

Take effective steps to reduce greenhouse gas emission

G-8 leaders urged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

South Asian civil society leaders yesterday called on G-8 leaders to enter into legally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80 percent or risk wiping out any developments in meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

Primary and Mass Education Adviser Rasheda K Choudhury said developed country leaders, not the poor, are in need of education about the far-reaching effects of global warming as they have not taken adequate action to mitigate it.

They were speaking at the concluding ceremony of the two-day South Asian Civil Society Consultation on 'Climate Change: Bali to Hokkaido what next?' in the city, where civil society experts and activists from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka brainstormed about possible courses of action.

They called for climate change

to top the agenda of the G-8 meeting in Hokkaido, a gathering of leaders of the eight most powerful countries in the world.

In a joint communiqué the regional civil society groups said, "Climate change is an emergency and if this crisis is not tackled urgently, all other development efforts in coming decades risk being wiped out."

In their recommendation, the groups called for the UN climate change process to a "legally binding target of a minimum of 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050."

They also called for greater attention to climate change concerns of the poor, equitable targets, eco-friendly policies from national governments and multilateral agencies, and for rich countries to pay for climate-change adaptation in least developed countries.

The joint communiqué also urged the World Bank to raise investments in renewable energy and find ways to reduce green-

house gas emissions.

It was undersigned by Indian group Don't Break the Promise, Enough is Enough from Pakistan, People's forum on MDGs from Bangladesh, Citizen's Campaign for Democracy, Social Transformation from Nepal, Sri Lanka's UN Friendship Organisation and Sanayee Development Organisation in Afghanistan.

Adviser Rasheda said regional cooperation on climate change is a must as "We must have our own house in order" before others come and say it.

But she said that G8 leaders in Hokkaido must show that they can deliver on their promises to effectively mitigate climate change and asked developed country governments not to be passive onlookers.

She added, however, "Our masses are more aware than most of the effects of climate change because they live through it. Who need to be made aware the most

are global leaders who continue to neglect the issue."

Foreign Secretary Tuhid Hossain lamented the domination by developed countries of the Bali conference that was reflected in the 'watered-down' resolution.

He also called for a 'Technology Transfer Board' like the existing 'Adaptation Board' to ensure that a greater number of adaptation funds and technology go towards countries that need them the most.

Tuhid also said that a post-Kyoto agreement cannot stifle the development potential of developing countries, but also require a legally binding framework to mitigate climate change.

Chair of Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Asian Development Bank Country Director Hua Du, acting World Bank Country Director Edzardo Campos, Indian High Commissioner Pinak Chakravarty and Japanese Ambassador Masayuki Inoue also spoke.

LDP demands polls in June

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) yesterday demanded holding of next parliamentary election in June.

The demand was made by LDP President Col (ret) Oli Ahmed while addressing a press conference at the party head office at Magbazar in the city.

The press conference was organised to evaluate one year of the caretaker government.

"Some people say that is not possible to hold election in June as it is the month of rainy season. But it is not true as there are instances that elections were held in the country in June and September," said Oli.

"All confusions about next election will be removed if the government declares the specific date for it," he added.

Oli criticised the Election Commission for its initiative to redraw the boundaries of parliamentary constituencies saying that it will create new crisis and delay the election.

He urged the government to announce the date of withdrawing emergency and lifting ban on indoor politics across the country.

Oli also urged the authorities concerned to disqualify war criminals, corrupts and black money holders from taking part in the election.

He however hailed the caretaker government for the separation of judiciary, anti-corruption drive and reforms in Public Service Commission.

CEDAW Discussion on alternative report preparation

A discussion on Cedaw alternative report preparation focusing on violence against women was held at the Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday, says a press release.

The alternative report preparation is a collective effort of many organisations led by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Nari Pokkho, Step Towards Development, Ain O Shalish Kendra, Women for Women and BNWIA.

Manusher Jonno Foundation organised the meeting to share information related to violence against women among partner and other organisations working at the grassroots level for preparation of Cedaw (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) report.

Shaheen Anam, executive director, Manusher Jonno Foundation, said it is necessary to collect information about this issue from all organisations, especially those working at the grassroots levels, and link it up with national and international efforts.

It will help provide a complete picture of the situation and give recognition to the activities of small organisations, she added.

Rina Roy, director, Rights, MJE, presented the objectives of the meeting while Maheen Sultan, member, Nari Pokkho, shared the format for reporting and elaborated on how different organisations could provide correct and authentic information.

Forty-eight participants from 25 national and local organisations took part in the discussion.



Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus speaks at a reception accorded to him by Bangladeshi expatriates in Austin, Texas, on Sunday.

Strengthen 'new political force' trying to move country forward

Says Prof Yunus at reception in Texas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus called on the people to support and strengthen the 'new political force' which he said was trying to build a new trend after 1/11.

Currently there are two forces in politics -- one group comprising old leaders trying to return the country to pre-1/11 situation and another group comprising both old and new leaders trying to move the country forward, he said at a reception accorded to him by Bangladeshi expatriates in Austin, Texas, on Sunday.

He also called on the people to banish the old forces trying to return the country to pre-1/11 situation.

Prof Yunus is currently on a tour of the US to publicise his latest book

titled 'Creating a world without poverty: Social business and the future of capitalism'. An IT firm established by expatriate Bangladeshis organised the reception ceremony, reports News World.

Prof Yunus said the new political force has the support of people who are the source of power. "We all have to support them for the sake of the country's future," he added.

He said vested quarters had pushed the country into uncertainty for their political gains, but 1/11 brought relief to the people.

Now efforts are going on to move Bangladesh forward despite hundreds of limitations, he added.

Earlier, Prof Yunus attended a book signing ceremony in Austin where over 600 people gathered to buy his book.

Book on history of Bangladesh in UK launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A book titled 'Kalapanir Haatchhoni: Bilete Bangalee Ithas' by eminent researcher Golam Murshid was launched in the city yesterday.

Noted historian Prof Salahuddin Ahmed unveiled the cover of the book at the Liberation War Museum.

Speaking on the occasion the author said, "As I have been living in England for a long time and I have the opportunity to observe the Bangladeshis living there closely, I felt the necessity of writing their history."



Participants at a publication ceremony hold copies of a book titled 'Kalapanir Haatchhoni: Bilete Bangalee Ithas' by Golam Murshid at Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday. From left are Prof Sirajul Islam, Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, Prof Salahuddin Ahmed and the author.

A soul expansive in creative dimensions

FROM PAGE 1

In Selim Al-Deen worked, frenziedly, a tortured soul. The vicarious nature of his sufferings, the identification with the social milieu he dealt with, was perhaps initially shaped in childhood as he went looking for books to read. Nothing else mattered. As a child in a family on the move (his father was in government service), Al-Deen fortified his reading with the experiences he came across. And that was when direct association with people together with his wide, ever-widening, reading led to the evolution that was to propel him to the heights. By the time he entered university, he had, he noted, read all the major works straddling the world's greatest literary traditions he could get his hands on. And that was in 1966, a seminal year for Bengalis as politically they were poised to venture out on a search for a new, definitively nationalist identity. Selim Al-Deen would not be left out of that journey toward national self-assertion. He found in Munier Chowdhury the inspiration that he needed in his efforts to create images and deliver a new message. But then the guru died, murdered by men with little understanding of the place of aesthetics in life. Like so many other idealistic young men at the time, Al-Deen forked out of the tragic end of men like Munier Chowdhury and the rise of the free Bangladesh state a profound reason to carry on the struggle in all the ambience of new-found freedom.

And that was the moment when Selim Al-Deen threw in his lot with a whole new crowd of Bengali

young men, all as ardent as he, into reshaping theatre in the country. It was a new ethos that came into the cultural consciousness when in 1972 these young spurred the group theatre movement on with the formation of Natyachakra.

Al-Deen had his peers -- Nasiruddin Yusuf, Al Mansur, Raisul Islam Asad, Khairul Alam Shabui, Habibul Hasan and others -- to add meat to the enterprise. The result was, if one were to put it in safe mode, democratic militancy that would reinvent the entirety of the drama spectrum in Bangladesh. Natyachakra was more than a forum for writing plays, for these young men. They also plunged into the sheer joy of acting out the roles they created in the plays. And then comes the story of Dhaka Theatre. Al-Deen, like everyone else and fired by the urge to create endlessly, joined hands with Nasiruddin Yusuf and pushed the machinery of drama ahead. The results were electrifying. And where specifics mattered, Selim Al-Deen's were based on the satires he sketched of the contemporary social scene. An observation of Kitkonkhola, Keramat Mangal, Hat Hadai and Chaka is but a study of the profundity of character he brings into his plays.

