

CELEBRATING LIFE

StanChart, Daily Star launch film, photo, lyrics contest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Standard Chartered Bank and The Daily Star jointly launched a contest styled 'Celebrating Life' on film, photography and lyrics to encourage new talents and project a better image of Bangladesh by highlighting its natural beauty and cultural heritage.

Standard Chartered Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Osman Morad and The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam signed a three-year agreement in this regard at a press conference at Hotel Sonargaon in the capital yesterday.

The contest on film includes a short documentary and a fiction film on the theme 'Knowing Bangladesh Better'. The photography contest will be on the theme 'Bangladesh -- My Love' taken anywhere in Bangladesh except Dhaka and the contest on lyrics, both in Bangla and English, will be on the same theme.

Separate jury boards comprising nine eminent personalities and experts on different subjects will judge the entries.

The winners of the contests will be awarded in a mega event titled 'Celebrating Life' in Dhaka by the

end of July 2008. Immediately afterwards, the winning films will be screened on Channel i. Audio cassettes and CDs will be produced from the winning lyrics with collaboration of music houses.

Later, the same festival will be replicated in 12 districts across the country throughout 2008.

"We are optimistic about Bangladesh. It is going to be a middle-income country in near future. It, however, involves not only financial issues, but also socio-cultural aspects," said Standard Chartered CEO Osman Morad at the launch of the contest.

The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam said such a competition has been organised to promote creative artists who have tremendous contribution to make towards nation-building and improving the image of the country and promoting her culture and tradition.

Channel i Managing Director Faridur Reza Sagar, film director Tareque Masud, lyricist Mohammad Rafiquzzaman, Standard Chartered Bank's Regional Head of Corporate Affairs, South Asia, Shah Masud Imam and festival coordinator Rafi Hossain

also spoke at the press conference.

Film contest

Contestants are invited to make films depicting any aspect of Bangladesh's nature, culture, life-style, commerce and politics and are encouraged to focus on rural Bangladesh.

The length of the films should be between 20 to 30 minutes and the submissions must be in DVD format for preview purposes. Only the winners will be asked to provide master copies of their films in DVCAM master format. Submissions must be original and unscreened works of the filmmakers.

The best submissions will be awarded in the following categories: Best Documentary, Best Short Fiction, Special Jury Award Documentary, and Special Jury Award Short Fiction. The awards for two best films carry Tk 100,000 each while the two special award films will be given Tk 50,000 each.

The winning films will be shown on Channel i and screened in a touring festival programme at the district level throughout Bangladesh. Eminent film directors have shown interest to work closely

with the top two winners for upcoming projects.

Photography contest

The contest titled 'Bangladesh -- My Love' invites photographs taken anywhere in Bangladesh except Dhaka.

The entries should bring to light a positive image of Bangladesh, based on any specific district or region. Participants are directed to submit any number of entries and the size of the photographs can be either 16" x 20" or 12" x 16".

Ten winners will receive certificates, crests and cash prizes. The first prize carries Tk 25,000, while the first runner-up will receive Tk 20,000 and the second runner-up Tk 15,000. The other winners will receive Tk 5,000 each.

The winning photographs will be featured in the district level festivals across Bangladesh. The top three winners of the photography competition will have an opportunity to work with The Daily Star as apprentices.

Lyrics contest

The contest is on the theme of 'Bangladesh -- My Love'. The contestants are encouraged to write patriotic songs and the entries can be in both English and Bangla. Participants can also submit any number of entries.

Twelve winners will be selected in two categories -- six for English lyrics and six for Bangla lyrics -- and they will receive certificates, crests and cash prizes.

The first prizes in both the categories carry Tk 10,000 each while the first runners-up in both the categories will receive Tk 7,000 and the second runners-up Tk 5,000. The other winners will receive Tk 3,000 each.

Renowned music directors will compose songs based on the winning lyrics, and young and veteran singers will give voice to the songs, which will be featured on cassettes and CDs. The winning lyrics will also be featured in district level festivals throughout Bangladesh.

The entries should be submitted to Rafi Hossain, festival coordinator, The Daily Star, 19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, by May 31, 2008.

