

Ratify UN convention to ensure rights of migrant workers

Speakers urge South Asian govts

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN, from Tangail

Speakers at the Fifth Saarc Peoples' Forum yesterday called on the South Asian governments to ratify the United Nations Convention on Migration in order to ensure the rights of migrant workers.

They also expressed concern over the security issue as well as human rights issue, saying that security of small countries could be jeopardised if they are branded as 'failed state'.

They also urged all to take steps to protect biodiversity in the region and ensure the rights of small communities.

The speakers made the call at different sessions on the second day of the three-day forum being held at Ridoypur Bidyagor in Delduar at Tangail ahead of the 14th

Saarc Summit to be held in New Delhi next month.

At a working session, Jahangir Alam Joni presented a paper on 'Threat to biodiversity and disaster management' with a call to safeguard biodiversity of rice varieties and promote biodiversity-based farming practice.

"Such farming system is the main precondition for food sovereignty in the South Asian region, and we should protect all varieties of rice with ecological characteristics," Jahangir told The Daily Star.

In the second session, Salma Ali, Anisur Rahman Khan and Gurundar Kaur discussed the topic 'Issues of trafficking in women and children and issues of migration' while Krishna Soman moderated the session.

They said the South Asian governments did not take any initiatives to help migrant workers and that

restrictions on Bangladeshi women workers willing to go abroad is one of the reasons behind the increase in the incidents of trafficking.

Shalini Bhutani, Ranjit de Silva and Farhad Mazhar presented papers on 'Intellectual property rights' in the third session moderated by Mohammed Iqbal, special correspondent of The Hindu, an Indian daily.

Farhad Mazhar of Nayakrishi Andolon opposed the idea of patenting any genetic resources, including agricultural products.

Nobody has the right to patent live forms as they are part of nature, the speakers said.

At another session, Hasib Khan of Resources Integration Centre (RIC), SM Altafur Rahman and Mohammad Hasan spoke on 'Security of small states and human rights' while Farhad Mazhar moderated the session.

They stressed the need to ensure security of the people, their movement and livelihood.

Farhad Mazhar called for promotion of peace-building process through exchange of views and sharing of ideas among the Saarc states.

The speakers also called for ensuring the rights of small communities such as standard Pakistanis.

"Don't call them standard Pakistanis. Please call them Urdu-speaking Bangladeshis," said a speaker.

Meanwhile, a book titled 'Food Sovereignty and Uncultivated Biodiversity in South Asia' written by Farhad Mazhar, Daniel Buckles, PV Satheesh and Farida Akhter was launched at the forum yesterday.

Two cases filed against Atiqullah Khan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two cases were filed against Globe Construction Ltd Chairman and Janakantha Editor Atiqullah Khan Masud on charges of cheating on Wednesday evening.

Mohammad Ishtiaq Hossain of Khilgaon and Sahanara Begum of Tikatuli lodged the cases with Ramna Police Station.

In the first information reports (FIR), the complainants said they paid around Tk 13.95 lakh to the Globe Construction Ltd for flats, but the company misappropriated the money and cheated them.

In his case, Ishtiaq mentioned that he gave Globe Chairman Masud Tk 8.10 lakh for a flat of 1013 square feet under Globe Centre Maghbazar Mouchak Project on March 15, 2003 and the flat was scheduled to be handed over by February 2006.

But Masud did not hand over the flat, nor did he return the money, Ishtiaq alleged in the FIR.

In the other case, Sahanara, wife of an expatriate, said that she gave a total of Tk 5.85 lakh between December 2000 and September 2001 to the company for a flat of 1497 square feet under Globe Nibas Paribagh project.

But when she came to know that the company is not implementing the project, she asked the company to return her money, Sahanara said.

She also met Masud in September 2006, but he refused to give back the money, she alleged.

Atiqullah Khan was arrested from the newspaper's office at Eskaton on March 7 under the emergency ordinance 2007.

Money exchange employee robbed of Tk 2.5 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An employee of a money exchange was robbed of Tk 2.5 lakh in front of Paltan Police Station in the city yesterday.

Sardar Humayun Kabir of Buriganga Money Exchange at Fakirapul was returning home from his office in a rickshaw at about 6:45pm, sources said.

When the rickshaw neared the intersection, a group of muggers numbering 4-5 stopped his rickshaw and snatched the money at the busy thoroughfare.

However, police later nabbed one of the muggers, identified as Shakil, and recovered Tk 49,500 from his possession.

BNP leader held in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Police arrested Sarwar Alam Biplob, secretary of Gournadi upazila BNP, from Gournadi Bandar last evening.

Abbas Uddin, officer in charge of Gournadi Police Station, said there was no case against Biplob but he was arrested for his alleged involvement in indoor politics defying the ban imposed by the state of emergency.

