



Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman Lt Gen (Retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury speaks at a view exchange meeting at Shilpakala Academy auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right is DIG Nazmul Huque and on his left is Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Ekram Ahmed.

## Mainul asked to withdraw comment on CHT acc ord

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens in a statement yesterday demanded withdrawal of the comment of Law Adviser Mainul Hossain, who on December 2 said Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord could be reviewed.

Expressing deep concern over the comment they said by attending the discussion which was organised by a controversial organisation, the adviser has lost his neutrality.

"Parbatya Chattagram Samu Odhikar Andolon is a platform founded by Wadud Bhuiyan, who is now behind the bars on charge of corruption," said the statement.

The followers of the organisation attacked Dr Kamal Hossain during the tenure of last government, it added.

Signatories to the statement included Justice KM Sobhan, Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Selina Hossain, Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Haq Inu, Pankaj Bhattacharya, MM Akash, Prof Ajoy Roy, Prof Rashid-e-Mahbub, Rokeya Kabir, Prof HKS Arefin, Prof Dalem Chandra Barman, Mesbha Kamal and Mafizur Rahman.

## Developer held on charge of cheating

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The managing director of a real estate company was arrested in the city on Tuesday in connection with cheating buyers of flats.

Dhanmondi police arrested Khairul Hasan Khokon, MD of Al Hasan Developers Ltd, after Mohammad Wahidur Rahman, an expatriate in London, filed a case against him in this regard. Wahidur Rahman bought a flat of 'Holy Air Palace' constructed by Al Hasan Developers Ltd.

Monwar Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Dhanmondi Police Station, yesterday said two more victims also contacted him to file cases against Khokon in this regard.

Meanwhile, complainant Wahidur Rahman told The Daily Star that the hired goons of Khokon were threatening him for filing case against him. He also lodged a general diary with Dhanmondi Police Station in this connection on Wednesday night.

Besides, Rifza Biswas, also a buyer of flat, told The Daily Star through an email that the company was dillydallying in handing over her flat although she had paid the money.

Police said although the victim buyers paid the money for the flats according to the agreement, the developer company is yet to hand over the flats to them.

Moreover, the company is selling out the flats to others at a higher rate.

## One shot dead by robbers in Chittagong

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Robbers shot one person to death, injured another and looted valuables worth Tk 1.5 lakh, including Tk 60,000 in cash, at Fatikchhari upazila in Chittagong in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim was identified as Abdul Gafur, 40, while his wife Rowshan Ara is undergoing treatment at a local clinic.

Police arrested one Md Khalil, 28, in this connection.

## Chehlum



Chehlum of Gazi Sadequul Islam Khosru, former managing director of Sonargaon Pan Pacific Hotel and General Manager of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, will be held at his Shyamoli residence in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

He was also a poet and an actor. On the occasion, Qurankhwani and doha mahfil will also be held.

His relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programme to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

## 'Check govt officials' activities to end corruption'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Corruption cannot be checked by bringing only the political leaders to justice unless the activities of government officials and employees are also looked into and checked, said the speakers at a view-exchange meeting yesterday.

The meeting on the ongoing anti-corruption drive was organised by Dhaka district administration at Shilpakala Academy auditorium in the city.

A large number of schoolteachers, NGO members and government officials including Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman Lt Gen (Retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury were present at the meeting.

### MANIK SAHA MURDER

## Supplementary charge sheet submitted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Inspector Chittya Ranjan Pal of Detective Branch of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) submitted a supplementary charge sheet in Journalist Manik Saha murder case to court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on Wednesday.

The number of chargesheeted accused now stands at 13, including armed cadre of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP Janajuddho) Hye Islam alias Kachi.

Manik Saha, Khulna Correspondent of The New Age and a stringer of BBC, was killed in a bomb attack on January 15 in 2004 near Khulna Press Club.

According to supplementary charge sheet, the accused are Sumon, Bulbul, Akram, Ali Akbar, Sattar, Belal, Omar Faruque, Mithul, Shawkat Hossain, BDR Altaf, Mahfuz, Sarwar and Hye

Speakers at the meeting called for solving unemployment problem, ensuring education for all, bringing cadres of different political parties to book, making the job of bureaucrats more accountable and keeping the prices of essentials within the reach of mass people to put an end to corruption.

"December is the month of dreams as well as fulfilling those dreams. We must take this month as a month of resisting corruption," said Mashhud Chowdhury.

