



PHOTO STAR  
Hindu devotees pray during Saraswati Puja on the Jagannath Hall premises on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

**Pola Uddin hails govt's handling of Sidr aftermath**

UNB, Dhaka

Visiting British-Bangladeshi Member of the House of Lords Baroness Pola Uddin appreciated the caretaker government's performance in handling the aftereffects of super-cyclone Sidr in the coastal belt.

She made the remarks during a discussion when she paid a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office yesterday.

During the meeting, Pola Uddin, on behalf of herself and the Bangladeshi expatriates in the UK, handed over a cheque for Tk 10 lakh to the chief adviser in aid of the cyclone-affected people.

UK-based NGO Muslim Aid worked for water purification at Sharanakhola in Bagerhat district while Pola Uddin coordinated from the House of Lords raising money for the Sidr victims.

Thanking her for the donations, the chief adviser said now rehabilitation and reconstruction works are going on in the Sidr-hit areas and emphasised more capacity building and permanence through the cooperation of development partners.

"We must think for long-term measure," he told Pola. Adverse impacts of climate change on Bangladesh were also discussed.

The Chief Adviser said the World Bank is taking initiative to hold a meeting on Climate Change in London that will be very helpful.

The baroness visited some cyclone-hit areas, particularly Sharanakhola.

Secretary to CA's office Kazi M Aminul Islam and CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim were also present.

**Light tremor felt**

BSS, Dhaka

An earthquake was felt yesterday at the Dhaka Seismic Centre at Agargaon at 03 hours 02 minutes and 50.86 seconds Bangladesh Standard Time.

The intensity of the tremor was 4.7 on the Richter scale, said a Met office press release.

The location of the earthquake was near Qamdo in China and the distance of the epicenter was 957kms northeast from the Dhaka Seismic Centre, the release added.

**Frame stringent laws to ensure urban sanitation**

Say experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concern over health and environmental hazards caused by indiscriminate dumping of solid wastes, urban planners yesterday suggested incorporating the issue in the national policies and framing stringent laws to ensure urban sanitation.

They also proposed establishing a secretariat, which will engage itself in policy formulation and sharing best practices among different city corporations on solid waste management with a target of recycling 80 percent of waste in the next five years.

These recommendations came at the Second Bangladesh Waste Management Conference-2008 organised by Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Japan International Cooperation Agency

(JICA) at a city hotel yesterday.

Representatives from all the city corporations -- Dhaka, Chittagong, Barisal, Khulna, Rajshahi and Sylhet -- took part in the daylong conference that put emphasis on appropriate urban planning including zoning and land use for better management of solid wastes.

"Underground water runs the risk of contamination from leachate (liquid that comes out of solid waste), while flies and mosquitoes produced from garbage dumped here and there cause public health hazards," said JICA Expert Team Chief Adviser Naoki Hara.

He said DCC successfully constructed the first sanitary landfill in Matuail for wastes, but a big portion of garbage is dumped without treatment, which is a serious health and environment hazard.

Massive public awareness should be raised in the communities, Naoki Hara said, adding that Clean Dhaka Project financed by JICA has already undertaken initiatives to bridge the communities, primary garbage collection service providers and DCC to ensure community participation in waste management.

"There are many people who do not want to pay the primary collectors, while some collectors have tendency to dump garbage in the places not meant for it. We need strong monitoring and awareness," he said.

A DCC official said no city corporation in the country can collect and properly dispose of over fifty percent of the garbage produced in the urban areas.

"The rest of the garbage go to the drains, lakes and even to the rivers.

There are even people who dump wastes on the banks of rivers or lakes in a view to extend their land areas and use those for their personal usage," he said.

These issues must be incorporated in the city corporation acts, the official said.

The conference observed that opportunities for privatisation of solid waste management should be sought gradually in parts of the cities.

According to a report prepared on the basis of the recommendations of the experts, the secretariat for waste management will play a role in policymaking related to solid waste management where universities and academics should be incorporated.

Socioeconomic conditions such as the realities in the slums should be considered sincerely, as a big number of people live in the slums in the capital and other cities, it said.

While formulating action plans for the solid waste management of the city corporations, role of ward commissioners, communities, departments of local governments, central government, NGOs and private sector should be clearly defined, the reports said.

