



The Daily Star

Plus Rising Stars



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Donors urged to help in quick recovery of cyclone loss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Partners of the Global Facility for Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction (GFDRR) have appealed international donors to support accelerated recovery of the losses caused by Cyclone Sidr.

Ulla Tornaes, visiting Danish minister for development cooperation, disclosed this yesterday at a joint press briefing of Denmark and World Bank (WB), two of the contributing partners of GFDRR.

Denmark will grant \$2 million to GFDRR and the fund will be used here through the WB for improving disaster preparedness and priority recovery support in the medium-term, she said adding that Denmark has already donated \$1 million for emergency relief in Bangladesh.

In addition, Denmark will also donate \$1 million to ActionAid for strengthening community-level

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Right to information act soon: CA

He terms it a driving force in democracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terming free flow of information a driving force in democracy and good governance, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday expressed the hope that the government will soon formulate a right to information act.

"I hope the information and the law ministries would soon take a step for making this law effective," he said while inaugurating a convention styled Right to Information for a Democratic and Corruption-free Bangladesh.

Noting that the caretaker government would promulgate the act, Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain said the act however requires approval in parliament.

The journalists and civil society



Director Advocate Sultana Kamal, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam, Research Institute of Bangladesh Chairman Dr Shamsul Bari also spoke at the convention chaired by MJF Chairperson Syed Manzur Elahi.

Speaking as the chief guest, Fakhruddin Ahmed said there is a direct link between the flow of information and socioeconomic affluence.

"The easier the availability of information in a state, the higher is its stage of development. On the other hand, underdevelopment is directly related to corruption."

Besides ensuring public welfare, optimum utilisation of information reduces corruption in society, polity, economy and state machinery, he said, adding: "As a

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Law will take own course in trial of 2 former premiers: CA

UNB, Dhaka

The law will take its own course over the trial of the two detained former prime ministers, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday told visiting Danish minister for development cooperation.

"Here court is open, the

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Six more bodies of Sidr victims found in Bagerhat

UNB, Bagerhat

The official death toll from November 15 cyclone rose to 793 in Bagerhat as six more decomposed bodies were recovered in Morelganj and Sharankhola upazilas in 24 hours ending yesterday morning.

Local people recovered the dead

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RENTAL POWER PLANT TENDER Govt considers unfit bidders' striking offer

SHARIER KHAN

Various quarters are questioning the Power Cell's handling of the rental power bids as it is seriously considering offers from two inexperienced and incoherent local consortiums that should have been filtered out at the final stage of selection.

Sources said two different consortiums, Energy Prima, owned by Hosaf group, and Green Power, of the Lotus Kamal group, appear to be the lowest bidders in five or six out of eight rental power tenders. As per the Power Cell's criterion, these bidders do not qualify but their bids are seriously being considered because of "low price offers".

Only two foreign power companies, which are specialised in rental power, turned out lowest bidders in two spots where they did not face competition from these local consortiums.

The tender committee filed its report to the power ministry on seven rental power bids last week. It is currently evaluating the eighth bid on Fenchuganj. A top source pointed out that the ministry has not yet taken any decision on the first seven bids.

Sources said if inappropriate bidders are selected, the government's target to add 300 megawatt (MW) of power within the next summer on a three-year rental term might suffer. In the past, inappropriate selection of the Meghnaghat-2 project's contractor failed to produce positive results.

The Power Cell, under the power ministry, floated the rental power bids in October, drawing 13 offers from five companies in seven locations. On November 19, the cell held another tender to draw offers for the eighth location and received two more such offers.

Sources said the cell's tender

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Over 10,000 languishing in prisons abroad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 10,760 Bangladeshis are languishing in prisons or police custody in 15 foreign countries, said Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment.

