

## WORLD HABITAT DAY TODAY

## Call to make cities make safer, greener

DU CORRESPONDENT

With the slogan 'A safe city is a just city', the World Habitat Day 2007 will be observed in Bangladesh today as elsewhere in the world.

The United Nations has designated the first Monday in October every year as World Habitat Day to reflect on the state of human settlements and the basic right to adequate shelter for all, a UN website says.

On the occasion, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in a message said that the day is an occasion to encourage city leaders to plan better for crime reduction, security of tenure and climate change mitigation.

He said, "We are at the dawn of a new urban era. Half of humanity now lives in towns and cities. It is estimated that by 2030, two-thirds of the world's people will be urban dwellers."

He said crime in urban areas is on the rise everywhere and fear of crime is one of the most influential factors shaping daily lives. In many countries, crime has divided cities into areas of decline where guns, rape, robbery and violence prevail,

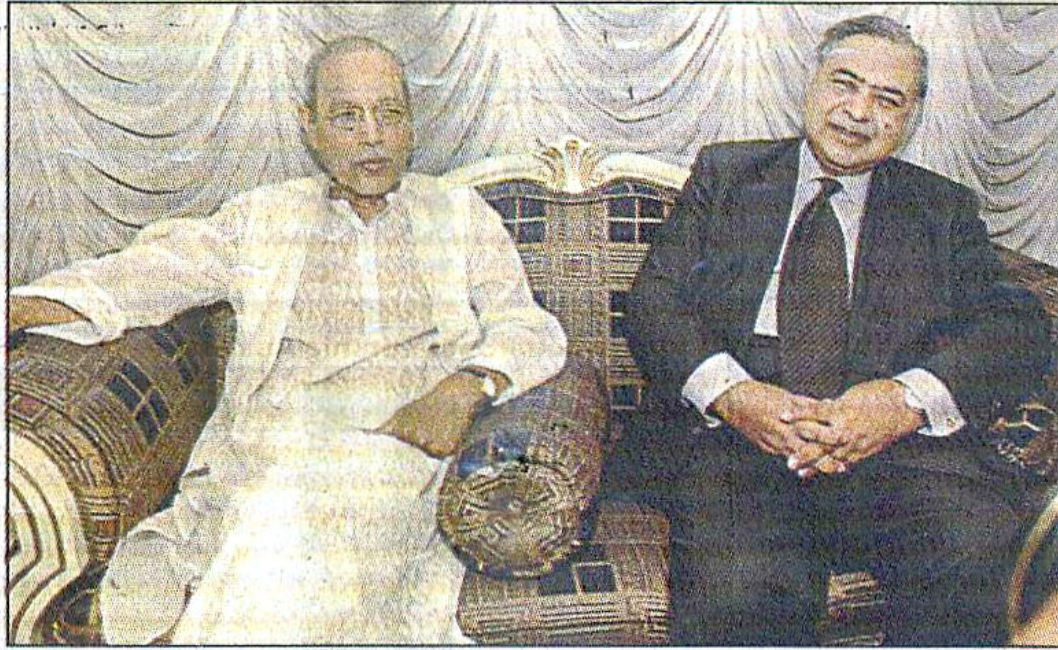
and wealthier districts, on the other hand, where residents can afford better protection.

In slums and poor urban areas, people lack security of tenure, utilities and health services and are most at risk of disasters shaped by climate change.

The UN Secretary-General added, "Let us resolve to make cities around the world safer, greener, more inclusive and more secure places for everyone."

Meanwhile, Campaign on Housing Rights placed a seven-point demand at a meeting yesterday with its adviser Mazharul Islam in the chair.

It demanded thousands of acres of khas lands across the country will have to be freed from the land grabbers and to distribute to homeless and poor people for their housing; lower-income people will have to be provided with housing loans on easier condition; there should be agreements between tenants and house owners and supervision of rent controller office should be intensified so that the house owners cannot lift the house rent whimsically.



