

# Dhaka for equal share of waters of common rivers to promote peace

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday called for sharing the flows of common rivers among the co-riparian states on an equitable basis to promote peace and harmony between the neighbours.

"In this age of mutual interdependence and collective responsibility, there is no scope for a unilateral action," Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury told a seminar marking the World Water Day at the Cirdap auditorium.

On the Tipaimukh dam planned by India, he said Dhaka has been assured that New Delhi would not unilaterally divert water at Tipaimukh or at any other point. "We have also been assured that the proposed inter-linkage of rivers would adversely affect Bangladesh and its environment."

Calling for serious discussion on the sharing of the Tista waters,

which is long over due, the adviser said Bangladesh and India are committed to working closely to ensure equitable sharing of the flows of all rivers.

Opposing the "single basin" approach to sharing the waters of the common rivers, he said the single-basin approach could only work in theory. It assumes that shortage of flow in one river system can be offset by surpluses in other rivers.

"We are talking about human habitation and real human beings, not an artificial arrangement. Bangladesh believes that the sharing of our common rivers must not be contingent on a hypothetical solution," said the diplomat-turned-adviser of the caretaker government.

On choices for meeting a growing demand for energy in South Asia, the adviser called for strengthening collaboration at the regional

level to harness the vast potential of generating hydropower in the region.

This, he said, is perhaps the most viable option to meet the growing energy demand in the region.

Stressing the sharing of information on rainfalls, flood forecasts and early warnings, he suggested an effective bilateral and regional framework for sharing water resources of the region—an imperative for all.

The United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) organised the seminar chaired by Prof Muzaffer Ahmed. Prof Nazrul Islam read out the keynote paper while International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Country Representative Finnruva and UNAB General Secretary Dr Syed Mohammad Shahid also spoke at the seminar.

## Ashtami Snan begins amid tight security

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Hundreds of Hindu pilgrims from home and abroad thronged Langalbandi to have a dip in the river Brahmaputra on the occasion of Ashtami Snan amid tight security yesterday.

The religious festival of the Hindus began yesterday afternoon and will continue till this afternoon.

More pilgrims are supposed to join the festival this morning that is taking place covering three kilometres of area that has 13 ghats and 11 temples, sources said.

Members of the armed forces have constructed the snan ghats to facilitate the holypoint.

A sculpture of Swami Vivekananda was unveiled at Raj Ghat to preserve his memory. It is said that Swami Vivekananda came to Raj Ghat with his mother for Ashtami Snan in 1901.

More than one hundred religious and social organisation, including Ramakrishna Mission, Iscon, Sadhu Nag Mohashoyer Ashram, Sri Guru Sangha, Red Crescent Society, Rotary and Lions Club had been providing pure drinking water, shelter, baby food and primary treatment for the pilgrims.

A three-day-long Basanti fair has also been organised on this occasion.

## MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE 'Bangladesh highest in Asia'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Speakers at a view exchange meeting in Sylhet yesterday said maternal mortality rate in the country is 320 per 1000 live births, which is one of the highest in Asia.

One woman dies in every 45 minutes due to pregnancy and birth related complications, they added.

Speaking as chief guest, Bangladesh Country Director of the Save the Children, USA Kelland Stevenson said Bangladesh has shown progress in improving maternal and neonatal health status.

Eileen Burke, director, Special Projects, Public Affairs and Communications, Save the Children, USA, said over 2 lakh caps will be distributed among the new mothers and babies in the country through Save the Children and its partners in order to increase awareness about healthy neonatal care practices.

The speakers said about 10,400 babies are born every day in Bangladesh.

41 babies die in the first 28 days (neonatal period) per 1,000 babies born alive, they added.

ACCESS Field Manager Mohiuddin Chowdhury and Programme Manager Dr Lubana Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

## Greenherald celebrates independence anniversary

Students and teachers of St Francis Xavier Greenherald School celebrated the anniversary of Independence and National Day through a colourful programme on the school premises in the city yesterday, says a press release.

The programme started with a minute of silence in memory of the martyrs of the War of Liberation, followed by a rendering of the national anthem by the students.