Of them, 8,830 have been placed under prison or police custody, mostly for immigration rules violations, while 1,930 have been convicted of various crimes, according to a compilation of data disclosed

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Govt to import 1 lakh tonnes of fertiliser

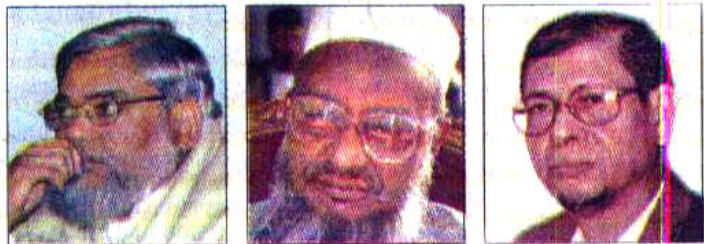
UNB, Dhaka

The government will import 1 lakh tonnes of fertiliser from Qatar and UAE to meet the growing demand for the essential farming input.

The Advisory Committee on

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Sedition case against Mojaheed, Quader Mollah, Shah Hannan



Ali Ahsan M Mojaheed Abdul Quader Mollah Shah Md Abdul Hannan

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered Tejgaon Police Station to register the sedition case filed with it (court) as a regular case against two top leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami and a former chairman of Islami Bank for their anti-liberation activities.

The accused are Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Assistant Secretary General Abdul Quader Mollah and Shah Md Abdul Hannan, ex-chairman of Islami Bank and a Jamaat sympathiser.

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Verdict draws sharp reaction

DU CORRESPONDENT

The example of sentencing four Rajshahi University teachers on charges of breaking the emergency power rules may have negative bearing on congenial academic atmosphere across the country, teachers and political leaders yesterday said.

The verdict has made Dhaka University teachers sceptical about

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TORCHING DGFI CAR Verdict in another case against RU teachers today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The verdict of the case against two Rajshahi University (RU) teachers and 12 others for torching a DGFI vehicle and assaulting a member of the intelligence agency during August 22 campus violence will be delivered today.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ruhul Amin will pronounce the verdict in presence of

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RU TEACHERS' CONVICTION Jurists see poor evidence, question govt neutrality

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The verdict sentencing four Rajshahi University (RU) teachers to two years' imprisonment was based on "poor" evidence and has raised questions about the caretaker government's neutrality in enforcing Emergency Power Rules (EPR) 2007, eminent jurists have observed.

Talking to The Daily Star, they said a good number of incidents have taken place so far violating the EPR, but the government has targeted university teachers only for prosecution.

"The judgment suffers from a lack of strict scrutiny of the oral evidence inasmuch as the conviction seems to be based on oral evidence of a single witness," Justice Ghulam Rabbani, former judge of Supreme Court Appellate Division, said.

"The learned magistrate ought to have noticed that the prosecution failed to produce any corroborative evidence and therefore he should not have relied on the un-

corroborative evidence. This is the rule of ordinary evidence," he said.

He said if the convicted teachers appeal with the higher court, the judgment will not sustain.

Questioning the government's impartiality in enforcing the EPR, Dr Shahdeen Malik said, "The prohibition on meetings, processions etc has clearly been enforced very selectively. We know of a good number of similar incidents that violate rule 3 of the EPR. Unfortunately, it seems that prominent and liberal teachers of the public universities have been targeted for prosecution and now punishment."

"This clearly does not indicate even-handed, impartial or neutral enforcement of rules, but targeted persecution. It is clear to me that most people will not blame the teachers for any wrongdoing but find faults with the government for intentional punishment of a select few," Malik added.

He said, "I hope that people in the authority will assume that by

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CYCLONE SIDR

In solidarity with the people affected by tropical cyclone Sidr, Western Union is introducing

a ZERO TRANSFER FEE*

on all money transfer transactions from **Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Italy and UK to Bangladesh** from **1 December to 31 December 2007** and from **USA from 27 November to 31 December 2007.**

We at Western Union would like to express our deepest sadness and sympathy to all our customers who have family and loved ones affected by the recent tragic events.

The Western Union Foundation is also supporting the victims by making a donation of US\$ 100,000 to UNICEF.

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