Liberal Democratic Party President Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury and Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain hold a meeting at the residence of LDP Secretary General Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan at Gulshan in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

## Four Japanese volunteers arrive

Four new Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) arrived in Bangladesh on September 28 in order to extend cooperation in different sectors that includes health and IT sector, says a press release.

They will work in public organisations in Bangladesh for the next two years.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has dispatched a total of 923 JOCV to Bangladesh since 1973 in various fields such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries, management, civil engineering and construction, health and hygiene, education, culture and sports.

At present there are as many as 53 volunteers engaged in various activities throughout Bangladesh, all speaking in Bangla language.

The new JOCV members called on Ambassador of Japan Masayuki Inoue at the Chancery yesterday. Ambassador Inoue said, "I wish you to fully demonstrate your talents and skills for the benefit of the people of Bangladesh."

## 6 get life in JCD leader Helal murder

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced six people to life in jail for killing Khondaker Wares Ahmed Helal, a former Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader of Dhanmondi unit in October in 1988.

The convicts are Bashir Uddin Khan, Mizanur Rahman Mizan, Mohammad Zabbar, Nurul Haq Jitu, Ziaur Rahman Zia and Pala Shamim. Of them, Zabbar was present in the courtroom during the delivery of the verdict.

Judge Anwar Hossain of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 handed down the sentence in presence of Zabbar at a packed courtroom.

The punishment of the fugitives will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender, the judge said.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence had completed their arguments and the court recorded

statements of 22 prosecution witnesses.

According to the prosecution, a gang of miscreants led by Mizan and Zabbar in a pre-planned way took the victim Helal, a Masters examinee of Jagannath University and a former JCD general secretary of Dhanmondi unit, to the court premises in the old city for bringing out a procession demanding release of BNP leader Obaidur Rahman at about 10.30am on October 6, 1988.

Later, the gang had killed Helal in a hotel adjacent to the court area and dumped his body to an unknown place in Savar area to destroy the evidence. But police recovered the body on October 8.

Victim's elder brother Belal Ahmed filed a murder case with Dhanmondi Police Station against Mizan and five others on October 11. Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had pressed charges against Mizan and five others on April 31, 2004.

Special Public Prosecutor Firoz Kamrul Hasan, Barrister Mahub-Uddin Khokon and Advocate Taherul Islam Towhid appeared for the state.

## EC DIALOGUE

## AL, JSD discuss common stance today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) today meets with the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) to take a common stance at the Election Commission (EC) dialogue.

The meeting will be held at the Gulshan residence of AL acting president Zillur Rahman.

Earlier on Saturday, the AL sat with the Workers' Party.

The meeting agreed in principle on opposing some of the EC proposals including one that says any criticism of the commission will be tantamount to contempt of court.

Talking to The Daily Star, JSD President Hasanul Haque Inu said

they would discuss the issues concerning the talks with the EC.

He said they would try their best to have a stance common to all components of the 14-party and other allies.

"We are already united on the 31-point common national minimum programme, and hopefully we will remain the same in the case of the EC dialogue," said Inu, a key leader of the 14-party alliance.

The AL will meet with the Samyabadi Dal on October 3.

Besides the 14-party, the AL will also meet the Communist Party of Bangladesh and other progressive political parties.

## World Hepatitis Awareness Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the slogan 'Be tested', Bangladesh will observe the World Hepatitis Awareness Day for the first time today to prevent the disease through early diagnosis.

European Liver Patient Association (ELPA) and World Health Organisation, Europe (WHO, Europe) have been observing the day since 2004 through different programmes.

The Fourth World Hepatitis Awareness Day this year will be observed in 40 countries simultaneously.

Liver Foundation Bangladesh will organise a seminar at city's Birdem auditorium today to mark the day.



New Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers pose for photograph with Japanese Ambassador Masayuki Inoue at the Chancery in the city yesterday.

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