

Only secular society can lead nation to prosperity

Speakers tell programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only a secular society can lead the nation towards prosperity, said the speakers at a programme yesterday. They said secularism separates religion from the state activities. The programme was organised by Mukti Juddher Smirity Sangrakhan Kendra Trust to mark the 10th founding anniversary of its library movement. The two-day programme began with the slogan 'Build Secular Human Society' at Women's Voluntary Association (WVA) auditorium in the city. The libraries set up by the trust in different parts of the country would serve as the centre to resist fundamentalism, said Prof Muntasir Mamoon.

He said these will also help spread the true history of the country and the liberation war and keep the memories of the freedom fighters alive. "The ideals lying behind our liberation war were to practice freedom of thoughts and set up a non-communal society where the religion would be a matter of personal consideration. But we went back when the word secularism was deleted from the constitution," said Prof Kabir Chowdhury. A united movement is now needed as the country is going to be a failed state because of the misuse of the four-party alliance government, he said. Prof Chowdhury urged all for strengthening the oust government agitation. The speakers said since the

independence the anti-liberation forces have been trying to undermine the spirit of the liberation by causing harms to freedom fighters. The nation should be aware of the vested quarters who had started business in the name of religion and spread a false explanation of secularism, they added. Presided over by Journalist Shahriar Kabir, the programme was also addressed by Poet Shamsur Rahman, Litterateur Hasan Azizul Haque, Prof Anupam Sen of Chittagong University, Qazi Faruque Ahmed of Proshika, Vice-president of the Committee to Resist Killers and Collaborators of 1971 Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, and Sector Commander of Liberation War Abu Osman Chowdhury.

ATTCK ON RALLY SCF submits memo to Buet director

DU CORRESPONDENT

Samajrantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) yesterday submitted a memorandum to the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) students' welfare director, demanding punishment to JCD men responsible for the attack on their rally on Wednesday. Buet SCF also brought out a procession and held a rally on the campus in the city demanding immediate arrest of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists, who attacked the rally leaving at least six injured. They will also hold a solidarity rally comprising teachers, guardians and students on Buet campus on Sunday.

BATEXPO Foreign buyers urged to ensure rights of garment workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment Sramik and Shilpa Rakha Jatiya Mancha, a forum of garment workers, yesterday welcomed the foreign buyers at Batexpo and urged them to ensure fair trade for establishing the rights of garment workers. At a rally in Muktangan in the city, the leaders said if fair trade is not established it will be difficult to implement the rights of workers. Referring to their five-point demand presented to the Labour Minister on July 12, they said the

Minister had taken no initiative to implement them even three months later. The wages of garment workers had not increased in the last 14 years despite the price hike of essentials, they added. Garment owners are exploiting them, which in turn could lead to anarchy in the industry, they warned. They threatened to go for strike if their five-point demand, including fixation of minimum basic wage of Tk 2500, is not implemented.

Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Advocate Sirajul Islam, a former lawmaker and former president of Brahmanbaria district Awami League, died at Holy Family Hospital in the city yesterday morning at the age of 67. He left behind his six daughters, one son and a host of relatives, political fellows and admirers to mourn his death. Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina expressed her deep shock at the death of Advocate Islam. In a condolence message, she said the nation has lost a patriotic politician, a veteran freedom fighter and a renowned social worker at his death. She prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the members of bereaved family.

Khalilur Rahman

Khalilur Rahman, a Bangladeshi physician living in Ireland, died of cardiac arrest on September 22 at the age of 53, says a press release. Rahman left his wife and two children. The body of Rahman arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday. After his namaz-e-janaza at Uttara Bajjary mosque in the city, Rahman was buried at his village home Charamgoria in Madaripur. Rahman was working as medicine specialist at Fligo General Hospital in Ireland. He was also doing research on Cancer.

Only one week ago, Prof Bashira Mannan, mother-in-law of Rahman, died of cardiac arrest in Dhaka. She was the former director of Social Welfare Institute of Dhaka University and wife of lawmaker Prof Dr MA Mannan.

Siraj Uddin Ahmed

Siraj Uddin Ahmed, managing director of Alpine Fresh Water System Limited and a social worker, passed away due to cardiac arrest at his own residence in the city on Wednesday at the age of 66, says a press release. He left behind his wife, two sons and one daughter. His namaz-e-janaza will be held at his residence in Paribagh at 8:30am on Sunday when his wife and children arrive from the USA. On the same day his body will be taken to his native village in Kilaora and will be buried in the family graveyard. His qulshwani will be held there after Magrib prayers on that day.



