

Fight regional, global challenges together

Speakers urge Saarc countries

UNB, Delhi

Policymakers, academics and human rights activists urged the Saarc countries to fight the regional and global challenges together.

The call was made at a two-day South Asian Policy Forum on Socio-economic Rights titled "Imagine a New South Asia" at the India International Centre in New Delhi yesterday.

The forum was jointly organised by Centre for Development and Human Rights and Institute for Human Development in partnership with ActionAid International. Regional organisations Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad, Sustainable Development of Pakistan, Indian Social Institute and NGO Federation of Nepal were associate partners at the forum.

Chaired by the former adviser of the caretaker government Shafi Sami, the inaugural address was presented by former Indian prime minister IK Gujral.

Reminding the delegates of the importance of repositioning South Asia as a community in the chang-

ing Asian and global context, Gujral said the formidable challenge is to take along the entire region, listen to voices from all facets of South Asian geography, fulfill the aspirations of all classes, inclusion of most marginalised citizens and accommodate entire spectrum of political ideologies.

The "Imagine a New South Asia" is conceived as a broad-based citizens' initiative to advance a shared sense of South Asian vision in promoting increasing policy convergence on key regional issues and increasing regional cooperation both at the government levels as well as the citizens' levels.

Prof Arjun Sengupta, a member of the parliament and chairman of Indian National Commission for Unorganised Sector, said most of the South Asian countries are experiencing positive changes in their GDPs, but what is important is that the changes in institutions, governance and technology are as important as the changes in GDP.

John Samuel, international director of ActionAid International in Asia region, said the new genera-

tion in South Asia refuses to be the victims of the past. Rather, it wants to build the future based on trust, solidarity, peace and stability.

"To them, politics of South Asia would have to be of the peoples, who look forward to become citizens of a South Asian union. And the first step toward that direction is to create a functional South Asian Parliament," he said.

Urging all for an improvement in democracies in the region, Nepali social and political activist Sarita Giri suggested establishing democracies in the region for better conflict resolution in South Asia.

Shafi Sami, the chair of the inaugural session, reminded the delegates about the past failures of the Saarc and urged them to work for a better association that represents the aspirations of the peoples across the Saarc countries.

In the working sessions, delegates pressed for a strong national level integration which, they thought, is the pre-condition for greater cooperation at the regional level.

Bail petition of Koyes Sami rejected again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again rejected the bail petition of Chowdhury Koyes Sami, former managing director of Oriental Bank Limited, in connection with a graft case filed against him on charges of embezzling Tk 15.24 crore.

Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokan passed the order rejecting the bail petition submitted by the lawyers for Koyes Sami.

Earlier on Sunday, Koyes was sent to Dhaka Central Jail as his bail petitions were rejected after he surrendered to a court and sought bail.

On January 18 and 25, the Oriental Bank filed two criminal cases with Tejgaon and Kotwali police stations against Orion Group chief Obaidul Karim, Koyes Sami and some other present and former officials of the bank on charges of embezzling Tk 504 crore.

In the case filed with Kotwali Police Station, SMM Akhter Hamid Bhuiyan, assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), alleged that Koyes Sami and nine others embezzled Tk 15.24 crore from a client's account by forging the client's signature.

Another case filed against him alleged that he along with others misappropriated Tk 488.50 crore through unauthorised issuance of 369 inter-branch debit advices with the assistance of several officials at the Oriental Bank head office and Bangshali, Nawabpur, Mirpur Road, Karwan Bazar and principal branches between 2003 and June 2006.

"Obaidul Karim, who is a close relative of some members of then board of directors of the bank, is the chief beneficiary of the misappropriated money," said the FIR.

GRAFT CASE AGAINST SYLHET MAYOR, 18 OTHERS

Trial deferred until Apr 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Sylhet court yesterday deferred the trial of a graft case against Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran and 18 others until April 5 due to the absence of the judge.

The trial of the much-talked-about kitchen market leasing case was scheduled to begin yesterday, but Additional District Judge Rafiqul Alam refixed the date due to the absence of District and Sessions Judge Abdul Gafur.

Sources said the cognisance court of Sylhet Sadar sent the case records to the district special court on March 13 after the Anti-Corruption Commission filed charge sheet against the 19 accused on February 7.

All the accused except Ward Commissioner Azadur Rahman Azad were present in the court yesterday. Azad is now detained in the jail on other charges.

In the charge sheet, Deputy Director of the ACC, Comilla circle, and Investigation Officer Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury said the accused leased the kitchen market of the city corporation at Shibganj Bazar to Azad on May 11, 2000 without floating any tender or taking permission from the ministry concerned. They had misappropriated Tk 23 lakh through the corrupt practice, the charge sheet added.

Filmmakers meet Mainul

UNB, Dhaka

A delegation of filmmakers yesterday met Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hosein and placed some specific proposals regarding removing barriers in making creative films and flourishing the country's film culture.

During the meeting at Information Ministry, they said the trend of making creative films is gradually intensifying in recent times and a number of films have brought honour for the country.

The adviser assured them of considering their proposals.

Tanvir Mokammel and Moshedul Islam led the filmmakers' delegation, said an official handout.

Cambrian College launches tourism courses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cambrian College formally launched bachelor and master's courses on tourism and hospitality management in collaboration with the Organisation of Tourism and Hospitality Management of London South Bank University.

"Tourism industry has huge potential to flourish in Bangladesh. These courses will help produce professionals needed for this sector in the near future," Chairman of the college MK Bashar said at the course launching ceremony in the city.

The country can earn a huge foreign exchange through exploring the tourism industry, he said.

Principal Dr Korunamoy Goshwami said the college's collaboration with an internationally recognised institute would help ensure quality education on tourism in Bangladesh.