Chehlum



Chehlum of Monowara Chowdhury, wife of Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury, former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, will be held at Damodarpur village at Rangpur tomorrow, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the programme.



PHOTO: STAR

Former communication minister Nazmul Huda being taken to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in the city yesterday.

Need to strengthen economic ties with China underscored

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday underlined the need for enhancing economic cooperation between Bangladesh and China.

He made the remark when the newly appointed Ambassador of China to Bangladesh Zheng Qingdian presented his credentials to him at Bangabhaban.

Welcoming the new envoy, the President congratulated him on his new assignment as the Ambassador of China to Bangladesh. He said Bangladesh attaches top priority to its relations with China.

He termed China as good friend and one of the development partners of Bangladesh. He told the envoy that the Chinese investors might invest in different fields here.

He said currently 84 products are getting duty free access to China market from Bangladesh under the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement.

He underscored the need for providing more Bangladeshi products under the provisions of the agreement to narrow down trade gap between the two countries.

President said the government of China might import our sophisticated pharmaceuticals, garments, melamine and ceramic at a very competitive price.

Iajuddin also said the government of China might utilise our skilled and non-skilled manpower for their development.

He stated that both the countries

should explore all avenues of cooperation for the mutual benefit.

He hoped that as a new observer of Saarc, China would make valuable contribution to strengthen this regional organisation. He said Bangladesh supports "One-china Policy".

President assured the Ambassador of all support and cooperation in discharging his responsibilities in Bangladesh and wished him good health and happiness.

He conveyed his greetings to Chinese President Hu Jintao through the envoy. He also invited the President of China to visit Bangladesh at his convenience.

The Ambassador termed the relations between China and Bangladesh as excellent saying that it would be further strengthened in the days to come. He said China is keen to further enhance bilateral relations with Bangladesh.

Earlier, on his arrival at Bangabhaban, the Ambassador was given a guard of honour by the president's guard regiment (PGR).

Military Secretary to the President Major General Mohammad Aminul Karim, Secretary to the President's office Mohammad Sirajul Islam, Foreign Secretary in-charge Mohammad Touhid Hossain and senior officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka were present on the occasion.

Banani roads renamed after war heroes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Road No. 27 at Banani in the capital has been renamed after veteran freedom fighter Moinul Hossain Chowdhury Bir Bikram in recognition of his contribution to the War of Liberation.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday unveiled the plaque marking the renaming of the road in presence of the freedom fighter, local woman ward commissioner and high officials of the DCC.

"This is a pride of my life as I achieved recognition as a freedom fighter during my lifetime," said an overwhelmed Moinul.

"A sense of responsibilities and patriotism and unequivocal support from the people have prompted me to join the War of Liberation. Many of my fellow freedom fighters embraced martyrdom during the war," he said.

He also posed a question: "Why is there still a debate over the Father of the Nation? Everybody knows who spearheaded the war."

Earlier, the DCC mayor also renamed the Road No. 11 at Banani after freedom fighter Air Vice Marshal Khademul Bashar Bir Uttam.

Shaheed Aslam Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Shaheed Aslam Day will be observed in the country today. On this day in 1986, Mazharul Haq Aslam, a Bangladesh Chhatra Union

(BCU) leader, was shot dead by criminals in front of the Arts Building of Dhaka University while taking part in a procession against the then autocratic regime of HM Ershad.

Aslam, son of Mozammel Huq, was born in 1966 at Kamarajata village at Ruhitpur in Keraniganj.

Doa mahfil



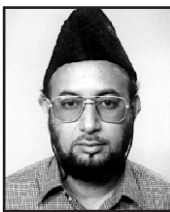
Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Relatives, friends, colleagues and admirers have been requested to attend the doa mahfil at Road No-1, House no-59, Block no-1, Banani and pray for salvation of his departed soul.

Obaidur Rahman, a former minister and an organiser of the War of Liberation, passed away at Apollo Hospitals in the city at 11:35am on March 21.

Mobashsher new postal DG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Mobashsherur Rahman joined as new director general of the postal department on March 27, says a press release.

Earlier, he served as additional director general (planning) and postmaster general simultaneously.

He belongs to 1982 batch of BCS cadre.

Help establish admin of good people

Speakers tell Election Olympiad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An Election Olympiad was held in the city yesterday with a view to raise public awareness about election.

Mirpur Regional Committee of Sujon- Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik, organised the Olympiad with its President MN Islam Tapan Chowdhury in the chair.

Addressing the function as chief guest, ASM Shahjahan, former adviser to the caretaker government, urged the youth to be enlightened man in future.

Sujon Secretary Dr Badiul Alam Majumder said his organisation aims at holding a meaningful election to establish an administration of good people.

The youth can play a significant role in this respect through their

work, he added.

