

Dispel misunderstandings among different faiths

Iftekhar urges UN members

UNB, New York

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury called upon the UN members to dispel "misunderstandings among different faiths".

He said followers of different religions and faiths in Bangladesh live in a state of tranquil harmony, as we have been able to inculcate in our peoples a sense of tolerance and respect for diversity.

He made these remarks at a high level meeting on inter-religious understanding, chaired by the president of the General Assembly

Dr Srgjan Kerim, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon attended the meeting on Thursday.

About 72 speakers, mostly foreign ministers representing their countries spoke at the conference, says a press release.

He added that the current state of globalisation poses many challenges to some countries.

Iftekhar said spread of education, alleviation of poverty, empowerment of women and polarisation in the community are needed to bring peace and harmony. He sought interna-

tional cooperation in this regard.

He said every year Bangladesh introduces a resolution in the General Assembly on 'The Culture of Peace'. This year too Bangladesh would do the same.

Bangladesh initiative receives an overwhelming support among the UN members, he added.

He noted Bangladeshi contribution in peacekeeping and said whenever Bangladeshi peacekeepers are present the message of social harmony is being propagated.

Land fraud syndicate takes Tk 12 lakh loan from bank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A land fraud syndicate allegedly took a loan of Tk 12 lakh from a commercial bank after submitting fake documents against 8.75 decimals of land at Paikpara in the city's Mirpur area.

However, the Mirpur Branch of Al Arafah Islami Bank on September 27 announced to auction the land after serving loan repayment notice to the recipients for several times.

As the genuine owner of the land AM Shamsul Alam came to know the matter, he filed separate cases with a Dhaka court and Mirpur Police Station against two alleged frauds Nasir Uddin and Kawser Rashid in this connection.

One of the cases filed is pending with the Joint District Judge's Court, Dhaka. The other case is now being investigated by an official of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

Owner of the land said Nasir Uddin, in guise of a buyer, collected photocopies of the land's all documents from him when he had taken an initiative to sell out the land in 2001.

Later, the frauds adopted unfair means and changed the name of the owner through an affidavit. They also attached his photograph with the affidavit and took the loan. Four officials of the bank, including a former manager, were involved in this process.

AM Shamsul Alam said all these happened while he was abroad. On his return, he came to know the matter and filed the cases.

Boy missing

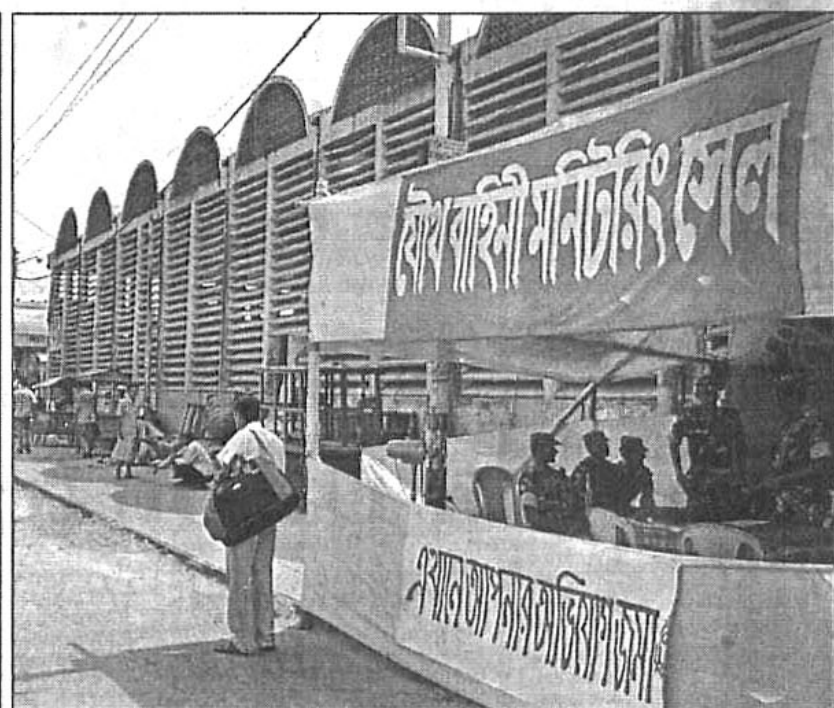
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amrul Hasan Chanchal, a 14-year-old boy of Netrakona, has been missing since September 25, says a press release.

Amrul, son of Dr Shamsul Huda (Renu Mia), went out of his house at Kadam Deuli in Barhatta, Netrakona, on the day to go to his private tutor's house but did not return home.

He is five feet tall. A general diary (GD) has been filed with Barhatta Police Station.