'Celebrating Life' is being organised by the Star Insight, a fortnightly magazine of The Daily Star. Radio foorti, Bangladesh info.com and Channel i are the media partners of the event.



CEO of Standard Chartered Bank Osman Morad, 3rd from left, and The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam, 2nd from right, exchange documents after signing an agreement on a film, photography and lyrics contest titled 'Celebrating Life' at Hotel Sonargaon in the city yesterday while lyricist Mohammad Rafiquzzaman, extreme left, festival coordinator Rafi Hossain, 2nd from left, filmmaker Tareque Masud, 4th from left, Shah Masud Imam of Standard Chartered Bank, 5th from left, and Channel i Managing Director Faridur Reza Sagar, extreme right, look on.

'Build nation on liberation war ideologies'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a condolence meeting yesterday said the nation should be built on the basis of the ideologies of liberation war.

They said this country should be a country of freedom fighters and not the frauds.

The meeting was organised by the expatriate freedom fighters of Dhaka and Chittagong Region at Dhaka Reporters Unity to condole the death of Jalal Uddin Ahmad, former chairman of Bangladesh Mukti Juddha Sangsad Central Command Council and one of the organisers of the liberation war.

The speakers said ideals of Jalal should be followed to build a democratic country with equal economic opportunity for all.

"We want a country of freedom fighters and not frauds so that none can say that he feels proud of being a Razakkar," said Prof Montajuddin.

Former air force chief Air Vice Marshal (ret) Sultan Mahmud said the country now needs people like Jalal whose contributions will be ever remembered by the people.

The meeting was also addressed by former adviser Ayub Quadri, Awami League leader Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Maniuddin Khan Mahi Gen (ret) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury and AW Chowdhury.

Results of BOA lottery draw

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) lottery draw was held in the city yesterday, says a press release.

LGRD Adviser Md Anwarul Iqbal was present at the lottery draw programme as the chief guest.

Following are the results of the lottery draw:

Table with 4 columns: Prize Category, Winning Number, Prize Amount, and Date. Includes categories like 1st Prize (Tk 10,000), 2nd Prize (Tk 5,000), etc.

VoIP equipment worth Tk 50 lakh seized in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) equipment worth Tk 50 lakh in a business office in the city's Dhanmondi area last night and arrested its three staffs.

The arrestees are identified as Rafiqul Islam, Anisur Rahman and Jewel.

Acting on a tip-off, Rab-1 members raided an apartment on the fourth floor of a building at Free School Street and seized 95 telephones, two gateways, eight modems, four telephone sets and 50 SIM cards.

Rab officials said the arrested persons had been carrying out the illegal VoIP business at the apartment for a long time.

Applications for ALA Scholarships invited

Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Douglas Foskett yesterday announced that applications are now being invited for the 2009 Australian Leadership Awards (ALA) Scholarships, says a press release.

"The ALA Scholarships scheme is a prestigious programme open to current and emerging leaders in the Asia-Pacific region," said Foskett.

