

## WORLD WETLAND DAY TODAY

# 260 species of freshwater fish extinct

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

World Wetland Day will be observed today in the country as elsewhere in the world emphasising the wise use of all wetlands and their protection from illegal encroachment for preserving ecosystem and resolving fish crisis.

This year, the theme of the day is 'Fish for Tomorrow'.

The main factors that threaten tomorrow's fish in the country are loss of wetlands due to human encroachment, siltation, drainage, pollution, excessive fishing and revenue-oriented management system that does not encourage conservation of fish.

Around 260 species of freshwater fish are now extinct due to declining sources of wetland.

To mark the day, the fisheries and

livestock ministry held a press conference at its seminar room yesterday.

Speaking as chief guest, CS Karim, fisheries and livestock adviser to caretaker government, said Bangladesh was very rich in its water resources as it has huge rivers, wetlands and various types of water bodies, but these are being ruined due to lack of proper policy.

He said filling up of wetlands and other water bodies to enhance food production to meet the pressure of population increase is creating a serious natural imbalance in the country.

He also said wetland can play a vital role to reduce poverty and improve the livelihood of rural people.

"In Bangladesh, wetlands which are valuable sources of biological

diversity, have been turning to wastelands due to encroachments and unsustainable use," said Ainun Nishat, a renowned water expert.

He said the biological diversity of the country would be severely damaged unless the wetlands, which covered almost two-thirds of the total area of the country, are protected.

Wetlands, which work as a life support system for the people of the country and its nature, must be protected, he added.

Nazrul Islam, director general of fisheries department, said sustainable use of wetlands must be ensured to save human life from the adverse impacts of natural calamities such as cyclones, storm surges, saline intrusions, droughts and floods.

## SEIZURE OF ROTTEN WHEAT

### 3 cops, 2 Khair Group officials sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Three police officials and two officials of Abul Khair Group, arrested on Tuesday for taking Tk 15 lakh as bribe, were sent to jail yesterday.

Police produced Officer-In-Charge (OC) Ashrafur Islam and Sub-Inspectors (SIs) Enamul Haq and Miraj Al Mahmud and officials of Abul Khair Group Mostafizur Rahman and Zakir Hossain before a magistrate court and after hearing, the court ordered to send them to jail.

Earlier, the court rejected their bail prayer. Police also did not seek for any remand for the accused.

As the counsels for the accused prayed for granting bail to the accused, many lawyers present at the court vehemently protested it.

The joint forces on Tuesday arrested five people, including three police officers, for taking Tk 15 lakh as bribe inside Fatulla Police Station in Narayanganj to get released a huge amount of rotten wheat seized earlier.

Earlier, an official of Rab-11 filed a case with Fatulla Police Station, but police recorded it as a general diary.

Besides, police sources said the three police officials were not kept in the lock up of the police station on Wednesday night rather they were kept at a house inside the police station compound.

Police did not allow any reporter to enter the compound at that time.

A huge contingent of police also barred photojournalists from taking any snap of the accused policemen when they were being taken to the court.

## Saarc Editors' Confce begins in Delhi Feb 9

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Promoting understanding among the people of the region and core media values are among the subjects that would come up for discussion at the first-ever South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) Editors' Conference to be held in New Delhi on February 9 and 10.

Growth trends and quality issues in regional news media, convergence and challenge of the Internet, freedom, social responsibility, accountability, state, market and the media as well as media and foreign policy are some other key issues which will be addressed by the conference, an Indian leading newspaper reported yesterday.

The Hindu quoted Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarma as saying that the conference is being organised as a build-up to the 14th Saarc summit to be held in New Delhi on April 3 and 4.

The Indian external affairs ministry and the Media Development Foundation, a not-for-profit public trust that runs the Asian College of Journalism in Chennai, are organising the conference.

Sarma said it was possibly the first time in the media field that such a public-private venture is being organised.

The media, he said, was developing very quickly in South Asia and a fruitful discussion could be held on several issues and trends in order to promote understanding among the peoples in the region.

The spokesman said the common platform provided by the external affairs ministry and Media Development Foundation would be used to bring together professional journalists and cover the print, broadcast and Internet media.

A concept note on the conference said the purpose behind the conference was to have a free and open discussion and frame media-related issues that can help initiate a wider public and civil society debate in South Asia.

Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon will deliver the inaugural address at the conference on February 9 while External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee will attend the closing ceremony the next day.

Among the foreign participants expected to attend the conference are Kanak Mani Dixit, Yuvraj Ghimire and Narayan Wagle (from Nepal), Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, Shyamal Datta and Saiful Bari (Bangladesh), Rehana Hakim, Imran Aslam and Najam Sethi (Pakistan), Sonam Kinga, Tashi Phuntsho Wangdi and Dasho Kinley Dorji (Bhutan), Thavarajah, Jatila Wallabada, Singha Ranatunga (Sri Lanka), Abdullah Naeem and Mariyam Suhana (the Maldives) and Hamida Osman, Zaid Mohseni and Barry Salam (Afghanistan).

Indian editors who have confirmed their participation include N Ram, N Ravi, T N Ninan and Vinod Mehta, according to The Hindu.

Media Development Foundation Chairman Shashi Kumar will be the moderator at the conference.

## 'SHADA MONER MANUSH' Award giving ceremony today

Unilever Bangladesh Ltd will honour the winners of 'Shada Moner Manush' at a ceremony at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel at 6:30pm today, says a press release.

On behalf of the Unilever, renowned personalities will present each of the 10 winners with a gold medal and a cheque for Tk 1 lakh.

In remote areas of Bangladesh, many people have been working selflessly and silently, without any recognition whatsoever. Due to lack of sponsorship and financial support, their acts often could not be carried forward. Many people have also been working without any cooperation.

Through the event, 'Shada Moner Manush', the selfless acts of these people have been highlighted, so that others are inspired and encouraged to work for the betterment of the country, society and people.

## Nairobi meet on climate change Feb 5

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Commonwealth environment ministers will meet in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, on February 5 to discuss concerns in adapting to climate change.

The meeting, which will take place under the umbrella of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on the Environment, will be chaired by Kenya's Minister for Environment and Natural Resources Prof Kivutha Kibwana.

According to a Commonwealth press release, the meeting will convene on the eve of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, Dr Indrajit Coomaraswamy, Director

of the Economic Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat, said: "We need effective measures to help people to adapt to climate change which is having a greater impact on the lives and livelihood of our people."

The meeting will focus on practical ways to help countries adapt to climate change and explore related political issues that need addressing.

Discussions will focus on the role of Commonwealth parliamentarians, skill-building, curriculum development and information exchange among small states, and the engagement of young people in raising awareness and gathering data.

## TURYA MURDER

### Bail petitions of 2 arrestees rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petitions of two arrestees, including the prime accused in connection with killing of young jewellery trader Turya Ghosh Roni in October last year.

Judge Mohammad Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order following a criminal appeal filed by the defence lawyers against rejection order of lower court on December 27 last year.

The defence lawyers of the prime accused Shahadat Hossain Liton alias 'Khora' Liton and Al Mamun alias Mamun filed the appeal with sessions court on January 10 seeking bail. But the court fixed February 1 for hearing on the issue with lower court record.

In his order yesterday, the judge said Liton masterminded the killing for kidnaping and killing the victim and Mamun gave confessional statement to a magistrate in this regard. So, their bail was rejected.

Turya, 21, was kidnapped by a group of miscreants led by Liton for realising a huge amount of money from his family on October 29 last year and later the gang killed the victim, though the family paid them Tk 10 lakh and 10 tolas of gold ornaments as ransom.

## Obituary



press release.

He left behind his three sons and three daughters to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Uttara mosque (sector no. 3) after Juma prayers and will be buried at Uttara graveyard in the city.

## Qulkhwani



city today.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his residence at Kiantlogney at 24/22A, Pallabi, Sector 11 and half in the city after Asr prayers today.

Rabbani, proprietor of M/S GR Trading Co. and ex-Director of Eastland Insurance Company Ltd, passed away at his Chittagong residence on January 15 at the age of 74.

