projects for sustainable development of the country.

They also urged the government to allocate more funds for such projects in the national budget for next fiscal.

The seminar on 'Upcoming budget and environment: Some proposals', was organised by the Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA) at the National Press Club in the city.

Environmentalists, academicians, economists and representatives of the non-governmental organisations took part in the seminar.

In his keynote article, noted economist Dr Atiur Rahman called for formulation of an environment-friendly poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP).

He said zero import tax should be continued in agriculture, fisheries, poultry and dairy sector.

Dr Atiur proposed an 'environment tax' for brick kilns and said these must not be allowed to establish beside the crop land.

He suggested that import tax should be fully withdrawn to encourage import of environment-friendly CNG-run vehicles. Besides, private importers should be given tax holiday to encourage import of CNG-run double-decker buses, he added.

Dr Atiur said fixed budgetary allocation needs for constructing modern flyover in the city. Besides, necessary funds should be allocated for circular waterways around the capital.

He said unfit passenger vessels, which are polluting the water of the rivers releasing oil and diesel, should be banned.

Dr Atiur called for imposing tax on hospitals, clinics, mills and factories that pollute

the environment.

He also stressed the need for more budgetary allocation for the development of solar energy to meet the need of electricity.

Funds should be allocated for training of youths for income generating activities in the rural areas, he added.

In his presidential speech, Prof Muzaffer Ahmed said a system should be developed to judge how much fund has been allocated in the national budget for environmental sector.

He also stressed the need for initiatives by the civil society to uphold the cause of environment.

BAPA Executive Member A M A Muhit, General Secretary Abu Naser Khan, President of the Institute of Architects Mobasher Hossain, Programme Officer of the Coalition for Urban Poor Ashish K Acharjee, and President of Mohanagar Taxi Cab Malik Samity F H Khandaker also spoke at the seminar.



PHOTO: STAR

Economist Dr Atiur Rahman speaks at a seminar on 'Upcoming budget and environment: Some proposals' organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA) at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are Prof. Muzaffer Ahmed and Abul Mal Abdul Muhit and on his right is Abu Naser Khan.