

Work together to offset impacts of global climate change

Speakers urge all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called upon all to work together to offset the impacts of global climate change.

Although Bangladesh contributes very little to global warming, it would be one of the worst affected countries and immediate measures need to be taken to this end, they said.

Ministry of Environment and Forests organised the discussion titled 'Environment-Our future' at Cirdap auditorium in the city to mark the Commonwealth Day.

Speaking as the chief guest, Barrister Raja Devashish Roy, special assistant, Ministry of Environment

and Forests, said the developing countries are most vulnerable to global climate change and we have to think about the mitigation and adaptation measures to cope with its adverse effects.

He also said it is clear that climate change is now a big problem in the world as sea level rise is threatening to submerge vast coastal areas and it would affect the developing countries like Bangladesh badly.

"We have to get prepared apart from building dams, embankments and roads which is needed to tackle the impacts of global climate change," he said adding, "We have to take effective measures in combating human-made calamities

apart from taking preparation for the disasters caused by climate change."

He also said this government along with the upcoming governments will carry out the works and the people, NGOs, private sectors and civil society members will have to come forward to help the government.

"We have done many mistakes like cutting down the hills and polluting our rivers. We have to bear the responsibilities of environmental calamities and we have to save our rivers and hills. Effluent Treatment Plant should be installed to stop industrial pollution," he added.

Devashish Roy also said environ-

ment is essential for sustainable development and media can play an important role in this regard.

The environment pollution will reduce significantly if the government, general people, NGOs and private sector work together, he said.

AHM Rezaul Kabir ndc, secretary to the ministry, narrated the consequences of the Commonwealth Day.

Touhid Hossain, secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Khandaker Rashedul Haque, director general of Department of Environment and Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, president of Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB), also spoke.

LIBERIA Peacekeepers earn fame for country

BSS, Bong County, Liberia

The Bangladeshi peacekeepers in Liberia earned fame for restoring peace and starting rehabilitation process in the war-torn country.

"They (peacekeepers) are making tireless efforts in maintaining peace and have already started rehabilitation in the West African country," said Brigadier General Monawar Hossain, the outgoing sector commander of Bangladesh Sector-3.

He was exchanging views with the members of the visiting Bangladeshi media team at his office at the CARL Complex here on Sunday.

Bangladesh was among the first troop-contributing countries that set up the military component of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), sending an advanced party of 80 soldiers from neighbouring Sierra Leone on October 8, 2003.

Since then, with 3,200 soldiers, Bangladesh has grown to become the largest contingent among the 48 countries contributing troops to Liberia.

Assigned in Sector-3 (Bong Grand, Bassa and Nimba counties), Bangladesh military reinforces the sector headquarters at CARL

Complex near Gbarnga with a contingent and deploys infantry battalions in 28 locations throughout the three counties.

Bangladesh, which began participating in the UN peacekeeping in 1988, has so far contributed over 70,000 men and women to 35 different operations on four continents.

Since their deployment in Liberia over four years ago, the Bangladesh military has scaled greater heights with the successive contingents building on their predecessor's achievements.

When the Bangladeshi peacekeepers were first deployed in Gbarnga and Bong County in 2003, they came face to face with the harsh realities in that volatile region of central Liberia.

The entire country was in shambles with properties looted and no power supply. The people who had fled to the bush for safety remained in hiding for fear of the marauding gangsters on the streets.

A lot has changed since then. Among the major challenges the Bangladeshi peacekeepers faced included the disarmament of tens of thousands of ex-combatants and providing security and logistical support during the voter registration.

Besides maintaining security in Sector-III, Brigadier General Monawar said the Bangladeshi peacekeepers are also contributing a lot to the development of the people of the war-ravaged country.

They are providing healthcare facilities to the Liberian people,

giving training to its unemployed youths and the children in different fields, the sector commander added.

He said over 1,100 trained youths have already been employed at different multinational companies including Mittal Steel of India.

Brigadier General Monawar said the Bangladeshi doctors have been providing medicare service for the local people in addition to the military and civilian staff of the mission.