"Punishing only the political leaders will not help eradicate corruption from the society. Corrupt government officials and employees must also be brought to justice," said Ziarat Ali, a schoolteacher from Dhamrai.

## ACC targets grafts

FROM PAGE 1

"I think the activities of the commission will assume a new dimension as we are informed of allegations against different service oriented organisations."

"Investigations against such organisations will begin by the end of December," he said without elaborating.

The ACC sources say it is a much-talked issue for decades that people don't get proper services and are rather harassed due to corruption and irregularities in the government's utility service sector.

On the other hand, many officials and employees from top tier to bottom level of those institutions embraced corruption and became rich. But hardly anyone was ever called to account to ensure proper service to the public.

The sources say power, water, gas supply offices and telephone departments of the government are known as the safe havens of corruption, which is a common perception of the people.

At the beginning of its drive against institutional graft, the ACC would focus on probe into corruption in Power Development Board (PDB), Dhaka Power Supply Authority (DPSA), Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), Telegraph & Telephone Board, Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Ltd, as sources say.

An ACC official says the police force is also known as a corrupt government department, which is responsible to provide services to the general people.

"Unfortunately, there are innumerable number of allegations against the police department that people don't get proper services and behaviour from the police and are rather victimised, harassed or suffered by them," adds another ACC official seeking anonymity.

"There are many organisations where graft at individual level has turned gradually into institutional corruption," he observes.

"Many other organisations in the

public sector and private sector as well are known as corrupt organisations. We know that in comparison some organisations are less corrupt than the others," says a high official asking not to be named.

"Considering this, we will set our priority as to which organisations should be targeted first," the official adds.

Another ACC official says they have identified a meter reader in power sector possessing huge amount of movable and immovable property, which does not match with his "known" source of income.

"This meter reader has made his property through a nexus with the power subscribers year after year and it's an open secret."

"But the higher authorities don't do anything against him as there is a chain in between the meter readers and other employees and officials who also take a share of the ill-gotten money."

ACC sources say they would conduct their investigation in accordance with the work pattern of an organisation. For instance, if an organisation's task is related to procurement, the commission will check transparency in its procurement process.

The commission will also examine the entire work process of an organisation and loopholes, if any, in its system. Considering the pattern the ACC will watch the function of the organisation.

"We will check whether the organisation has its in-built anti-corruption methods and whether it checks its staffs' assets or not," says an ACC official.

He says the commission will not only go for legal actions if it finds corruption but also recommend that the government take necessary steps to reduce institutional graft.

After the military-backed caretaker government assumed power, task forces of the National Coordination Committee to combat crime and corruption kicked off the first ever crackdown on institutionalised corruption in government agen-

cies. The move came as part of the government's ongoing massive anti-corruption drive being carried out countrywide since February against high-profile graft suspects.

Two-decade-old Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) is the first target of the drive against institutionalised corruption introduced as the second phase of the ongoing anti-graft campaign in an effort to bring necessary reforms to the government agency for making it a service-oriented vibrant organisation.

Later the task forces started work in Dhaka City Corporation, Public Works Department, and Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Department.

They are also working at the Chittagong Port and Zia International Airport.

## €3 lakh French grants for Sidr victims

UNB, Dhaka

French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs granted 3,00,000 euro to help families affected by Cyclone Sidr.

French government, citizens and companies are mobilising altogether around 1.4 million euro to help the Sidr victims.

French Chargé d' Affaires Jean Romnicianu announced it at a press conference at Hotel LaVinci yesterday.

The grant will be channelled through 'Friendship', a non-governmental organization to help the affected people. Friendship has been on site since November 16 and has been working on health, sanitation, relief and rehabilitation.

Runa Khan, Executive Director of Friendship and Dr Régis Garrigue of Help Doctors were present at the conference.

## Empower poor through IT access

FROM PAGE 1

Mission 2011 a success, which can usher in a new era in the country's march towards progress.

The theme of the mission 2011 is "Building a Sustainable ICT-based Information and Knowledge System for the Poor and Marginalised".

The aim of the mission is to set up 40,000 telecentres all over Bangladesh by 2011, raising the number from existing 800.

Telecentre is a public place where people can have access to computers, internet and other technologies.

Telecentre exists in almost every country although they sometimes go by different names like village knowledge centre, infocentre, community technology centre, community multimedia centre, information kiosk. In Bangladesh, telecentre are called Community Multimedia Centre, Community Information Centre, Rural Knowledge Centre and so on.