## Chehlum



and milad mahfil will be held at his residence at 73 Siddeswari Circular Road after Asr prayers to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

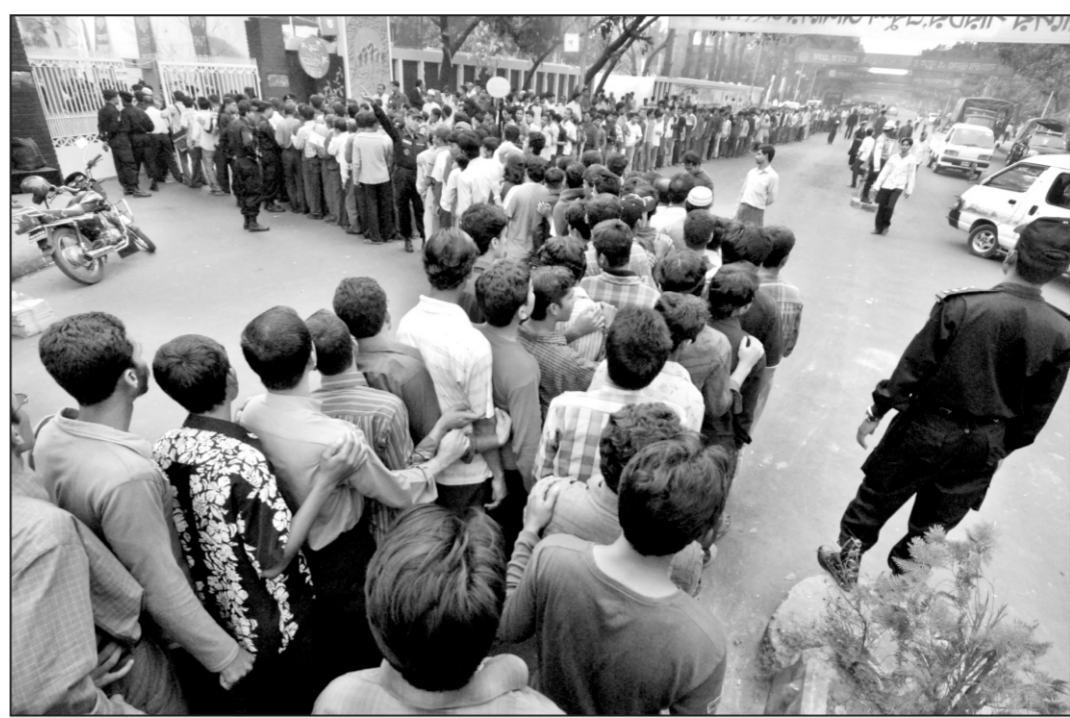


PHOTO: STAR

People wait in long queues to enter Bangla Academy to visit the Ekushey Book Fair on the first day of the fair yesterday.

## Amar Ekushey Book Fair begins

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2007 kicked off on the Bangla Academy premises in the city yesterday amid festivity and enthusiasm.

Chief Adviser to the caretaker government Fakhruddin Ahmed inaugurated the month-long fair at around 3:30pm.

Soon after the inauguration, people in large number thronged the fair venue. Law enforcers searched the visitors and their bags with metal detectors before allowing them to enter the venue through the only entrance.

A number of visitors, writers, poets and publishers expressed the hope that this year's book fair is going to be the most successful in the changed political scenario.

However, many stall owners were busy with decorating their stalls on the first day of the fair.

They blamed the Bangla Academy authorities for the delay in completing the preparation work.

"If stalls are not allotted in time, how can we finish erecting stalls in time?" a publisher posed a question.

The fair commemorating the supreme sacrifice of Bangladeshes during the Language Movement on February 21 in 1952 also serves as the intellectual hub of the nation and the central forum for the youth, writers, poets and intelligentsia.

Prof Dr Syed Anwar Hossain, former director general of Bangla Academy, along with his wife came to the fair venue yesterday.

When asked about his remarks on the fair, Prof Anwar said, "Quite impressive."

Referring to the publishers' allegations that they were not allotted stalls on time, he said, "I would request the authorities to redress the grievances of the publishers."

He also said that some organisations that got stalls are not creative or research-based publication houses.

A sculpture depicting the Language Movement along with busts of five martyrs -- Abul Barkat, Rafiq Uddin Ahmad, Abdul Jabbar, Shafiur Rahman and Abdus Salam -- was also inaugurated on the Academy premises yesterday.

Sculptor Md Mofidul Alam Khan was seen explaining his creation to the enthusiastic visitors who gathered near the sculpture.