Family members of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria and members of civil society line up along a road near the Science Laboratory intersection in the city yesterday to demand trial of the perpetrators of the gruesome murder.

BDB labour wing formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) yesterday formed a 21-member committee of its labour wing named Bikalpa Sramik Dhara (BSD) for Dhaka City unit, says a press release. Md Anul Haque was named its convener and Mohammad Anwar Hossain its member secretary. Professor Dr Nurul Amin Bepary, joint secretary general of BDB, and Azizur Rahman Akhand, member secretary of BSD central committee, were made the advisors of the newly formed BSD.

NUS workshop begins

A three-day Advocacy workshop to combat violence against women and children, organised by the Nari Unnayan Shakti (Women's Power for Development), began at Banasri, Rampura, in the city on Wednesday, says a press release. Dr Md Mahbubur Rahman, secretary of the information ministry, inaugurated the workshop as the chief guest. TIM Nurun Nabi Chowdhury, joint secretary of the law ministry, M Haibullah, joint secretary, IMED, and Syedul Hoque Milky of the Hard to Reach Project, Unicef, were present as special guest while Afroja Parvin, executive director of the Nari Unnayan Shakti presided over the inaugural session. The victims of violence, community leaders of Khilgaon area, representatives from NUS's different projects and other NGOs attended the inaugural session.

Death anniversary

Today is the 53rd death anniversary of Abdul Karim Shahityabishar ad, one of the mentors of exploration of Bengali tradition, says a press release. Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar and different cultural organisations will organise different programmes in Dhaka and Pottia of Chittagong, birthplace of Abdul Karim. Shamaj Rupantar Adhayan Kendra will organise a memorial lecture at Dhaka University Business faculty auditorium tomorrow in the morning.

Arifa Haque Lithi Today is the 4th death anniversary of Arifa Haque Lithi, daughter of Mohammad Azizul Haque, says a press release. On the occasion a millad mahfil will be held at Mirbagh Darul Aman Jame Masjid in the city after Asr prayers today.

Nawabzada Hasan Ali Today is the 24th death anniversary of Nawabzada Syed Hasan Ali Chowdhury, son of Nawab-bahadur Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhury, eminent leader of Muslim Renaissance in Bengal, says a press release. Nawabzada Syed Hasan Ali Smriti Sangsad and The Royal Resort Dhanbari will observe the death anniversary across the country.

Continue role in poverty cut, rural development

Bhuiyan urges Cirdap countries

BDNEWS, Dhaka

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday urged Cirdap as well as its member countries to continue its role in the rural development and the reduction of poverty through sharing expertise and experiences for the uplift of poor of this region along with the global response and opportunity. Bhuiyan was addressing the inaugural session of the Executive Council-25 of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (Cirdap) as the chief guest at its auditorium. Cirdap is a unique organisation in the region working for poverty alleviation, rural development, gender equity, social mobilisation of poor, GO-NGO collaboration in development efforts, food security, harnessing the community initiative, human resources development since its inception, headed. It has organised the series of

events, including a regional policy dialogue on Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation, from September 29 to October 3 in Dhaka on the occasion of its executive committee (EC) and governing council (GC) meetings. Cirdap Executive Committee Chairperson Arwan Surbaki presided over the meeting. Director General Dr Durga Prasad Paudyal said the meeting will be a historic one for streamlining the mechanism for enhancing regional cooperation among the countries of Asia-Pacific region in fostering rural development and achieving the goal of 'poverty alleviation' with active participation of Cirdap at the regional level. State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Ziaul Haque Zia, said a new strategic framework for Cirdap has been developed with a new vision for enhanced regional cooperation. Secretary Hedayatul Islam Chowdhury also spoke. Representatives from 14 member countries and policy experts of this region have been taking part in the dialogue and the meetings. The regional policy dialogue on Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation will be held at Cirdap auditorium in the city on October 1. The 25th EC meeting of the Cirdap will be held today while the 15th GC meeting on October 2 and 3 with a view to strengthening the organisational capacity and professional strength of the regional body. GC is the highest policymaking body of the Cirdap comprising the ministers in-charge of rural development and agriculture in 14 member countries. The EC is a policy planning and recommending body consisting of the secretaries, permanent secretaries and secretary generals of the designated contact ministries of the member countries.

