

Iran assures cooperation in petrochemical sector

UNB, Dhaka

Iran has assured Bangladesh of considering cooperation in oil and petrochemical sector, particularly in the Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) sector.

"As a logical decision and as a base, the issues of oil and petrochemical are considered in Iran and naturally LPG is one of the elements being considered," Iranian Ambassador Hassan Farahzadeh told reporters after a meeting with Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday.

The ambassador mentioned the last year's ministerial meeting between Bangladesh and Iran in Tehran when the two sides signed an MoU for expanding cooperation in different promising areas for mutual benefit.

"There are a lot of issues in the MoU to be followed up," he said,

adding that they discussed ways of expanding economic and cultural activities between the two brotherly countries.

Referring to many commonalities in language and culture between the two countries, the ambassador said more than 8,000 Persian words are used in Bengali vocabulary.

Asked about the UN sanction on Iran for its nuclear enrichment programme, Farahzadeh said: "Sanction is not a new word or action against Iran."

He said people may suffer from the sanction but "I am afraid others may suffer more economically."

He conveyed Iranian Foreign Minister Manucheher Muttaki's invitation to the adviser to visit Iran.

Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury said they have discussed bilateral issues of mutual interest and agreed to identify the areas very soon on

which the two countries would cooperate.

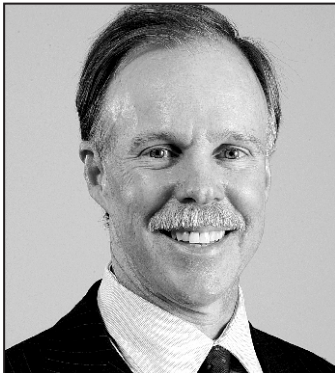
Asked about FTA between the two countries, he said it is too early to make any remarks about it but added that they would consider cooperation across the broader possible spectrum.

In international arena, he said Iran and Bangladesh have been partners and friends.

On Iran's nuclear programme, the adviser said: "We are very closely following it and we are very pleased to note that Iran has been very cooperative."

He said: "We see Iran as an important player in international arena and even in the situation of Iraq, Iran is playing a role which we hope will ultimately lead to the stabilisation of Iraq."

The adviser extended an invitation through the ambassador for the Iranian foreign minister to visit Bangladesh.



Jack, Beth Meyer contribute \$1m to AUW

Chairman of the Asian University for Women Support Foundation Jack R Meyer and his wife Beth Meyer have contributed \$1,000,000 to the work of building the Asian University for Women (AUW) in Chittagong, says a press release of the Foundation.

Their latest contribution comes on the heels of prior personal gifts for general support, a current use scholarship and an endowed scholarship. It will be matched by \$500,000 of support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation under an existing challenge grant to the university.

Jack Meyer is the managing partner and CEO of the Boston-based hedge fund Convexity Capital LLP. Prior to founding the largest ever start-up hedge fund in the United States, he served for over 15 years as head of the endowment of Harvard University.

Jack Meyer visited Bangladesh in February 2006 upon his election as the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Asian University for Women Support Foundation and spoke in gatherings in Dhaka and in Chittagong on the critical importance of women's education.

Rokia Rahman, chairman of AUW's Bangladesh Board of Advisers, commented: "We are deeply touched by Jack Meyer's leadership and immense commitment to the Asian University for Women. It is through demonstration of such leadership and global philanthropy that an institution like the emerging Asian University for Women can be created and nurtured. We owe Mr. Meyer a huge debt of gratitude for his relentless support of the project."

The Asian University for Women, chartered through an act of parliament in Bangladesh, is under development at a 100-acre site in Chittagong. Internationally acclaimed architect Moshe Safdie has been commissioned as the master planner for the AUW campus.



PHOTO: PID

President Iajuddin Ahmed presides over a meeting of the governing body of National Defence College (NDC) and Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP

25000 poor women to be empowered by 2010

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Firoza was simply a housewife even a few years back and she was plunged into darkness one day when her husband returned home after losing his job.