There was modernity in Al-Deen's approach to the literary. But it was modernity that did not leave cultures submerged in the shadow of other cultures. His early works, he used to say, were rather influenced by Sartre and Camus. And yet he possessed the liberality of heart to acknowledge (and this was in the

early stages, in the late 1960s) that while western drama could serve as a basis for his creations, the peculiarity of circumstance that such drama held forth could not always be transferred to an interpretation of life in Bangladesh. And so he moved on, if not away. Epic realism defined such plays as Bashon, Saifulmulk Badiuzzaman and Keramat Mangal. In such productions as Joiboti Konyar Mon, it was the katha-natya folklore tradition that underpinned his thoughts.

Selim Al-Deen was an extraordinary man even by the standards of the times in which he made his foray into the world of writing and theatre. At a time when young men nurtured ambitions of a typical middle class sort, of climbing the greasy pole of material prosperity, he convinced himself he would be a writer. He was not yet twenty when he made his choice known. He moved on, to build his own canvas of drama. His plays have gone out to the world, in translation. In his classes as a teacher of drama, he remained the epitome of contemporary Bengali thought. It was always the roots of Bengali culture he stressed, those that would ensure for it a place in the realm of global literature.

In Selim Al-Deen's death, it is those roots which have come by a bad tremor. Our tributes go out to a soul that was as comprehensive as it was forever expansive in its creative dimensions.

(Selim Al-Deen, dramatist, writer and teacher, was born on 18 August 1949 and died on 14 January 2008)

ACC to submit charge sheet against Taimur, Helaluzzaman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday approved submitting charge sheet against detained former BRTC chairman Taimur Alam Khandaker and former BNP lawmaker Helaluzzaman Talukder Lalul on charges of taking bribe and amassing wealth illegally beyond their known sources of income.

The ACC also approved issuing notice on former lawmaker Ilias Ali asking him to submit statement of wealth.

This was stated by ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal at a routine press briefing at the ACC headquarters in the city.

The charge sheet against Taimur Alam Khandaker will be submitted on charge of taking Tk 25 lakh in bribe.

ACC Deputy Director Golam Mostofa filed the case with Paltan Police Station on August 15 accusing the BNP leader Taimur of receiving Tk 25 lakh in bribe from the owner of Nikunja Model Centre in 2006.

In another charge sheet Talukder and his wife Shamsunnahar Jamal have been accused of accumulating Tk 43,63,904 beyond their known sources of income.

Diplomats hail rural dev model

A 20-member delegation of defence attaches and high-level officials of India, Pakistan, China, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Japan embassy in Dhaka visited the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) in Comilla yesterday, says a press release.

The Director General (Current Charge), BARD M Khairul Kabir, welcomed the delegation and presented a video on BARD activities before them.

During the discussion the team said that the rural development model and other programmes of BARD were very successful and praiseworthy in developing the socio-economic condition of the rural people.

Milan Kanti Bhattacharjee, joint director, BARD, presented the programme while Dr Md Shafiqul Islam, also a joint director, BARD, coordinated the programme.

The directors of deferent divisions of BARD and Colonel Sabir Ahmed psc, acting commander, 44 Infantry Brigade, Comilla Cantonment was also present on the occasion.



Death anniversary

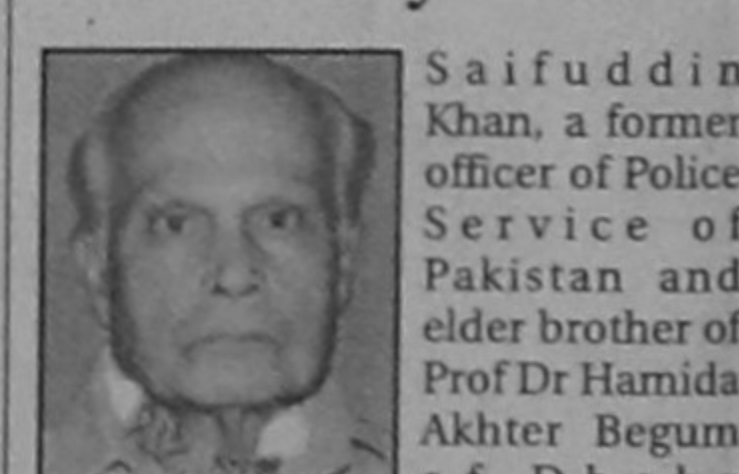
Today is the 4th death anniversary of Manik Chandra Saha, journalist and human rights activist, says a press release.

Manik Saha, staff correspondent of the daily Sangbad, Khulna-based stringer of BBC and former president of the Khulna Press Club (KPC), was killed in a bomb explosion in front of the Khulna Press Club.

KPC, Khulna Union of Journalists (KUJ) and Manik Saha Smriti Parishad chalked out elaborate programmes to mark the day.

