

E-9 meet ends with adoption of Bali Declaration

ASHEFAQ WARES KHAN, from Bali, Indonesia

The 7th E-9 ministerial meeting concluded here yesterday with nine biggest middle and low-income countries, including Bangladesh, pledging more money for teachers' salaries and training to attract 18 million primary school teachers required to achieve 'education for all' (EFA) by 2015.

The E-9 groups Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan, who represent 60 percent of the world's population and are among the most populous middle-income and low-income countries in the world.

The group adopted the Bali Declaration, which focused on teachers' training, salaries, retention, use of information communication technologies and open and distance learning.

"We recognise that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers, as they are the key factors in improving the quality of education," states the declaration.

The declaration also called for innovative approaches to attract teachers, especially female teachers, and monitor and improve teaching performances.

The group especially pressed on the issue of raising teachers' salaries to curb the rate of their leaving the profession because of better opportunities elsewhere.

UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura told a press conference that E-9 countries must allocate at least half of their education budget on EFA programmes if

they are to meet the targets.

The UN agency recommends that at least 20 percent of the national budget is allocated for education, and 10 percent for EFA.

Matsuura also urged donors to allocate more funds for education, especially for basic education in poorer countries to boost their chances of achieving EFA targets by 2015.

"We need a collective effort to increase the number of qualified teachers available to meet the EFA goals and that is why it is important to make E-9 a forum of action," said Matsuura.

Bangladesh has learned a lot from this conference, especially from countries such as Indonesia, who have not only passed a law for better qualified teachers but are also running programmes to attract educators for this profes-

sion, said Manzoor Ahmed, Bangladesh's delegation member and Director of Brac's education programme.

"We have also learned from open and distant learning programmes in other countries, which would help Bangladesh," he added.

Three South Asian countries in the group India, Pakistan and Bangladesh also discussed linking up Saarc education projects with Indonesia, another E-9 country, to adopt their best practices on a number of issues.

Participants at the two-day meeting shared best practices and learned from each other's mistakes in implementing education policy in countries with large population.

The next E-9 meeting will be held in Nigeria in 2010.

Robbers kill one in Gazipur

UNB, Gazipur

Armed robbers killed a house owner and injured five house inmates and looted valuables worth about Tk one lakh at Majkhana village under Sadar Upazila on early Wednesday.

The dead was identified as Mujibul Haque, 55.

Police said the gang numbering 10/12 entered into the house of Mujibul Haque at about 1:00am breaking the door open and took the house inmates' hostage at gunpoint.

They at one stage hacked Haque and his wife as they were delaying to give them the keys of locker. Later, they looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuables worth Tk one lakh.

As the house inmates raised hue and cry for help when the dacoits were feeling, the criminals opened fire on them indiscriminately, leaving six people injured.

Of the injured Mujibul Haque died soon after his admission at Tangi hospital while the rest were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and local clinics.

103 arms seized in Khulna in Feb

UNB, Khulna

Police recovered 103 illegal firearms, 71 explosives and 533 rounds of bullet in Khulna in February.

They also arrested 11,016 people, including 73 listed terrorists and extremists. Some 402 cases were also filed under Narcotics Control Act during period.

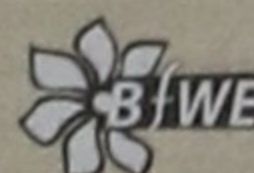

The drive was launched to check the criminal activities by anti-social elements and improve the law and order situation significantly in the district.



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Winners of the final rounds of inter-class debate competition of Sunshine Grammar School and College and Chittagong Sunshine School and College pose for photograph with the guests at the prize giving ceremony in the port city yesterday. The competition was held as part of the Star Campus-Drishly Debate for Generation Next '08.

STAR CAMPUS-DRISHTY DEBATE IN CTG Stand against unjust, inhuman activities

Speakers urge students

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The final rounds of inter-class debate competition of Sunshine Grammar School and College and Chittagong Sunshine School and College for the Star Campus-Drishly Debate for Generation Next '08 was held at Sunshine Grammar School yesterday.

The speakers on the occasion urged the students to be courageous and stand against all sorts of unjust and inhuman activities.

Revolutionary Binod Bihari Chowdhury was the chief guest at the ceremony with Principal of both the schools Safia Gazi Rahman in the chair.

Chairman of Centre for Good Governance Professor Syed Ahsanul Alam Parvez was present as a special guest.

Drishly, a cultural organisation, arranged the competition while The Daily Star sponsored it. Radio Forti was the radio partner of the competition.

