

Economic ties to further strengthen with Germany

Hasina greets new chancellor

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina congratulated newly elected German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

In a letter to Merkel, Hasina, also Awami League president, hoped bilateral relations and economic cooperation between Bangladesh and Germany would be further strengthened under the new leadership for mutual benefit of the two peoples.

Describing Germany as a trusted development partner of Bangladesh, the former prime minister said Germany has been assisting Bangladesh since her Independence led by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

She wished good health and long life of the Chancellor Merkel and continued peace and prosperity for the people of Germany.



PHOTO: STAR

Leaders of the Hindu community greet Awami League President Sheikh Hasina with a bouquet on the occasion of the Durga Puja, the greatest festival of the Hindus, at the Dhanmondi party office in the city yesterday.

Amend laws to ensure fair trial of juvenile offenders

Speakers tell roundtable

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged the government to amend the Children Act 1974 and the Children Rules 1976 to ensure fair trial of juve-

nile offenders.

There must be a clear distinction between criminal as well as juvenile justice system and juvenile offenders must come under the purview of juvenile courts and not under the criminal courts, they said.

The roundtable, organised by Save the Children UK at the Jatiya Press Club in the city, deliberated on "Can a juvenile be sentenced to death? A discussion on the Judgement of the Appellate Division Court, in Md Shukur Ali vs State."

Supreme Court lawyers Md Nizamul Huq Nasim, Nayeem Ahmed, Alena Khan and ABM Bayezid spoke at the roundtable with Shaheen Anam, team leader of Manusher Jonno, in the chair.

Earlier, Save the Children UK's head of programme Habibun Nessa introduced the topic on which the keynote paper was presented by Dr Shahadeen Malik of Brac University.

The speakers referred to juvenile Shukur Ali who was sentenced by a criminal court to death in 2001 in a 1999 rape and murder case under Section 6(2) of the Women and Children Repression Act.

"The verdict is a shameful example of major failure of the country's juvenile judiciary system", said Nizamul Huq Nasim.

Shahadeen Malik pointed out that in the Children Act of 1974 it was manifested that the Juvenile Court was to rehabilitate the children, not to subject them to the rigors of criminal justice system, which was for adults only.

"The Children Act prohibits death sentence and imprisonment of youthful offenders and, most importantly, the juvenile Justice system is centered

around the youthful offender and not the criminal act committed by the offender," he said.

ABM Bayezid said the Children Act did not specify the age limit of juvenile and that is also problem of determining the actual age of an offender in the absence of valid birth certificate.

The participants called upon the government to reconsider the existing Children Act and the Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Ain and to bring necessary amendments to clear the legal confusion overage.

Electronic goods, liquor worth Tk 18 lakh seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The members of Bangladesh Coast Guard (BCG), East Zone, yesterday seized huge quantity of liquor and electronic goods worth around Tk 18 lakh from a Vietnam-flag carrier at the outer anchorage of Chittagong port.

On information, a squad of BCG East Zone raided the Vietnamese vessel - MV PHU TAN while off-loading the seized goods reportedly smuggled into the country.

Searching the vessel the Coast Guard men recovered 2000 cans of bear and huge quantity of electronics goods including ten photocopy machines.

The ship was detained and search operation with the help of concerned customs authorities was going on till filing of this report yesterday evening, sources said.

Sources said different smuggling syndicates, reportedly in association with the masters and crews of foreign vessels, had long been smuggling contraband items into the country.

The smuggled goods were off-loaded through Tempo boats at different points of Patenga sea-beach, the Sangu river adjoining areas and outer anchorage, sources said.