A memorial meeting will also be held at Moni Singh-Farhad Memorial Trust in the city today.

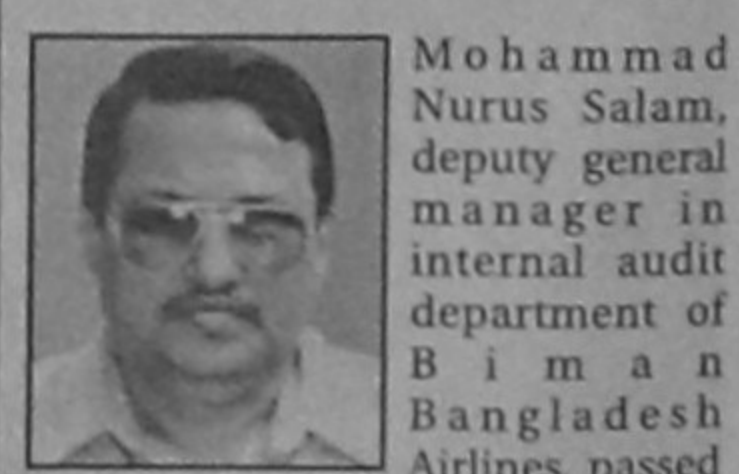
Obituary



Saifuddin Khan, a former officer of Police Service of Pakistan and elder brother of Prof Dr Hamida Akhter Begum of Dhaka University and Ekushey Padak winning singer late Anwar Uddin Khan, passed away at Shahabuddin Medical College Hospital in the city on Sunday at the age of 81, says a press release.

His quikhwani will be held after Asr prayers at Banani (House No-58, Road no-10, Block-D) in the city today.

Mohammad Nurul Salam



Mohammad Nurul Salam, deputy general manager in internal audit department of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, passed away due to complications in operation of brain tumor at a city hospital yesterday at the age of 55, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, two sons and a good number of admirers to mourn his death.

Annual sports for autistic children held

Autism Welfare Foundation (AWF) organised an annual sports competition for the autistic children at Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Noted sports personalities Jubaida Raman Nilu, Kamrunnahar Dana, Rakibul Hasan and Sheikh Hashem Ali and singers Fahmida Nabi and Mehreen were present on the occasion while Dr Anupam Sen and Abdun Nur Tushar were the commentators.

Inaugurating the competition, former adviser Prof Sofia Rahman said, "It is necessary to provide the autistic children with both indoor and outdoor games facilities for their mental and physical growth."

Former national cricketer Rakibul Hasan also assured AWF of all-out support.

Dr Rawnak Hafiz, president of AWF, also spoke on the occasion.

Fire at jute mill

UNB, Narsingdi

A huge quantity of jute, jute goods and machinery burned down in a fire at United Meghna Chandpur Jute Mill in Narsingdi yesterday.

An electrical short-circuit sparked off the fire at the Meghna division of the mill at around 1:00pm, fire brigade sources said.

Receiving information, fire fighters from Narsingdi, Madhabdi and Polish rushed to the spot and put out the blaze at about 3:00pm with the help of local people.

The mill authorities claimed that valuables worth around Tk 1 crore were destroyed in the fire.

CPD

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Go-To Think Tanks report that identifies some of the leading public policy research organisations, Bangladesh secured the 25th position among 25 countries with the largest number of think tanks.

According to the report the US has the highest number of think tanks having 1,776 of them, followed by the UK with 283.

Other countries that made it to the list of having the largest number of think tanks include Germany ranking the 3rd with 187, France 4th with 162, India 5th with 122, Russia 6th with 104, Japan 7th with 103, Argentina 8th with 100, Canada 9th with 94, and Italy 10th with 87 think tanks.

The report mentioned that there were 5,080 think tanks in the world in 2007, 1,924 or 37.87 percent of which were surveyed for the report in North America, while 1,198 or 23.58 percent were surveyed in Western Europe, 601 or 11.83 percent in Asia, 483 or 9.51 percent in Eastern Europe, 408 or 8.03 percent in Latin America, 274 or 5.39 percent in Africa, and 192 or 3.78 percent in the Middle East.

The report said the boom in think tanks came mainly due to the information revolution, the end of government monopoly on information, the current complexity and technical nature of policy problems which has made decision making more difficult, expansion in the size of governments, globalisation, and the growth of state and non-state actors.