Principal of London College of Law and Management Dr Mike Sonny, Key Account Manager of OTHM Simon Patinott also spoke at the ceremony held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

People-to-people contact a must to improve ties

Says Tunisian envoy

BSS, Dhaka

Tunisian Ambassador to Bangladesh Dr Zouhaier Dhaouadi has laid emphasis on people-to-people contact between the two countries for further improving bilateral relations.

"There should be contact among the people in all fields, including culture, trade, business, media and education, for further strengthening and deepening bilateral ties for the betterment of the two peoples," he told BSS in an exclusive interview.

In this regard, the Tunisian envoy said that Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali also stressed the need for strengthening bilateral ties between Tunisia and Bangladesh.

The ambassador also called on Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury at his office on Sunday.

The envoy put stress on bilateral trade to improve the conditions of the two peoples saying, "Being moderate Muslim countries, we share many common things, including culture and civilisation."

The Tunisian ambassador also suggested setting up joint venture industries in special zones in his country by Bangladeshi entrepreneurs saying that his country has a very liberal industrial policy to attract foreign investors.

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 until 6:00pm today.

Slight rise in day temperature is expected over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 36.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 15.4 degree Celsius at Ishwardi.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:13pm today and rises at 5:54am tomorrow.

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	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.0	20.2	32	19
Chittagong	33.8	22.4	74	73
Rajshahi	34.6	16.4	58	25
Khulna	34.2	23.0	77	54
Barisal	34.6	22.8	82	51
Sylhet	34.2	19.5	43	24
Cox's Bazar	33.7	23.2	64	56

Bail petition of Koyes Sami rejected again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again rejected the bail petition of Chowdhury Koyes Sami, former managing director of Oriental Bank Limited, in connection with a graft case filed against him on charges of embezzling Tk 15.24 crore.

Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokan passed the order rejecting the bail petition submitted by the lawyers for Koyes Sami.

Earlier on Sunday, Koyes was sent to Dhaka Central Jail as his bail petitions were rejected after he surrendered to a court and sought bail.

On January 18 and 25, the Oriental Bank filed two criminal cases with Tejgaon and Kotwali police stations against Orion Group chief Obaidul Karim, Koyes Sami and some other present and former officials of the bank on charges of embezzling Tk 504 crore.

In the case filed with Kotwali Police Station, SMM Akhter Hamid Bhuiyan, assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), alleged that Koyes Sami and nine others embezzled Tk 15.24 crore from a client's account by forging the client's signature.

Another case filed against him alleged that he along with others misappropriated Tk 488.50 crore through unauthorised issuance of 369 inter-branch debit advices with the assistance of several officials at the Oriental Bank head office and Bangshali, Nawabpur, Mirpur Road, Karwan Bazar and principal branches between 2003 and June 2006.

"Obaidul Karim, who is a close relative of some members of then board of directors of the bank, is the chief beneficiary of the misappropriated money," said the FIR.

GRAFT CASE AGAINST SYLHET MAYOR, 18 OTHERS

Trial deferred until Apr 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Sylhet court yesterday deferred the trial of a graft case against Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran and 18 others until April 5 due to the absence of the judge.

The trial of the much-talked-about kitchen market leasing case was scheduled to begin yesterday, but Additional District Judge Rafiqul Alam refixed the date due to the absence of District and Sessions Judge Abdul Gafur.

Sources said the cognisance court of Sylhet Sadar sent the case records to the district special court on March 13 after the Anti-Corruption Commission filed charge sheet against the 19 accused on February 7.

All the accused except Ward Commissioner Azadur Rahman Azad were present in the court yesterday. Azad is now detained in the jail on other charges.

In the charge sheet, Deputy Director of the ACC, Comilla circle, and Investigation Officer Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury said the accused leased the kitchen market of the city corporation at Shibganj Bazar to Azad on May 11, 2000 without floating any tender or taking permission from the ministry concerned. They had misappropriated Tk 23 lakh through the corrupt practice, the charge sheet added.

Filmmakers meet Mainul

UNB, Dhaka

A delegation of filmmakers yesterday met Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hosein and placed some specific proposals regarding removing barriers in making creative films and flourishing the country's film culture.

During the meeting at Information Ministry, they said the trend of making creative films is gradually intensifying in recent times and a number of films have brought honour for the country.

The adviser assured them of considering their proposals.

Tanvir Mokammel and Moshedul Islam led the filmmakers' delegation, said an official handout.

Cambrian College launches tourism courses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cambrian College formally launched bachelor and master's courses on tourism and hospitality management in collaboration with the Organisation of Tourism and Hospitality Management of London South Bank University.

"Tourism industry has huge potential to flourish in Bangladesh. These courses will help produce professionals needed for this sector in the near future," Chairman of the college MK Bashar said at the course launching ceremony in the city.

The country can earn a huge foreign exchange through exploring the tourism industry, he said.

Principal Dr Korunamoy Goshwami said the college's collaboration with an internationally recognised institute would help ensure quality education on tourism in Bangladesh.

Principal of London College of Law and Management Dr Mike Sonny, Key Account Manager of OTHM Simon Patinott also spoke at the ceremony held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

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 until 6:00pm today.

Slight rise in day temperature is expected over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 36.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 15.4 degree Celsius at Ishwardi.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:13pm today and rises at 5:54am tomorrow.

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	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.0	20.2	32	19
Chittagong	33.8	22.4	74	73
Rajshahi	34.6	16.4	58	25
Khulna	34.2	23.0	77	54
Barisal	34.6	22.8	82	51
Sylhet	34.2	19.5	43	24
Cox's Bazar	33.7	23		