

# Bangladeshi peacekeepers improve communication network in Liberia

BSS, Bong County, Liberia

Communication network in war-torn Liberia has improved significantly following the relentless work of the Bangladeshi peacekeepers.

The BANENGR-8, which is tasked to maintain and repair roads in Bong County, is making all out efforts to reestablish the communication network in the country, said Lt Col Abu Jobaer Nayeem, commanding officer of BANENGR-8.

He said road and rail communication had been totally damaged in the West African country due to the 14-year long civil war.

Since the deployment of the BANENGR-8 in Bong County, it has repaired 81 km Gbarga-Salala Road, 80 km Gbarga-Ganta Road and 44 km Gbarga-Zoror Road, Nayeem said.

The contingent, he said, also

carried out repair work of an entry road from CARI Complex to UN Water Point and internal roads in Gbarga city and constructed a connecting road near CARI administration office.

It also worked for the development of Palala-Charly Road, the Medal Parade Ground for Nigerian Formed Police Unit and a field around Bong County superintendent accommodation area, Lt Col Nayeem said.

Renovation work of UN Helipad at CARI Complex was done by the BANENGR-8, he said. It also supplied 18,000 liters drinking water to BANBAT-11, Bangla Camp and CARI Complex in the country.

Besides maintaining and repairing roads, he said, the contingent destroyed 15 hand grenades, 12 RPGs, 12 mortars, two GF shells, 16 RL shells, four rocket bodies, 11

rocket shells, one airdrop bomb, 74 unexploded bombs and 1187 various types of ammunition abandoned by the combatants in last one year.

Meanwhile, the BANENGR-7, deployed in Nimba County, constructed and repaired 101 km Ganta-Tappita Road, 26 km Sanniquelli-Loguatu Road and 2.85 km road under Ganta city Development Project, said Lt Col Habib, commanding officer of BANENGR-7.

Twenty-two culverts were also built and repaired by the contingent, he said.

Besides, the BANENGR-7 constructed the playground of an orphanage and two passenger-sheds and carried out development work and welfare activities of different organisations, Habib said.

## Tribute paid to Bazlur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Paying tributes to late editor of the Sangbad, the speakers at a condolence meeting yesterday said the countrymen will always remember Bazlur Rahman with gratitude for his contributions to journalism, progressive politics and social services.

They said Bazlur was a pioneer and role model in journalism and his death has created a vacuum in this field.

The condolence meeting was organised by Moni Singh-Farhad Smriti Trust at its Purana Paltan office in the city where politicians, media people, cultural activists, artists and civil society members were present.

Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon said Bazlur would be long remembered for his invaluable contribution to building a progressive, democratic and secular country.

Recalling his unflinching devotion to journalism Menon said Bazlur was a beacon of journalism in Bangladesh and new journalists should follow his ideology.

Awami League leader Nurul Islam Nahid said Bazlur believed in non-communal ideology and his demise is not only an irreparable loss to newspaper industry, but also to the country as a whole.

Shekhar Dutta, general secretary of Moni Singh-Farhad Smriti Trust, said Bazlur was a valiant freedom fighter and the nation would remember him for his contribution to language movement and liberation war.

Pronay Saha, general secretary of Khela Ghar, said Bazlur was a great patron of cultural programmes and he always encouraged the activities of Khela Ghar.

Motia Chowdhury, Bazlur's wife and Awami League leader, artist M Hamid, Workers' Party General Secretary Bimal Biswas were present at the meeting.

The participants at the meeting prayed for peace and salvation of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to bereaved family members.

Bazlur died of a cardiac arrest at Ibrahim Memorial Hospital and Cardiac Research Institute on February 26 at the age of 67.

## Sixth Int'l Education Exhibition begins in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 6th International Education Exhibition 2008 began at Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday to provide admission information for different public and private universities at home and abroad.

The three-day exhibition was inaugurated by former adviser to caretaker government CM Shafi Sami at the ballroom of the hotel.

40 booths have been set up at the exhibition organised by SSBCL, a consulting firm for students willing to study abroad.

Nearly 30 local and foreign exhibitors are offering services and information for the visitors.

Shafi Sami said this is an ideal opportunity for talking to counselors and students and interact with the representatives of foreign institutes and delegates at the same venue.