Speaking at a discussion organised on the occasion, Syed Badrul Ahsan, editor of Current Affairs of The Daily Star, outlined the history of the political struggle of the Bengali nation between the language movement of 1952 and the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971.

Sister Asha, principal of Greenherald, reminisced on her own experiences of the war and emphasised the need for the young to study history as a way of understanding their cultural and political legacy.

Sister Michelle also narrated her own experiences of the war.

Saber Hussain, a senior teacher, recited a self-composed poem in memory of the martyrs.

Amusical soiree based on patriotic songs, was choreographed by Timir Nandy, a freedom fighter and teacher of the school.

## Trader robbed of Tk 17.96 lakh in Gazipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Muggers yesterday took away Tk 17.96 lakh from a trader on Dhaka-Gazipur highway in Gazipur.

Gazipur police said Rafel Sarwar Tony left home at Jurapukur to deposit the money in Gazipur branch of a bank at around 10:00am on board a motorbike.

As soon as he reached near District Fisheries office, a yellow colour taxicab waylaid his motorbike and he fell down from it. Then a group of five to six people snatched away the money, police said adding that the criminals then sped away towards Joydepur.

A case has been filed in this connection.



PHOTO STAR

Former managing director of Oriental Bank Limited Chowdhury Koyes Sami is being taken to Dhaka Central Jail as his petitions for bail were rejected after he surrendered before a Dhaka court yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

## Independence day today

FROM PAGE 1

paved the way for the massive victory of the Awami League led by Bangabandhu in the 1970 Pakistani national elections.

The Pakistani junta in the then West Pakistan, however, refused to hand over power to the then East Pakistanis. They stalled installation of the newly elected parliament and started ethnic genocide aimed at extinguishing all signs of Bangalee nationalist movement.

In the face of this, the inevitable declaration of independence came on March 26, 1971.

### PROGRAMMES

A 31-gunshot salute at dawn will mark the beginning of today's celebrations. National flags will be hoisted atop government buildings, while important public buildings will be illuminated tonight to give them a festive look. It is a public holiday today.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will lead the nation in paying tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar at sunrise.

Leaders of different political parties, socio-political organisations, freedom fighters and people of all lifestyles will then place wreaths at the memorial.

The president will take salute at a ceremonial march past by contingents of freedom fighters, armed forces, Bangladesh Rifles, police, BNNC and Ansar-VDP at the National Parade Ground in the capital at 10:00am. The chief adviser will also attend the programme.

Armed forces' music bands will play patriotic songs at different venues in the city to entertain the public. The venues are Rajdhani School premises (Manik Miah Avenue), Farmgate and Mirpur

Stadium from 3:30pm to 5:30pm.

A number of navy ships will remain open for people's visits at Sadarghat in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Chittagong, Khulna, Mongla port and Barisal from 2:00pm to 5:30pm.

Bangladesh contingent deployed in UN mission in Liberia will celebrate the Independence Day with due respect and solemnity, and the programmes include special prayers, reception of local guests, cultural session and sports.

The Awami League (AL) will hold a discussion at the Engineers Institute Auditorium where party's senior leaders will speak.

Other political parties, social and cultural organisations have chalked out separate programmes to mark the day.

### MESSAGES

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and AL President Sheikh Hasina in separate messages have paid tribute to the martyrs of the Liberation War.

President Iajuddin Ahmed called upon all Bangladeshi citizens, living at home and abroad, to work united with continued efforts to expedite overall development, economic self-reliance and democratic progress.

The president said one of the prime objectives of the independence was to establish a happy, prosperous and self-reliant country.

"Keeping that in mind, Bangladesh has already achieved significant progress in the fields of education, healthcare services, family planning, food production, micro-credit, telecommunication, rural infrastructure, sanitation and empowerment of women," he said.

"We have to go a long way to realise a self-respectful and self-reliant Bangladesh, which was the desired goal of our independence."

he said.

The president expressed his firm conviction that progress and prosperity in all areas of national life will be achieved if we devote ourselves to nation building and keep national interest above everything.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in his message urged all citizens, regardless of their class, creed or political affiliation, to stand united in the spirit of 1971 to achieve the goals of the Liberation War together and fulfil the dreams of the martyrs.