The report also mentioned, there is however a declining trend in establishing new think tanks worldwide, the reasons for which are political and regulatory environment hostile to think tanks and NGOs, a change in funding priorities for think tanks by public and private donors, underdeveloped institutional capacities which decrease the survival rate, and increased competition from advocacy organisations and for-profit consulting firms and electronic media.



Autistic children take part in an event at an annual sports competition organised by Autism Welfare Foundation (AWF) at Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex in the city yesterday.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar
The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and Eastern Bank Ltd jointly organise a seminar on present and future prospect of SME-banking in Bangladesh. Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 6:00pm.

Report launching
Panos South Asia will launch its report titled 'Making poverty the story: Time to involve the media in poverty reduction'. Venue: Conference Hall, Brac Centre. Time: 10:00am.

BEI seminar
Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) organises a seminar on corporate governance for SOEs in Bangladesh. Venue: BEI conference room. Time: 11:30am.

Adolescent convention
Disadvantaged Adolescents Working NGOs (DAWN) Forum organises a two-day national adolescents convention. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy. Time: 8:30am.

Seminar
Bangladesh Philosophical Association organises a seminar on human dignity and ethical values. Venue: RC Majumder auditorium, DU. Time: 10:00am.

Luncheon meeting
The luncheon meeting of the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh will be held. Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 12:30pm.

Rotary Dhaka
The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka will be held. Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5:30pm.



Acting Editor of the daily Ittefaq Rahat Khan speaks at a meeting in memory of noted photojournalist Mohammad Alam at Bangladesh Photojournalists' Association in the city yesterday.

WEATHER TODAY

Mild cold wave likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather will remain dry over the country in the next 24 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning and mild to moderate cold wave may sweep Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Tangail, Mymensingh, Comilla and Sitakunda during the period, Met Office said.

It also said night temperature may fall slightly over the country. Yesterday's highest temperature of 27.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and Teknaf and the lowest of 8.0 degrees at Jessore.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:32pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

The 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	23.5	13.5	80	59
Chittagong	25.4	15.8	85	60
Rajshahi	23.6	08.9	73	67
Khulna	24.5	11.6	73	69
Barisal	25.0	10.5	72	66
Sylhet	24.4	11.8	91	65
Cox's Bazar	27.6	16.2	64	51

Star Campus-Drishy debate contest begins today in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A month-long debate competition styled Star Campus-Drishy Debate for Generation Next begins in the port city today.

The event sponsored by The Daily Star will be held at six separate venues to be organised by six English medium schools.

Other English medium schools can also take part but they need to enlist their names prior to the competition, said organisers of Drishy, a cultural organisation.

Each school will organise separate debate competitions on their own campuses throughout the month and later a grand finale will be held where the best debaters from each participating school will contest for the coveted title.

On the opening day, the debate will be held on the campus of Mastermind International School at city's Panchaish Residential Area. School Principal Prof Golam Abu Mohammad will inaugurate the meet at 11:30am today.



Court Reporters Assoc executives

Abdul Haq Bhuiyan of the daily Manabjamine and Ashraf-Ul-Alam of the daily Prothom Alo have been selected president and general secretary of the Court Reporters' Association for 2007-08, says a press release.

Three senior members of the association primarily selected them and submitted it to the chief election commissioner on January 8 for final declaration.

Other office-bearers are Chaitanya Chandra Halder of The Daily Star (Vice-President), Khondaker Newajul Bari of BSS (Assistant General Secretary), Anwarul Kabir Babul of the daily Samakal (Treasurer) and Raihan Morshed of the daily Sangram (Office and Publicity Secretary).

Executive committee members are Samiul Karim Alamgir of the Bhoror Kagoj, Dulal Mitra of the daily Janata and Shahidullah Mian of the daily Nayaniganta.

Shahidullah Khan of UNB was nominated as the chief adviser to the association.

Reunion of DU Economics Dept Alumni Assoc

Reunion of Dhaka University Economics Department Alumni Association (DUEAA) will be held on February 8 at 'Bitopir Chayra', Mia Bari Sarak, Gozaria, Joydevpur, said an official handout.

All members of the association have been requested to contact any one of the following persons for registration and other details: Thakur of economics department (Tel: 9661920-59, ext. 6441), Farid-01711537100, Zia-01713017238, Shaiful Islam Khan-01817045648, Monowar-01552469099, Habibullah Bahar-0199814035, Fatema Yousuf-01713244340, Afsari-01916858250, Fatema Zohra-01713302980, Mosud Mannan-01711595275, Hafiz-01713018108, Quamrul-01711433807, Molder-01711534763 and Iftekher-0171475335.