"We are also creating awareness among the Liberian people about health and hygiene, HIV/AIDS, STD, Lassa fever and water-borne diseases," Brigadier General Monawar said.

He informed the journalists that they also send helicopters to the remote areas to reach the healthcare facilities to the doorsteps of the Liberian people.

About investment, the sector commander said, there is a scope for Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to invest in Liberia. They can invest in potential sectors like cement, pharmaceuticals and plastic.

In addition to the humanitarian assistance, Monawar said the Bangladeshi peacekeepers have also undertaken small-scale community projects. Some of these include small-scale agricultural projects as well as vocational training for ex-combatants and local residents.

He said the peacekeepers are also engaged in constructing roads, bridges and culverts to restore the communication system in Liberia.

Install 'speed governor seal' on all public transport

High Court directs govt

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday directed the government to install 'speed governor seal' on all modes of public transport, like bus, minibus and truck, playing across the country to avoid road accidents.

In its ruling, the High Court made the compliance with its orders by March 10, 2009 mandatory, as the court took cognizance of growing incidence of traffic mishaps largely forshard driving.

Making its suo moto rule absolute, a division bench comprising Justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice Abdul Awal passed the order.

During hearing on its suo moto rule, it appointed Supreme Court Bar Association President Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam, Advocate Abdul R Chowdhury, Dr Shahid Malik and Advocate Manzill Morshed as intervenors.

On December 13 last year, the High Court, after browsing a tragic story in a daily newspaper of a college girl's death in a road accident, had issued the suo moto upon the government and others concerned. They were asked to explain why speed-governor seal 'should not be compulsorily installed on all public transports all over the country'.

Speed-governor seal is meant for controlling the speed limit of those vehicles within the limits fixed by the authorities concerned.

Life of Sadia Afrin Suchi, a first-year student of Dhaka City College, was cut short in a minibus accident while she was crossing the Mirpur Road.

Two secretaries of the ministries of home and communications, the chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and the Inspector General of Police were also made respondents in the rule.

"Imposing fines worth Tk 200 per day on the defaulters after the expiry of the deadline," the High Court also asked the appropriate authority in its ruling.