Anybody knowing his whereabouts has been requested to call at 01726091183 or 01552324137.



A monitoring cell of the joint forces has been set up at Gabtoli Bus Terminal in the city to check harassment of passengers by transport workers ahead of Eid. (Left) Home-bound passengers wait for bus at the bus terminal. Women members of many families are now leaving the capital for their home districts to avoid last-minute rush.

Two cattle thieves die in mob beating

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Two cattle thieves were lynched by angry mob at Madhupur in Tangail in the early hours of yesterday.

The dead were identified as Mohammad Ainal Miah, 30, son of Khalilur Rahman Khoka of Bekerona village and his younger brother Mohammad Ripon Miah, 25.

Police said a gang of cattle thieves entered Mohishmara village by a three-wheeler at around 3:30am in a bid to steal cattle.

Sensing their presence, the villagers surrounded the gang and caught two of the thieves and beat them mercilessly to death.

The rest of the thieves, however, managed to escape the scene with the three-wheeler, they said.

On information, Madhupur police rushed to the spot, recovered the bodies and sent them to Tangail General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

ANM Golam Mostofa, officer-in-charge (OC) of Madhupur Police Station, told The Daily Star that Ainal and Ripon were professional cattle thieves.

"Madhupur police had arrested them with four stolen cows on April 22 but they were released on bail recently," he added.

Road crashes kill 3, injure 73

STAR REPORT

At least three people were killed and 73 others injured in separate road accidents in Chittagong, Bagerhat, Brahmanbaria and Satkhira yesterday.

Staff correspondent from Chittagong reports: One person was killed and three were injured in a road accident on Chittagong-Hathazari road at Hathazari Road at Hathazari in the district yesterday.

The accident occurred when a truck from the city collided head-on with a CNG-run auto-rickshaw on Chittagong-Hathazari road at Madanhat Jamtala at around 8:00am, leaving CNG-passenger Liton Chowdhury, 30, dead on the spot and three others injured.

The injured were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Staff correspondent from Khulna adds: A woman was killed and 40 others were injured in a road accident at Joydih village under Mollahat upazila of Bagerhat yesterday.

The dead was identified as Afroza Begum, 30, wife of Shahadat Hossain of Khulna city.

Of the injured, 14 were rushed to Mollahat Upazila Health Complex.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound passenger bus from Khulna collided head-on with a minibus bound for Bagerhat from Mollahat upazila.

Drivers managed to escape while police seized the two busses from the spot.

Our correspondent from Brahmanbaria adds: One person was killed in a road accident on Brahmanbaria-Chittagong highway at Sultanpur village under Sadar upazila early in the morning yesterday.

The dead was identified as Md Kamal Uddin Ahmed, 35, of Sultanpur village under Sadar upazila.

The accident occurred when a speeding bus knocked Kamal's relative's house from Sultanpur village, leaving him dead on the spot.

Our correspondent from Satkhira says: At least 30 people were injured, 12 of them seriously, in a road accident on Tala-Paikgachha road near Mobarakpur in Tala upazila yesterday.

The injured are Alamgir, Tarak Biswas, Niranjana Das, Samsur Rahman, Niranjana Das, Kartik Biswas, Rajab Ali, Samsul Alam, Nasrin Sultana, Rabeya Khatun, Ayesha Begum, Nityananda Biswas, Sabur Sheikh, Samsul Alam, Solaiman, Bijon Bisas, Hafiza Khatun, Nasrin Sultana, Jabbar Gazi and Arshad Gazi.

Quoting local people police said the accident occurred when a Paikgachha-bound bus turned upside down and fell into a roadside ditch near Mobarakpur when the driver lost his control over the steering.

Of the injured, 12 were admitted to Tala, Paikgachha and Satkhira Sadar hospitals in critical condition.

India keeps close eye on Pak poll

AFP, New Delhi

India is closely monitoring the situation in Pakistan as President Pervez Musharraf looks set to win five more years in office from week-end elections, a senior official said Friday.

"We are keeping a close watch on the developments," a foreign ministry official who asked not to be named told AFP, adding the elections were an "internal matter" for Pakistan.

New Delhi has been silent on recent political developments in Islamabad, including pro-democracy protests and the deportation of former premier Nawaz Sharif.

Analysts predicted more instability after the election that Musharraf is expected to sweep on Saturday and "difficulties" in ties with India.

Musharraf, who seized power in a bloodless coup in October 1999, has been under pressure to hold elections and quit as head of the all-powerful army.

Last month, Musharraf said he would shed his uniform by November 15, provided he wins another five-year term.

Wilson John, analyst with the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi, noted that Musharraf had named former intelligence chief Lieutenant General Ashfaq Kiya to succeed him as head of the army.