Living at a village of Shaturia upazila in Manikganj, Firoza set up a poultry farm to rebuild her fate but this time she had to lose her house in rivererosion.

But her painful days came to an end when Firoza got the job as sales representative of Unilever Bangladesh and started to earn a living by dint of hard labour.

Her little daughter also started to go to school again.

Like Firoza, a total of 5000

women have been provided with job under the collaborative programme of Care Bangladesh, Unilever Bangladesh, Catalyst, Square Group and Bata in 19 districts across the country and changed their fates.

"By the end of 2010 we hope to reach 25,000 women living in extreme poverty-stricken areas like chars and haors of north-eastern and north western region of the country," said Deputy Country Director of Care Bangladesh Hasan M Mazumder at a discussion yesterday.

The discussion titled 'Poverty and Business: Bridging the Gap' was held as part of its experience-sharing programme among the

partner organisations at the Headquarters of Care Bangladesh.

Representatives of the partner companies explained the strategies to empower the poor women.

They also discussed women's empowerment, gender and business, women enterprise development and violence against women.

The speakers said their overall effort is to focus on the importance of the collaborative partnership between private sector and development organisations to promote women's economic empowerment and fight global poverty.

Care Bangladesh started its Women's Development Programme in 1980s.

'Melting of Himalayan glaciers poses threat to Bangladesh'

The glaciers of the Himalayas are melting fast which, in course of time, will gradually dry up the source of water in the Ganges and Bangladesh will suffer the most as an agricultural country, said Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmed, president of Bangladesh Economic Association.

He was speaking at a seminar on "Global climate change and implications for Bangladesh" this weekend, organised by Independent University, Bangladesh on its Baridhara campus, says a press release.

Such drying ups would result in the loss of wildlife as well as plant species, change in cropping pattern and lowering of water level in rivers, while the rising sea level due to the global warming will push saline water deeper and deeper inside the country, added Dr Kholiquzzaman, also the chairman of Bangladesh

Unnayan Parishad.

He commented that Bangladesh's share from various international funds available to the developing countries for mitigation of climate change has been insignificant.

Even the funds available are not disbursed, he said citing an example without naming the case when United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) suspended disbursement on receipt of complaints.

Dr Kholiquzzaman underscored the severe consequences of climate change on Bangladesh and taking into consideration the limitations emphasised on the development of our capacity for adaptation and mitigation.

He said that various types of adaptation can be distinguished, including anticipatory and reactive adaptation, private and public

adaptation, and autonomous and planned adaptation.

The process on adaptation, according to him, should be capacity building, awareness raising, adaptation assessment, policy planning and project development, implementation, evaluation and monitoring to determine successes achieved and what more are needed to be done.

He asked for awareness building as well as coordinated steps by the government with the participation of the mass.

Vice Chancellor Prof Bazul Mabin Chowdhury, Dr Zahurul Karim of School of Environmental Science and Management and Dr Tanveer Ahmed Khan of the Development Studies Group spoke at the seminar conducted by Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Omar Rahman.

Comrade Abdul Hye passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Comrade Abdul Hye, member of Narsingdi unit of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and vice-president of Bangladesh Krishak Samity, passed away yesterday at the age of 80.

He played an important role in generating peasant and communist movement in Narsingdi.

Different political and peasant organisations expressed deep shock at the death of this veteran peasant leader.

CPB President Manzurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim in a statement conveyed deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

They also said his life and activities will help people of the country find a way out of this crucial situation.

In another statement, Bangladesh Krishak Samity President Maulana Ahmedur Rahman Azmee and General Secretary Morshed Ali expressed deep shock at his death and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family.

Paying tribute to the memory of Hye, they said he fought for the emancipation of the poor throughout his life.

Death anniversary



Today is the 5th death anniversary of Advocate M Abdur Rahim, an eminent lawyer of the Supreme Court, says a press release.

Friends, relatives and admirers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Dilruba Rahman



Today is the second death anniversary of Dilruba Rahman, wife of eminent filmmaker Badal Rahman, says a press release.