Writer Imdadul Haq Milon was seen giving autographs to his fans at the stall of Onnya Prakash while journalist and writer Anisul Haq spent some time at Samoy Prakashon.

Answering a question, Anisul Haq hoped that this year's fair would be the most successful as

the country's political situation is stable.

On the opening day, only a small number of books arrived at the fair. The books include 'Alo Andhokare Jai' by Anisul Haq, 'Option Three' by Ahsan Habib, 'Khude Biggani Series - 13' (Anu Paraman) by Biggan Academy, 'Father Rigon: Nibhrilo Kolahai' edited by Kabbo Kamrul.

All books, including those published by Bangla Academy, are being sold at a 30 percent discount.

The fair will remain open from 3:00pm to 9:00pm everyday. On Fridays the fair will open at 11:00am and there will be a two-hour break from 12:00 noon.

On February 21, the International Mother Language Day, the fair will continue from 8:00am to 9:00pm without any break.

PROF TAHER'S KILLING

## CA urged to start trial

RU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers, students and staffs of Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday urged the chief adviser (CA) to caretaker government to start trial of the murder case of Prof S Taher Ahmed of geology and mining department who was killed on February 1, 2006.

At a condolence meeting, they also expressed deep concern over the failure of the previous government to initiate the trial process of the sensational killing.

The meeting decided to observe February 1 as mourning day in honour of their favourite teacher.

It also decided to name the research laboratory of the department after the name of Taher Ahmed.

The condolence meeting held at the seminar room of the geology and mining department with its Chairman Prof Sayed Shamsuddin Ahmed in the chair.

Department teachers Prof Hamidur Rahman, Sultanul Islam, Sabbir Sattar Tapu, Anwarul Islam, Shafiqul Alam and Sarwar Jahan while students Bazlur Rashid, Mahbubul Alam, Niharjanjan and Jilur Rahman spoke on the occasion.

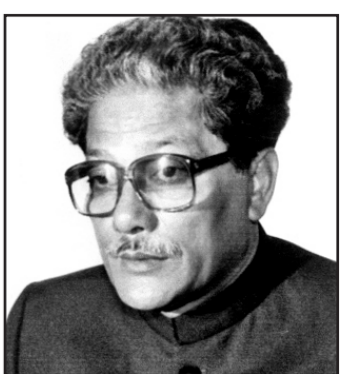
Prof Sarwar Jahan said after getting bail, the killers of Taher have been plotting fresh conspiracy to kill other teachers.

He demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits so that they cannot dare to commit such brutality in future.

Earlier, more than 500 teachers and students collected mass signatures and faxed a memorandum to the chief adviser demanding immediate start of the trial of the case.

Meanwhile, Progressive Teachers' Society (PTS), a pro-Awami League teachers' body, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front and Progressive Student Alliance in separate statements slated university authorities for not holding any condolence meeting in memory of slain Prof Taher.

They also demanded immediate submission of charge sheet to ensure punishment to the killers.



## Mizan Chowdhury's death anniversary today

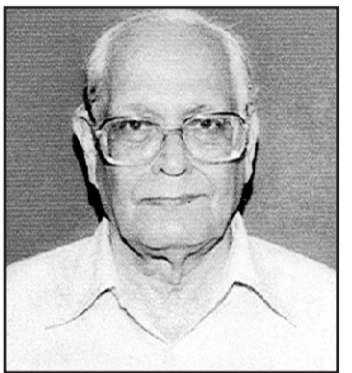
Today is the first death anniversary of former prime minister Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, says a press release.

He was also an organiser of liberation war and veteran parliamentarian.

On the occasion, fataha will be offered and wreaths will be placed at his grave at 7:00am.

Qurankhwani, milad and doa mahfil will also be held at his residence and special prayers will be held at every mosque in his village in Chandpur.

All have been requested to pray for salvation of his departed soul.



## Debesh Bhattacharya

Today is the third death anniversary of Justice Debesh Bhattacharya, an eminent jurist and champion of human rights, says a press release.

On the occasion, Justice Debesh Bhattacharya Foundation will distribute warm clothes and food among the destitute in Ellenga, Tangail.

