

SAARC SEMINAR ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Developing new crop varieties a must to avoid food crisis

Experts tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a seminar yesterday said the agricultural production would decrease significantly in Saarc region in the coming years due to climate change. Developing new varieties of crops tolerant to heat, drought and salinity is a must, otherwise the region would fall into the grip of serious food crisis, they added.

Dr Ahsan Uddin Ahmed, executive director of the Centre for Global Change, presented the keynote paper at the seminar. He said due to climate change temperature of the region would increase by 1.3 to 2.6 degrees centigrade in the next four to five decades. "As a result, Bangladesh will face frequent flash flood, drought, cyclone, bank erosion and salinity," he added.

He urged the Saarc countries to create regional food stock, seed bank and increase cooperation for early flood warning system in the region. Speaking as chief guest Agriculture Secretary Abdul Aziz said, "We cannot avoid the impacts of climate change, so we must be ready to face them."

He laid emphasis on creating a climate cell for the Saarc region that would build up a network among the member countries to face the impacts of climate change. "All countries in the Saarc region are the victims of climate change and they should face the situation unitedly," he added.



Singer Fahmida Nabi speaks at a seminar titled 'Basic rights of street children and our responsibility' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On her left are ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director Farah Kabir and film director Morshedul Islam.

BAITUL MUKARRAM VIOLENCE 'Take stern action against Islamist activists'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demanding stern action against Islamist activists who had staged violence in Baitul Mukarram area in the city, leaders of different organisations yesterday said the country will face a disastrous situation if the government does not take tough action against the activists.

Urging people to raise voice against such kind of activities, they also demanded exemplary punishment to the activists. Blaming a Jamaat leader for provoking the party cadres to resort to violence, Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Misbahur Rahman Chowdhury urged all to come forward to protect the mosque from the Jamaat cadres for the sake of its sanctity.

"How the fundamentalists could stage violence when there is state of emergency in the country," they asked in separate statements. "Such incidents cannot take place without the support of a section of the administration," said the leaders of South Asian People's Union against Fundamentalism and Communalism and Ektaturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee in a joint statement.

The 10-day annual exhibition of UPL books begins at the Central Public Library Auditorium at Shahbagh in the city today, says a press release. All books published by the UPL will be sold at varying discounts at the exhibition, which will remain open from 10:00am to 7:00pm on all working days except government holidays.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today. Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is also likely at one or two places over Rajshahi division and the regions of Mymensingh, Tangail and Sylhet during the period, Met Office said.

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	36.0	25.2	70	54
Chittagong	30.7	22.2	67	76
Rajshahi	40.0	23.8	63	33
Khulna	36.5	24.8	82	64
Barisal	35.3	23.8	86	66
Sylhet	35.2	23.2	72	52
Cox's Bazar	32.9	23.4	82	80

TRIAL OF WAR CRIMINALS SCF signature campaign from tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sector Commanders' Forum (SCF), a platform of sector commanders of the liberation war, will start a mass signature campaign across the country from tomorrow (April 14), Bangla Noboborsho (New Year), to mobilise public support against the war criminals and anti-liberation war forces.

Silent famine prevails in country Says BKP chairman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Bangladesh Kalyan Party (BKP) Chairman Maj Gen (Retd) Muhammad Ibrahim yesterday said a silent famine is prevailing in the country.

The Kalyan Party chief said this at a discussion in Tangail as the chief guest. "The government is responsible for the current food shortage in the country, as it did not take steps in time," he said. He further said the finance adviser has opposed to launch rationing system for the low-income groups in this critical situation.

Robbers kill house owner in Bandarban

UNB, Bandarban

A house owner was killed and his three relatives were critically wounded as armed robbers sprayed bullets on them during a robbery at his house at Kadukhali in Sadar upazila early yesterday. The police said a gang of 10 or 12 masked robbers stormed into the house of Abdul Ali, 28, son of Omar Ali of the area, at about 3:00am and started looting cash, gold ornaments and other valuables at gunpoint. When Ali and his three relatives tried to resist them, the robbers opened fire on them, killing Ali on the spot. The injured relatives -- Yusuf Gazi, 25, Hossain Member, 30, and his younger brother Majibur Rahman -- were admitted to Sadar hospital in a critical condition. Later, the gang also stormed into two other adjacent houses and three shops and looted cash and valuables.



