

TSUNAMI

Need for early warning systems underscored

The chaotic scenes following the tsunami warning on September 12 in Southern Bangladesh as well as in other Indian Ocean littoral states demonstrate the importance of improving both early warning systems and community preparedness.

The observation came at a dialogue to disseminate the results of a pilot project in Sri Lanka's at Bangladesh University of Science and Technology (Buet) yesterday says a press release.

Bangladesh can be proud of having reduced the fatalities from cyclones in the past decades, but increasing geological instability in the ocean south of the country poses a new challenge in the form of tsunamis, a rapid-onset hazard that can destroy lives and livelihoods on a massive scale unless the necessary preparations are made.

Under current technology, authorities have 2-3 days to issue warning and evacuate people from the path of dangerous cyclones. Tsunamis allow only a few hours to prepare.

In Sri Lanka, a nation that suffered greatly from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, researchers and community leaders have been working diligently to find technological and organisational solutions for the challenges posed by tsunamis and other rapid-onset hazards.

The perception has been that if

the challenges posed by tsunamis can be met, the risks from other hazards can also be minimised.

Intergovernmental and governmental organisations are improving the tsunami detection and monitoring systems in the Indian Ocean. But each government in the region must develop faster and more reliable methods to decide on the issuance of watch, warning and evacuation messages and to communicate such messages to first responders and the media.

Communities must prepare themselves to receive these messages as well as generate their own information. To devise and implement effective last-mile warning systems and to maintain disaster response plans while successfully implementing them. The tasks are complex and large, requiring the cooperation of government, the private sector and communities.

Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka's largest

community-based organisation, and LIRNEAsia, a regional ICT

think-tank, collaborated on a 32-village pilot project that sought to identify the best technologies for reaching villages; to identify the significance of organisational strength and training for risk reduction; and to assess the participation of women in these activities.

The community-based

approach implemented in the

project is different from a public-



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Channel i Managing Director Faridur Reza Sagar, Director (news) Shykh Seraj and others cut a cake at the Channel i office in the city yesterday celebrating the 9th founding anniversary of the satellite channel.

Taiwan accuses Beijing of threatening peace

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan yesterday rejected Chinese accusations that Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian's efforts to host a referendum on UN membership are threatening regional stability.

Instead, Taiwan's foreign ministry in a statement denounced Beijing's stockpiling of nearly 1,000 ballistic and cruise missiles aimed at the island.

"It is China not Taiwan which pulls the two sides ever away... the fact that it has kept deploying more missiles targeting Taiwan has gravely threatened peace in the Strait," it said.

It also denied Beijing's "one China principle" -- that Taiwan is a province of China and not a separate state.

"Taiwan and China have governed themselves separately since 1949 (at the end of a civil war). They do not belong to each other. The Chinese government has never exercised its rights of ruling on the island, nor has it ever collected a single penny in tax from Taiwan," it said.

Reinstatement of laid-off journos, staffs of Ittefaq demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Newspaper Employees Federation (BNEF) yesterday expressed deep concern over the lay off of a large number of journalists and employees of the Ittefaq and demanded their reinstatement.

With Federation Senior Vice-President Salim Uddin Selim in the chair, the meeting observed that such indiscriminate lay off before the Eid had created panic among the employees of the newspaper industry.

The meeting, held at Observer Bhaban, also regretted the lay off of BNEF President Motiur Rahman Talukder, who is also the member of the 6th Wage Board and joint member-secretary of Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmochari Oikya Parishad.

Media has important role to play: Mainul

BSS, Dhaka

Information Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday said the media has a very important role to play in disseminating the present government's efforts to reestablish democracy in the country.

"The present government is playing a constructive role towards mass media," he said while speaking at the 9th founding anniversary of Channel i, a private TV channel, at its office.

He said the government considered media's role "very important" in nation building.

The nation, he said, needed honest and capable leadership to reestablish democracy in the country. The adviser said that Channel i had been playing a significant role in that respect.

He described the role of Channel i as "laudable" in creating

mass awareness as well as in inspiring people in constructive activities.

He congratulated all personnel of the channel for earning the people's admiration for it through objective dissemination of news and views.

