

INT'L WHITE CANE SAFETY DAY TODAY

# 20 lakh suffer from eye problems in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International White Cane Safety Day will be observed in the country today as elsewhere across the world to ensure safe movement for the people lacking eyesight.

The day is observed since 1969 following a decision taken in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia have given separate messages on the occasion.

The president in his message said, "It is our social and civic responsibility to create a favourable conditions for the blinds."

He urged all voluntary and private organisations including social workers to extend their hands for the welfare of the people with sight disability to supplement the government efforts.

The prime minister in her message said, "It is the responsibility of all of us to ensure their (people lacking eye-sight) welfare and development."

She hoped that voluntary organisations and civil societies would play more effective role to supplement the government initiatives.

According to Blind Education and Rehabilitation Development Organisation (Berdo), there are around 20 lakh people in Bangladesh

suffering from eye problems in different forms like partly blindness, blind from birth, total blindness, and cataract.

Berdo is helping the sightless people by arranging scholarships, library facilities, training programmes, jobs and credit facilities.

Different organisations have taken up programmes to observe the day in a befitting manner.

National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled will hold a discussion at social service department office at Agargaon in the city at 10.00am.



Jatiya Garments-Darji Sramik Karmachari Kendra stages a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding Eid bonus and salary arrears before Ramadan 20.

## Price spiral of essentials makes people's lives miserable: B Chowdhury

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday criticised the BNP-led alliance government for its failure to check price spiral of essentials and to curb the activities of religious extremists.

Such failures made the lives of the people miserable and tarnished the image of the country abroad, he said.

The general people now curse the government for its failure, which will speed up its fall, said Badruddoza.

"The government is cursed by the people who were repressed in various ways over the past four years."

He also criticised the BNP for making the parliament ineffective.

The former president was addressing a public meeting on the Adampur Juba Shangha premises at Sonargaon in Narayanganj. Party's youth front Bikalpa Jubo Dhara organised the programme.

BDB Secretary General Abdul Mannan, Joint Secretary General Firoz M Hasan, Organising Secretary Mahi B Chowdhury and other central and local leaders also addressed the meeting, chaired by ATM Kamal, convener of the party's youth front.

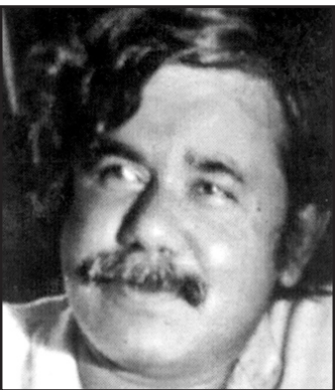
## Fertiliser worth Tk 2 crore seized from Meghna

UNB, Bhola

Coastguards seized two cargo vessels with 4000 sacks of smuggled urea fertiliser worth around Tk 2 crore from the Meghna river at Bhargar char area early yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, the coastguards ambushed in the river on Thursday night and chased the vessels while they were passing by Bhargar Char at dead of night.

The drivers and crewmembers fled the scene leaving behind their vessels as the coastguards fired 20 shots at them at one stage of their chase.



## Prof Shawkat passes away

DU CORRESPONDENT

Prof Shawkatuzzaman, noted artist and teacher of the Institute of Fine Arts of Dhaka University, passed away due to heat attack in the city yesterday, says a press release.

His body will be taken to the institute at 11:00am today to pay last homage.

After a namaz-e-janaza at the university central mosque after Zohr prayers, Prof Shawkat will be buried at Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur.

## A quarter trying to destroy govt achievements: Bhuiyan

BSS, Dhaka

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said a vested quarter has been trying to destroy the achievements of the government.

"The government has achieved a tremendous success in every sector during the last four years, while a vested quarter has been hatching conspiracy against the country," said Bhuiyan, also secretary general of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

He was addressing a discussion and Iftar party organised by Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB) at Sangsad Bhaban plaza with DAB President Dr AKM Azizul Haque in the chair.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, State Minister for Health Mizanur Rahman Sinha, advisor of DAB Dr MA Hadi and Secretary General of the BMA Dr ZM Zahid also spoke.

Bhuiyan urged the countrymen to elect the government in the next general elections to maintain the flow of the success.



As part of beefed-up security, police search devotees as they enter the High Court Mosque in the city yesterday to offer Juma prayers.

# Dhaka close ally, strategic partner of US

## US officials tell foreign secretary

UNB, Dhaka

Key administrative officials of US National Security Council, State Department and Defence Department recognised Bangladesh as a close ally and strategic partner of the United States and assured continued support for the country's democratic governance and economic progress.

The assurance came when Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin had several meetings with the US officials during his two-day visit to Washington.

Hemayet conveyed Bangladesh government's desire to further expand and deepen the existing bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the US, according to a message received here yesterday.

At his meeting with Deputy National Security Adviser Juan Zarate on Wednesday at the White House, Hemayet said Bangladesh government would like to see more frequent exchange of high-level visits between the two countries to facilitate increased understanding and cooperation at the political level.

He expressed satisfaction at the current level of bilateral cooperation and mentioned that there is great potential for further strengthening them.