Malaysian High Commissioner in Dhaka Dato Abdul Malek Bin Abdul Aziz, Amar Desh Editor Amanullah Kabir and Chairman and Managing Director of SSBCL Group S Talukder also addressed at the function.

The Daily Star, ETV, Radio Today, Amar Desh, SNN Media Ltd and the Janakantha are the media partners of the exhibition.

The exhibition will also be held at Peninsula Hotel in Chittagong on March 18 and 19.



Children place wreaths at the portrait of eminent journalist Bazlur Rahman at a memorial meeting at Moni Singh-Farhad Memorial Trust auditorium in the city yesterday.

## Myanmar okays visa for human rights expert

UNB, Geneva

The outgoing UN expert on human rights in Myanmar yesterday said he is being granted a visa by the country's military rulers to see what progress has been made since his last visit in November.

"I have good news for you... Today the visa has been issued and my passport will be returned this afternoon," special rapporteur Paulo Sergio Pinheiro told journalists in Geneva. "That's a wonderful surprise."

News of the visa came mid-way through a press conference at which Pinheiro elaborated on his report this week to the Human Rights Council which was sharply critical of Myanmar.

Pinheiro, a Brazilian diplomat and legal scholar, said he did not know when he would go to Myanmar, or whether he would prepare a new report -- given that his seven-year mandate expires this month.

## Dhaka upholds strong anti-trafficking position in Vienna confce

BSS, Dhaka

Dhaka's strong stance against trafficking and child labour was aptly upheld in a recent conference in Vienna, Austria, where an international lobby tried to project Bangladesh as a hotspot for child employment, labour exploitation and human trafficking.

"We have foiled the move coming from a strong group in Europe, as we showed evidence that Bangladesh eliminated child labour from its readymade garment sector almost a decade ago," Home Secretary Mohammad Abdul Karim, who refuted all allegations against Bangladesh, told BSS upon his return from Austria yesterday.

"Steps have also been taken to check human trafficking," he told

the conference.

Karim led a six-member delegation that included Deputy Secretary Shudhakar Dutta, Habiba Akhter of US Agency for International Development (USAID), Advocate Salma Ali of Bangladesh Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA), Hosne Ara Begum of TMSS and Syeda Munira Sultana of International Organisation of Migration (IOM).

The programme titled United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking (UN.GIFT) brought together over 1,500 delegates from 116 countries to enhance global efforts to fight human trafficking, worst form of crime towards modern day slavery.

Egyptian first lady Suzanne Mubarak, British actress Emma

Thompson and singer Ricky Martin joined the event.

Industry insiders said the RMG sector and the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in Bangladesh are free from child labour since 1998 in line with a tripartite agreement between the government, International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Readymade Garment Exporters' Association (BGMEA). ILO still regularly monitors the enforcement of the agreement signed in 1995.

As regards trafficking, Abdul Karim told the conference that the position of Bangladesh was far better than many other densely populated countries in South Asia. The preventive measures from the government, he said, have saved many lives that end up in forced prostitution in neighbouring countries.

An estimated 20,000 persons including women and children were trafficked each year from Bangladesh to India, Pakistan and the Middle East, a claim NGOs say is an underestimation and the government says overestimation.

Women and girls aged between 7 to 24 years and boys aged from 2 to 12 years are the worst victims of trafficking, according to a report of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Persons are being trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation, bonded labour, human organ supply and beggary.

The US government, in its trafficked-in-person (TIP) report put Bangladesh at 'Tier-3' few years back, but gradually the position lowered at 'Tier-2 Worst List' and presently at 'Tier-2', a situation the home secretary dubbed as tremendous development than neighbouring countries, who still remained at 'Tier-2 Worst List'.

Abdul Karim, who pleaded for ensuring mode-4 of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for least developed countries, said the trafficking could be prevented more successfully provided the developed world ensure free flow of natural persons to their lands. The trafficked persons -- be female or male -- fell victim most in hope of getting better jobs abroad.

"So, simultaneously we are promoting safe migration in line with mode-4 of WTO and strongly checking all forms of human trafficking," he said adding that labour trafficking has become a new form of exploitation.

The developed world, he said, should encourage wider legal migration of workers from developing countries.

Asked about any long-term solution, the home secretary said empowerment of women and development of skilled manpower should be the focus to deter trafficking from Bangladesh. A number of steps, he said, have already been taken to educate girls and aware people to prevent trafficking, fueled by poverty and illiteracy.