"Through the combined efforts of our citizens, we can fulfil the dream of a modern, prosperous and democratic Bangladesh," the head of the caretaker government said.

"I also recall with deep admiration and gratitude the sacrifices, forbearance and contributions of our freedom-seeking people living at home and abroad, as well as the unflinching support and cooperation of the governments and peoples of the friendly countries," the chief adviser said.

The chief adviser said the present government is carrying out a number of fundamental reforms to strengthen democracy and establish good governance.

He also mentioned an "all-out drive" to curb corruption and crime

and establish the rule of law, undertake initiatives to infuse dynamism into the economy, increase public welfare and uphold people's interests.

Sources said the order had come after Awami League-backed lawyers held a meeting in a city hotel on Saturday violating the emergency rules that bans the political activities.

Earlier BGMEA election was held during the emergency in February.

## CARJACKING CASE AGAINST PABAN Case transferred to metropolitan court for trial

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, Dhaka yesterday transferred the carjacking case against Akter Hamid Paban, son of former chief whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain, and three others to a court of metropolitan magistrate for trial.

CMM Jalal Ahmed sent it to the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Syed Mohammad Mojibul Haque for its quick disposal.

Three others are Paban's accomplice Zahurul Islam Robin, 24, Abdul Halim, 23, and Masum, 26. Of them, Paban, Robin and Halim are on bail while Masum is still at large.

Sub-Inspector of Detective Branch of police Syed Selim Masud, also the investigation officer of the case, pressed charges against the four on December 28 last year showing 10 people as prosecution witnesses.

During the investigation, Robin gave a confessional statement to a magistrate admitting his and others involvement with the incident.

According to the prosecution, three criminals hijacked the vehicle from the owner at Motijheel in the city at gunpoint on October 13 in 2005.

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested Paban at Bailey Road with a stolen Toyota Premio on June 7 last year.

## SCBA polls halted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) yesterday halted the annual election of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), slated for March 28-29.

In a letter sent to the SCBA Secretary AM Aminuddin, the DMP said approval for the polls given on March 21 was withdrawn for "some special reasons" without specifying any reason.

Aminuddin told The Daily Star that after receiving the order, it was sent to SCBA Election Commission for necessary action.

The DMP commissioner also asked law enforcers to take necessary steps to enforce the order of cancellation.

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open.

Do not catch, get near or keep in captivity wild birds.

Report to authorities any unusual death or illness of chickens and other birds.

Report to authorities any case of respiratory illness with history of exposure to sick or dead chickens and other birds.

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13. What should Local Government Officials do?

Monitor and apprehend smuggling activities and illegal trading of poultry like game fowl, breeders and wild birds coming from countries affected by bird flu.

Pass and enforce local ordinances on the ff:

prohibition of live chickens in the market while there is a threat of bird flu

not allowing chickens to roam freely

prohibition of placing chickens, ducks and pigs together in one area, cages or pens

Provide correct information to the community.

Advise public not to catch, get near or keep in captivity wild birds

Coordinate with the local agricultural office for any unusual death or sickness of chicken and other fowl.

Coordinate with the nearest health worker for any suspected case of bird flu.

Control human traffic into poultryries

Practice proper hand washing and cleaning and disinfection procedures in poultryries

Report to authorities any illness among the workers in poultry farms

For the general public:

Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water before and after handling chicken meat

Clean kitchen surfaces and utensils before and after use

Cook chicken well by seeing to it that the boiling temperature is reached

Do not sell live chickens in the market while there is a threat of bird flu.

Keep them in cages or pens.

Do not place chickens, ducks and pigs together in one area, cage

Dr. Luningning P. Elio Villa Medical Specialist IV and Program Manager

Emerging and Re-emerging Infectious Unit

National Center for Disease Prevention and Control

Department of Health

Eminent journalist Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury administers the oath of 32 young reporters of ETV's Mukta Khobor at ETV Bhaban in the city yesterday. On his left is eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain.

ETV MUKTA KHOBOR

Reporters pledge to uphold spirit of Liberation War

STAFF CORRESPONDENT