

CPD accords reception to Prof Yunus
DU CORRESPONDENT

The Board of Trustee for Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) accorded a reception to Nobel Peace prize laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, a founding trustee of CPD, on Wednesday.

The CPD organised the reception ceremony at Spectra Convention Centre at Gulshan in the capital, a press release said.

Congratulating Prof Yunus on behalf of the CPD family, CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan recalled Yunus' exceptional contribution towards empowerment of the poor in Bangladesh.

Sobhan presented Yunus with an *Uttariya*, a rug, and a commemorative memento especially made for the occasion.

Eminent citizens of the country, including CPD trustees, current and former advisers to the caretaker government, former ministers and MPs, political leaders.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Russia, India call for 'weapons free' space

Putin seals nuke power plant deal with Delhi

AFP, REUTERS, New Delhi

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called yesterday for a "weapons free outer space", after China staged a satellite-destroying weapons test.

"The fundamental position of the Russian Federation is that outer space should be absolutely weapons free," Putin told a joint news conference in New Delhi.

India's prime minister said he shared that position.

"Our position is similar in that we are not in favour of the weaponisation of outer space," Singh said.

China confirmed for the first time on Tuesday that it had tested a satellite-destroying weapon but insisted its space programme posed no threat to the rest of the world.

"What's more, in military circles in the US, we hear plans about attempting to militarise outer space. We should not let the genie out of the bottle. This is our position," Putin added.

Putin noted that China was "not the first country to hold such tests."

After destroying satellites in space in the 1980s, the United States and the Soviet Union ended their space weapons programmes, largely because of the problem of debris.

Putin met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday and will be the guest of honour at the official celebrations of India's Republic Day on Friday -- a reflection of the historically close ties between the two countries.

"Energy security is the most important of the emerging dimensions of our strategic partnership. Russia's position as a global leader on energy issues is widely recognised," Singh said at the signing ceremony.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Earlier Russian President sealed a deal yesterday to construct nuclear power plants in India, as Moscow moved closer to its long-term Asian partner through lucrative energy and arms agreements.

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Polls to be held soon after creating level playing field

Says foreign affairs adviser

UNB, Dhaka

The next general election will be arranged within the shortest possible time after creating a level playing field to ensure participation of all political parties, Foreign

Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury said yesterday.

"Election is the primary aim of the caretaker government. But, before that, it is very essential to create a level playing field. It is important to make the election credible, so it must produce the results that will stabilise the society," he told a press briefing at the foreign ministry.

Chowdhury said the government

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

WSF ends with call to make a better world

SHAKHAWAT LITON,
from Nairobi, Kenya

As the seventh World Social Forum (WSF) 2007 meet ended yesterday in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, Nobel laureate Prof Wangari Maathai urged participants to take actions to make a better world to live in.

"I am quite sure that at the individual level we will go away with a special message having come to listen, learn and share experiences.

We will go away with something that will make each person say, 'I came, I learnt and I will take actions in this direction,'" Prof Wangari Maathai, the winner of Nobel Peace Prize in 2004, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Talking to this correspondent

during the closing ceremony of the WSF 2007 at Uhuru Park in Nairobi, the Nobel laureate said he believes through this gathering the participants have been encouraged and now they will go for action.

January 20 in Nairobi ended yesterday.

Processions, workshops, singing, dancing, networking etc marked the occasion that was aimed to focus on the world disorder, create awareness and encourage the participants to fight for making the world free from injustice and all kinds of repression.

The international organising committee has decided that the next WSF meeting will be held in 2009, but it did not decide the venue.

A member of the international organising committee of WSF 2007, Taofik Ben Abdullah, urged more actions over the next two years to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

2 VoIP trade centres busted in Ctg

Equipment seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) yesterday seized a huge number of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) equipment raiding four unscrupulous phone service centres at Mirpur in Dhaka and also in Chittagong.

Meanwhile in Chittagong, at least four people were wounded when illegal occupants clashed with police yesterday during an eviction drive for recovering vast government land in the city, reports our staff correspondent there.

With an aim to widen the Mirpur-Bhasantek road, DCC workers pulled down the illegal structures in the area with two bulldozers during the four-hour drive in presence of the army and the police.

"We knocked down those structures to expand the road to 120

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

Workers of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha tear down an Awami Jubo League office at Gulshan-2 in the capital yesterday as part of the ongoing drive to demolish illegal structures.

US, Iraqi troops kill 30 militants 12 die in bombings

AP, AFP, Baghdad

US and Iraqi troops battled Sunni insurgents hiding in high-rise buildings on Haifa Street in the heart of Baghdad Wednesday, with snipers on roofs taking aim at gunmen in open windows as Apache attack helicopters hovered overhead.

Iraq said 30 militants were killed and 27 captured.

Twelve people were killed in bombings in Iraq on Thursday, most of them in attacks against markets or shopping areas in violence-wracked Baghdad, security sources said.

Insurgents planted a motorcycle bomb in Shorja market -- Baghdad's oldest -- killing four people and wounding 20, officials said.

The blast ripped through the market on the east side of the Tigris river in central Baghdad at around 11:00 am (0800 GMT). "The bomb was strapped to a motorcycle which was parked on one side of the road that runs through the market," which has been a regular target of insurgents in the past year, a security official said.

Two makeshift bombs also exploded seconds apart in a major shopping street in the southwestern district of Al-Bayah, killing three people and wounding seven.

Later in the day a suicide car bomb aimed at a police patrol killed two policemen and wounded 16 people in shopping area in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Accepting the prayer of former military ruler HM Ershad, the Supreme Court (SC) yesterday ordered transfer of the appeal hearing against his conviction in a graft case to another High Court (HC) division bench.

After a brief hearing, a four-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Mohammad Kabir Hossain of Baragram under Kamrangirchar area of the capital, who faced Pintu's brutality, filed the case with Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court seeking an arrest warrant against the accused.

In his complaint, Kabir mentioned that Pintu called him out of his house and beat him mercilessly with hockey stick saying, "You are a supporter of Monir chairman...you tarnished my political image...take this good lesson so that you cannot

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Prayer Timing

January 26

Azan Jamaat

Fajr 5:35 6:10

Juma 12:30 1:15

Asr 4:15 4:30

Maghrib 5:46 5:50

Esha 7:15 7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

ERSHAD'S GRAFT CASE Hearing shifted to another HC bench

UNB, Dhaka

The BNP man yesterday filed an attempted murder case against Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu, a lawmaker of the same party.

Metropolitan Magistrate Selina Akhter directed officer-in-charge (OC) of Hazaribagh police station to submit an investigation report on the accused.

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SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Govt plans to rehabilitate slum-dwellers

UNB, Dhaka

The caretaker government has undertaken a plan for rehabilitating slum-dwellers as a priority task, as many of them are now left without a roof over the head.

Adviser for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, and Land Mainul Hosein has already directed the land secretary to find out suitable sites for rehabilitation of those rootless people.

"Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed has also agreed to implement the rehabilitation programme," a government announcement said yesterday.

It is expected that local and international donor agencies will assist in the rehabilitation programme.

A total of 5.4 million people live in the slums of six divisional cities of the country. Of the total slum-dwellers, some 3.4 million live in Dhaka.