

# Hold Saarc confce as early as possible

## People's Summit urges govts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day People's Summit for People's Saarc ended in the city yesterday with a call on the Saarc governments to make immediate arrangements to hold the 13th summit.

"We have urged the governments in our recommendations to hold the summit as early as possible expressing our deep concern over its postponement," said the President of South Asia Partnership (Sap) Bushra Gohar at a press conference held at the end of the regional conference at the Brac Centre Inn.

She said a draft declaration has been adopted at the conference, organised jointly by the Sap and South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (Saape), accommodating a good number of recommendations on different issues for the welfare of the region and its people.

The participants from South Asian countries during the plenary session also agreed in the declaration that no government in the region should construct any major infrastructure creating adverse impact on the lives of people of other countries, she added.

"We have agreed that under no circumstances civil liberties and fundamental rights of the people should be suspended and that the people's right to information and communication has to be recognised as fundamental one," said Bushra.

The draft declaration, she said, has urged all the seven governments of the South Asian Association for Regional

Cooperation (Saarc) to frame policies for a visa-free south Asian region, gender equality, increased participation of women in decision making process, common currency, land reforms, reduction of military expenditure, and a refugee-free region.

While making recommendations on good governance, the group emphasized that a government must ensure rule of law with administrative decentralisation and accountability to the people, she added.

Bushra said the group on peace and demilitarisation called for declaration of December 8 as the Saarc Annual Peace Day.

The group on human security and trafficking recommended that a regional mechanism should be instituted under the Saarc arrangements to prevent trafficking into women and children, she added.

Bushra said the participants also recommended that the South Asian countries must ensure people's participation in collective efforts to eliminate poverty and protect civil liberties in the region by promoting a culture of peace and democracy for the welfare of common man.

Representatives from six Saarc countries attended the people's summit. Representative of the Maldives could not turn up due to post-Tsunami situation on the island country.

Chairperson of Sap Bangladesh chapter Asrukana Das, Executive Director Syed Nurul Alam, Executive Director of Sap-International Rohit Kumar Nepali, and the Saape focal person Rokeya Kabir were present at the press conference.

## Minor boy burnt alive in Ctg fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A three-year-old boy was burnt alive and 67 houses were gutted in a fire at a slum at Sagarika Road at Pahartali area in the city yesterday.

Sujan, the only son of rickshawpuller Mohammad Jafar and Baby Akhtar of Sonagazi in Feni, was suffering from fever.

The fire broke out when Sujan's father went out of the shanty to bring medicine for him, witnesses said.

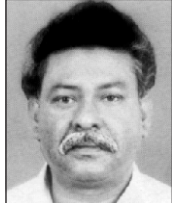
The fire originated from a kitchen oven at around 12.10pm yesterday spread fast and engulfed the slum and reduced a total of 67 semi-pucca and thatched houses and four shops to ashes.

Sujan was burnt alive being trapped in a room, witnesses said.

Four firefighting units from Agrabad Fire Stations rushed to the spot at 12.15pm and extinguished the blaze at around 1.30pm.

The Fire Brigade sources estimated the damage of properties at Tk 5 lakh.

## Obituary



says a press release.

Humayun was the eldest son of poet Habibur Rahman.

He left behind his wife and two daughters to mourn his death.

His gulkhwani will be held at his residence at 6/8 Block-E, Lalmatia in the city after Asr prayers on February 11.



The main opposition Awami League lawmakers hold a meeting under police guard at Russel Square in the city during the hartal hours yesterday.

# Ensure sustainable farming for food security

## MK Anwar tells Rice-Wheat Consortium

BSS, Dhaka

Agriculture Minister M K Anwar yesterday urged the agricultural researchers for innovating cost-effective production techniques to improve the livelihood and increase income of farmers.

"We have to ensure sustainable farming for achieving food security changing the existing complex cropping systems," he said. Without increasing productivity the developing countries can not achieve the

goal, he added.

The minister said this while he was inaugurating a three-day regional steering committee and regional technical coordination committee meetings of the Rice-Wheat Consortium for the Indo-Gangetic Plains at Spectra Convention Centre here.

With the steering committee chairperson Dr Badaruddin Soomro in the chair, the function was also addressed by Agriculture Secretary ASM Abdul Halim, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) Executive Chairman Dr Nurul Islam and International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) Director General Maxico Dr Masa Iwanaga.

