

## Dhaka's participation in WEF raises its int'l profile

### Says foreign adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed's participation in the World Economic Forum (WEF) raised Bangladesh's international profile, Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury said yesterday.

This was the first time Bangladesh was invited to take part in the WEF annual meeting in Davos where world leaders from every walk of life gather to discuss key current economic and political issues.

Over 2400 global 'thought leaders' including 27 heads of government, scores of ministers and hundreds of other public figures and business chief executives attended the event.

The foreign adviser said the chief adviser had a message to each of the two groups attending, public figures and business executives.

To the public figures,

Fakhruddin explained Bangladesh's current institution building reforms that would lead to sustainable democracy, reiterating that a free, fair and credible election would be held before the end of December this year.

To them he also underscored the fact that currently a quiet revolution was underway, transforming the society in a positive manner through micro-credit, spread of learning, including girls' education and women's empowerment that have marginalised extremism.

Iftekhar said the chief adviser emphasised Bangladesh's important international role, championing development as Chair of (least development countries) LDCs and stabilising the world through UN peacekeeping.

He argued that Bangladesh deserved to be rewarded for its performance through support to its development efforts and greater

market access for its manufacturers, particularly RMG.

Iftekhar said to the business leaders, the chief adviser's message was that Bangladesh is calm oasis of stability in an otherwise turbulent region, which would be able to bring to the investors attractive returns.

The foreign adviser said Fakhruddin in his bilateral meetings, press interviews and social functions made the point that Bangladesh with its huge population of 145 million had great future potential as another growing Asian state within the rapidly transforming vast South Asian entity.

Iftekhar said 'from a foreign policy perspective, one has to conclude that this year's Davos enhanced the world's understanding of Bangladesh's positive and responsible state in the global arena.'

## 2 RU students injured in attack by JCD men

UNB, Rajshahi

Two students of Rajshahi University were injured, one of them critically, in attacks by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists over a trifling matter on Saturday night and Sunday.

Campus sources said JCD worker Aashish along with his fellow party activists beat and stabbed Sayed Fatch Ali Bulbul, a student of mass communication department, at his mess near the campus on Saturday night over selling of a computer.

The attackers left the place after Ekramul Haq Hira, also a JCD activist and student of anthropology department, came to the rescue of Bulbul. Hira stays at the same mess.

Later, Bulbul filed a case against JCD cadres Ashish, Rana and Rajib with Mithar Police Station.

Hearing the news of filing of the case, Aashish along with 15 or 20 JCD cadres attacked Hira on the campus on yesterday noon. They beat him with iron rods and hockey sticks, leaving him critically injured.

He was rushed to RU medical centre and later shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.



Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman speaks at a seminar on 'State of Democracy in South Asia' at Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left are BEI President Farooq Sobhan and Centre for Policy Dialogue Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan. (Story on Page 16)



Natya Manchayan Parshad organised a condolence meeting in memory of Selim Al Deen, a legendary drama icon of the country, at Padma Manch in Rajshahi city yesterday. Litterateur Hasan Azizul Haque, theatre personality Nasiruddin Yusuf and Prof Moly Kumar Bhowmik attended the meeting.

## HOMAGE TO SELIM AL DEEN

### 'A playwright who developed new drama form'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Selim Al Deen, the legendary drama icon of the country, was remembered at a citizens' condolence meeting at Padma Mancha in Rajshahi city yesterday.

Speakers at the meeting said the death of Al Deen brings to an end the illustrious career of a man who made significant contribution to literature and theatre of Bangladesh.

They said he is the only playwright in Bangla literature who developed a 'new drama form' based on the narratives of traditional indigenous theatre.

Shakuntala, Kitkonkhola, Keramat Mongol, Hat Hadai, Chaka, Joiboti Koinnar Mon, Horgo, Bonopangshul, Nimojon and many other plays by Al Deen are remarkable examples of the narrative style he popularised, they added.

Presided over by Hasan Azizul Haque, a well-known litterateur, the meeting was attended by Nasiruddin Yusuf Bachchu, a noted drama director, as the main speaker.