The UN estimates that globally some 2.5 million people are in forced labour, as a result of trafficking, which has now become a 'booming organised crime' with annual profits going up to 32 billion US dollars on a global scale. The profit from trafficking has been positioned just after earnings from smuggling of drugs and arms.



Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz inaugurates a reunion of DU Sociology Alumni Association by releasing balloons at the Teacher-Student Centre yesterday. The association organised the event to mark the golden jubilee of the sociology department.

## 'Green' buildings could slash greenhouse gas emissions

AFP, Vancouver, Canada

Basic changes in building design and construction could slash greenhouse gas emissions by 35 percent in North America, said a joint Canada-US-Mexico report Thursday.

The report, "Green Building in North America: Opportunities and Challenges," was released by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation at an environmental trade fair in this western Canadian city.

Politicians and businesses on the continent have focused on the role of transportation and the oil and gas sector in climate change and ignored buildings, said Jonathan Westeinde.

But the building industry has "a much greater potential to have an impact on climate change," he said.

Westeinde is a Canadian developer who chairs an advisory group for the commission, which has the mandate of environmental cooperation under the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The report recommended that engineers and architects abandon old, proven designs in favor of emerging building technologies, and also called for urban planning with increased population density and access to public transit.

It touted basic measures such as

thicker insulation and more energy efficient windows, minimizing energy-intensive heating and air-conditioning and avoiding use of some synthetic building materials that cause indoor air pollution by releasing volatile compounds.

The report noted that North America's buildings release more than 2,200 megatons of carbon dioxide each year, some 35 percent of the continent's total. "The carbon savings, if we started building all buildings to a higher standard by 2030, would be equivalent to all carbon emissions of the transportation sector in the United States," said Westeinde.

But the industry has a long way to go. Less than four percent of new buildings meet stringent new environmental, health and energy-saving goals under the continent's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standard.

Many of the ideas in the report, from urban design to boosting insulation, are not new. "What's different with this report is there is science behind it," said Westeinde.

Evidence for the possible energy savings is contained in technical background papers based on laboratory tests, and show that the targets in the report are achievable, he said.

The report shows that the goal of making all American buildings

completely carbon-neutral by 2030, set by the American Institute of Architecture, can be achieved, he said.

Yet, North America lags Europe in sustainable construction. "The North American building industry has the lowest research and development budget, as a percentage of revenues, of any industry in North America... (and) of its peers anywhere in the world," explained Westeinde.

"It shows how much of a laggard we are."

"If I wanted to be critical, I'd say North America has no vision about what it's trying to achieve from a climate change point of view."

In North America another barrier to sustainable buildings is the way new residential and commercial construction is financed, said Westeinde.

Environmentally friendly buildings are not more costly in the long run, because they save money on energy and maintenance many years after construction.

But loans for construction are based on the short-term costs of developers, rather than the long-term savings for buyers.

The result is the "lowest possible capital cost construction... even though the life cycle of a building is 50 to 75 years," lamented Westeinde. "It's a stupid way."

## Vitamin D supplements cut risk of child diabetes

AFP, Paris

Taking vitamin D supplements in infancy may help a youngster ward off Type 1 diabetes, according to a review of the evidence released on Thursday in a special journal.

Doctors in Britain looked at five studies in which children were monitored from infancy to early childhood to see if vitamin D supplements made a difference to the risk of becoming diabetic.

The risk of developing the disease was reduced 29 percent in children who took extra vitamin D as compared to those who had not.

Diabetes is a chronic condition in which the body does not produce enough of the hormone insulin, or cannot make proper use of the insulin it does produce, a condition called insulin resistance.

In Type 1 diabetes, so-called beta cells in the pancreas that produce insulin are destroyed in early childhood by the body's immune system.

The disease is most common among people of European descent, affecting around two million Europeans and North Americans, and for reasons that are unclear is becoming more widespread.

Type 2 diabetes, which is far more common, is linked mainly with an unhealthy diet and sedentary lifestyle. It is becoming epidemic in scale in many developed or fast-developing countries.

The new study, led by Christos Zitiptis of St. Mary's Hospital for Women and Children in Manchester, northern England, is published by Archives of Disease in Childhood.

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