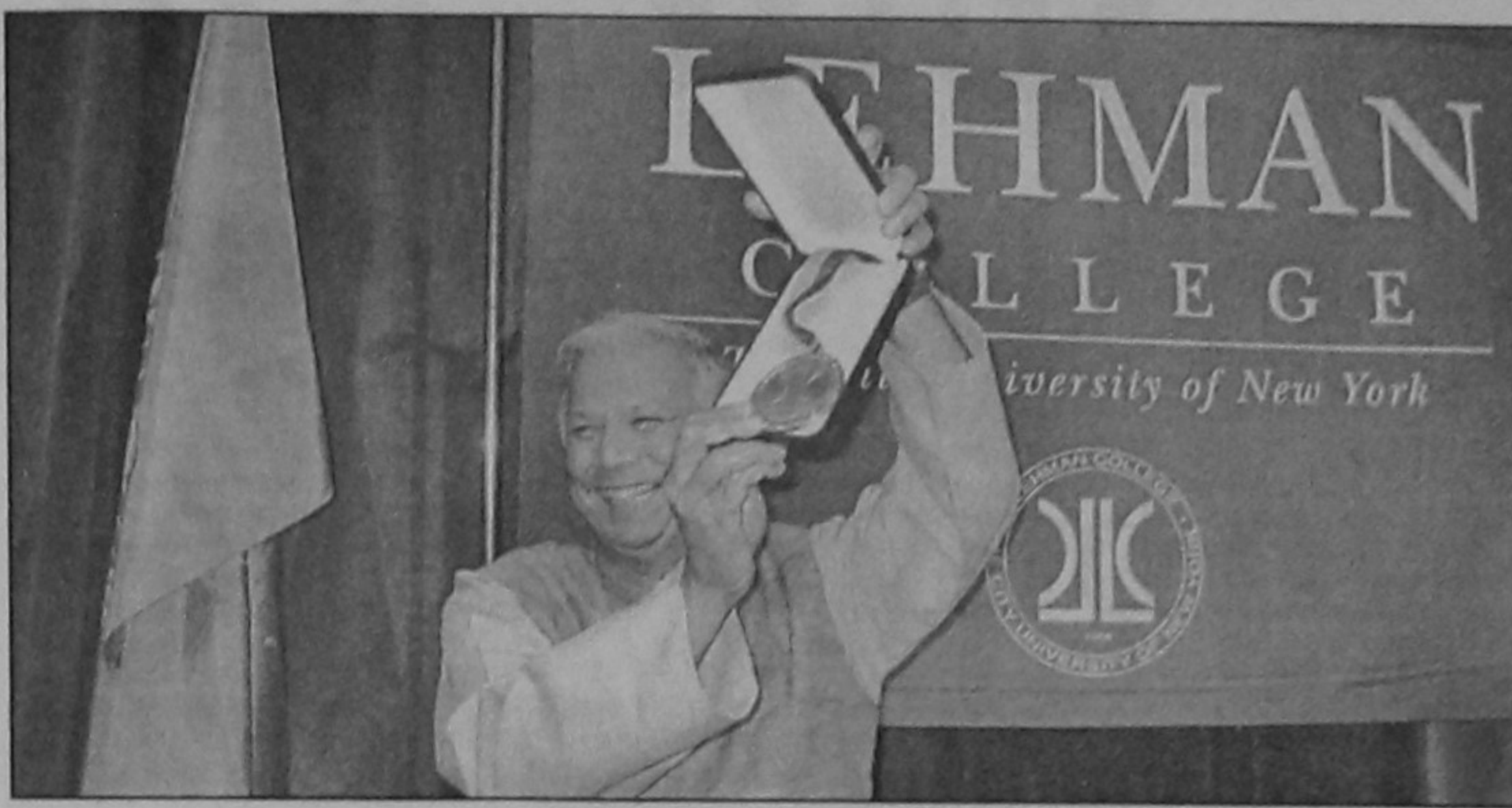
Donation for cancer hospital

Roushan Ara Khan, a housewife, donated Tk 10 lakh for the construction of Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH), says a press release.

She handed over a cheque for Tk 10 lakh to Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) President Kazi Rafiqul Alam at a ceremony at Mission Bhaban in the city yesterday.

For this donation a two-bed cabin of the hospital will be named after her husband Abdul Jabbar Khan and herself.

Mher son-in-law Saiyid Musharraf Hussain, former additional secretary was present on the occasion.



Lehman College of the City University of New York honoured Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus with the President's Medal at a reception ceremony in New York on Sunday. The photo shows Dr Yunus holding the medal at the programme.

Access to credit should be recognised as human right

Says Dr Yunus

STAR REPORT

Terming poverty an artificial problem created by society, Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus said access to credit should be recognised as a basic human right.

"Poverty is a fault in our system. Unfortunate people should not be held responsible for it; they are victims of this artificial problem created by society," he said at a reception accorded to him at Lehman College of the City University of New York on Sunday.

The phenomenal success of micro-credit in various countries of the world has proved that the poverty-stricken people can do wonders if they are given opportunities, he added.

Lehman College President Dr Ricardo R Fernandez gave away the President's Medal to Dr Yunus at the programme in recognition of his innovative economic ideas, humanitarian efforts, and contribution toward world peace, according to News World, a New York-based news agency.

Muslim Public Affairs Council of the USA also presented Human Security Award to him at another programme in New York the same day.

Dr Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank, said two-thirds of people of the world have been deprived of credit facilities. As a result, they cannot participate in economy and this is a major cause of poverty.

These people can do wonders if they are given opportunities, he added.

Dr Yunus said three lakh women in rural areas are currently using Grameen Phone to earn a livelihood, but this business has become increasingly competitive.