Dr Majumder said the reason to organise Election Olympiad across the country is to reinforcing people's responsibilities as citizen of the country.

Munshi Bazlul Basit Anju, commissioner of ward no 7 of Mirpur, said the politics of today has become the hub of evil persons as honest people do not want to involve themselves in politics.

He urged the youth to change this culture of reluctance to become good politician.

Earlier, the Olympiad began with the national anthem followed by the hoisting of the national flag in the morning at Mirpur University College.

A total of 10 colleges and univer-

sities including Mirpur University College, Mirpur Ideal Women's College, Mirpur Government Bangla College, Shaheed Zia Women's Degree College, Bangabandhu College, Pallabi Degree College, BCIC College and Tejgaon College took part in the Olympiad.

Fatima Khanom became champion and Aeysha Khanom runners up at college level while ANM Muktadir Hossain became champion and MA Mannan runners up at the university level. They were awarded certificates, medals and crests.

Besides, certificates were awarded to all the participants and medals to 20 other winners.

Cancellation of selection in 27th BCS exams demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of students, teachers and freedom fighters yesterday urged the caretaker government to cancel PSC's (Public Service Commission) primary selection of successful candidates in 27th BCS as the PSC, in their opinion, made most appointments of the 27th BCS on political and/or other grounds ignoring merit.

A few of the successful candidates, of course, were genuinely brilliant and measures should be taken in such a way that they are not victimised, they said.

The allegations were made at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium in the capital.

Claiming that most PSC members are corrupt, they urged the government to investigate all irregularities in PSC.

Asst Prof Sheikh Hafizur Rahman Karzon of Law Department of Dhaka University (DU) said

although 'successful' BCS candidates of the 27th BCS were not invited to the March 25 view-exchanging meeting on PSC, many of them were present.

He suggested that if the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) interrogates the BCS 27th candidates present at that view-exchanging meeting, it (ACC) would be able to unearth valuable leads of gross irregularities in the PSC.

A master's student at DU, Abdul Kuddus said the PSC did not admit question paper leakage of the 27th BCS exam when everyone knew about it. As a result, bright candidates were screened out and inferior ones scored high with the help of the leaked question paper.

Kuddus also alleged that the PSC members were directly involved in irregularities during written and viva voce exams.

Commenting on 'freedom fighters' children quota' in BCS recruitment, Hamidul Hossain Tareq Bir

Bikram said freedom fighters of the country did not fight for their own benefit. There are many other ways to recognise the contribution of the freedom fighters. Their children should not be awarded any prerogative for their ancestors' contribution to the nation.

He also said so far there is no national list of freedom fighters. Successive governments made their own 'freedom fighters' list. "Since there is no [national] list of freedom fighters, the freedom fighters' quota is insignificant."

Rejvi Ahmed, another master's student at DU, urged the government to reserve five percent quota for the tribal and disadvantaged people and repeal all other quotas.

Sheikh Hafizur Rahman Karzon read out a written statement at the conference where a good number of DU students were also present.



PHOTO: STAR

The Royal Thai Embassy distributed funds to seven organisations for the destitute and the people with disability at a ceremony on the embassy premises in the city yesterday. The embassy in collaboration with the Thai Airways International PCL and Thai Trade Centre organised the Thailand King's Cup Golf Tournament in September last year to raise the funds. The picture shows the representatives of the organisations posing with Thai Ambassador Suphat Chitranukroh at the fund distribution ceremony.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

A seminar on 'Open source and open content' will be held. Venue: Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 2:30pm.

Reception

Shadhinata Dibash Ujapan Parishad will accord a reception to a number of valiant freedom fighters of the War of Liberation. Venue: Abu Dharr Ghifari College premises. Time: 4:30pm.

Dialogue

Nagarik Sanghatil will hold a dialogue on the policy of resource management of the Haor areas. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 9:30am.

Conference

The inaugural ceremony of the 1st national conference on 'Achieving millennium development goals 4 and 5: Where we are and what needs to be done' organised by Institute of Child and Mother Health (ICMH) will be held. Venue: ICMH, Matuail. Time: 9:45am.

Roundtable

Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh (CDRB) organises a roundtable on 'Accident-management and disaster preparedness in the cities of Bangladesh present perspective and future expectations'. Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 4:00pm.

Annual general meeting

The 16th Annual general meeting and National Conference 2007 of Zoological Society of Bangladesh will be held. Venue: Teacher-Student Centre, Dhaka University. Time: 10:00am.

Environment-friendly brick tech launched

BSS, Dhaka

A new environment-friendly and energy-efficient brick making technology called 'Hybrid Hoffman Kiln' has been launched in the country to produce high quality and low-cost bricks.

A plant with the use of HHK technology is now underway at the old site of Universal Bricks at Dhamrai, 40 kms from the capital.