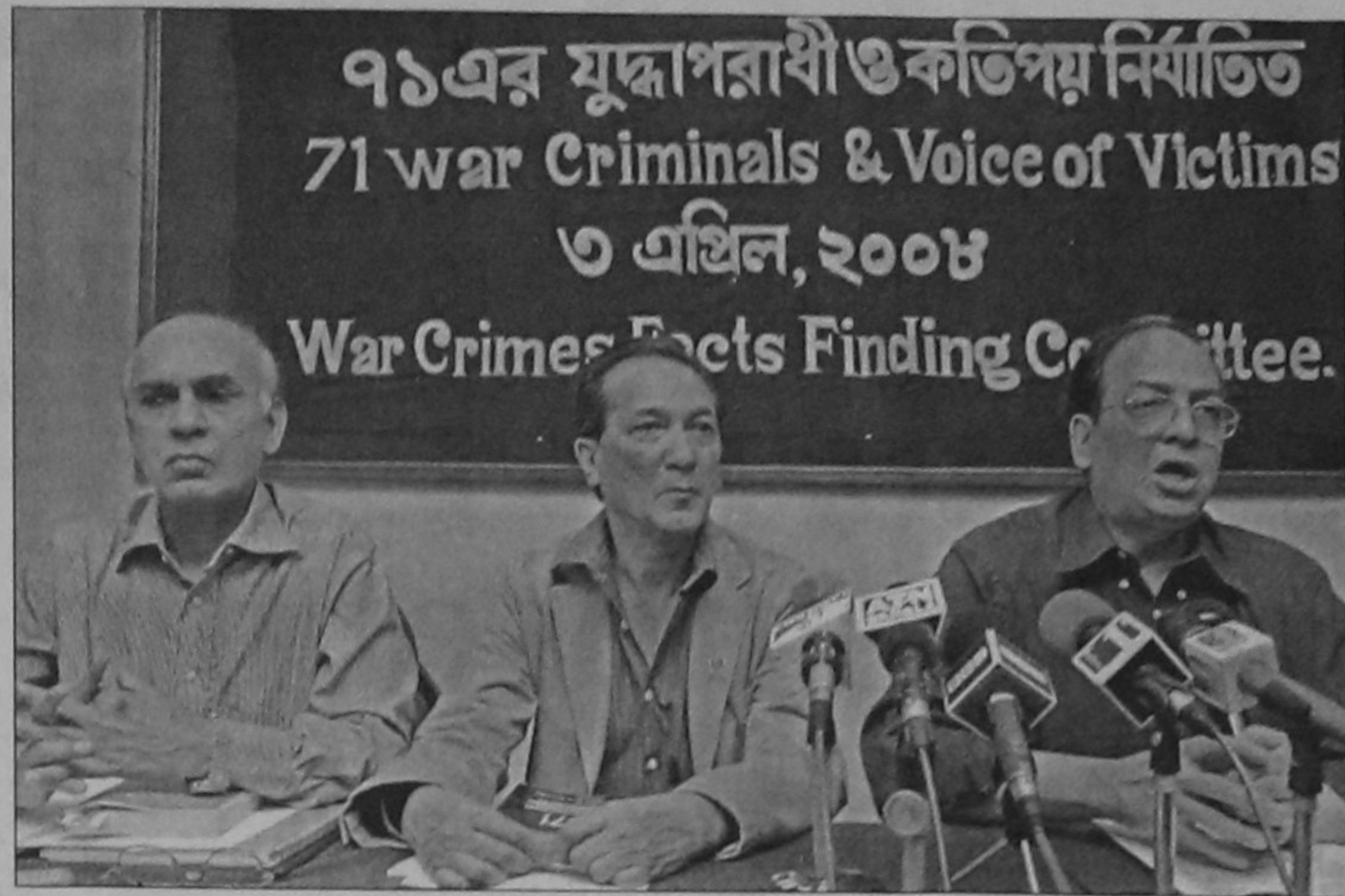
The ALA Scholarships are one of the Australian government scholarship programmes managed by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). Over Aus\$133 million is spent annually on scholarships throughout the aid programme.

The scholarships provide funding for study at masters and doctorate levels in Australia. These provide a significant opportunity for high achievers in Bangladesh to extend their education, strengthen their leadership skills, build networks and develop strategies to address development challenges across the Asia-Pacific Region.

Up to 220 scholarships are being offered to students globally to study at Australian universities in 2009 including candidates from Bangladesh. Scholars will be selected from a highly competitive regional pool on the basis of demonstrated leadership qualities and academic achievement. Sixteen scholars were selected from Bangladesh in 2008.

Awards are open for all fields of study programmes that relate to the priority themes of shared regional interest -- international trade, pandemics, security and climate change (including clean energy) -- are encouraged.

Applications for 2009 ALA Scholarships close on June 30. For further information go to <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/scholar/ala.cfm>



Dr M A Hasan discloses the names of war criminals at a press conference at WVA auditorium in the city yesterday. War Crimes Facts Finding Committee organised the programme. On his right are Akku Chowdhury and Col (Retd) Sajjadul Zahir. (Story on page 1)

Jonojuddho cadre killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A rival party cadre of outlawed Jonojuddho, one of the factions of Purb Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML), was slaughtered at Dalka village under Damurhuda upazila in Chuadanga on Wednesday night.

