

'893 Indian prisoners in Bangladeshi jails'

UNB, New Delhi

There are 893 Indian prisoners in various jails in Bangladesh, Indian Minister of State for External Affairs E Ahmed said in parliament on Friday.

A total of 6,277 Indians are languishing in foreign jails and Bangladesh is the second in the list after Saudi Arabia where 1,116 Indians are in jails.

Bangladesh is followed by the United Arab Emirates where 825 Indians are behind the bars. Other countries with relatively high number of Indian prisoners are Singapore (791), Malaysia (545) and Britain (239).

Gulf region account for higher number of Indian prisoners because a large number of Indian citizens work there.

Ahmed said the Indian government through its mission abroad makes all possible efforts to get the Indian nationals released quickly and provide them with necessary assistance, including requesting speedy trials, seeking remission of sentence and consular access to the detainees and prisoners.

The government also provides guidance in legal and other means, interacting with their relatives in India, ensuring fair treatment to the prisoners in jails abroad and facilitating repatriation of released prisoners to India, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Jago Bangladesh takes out a colourful procession in the city yesterday to promote the forthcoming 'Grameenphone Activate Bangladesh -- Challenge of the Longest Beach 2007 -- a 100 kilometre walkathon from Teknaf to Cox's Bazar'.

Challenge of Longest Beach Walkathon from March 23

A colourful procession to promote the forthcoming Grameenphone Activate Bangladesh-Challenge of the Longest Beach 2007, a 100-kilometre walkathon from Teknaf to Cox's Bazar, was brought out in the city yesterday, says a press release.

The procession, starting from the Institute of Fine Arts of Dhaka University, was participated by elites, cultural personalities, celebrities and people from different walks of life.

A band playing tunes of popular patriotic songs accompanied the procession that

ended at the Central Shaheed Minar with the release of balloons by Major General M Anwar Hossain, Afzal Hossain, Faridur Reza Sagor and Imdadul Huq Milan.

Representatives of the title sponsors of the event GrameenPhone and co-sponsors HRC, Square, Teem (Pepsi), Labaid, Alma Crystal Drinking Water and associates Channel i, Prothom Alo, The Daily Star, Radio Today, Hotel Sea Palace and the British Council were present on the occasion.

The whole programme was organised by MAA Consortium and Activate Bangladesh.

The Challenge of the Longest Beach 2007 walkathon will be held from March 23 to 25.

A grand gala event will be held at Cox's Bazar on March 26.

'World's oldest person' dies

REUTERS, San Salvador

A Salvadoran woman believed to be 128 years old and possibly the world's oldest person, has died, a family friend said on Friday.

Cruz Hernandez, who national birth records show was born on May 3, 1878, in central El Salvador, passed away in her sleep on Thursday, neighbour and close family friend Margarita Ascencio said by telephone. Hernandez died without being recognised by the Guinness Book of Records.

"She had been poorly for a few days, and yesterday, after eating a tamale and drinking some milk, she went to sleep and never woke up," Ascencio said.

Hernandez gave birth to 13 children and ended up with at least 60 grandchildren, 80 great-grandchildren and 25 great-great grandchildren.

Many who knew her attributed her longevity to her favourite drink of a beer with two raw eggs in it.

A midwife until she was 100 years old, Hernandez died at her home in the town of San Agustin, having spent her last months unable to speak and mainly dozing.

Some 200 guests celebrated her 128th birthday in May, and national birth registry officials sent Hernandez's documents to the Guinness World Records organisation last year, but never got a reply.

FERRY SHORTAGE

Vehicles stranded at Daulatdia, Paturia

UNB, Goolando

Scores of vehicles got stranded at Daulatdia and Paturia ferry ghats as five ferries, out of 12, operating between the two terminals are reported to have become inoperative.

Local BIWTC office and ghat workers said two ferries (K-type) became inoperative on March 6 while three others -- Shah Paran, Shaheed Matiur Rahman and Shaheed Barkat

-- on March 9 as cracks developed in the bottoms of the vessels.

"Cracks have developed as the bottoms of the age-old ferries hit silted riverbed frequently," an official said.

Shahadat Hossain, deputy director general of BIWTC (Aricha region), told UNB that the obsolete ferries are being repaired at Paturia ghat.

"The situation might return to normal by Saturday night if at least two ferries could be repaired by then," he said.

Science fair held at Scholastica

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Scholastica organised a science fair on its Uttara campus in the city yesterday.

Scholastica Chairperson and former adviser to the caretaker government Yasmeen Murshed inaugurated the daylong fair in the morning.

The students of Scholastica School displayed 69 science projects under the supervision of science faculty.

The projects invented by the young scientists highlighted different aspects of modern science, including subway in Bangladesh, optical messenger, solar energy, space exploration, DNA, brain and memory, HCV and liver disorder and so on.

Talking to The Daily Star, Scholastica chairperson laid emphasis on practice of the science theories, which are taught in the classroom.

The science fair reinforces learning and helps students learn more about what they learn and the world as well, she added.

Tanbin, a student of class VI, showed the evolution of space shuttle from first generation to third generation. The entire group comprising five members of the same class demonstrated the project confidently.

Anika Nayeer Rahman of the same class made the structure of molecules of graphite of her own. The lone member of the project explained the smallest element of graphite through graphical presentation and concrete structure made of foam linking with pipe.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Scholastica display projects at a science fair on its Uttara campus in the city yesterday. A total of 69 science projects were put on display during the daylong fair.

'Protect jatka to boost Hilsa output'

UNB, Dhaka

Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Dr CS Karim yesterday urged everyone concerned to protect jatka (hilsa fry) to boost the country's hilsa output.

"The annual contribution of hilsa to the country's total fish output accounts for 12-13 percent," he said addressing a press conference in the city's Matsya Bhaban on the occasion of 'Jatka Protection Week'.

Dr Karim said the contribution of hilsa towards creating employment, reducing poverty and socio-economic development of the country is very important.

About four lakh tons of hilsa are produced worldwide of which Bangladesh's contribution accounts for over 50 percent while that of Myanmar accounts for 25 percent, he observed.

The adviser said hilsa output in Bangladesh might be affected seriously due to some man-made and natural reasons. "The present trend of hilsa to go towards sea from internal rivers for various reasons will alarmingly bring down its output in near future," he added.

Emphasising the need for joint efforts of all concerned to preserve jatka, he said a two-step management plan would be taken to protect both the bigger and smaller hilsa to increase the production.

The adviser also sought cooperation of the media in creating awareness of the people to protect jatka. "Hilsa fry can be protected by strictly enforcing the existing laws and raising the awareness level of the people."

Earlier in the morning, the Adviser attended a rally marking the inauguration of 'Jatka Protection Week-2007' across the country. The rally that started from Matsya Bhaban terminated at Zero Point after parading some city streets.

Fisheries and Livestock

Secretary Syed Ataur Rahman, Director General of Fisheries Department M Nazrul Islam and officials concerned, representatives of various NGOs and fish traders were also present at the press conference.



PHOTO: STAR

The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock takes out a procession in the city yesterday marking the inauguration of Jatka Protection Week-2007.