



# Dhaka committed to peace, development

Says foreign adviser

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury yesterday said the ongoing reforms of the government are aimed at institutionalising Bangladesh's pluralist spirit and 'communal harmony'.

Iftekhar, who is now in Manila, was speaking at a meeting between the foreign ministers attending the ongoing Asean Regional Forum (ARF) and Philippines President Gloria Arroyo at the Malacanang Presidential Palace, according to a foreign ministry press release from Manila.

He said, "Bangladesh is committed to peace and development and is

pleased to join the ARF at a time when the dawn of the Asian Century is breaking out across the global horizon."

"As all are aware, Bangladesh today is undergoing great changes. Reforms are in motion, setting up institutions that would sustain the pluralist spirit and urges of the Bangladeshi people for a long time to come," said the foreign adviser, who is heading the Bangladeshi delegation attending the ARF for the first time.

"At home and abroad we are a mainstream and moderate voice encouraging bridge-building across faiths and communities; we take great

pride in the communal harmony that pervades our society," he said.

Citing the recent gift of Gautam Buddha's hair relics to Sri Lanka, Iftekhar said it was given "not because we wanted to be seen as generous, but because we wanted to share our heritage with the Sri Lankan Buddhists".

Lauding the Philippines for its measures to encourage 'communal harmony' between its Christian and Muslim communities, he said Bangladesh would support and welcome the Philippines as an 'observer' in the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

## MASS PSYCHOGENIC ILLNESS

# 89 more students fall sick

## STAR REPORT

Today is the 25th death anniversary of former chief justice Syed A B M a h m u d Husain, says a press release.

To mark the day, Chief Justice Syed A B Mahmud Husain Smriti Sangsad will hold a discussion and milad mahfil at the Supreme Court Bar Association auditorium at 5:00pm today.

Chief Justice Md Ruhul Amin will attend the discussion as the chief guest. Dewan Nurul Anwar Husain Chowdhury will present a paper on the life of late chief justice. Judges of the Supreme Court and eminent lawyers will participate in the discussion.

Friends, relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programme.

## Suraiya Begum

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the fourth anniversary of death of Suraiya Begum, an associate professor of the department of information science and library management of the University of Dhaka, says a press release.

She was the wife of late Tawfiq Aziz Khan, who was executive editor of The Daily Star and renowned sports writer and commentator.

Late Suraiya Begum was a life member of the Bangla Academy, Library Association of Bangladesh, Institute of Library Information and Management and the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

She was also member of the Inner Wheel Club of Dhaka North West, an executive committee member of the Community Development Library and Management and the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

## Comrade Iqbal Majumder

Today is the sixth death anniversary of Comrade Iqbal Majumder, a freedom fighter and founder national secretary of Gonotantrik Mojdoor Party, says a press release.

He was also the general secretary of Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation. He was killed by miscreants in Motijheel area in the city on this day in 2001.

Party leaders will place wreaths at his grave at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur.

## Dead whale to be sent to Nat'l Science, Tech Museum

### CU CORRESPONDENT

The dead whale that was found at the port city's Kattali sea beach on Monday will be sent to National Science and Technology Museum in the capital.

The district administration through a letter yesterday afternoon informed Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Acting Mayor of the decision taken at the directive of the adviser to the concerned ministry, said a CCC press release yesterday evening.

A five-member committee led by National Science and Technology Museum Curator is likely to arrive in Chittagong today to take the skeleton of the rare whale to the National Museum in the capital where it would be preserved and put on display for the visitors.

CCC, district administration and Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) took measures to preserve the rare mammal till it is sent to Dhaka.

## WEATHER TODAY

# Light to moderate rain likely

## UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowsers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Khulna.

Barisal and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to very heavy rainfall is also likely at places, Met office said. Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

Highest temperature 33.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Khulna and Mongla and lowest 24.6 degree Celsius at Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:41pm today and rises at 5:28am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Humidity in			
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.3	25.3	90	87
Chittagong	31.0	25.2	83	83
Rajshahi	30.0	25.2	97	86
Khulna	33.8	27.5	82	83
Barisal	32.6	26.8	82	87
Sylhet	29.5	24.6	99	87

## Concern over laid-off jute mills, workers

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Various socio-political organisations have expressed grave concern over the fate of the laid-off workers of the four state-owned jute mills that blew their final whistle at midnight on July 31 and their families.

In a joint statement, Karmojibi Nari (KNN) President Shirin Akhter and General Secretary Sharmin Kabir alleged that the nation's economy would be hit hard if jute mill workers kept losing their jobs and this would further increase the rate of unemployment in the country.

They urged the government to make arrangements to employ the laid-off workers and to ensure proper education facilities for their children.