So, the Grameen Bank is now planning to provide women with internet facilities as another mode of business, he added.

He also said that Grameen Bank is

the only bank whose shareholders are those who receive loans from it.

It is not possible to alleviate poverty through charity or donation, Dr Yunus said and stressed the need for social business, which can ensure the welfare of the people.

He also cited the investment of Danone in Bangladesh as an example of social business.

At the reception ceremony hosted

by Muslim Public Affairs Council, Jewish religious leader Rabbi Mac Senior said Dr Muhammad Yunus could act as a bridge between Islam and other religions.

Islam is a religion of peace and the Holy Quran does not support terrorism, he said, adding that those carrying out terrorist activities in the name of Islam can never be friends of religion and humanity.

Scrap Oct 29 meet decisions to reunite BNP

Goyeshwar asks rivals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of pro-Khaleda faction of BNP, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, yesterday said leaders of the rival 'reformist' faction will have to remove on their own, all obstacles to party unity, like the decisions of the latter's October 29, 2007 meeting, if they want to reunite the organisation.

"Party leaders and activists want to give them a chance but it depends on those, who made mistakes, how they would relate to the unity process," he said.

He was talking to reporters in the capital in the Nam apartment of Mohammad Shahjahan, a former lawmaker and, central organising secretary of undivided BNP.

Meanwhile, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, detained Chairperson Khaleda Zia appointed secretary general of BNP, left Singapore for New York on Sunday.

When asked about Saifur Rahman's remarks on Hannan Shah's letter to him which reportedly asked the former to declare null and void all decisions taken on Saifur faction's founding meeting of October 29, Goyeshwar also a joint secretary general of the undivided central

committee said, "Those who will not get involved in the unity process, might not be able to continue in BNP."

Saifur Rahman, acting chairman of the standing committee of 'reformist' faction, told reporters on Sunday, "Hannan Shah sent me a letter with a set of proposals for party unity including a demand for cancelling the decisions of our meeting. But if we are to cancel the decisions, why would a discussion be needed?"

According to pro-unity party leaders who do not have any clear cut allegiance to any of the factions, pro-Khaleda leaders prepared a draft set of proposals for reconciliation of the two rival factions of BNP following discussions with pro-Saifur leaders. The draft proposal was then sent to Khaleda Zia through her lawyers in the sub-jail where she is currently interned on charges of corruption.

Goyeshwar Roy yesterday said the party is united under the leadership of Khaleda Zia who issued a directive to reunite the party, and nobody will be able to continue in BNP politics defying her leadership.

Bangladeshi shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi youth on Kalabari border under Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat district yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Hasibul Islam, 16, son of Phonar Uddin of Kalabari village under the upazila.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources said the BSF personnel of Biesbari camp under 79 BSF Battalion opened fire on Hasib while he was walking along the border near pillar no 840 at around 5.00am. Hasib died instantly.

BDR strongly protested the killing through a letter sent to its Indian counterpart. The border guards of Burimari outpost handed over Hasib's body to his family.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION ORDN

