

UN urged to protect rights of migrant workers

Iftekhar meets UN General Assembly president

UNB, New York

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury met with UN General Assembly President Serjani Kerim at the UN headquarters on Tuesday and underscored the need for the UN to play a greater role in protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of migrant workers.

Iftekhar said 'managed migration' can be an effective tool for poverty alleviation and development. He said in the past year Bangladesh sent a record 8,32,000 workers and the remittance

received in the country US\$ 7 billion, which was a new record.

The adviser observed that if host societies are made to be more responsive to the welfare needs of the migrant workers, it can be a 'win-win' situation for both sides. He thought the UN could assist this process more effectively by bringing together all stakeholders. They also discussed the subject of the Millennium Development Goals Summit scheduled to be held under UN auspices on September 25 this year.

Kerim accepted with gratitude

the foreign adviser's invitation to visit Bangladesh and stated that he looked forward to visiting Dhaka in August this year. He praised Bangladesh's role in facilitating UN reforms and the contribution of the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Ambassador Ismat Jahan as member of the Task Force on Security Council Reforms.

Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Ambassador Ismat Jahan and Director General of the Foreign Ministry Hamidur Rashid were present during the meeting.

TRIAL OF WAR CRIMINALS

AI, FSB welcome govt initiative

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amnesty International (AI), a London-based human rights watchdog, and Forum for Secular Bangladesh (FSB) yesterday welcomed the government initiative to involve the United Nations in the process for the trial of war criminals.

"Action to end impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law committed in 1971 is long overdue. The failure to tackle this has encouraged the persistent nature of impunity in Bangladesh," AI said in a release.

In a separate press release, Forum for Secular Bangladesh said, "We expect UN's role in trying the Pakistani war criminals, but now we are more concerned about the trial of Bangladeshi war criminals."

The UN can be involved in the process for the trial of war criminals after the formation of a special tribunal for this purpose, it said.

The UN can send observers to witness the trial process of Bangladesh war criminals and can also help Bangladesh in collecting documents and evidence of war crimes, it added.

During her recent visit to Bangladesh, Amnesty International Secretary General Irene Khan said the government has to take initiatives to bring the war criminals to justice.

She also said that the government should also take advice from the United Nations on legal steps.

70pc merit quota in govt service demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students of Dhaka University (DU), who have been demonstrating on the campus under the banner of Quota Reform Movement (QRM), yesterday demanded implementation of 70 per cent merit quota in government service recruitment.

The demand came at a press conference at Dhaka University Journalists' Association (DUA) where QRM Convener KM Selim read out a written statement.

He urged the government to fulfill their demand by April 10, otherwise they will go for tougher programme.

Earlier, the QRM gave an ultimatum to the government to make public the report of the two-member committee formed to evaluate the quota system for Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examinations within March 29.

Selim, a student of political science, said if the government dilidallies to fulfill their demand, they will take to the streets again and lay siege to Public Service Commission (PSC) office to press home their demand.

Earlier, the government formed the committee headed by Regulatory Reform Commission Chairman Dr Akbar Ali Khan to look into the quota system under the Public Service Commission (PSC) and submit a report on it.

Three held with huge foreign currencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested three alleged Hundi traders from a house at Segunbagicha in the city last night and seized about Tk 16.61 lakh, 4,500 euros, 1,330 US dollars and currencies of several other countries.

A team of Rab-10 conducted the raid and arrested Zakir Hossain and his brothers Alamgir Khan and Monir Hossain. They hail from Khraikandi village of Debidwar in Comilla, says a Rab press release.

Final round of first Stamford biz quiz contest held

The final round and prize giving ceremony of First Business Quiz Competition-2008 was held on the Dhanmondi campus of Stamford University Bangladesh on April 1, says a press release.

The 15-day quiz programme was arranged only for the BBA students. A total of four teams, comprising eight members, competed in the final round out of 40 teams.

By obtaining the highest mark in the competition, Team-17 comprising Alim-al-Rabbe and Lutful Kabir Munna became the champions of the competition, while Team-12 of Md Nazmul Huda and Md Shajalal, Team-10 of Monika Sharmin and Jasmin Ara Molly and Team-21 consists member of Tamanna and Rabeya were placed first, second and third runners-up respectively.