DHAKA TODAY

ActionAid conference
ActionAid Bangladesh organises a global conference on 'International reflections on diversity and citizenship movement'. Venue: Spectra Convention Centre, Gulshan-1. Time: 9:30am.

Peace procession
World Peace Organisation will take out a peace procession protesting all kinds of war and violence and demanding one world without any boundary. Venue: Muktangan. Time: 9:00am.

Launching ceremony
The launching ceremony of a book titled 'Shah AMS Kibria: A Legend' edited by Mohammad Shahjahan will be held with Prof Salahuddin in the chair. Venue: Liberation War Museum, Shegubagicha. Time: 3:30pm.

Bapa rally
Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon will hold a rally and form a human chain demanding freeing of playgrounds from occupation and their proper maintenance as per High Court directives. Venue: In front of Dhanmondi Club Math. Time: 10:30am.

Memorial meeting
Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies and Film Archive will hold a memorial meeting in memory of film director Mohiuddin who died on September 20. Venue: Archive auditorium, 12 Gaznabi Road, Mohammadpur. Time: 4:30pm.

Prize distribution
The prize distribution ceremony of Nestle Bangladesh and Saptahik 2000 sponsored story writing competition will be held. Venue: National Museum. Time: 5:00pm.

Biman tender stalled for 8 months by a group

Following the DC-10 disaster in Chittagong on July 1, Biman sought lease of one or two DC10-30 aircraft in a tender that closed on July 14. But none participated in it. Sources said that DC-10 aircraft have now become so obsolete that there is a lack of suppliers. Similarly, Biman's tender closing on September 15 to purchase or lease three Airbus A320 family or Boeing B737 family airplanes also failed to draw a single bid. Biman rescheduled the bid with the date closing yesterday. It could not be known if any bidder turned up in the last minute. "The unofficial price of doing business with Biman is pretty high. Besides, when there is someone politically very powerful wanting to bag illogical and unauthorised commissions, no airline manufacturer wants to put their necks in Biman deals," quips a competent Bimansourer. However, Biman chief Mahmudur Rahman says it is too early to conclude that no one will bid for Airbus A320 planes. "It's true that DC-10 aircraft are obsolete now. We are not looking for DC-10 now. Airbus is not obsolete and let's see if we can get offers in the present bid," he pointed out. In recent years, Biman has suffered a number of accidents while its fleet of 10 aircraft has become nearly obsolete.

FROM PAGE 1 some deficiencies in ATRs. For instance, to accommodate a coffin, the number of seats of each aircraft will go down to 66. At this point, the deal became stalled. After a year on November 27, 2004, Biman's committee of executive directors recommended purchasing the Dash8-Q400 aircraft on the grounds that they will be more profitable, even though they are costlier than the ATR plane by \$20 million. But on December 12, the Biman Board decided to cancel the tender and float a fresh tender. This time Biman's revised tender schedule was forwarded to the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) of the finance ministry. The IMED omitted the coffin accommodation from the tender terms on the grounds that coffins, being carried very few times a year, can not justify spending \$20 million dollars extra. The IMED also dropped another option in the tender that allowed a trade-in of Biman's old F 28 airplanes, saying these can go for an auction. The IMED then accordingly forwarded the tender schedule to Biman, but the national flag carrier ignored the revision and went ahead with the old terms and conditions, seeking bids by January 24, 2005. Later it extended the closing date on February 7. The ATR offered a price of \$49.2 million for three planes this time accommodating the coffin without sacrificing any seats - while Bombardier offered \$69.74 million for three planes. The evaluation again showed ATR to be the lowest bidder, this time with better terms - including 100 percent credit financing and low operating costs. As Biman's tilt to ATR became obvious, the business lobby then influenced the government to stall the purchase process, the sources said. Other than domestic routes, Biman intended to operate the medium sized aircraft in Kolkata, Kathmandu and Yangoon, the sources added. However, Biman's acting Managing Director, Mahmudur Rahman, terms the suspension of this tender strategicaly denying that is resulted from anyone's pressure. "Right now our prime priority is purchasing aircraft like the DC-10 and Airbus for international routes where Biman's operations are suffering the most," Rahman told The Daily Star Tuesday. "We have not cancelled the bid (for ATR/Dash planes). But procuring both types of planes for domestic and international routes makes it a heavy financial burden. That is why we are consciously delaying