He said the crop diversification must be given priority in agricultural development strategy for balanced nutrition. Diversification can not be achieved unless resources are released from rice cultivation as most of our land and other agricultural resources are tied with rice cultivation, he added.

"In Bangladesh, about 77 per cent of the total cropped area and more than 80 per cent of the total irrigated area is planted with rice while rice and wheat together occupy over 83 per cent of the total cropped area in the country," he said.

M K Anwar said that increasing and competing demands for water are plunging many countries into an era of severe water shortage and arsenic contamination.

He called upon the scientists to find out ways and means to address the problems. He also urged them to reduce yield gap between the researchers and the farmers level.

A total of 115 rice and wheat experts policymakers, planners and representatives from agricultural organisations of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Mexico, USA, UK, France, Italy, Australia, the Philippines, Peru, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Taiwan and Africa are participating in the meeting.

Covers of five important publications on the research activities conducted by the scientists of the regional steering committee were also unveiled in the inaugural function.

In Bangladesh, about 80 per cent of wheat are cultivated after the harvest of Aman crop.

The recommendations of the meeting will strengthen the food security measures of Bangladesh through increasing rice-wheat system productivity, meeting sources said.

## Bomb blast at Khulna Press Club condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday condemned the bomb explosion on Khulna Press Club premises on Saturday night injuring four journalists including its President Sheikh Abu Hasan.

The others were President of Khulna Metropolitan Journalists' Union Sheikh Belal Uddin, Staff Photojournalist of the daily Jugantor Jahidul Islam and Khulna Correspondent of News Today Rabiul Islam Tutul.

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam strongly condemned the bomb attack.

In a statement, he regretted the frequent attacks on journalists in southwestern region of the country.

The minister said such heinous attacks, one after another, have been carrying out in a planned way to make the country unstable.

"The government is determined to find out the miscreants behind the bomb attack and give exemplary punishment to them," he added.

Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmochari Oikya Parishad, Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity, Dhaka Union of Journalists, and Narayanganj Press Club demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits and security of all journalists in the country.

They also urged the authorities concerned to send Belal Uddin abroad for better treatment.

Different journalists' associations in Mymensingh held a rally and formed a human chain in front of the local press club to protest the bomb blast.

Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Communist Party, and Bikalpadhara Bangladesh also demanded arrest and exemplary punishment to the culprits.

Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association, Ain O Shalish Kendra, Democracy Watch, Sammilito Peshajibi Parishad, Human Rights Review Society and Bangladesh Cultural Centre in separate press releases also condemned the bomb explosion and demanded immediate arrest and punishment to the persons involved in it.

Our Rajshahi Correspondent adds: More than a hundred journalists staged demonstration in the city protesting the bomb attack on Khulna Press Club premises that left four journalists injured.

They took out a procession and held a rally at Shaheb Bazar Zero point with Danik Barta Editor SM Kader in the chair.

Rajshahi Press Club President Anu Mustafa, Metropolitan Press Club General Secretary Anisuzzaman, Rajshahi Union of Journalists President Mustafizur Rahman Khan Alam, Jatiya Sangbadik Sangstha's district unit President Feroz Hassan, and Editors' Forum Convenor Liaquat Ali addressed the rally.

The speakers demanded immediate removal of Khulna Metropolitan Police Commissioner, security of journalists, and proper probe into all bomb blasts. Rajshahi journalists will also stage demonstration in front of the deputy commissioner's office today.

## 1,095 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,095 people on various charges during their countywide drive in the last 48 hours till 6.00am yesterday.

During the period, the law enforcers recovered 11 firearms, nine other weapons and 18 bullets and two bombs.

# Brisk preparation for union level BNP council in Ctg

## 150 arches to be erected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Brisk preparation is going on for the Chittagong (north) district BNP representatives' council to be held at the MA Aziz Stadium in the city on February 12.

About 770 councillors from 108 unions and ward committees under seven thana and six municipal areas of Chittagong (north) district will join the council.

Work is going on round-the-clock to erect huge bamboo arches and put up billboards on both sides of the streets leading to the council venue.

As many as 150 arches decorated with banners and festoons will be erected to welcome the participants, the organisers said.

Of them, 100 will be erected on the 30-km stretch of the road from Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport to Bahodderhat while 50 others on the Dhaka-Chittagong road from Mirer Sarai to City Gate area.

Besides, the islands and road dividers will be decorated with colourful festoons and lighting.