BBA Department Academic Adviser Dr Jamal Uddin Ahmed handed over the trophy to the champion team as the chief guest.



Newly appointed non-resident Ambassador of Portugal Luis Filipe Carrilho de Castro Mendes presents his credentials to President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Press remains free under emergency

President tells Portugal envoy

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed said the government is extremely cautious of applying the emergency in freedom of expression.

"The press remains free," he said this when newly appointed non-resident Ambassador designated of Portugal Luis Filipe Carrilho de Castro Mendes presented his credentials to him at Bangabhaban here yesterday.

While talking to the Envoy, the president emphasised on exchange programmes among professional experts, including IT, scientists, physicians, engineers and academics between the two countries.

He underscored the need for increasing trade relations between the two countries saying, "There is a huge scope for expansion of our trade relations."

Iajuddin hoped that the bilateral trade between the two countries would get new impetus during the tenure of the newly appointed Portugal Ambassador.

The president apprised the envoy of the imposing of State of Emergency in the country and also the progress in the preparation of holding the elections as per the roadmap of the Election Commission.

Cuta election April 15

CU CORRESPONDENT

Awami League-backed 'Yellow' panel and four-party alliance-backed 'White' panel candidates submitted nomination papers yesterday for the Chittagong University Teachers' Association (CUTA) election scheduled to be held on April 15.

Prof Ershad Kamal of Economics Department and Prof Kamal Hossain of Institute of Forestry and Environmental Sciences submitted their nomination papers for the post of president from the 'Yellow' and 'White' Panel respectively.

Prof Kamrul Huda of Botany Department and Prof Abdul Karim of Statistics Department submitted nomination papers for the post of general secretary.

Other Yellow panel members who also submitted nomination papers are Dr Ganesh Chandra Roy (vice president), Khaled Mizbahuzzaman (treasurer), Ali Asgar Chowdhury (joint secretary), Dr Mohammad Abul Hossain (member), Dr Jiban Chandra Pal (member), Dr AKM Moinul Haq Miaz (member), Dr Selina Akhter (member), Mohammad Helal Uddin Nizami (member) and Hossain Kabir (member).

The 'White' panel members are Associate Prof Abu Taher Chowdhury (vice president), Associate Professor Dr Saleh Jahur (treasurer), Assistant Professor Mamta Uddin Kaderi (joint secretary), Prof Abul Kashem Chowdhury (member), Dr Mohammad Abdul Forcan (member), Dr Mohammad Maruf Hossain (member), Dr Shafiqul Alam (member), Dr Mohammad Al Amin (member) and Salma Mamta (member).

Last date for withdrawal of nomination papers was fixed for Saturday next.

A total 620 teachers would exercise their volition in the election, sources said.

A three-member panel of election commissioners, headed by Prof Mohammad Azizur Rahman of Botany Department, would conduct the election.

The envoy appreciated the ongoing process of issuing voter ID cards and said he was hopeful about return of democracy in the country.

Terming Bangladesh as a 'moderate' Muslim country, the envoy said, "Communal harmony prevails in the country".

Praising Bangladeshi nationals staying in Portugal, he said, "Bangladeshi people are very good".

Secretary to President's Office Md Sirajul Islam, Foreign Secretary Touhid Hossain and President's Press Secretary Abdul Awal Howlader were present.

10th CHT cultural festival begins today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The four-day 10th Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Indigenous Cultural Festival begins on the premises of Tribal Culture Institute in Rangamati hill town today.

Jhum Aesthetic Council (JAC), a cultural organisation of eleven ethnic communities in CHT, is organising the festival on the occasion of traditional Bijhu Utsab to be held on April 12-14.

Law Adviser Hasan Arif, the chief guest of the function, will inaugurate it through lighting candle (mongal pradip) at Tribal Culture Institute at 4:00pm while

Deputy Commissioner Md Nurul Amin and cultural personality Albert Soren will attend, among others.