Jatiya Samik League, labour front of Awami League, stages a mass hunger strike demanding immediate release of AL President Sheikh Hasina at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday.

Famine takes place in states run by unelected govts

Dr Akbar says at BBC Sanglap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chairman of the Regulatory Reforms Commission Dr Akbar Ali Khan yesterday said famine takes place in the countries run by unelected governments as there is none to put pressure on the government to take the right decision. But with elected governments at the helm and democracy prevailing, the countries usually do not witness famine, as the government remains under pressure to take the right decision, he said at the BBC Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital. Famine might also occur when there is a lack of employment opportunities, despite huge stockpiles of food grains, Dr Akbar said quoting from the researches of Nobel laureate Prof Amartya Sen. Dr Akbar, also a former adviser to the caretaker government, said the government would have to create employment opportunities for the common people. But it is not easy for the government to do so under the present context, he said and suggested distributing foods among the poor people through VGF project on an emergency basis.

Trust organised the event moderated by Kamal Ahmed of BBC Bangla Service. Dr Akbar observed that the government could not introduce rationing system right now because it does not have adequate stockpiles of food grains or the capacity. About the Women Development Policy, he said political government should formulate such a policy. Resorting to violence on the streets is also not the right way to resolve any issue, he added. Dr Akbar also said the government should not impose reforms. Rather, the government will have to sit with all in order to bring about reforms, he added. AL leader Motia Chowdhury alleged that those who resorted to street violence in protest against the Women Development Policy are 'extremists' and part of Jamaat-e-Islami who misguides the people in the name of religion. She also said that the information about the present food crisis has been concealed by the government. She urged the government to buy food grains from farmers directly at higher prices instead of importing food items from abroad. BNP leader Mofazzal Karim said the government should have announced the women development policy after taking opinions from all. Terming the food crisis as a 'great crisis', the BNP leader suggested procuring food grains in the way the AL government procured

them during its tenure. The government should also sit with all the political parties in order to tackle the food crisis, he added. Kazi Faruque suggested the government should improve the food distribution system and channel to tackle the food crisis. Specialist physicians of cardiology department of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) yesterday provided free treatment to the people aged above 35 of city's Jigatola area at Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital in the city, says a press release. They tested people's chest, identified problems and provided treatment at free of cost. The service was provided at the out door of Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital on the eve of the Bangla New Year. A six-member team of doctors provided the treatment. Around 1500 patients received treatment. Among them around 200 patients received ECG and 400 receive nebulisation service from the hospital at free of cost. Dr AKM Mosharaf said they would provide next round of treatment to these patients at BSMMU.



Students of Fine Arts College in Chittagong prepare masks and other artworks yesterday for the celebration of Pchela Baishakh tomorrow.

'Change attitude towards child, juvenile offenders' 380 children in 57 jails

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Though there is no scope to consider the children as offenders under the Children Act 1974, some 380 children are still in 57 jails of the country due to lack of understanding of the law and mindset problem of the authorities concerned, said the speakers at a seminar yesterday. They said proper implementation of the act and coordination between police and judiciary is a must to uphold the rights of the children. The seminar titled 'Child protection: Compliance of the Children Act 1974' was organised by Save the Children UK at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital. Speaking as chief guest Justice M Fazlul Karim said, "We want justice to all. So the police should

act humanly with all including the children." Juvenile development centre should be set up in every district," he said, adding, "We must change our attitude towards child and juvenile offenders." "The Children Act 1974 deals with three broad categories of children who are in need of protection. They are delinquent children, neglected children and victim children. They cannot be sent to jail in anyway, rather they should be sent to child development centres," said Justice M Imam Ali. "There are clear directions in the act regarding arrest, bail, custody and trial of youthful offenders. But in practice these legal directives are not always followed due to various limitations," said Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad. However, change in the mindset of police, magistrates, lawyers and

jail authorities is a must to ensure proper implementation of the laws regarding children, he said, adding that they should be aware that criminal justice for adults and criminal justice for children are of two different things. Dr Shaheen Malik said the general proposition of laws regarding children is that the children are not 'persons' in the eye of law, and as such they cannot enter into legal transactions. Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, director general of social services department, Ikter Ahmed, registrar of the Supreme Court, MA Hye Howladar, secretary to social welfare ministry, and UM Habibun Nessa of Save the Children UK also spoke. Representatives from different organisations working for child rights, and members of law enforcement agencies and judiciary were present.