After examining the prosecution witnesses and other relevant documents, the trial court handed down the verdict.

The adviser cut a cake to inaugurate the anniversary celebration and wished the channel uninterrupted progress.

Agriculture Adviser Dr CS Karim, Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury, the channel's Managing Director Faridur Reza Sagar, its Chief of News Shykh Seraj, politicians, journalists and cultural activists were also present on the occasion.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 35.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakund and lowest 24.0 degree Celsius at Rangamati.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:45pm today and rises at 5:51am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature in celsius	Humidity in percentage		
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.8	26.4	73	79
Chittagong	32.5	25.5	76	76
Rajshahi	34.5	26.0	79	80
Khulna	33.0	26.4	77	71
Barisal	33.3	25.5	78	89
Sylhet	30.2	25.0	100	88
Cox's Bazar	33.4	24.5	69	86

York College to launch 'Yunus Scholarship'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

York College in New York City is going to launch a scholarship named after Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus.

Dr Yunus gave his consent to 'Dr Yunus Scholarship' at a meeting with Jerald Posman, vice-president of the college, in New York on September 27, according to a report of News World, a New York based news agency.

According to the detailed plan of the scholarship, an exchange programme with Grameen Bank will also be introduced.

As part of the exchange programme, selected students of York College will be sent to Bangladesh to observe the activities of Grameen Bank while students of different schools associated with the Grameen Bank will visit York College.

Writer Rashidul Bar, one of the initiators of the scholarship, Dr Shawkat Ali, president of Bangladesh Journalist and Writers' Association, Abu Taher, secretary general of the association, and Monica Yunus, daughter of Dr Yunus, were present at the meeting.

2 get life in double murder case

BSS, Rajshahi

A trial court has sentenced two persons to rigorous imprisonment (RI) for life and three others to 10 years' RI in a double murder case in the district.

The convicts jailed for life are Abul Kalam and Abdus Samad. The court also fined them Tk 10,000 each, in default, to suffer one year more RI.

Three other convicts Shahidul, Salam and Bazzullah were also fined Tk 10,000 each, in default, to suffer one year more in jail.

The judge acquitted five accused Jaber Ali, Habibur Rahman, Riaz Uddin, Momena Khatun and Mojibur Rahman of the charges as the prosecution could not prove the allegation brought against them.

The prosecution story, in brief, is that the convicts, armed with lethal weapons attacked the residence of one Rahmatullah Pramanik at Telipukur village under Bagmara upazila and beat his family members indiscriminately as sequel to previous enmity over a piece of disputed land on January 22, 2005.

In the attack, many of the family members were injured seriously. Of them, Pramanik's son Rafiqul Islam and grandson Zeker Ali succumbed to their injuries at Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital.

Rahmatullah lodged a case with Bagmara Police Station on the same day.

On completion of investigation, police pressed charges accusing 10 people.

After examining the prosecution witnesses and other relevant documents, the trial court handed down the verdict.

Arunabh wins poetry prize



Tanguil Sahitya Sangsads has selected Arunabh Sarkar for its poetry prize for 2007, says a press release.

The executive committee of the Sangsads took the decision at a meeting recently.

The award giving ceremony will be held on December 15.

The award carries a citation and Tk 10,000 from the 'Dinesh-Bani Gold Medal' Award Committee.

Arunabh has three collections of poems to his credit -- 'Nagare Baul', 'Keu Kichhu Jane Na' and 'Narira Fere Na'. He also edited Eshika, a poetry magazine.