With the president striking a deal with former prime minister Benazir Bhutto ahead of parliamentary polls early next year "what we see is a very complex situation emerging in Pakistan" vis a vis India, he said.

"Earlier, you had Musharraf as president and army chief and the pointman on the dialogue on Kashmir," John said, referring to a peace process between arch rivals India and Pakistan to resolve the decades-old dispute over the Himalayan region.

"Now there is a three-way division in the power structure and evolving a consensus on issues will be more difficult," he said, forecasting a hardening of negotiating positions at future peace talks.

"The negotiating space will be less and less as you have more players on stage."

CU Bhaskar, the former head of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses said India would have to "wait and see" how the new power structure in Pakistan worked.

"What I would like to see is whether the new equations lead to... a reduction of violence in Kashmir," he said, referring to New Delhi's charge that Islamabad supports an Islamic insurgency in the divided state.

Officials of both countries were expected to meet this month to try to boost cooperation against terrorism and reduce the risk of a nuclear war beginning by accident as part of the "composite dialogue" peace process.

An Indian official noted that "despite all the turmoil in Pakistan, there is a broad consensus that the dialogue with India should carry on. And that is a good sign."

3 sustain acid injuries in Bogra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Three people, including a minor girl, sustained acid burns in a dispute over divorce in Saradigor in Nandigram in Bogra on Thursday night.

The victims were identified as Shamima Akhter, 22, her mother Hasina and her nephew Ayesha Siddiqui, 5.

Source said Shamima and her husband Sikandar were exchanging heated words over a dispute on Thursday. At one point, she divorced his husband.

Being infuriated, Sikandar and his accomplice Muktar threw acid through the window of the room where the acid victims had been sleeping.

Locals added that Shamima's brother divorced Sikandar's sister few days back. Since then, Shamima had a cold relationship with her husband.

Officer-in-Charge of Nandigram Police Station said that a case has been filed against Sikandar and Muktar.

US forces kill 25 women, children in Iraqi air raid

AFP, Baghdad

US operations near the Iraqi city of Baquba yesterday killed at least 25 people the American military said were "criminals", but Iraqi officials said women and children were among the dead.

A US military statement said a strike targeted an Iranian-linked commander believed to be smuggling weapons across the border from Iran, accused by the Americans of fuelling the sectarian conflict in Iraq.

US aircraft killed the insurgents and destroyed two houses after a heavy freight near Baquba, 60km north of Baghdad, during which rebels fired rocket-propelled grenades, it said.

Iraqi defence ministry officials and witnesses said at least 17 Iraqis including women and children were killed in what appeared to be part of the same operations.

"Seventeen people were killed, 27 were wounded and eight are missing including women and children," a defence ministry official told AFP.

US helicopters attacked the village of Al-Jayzani, near the mainly Shia town of Al-Khalis, at

around 2 am (2300 GMT), destroying at least four houses and killing up to 25 people, witnesses said.

Ahmed Mohammed, 31, said he had travelled with 15 wounded from the area to the City Medical Hospital in Baghdad.

"There are 24 bodies on the ground in the village and 25 others wounded in Al-Khalis hospital," he told AFP.

US military spokesman Major Winfield Danielson said the site of their raid, also Friday morning, was southwest of Khalis.

"As for the operation in question, we have no reports that any Iraqi civilians were killed as a result of this operation," Danielson told AFP. "Coalition forces only engage hostile threats and take every precaution to protect innocent civilians."

The US statement said the target of the operation was a "Special Groups" commander believed to be associated with members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, Quds Force.

"Special Groups" is a US military term for what it says are secret Shia cells which wage acts of "terrorism" in Iraq with the financial and military backing of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards units.

Save life of acid victim Shamsul Huq

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) has appealed for help to save the life of an acid survivor, says a press release.

The victim, Shamsul Huq, who suffered serious acid burns in most parts of his body, is now undergoing treatment at the ASF.

He fell victim to acid attack in his sleep at his home at Galdighi village in Thakurgaon on July 7.

He was admitted to the ASF on July 10 and then shifted to City Hospital in Dhaka where he had been treated for two and a half months.

Presently, he is being treated at ASF and his condition is still critical. The cost of the treatment is also too high.

The ASF, which has already spent Tk 9 lakh on his treatment, has appealed to the affluent people to extend a helping hand to save his life.

Contributions can be sent to Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF), A/C No. 02-1702483-03, Standard Chartered Bank.

Md Sohrab Hossain



A mother has appealed for financial assistance for the treatment of her 13-year-old son who is suffering from leukaemia, says a press release.

