



Projonmer Chetona forms a human chain in front of the National Museum at Shahbagh in the city yesterday demanding judicial investigation into the incidents of bomb attacks in Sylhet.

## REPRESSES ON RELIGIOUS MINORITIES 'Bring culprits to justice'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday demanded punishment to the criminals involved in the post-election attacks on the religious minorities in 2001.

They said the minorities, especially the Hindus, suffered a lot in the wake of general election as armed cadres of ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami looted and set fire to their houses and violated girls and women.

The South Asian People's Union against Fundamentalism and Communalism organised the discussion in the city, with Prof Kabir Chowdhury in the chair.

Barrister Amir-ul Islam said the government has no respect for human rights; it had just turned a blind eye to the repression of minorities.

The government does not even respect the views of the opposition parties, he added.

On bomb attacks in Sylhet, he said investigation into every attack was conducted with a political point of view.

Justice KM Sobhan said a sense of

insecurity has gripped the people as human rights are being trampled systematically.

"Supporters of the Awami League across the country and the religious minorities, in particular, were harassed after the general election but the criminals escaped justice," he said.

Justice Sobhan also said fundamentalism has taken a deep root in the country with active support from the administration.

Fundamentalists are now targeting those who believe in progressive causes and speak in favour of secularism, he said.

Prof Borhan Uddin Khan Jahangir called on the progressive political parties to unite to combat fundamentalism.

President of Mahila Parishad Hena Das, Prof Ajoy Roy and writer Shahriar Kabir also spoke.

A documentary titled 'Let us live our lives' was also screened at the programme. Shahriar Kabir made the documentary depicting the repression the minorities have suffered after the general election.



Sammilita Ainjibi Samannaya Parishad forms a human chain on the Supreme Court Bar Association premises in the city yesterday demanding quick disposal of the Bangabandhu Murder Case.

## 12-point demand for flood-affected working people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramik Federation (BSSF) yesterday placed a 12-point demand to the government for flood-affected working people of different trades.

The demands included three months' salary as grant and interest-free loan for the workers.

At a press conference in the city, the federation leaders

called for waiving previous loans for the farmers, weavers, and fishermen and sanction new loans for their rehabilitation.

They also urged the government to issue Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) cards among the distressed workers, farmers and day labourers in flood-affected areas.

The bank on Tuesday asked its 30 branches in the city and all the branches at district headquarters not to sell any form and receive money from people until further order, sources said.

BSSF President Muklesur Rahman urged the government to take necessary steps to control the price of daily essentials.

The teachers' delegation also urged the VC to hold the election of syndicate members soon. "The VC assured that the syndicate election will be held this month," said the Duta president.

Duta General Secretary Prof Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman was also present at the meeting.

## BHASANTEK REHABILITATION PROJECT Bank stops selling forms, receiving money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agani Bank has stopped selling forms and receiving money for Bhasantek Rehabilitation Project for slum dwellers and low-income groups following the reported allegations of corruption against the developer.

On the other hand, the NSDL denied the allegation saying it has not violated any provision of the agreement.

It also accused the parliamentary body of violating its jurisdiction to make a statement asking people not to buy forms and deposit money for the project.

The statement of the parliamentary body has damaged the image of our company. We consider the direction of the parliamentary standing committee as illegal," said Abdur Rahim, chairman and managing director of the NSDL, in a statement.

Being approved by the planning commission, the land ministry signed an agreement with the NSDL on September 29 last year to implement the Tk 347 crore project.

Under the project, 15,024 flats would be built for slum dwellers and low-income groups.

## COMPULSORY REGISTRATION

# Book publishers, sellers give 10-day ultimatum to govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Book Publishers and Sellers' Association yesterday gave a 10-day ultimatum to the government to withdraw notices asking for compulsory registration of bookshops under the Value Added Tax (VAT) Act.

Otherwise, the bookshop owners will keep the shutters down in Dhaka city on August 22, said the association leaders at a press conference.

They also warned that the association would enforce a countrywide strike for indefinite period if the issue is not settled.