The HHK has been chosen as 'lead' technology, officials told newsmen here yesterday.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Dhaka is facilitating the new project keeping in view a sharp cut in the emission of greenhouse gases from the country's brickfields.

UNDP Official Shakil Ahmed said the HHK technology uses 10-12 tonnes of coal with 50 per cent energy saving compared to old system.

One HHK plant with 7.5 times higher production capacity needs only 25-30 per cent of land than an old brickfield.

The initiative was undertaken by a project titled 'Improving Kiln Efficiency in Brick Making Industry (IKEEMI, Phase-B)' funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), an international funding agency.

A brief description about the new brick making technology was given at the concluding session of a daylong workshop held at the LGED Bhaban here.

Secretary to the Ministry of Environment and Forests SM Jahurul Islam was the chief guest while UNDP's Assistant Country Director Shireen Kalam Sayeed was in the chair.

Saarc Car Rally reaches Pakistan

BSS, Lahore

The Saarc Car Rally 2007 reached Lahore on Wednesday night after the caravan ended its third leg journey to India.

Federal Minister for Tourism Nilofar Bakhtiar received the participants of the car rally at Wagah border in Punjab, while Provincial Minister for Tourism Mian Aslam Iqbal and Mayor of Lahore Mian Amer Mahmud were present.

Hundreds of people of all ages, including students, greeted the participants, showering flower petals, beating drums, waving flags and singing national anthems of seven Saarc countries when the caravan entered into the Pakistan territory.

The rally has crossed 4,900 kilometres roadway in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Indian states of Assam, West Bengal, and Chandigarh, the union capital of both Punjab and Haryana states, in the last 14 days.

The 30-day rally started from Cox's Bazar, the tourism capital of Bangladesh, on March 15 and will conclude in Male, the capital of Maldives on April 14.

Earlier, the rally entered into Pakistan through Wagah, around 250 kilometres away from Chandigarh of India after ending its third leg visit to India yesterday.

It will start for its fourth leg visit to New Delhi on March 31.

Workers lay siege to Latif Bawani Jute Mill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The workers and employees of Latif Bawani Jute Mill yesterday laid siege to the mill and started observing work abstention demanding payment of their salary and arrears.

The workers are yet to get four month's salary while the officers didn't get their wages in the last two months.

Abdul Haq, director (accounts) of the mill, said they have not been able to pay the wages due to financial hardship.

Located in Demra, nation's largest jute mill Latif Bawani has 4000 permanent and 2500 temporary workers in addition to its 2500 regular employees.

Monju acting CCC mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) is likely to have an acting mayor today 22 days after the post became vacant.

Monjurul Alam Monju, commissioner of CCC No 10 North Kattali Ward, is taking over the office as acting mayor at 3:00pm, said sources.

Monju was selected to run CCC as the acting mayor as per the consent and nomination of CCC Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

CCC chief executive officer received a letter containing Mohiuddin Chowdhury's nomination for Monju through the deputy commissioner of Bandarban by fax yesterday afternoon, sources said.

1293 hydraulic horns seized

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) seized hydraulic horns of 1,293 motor vehicles and filed 3823 cases against their owners in the last seven days for using hydraulic horn in restricted areas, says a press release.

Earlier, DMP restricted the use of horns from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University to Sonargaon intersection, which is now extended to Shaheed Jahangir Gate.

The new restriction would be enforced from April 1.

Obituary



Afzal Hossain, former law-maker and a freedom fighter, passed away due to old age ailment at the Ibn Sina Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 74, says a press release.

Afzal, also a former director of Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), left behind his wife, one son and one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was elected member of National Assembly from Nayaranganj-4 constituency in 1970.

He was laid to rest at Paikpara graveyard after Maghrib prayers with state honour.

His quikhwani will be held at Baburail Jam-e- Mashjid near his residence after Asr prayers on April 1.

AKM Azizul Huq



AKM Azizul Huq, a retired district judge and son of late Abdul Bari of Nurpur Villa of Begumbazar at Lalbagh in the city, passed away at his residence at Dhanmondi on March 26 at the age of 79, says a press release.

As a judge, in his long career of 35 years, he was known for his honesty and integrity. He studied in Armanitola School, Presidency College of Kolkata and Dhaka University.

Death anniversary



Today is the 36th death anniversary of Shaheed Lt Col Dr N A M Jahangir, a freedom fighter, says a press release.

He embraced martyrdom during the War of Liberation at the age of only 39.

On the occasion, prayers will be offered at his graveyard at Comilla Cantonment and doa mahfil will be held at CHM Jame mosque at Comilla and his ancestral house at Pangsha after Juma prayers.

Shaheed Dr Jahangir joined the medical corp after completing MBBS from Dhaka Medical College in 1953 and later obtained higher degree on Clinical Pathology from the United States.