On the occasion, a daylong Qurankhwani, destitute feeding and doa mahfil will be held at her residence at 3G, Eastern Housing, Siddheshwari in the city after Asr prayers.

Her friends, relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programmes to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

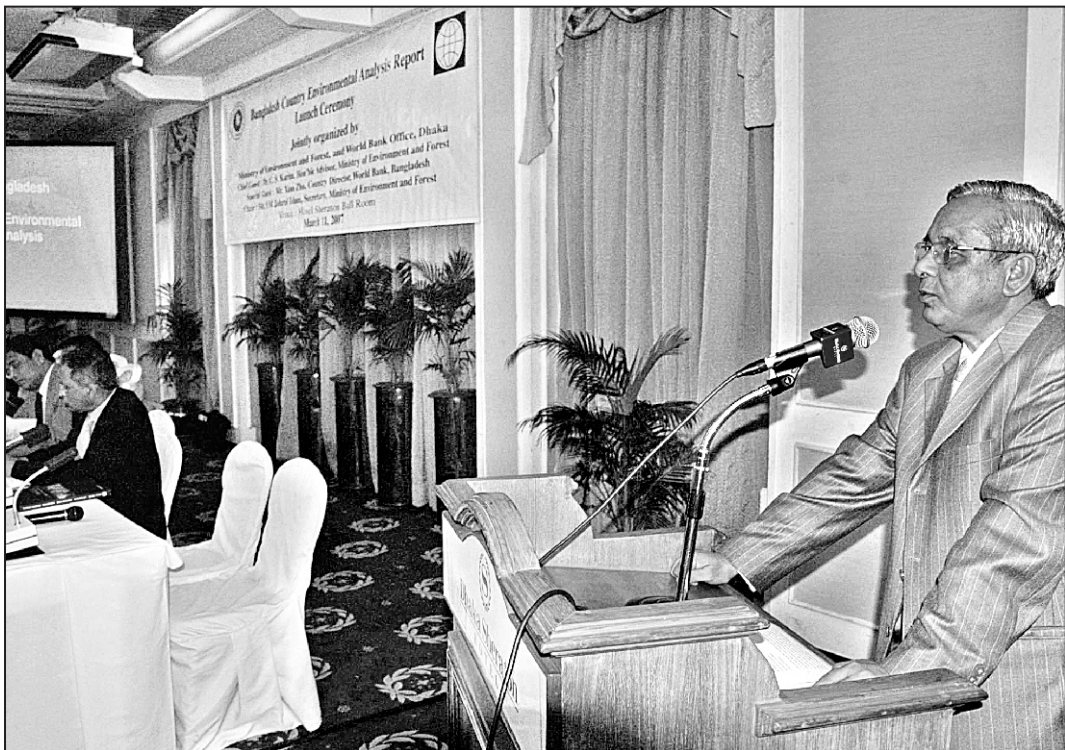


PHOTO: STAR

Adviser to the Ministry of Environment and Forest Dr CS Karim speaks at the launching ceremony of a report titled 'Bangladesh Country Environment Analysis' at a city hotel yesterday. The report was jointly prepared by the ministry and the World Bank.

RU increases admission and certificate fees

Student bodies demand withdrawal of fee hike

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) authorities have decided to increase admission fees and certificate fees with effect from current academic session (2006-07) and from March 15 respectively.

Meanwhile, general students and different student organisations strongly protested the decision of increased fee and demanded immediate cancellation of the decision for the greater interest of the students.

They said the authorities are imposing additional fees one after another taking the opportunity of countrywide state of emergency.

According to the administration sources, the last syndicate meeting, held last week, has taken the decision of raising fees.

Earlier in November last year, RU authorities had formed a committee comprising seven-faculty deans and teacher leaders to review the proposal of increasing fees. The committee however recommended to increase fees, the sources have confirmed.

The examination controller

office issued letters yesterday, signed by Examination Controller Dr Anwar Hossain, to every departmental offices to make the decision effective, campus sources said.