the purchase of the planes for domestic routes and prioritising the wide-bodied aircraft purchase," he added. When The Daily Star pointed out that the bid for ATR/Dash planes remains suspended from February several months before Biman decided to prioritise purchase of wide-bodied aircrafts, Rahman replied, "We have finished the evaluation of ATR/Dash planes. But it will be a heavy financial burden to finish the scheme right now." "There is no doubt that we will have to replace all our F28s (used in domestic routes) as soon as possible," he added. Ironically, state minister for civil aviation, Mir Mohammad Nasir, earlier this year purchased for Biman two very old F28-4000 aircraft from an Indonesian company at a cost of \$2.97 million. Both the aircraft are performing poorly and added to a fleet of decades old second-hand planes, making Biman's health suffer further. Poor tender response Arbitrary handling of aircraft purchases in recent years has affected Biman's reputation among airplane manufacturers and suppliers so much that now the airline is failing to attract a single bidder in its attempt to purchase or lease wide-bodied aircrafts, sources said.

Following the DC-10 disaster in Chittagong on July 1, Biman sought lease of one or two DC10-30 aircraft in a tender that closed on July 14. But none participated in it. Sources said that DC-10 aircraft have now become so obsolete that there is a lack of suppliers. Similarly, Biman's tender closing on September 15 to purchase or lease three Airbus A320 family or Boeing B737 family airplanes also failed to draw a single bid. Biman rescheduled the bid with the date closing yesterday. It could not be known if any bidder turned up in the last minute. "The unofficial price of doing business with Biman is pretty high. Besides, when there is someone politically very powerful wanting to bag illogical and unauthorised commissions, no airline manufacturer wants to put their necks in Biman deals," quips a competent Bimansourer. However, Biman chief Mahmudur Rahman says it is too early to conclude that no one will bid for Airbus A320 planes. "It's true that DC-10 aircraft are obsolete now. We are not looking for DC-10 now. Airbus is not obsolete and let's see if we can get offers in the present bid," he pointed out. In recent years, Biman has suffered a number of accidents while its fleet of 10 aircraft has become nearly obsolete.

Five killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least five people were killed and six others injured in separate road accidents in Khulna and Brahmanbaria yesterday. Staff Correspondent from Khulna reports, three people were killed and three others severely injured in a road accident at Gokhalhi in the Khulna City. The dead were identified as Momena Khatoun, 40, Anwar, 38, and Anisur Rahman, 24. The injured were undergoing treatment in the Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) were identified as Merry, 20, autorickshaw driver Khalrul, 35, and Saleha, 45. The accident occurred when a Phultala bound passenger bus collided with an auto-rickshaw coming from Daulatpur to Khulna city with five passengers. The auto-

rickshaw was smashed and later seized by police. The doctors at KMCH said condition of the injured is critical. Of the dead, Anisur Rahman was a final year student of Northern University's Khulna campus. Our Correspondent from Brahmanbaria says, Two people were killed and three others injured while two trucks collide on Dhaka-Brahmanbaria highway at Bertola village under Sarail upazila of the district on Wednesday night. Police and hospital sources said the accident occurred when a truck was going to Ashugonj from Kasba and another to Sylhet from Dhaka. The trucks collide when they tried to save a power trolley at Bertola here. Truck driver Hanna, 42, and one unidentified person of the truck died and three others were injured. The injured were rushed to Sadar hospital.



National Press Club President Reazuddin Ahmed speaks on the proposed media complex at an extra-ordinary meeting of the club in the city yesterday.

WEATHER TODAY

Moderately heavy falls likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions and at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, and Sylhet divisions till 6:00pm today. Moderately heavy falls are also expected at places during the period, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country. Highest temperature 34.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 23.7 degree Celsius at Srirangon. The sun sets in the capital at 5.47pm today and rises at 5:50am 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	31.5	25.8	85	79
Chittagong	30.7	26.2	89	98
Rajshahi	34.5	26.3	80	83
Khulna	31.7	24.0	86	83
Barisal	31.0	26.0	93	83
Sylhet	30.8	25.4	92	82
Cox's Bazar	31.5	25.0	79	91