



PHOTO: STAR  
Artistes perform a dance number at the inaugural ceremony of the annual conference of Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad at Chhayanaout Sangskriti Bhaban auditorium in the city yesterday.

## 'Form task force to protect Haor people from floods'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists and conscious citizens at a dialogue yesterday urged the caretaker government to form a national task force to protect two crore people living in haor areas and their crops from early flood.

They said a master plan along with mass participation is necessary to save the haor people as well as the biodiversity and aquaculture of the country.

The national dialogue on 'Agri-culture and natural resource of haor areas and what policy should be taken' was organised by Nagorik Sanghati at the National Press Club in the city.

The participants said people living in wetlands of some 48 upazilas of seven north-eastern districts have been leading a miserable life for years amid food insecurity, unemployment and natural disaster, but no government since the country's independence took any effective steps to upgrade their life.

They demanded reforms in the existing leasing system of haor since it only benefits local influential

figures instead of common people and fishermen.

Engineer M Inamul Haque, former director general of Bangladesh Haor and Wetland Development Board, said normally early flood hits the haor areas in the middle of April.

"Huge amount of crops in haor area will be damaged if early flood occurs. The caretaker government

### Criminal held with firearm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) nabbed an alleged criminal with a firearm from Keraniganj near the capital on Thursday.

Acting on a tip-off, Rab men nabbed Ataur Rahman, 35, son of late Sultan Uddin, from Hazrat Bayati Super Market.

They also recovered a revolver and two rounds of bullets from him.

The law enforcers are taking legal actions against him, said a fax from Rab-4 headquarters yesterday.

should take effective steps to protect the crops from the flood," he said.

He emphasised a combined policy to ensure proper utilisation of the potentials of these areas for national development.

Researcher Pavel Partha in his keynote paper said people living in haor areas are leading a miserable life as most of them are struggling against hunger, poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, unemployment and flood.

IT expert Mostafa Jabbar said haor area is a huge resource of sweet water fishes and a suitable plan can provide the country with a lot of foreign currencies.

Anisur Rahman, an expert on Haor, said the poor fishermen of haor areas are deprived of the rights to haor assets due to existing leasing system which benefits only the well-to-do and influential quarters.

Engineer Kazi Shish, Barrister Sadia, Environmentalist Chhabi Biswas, Hamidul Islam Bir Bikram and Advocate SM Sabur also took part in the dialogue.

## Undetected TB patients a threat to public health

UNB, Dhaka

More than half of the undetected tuberculosis-infected people move around freely, posing a serious threat to public health.

"While the treatment success rate is fairly high at 85 percent, less than half (44 percent) of the cases are detected, resulting in a larger number of untreated carriers who spread the disease still further," said a USAID report.

A recent study of ICDDR,B said effective control of the disease burden is hampered by the fact that only 46 percent of TB cases are detected.

Tuberculosis (TB) is a major public health problem and a leading cause of adult mortality in Bangladesh. In 2006, World Health Organisation (WHO) ranked Bangladesh sixth among the world's 22 high-burden TB countries.

More than 319,000 new cases, including 143,000 sputum smear-positive (SS+) pulmonary TB cases and 70,000 TB-related deaths occur annually, mentioned the report.

In 1993, Bangladesh's National TB Control Programme (NTP) began implementing 'Directly Observed Therapy Short-Course (DOTS)'. After that, the case-detection rate under

DOTS increased from 29.2 percent in 1993 to 61 percent in 2005 but so far failed in 100 percent detection.

The DOTS coverage also increased throughout the country -- from 90 percent in 1999 to 99 percent in 2004. The treatment success in TB, which was 81 percent in 1993, reached 89 percent in 2004.

"Yet many Bangladeshis are unaware of the fact that TB is curable and that treatment is available at public health facilities free of charge," said another study.

Control of TB depends upon the coordinated and effective implementation of programmes that combine both

strategies to prevent TB and those to diagnose and treat it early.

ICDDR,B said it is early diagnosis and treatment that will prevent the spread of TB within households and among those coming into contact with active cases.

"The next challenge will be to identify persons infected with tuberculosis early, before they become sick.

Earlier diagnosis means treatment can start earlier, thus preventing transmission to the next generation of TB victims," said ICDDR,B Executive Director David Sack.