Justice Bhattacharya is widely remembered for his involvement in defending democratic and human rights. Because of his involvement in political activism, Debesh Bhattacharya, then an advocate at Mymensingh district court, was put in jail by the Muslim League government as a security prisoner during 1949-50.

After independence, Bhattacharya, who was also a senior advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, was appointed as a judge of the newly established Bangladesh High Court in January 1972.

He was elevated to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in June 1975 and retired from the bench in 1977. He proved himself to be an outstanding jurist and some of his verdicts had been historically precedent setting judgments.

Justice Bhattacharya was associated with a number of social and civil society organisations. He was a member of the Gono Adalat (people's court) set up to try the war criminals of 1971.

He has established a number of educational institutions at his home village where he carried out philanthropic activities. He has published a number of monographs, including an anthology of poems.

## Habib Ullah Khan



press release.

On the occasion, doa and milad mahfil will be held at his residence at Bancharampur (Boro Bari) under Brahmanbaria after Juma prayers.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the mahfil and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

## Watercolour art camp launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent artists along with promising young artists launched a three-day watercolour art camp titled 'Renewal of nature' at Jamuna Resort in Bhuapur yesterday.

Organised by Galleri Kaya, the camp is sponsored by The Westin Dhaka, an upcoming five-star hotel.

A total of 11 artists are taking part in the workshop. They will create artworks and exchange views on artistic techniques and ideas.

The participants are Rafiqun Nabi, Hasham Khan, Hamiduzzaman Khan, Chandrashekhhar Day, Alokes Ghosh, Kazi Rakib, Masuda Kazi, Tarun Ghosh, Shishir Battacharjee, Nagarbasi Barman and Uttam Kumar Saha Chowdhury.

## Valuables worth Tk 5.6 lakh looted from city shop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown thieves stole valuables worth around Tk 5.6 lakh from a shop at Sutrapur in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

Al Amin, owner of Al Amin Store of Nanda Dutta Lane, filed a theft case of 400 pieces of saree, 100 pieces of dresses, and 50 pieces of fatua worth Tk 5,59,570 with Sutrapur Police Station, police said.

Police suspect the event took place at late night between 9:30pm to 7:00am yesterday.

The locals in the morning seeing the door of the shop open informed Amin at around 7:30am, police said.

## RU Shibir procession to undermine Prof Taher's death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

In violation of the emergency ordinance, Islami Chhatra Shibir yesterday brought out a procession on the campus of Rajshahi University (RU) in a covert attempt to undermine the first death anniversary of Prof S Taher Ahmed.

The incident drew sharp reactions from university teachers and students as it occurred while they were holding a condolence meeting at the geology and mining department of the second science building at around 11:30am.

According to police investigations, a Jamaat-backed pro-BNP teacher Mia Mohammad Mohiuddin and RU Shibir President Mahbubul Alam Salehi along with three others orchestrated the gruesome murder of Dr Taher on February 1.

Salehi and almost all other Shibir leaders have already left the campus and went into hiding since the declaration of the State of Emergency in the country, said a source.

Most of the participants number-

ing about 50 who took part in the procession were outsiders and hostel boys while about five unknown Shibir adherents led the rally, said witnesses.

The processionists said they took out the procession to celebrate the inception of 'Bikalpa Sahitya O Sangskritik Sangsad', a cultural platform of Shibir.

The merry-makers were beating drums loudly especially when they were crossing the Second Science building and some of them were dressed as member of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), bride and bridegroom.

RU Proctor Enamul Haque told reporters that he was not certain whether the procession was legal or illegal during an emergency.

Investigation into the murder case of Prof Taher has been stalled for last nine months due to influence by high police officials, said sources.

The victim's relatives have however drawn the attention of the caretaker government to get justice.



Artists taking part in a watercolour art camp at Jamuna Resort in Bhuapur pose for photograph yesterday.



## Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during late night until early morning, Met Office said.

Night temperature may fall by 1-3 degree Celsius over the country during the period.

Highest temperature 30.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 15.1 degree Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:45pm today and rises at 6:39am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.4	19.0	96	80
Chittagong	28.2	20.0	93	91
Rajshahi	27.3	15.4	99	77
Khulna	28.5	18.0	100	67
Barisal	27.8	18.5	100	84
Sylhet	26.2	16.3	84	71
Cox's Bazar	28.0	19.5	87	82