

SANITATION FOR ALL

## 'Step up efforts to meet MDG target'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh cannot meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target on sanitation for all by 2010, if sanitation coverage is not raised by 9.5 percent a year, experts at a roundtable said yesterday.

Though sanitation coverage achieved 7.5 percent in the early 90s in the country, it slowed down in the past decade, they said.

Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) organised the roundtable titled 'Citizens' evaluation of progress made on safe water supply and sanitation in Bangladesh' at its conference room in the city.

Seventy-five percent of people have access to water supply in Bangladesh and the achievement is less than other countries in South Asia. Worryingly, over three crore people have been drinking highly arsenic-contaminated water, said the experts.

They also said that there is no specific plans to supply safe water in coastal areas, which is an obstacle to meeting the MDG.

But the government's initiatives to achieve the target for total sanitation and water supply are not insignificant.

Its initiatives include social mobilisation campaign, allocation of 20 percent of the ministry's budget to sanitation, nationwide baseline sanitation survey and a sanitation strategy.

It has also developed the National Policy for Arsenic Mitigation and Implementation Plan for Arsenic Mitigation in Bangladesh, said Prof Feroze Ahmed of Buet in his keynote paper.

Dr Ahsan Uddin Ahmed, executive director of BUP, read out the keynote paper.

There are many policies, but the government lacks commitment, said BUP Chairman Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad.

The speakers also stressed the

need for developing the water bodies and reducing wastage of water to meet the goal on safe water supply and sanitation.

Executive Director of the Centre for Environmental and Geographical Service Gias Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, former secretary Dr Zahurul Karim, Jalal Uddin Muhammad Abdul Hai of the Institute of Water Management, Shahidul Islam of Uttaran and Nilufar Yeasmin of Water Resources Planning Organisation, also spoke.

## Commissioners boycott RCC mayor's meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The ward commissioners (WC) of Rajshahi City Corporation yesterday boycotted the monthly general meeting on development as some issues were not included in the agenda.

Of 40 WCs, 35 attended the meeting. They walked out of the meeting terming the mayor's activities as 'abusive for the corporation'.

They demanded inclusion of 12-point demand in the agenda of the meeting promised by Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu MP in the previous meeting.

The demands include minimum Tk 30 lakh development work for every ward, making the ward commissioners aware of development works, full payment of honorarium and furnish the WC's offices with computer for data entry and permanent night guards.

"The mayor started presiding over the meeting only to get approval of work worth Tk 100 crore done without our knowledge", said WC Abdul Hamid.

The mayor could not be contacted for his comment.

A RCC press release, however, said the monthly meeting was held in presence of all ward commissioners.

## Pro-opposition lawyers observe 'Black Day' today

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Sammilita Ainjibi Samannay Parishad (SASP), a forum of pro-opposition lawyers, will observe 'Black Day' across the country today.

On this day in 2003, the ruling BNP activists led by Sagir Ahmed attacked the lawyers on the Dhaka District Bar Association premises while they were holding a rally under the banner of the SASP.

The SASP leaders claimed that

about 100 lawyers, including some journalists, were injured in the attack.

Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) Secretary Advocate M Enayetur Rahim said a protest meeting will be held at the south hall of the SCBA at 1:00pm today.

He said the lawyers of the country under the banner of the SASP will observe the similar programmes at all the district bar associations today.



Indian Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, middle, calls on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday. Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri, extreme left, was present on the occasion.

## Complaint against SPP for demanding money from complainant

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) has been accused of demanding money unlawfully from a complainant of a criminal case.

Mohammad Nizamul Haq, the complainant in a petition filed to the General Secretary of Dhaka Bar Association (DBA) alleged that SPP Mohammad Abul Khair yesterday demanded Tk 1,000 when he (Nizamul) appeared before the court for giving his deposition.

Nizamul Haq of Shahidbagh at Motijheel in the capital, complainant of a case filed under the Special Act for Prevention on Women and Children Repression, in his petition mentioned that he appeared before the court at about 10:00am for giving his deposition. But SPP would not take necessary steps for giving his deposition if he (complainant) did not pay the money, the petitioner said.

Khair became angry and misbehaved with the complainant as he refused to give the money. Moreover, the SPP ousted him from the courtroom, the complainant added.

When contacted, SPP told The Daily Star that the charges brought against him were false, fabricated and concocted.

DBA General Secretary Mohammad Khorshed Alam said that he got a petition against the SPP and he would take necessary action if the charges brought against him are proved true.

## Zero percent tariff on imported paper demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Pustak Prokashok O Bikreta Samity (Book publishers and sellers association) yesterday demanded zero percent import tariff on imported paper to cut its present price hike.

At a press conference at the National Press Club, they said they are to buy now one ton newsprint at Tk 62,000 by paying Tk 22,000 as import tariff, VAT, surcharge, PCI and DF VAT.

The scenario is same in the case of white paper also, they added.

The leaders said the price hike of paper will hinder their business, which

in turn will hamper the interest of around three crore students and many other readers across the country.

Taking the opportunity of present price hike, local paper industries also hiked the price of their paper whereas the government didn't impose any new tax on them, they alleged.

The leaders said local producers hiked the price twice within last one and a half months and they are now selling per ton of paper at Tk 49,000.

They also alleged that private sector is manipulating the local paper market as only one state-owned Kamaphuli Paper Mills is now open.

Reading out a written statement at the conference, association Chairman

Abu Taher demanded that the local producers should sell their paper at reasonable price for publications.

He also demanded government intervention in this regard.

Referring to government's decision to publish next year's textbooks in white paper, he posed the question, if the paper price is not cut, how a student will be able to buy the book at such a high price?

Md Tajul Islam, Kamrul Islam Sayak, SM Omar Faruk, Alhaj Md Abul Kalam, Md Abdur Razzak, Abdul Wadud Master, and Md Abdus Salam also spoke at the press conference.



PHOTO: STAR

Renowned economist Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya speaks at a seminar on 'Right to information' at the Brac Centre conference room in the city yesterday. On his right are Law Minister Moudud Ahmed and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Information Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury and on his left are Information Secretary Mahbubur Rahman and Team Leader of Manusher Jonno Shaheen Anam. Manusher Jonno, a nonprofit organisation, organised the seminar.

## PM opens Solar Home System today

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will open the 50,000th Solar Home System today installed at Parshuram in Feni through video link.

The inaugural ceremony of the solar system financed by Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL) will take place at Bangladesh-China

Friendship Conference Centre in the city at 12 noon.

The Prime Minister will also distribute IDCOL award for outstanding contribution to IDCOL Solar Programme.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman will attend the function as the special guest while World Bank Country Director Ms Christine I Wallich will speak at the function.