"Problems, solutions and lessons learned from city corporations should also be shared among themselves for improving services," it said, adding that human resources can also be transferred from one city corporation to another for sharing expertise.

DCC Chief Conservancy Officer Maksudur Rahman Chowdhury, JICA Bangladesh Additional Representative Eiichiro Cho, JICA Advisory Mission Head Dr Yoshida, DCC Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Alauddin and Matuail Landfill Project Director Dr Tariq Bin Yousuf also spoke.



PHOTO STAR  
Second Bangladesh Waste Management Conference-2008 was held at a city hotel yesterday. Sitting from left are Dr Mitsuo Yoshida, Eiichiro Cho, Mohammad Alauddin, Maksudur Rahman Chowdhury and Naoki Hara.

**N'ganj RMG factory, Savar jute godown gutted**

UNB, N'ganj

A devastating fire burnt a garment factory at Dapa Idrakpur in Fatullah apparel hub yesterday, causing a colossal loss to the export industry.

Ten people, including a firefighter, sustained burn injuries during the fire that originated in 'Wisdom Attires' factory from an electric short circuit at about 2:45pm.

Local sources said the blaze, originating in the finishing section on the first floor of the two-storied factory, soon spread to the accounts and commercial sections on the same floor, burning down clothes and valuable machinery worth about Tk 2.5 crore as well as important documents of the factory.

On information, four fire fighting units from Mandalpara and Hajiganj rushed to the spot. Two more units from Postagola rushed in. They later

put out the blaze after three hours of frantic effort.

"The entire area was shrouded with fumes during the fire and workers of the adjacent factories were seen running helter-skelter out of panic," says a spot account of the fire havoc.

In another fire accident at Savar, on the outskirts of the capital, a jute-godown and four shops at Namabazar went up in flames yesterday afternoon.

The affected businessmen claimed valuables worth about Tk 50 lakh were gutted in the devastating flames.

**Ahle Hadit annual congregation**

The two-day central annual congregation of the Ahle Hadit Andolan, Bangladesh will be held on February 28 and 29 at Naodapara in Rajshahi instead of February 14 and 15 due to unavoidable circumstances, says a press release.

**Trader murdered in N'ganj**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

An injured trader died several hours after he was shot and stabbed by unidentified criminals in Narayanganj on Sunday night.

The victim was identified as Kabir Hossain, 40, son of Abdus Sattar of Muradpur in Shyampur.

The criminals shot and stabbed him at Nandipara in Narayanganj at around 8:00pm and fled away, the police said.

Local people found Kabir lying with bullet wound in his stomach and stab injuries in his body. They rushed him to Narayanganj Hospital.

Later, the police shifted him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died in the morning.



PHOTO STAR  
Prof Abu Ahmed speaks at a roundtable at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are Prof M Asaduzzaman, Shahabul Haque Sabu, Prof Masuda M Rashid Chowdhury and Prof Mozammel Haque.

**'Reduce BCS quota, ensure merit-based appointment'**

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged the government to reduce the amount of quota in the BCS examinations to a reasonable level and ensure merit-based appointment for the sake of proper development of the country.

The provision for 55 percent quota in the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examinations has created an obstacle to utilising the talents of the majority population, resulting in an incompetent public administration, they said.

Many speakers also demanded that the quota system be abolished, saying that the incompetent people, who are appointed through quota system, have brought the administration to a standstill.

The 'Student Parishad', a platform of Dhaka University students who have been demonstrating for the cancellation of the quota system, organised the roundtable at the National Press Club.

Prof M Asaduzzaman, former chairman of the University Grant Commission, said the Public Service Commission (PSC) should reform the quota system to restore its image.

"Quota for the freedom fighters' children should be reduced to 10 percent and there is no need for women's, indigenous and district quotas. We should consider a quota for the people with disabilities and the total amount of quota should not exceed 20 percent," he added.

He said a number of organisations submitted several reforms

proposal of the PSC, but none of them was brought to public implementation.

Sharing his experience in his classroom at the finance department of Dhaka University, Prof M Mujahidul Islam said students who got admitted under the quota system cannot keep pace with other students, as they lack talents.

He called for abolishing all the quotas except the quota for the freedom fighters.

In the BCS examinations, a total of 55 percent of appointments is made under four quotas -- 30 percent reserved under freedom fighters' children quota, 10 percent under women's quota, 10 percent under district quota and five percent under indigenous quota.

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