The victim was identified as Shamsur Rahman alias Kota, 45, son of Abdus Sattar of the same village.

According to police, a gang of 10 to 12 Jonojuddho cadres went to the house of Kota at about 12:00pm and called him out.

They took Kota to Dalka-Lakhipur water body and slaughtered there.

Police recovered the body in the morning and sent to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital.

One Ripon, introducing him as leader of Jonojuddho yesterday, claimed the responsibility for the murder without giving any further details.

2nd Dhaka int'l edn fair begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A four-day Second Dhaka International Education Fair-2008 began yesterday at Bashundhara City in the capital where admission information of different public and private universities are being provided.

Over 55 local and foreign universities, education institutions and related service providers have participated in the biggest education fair.

E3 Solutions (Extreme Exhibition and Event Solution Ltd) organised the fair at Bashundhara Expo Centre, level seven of the Bashundhara City where about 100 booths are set up for providing students and their parents with necessary information on courses, programmes and

facilities offered by different private universities and other educational institutions.

Representatives of different foreign universities especially the UK, the US, Malaysia, Cyprus, Thailand, India, Australia, Ireland, Poland and Singapore are also present at the fair so that aspirants can easily collect information and gather knowledge about these universities.

Novelist Imdadul Haque Milon inaugurated the fair and said the fair will help the students to design their career paths.

The Daily Star, Channel-i and the Ittefaq and Radio Today are the media partners and BDJobs.com is the web partner of the education fair.

The fair remains open for all from 10:00am to 8:00pm everyday.

Only MPs have right to stay in Nam flats

FROM PAGE 16

works asked the Parliament Secretariat to cancel the Nam flat allotment for the former lawmakers. It also asked the secretariat to direct the ex-lawmakers to apply to the Directorate of Government Accommodation (DGA) for fresh allotment and pay as per increased rent -- Tk 20,000 a month for a 1,250-sqft well furnished flat and Tk 25,000 for a 1,800-sqft flat in stead of Tk 400 and Tk 500.

The Parliament Secretariat handed over 137 Nam flats to the ministry on condition that those would again go under the secretariat's jurisdiction as soon as the official results of the ninth parliament are declared.

The government and the former lawmakers are now in a head-to-head position as the housing ministry had asked them to either vacate the flats by March 31 or pay Tk 20,000 per month as rent.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar in a letter to the chief adviser on March 30 said the Nam flats are the property of the Parliament Secretariat.

Neither the government nor the speaker had the authority to cancel the decision of the Sangsad Committee of the eighth Parliament, he said.

Sircar in his letter proposed that the issue could be resolved through holding a joint meeting of the MPs,

officials of the Parliament Secretariat and the housing ministry with the law adviser as arbitrator.

The speaker also proposed that the issue could be referred to the Supreme Court for legal opinion.

Shajahan Khan, Advocate Promod Mankin, Prof Dr Amanullah, Motahar Hossein of AL, Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rumi, AKM Selim Reza Habib, Nurul Kabir Sahin, Dr Muhammad Saleque Chowdhury, Rezina Islam, Fahima Hussein Jubilee, Rasheda Begum Hira, Advocate Bikis Jahan Shirin, Nurjahan Yasmin of BNP and Mojibur Rahman of JP were present at yesterday's press briefing.

WB for global fight against hunger

FROM PAGE 16

immediately threatened with malnutrition and starvation.

Zoellick urged countries to provide the minimum 500 million dollars immediately sought by the World Food Program (WFP) to face the mounting food crisis.

The United States, European Union, Japan, and other developed countries "must act now to fill this gap -- or many more people will suffer and starve," he told the Center for Global Development.

The WFP, a United Nations agency, issued "an extraordinary emergency appeal" to governments on March 20 for money to close a widening funding gap created by soaring food and fuel prices. Without such immediate help, the WFP warned it may have to cut food rations.

Zoellick said that the World Bank "will almost double our own lending for agriculture in Africa, from 450 million to 800 million dollars."

He said the World Bank estimates 33 countries face potential social unrest because of the stark rises in food and energy prices.