Nasiruddin, who directed most of Al Deen's plays, said, "For last three decades, we worked together establishing a new trend in theatre. In his

death I have lost my best friend."

Hasan said, "Al Deen's death is an irreparable loss. He successfully highlighted typical Bengali cultural identity through his plays."

Rajshahi University teacher Moly Kumar Bhowmik, General Secretary of Rajshahi Muktiujuddho Library Dr Shafikul Alam, drama artistes Humayun Kabir Himu, Sayeed Hossain Dulal, Tawfik Hossain, Kamarullah Sarker and Mamunur Rashid also spoke on the occasion.

Rajshahi Natya Manchayan Parshad organised the meeting. Selim Al Deen passed away on January 14.

## Fire at Gaco office in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire tore through the second floor of a three-storey building housing Gaco Pharmaceuticals Ltd in the city's Tejgaon Industrial Area yesterday, damaging medicines, equipment and furniture.

An electrical short circuit sparked off the blaze at around 5:35 pm, fire brigade sources said.

The fire fighters managed to put out the blaze within one hour.

However, no casualties were reported in the fire.

## Secy asked to submit report on Bangladeshi workers in Saudi Arabia

BSS, Dhaka

Secretary to the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment has been asked to submit a detailed report on the condition of Bangladeshi workers in Saudi Arabia.

The government will take necessary steps after receiving the report from Bangladesh mission in Riyadh, said a press release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

Adviser for Foreign Affairs Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury who is also in-charge of the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment asked the secretary for the report when his attention was drawn to a news item published in yesterday's issue of the daily Ittefaq headlined 'Disaster in export of manpower to Saudi Arabia feared'.

## Review CHT accord to establish peace

Speakers say at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called for reviewing the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) peace accord in the light of the constitution to establish peace in the region.

They claimed that criminal activities and clashes between indigenous and Bangalees have increased after the signing of the accord.

The seminar titled 'Re-evaluation of CHT Peace Accord' was organised by Sama Adhikar Andolon (movement for equal rights) at the National Press Club in the capital.

Journalist Sadek Khan said peaceful co-existence between Bangalees and indigenous people is not possible on the basis of the treaty.

"CHT peace treaty is an unequal accord. Time has come to review the accord. Peace in CHT will not be possible without establishing equal rights for all people living in the region," he said.

Advocate Tajul Islam presented the keynote paper at the seminar which was also addressed by BNP leader Mahbubur Rahman, indigenous leader Manindra Lal Tripura, Prof Abdul Gafur, Shafiqul Alam Prodhon, Abu Naser M Rahamatullah, Advocate Abdul Mobin and Mostak Ahmed Bhashani.

## Musharraf faces new militant challenge: Analysts

AFP, Islamabad

With Islamic militants now massing at the gates of Pakistan's main north-western city, President Pervez Musharraf faces a new challenge on his return from a foreign tour, analysts and officials said.

After a week-long charm offensive in Europe aimed at convincing Western allies he can tackle Al-Qaeda, Musharraf will fly home this week to find rebels clashing with security forces just outside bustling Peshawar.

In the nearby tribal belt bordering Afghanistan, Pakistani troops are still battling fighters led by the main suspect in the killing of Benazir Bhutto, adding to global concerns for the stability of the nuclear-armed nation.

Analysts said Musharraf must resolve a long-standing dilemma -- go after the militant leadership and risk even more suicide attacks in Pakistan's big cities, or hold back and see the insurgents push further into the country.

"These militants have been expanding their influence in the northwest, and it has been happening for quite a few days," Brigadier Mahmood Shah, the former secretary for the tribal areas during 2003 and 2004, told AFP.

"The government is reacting late to the threat and the situation," added Shah, who was in charge of the region at a time of massive military operations to drive out Islamist fighters.

Former army general Musharraf repeatedly insisted during meetings in Europe last week that Pakistan and its estimated 50 nuclear warheads are safe from any militant takeover.