The telecentre helps community members in different ways—like learning and developing skill, creating local content and capturing local knowledge, providing access to physicians and other distant professionals, overcoming isolation, bridging the digital divide and reaching out to the youth.

Science and ICT Adviser Tapan Chowdhury, UNDP Resident repre-

sentative Renata L. Desallien, Chairman of BTRC Maj Gen (rd) Manjurul Alam, Executive Committee member of Global Knowledge Partnership and fellow of Sawminathan Research Foundation, India, Prof Subbiah Arunachalam, and senior programme officer of IDRC/telecentre.org Asia Region Dr Basheerhamed Shadrach also spoke at the function.

Chairperson of Bangladesh Telecentre Network Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury presided over the inaugural session and Vice-Chairman of Bangladesh University Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury presented the keynote paper.

Distinguished researchers, IT experts, academics and telecentre practitioners were among others present.

Addressing the function, the CA hoped that Mission 2011 would play a significant role in unleashing the immense power of ICT for the country's national development and help achieve MDGs in the medium term and a poverty-free Bangladesh in the long run.

Highlighting immense prospects of knowledge economy, he mentioned that India currently earns more than \$50 billion annually from their software services alone.

Besides, e-governance programmes have brought about dramatic improvements in many

countries of South Asia and Southeast Asia as well as in transition economies.

The CA said export earning from knowledge economy of Bangladesh is also growing but it remains far behind its actual potential.

He said the poor have an additional entry now to their list of deprivation. The better-off urban people are benefiting from the ICT-based new economy, but the poor, disadvantaged and rural population do not have access to the information super-highway. "We need to remove this barrier and empower these people by providing them with access to new technologies."

The CA said a solution to this problem lies in a network of telecentres, which will provide access and support to rural communities.

He expressed his confident that the telecentres will not only minimise the digital divide by improving access to technology but will also provide invaluable support through appropriate contents and advisory services in the livelihood struggle of large number of the country's population.

He said ICT can undoubtedly play a vital role in the country's development endeavours and a well-planned and well-laid-out ICT network all over the country will speed up development on many fronts.

## Kuakata left in Sidr ruins

FROM PAGE 20

ongoing peak season Kuakata is yet to receive its most cherished visitors -- tourists.

Hotels are marking zero occupancy; shops in the local markets are empty of merchandise and the famous dry fish industry is yet to rebuild its infrastructure.

The loss of livestock and poultry in surrounding villages was such that the local markets have no supply of chickens since November 15.

Every day buyers move around the market waiting for farmers from surrounding villages to arrive with some products to sell. As soon as someone arrives with a chicken or vegetables, it is instantly grabbed by eagerly waiting buyers.

Tahmina Selim Nila, who runs Hotel Nilanjana, one of the largest hotels in Kuakata, says they had no tourists since the mega-cyclone hit.

Parjatan Hotel, which is usually booked for the entire season, is now being empty for weeks.

Other small hotel owners are in the same predicament. While staying at an LGED guesthouse it was found that the remaining 16 rooms are empty.

"Apart from one or two groups of relief workers, we have had no occupancy at all this peak season. I suppose tourism is going to be very badly affected this year," Nila says.

The hoteliers have not reported arrival of any local tourists, leave alone anyone from abroad.

Immediate relief work is not a priority now for many locals. They nevertheless stress the need for starting rehabilitation as soon as possible so that small traders and other businesses can regain their footing and revive the crucial tourism industry.

Cyclone Sidr has shattered Kalam Akand's dreams. Kalam owned a grocery store on the Bay side of Kuakata's embankment. Now this thirty-five-year old man spends his days in search of aid so that he can rebuild his business.

"My lifetime savings are gone; if I don't receive some sort of help from outside it will be impossible for me to restart. Every business outside the embankment has been washed away in waves, the future looks very bleak," he says.

Rahman Mia, Tayebur Rahman, Ripon Khalifa, Al Amin and Masud --

all rent out sun-loungers on Kuakata beach -- are now struggling to rebuild their businesses. They said the surge took away all their materials including the parasols, benches and mattresses.

"We are now trying to secure soft loans, but since we don't operate with any installations the authorities are reluctant to offer any financial assistance to us," says Al Amin.

Kuakata's famous dry fish industry is possibly the worst affected in the entire region.

Traders export dry fish to Hong Kong, Singapore and other countries in Asia, as well as exploiting the lucrative domestic market. Operating from warehouses along the beach, the traders say they are now totally ruined.