"For these countries, where food comprises from half to three quarters of consumption, there is no margin for survival," he said in a speech ahead of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's spring meetings on April 12-13 in Washington.

A surge in international prices of most cereals over the past two years has rippled through the price chain, driving up the retail prices of basic foods such as bread, meat and milk.

Zoellick noted the real price of rice last month had hit a 19-year high and that of wheat rose to a 28-year high.

The spiraling prices have forced some developing countries to take emergency measures to guarantee their food stocks.

On Tuesday, amid a second day of violent protests against soaring prices in Abidjan, the Ivory Coast government temporarily lifted tariffs on imports of certain food essentials, including rice, wheat flour, sugar, milk and fish.

FAO SAYS RICE OUTPUT TO

RISE

FAO has predicted that the global rice production will increase by 12 million tonnes in 2008, assuming normal weather conditions.

It will help ease the tight global supply situation that has pushed rice prices to a record high.

International rice prices rose by 20 percent in January, according to the FAO All Rice Price Index released in Rome on Wednesday.

In March, the price of high quality Thai rice rose to \$546 a tonne, up by 13 percent from the previous month and 68 percent from the same period last year.

The FAO looks for sizeable output rises in all major Asian rice-producing countries, especially Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Thailand where supply and demand are rather stretched now. Governments in these countries have already announced a series of incentives to raise production.

Farmland prices have increased in the USA and the US Department of Agriculture predicts prices to appreciate by 14.9 percent in 2008.

Production outlook is positive in Africa, where high prices may sustain a two percent growth, particularly in Egypt, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

Concerns about food import dependency in the region have led to a mobilisation of resources towards the rice sector. Production is expected to recover strongly in Latin America.

Rice production in the European Union is also expected to rise while it may contract in Japan.

A dismal production is forecast in Australia, considering low availability of water. A reduced crop is also expected in the USA, mainly due to a cut in area following competition for cultivation of more profitable crops.

Referring to the short-term volatility, FAO Senior Economist Concepcion Calpe said, "The international rice market is currently facing a difficult situation with demand outstripping supply and substantial price increase."

"Higher rice production in 2008

could reduce the pressure, but short-term volatility will probably continue, given the very limited supplies available from stocks. This implies that the market may react very strongly to any good or bad news about crops or policies," she added.

According to the latest FAO estimates, paddy production rose by one percent in 2007 to 650 million tonnes, which implies that it would be the second consecutive year where production growth would fall short of population growth, resulting in a drop of rice production on a per caput basis.

On rice trade, the FAO report said international trade in rice in 2008 is currently foreseen to reach 29.9 million tonnes, 1.1 million tonnes lower than the revised 2007 trade estimate.

The very tight supply situations that most exporting countries may face until the last quarter of the year and the associated restrictions on exports lay much behind the anticipated drop of rice trade in 2008.

Currently, China, India, Egypt, Vietnam, four among the traditional rice exporting countries, as well as Cambodia, have either imposed minimum export prices, export taxes or export quotas/bans.

Such moves are expected to reduce rice export from these countries. As for imports, the drop reflects prospects of lower shipments to Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as supply and demand situation in those countries may ease somewhat compared with last year.

Recent sudden price rises reflect the very limited supplies available for sale, especially given the wide range of restrictions imposed by key major exporting countries.

The tendency for further price rises, however, may diminish somewhat in the next few months, with the arrival of new rice harvests in Brazil or Uruguay and also in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam. "So far, prospects regarding these crops are positive," Calpe added.

WAR CRIMINALS

Involve UN in trial process Says SCF president

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Sector Commanders' Forum (SCF) President Air Vice Marshal (ret) AK Khandaker yesterday said the message from the discussion between the foreign adviser and the UN Secretary General on the issue of the trial of war criminals is not clear.

"However, we are pleased that the issue has been discussed at the UN," he said.

The war hero said the government must raise the issue at the UN to involve the world body in the process for the trial of war criminals.

If the UN gets involved in the process, the trial will be acceptable to all and the next governments would not reject the trial, he said at a discussion meeting at Pakulla in Mirzapur as the chief guest.