Nineteen stalls of different communities have been set up on the occasion.

Sixteen ethnic communities, namely, Chakma, Marmar, Tangchangya, Tripura, Lushai, Khyang, Chak, Khumi, Bom, Mro, Garo, Monipuri, Rakha, Santal, Munde and Mahali will participate in the festival, JAC President Jhimit Chakma said.

Indigenous cultural functions and roundtable meetings will mark the four-day festival.



Apollo Hospitals Dhaka organised a healthcare awareness programme on adolescent issues at Notre Dame College during its Annual Science Festival 2008 recently. Counsellor Farhat Hasan of Apollo Hospitals conducted the programme.

2 maund hemp seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police on Tuesday recovered two maunds of hemp worth about Tk 2.5 lakh from a truck on Moulvibazar-Dhaka highway near Jalalabad Gas Distribution office at Moulvibazar town.

Truck driver Abdul Haque, 40, and helper Saiful, 20, were arrested in this connection.

Amulya Kumer Chowdhury, Inspector of CID Moulvibazar said, Acting on a tip, CID men held the truck loaded with furniture at midnight and they found four sacks of hemp weighing about two maunds after a search.

One killed in roof collapse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A man was killed when a large chunk from the roof of a restaurant on DB road at Gaibandha town fell off on Tuesday night.

Mohsin, 40, and Wahab, 12, remained trapped unconscious under the rubbish after the accident.

Police and fire brigade men rescued them and sent to Gaibandha modernised hospital.

On-duty doctor declared Mohsin dead shortly afterwards while Wahab was shifted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital yesterday morning as his condition deteriorated.

1.50 kg heroin recovered, five arrested in Benapole

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

The Directorate of Narcotic Control (DNC) officials in separate drives yesterday recovered 1.50 kilogramme of heroin from Benapole bazaar and arrested five persons in this connection.

DNC Deputy Director Hafizur Rahman said the drives were conducted at Star Medical Store, Rupali Jewellers and Anis Telecom.

The arrestees are Nur Islam, Samir, Anis, Shahidul and Rahim.

During the drives, Tk 1.50 lakh in cash and eight mobile phone sets were also seized from their possession.



Zonta Dist-25 governor arrives today

Manthri Parera, governor of Zonta International District-25 comprising Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka, arrives in Dhaka today on a four-day visit, says a press release.

During her visit, Governor Parera will attend the Area-02 Meeting to be held on April 4 at Dhaka. She will also visit Chittagong Club.

Zonta International is an international service organisation represented in 67 countries with about 33,000 women members who are leaders in their business and profession, working together to advance the status of women worldwide and to improve the legal, political, economic, education, health and professional status of women and girl children.

Paediatric Assoc executives

Shishu Matri Institute Executive Director Prof Abdul Hannan and Dhaka Shishu Hospital Medicine Department Prof Md Ruhul Amin were elected president and general secretary of Bangladesh Paediatric Association (BPA) on March 21, says a BPA press release.

Other office-bearers are Vice Presidents: Prof Sirajul Islam, Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, Prof Md Shahidullah, Prof Ekhlashur Rahman and Dr Md Kamruzzaman, Joint Secretaries: Dr Jahangir Alam and Dr Abdul Aziz, Treasurer: Dr Mejbah Uddin Ahmed, Organising Secretary: Dr Hossain Shahid Kamrul Alam, Office Secretary: Dr Abu Taiyeb, Social Welfare and Cultural Secretary: Dr Shahida Aktar and Scientific Secretary: Dr Habibur Rahman.

Seventeen others were elected executive committee members.

Action against two factories for polluting environment

BSS, Dhaka

Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday conducted raid on different industrial units in Savar as part of its drive against environment polluting mills and factories.

During the drive, gas and power supply to two factories were severed for discharging liquid into water bodies without treating in effluent treatment plants.

The two factories are Pakiza Dyeing and Printing Limited, and Anilma Yarn Dyeing Limited.

Director of DoE Dhaka Divisional Office Neyamat Ullah Bhuiyan led the drive while Savar Upazila Nirbahi Officer M Rabbi Mian and representatives from Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd, Rural Electrification Cooperative Society, joint forces and police took part in it.