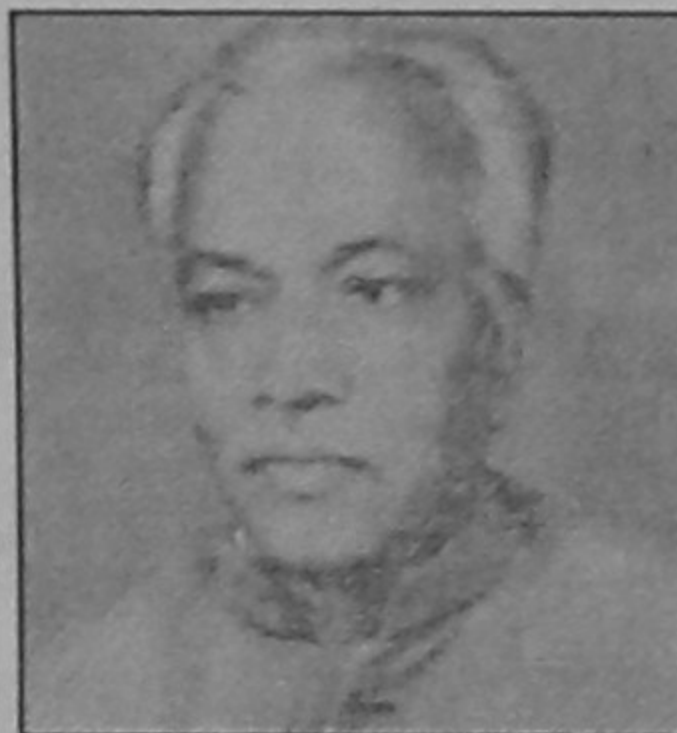
Roundtable on draft today

BSS, Dhaka

Aroundtable on the draft of the Right to Information Ordinance-2008 will be held in the conference room of LGED Bhaban in the city today.

According to an official handout issued here yesterday, members of the civil society, lawyers, journalists, businessmen and other professionals will take part in the roundtable.

Apart from making time-befitting, the opinions and recommendations to be obtained from the roundtable will enrich the draft. This will also help finalising the draft, the handout said.



17th anniversary of death of Abul Kashem today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 17th death anniversary of Abul Kashem, one of the architects of the Language Movement and the founder of Mirpur Bangla College, says a press release.

On the occasion, Fateha will be offered at his grave on the Bangla College premises in the city at about 8.00am followed by a memorial meeting. A doa mahfil will also be held at Bangla College Mosque after Zohr prayers.

Principal Kashem formed Tomoddun Majlis on September 1 in 1947. He was also the founder of the All Party State Language Movement.

He led a number of demonstrations and rallies during the primary stage of the Language Movement. On December 6 in 1947, he presided over the first rally at Dhaka University that demanded Bangla as the state language of the country. A general strike on December 11 was followed by the rally.

For his contribution to the language movement, he was awarded the Independence Day Award in 1993, Ekushey Padak in 1987, Bangla Academy Award in 1982 and Islamic Foundation Award in 1988.

Paying tribute to the architect of the Language Movement, President Iajuddin Ahmed said he will always be remembered for his contributions to the Language Movement.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed said Principal Kashem's contribution in establishing Bangla as the state language and building the nation will be a source of inspiration to the new generation.

Cultural Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury and Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman in separate statements also paid tribute to Principal Kashem.

Apollo Hospitals' clarification

Apollo Hospitals Dhaka has clarified a news item on demonstration by its doctors and nurses published in several national dailies on March 9.

In a press release, the hospital authorities said the hospital, after its successful completion of 3 years, has taken an initiative to develop a more dynamic staffing level and is now going ahead with new programme and service to ensure better healthcare service nationwide.

Right mix of staffing is another important element to ensure quality in healthcare, the authorities said, adding that they have been trying to develop right workforce starting from this year to manage better equipment and advanced technology.

"For the better future of the overall employees, the hospital authorities have also decided to right-size the manpower. The right-sizing process is being done under the existing Labour Law 2006 of the country," the press release added.

The hospital authorities also claimed that the present situation of the hospital is normal. "The misunderstanding has been amicably settled and the nurses and doctors are working in their respective areas as usual to provide services."

Concern over murder by Satkhira OC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five human rights organisations have expressed concern over the murder of a woman by the officer-in-charge (OC) of Patkelghata Police Station under Satkhira district.

Leaders of Ain-O Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Nijera Kori, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and Karmojibi Nari in a joint press release demanded exemplary punishment to OC Mizanur Rahman.

According to several national dailies of March 9, the OC beat up Sadia Rahman mercilessly on March 4 as she went to him for her social recognition as wife.

As her condition deteriorated Sadia was sent back to Dhaka, but on the way she died.

Despite the order of the district police super not to bury the body without post mortem, she was buried hurriedly in Dhaka.

The human rights leaders in the press release said the government initiative to build up a people-friendly police and called for bringing the OC to justice.

WEATHER TODAY

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.