Binod Bihari in his speech said that people still lead a miserable

life although the country got independence twice in 1947 and 1971.

"Establishment of true democracy is necessary for the welfare of the people," he said adding that democracy cannot be blamed for the situation the country is undergoing now.

It is rather the fault of the politicians who did not adhere to true democracy, he observed.

Professor Ahsanul urged the young generation to prepare themselves for taking the control of the country in future as the present leadership failed to show correct direction for the development.

The topic in the final round for Sunshine Grammar School and College was 'Democracy is not suitable for the third world countries'.

The team that spoke against the notion clinched the title while Eshfaq Ullah, a student of Class VIII and the captain of the losing team, was adjudged the best debater.

A total of nine teams of the school participated in the competition that began on February 18.

Meanwhile, for Chittagong Sunshine School and College, the topic was 'Newspaper is much more effective than television as mass media'.

The team that spoke for the notion became champion. Jaodad Hasib, a student of class X and captain of the winning team, was the best debater.

Five teams of different classes of the school from class VII to class X participated in the competition.

Safia Gazi Rahman and Drishly Joint Secretary Adnan Mannan were the moderators in the rounds respectively.

Senior teacher of Sunshine Grammar School and College Aminul Islam, Drishly Joint Secretary Shahidul Islam, Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB) Debate Club executives Tazrian Shahid and Salman Jahir were the judges.

Drishly President Masud Bakul, Vice President Kashihaful Haque Shehzad and member Masudur Rahman were also present.

WEATHER FORECASTING

India to launch advanced meteorological satellite

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, from New Delhi

Reflecting a sense of urgency, experts from Saarc countries have begun discussing use of satellite products in day-to-day weather forecasting as India offered to share its satellites providing such information to the region prone to most of the world's major natural disasters.

The four-day Saarc workshop on weather forecasting techniques, which started here on Tuesday, was told that India plans to launch an advanced dedicated meteorological satellite probably by this year-end which will provide a quantum jump in disseminating information on temperature, humidity sea surface temperature, snow cover, snow depth, fire and smoke.

The Indian Space Research Organisation is also planning to launch two more satellites for weather forecasting.

Under the Saarc cooperation programme, meteorology is one of the five areas identified since its inception in 1981.

Saarc countries have had more than a fair share of weather and weather-related disasters and therefore accurate day-to-day forecasting and early warnings about tropical cyclone, track predictions, seasonal and long-range rainfall forecasting, flood prediction are vital for the region.

The workshop aims at appraising scientists and meteorologists of South Asia with the use of meteorological data and imageries from satellites.

The workshop will come up with recommendations for implementation by governments of Saarc countries.

The workshop is being attended by about 16 representatives from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives and hosts India.

Meanwhile, India's former foreign secretary Shyam Saran was on Tuesday appointed as Prime Minister's special envoy on climate change. Saran is also the Prime Minister's special envoy on the Indo-US nuclear deal.

Sudan wants Bangladesh role in economic progress

UNB, Dakar

Sudan wants Bangladesh to participate in Sudan's economic progress as there has scope for Bangladeshi skilled and semi-skilled manpower in Sudanese development.

Sudanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs, the leader of Sudanese delegation to the OIC Ministerial Council Meeting, Elsamani Elwasila Elsamani informed this to Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury when the two held a bilateral meeting on the sideline of the Ministerial Conference in Dakar on Tuesday.

The Sudanese minister observed that with the recent discovering of natural resource, there was a "surge" of interest in Sudanese economy by Asian countries like India and China.

He stated that the Sudanese government and people would welcome the participation of Bangladeshi companies and firms in the consequent economic activities.

He also lauded the role of the Bangladeshi Army and Police peacekeepers in Sudan that is helping bring stability to that country.

The foreign adviser informed

him about the initiatives underway to open a diplomatic mission in Khartoum in line with Bangladesh's growing relations with that country.

"We would be happy to fill this need," Iftekhar told Elsamani.

A draft cooperation agreement was under negotiations which both agreed should be signed soon. The Sudanese minister hoped the foreign adviser would be able to visit Khartoum and "see the facts for himself."

Int'l telecom may interrupt on March 15

BSS, Dhaka

International telecommunication through submarine cable may be interrupted from 2:00am to 5:00am on March 15 due to emergency repair work of Chittagong-Cox's Bazar optical fiber line, an official handout said here yesterday.

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) has expressed sincere apology for the temporary inconvenience of its subscribers, it said.



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