Freedom fighters of the upazila organised the discussion to mark the 37th anniversary of Goran-Satiachara Resistance Day.

The SCF President also said those who feel proud to introduce themselves as razakars like Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury are mentally ill.

Former Awami League lawmaker Dr Abdur Razzak Bhola, Workers' Party leader Hazera Sultana, Secretary of Peshajibi Samannaya Parishad Dr Kamrul Hossain, Tangail AL President Shamsur Rahman Khan Shajahan, secretary Fazlur Rahman Faruque and freedom fighter Khandakar Abdul Baten also spoke at the discussion presided over by former AL lawmaker Ekabbar Hossain.

Over 100 shanties gutted in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 100 shanties were gutted at Rayerbazar Pukurpar slum in the city yesterday evening, leaving several hundred people homeless.

Fire fighters from 11 units of the Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD) fought for over two hours to put out the blaze.

Fire Service officials said the fire was originated from an earthen stove at the slum at 6:20pm.

Affected people said most of their valuables were burnt to ashes.

Witnesses said the heavy rainfall, however, helped the fire fighters to extinguish the fire.

Death anniversary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Today is the third death anniversary of Abdul Mannan, former home and health minister, president member of Awami League and a close aide of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The veteran politician passed away due to old age complications at his Elephant Road residence in the city in 2005.

To mark the day Abdul Mannan Smriti Parishad organises different programmes including placing wreath at his grave, Quarankhwani, milad mahfil at College para in Tangail. Destitute feeding and a memorial meeting will also be held at the Central Shaheed Minar premises in the town.

Dr Captain Abul Kashem

Today is the 9th death anniversary of Dr Captain Abul Kashem, former member of the parliament and Awami League leader, says a press release.

On the occasion, milad mahfil and Quarankhwani will be held after Asr prayers at Bara Masjid adjacent to Katal graveyard at Pachaish in Chittagong.

Relatives, political colleagues, admirers and friends are requested to attend the milad mahfil.

Salahuddin Ahmed

Today is the 12th death anniversary of Salahuddin Ahmed, the first managing director of H o t e l International Limited and owner of Sonargaon Hotel, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held and food will be distributed among the destitute.

Bazlur Rahman's chehnum today

Chehnum of journalist Bazlur Rahman will be held at his apartment at Ramna in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

His wife Motia Chowdhury and other family members requests all his friends, admirers and relatives to attend the chehnum and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

DHAKA TODAY Zonta The meeting of Zonta International Dist 25, Area 2 will be held. Venue: Aristocrat Restaurant, Gulshan Avenue. Time: 10:00am. Scientific seminar A scientific seminar on the occasion of launching of 'Nobori' the drug editing stem will be held. Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 6:30pm. Art exhibition The opening ceremony of a six-day solo art exhibition will be held. Venue: Drk Gallery. Time: 4:30pm. Public dialogue Bangladesh Parishad Andolon organises a public dialogue on use of genetic technology in rice production and its consequences. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:30am. Discussion Tamuddun Majlish organises a discussion to mark the Eid-e-Miladunnabi and peace award handing over and prize giving ceremony of essay competition. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

WEATHER TODAY Thundershowers likely UNB, Dhaka Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today. Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said. Highest temperature 34.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 17.2 degrees Celsius at Syedpur. The sun sets in the capital at 6:16pm today and rises at 5:46am 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 32.6 21.5 79 62 Chittagong 30.6 22.2 75 72 Rajshahi 34.4 20.0 81 61 Khulna 33.6 24.7 77 61 Barisal 33.5 21.6 86 62 Sylhet 28.4 20.2 70 78 Cox's Bazar 32.9 23.5 66 70

WB for global fight against hunger... Rice production in the European Union is also expected to rise while it may contract in Japan... FAO SAYS RICE OUTPUT TO RISE... Today is the 9th death anniversary of Dr Captain Abul Kashem... Today is the 12th death anniversary of Salahuddin Ahmed... Bazlur Rahman's chehnum today... Today is the 12th death anniversary of Salahuddin Ahmed, the first managing director of Hotel International Limited and owner of Sonargaon Hotel, says a press release. On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held and food will be distributed among the destitute.