

Two get death in drug case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced two people to death in a drug case. Judge Aman Ullah of the Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court handed down the verdict to Shyamal Dulal Devnath and Saiful Islam of Mirzaganj in Patuakhali. According to the prosecution, a team of law enforcement agencies arrested the two with one Kg of heroin during a pre-dawn raid on a house at Senpara Parbata in Mirpur on July 11 last year.

120 houses gutted in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

At least 120 thatched houses and nine shops were gutted in a devastating fire at the city's Chandgaon area in the early hours of yesterday leaving over one thousand people homeless. Witnesses said the fire broke out at Nur Mohammad Colony of Janalihat near Kamal Bazar under Chandgaon Police Station around 3:40am. The fire spread fast engulfing houses and shops of the neighbouring four other colonies - Kazi Nurul Haq Colony, Abdus Sattar Colony, Mujibur Rahman and Abul Bashar Colony. Eight fire fighting units rushed to the spot from different fire stations of the city and doused the fire after three hours of effort. The fire originated at Sukkur Sawdagar's shop from electric short circuits while damage of properties was estimated at Tk 10 lakh, said the sources in fire service.



Around 150 shanties were reduced to ashes in a devastating fire at a slum at Malibagh Chowdhurypara in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

PHOTO: STAR

'Integrate disability issue with disaster management'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday stressed the need for integrating disability issue with disaster management. They also called for inclusion of disability issues in national curriculum to help raise awareness in the society. The speakers said initiatives should be taken to make a correct list of persons with disability (PWD), as there is no current statistics of PWD in the country. As per World Health Organisation (WHO) statistics in 2003, the number of PWD in Bangladesh is 1.40 lakh covering 10 per cent of the total population, they added. The workshop titled 'Findings of vulnerability and capacity assessment of PWD in disasters' was organised by Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC) and Handicap International (HI) at the Spectra Convention Centre in the city. The workshop was supported by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid (ECHO). BDPC with the support of HI and ECHO conducted a survey recently in three districts including Dhaka, Sirajganj and Gaibandha with a view to identify the vulnerabilities and capacities for risk reduction through participatory discussion with community people. Presenting the survey findings on the occasion BDPC Programme Coordinator Moloy Chaki said the survey shows that the major forms of

disaster in the three districts include flood and river erosion. He pointed out that although the government service providing agencies are available for disaster management, people are deprived of those services due to good governance in the institutions. On the other hand, most people are not aware of the whereabouts and the ways of receiving those services including relief, rehabilitation and fire service provided by the government during the time of disaster, he added. Moloy said Bangladesh is a disaster-prone country for its geo-physical position suggesting that disability and disaster management issues should be integrated in national development projects. Representatives from different NGOs, civil society, local government, social workers and government service

providing agencies took part in the workshop presided over by BDPC Director Muhammad Saidur Rahman. The speakers asked for a comprehensive and sustainable risk reduction plan ensuring community participation. They also emphasised the inclusion of disaster management addressing disability issue in the textbooks that will help dissemination of messages in the society. Speaking as chief guest, CDMP Deputy Team Leader emphasised the need for listing of PWD and suggested that the Election Commission may take the initiative to count the number of PWD during its door-to-door visit for voter list. He also stressed the need for community mobilisation in risk reduction mainstreaming the PWD, as the government alone cannot solve all problems.

CG firm to strengthen ties with Muslim states

Iftekhar tells OIC envoys

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury has said that the declared policy of the present government is to strengthen and deepen Bangladesh's cooperation with all Muslim countries. The adviser was speaking at a working lunch he hosted in honour of the envoys of the Islamic countries yesterday at the State Guest House Padma. He thanked all the envoys for their support to the activities of the caretaker government saying, "We value your

encouragement". Iftekhar expressed total solidarity with the Palestinians for a state of their own with Jerusalem as the capital. He hoped that the new unity government of Hamas and Al Fatah would be able to take the issue closer to resolution. The adviser lauded the recent successful efforts of the Saudi King in that end to the creation of the government. "The Ummah is grateful to the Protector of the two holy shrines for that initiative," he said. Iftekhar said he would represent

Bangladesh at the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers' (ICFM) Meeting in Islamabad in May. "Bangladesh is looking forward to participate in it effectively." He hoped that the outcome of the Islamabad Conference would lead to greater cohesion politically, economically, and socially among the Islamic countries. The adviser also hoped that there would be increasing trade and economic cooperation between Bangladesh and all other Islamic countries. "We owe it to our peoples, who have so much in common," he said.

The luncheon was attended by the OIC Ambassadors in Dhaka and also by the non-resident envoys of Muslim countries, who were here to attend the Independence Day celebrations. Saudi Ambassador Abdullah M Al-Obaid Al-Namlah thanked the adviser and the Bangladesh government for the assurances of friendship and cooperation and reiterated the enthusiastic support of the Muslim countries for Bangladesh and for its government.