Md Sohrab Hossain, a student of class five, is now undergoing treatment under the supervision of Prof MA Mannan at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (Bed No.-12, Block-D, 3rd floor).

According to doctors, Sohrab needs proper and prolonged treatment, which involves a huge amount of money.

But his mother Firoza Begum, a resident of Champanganagar village at Parshuram upazila in Feni, has already sold off almost all her property to meet the cost of the treatment.

She has now appealed to the generous people to extend a helping hand to save the life of her son.

Contributions can be sent to the following account: Firoza Begum, Savings A/C No. 16373, Sonali Bank, Porshuram Branch, Feni.

Interested persons can also contact Ashik Foundation, 114 Central Road, Dhanmondi for further information about the boy. Phone: 9673982 and 01717938021.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Residents of Mirhaziribagh in Jurain wait in a long queue to collect water from a water tanker of Dhaka Wasa yesterday. Acute water crisis has gripped the area for the last 15 days.

Child killed, 26 hurt in Philippines bombings

AFP, Manila

A child was killed and 26 people injured yesterday in two bomb blasts in the southern Philippines, the military said.

The bombings occurred within minutes of each other in Kidapawan City on Mindanao island.

The first bomb exploded under a crowded minibus killing an eight-year-old girl and injuring more than a dozen people, local brigade army commander colonel Pedro Soria told AFP.

He said a second bomb, planted at the side of the road near to the vehicle, exploded a few minutes later.

"We already have a suspect in custody," he told AFP without elaborating.

He said the bombings happened during the rush hour and "those injured were mainly students who were on their way home."



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

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

Highest temperature 36.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Mymensingh and lowest 24.6 degree Celsius at Cox's Bazar.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:41pm today and rises at 5:52am 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	35.0	27.4	74	65
Chittagong	32.0	25.8	90	92
Rajshahi	34.8	26.7	82	88
Khulna	35.3	27.0	86	78
Barisal	34.5	27.0	87	88
Sylhet	35.8	26.5	74	70
Cox's Bazar	32.5	24.6	80	80

'Pay RMG workers their arrears, bonus before Eid'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Textile Garment Sramik Federation yesterday urged the garment owners to pay the arrears and bonus of garment workers before the Eid-ul-Fitr, says a press release.

In a joint statement President of the Federation Advocate Mahbubur Rahman and General Secretary Bazlur Rashid Firoz said although the garment workers worked hard through out the month of Ramadan, many garment owners are not paying the workers duly. Finding no other alternatives, workers are staging demonstrations to press home their demands.

They also said that whenever the garment workers demonstrate to establish their rights, the government and garment owners sniff conspiracy.

The leaders also demanded implementation of the tripartite agreement among the garment owners, workers and the government.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

Financial News Network will organise a seminar on housing rights. Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 10:00am.

Focus group meeting

Ministry of Environment and Forests and The World Conservation Union (IUCN) will jointly organise a focus group meeting on 'Role of media in sustainable environmental governance'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 2:30pm.

Discussion

Bangladesh Magazine Journalists Association will hold a discussion on Ramadan. Venue: Public Library seminar room. Time: 4:00am.

Seminar

Equality and Justice Working Group organises a seminar on foreign loan and aid. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Art competition

Singapore Tourism Board organises a children's art competition on 'Singapore in my imagination'. Venue: Institute of Fine Arts. Time: 10:00am.

Inaugural ceremony

The inaugural ceremony of palliative care service of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) will be held. Venue: Milton Hall, BSMMU. Time: 9:30am.

Mehedi festival

Dhakabashi and National Press Club will jointly organise a mehedi festival. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:20am.

Launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of Heritage Foundation will be held. Venue: Heritage Restaurant, Gulshan. Time: 5:00pm.

Premiere show

The premiere show of the film 'Nisad' will be held. Venue: Biam auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Rotary Dhaka

The regular weekly meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka will be held. Venue: Green View Restaurant, Kurmitola Golf Club. Time: 4:30pm.

Rotary Dhaka North West

The regular weekly meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka North West will be held. Venue: Bashati Rainbow, Banani. Time: 4:30pm.

Death anniversary



Today is the seventh death anniversary of MA Rouf, former chairman of Bangladesh Mukti Joddha Sangsad, says a press release.

He was also a press secretary and former chief engineer of Public Works Department (PWD).

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Aftab Uddin Bhuiyan



Today is the sixth death anniversary of Aftab Uddin Bhuiyan, one of the organisers of the War of Liberation, a former member of the parliament and former parliamentary secretary, says a press release.

He was also the former acting president of Bangladesh National Lawyers' Association and founding president of Raypura Upazila unit of Awami League.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at Raypura sadar for the salvation of the departed soul.