In a different statement, Labour Employment Right President Mosleh Uddin Mosluh alleged that the state-owned jute mills and their laid-off workers are facing a huge crisis because of the ill-conceived policies of the government.

The mill workers are paying the ultimate price for the reform policies introduced by the government, the statement added.

Mosluh called on the government and the concerned authorities to pay up the arrears of the laid-off workers and thereby bring an end to the untoward situation.

## Alleged robber lynched

### BSS, Narayanganj

An alleged robber was lynched at Arai Hazar in the district on Tuesday, police sources said.

The deceased was identified as Arafat, 28.

The police said the incident took place when a gang of robbers numbering seven to eight was taking preparation for committing a robbery on the Arai Hazar.

Locals caught one of the robbers and beat him to death.

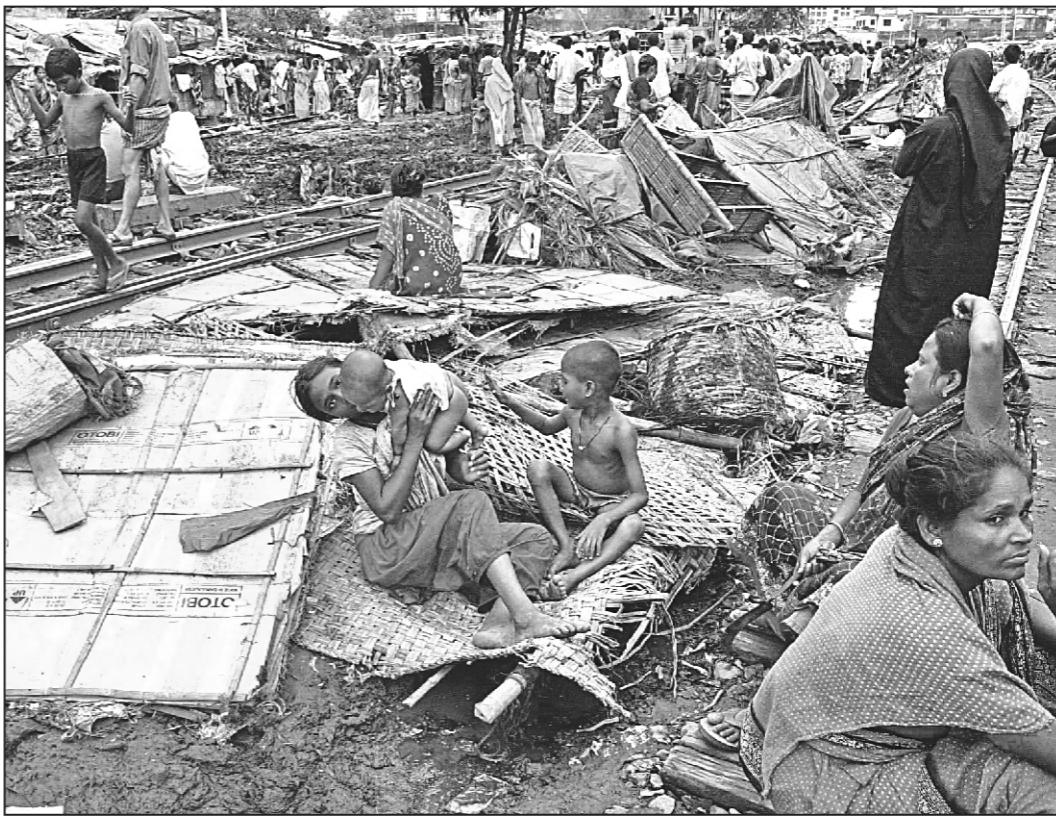


PHOTO: STAR  
Railway authorities demolish shanties along the rail lines in Karwan Bazar area in the city yesterday as the rail lines will be converted into broad gauge for the movement of Dhaka-Kolkata trains.

# Flood kills 38, affect 46 lakh in 36 dists

## Adviser tells press briefing

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Responding to the current floods in Bangladesh, the UK has given \$2.5 million of immediate aid, providing food, water, shelter and medicines for 50,000 people in the ten worst-affected districts and special assistance through the Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP), says a press release.

The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) is supporting the government's ongoing relief work, channelling \$1.8 million aid through UNDP.

The UK has also authorised DFID's own Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP) to offer further reliefs in their operation areas in five districts in the northern region - Jamalpur, Sirajganj, Bogra, Gaibandha, Kurigram. Up to \$1 million will be spent for this worst hit region by CLP.

Acting UK DFID Country Representative Sarah Sanyahumbi said, "We are keenly aware of the need for urgent action in bringing help for the many gravely affected by flooding. As a long-standing friend of the Bangladeshi people, the UK seeks to continue its partnership with the Government of Bangladesh, and to make sure that assistance reaches those who are most in need."