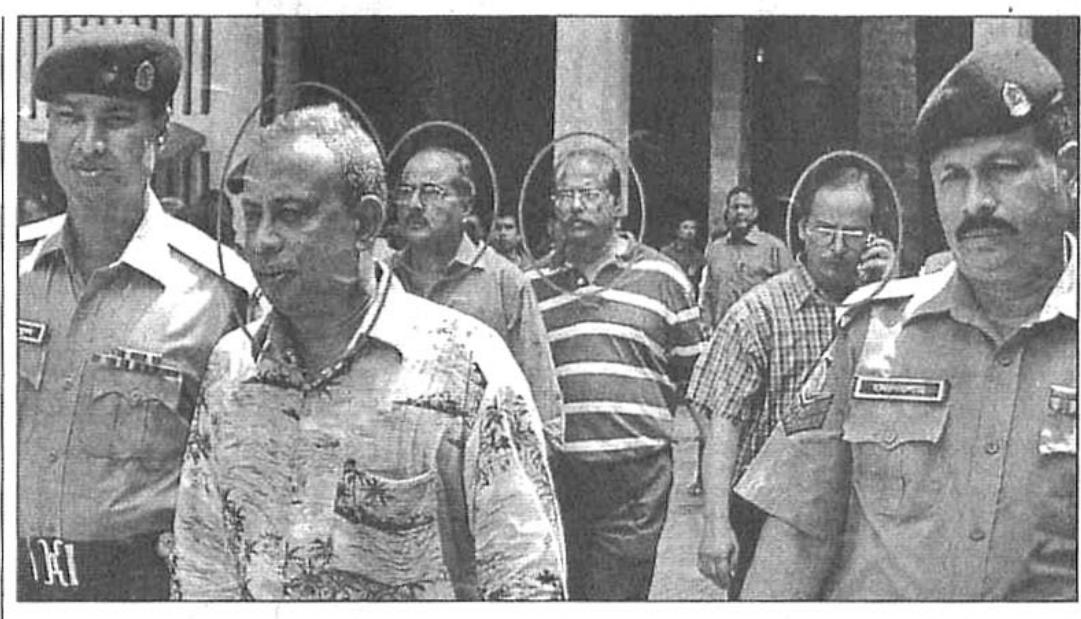
Tanguil Sahitya Sangsads has been giving the poetry prize every year since 2004 to eminent poets of the district for their outstanding contribution to poetry.

Indonesia reports 86th bird flu death

AP, Jakarta

A 21-year-old man from the Indonesian capital Jakarta died from bird flu last week the health ministry said yesterday, bringing the toll in the world's worst-affected nation to 86.

"This confirmed case puts the number now at 107 infected, including 86 dead," Ningrum, a doctor from Indonesia's bird flu information centre, told AFP.



Former public works secretary SM Jafarullah, former chairman Shahidul Alam and Iqbal Hossain and Rajuk official Golam Nabi are being taken to jail after they surrendered to a court in connection with a graft case yesterday.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Mugger beaten to death in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

A mob beat a mugger to death and injured two others near the United Nations Park in the port city in the early hours of yesterday.

The dead was identified as Mafiz Uddin, 28, and the injured are Mohammad Kamal, 30, and Saheb Ali, 28.

Sources said the gang of three intercepted a pedestrian and tried to snatch valuables from him at around 2:00am.

When the pedestrian raised an alarm, local people rushed to his aid and caught the muggers. They also beat up the three, leaving them badly injured.

The muggers were sent to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where Mafiz succumbed to his injuries about one hour later, the sources said.

Police said the Khulna-bound truck, loaded with thread, dashed the Magura-bound tempo at Kechuadubi at about 8:00pm, leaving three of its passengers dead on the spot.

The deceased were identified as Manirul Islam, 35, of Habala village, Rabiul Islam, 25, of Beroakandi and Abdur Razzak, 38,

Road crashes kill 4

UNB, Dhaka

At least four people, including a schoolgirl were killed and eight others injured in separate road accidents in Magura and Jhenidah yesterday and on Sunday night.

A report from Magura says: Three people were killed and seven others injured when a truck hit a tempo in Sadar upazila on Jessor-Magura road Sunday night.

Police said the Khulna-bound truck, loaded with thread, dashed the Magura-bound tempo at Kechuadubi at about 8:00pm, leaving three of its passengers dead on the spot.

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The injured were rushed to Magura Sadar Hospital.

Another report from Jhenidah says:

A schoolgirl was killed and a college girl injured when a tempo hit a van they were on board near Madandanga Bazar on Jhenidah-Kushtia road yesterday.

Witnesses said Jannatul Ferdous, student of class X, died on the spot and badly wounded Popy Khatun, a first year student of DM College, was rushed to the hospital.

The killer bus of Gangchil Paribahan managed to flee leaving behind the victims lying in a pool of blood on the road.

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