But as he delivered his speeches, around 30 militants and two soldiers were killed on Friday in fighting involving helicopter gunships and tanks in the huge tribal weapons bazaar of Dara Adam Khel, on the outskirts of Peshawar.

Pakistani forces launched an operation to recover four trucks of ammunition that had been hijacked by rebels -- but the militants responded by blocking a major highway.

The army is denying that the clashes are linked to the situation in the tribal area of South Waziristan, the stronghold of Al-Qaeda-linked radical warlord and Benazir assassination suspect Baitullah Mehsud.

Insurgents in Mehsud's area of control captured a paramilitary fort earlier this month and have attacked several others in a dramatic escalation of violence since Benazir's death that has cost more than 200 lives.

This particular area and operation in Dara Adam Khel is detached from other parts of FATA (the tribal areas)," chief military spokesman Major General Athar Abbas told AFP.

Dara Adam Khel was "known for criminal gang activities" and "criminal gangs have joined (Islamic) miscreants and the result of this is that they have hijacked explosives trucks," Abbas said.

"The whole Indus highway is blocked by these miscreants and the objective of this operation is to clear that road and provide relief to the people."

But Rahimullah Yousafzai, an analyst on tribal affairs and leading journalist in Pakistan, said the current battles near Peshawar and in South Waziristan were linked, due to a change in militant tactics.

"It is a diversion, they are trying to help militants in South Waziristan by engaging the army elsewhere," Yousafzai said.

"The ammunition trucks were being carried by the army to Waziristan -- this seizure was to help Baitullah Mehsud."

The army is still snuffing out the last pockets of rebellion from the

only other previous headline uprising in Pakistan outside the tribal areas, which flared up in the north-western Swat Valley, a famed tourist spot, in September.

Before that, clashes between militants and the army were restricted to the conservative Pashtun tribal belt, where hundreds of Al-Qaeda and Taliban militants took sanctuary after the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

Yousafzai said Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants were now present in most of North West Frontier Province and were abandoning a defensive policy of launching suicide attacks in retaliation for military operations.

"They are opening new battlegrounds," he said.

"Whenever they gain strength they like to strike, it is a change in tactics. But they cannot fight for long, after a while they have retreat and flee to their stronghold."

Musharraf must now take tough decisions on how to handle the conflict, analysts said.

"The army is facing difficulties because the more fronts these militants open, the greater the concerns about how long the army will keep fighting and on how many fronts," Yousafzai said.

## Afghan police search for abductors of US aid worker

AFP, Kandahar, Afghanistan

Police in Afghanistan's southern city of Kandahar were hunting yesterday for the abductors of a US aid worker and her driver as the Taliban militia said it could not "yet" take responsibility.

There was a heavier-than-usual police presence in the area where Cyd Mizell, 49, and her Afghan driver were seized while travelling to work on Saturday and police were searching every vehicle, an AFP reporter said.

"Our goal is to stop the suspected abductors from taking the hostage out of town and hopefully, with God's help, arrest those who have abducted her," said one of the police officers, who gave his name only as Hashmatullah.

The Afghan government said no one had contacted police to claim the kidnapping of Mizell, who works for a small Philippines-headquartered community development organisation.

"The police are working on the case and we are trying our best to make her release safe," interior ministry spokesman Zemaral Bashary told AFP. "As yet no one has made contact with the police."

The US embassy said it was continuing to look into reports of the abduction.

Officials said Mizell had been wearing a burqa -- the all-encompassing garment that most Afghan women wear and which covers the face -- when she was captured in the city, one of the most risky in Afghanistan for foreign nationals.

Few foreigners live and work in Kandahar because of the threat from Taliban insurgents who are most active in southern Afghanistan.



Apollo Hospitals Dhaka organised a healthcare awareness programme for the staffs of BATA Shoe Company recently. Dr Md Shahab Uddin Talukder, consultant of Cardiology of Apollo Hospitals, conducted the programme.

## WEATHER TODAY

### Temperature may fall

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain or drizzle is likely at a few places over Barisal and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm yesterday.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country during the period, Met Office said.