Pvt university student killed in city road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A minibus crashed into a road island at Banani in the city yesterday, killing a private university student who was waiting there for a bus. The victim was identified as Minhazul Abedin Madhu, 28, a master's student of Islamic studies department at Shanto-Marium University. Police arrested the driver, Alauddin, and seized the vehicle. Police quoted the driver as saying he tried to brake several times but failed due to a technical fault, and finally decided to crash into the road island to avoid a serious accident. The driver also told the police that he did not notice the student waiting there.



Ambassador Arshad-uz Zaman passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Former ambassador Arshad-uz Zaman, son of the late Khan Bahadur Fazlur Rahman, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at 8:15pm yesterday at the United Hospital in the city. He is survived by his wife and two daughters and a host of friends and relations to mourn his death. Zaman, a native of Bagerhat and a close acquaintance of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led a highly distinguished career. He served as ambassador to Algeria, Egypt and Senegal and later became Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in Jeddah. Ambassador Zaman was the first Bangladeshi to ever receive the Legion d'Honneur, the highest honour bestowed by the Republic of France. He was fluent in French and Turkish and translated the works of Nazrul Islam into Turkish and of eminent French writer Andre Malraux into Bengali. After graduating from Kolkata University, he pursued a degree in Political Science at the famous Institut d'Etudes Politiques at the Sorbonne University in Paris. After retiring from the Foreign Service, Zaman became active in politics and was serving as an adviser to former President Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury prior to his death. He was a true patriot who served during the War of Liberation primarily informing the western media about the atrocities committed by the Pakistani Army. Zaman was also a prolific writer and contributed regularly to The Daily Star, Dhaka Courier, Janakantha and other publications. His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Gulshan Idgah Mosque after Zohr prayers today. Relatives and friends are requested to attend the janaza and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Shahnaj Nizam BSS, Dhaka Shahnaj Nizam, senior announcer of Bangladesh Beter and cultural activist, died of heart attack at Sikder Medical College Hospital in the city last night. She was 51. She left behind her husband, one son and two daughters. The body of Shahnaj has been kept at the United Hospital mortuary. She will be buried at the Banani graveyard after a namaz-e-janaza at Gulshan Azad Mosque after Asr prayers today. Her qulhwani will be held at Azad Mosque after Asr prayers tomorrow.

Deshpriya Talukder BSS, Dhaka Deshpriya Talukder, a computer operator of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), died of cancer at Holy Family Hospital in the city last night at the age of 59. He left behind his wife and three daughters to mourn his death. He will be cremated at Harihar village under Rangunia upazila of Chittagong today.

Qulkhwani Quilkhwani of Joyanbunessa, mother of poet Fajal-a-Khoda, will be held at Banagram under Bera Police Station in Pabna after Johr prayers today, says a press release. She passed away on Friday night at the age of 90.

DHAKA TODAY

BISS seminar
Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organises a seminar on the Role of theologians in combating terrorism: Bangladesh perspective. Venue: BISS auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

Brac roundtable
Brac organises a roundtable on 'Extreme poor programme of Brac: Social participation'. Venue: Brac conference room. Time: 10:30am.

Photo Exhibition
The inaugural ceremony of a three-day World National Rupashi Bangla Photo Exhibition will be held. Bangladesh Photojournalists Association organised the event. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

FICCI meeting
The monthly luncheon meeting of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) will be held. Venue: Hotel Westin. Time: 12:30pm.

Roundtable
The Main Roaders organises a roundtable on 'Food situation in Bangladesh'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 10:30am.