Fifteen huge billboards having digital portraits of founder-president of BNP late Ziaur Rahman, BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman are also being set up around the council venue and the main thoroughfares of the city.

Although the expenditure on the grand event is likely to be higher than Tk 30 lakh, the organisers claimed that the budget would not exceed Tk 3 lakh.

Col. (retd.) Oli Ahmad, Bir Bikram, will attend the council as the chief guest and Tarique

Rahman will preside.

Similar preparation is also going on for Chittagong (south) district BNP representative council scheduled for February 13 at Patiya Rahat Ali School ground on the other bank of the Karnaphuli.

About 670 representatives from 117 union and ward committees will take part in the council.

As many as 50 arches are being erected on the road from Bahodderhat to the council venue.

Meanwhile, the sports lovers have expressed grave concern over the use of MA Aziz Stadium for such a political gathering.

They said the digging of the field for erection of canopy and setting up of dais would damage both the wicket and outfield of the stadium, which is the 2nd test venue in the country.

## POLICE ACTION

## Ctg journalists' programme begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

All the newspapers published from the port city would keep a space of six inches vacant on the front page from tomorrow for next six days in protest against the police action on working journalists during hartal hours on Saturday.

The weeklong agitation programme came at a joint meeting of the leaders of Chittagong Press Club (CPC) and Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) at the CPC Bhaban yesterday with club President Abu Sufian in the chair.

The leaders denounced the police assault on journalists in Chittagong and the bomb attack at Khulna Press Club, and demanded exemplary punishment to the persons responsible for them.

Daily Azadi Editor MA Malek, BFUJ Vice-president Arun Das Gupta, CUJ President Mostak Ahmad, Resident Editor of Prothom Alo Abul Momen and CPC General Secretary Kalim Sarwar addressed the meeting.

Later, they brought out a procession that paraded different city streets.

Leaders of Chittagong Metropolitan Union of Journalists (CMUJ) in another meeting condemned both the incidents in Chittagong and Khulna, and demanded proper trial of the persons involved in them.



## Death anniversary of Khairul Kabir today

Today is the eighth death anniversary of journalist and banker Khairul Kabir, says a press release.

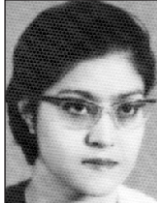
He died of old age ailments in Singapore on this day in 1997.

Kabir was the founder-editor of the Daily Sangbad and the founder-first life member of the Jatiya Press Club.

He was also the first chairman and managing director of Janata Bank and a fellow of the American Bankers' Association.

Khairul Kabir hailed from the illustrious Kabir family of Ghorasal and was buried in the family graveyard there. A milad mahfil has been organised at his ancestral home in Ghorasal to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

## Ruby Rahman



The 40th death anniversary of artist Ruby Rahman will be observed today, says a press release.

Expert in classical Chinese

paintings and writer, Ruby Rahman was killed in a car accident on this day in 1965 at the boarder of Lebanon and Syria.

To mark the day, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at the High Court Mazar in the city today for the salvation of the departed soul.

## DHAKA TODAY

### Memorial meeting

Sammitto Nagorik Samaj will hold a meeting in memory of Shah ASM Kibria, a language veteran, freedom fighter and former finance minister. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 3.30pm.

### Meeting

The second meeting of the convening committee of the Association of Private Universities in Bangladesh will be held. Venue: Faisal Investment Foundation, House-1/10, Block-A, Road-5, Lalmatia. Time: 6.30pm.

### Jamaat rally

Dhaka city unit of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh will hold a rally in protest against hartal and anarchy with Industries Minister Matu Rahman Nizami as chief guest. Venue: North Gate of Baitul Mokarram National Mosque. Time: 4.00pm.

### Film show

The High Commission of India will screen a film titled 'Gangajal'. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, House-25, Road-96, Gulshan-2.

## DHAKA TOMORROW

### Press preview

A press preview of the solo exhibition of paintings by Ali Imam titled 'Anadi Ananta' will be held. Venue: Bengal Shilpalay, House-275/A, Road-27 (Old), Dhanmondi. Time: 3.30pm.

### Thumri evening

Samina Dey will present a selection of Thumri in an exclusive soiree in memory of Shobha Gurtu. Venue: German Cultural Centre, House-10, Road-9, Dhanmondi.



PHOTO: STAR

Organisation to Safeguard Human Rights stages a demonstration against hartal at Muktangan in the city yesterday, the last day of 36-hour hartal called by the opposition parties.