Such drives will be continued against the organisations which have not taken no-objection certificates from the DoE and polluting environment keeping their effluent treatment plants inoperative, the press release said.

Result of junior scholarship exam today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The result of junior scholarship examination-2007 in Dhaka region will be published today, a handout said yesterday.

Candidates will be able to collect their results from the respective district education offices at 3:50pm.

Rohingyas clash with police: 25 injured

UNB, Cox's Bazar

Clash between police and Rohingya refugees at Nayapara near Teknaf yesterday left at least 25 people injured, including 10 police and Ansars.

Police said the clash erupted when the France-based medical service providing agency MSF closed its operation in the refugee camp.

Scores of refugees obstructed MSF officials to leave the camp. When police and Ansars came in they attacked them leading to the clash.

The refugees ransacked the government and NGO offices and damaged two vehicles. Police fired warning shots to disperse the trouble mongers.

The injured were taken to upazila health complex.

Five Rohingyas were arrested. Additional police were deployed in the area to ward off further disturbance.

Govt hands over historic official documents to Nat'l Archives

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday handed over the minutes, notices and summaries of cabinet meetings and some historic official documents of 11 years until 1982 to the National Archives.

The documents include the appointments and oaths of the presidents, vice presidents and prime ministers of Bangladesh.

The handover was done according to Section 9 (D) of the National Archives Ordinance 1983.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed formally handed over the historic documents to Cultural Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Choudhury at the conference room of the Cabinet Division after an advisory council meeting there.

A total of 51 volumes - 10 volumes compiling the original copies of the minutes of cabinet meetings from 1971 to 1980, four volumes of notices and 37 volumes of summaries from 1976 to 1980 - were given to the National Archives.

Besides, three volumes of historic documents regarding appointments and oaths of the presidents, vice presidents and prime ministers of Bangladesh during the period from 1971 to 1982 were given for permanent archiving.

Speaking briefly on the occasion, the chief adviser said it would help those who will carry out research and write history.

"These important documents would also be better preserved at the National Archives," he said,

Italian grant for ultra-poor women

UNB, Dhaka

The foreign ministry of Italy has announced a five-lakh-euro financial grant for enhancing food consumption and livelihoods of ultra-poor women in Bangladesh, as the country now reels out of natural disasters.

The financial support would be given through World Food Programme (WFP) under a programme titled 'Enhance Food Consumption and Livelihoods of Ultra-Poor Women - Vulnerable Group Development in Bangladesh'.

The newly appointed Italian Ambassador Dr Itala Maria Marta Occhi apprised Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed of the decision during a courtesy call on him at the CA's office yesterday.

The envoy also informed that Ferrero, a world-famous chocolate and food products manufacturing company of Italy, is donating 7 lakh packets of nutritious biscuits worth about \$1.5 million for cyclone 'Sidr' victims.

The company formally handed over the biscuits to Food and Disaster Ministry yesterday. The Italian envoy said the company would also explore opportu-

nity to invest in Bangladesh, particularly in setting up food-product industries.

Meantime, the council of advisers yesterday approved in principle the amendments to the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority Act 1980 to make some provisions in keeping with the changed context.

It also approved in principle the amended EPZ Labour Union and Industrial Relations Act 2004 with insertions of some sections in the law governing labour unions at the export-processing zones.

The advisory council meeting at Bangladesh Secretariat also discussed elaborately the Management of Sale and Purchase of Private Plots and Flats (Real Estate Development) Ordinance 2008.

Termining the draft of real-estate development ordinance important, the meeting sent it back for further consultation with stakeholders, emphasising wider public opinions about it.

Chief Adviser's Special Assistant for Power Division Dr M Tamim briefed the meeting on the latest state of load shedding due to repair of some power plants.

He informed that the country is now generating 3900MW of electricity against the demand for 4100 megawatts.

The chief adviser asked for taking short-term action plan to ensure smooth power supply ahead of the summer.

He also put emphasis on giving priority to uninterrupted electricity supply for irrigation.

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