Bangladesh's Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme, jointly funded by the UK and UNDP, has been established to improve Bangladesh's capacity to manage natural disasters like floods significantly.

During the 2004 floods, UK assistance to the relief operation totalled \$29 million. Every year, the UK contributes £120 million through DFID in support of Bangladesh's development programmes, making it the largest bilateral partner.

He said around 46 lakh people have been affected in 36 districts where 38 people have so far died in the current flooding.

The flood has caused damages to crops of around 600,000 acres of land, 337,000 of roads fully and 814,400 partly, 44 km of embankments fully and 363 km partly, 82 educational institutions fully and 1766 partly, 14 bridges and culverts fully and 178 partly, he added.

Replies to a question, the adviser said the overall flood situation is not so worst right now that a state of 'national disaster' should be declared.

Asked if the political parties could launch relief operation for flood-victims, the adviser said anyone can come to the aid of affected people, but "I cannot say for sure if the political parties can take part in relief operations using their banners. There has been no decision yet in this regard."

Tapan said he does not feel that the government should appeal to political parties to come to the aid of the flood victims.

"This is our country and we all can



## Australian chef Szabo in city

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Celebrity Australian chef Steve Szabo is now in the city to offer his special delicacies to food connoisseurs.

Szabo, executive chef of the Palazzo Versace, a hotel run under the direction of the celebrity fashion house Versace, will present a set menu dinner at the restaurant Sublime of the Radisson Water Garden Hotel from August 3 to 5.

He has worked in some of England's most famous establishments, including three of London's popular Michelin Star restaurants -- the Chelsea Room, Ma Maison and Walton's -- during his 21 years in the restaurant industry.

Head Pastry Chef of the Palazzo Versace Lisa Halliwell and International Executive Sous Chef Saleh Ahmed of the Radisson will also take the opportunity to demonstrate their culinary skills in the dinner.

Locals caught one of the robbers and beat him to death.

# BNP cadres grab land of Hindu families in Munshiganj

## Allege victims

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local BNP cadres grabbed the lands and other properties of 50 Hindu families at Louhajang in Munshiganj and forced them out of their houses about two months ago, the victims alleged yesterday.

"The BNP cadres first grabbed our lands and set up a madrasa for girls there. We could not protest in fear of further attack and repression. Finally, they ousted us from our homes. Now we have no shelter and are passing our days like homeless people," said Kulbhushan Kangsha Banik, one of the victims, at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city.

He also alleged that the cadres have taken signatures of the victims on false land deeds at gunpoint before ousting them from their homes two months ago.

Kulbhushan said the BNP cadres had been torturing the families

for the last several years.

"We could not celebrate our religious festivals peacefully. The cadres demolished our temple and puja mandap. They beat us when we tried to save our temple," he said.

Rashmoni Kangsha Banik, another victim, said they had informed the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) of the situation, but to no avail.

"The cadres once set fire to my seven-year-old daughter and they also beat me when I tried to extinguish the fire," said Maya Rani Kangsha Banik.

"Two months ago, the BNP cadres beat me and my husband before ousting us from our house. They will kill us if we try to go back to our home," she said.

Basudeb Kangsha Banik, Gouranga Kangsha Banik and Gopal Chandra Saha were also present at the press conference.

He is survived by his wife and one daughter.

Management and employees of Advanced Development Technologies Ltd. condoled his death and prayed for salvation of the departed soul. They also conveyed sympathy to members of the bereaved family.

### Obituary

Khulhwani of Advocate Abdus Sobhan, founding editor and publisher of the 'Shaptahik Ain Samaj' will be held at his residence at 51D Dhaka University Staff Quarters after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Relatives and friends are requested to attend the khulhwani.

Advocate Sobhan passed away on July 29.

He left behind his wife and two daughters to mourn his death.

Management and employees of Advanced Development Technologies Ltd. condoled his death and prayed for salvation of the departed soul. They also conveyed sympathy to members of the bereaved family.

### Meeting

The second general meeting of Gender in Media Forum will be held. Venue: Steps Towards Development, 3/4, Block-D, Lalmoni. Time: 10:00am.

### Consultation

A national consultation on the 3rd and 4th periodic state party on the Child Rights Convention will be held. Venue: Jatiya Mahila Sangstha auditorium, Daily Road. Time: 9:30am.

### Award giving ceremony

The monthly Pratilalana will celebrate its 5th anniversary and give away Pratilalana Award 2006. Venue: Khamarbari, Farmgate. Time: 4:00pm.

### Science week

Dhaka College Science Club organises 'Science and Technology Week 2007' beginning from today. Venue: 58/1 Kalabagan (1st lane). Time: 4:30pm.