



PHOTO: PID

Spouses of South Asian leaders visit Saarc Fair at Padma State Guesthouse in the city yesterday.

Spouses of Saarc leaders visit fair

UNB, Dhaka

Spouses of South Asian leaders yesterday spent their leisure time listening to music and buying Bangladeshi handicrafts, sarees and clothes from a fair at Padma State Guest House in the city.

Gursharan Kaur of India, Nasreena MA Gayoom of the Maldives, Queen Komal Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah of Nepal and Rukhsana Aziz of Pakistan visited the fair organised on the occasion of Saarc Summit on the compound of the guesthouse.

Nasreen Khan, wife of Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, received the dignitaries at Padma where they spent about two hours from 11:30 am. Wife of Pakistan foreign minister was also present.

Twenty-three stalls were set up at the fair, displaying different items including ceramic wares, Nakshi Kantha, Jamdani saree, Tangail saree, silk, handloom, handicrafts and leather goods.

Lunch for journos

BSS, Dhaka

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam yesterday hosted a lunch in honour of journalists of print and electronic media from home and abroad, who attended the 13th Saarc summit.

Editors of national dailies, news agencies and electronic media and senior journalists attended the lunch at Hotel Sonargaon.

Unloading of rotten wheat starts at Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Local agents yesterday started unloading imported rotten wheat from 24 lighter vessels that remained stalled for nine months in the outer anchorage of Chittagong port.

On behalf of the Indian exporter Prianka Overseas, local agent Arafat Trading started unloading the wheat from the lighter vessels at Sadarghat, Bangla Bazar, Chankhali and Asam Bengalghats.

The exporter was allowed to unload the wheat on condition that he will pay duty for all the 26,500 tonnes of wheat in five instalments and the unloading started after paying duty for 4,000 tonnes in the first instalment, sources said.

The imported wheat carried by mother vessel MV Celtic reached Chittagong port on February 27 this year and was loaded into 30 lighter vessels.

Six of the lighter vessels were unloaded when the wheat was detected as rotten, and unloading from the remaining 24 vessels was suspended.

Aggrieved owners and workers of the lighter vessels enforced an indefinite strike on October 13.

On October 15, Chittagong customs and port authorities in a meeting with the concerned owners and workers agreed to allow the 24 stalled lighter vessels unload the wheat into Central Storage Depots (CSD) godowns of food department or any other godowns outside the port area and the strike was withdrawn the following day.

As per the decisions taken in the October 15 meeting, the unloaded wheat would be under the joint security protection of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and Chittagong Customs authority.

As per Section 78 of Customs Act, the concerned shipping agent Messrs Humayara Shipping Agency would remain the custodian of the wheat until its disposal.

The meeting decisions also include proper fumigation of the wheat before unloading, collection of the sample of the wheat by customs authorities before offloading from each coaster and weighing the wheat before sending to godowns.

AUG 17 BLASTS

JMB man admits involvement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanj

An activist of banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) yesterday gave a confessional statement before the court admitting his involvement in the August 17 countrywide blasts.

Narayanganj police arrested Rabiul Islam Shohag, 23, from a garment factory at Fatallah on November 10. Shohag, who hails from Dinajpur, used to live at a rented house of one Shafi Miah at Shasangaon area.

ADV PAPIA KILLING

Trial of killers demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Samajik Protirodh Committee, a women's rights group, yesterday demanded immediate trial of the killers of Advocate Dilruba Haque Papia, a rights activist.

At a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium, they demanded that the trial process must be free from undue pressure by vested quarters.

According to family sources, Papia, also a worker of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), was killed at her father-in-law's house in Barisal on November 3 when she went there from Dhaka with her husband and a nine-year-old daughter to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr.

Speaking at the press conference, Mahbuba Haque Kumkum, elder sister of Papia, said despite repeated torture by her husband Mahbub Morshed Tuhin since her wedding, Papia could not divorce him due to social bindings.

"Though marks of injury in Papia's body were found during the

autopsy on November 8, the post-mortem report was not issued so far," Kumkum alleged.

"The real killer has been absconding with the help of a local influential quarter and giving threats to Papia's family continuously," said Shahnaz Sumi, a member of the protirodh committee while reading out a written statement at the press conference.

"As a rights activist, Papia was always vocal against repression on women, but unfortunately she had to die being a victim of repression," said Ayesha Khanom, general secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

She demanded of the government for speedy disposal of the Papia's case under Speedy Trial Tribunal.

Ayesha Khanom also called for safe custody of Papia's daughter now living in an adverse situation at her father's house.

Samajik Protirodh Committee leaders Faozia Khandaker, Momtaz Begum, Rehana Begum and Kalpana Roy were present at the press conference.



PHOTO: STAR

Ayesha Khanom, general secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, speaks at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium in the city yesterday.

Varnish factory, godown of electrical goods gutted

Water tank gas explosion injures 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A varnish factory and a godown of electrical goods were gutted and five people were injured in separate fire incidents in the city yesterday.

Three of them received burns in a fire while cleaning an underground water tank of a house at West Jurain at around 1:30pm. Noor Islam, 25, Mohammad Rabin, 12, and Mahmud Hasan Rudra, 7, lowered themselves into the empty water tank with a burning candle, which causes the accumulated gas to explode, witnesses said.

They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with burns in different parts of their bodies.

In the other incidents, a fire destroyed huge raw materials and products and equipment at the Hossain Electric Industries and Nito Varnish in Saddam market area at Shyampur.

An electrical short circuit sparked off the fire at around 2:30pm, said fire fighters.

Amir Hossain Howlader, owner of the establishments, and Mohammad Nabi, an employee were injured in the fire.

Fire fighters brought the blaze under control in about half-an-hour. They estimated that the fire has caused a loss of Tk 10 lakh.