It also said that light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning. Night temperature may fall by 2-5 degree Celsius over Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Dhaka divisions and may remain nearly unchanged elsewhere across the country.

Mild cold wave may sweep over Rajshahi and Khulna divisions and the region of Tangail and Mymensingh.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 24.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Rangamati and the lowest of 11.5 degrees at Ishwardi.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:42pm today and rises at 6:41am 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	22.1	15.1	94	73
Chittagong	19.7	15.5	89	82
Rajshahi	22.8	12.2	98	64
Khulna	21.2	15.0	96	82
Barisal	19.5	15.5	91	88
Sylhet	20.5	13.7	98	86
Cox's Bazar	20.0	15.7	94	85



Eminent artist Mustafa Monwar speaks at a press conference on the first International Children's Film Festival 2008 at National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is filmmaker Morshedul Islam and on his left are filmmaker Fuad Chowdhury and Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kori.

## Kraft Foods donates \$4.50 lakh for Sidr victims

Tang, a product of Kraft Foods, recently provided \$4.50 lakh for the Sidr victims, says a press release.

The contributions were made through the American Red Cross, Save the Children and the United Nations World Food Programme.

Sajeer Corporation is the sole distributor of Tang products in Bangladesh.

## DU English dept alumni reunion Feb 1

BSS, Dhaka

The annual reunion of the English Department Alumni Society of Dhaka University (DU) will be held on February 1 from 3:00pm to 7:00pm at Teacher-Student Centre.

Alumni have been requested to register for the reunion, said a press release.

## DHAKA TODAY

- Workshop**  
Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (Cirdap) organises a researches' planning workshop on 'Knowledge generation and policy dialogue on access to land and other natural resources by the rural poor in four Asian countries'. Venue: Cirdap Auditorium. Time: 9:15am.
- Seminar**  
Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) in collaboration with German Embassy in Dhaka will organise a seminar on 'The changing strategic landscape: New challenges and realities'. Venue: Radisson Hotel. Time: 10:00am.
- PIB seminar**  
Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) organises a seminar on reforms in education system in Bangladesh. Venue: PIB seminar room. Time: 10:00am.
- WB workshop**  
World Bank Office, Dhaka organises a workshop on housing finance market. Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 10:30am.
- Lecture**  
AMA Muhiit will deliver a lecture on foreign policy of Bangladesh on the occasion of 3rd death anniversary of SAMS Kibria. Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research organises the lecture. Venue: Sufia Kamal Auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.
- Fair**  
The inaugural ceremony of the 5th Dhaka international plastic, packaging and printing industrial fair will be held. Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BPGMEA) organises the fair. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 12:00am.
- Photography exhibition**  
Dhaka University Photographic Society (DUPS) organises its three-day 2nd annual photography exhibition. Venue: TSC. Time: 10:00am.

## Cop killed in road accident in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

A police constable of Kalmakanda Police Station was killed in a road accident at Kurpur in Netrakona town yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Liakat Ali, 40.

Sources said a speedy Netrakona-bound passenger bus from Chittagong knocked him down while he was walking on the road in front of Netrakona Sadar Hospital. He died on the spot.

Liakat was undergoing treatment at the hospital after some miscreants swooped on him on November 30, 2007 while he was on duty in Bishorpasha Beel area.

Police seized the bus, but the driver managed to escape.

## Korean research instt forges ties with Nasa

AFP, Seoul

South Korea's top research organisation said it cemented a deal with Nasa yesterday to work together to develop satellites and other space technology.

The deal with the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) was signed at Nasa's research headquarters in Moffett Field, California, a KAIST official told AFP.

A KAIST team launched the country's first small satellite in 1992. Since then South Korea, a late-comer in the space race, has launched three commercial communications satellites.

South Korea plans to launch a lunar orbiter by 2020 and to send a probe to the moon five years after that.

KAIST said in a statement that potential areas of collaboration with Nasa's Ames Research Centre included satellite communications and navigation systems, planetary exploration, lunar science, rovers and small satellites.