

# Stop hill cutting in Ctg

Speakers tell seminar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Speakers at a seminar in the city yesterday urged the caretaker government to take immediate measures to stop hill cutting in Chittagong in order to protect the region from facing devastating natural calamity like earthquake in the nearest future.

The seminar titled 'Hill Cutting in Chittagong, Environmental Degradation and Our Duty' was organised by Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela) at a local hotel.

Md Yasin, district judge and member of Administrative Tribunal (Chittagong and Sylhet), was the chief guest at the seminar with Dr Md Mohiuddin, professor of Institute of Forestry and Environmental Science of Chittagong University (CU), in the chair.

Dr Md Shahidul Islam, professor of Geography and Environment Department at CU, presented a keynote paper at the seminar.

In his paper, Dr Shahidul said the majority of hills of the port city have already been cut and many

are being cut and the anti-nature action was done only for making money through housing plots or making brickfields.

Hills in Chashma hill, Cosmopolitan, Hill View, Amin Jute Mill and Raufabad areas have mostly lost while hills surrounding Foy's Lake, some portion of DC Hill and Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (BFR) area are currently being cut, he said.

The biodiversity and ecological balance is under threat as people cut the hilly plants first, then burn the bushes or grasses and finally cut the hill, he said.

Speakers blamed lack of proper law for preserving the hills from indiscriminate cutting.

Nothing has been mentioned about cutting hill in the Environmental Law-1995, they said.

Environmental court started operation in 2000 but filing of case in the court is very difficult, they observed, adding that only a few cases have been filed.

In most cases politically backed powerful people are involved in

such activity and they continue to cut hill by paying a meagre amount of fine when cases are filed, they said.

They said coordination is essential between the concerned planning and administrative authorities like CDA, Chittagong City Corporation, Environment Department and DC Office to allot the land for housing.

They urged the government to make a national planning board consisting of all concerned authorities as well as representatives of related sections like environmentalists and scientists to find effective way to resolve the problem.

President of the Forum for Planned Chittagong Professor Emeritus Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam, Architect Zarina Hossain, Director of Environment Department, Chittagong Mosharriff Hossain, Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) Executive Engineer Md Mohsin Bhuiyan and Associate Professor of CU Law Department Dr Abdullah Al Faruq addressed the seminar.

Earlier, the health adviser urged the mass media to come forward to create awareness among the people.

Presided over by IEDCR Director Prof Mahmudur Rahman, the inaugural session was also addressed by Director General of Health Department Shahjahan Biswas, Japanese Ambassador Masayuki Inoue, Unicef Representative Louis-George Arsenault and WHO Country Representative Dr Duangvadee Sungkhobol.

Earlier, the health adviser unveiled the covers of nine modules for the divisional, district and upazila level health workers.

Three-day open air art exhibition will begin on the premises of Arts Building of Dhaka University tomorrow on the eve of the International Mother Language Day.

The exhibition will run from 10:00am to 6:00pm everyday.

Apart from the works of the renowned artists, the exhibition will also feature works of people who don't have any institutional qualifications in art.

Renowned expatriate street painter Kazol, now visiting Dhaka from Denmark, would paint the surrounding area of Aparejeyo Bangla.

Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz,

Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam, cartoonist Shishir Bhattacharya and many others will be present at the inaugural function of the art exhibition.

Professor Niranjana Adhikari, secretary general of the committee, read out the written statement. Poet Mohammed Rafiq is the convener of the committee.

Shishir Bhattacharya, artists Kazi Munir and Monowar Mehdi were also present at the press conference.

Raise awareness about bird flu  
Says health adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Health and Family Welfare Adviser Maj Gen (retd) Dr ASM Matiur Rahman yesterday emphasised the need to raise mass awareness about avian influenza as the country is vulnerable to global bird flu pandemic.

"Bird flu is knocking at the door of Bangladesh. The country faces the risk of bird flu attack as the deadly disease has already broken out in almost every neighbouring country," he said at the inaugural session of an advocacy meeting of health officials at the auditorium of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) in the city.

Although the country has not yet come under the attack of bird flu, there was no reason to think that the disease would never break out in the country, Dr Matiur said.

The government has already decided on a plan of action and a module has been formulated for the field-level health workers, he said. "We've to build a mass awareness by ensuring proper application of this module," he added.

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Students hold lighted candles at the closing session of the prize giving ceremony of a book reading programme at the Institute of Fine Arts in the city yesterday. Biswa Sahitya Kendra organised the event.

## Students vow to remove darkness

Prize giving ceremony of book reading programme ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With lighted candles in their hands, schoolchildren yesterday vowed to remove darkness all around in order to build a prosperous Bangladesh, as the curtain fell on the two-day prize giving ceremony of a book reading programme

organised by Biswa Sahitya Kendra.

Handing over the lighted candles to the students at the closing ceremony in the city, Prof Abdulah Abu Sayeed, founder of the Kendra, expressed the hope that this light will illuminate all darkness, paving the way for a prosperous future.

A total of 1,800 students

received prizes at the ceremony at the Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University, on the concluding day.

About 25,000 students from 100 schools in Dhaka took part in the book reading programme in 2007, said a press release of Biswa Sahitya Kendra.

Brac University Vice-Chancellor Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, Ramon Magsaysay Award winner and Editor of the Prothom Alo Matiur Rahman, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam and litterateur Selina Hossain were also present at the closing ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury advised the students to utilise the opportunity provided by the Kendra to read the best books of world literature.

You will illuminate all darkness after being enlightened through reading books, he told them.

"We need enlightened people today because our surroundings are plunged into darkness. You have to enlighten others after being enlightened by reading books," he said.

Mahfuz Anam urged all to intensify the book reading programme in order to enlighten more people across the country.

Matiur Rahman expressed his hope that this enlightened students will build a prosperous Bangladesh in the future.



Advocate Fazlur Rahman hands over memorabilia of Language Movement to Kazi Peyari Mahbub at newly established Vashondol Museum in Dhanmondi in the city yesterday. Language veteran Gaziul Haq, extreme right, and Abdul Matin were also present.

### Valuables worth Tk 4 lakh looted

CU CORRESPONDENT

Armed robbers looted gold ornaments, cash and mobile phone sets worth around Tk four lakh from the residence of second officer of Kotwali Police Station at Khatibpur Hat in the city yesterday.

Sources said four robbers entered the house of second officer SI Mahfuzur Rahman on the second floor of a three-storeyed building at around 12:30pm.

They took away 20 tolas of gold ornaments, Tk 55,000 in cash and three mobile phone sets holding Mahfuzur's younger brother Tanimul Haq, his mother and wife at gunpoint.

Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus speaks at a discussion on "the microcredit of Zoba and a poverty-free world" at the auditorium of Engineers Institute, Chittagong in the port city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)



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