"Just the other day there was a false tsunami warning so we had to move our stock to a safer place, which cost us a lot of money. When Sidr warning came, most of us did not take it seriously; our losses are in crores of taka," says Abu Khalifa.

Khalifa, who lost his entire stock along with his warehouse, estimates his loss to be around Tk 10 lakh.

Like Khalifa dry fish traders Khalil, Azmat Ali, Hatem, Dulal, Kuddus Mreedha, Yusuf Mreedha are unsure of their future with no means to restart their businesses. Many of these traders are now forced to consider taking high-interest loans from private lenders.

However, fishermen, dry fish traders and other small businesspeople have initiated their own efforts with whatever they have to recover from the colossal loss.

FOREST Department of Forest officials in Alipur say over 50 percent of the 3,000-acre forest in Kuakata has been partially or totally destroyed.

Abdul Haque, range officer for Mohipur, says they would leave the regeneration of the forest up to nature. "We are only removing trees which fell on the roads. Otherwise the actual forest will not be touched; within a few years the forest will be restored," he hopes.

an important role in improving soil fertility, he notes.

The Kuakata Eco-Park project, which is scheduled to be completed this year, has been severely affected. Besides damaged plants and trees, the cyclone brought down the boundary wall.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE Abdul Barel Molla, chairman of Latachakri union, which covers almost the whole beach area, tells The Daily Star the upazila army coordination office sought a list of affected fishermen and trawler owners yesterday.

"I don't know how much they are going to pay to each of the affected," he says.

On assisting the dry fish traders, he says he asked the UP members to prepare a list but they are yet to submit any.

Barek says he did not receive any instruction from the government regarding assistance to the hoteliers and restaurant owners.

### SUNSHADE COLLAPSE

## Female garment worker dies in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was killed when a sunshade of an under-construction residential building of the staff of Dhaka Commerce College at Mirpur fell on her yesterday.

The deceased, identified as Marium, 40, worked at a garment factory at Mirpur-10.

Witnesses said a big portion of the sunshade of the second floor of the building collapsed on a tin-roofed house at the sweeper colony in Rainkholia area at around 8:45am.

Marium, who was alone in the house, sustained severe injuries as the sunshade and her house's roof fell on her.

Locals rushed her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries an hour later.



Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman hands over a cheque to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for the victims of cyclone Sidr at his office yesterday.



Dhaka Bank Chairman Khondoker Monir Uddin hands over a payment order of Tk 50 lakh to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the latter's office for the cyclone-hit people on December 4.



Pubali Bank Managing Director Helal Ahmed Chowdhury hands over a cheque for Tk 50 lakh to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for the cyclone-affected people at the latter's office on December 5.



Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters' Association (BFFEA) President Kazi Belayet Hossain hands over a cheque for Tk 10 lakh to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the latter's office for cyclone-affected people recently.



Animal Health Companies Association of Bangladesh (AHCAB) President ARM Tayebur Rahman hands over a cheque for Tk 3 lakh to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for the cyclone victims at the latter's office in the city on December 2 while AHCAB Secretary General Momin Ud Daula looks on.



Dhaka Bank Managing Director Shahed Noman hands over a payment order of Tk 5.10 lakh to Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed for the cyclone victims at Old Officers' Mess in Dhaka Cantonment on December 4.



Sri Lanka-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SLBCCI) has donated 200 packs of household utensils for cyclone-affected families. High Commissioner V Krishnamoorthy hands over the relief goods to Food and Disaster Management Secretary Dr Mohammad Aiyub Mia on December 4.



## Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said in a forecast.

Highest temperature 30.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 13.2 degrees Celsius at Ishwardi and Jessore.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm today and rises at 6:29am tomorrow.

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

| City/Town   | Temperature<br>in celsius |      | Humidity in<br>percentage |         |
|-------------|---------------------------|------|---------------------------|---------|
|             | Max                       | Min  | Morning                   | Evening |
| Dhaka       | 28.2                      | 15.8 | 76                        | 69      |
| Chittagong  | 27.2                      | 18.0 | 78                        | 64      |
| Rajshahi    | 27.6                      | 14.5 | 92                        | 78      |
| Khulna      | 27.4                      | 15.7 | 88                        | 73      |
| Barisal     | 28.6                      | 15.5 | 90                        | 77      |
| Sylhet      | 27.0                      | 15.7 | 59                        | 68      |
| Cox's Bazar | 30.5                      | 18.2 | 60                        | --      |