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty is also likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Khulna, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the region of Comilla. Met Office said, predicting slight rise in day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 33.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 18.5 degrees Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:06pm today and rises at 6:10am tomorrow.

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 | 31.5 | 22.6 | 84 | 55 |
| Chittagong | 30.2 | 21.0 | 81 | 82 |
| Rajshahi | 31.4 | 19.0 | 86 | 61 |
| Khulna | 32.5 | 22.2 | 86 | 60 |
| Barisal | 32.4 | 22.0 | 89 | 63 |
| Sylhet | 30.8 | 19.6 | 76 | 63 |
| Cox's Bazar | 31.6 | 21.0 | 66 | 73 |

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable

The daily Prothom Alo organises a roundtable on start of the process of trial of war criminals. Venue: Prothom Alo office. Time: 10:00am.

Launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of the book 'British Muslim Guide (Bengali Version)' will be held. British Council publishes the book. Venue: British Council. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar

Police Reform Programme organises a seminar on The role of police in preventing domestic violence. Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 3:00pm.

Rotary Dhaka

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

Rice price gone beyond tolerable level

FROM PAGE 1

the keynote paper at the seminar. Focusing on government activities for adequate rice import, the food adviser said the caretaker government has so far imported 29 lakh tonnes of rice in a bid to cool down its overheated market.

"The quantity of the imported rice is expected to stand at 40 lakh tonnes by June next. So, there is no lack of effort on the government part. But some difficulties arise in import of rice as per its demand due to some internal decisions of our neighboring nation, India," Shawkat Ali said.

The adviser told the seminar that the government has decided to import five lakh tonnes of rice from five state-owned companies of India as soon as possible.

"One lakh tonnes of rice will be imported soon from Kolkata Essential Corporation. The rest will also be imported from four other state-owned companies of India," he said.

Rice importer Tipu Sultan said

rice in India is sold at Tk 14,000 per tonnes, but when private importers from Bangladesh want to buy it at the same rate, they demand Tk 26,000 per tonnes.

"Our government should take immediate diplomatic steps so that India sells rice to Bangladesh's private importers at a reasonable rate," Tipu said.

Asked what the government can do to convince India to sell rice at a reduced rate, the adviser said India has increased the export price of rice in order to discourage its exports.

"To ensure its own food security, India has technically increased the price of rice for the private importers. We'll have to deal with the matter logically. But Bangladesh government, if necessary, can request India in this regard," Shawkat Ali said.

Other speakers at the seminar stressed the need for formulating long-term action plans to ensure food security of the country and keep the prices of essentials at a tolerable level in the future.

HOSSAIN ZILLUR SAYS GOVT MAKES NO FAULT

Our staff correspondent adds: Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said the government made no fault in its efforts to make the prices of essential commodities stable.

Admitting that prices of commodities, especially edible oil, are unstable, he said, "Just two weeks ago we made an arrangement with businesses about oil prices. I then went abroad and the price was normal until March 2 when it became unstable. We have to see where exactly the problems lie."

The adviser was talking to newsmen following the inaugural session of a two-day South Asian Sociology Conference organised by the South Asian Sociological Society (SASS) in association with Independent University, Bangladesh at Spectra Convention Centre in the capital yesterday.

"Monitoring of market is the main challenge...punishing someone will not be a solution. But if punishments

bring solution, we shall go that way," Hossain Zillur Rahman said, adding, "We are learning and making strategies on how we can address the price-hike issue because this is a very sensitive matter."

He said the problem should be looked at with the social point of view along with the economic point of view.

He said he was seeking recommendations from the importers, refiners and others concerned and trying to learn why the government efforts to make the market stable are failing. He said he would have a meeting with the chief adviser in a day or two after getting the recommendations.

"We shall let you know about the next course of action after making solid decisions," he said adding that they will also try to do something about the price hike of commodities in the international market.

The decisions must be made considering the economic realities, Zillur said. There is OMS (open market sales) now for the underprivileged consumers, he said.