The foreign secretary reiterated Bangladesh's commitment to democracy and its principled position of condemnation of extremism in all its forms.

These commitments have seen their forceful and unequivocal expression in Bangladesh prime minister's recent address to the nation, he said.

Zarate recognised Bangladesh as a close ally of the US in its fight against international terrorism. He appreciated various actions taken by the Bangladesh government in bringing to account the perpetrators of the August 17 bombing incidents.

He assured Hemayet of continued US support for Bangladesh's own efforts towards strengthening democratic governance and achieving

economic and social progress.

The foreign secretary had a meeting with Peter Rodman, assistant secretary for international security affairs at the Department of Defence.

Rodman appreciated Bangladesh's contribution in various United Nations peacekeeping operations and assured of continued US assistance to strengthen Bangladesh's peacekeeping capability.

He expressed US administration's gratitude for Bangladesh's donation of one million dollars for the victims of recent hurricane Katrina and remarked that this donation meant a lot to the American people.

Rodman said the United States considers Bangladesh as an important strategic partner and friend and that his country will continue to

remain engaged with Bangladesh as it has stake in Bangladesh's success.

Hemayet also held meeting with Henry A Crumpton, coordinator for counterterrorism, and John Gastright, deputy assistant secretary for South Asian affairs at the State Department. He briefed them on Bangladesh government's commitment to fighting extremism.

Terming the incident of country-wide bomb blasts of August 17 an attack on democracy, the foreign secretary said the people of Bangladesh are firmly committed to the value of democracy and they will fight any attempt to weaken this commitment.

Bangladesh Ambassador to USA Shamsheer M Chowdhury was present at all these meetings.

## 18 teachers out of 31 on leave

UNB, Dhaka

Academic activities of the Computer Science and Engineering Department of Dhaka University are being hampered as 18 teachers out of 31 are on leave, sources said yesterday.

Fourteen assistant professors, out of 18, and four out of eight lecturers are on leave. Only 13 teachers are now working to run the department.

The students are facing problems due to absence of the teachers. Regular classes, completion of syllabus in time, class tests and other curricula are being hampered.

The university authorities recruited three part-time teachers to overcome the situation as most of the teachers have been staying abroad on scholarships.

"But these part-time appointments are not sufficient," said a student.

The students said the number of teachers is not sufficient to continue the academic activities smoothly.

A second year student on condition of anonymity said the part-time teachers are maintaining class schedule according to their will.

Dr Hafiz Muhammed Babu, chairman of the department, admitting the problems, said the working teachers are trying their best to overcome the situation.

"The problem could be solved through trouncing the complexity of recruiting new teachers in the university", he added.

Referring to the allegation of class schedule of part-time teachers, Dr Hafiz said "the matters will be considered if the students formally inform us."

# DHAKA TODAY

## AL discussion

Gulshan Thana Awami League organises a discussion. Venue: Community Club, Gulshan-2. Time: 4.00pm.

## ISD roundtable

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal organises a roundtable titled 'Four years of misrule of alliance government: Black chapter of Bangladesh.' Venue: 35-36, Bangabandhu Avenue. Time: 11.00am.

## CPB rally

Communist Party of Bangladesh organises a rally. Venue: Muktangan, Ramna. Time: 3.30pm.

## Islami discussion

Islami Ain Bastobayon Committee organises a discussion. Venue: Near Lalbagh Shahi Mosque. Time: 4.00pm.

## Discussion

Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Parishad organises a discussion on the significance of Ramadan. Venue: 60/C Naya Paltan. Time: 4.00pm.

## Debate

National Debate Federation organises a friendly debate competition. Venue: Daffodil University, Sobhanbagh. Time: 2.30pm.

## Women's Day

A discussion, cultural function and rally will be held on the occasion of World Rural Women's Day. Venue: Central

Shaheed Minar. Time: 1.00pm.

## Dam roundtable

Dhaka Ahsania Mission organises a roundtable on the 'Role of media in awareness building on breast cancer.' Venue: House-19, Road-12, Dhanmondi. Time: 11.00am.

## NFOWD discussion

National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled organises a discussion in observance of World White Cane Safety Day. Venue: Social Service Department, Agargaon. Time: 10.00am.

## Literary meeting

The monthly meeting of Bangladesh Lekhok Samity will be held. Venue: 125, Motijheel. Time: 4.00pm.

## Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony of the web site www.scholarsbangladesh.com will be held. Venue: Brac Centre Inn, Mohakhali. Time: 3.00pm.

## Rotary meeting

Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Desh Upodesh, House-53, Road-12/A, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.00pm.

## Lions meeting

Monthly meeting of the Lions Club of Dhaka South District 315-B1 will be held. Venue: House-33, Road-4, Dhanmondi. Time: 4.00pm.



Awami League presidium member Zillur Rahman speaks at a seminar on 'Law and order and terrorism' at the Rajuk Auditorium in the city yesterday. AL organised the seminar.



Myanmar citizens residing in Dhaka stage a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding release of their leader Aung San Suu Kyi.