

Hold Saarc confce as early as possible

People's Summit urges govt

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.

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 Asrurana 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.

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.

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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 Agrabard 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

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 border 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

Sammilito 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.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Film show

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

Press preview

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

Jamaat rally

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



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

3 decomposed bodies recovered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered decomposed bodies of three people, including a child, at Khilgaon and Lalbagh in the city.

Two bodies were identified as Ebrahim alias Bisu, 20, a rickshawpuller and Shanta, 7.

Several unidentified persons called Ebrahim out of his house at South Mothertak at 9.00pm on Friday and his body was recovered from a water body (beel) of Nandipara at Khilgaon in the city at 3.00pm yesterday, police said. His body bore several marks of injuries with lethal weapons morgue sources at Dhaka Medical College Hospital said.

Santa was missing on January 31 from in front of her house at Barobari Meradia at Khilgaon and police recovered her body from a paddy field under Dawkandi Aftabnagar project in Khilgaon at 3.45pm yesterday.

Another body aged about 22 is yet to be identified. Police recovered the body from a drain of city protection embankment at Nawabganj under Lalbagh thana at 2.00pm.

Truck with 320 sacks of rice hijacked

UNB, Comilla

A truck carrying 320 sacks of rice worth Tk 2.78 lakh was hijacked by the miscreants at Chardina here early hours of yesterday.

Police said the truck loading the rice from Hilli land port in Dinajpur was bound for Comilla. The miscreants fell logs at Dharanipara on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at about 3-30am blocking the passage of the truck.



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.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country having chances of rain or thundershowers at places over Rajshahi division and the regions of Jessor, Kushtia, Tangail, Mymensingh, Comilla and Sylhet till 6.00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over river basins of the country during the period, Met Office said forecasting that night temperature may remain nearly unchanged.

Highest temperature 29.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangamati and lowest 8.7 degree Celsius at Srimangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:49pm today and rises at 6:36am 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	27.6	12.7	56	56
Chittagong	29.0	14.0	71	44
Rajshahi	28.4	12.4	74	70
Khulna	28.7	14.0	92	59
Barisal	28.6	11.8	92	73
Sylhet	27.0	12.3	62	54
Cox's Bazar	29.0	14.6	65	56

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.

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.

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.

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

Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmochari Okya 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 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 Dainik Barla 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 countrywide drive in the last 48 hours till 6.00am yesterday.

During the period, the law enforcement 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

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 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 Bahadurhat while 50 others on the Dhaka-Chittagong road from Mir 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.

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, BFU Vice-president Arun Das Gupta, CUJ President Mostak Ahmad, Resident Editor of Prothom Alo Abu 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 (CMU) in another meeting condemned both the incidents in Chittagong and Khulna, and demanded proper trial of the persons involved in them.