As per the new decision, Tk 100 has been fixed, up from Tk 20, for issuing provisional certificate, Tk 200, up from Tk 60, for original certificate, Tk 300, up from Tk 100, for issuing all duplicate marks sheets, Tk 300, up from Tk 200, for collecting transcript and Tk 250, up from Tk 125, for name correction.

Besides, the authorities also imposed new fees of Tk 50 and Tk 75 for collecting viva examination fees for honours and masters course examinations respectively.

In addition, Tk 500 has been fixed for non-collegiate student fees instead of Tk 60, Tk 50 for three-hour honours course examinations and Tk 60 for four-hour examination.

On the other hand, Tk 60 for three-hour masters and Tk 75 for four-hours masters courses examination fees, according to the new fees.

Admitting the fact, Dr Anwar

said the fees were increased from session 2006-2007 following approval of the syndicate body.

RU Pro-Vice Chancellor, also Chairman of examination and certificate fees related committee, Professor Mamnunul Keramat told The Daily Star, the decision came from proposal of dean's council and RU Teachers Association members.

"The fees will not be a burden and not too high for students", the pro-VC said, adding that the additional fees are equal to other public universities fees.

When contacted, RU VC Prof Altaf Hossain said 'We increased fees as we had to do so'.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) and Progressive Students Alliance (PSA) of RU unit yesterday in separate statements demanded immediate withdrawal of the increased fees.

Terming it as 'commercialisation of education', the student organisations said the additional fees will be a burden for the general students.

Case filed against Lobi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladesh-born British national filed a case against former BNP lawmaker Ali Asghar Lobi, his wife Khorsheida Akhter, and two others with Gulshan police station early yesterday accusing them of forcible breaking and entering and looting of valuables.

In the first information report (FIR), complainant Zakaria Khan Jumu mentioned that Lobi, his wife, and two other persons forcibly entered his house, damaged furniture and looted valuables on August 14, 2003.

He said a caretaker of the house on Road 42 in Banani was present there when the looting was carried out, Zakaria said.

Lobi is currently in detention following his arrest by the joint forces on charges of corruption.

Arrested Biman employee dismissed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday dismissed Ashiqur Rahman, a mechanic of GSE (Ground Support Equipment) at Chittagong International Airport, who was arrested by the joint forces.

The joint forces arrested him on Saturday for buying liquor illegally from the duty-free shop at the airport. He was not on duty at that time.

"Biman Bangladesh has fired him (Ashiqur) from his job," a public relations officer of Biman told The Daily Star.

House caretaker shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suspected extortionists shot the caretaker of a house at Jatrabari in the city yesterday.

Sources said a gang of three extortionists tried to cross the boundary wall of Hiru Mia's house at Pashchim Kazirgaon in Jatrabari at around 9:30am.

Seeing them entering the house, caretaker Mujibur Rahman, 50, tried to resist them and consequently the extortionists opened fire at him.

Bullet-hit Mujibur is now receiving treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Sources said the extortionists had been demanding Tk 5 lakh from Hiro Mia for the last 15 days.

3 arrested on charges of rape

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people were arrested on charges of violating a housewife in Tejgaon Industrial Area in the city on Saturday night.

Police said the gang of three people entered the tin-roofed house of the woman at Dakkhin Begun Bari at around 10:00pm and violated her after locking her husband into another room.

When her husband raised an alarm, locals rushed to the spot and caught the three - Nurul Islam, 50, Abdul Kader, 25, and Abdur Razzak, 28.

Later, they were handed over to the police.

A case has been filed with Tejgaon police station.

The victim is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is also likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna and Sylhet divisions and the region of Comilla.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 34.4 degree Celsius was recorded at Sitakunda and the lowest of 13.7 degrees at Srirangam.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:06pm today and rises at 6:10am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature in celsius		Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min	
Dhaka	33.3	20.7	61
Chittagong	34.1	15.7	57
Rajshahi	33.4	18.9	54
Khulna	32.2	20.2	59
Barisal	32.5	18.5	80
Sylhet	32.8	18.1	49
Cox's Bazar	33.0	18.4	64