Although book publishers, importers and sellers have been kept out of the VAT net, the Customs, Excise and VAT office at Sutrapur issued registration notices to most members of the association on May 29, the leaders said terming it a violation of law.

"The VAT office has repeatedly issued notices asking for declaration and threatened to collect VAT from us under the law," said association Chairman Md Abu Taher.

But the notice did not mention any specific law under which the

VAT would be collected, he added.

"We even contacted the VAT office and the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for clarification but they could not give any satisfactory reply," said Taher.

Md Faisal, an importer, alleged that the customs officials have seized many imported books for non-payment of VAT.

"They are now harassing the book importers by imposing VAT on the books imported during 2000-2003," he added.

He also alleged that the customs offices in the ports never issued any notice, but they were asking for VAT verbally.

The association leaders said imposing VAT on book publication, sales and import would seriously hamper the education of the students.

No countries impose tax or VAT on books in line with the Unesco Charter, said Md Osman Goni, director of the association.

Even the traders in the Saarc countries do not pay any tax or VAT for publishing, selling or importing books, he added.

## Chinese aid for flood victims

UNB, Dhaka

China will provide Bangladesh 1 lakh US dollar in cash and relief commodities worth about Tk 5.1 crore (RMB 7 million) for flood rehabilitation programme.

A certification of exchange note was signed between the two governments here on August 9 in this regard. Chinese Charge de' Affairs Duan Zhiqian and Secretary of the Food and Disaster Management Siddique Rahman Chowdhury inked the note on behalf of their respective sides, says a Chinese Embassy News Bulletin.

After the signing ceremony, Chinese Charge de' Affairs handed over a cheque for 1 lakh US dollars to Food and Disaster Management Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yousuf.

## Indian HC medical camp from today

BSS, Dhaka

The High commission of India will launch a week-long medical relief camp at Vatara Union Parishad, Baridhara, Notun Bazar and Badda from today.

The camp will provide free medicare services to the flood victims of the city in association with the State Bank of India and the India Association, a High Commission press release said.

High Commissioner Veena Sikri will inaugurate the camp at 10.00 am today in presence of State Minister for Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Qamrul Islam.

## Edn materials for mentally challenged students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

CityCell, a leading cellular phone service provider, donated education materials to mentally challenged students of the Chittagong Institute for Intellectually Disabled (CIID) at Zakir Hossain Road in the port city yesterday.

The CIID is one of the 30 institutes across the country, run by the Society for the Welfare of Intellectually Disabled (SWID), Bangladesh.

Shovon Mahboob Shahabuddin, general manager of CityCell, Chittagong, handed over the education materials to Md Moslem, president of SWID, Chittagong branch.

SWID President MA Baten, CityCell Media Consultant Shawkat Mahmud and Senior Executive (marketing) Tania Mahbub were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, Shovon Mahboob said CityCell has long been trying to improve the quality of life of all in the society under its programme, 'CityCell Changing Lives'.

Md Moslem said the SWID started its activities in Chittagong in 1981 and established the school in its own land.

At present, the CIID has 100 mentally challenged students.

MA Baten said the SWID has rehabilitated about 1400 disabled children since 1977. It also has trained about 1500 teachers.

## Obituary



Prof. Dr Jahan Ara Begum, former head of the department of chemistry of Eden College, died of brain haemorrhage on August 8, says a press release.

She was buried at her family graveyard in Habiganj.

## Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Serajul Islam, executive vice-president of United Commercial Bank, will be held at PC Culture Mosque at Sheker Tek, Mohammedpur in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow, says a press release.



PHOTO: STAR

Two mentally challenged students perform dance at a ceremony on the occasion of handing over of education materials for the students of Chittagong Institute for Intellectually Disabled (CIID) yesterday.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over the country till 6.00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 35.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and the lowest 24.8 degree Celsius at Cox's Bazar.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:34pm today and rises at 5:33am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.4	26.3	71	93
Chittagong	32.0	25.2	79	77
Rajshahi	32.8	26.0	81	77
Khulna	31.0	26.1	81	93
Barisal	31.0	25.8	75	92
Sylhet	35.4	26.3	76	53
Cox's Bazar	29.3	24.9	92	92

## Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

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