

EXERCISE SHANTI DOOT-2

Boosting efforts to establish global peace

PORIMOL PALMA, back from
Rajendrapur Cantonment

The word 'soldiers' creates a picture of fight and casualties in the mind, but the ongoing multinational military exercise at Rajendrapur Cantonment forms a different picture - interaction with general mass and solving their problems through dialogues.

Around 400 soldiers from 11 countries are not only learning the tools to deal with the issues in the conflict-ridden regions of the world but also learning cultures of various regions and ways to make friendship with a view to boosting their efforts to establish global peace and face evil elements disturbing harmonious living.

A number of foreign partici-

pants made this observation to reporters during a visit to the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training (BIPSOT) at Rajendrapur Cantonment yesterday.

The military exercise titled 'Shanti Doot-2', which means peace ambassador, has been organised under the auspices of the US-based Global Peace Operation Initiative (GPOI). It started on April 6 and will end on April 20.

"Our efforts will enhance the availability and capability of these countries to participate in the regional and worldwide UN peacekeeping operations," said Lt Col Edward Tanguy of US Army, commander of the 249th Regional Training Institute in Oregon.

To ensure the exercise matches conditions that participants are likely to encounter during real peacekeeping missions, Bangladesh Armed Forces provided UN-type vehicles for the scenarios, installed UN checkpoints and hired local people to portray a variety of roles.

"To maintain peace is a great job and we are here to learn how to meet the peacekeeping needs of the world," said Lt BG Banita of Nepal. Female soldiers alongside their male colleagues are doing excellent work in the exercise, she said.

Peace has become a vital need in today's world, said Lt Sunil Soni of the Indian Army.

"We the soldiers are trained for fighting, but here it is something different. We are learning how to

deal with people, interact with them and sharing cultures of different countries," said Sergeant Zed Warnock of the US Army.

In the UN missions, peacekeepers have some common tasks. Therefore, they need better understanding and mutual trust among themselves for better results, said Brig Gen Saiful Ali, commandant of BIPSOT.

There are around 8000 Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the UN missions across the world and they are working with reputation, he added.

The countries participating in the 'Shanti Doot-2' include Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Tonga and United States.

Tk 20 lakh looted from city house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers looted Tk 20 lakh and 10 tolas of gold ornaments from a house at South Dania under Shyampur Police Station in the city yesterday.

Police said a gang of four to five robbers entered the residence of schoolteacher Monzurul Islam Bakul on fourth floor at around 5:00pm. They pressed the doorbell and entered the flat identifying themselves as Bakul's relatives.

Shyampur police said one of the robbers pointed a pistol at Bakul's wife and demanded Tk 20 lakh that Bakul drew from a bank for buying a piece of land. They made off with the money and the gold ornaments.

Bakul was not at the house during the robbery.

JCI World chief calls on CA

UNB, Dhaka

Visiting Junior Chamber International (JCI) World President Graham Hanlon made a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Fakhrul Islam Ahmed at his office yesterday, when he offered his organisation's cooperation with Bangladesh in any need.

JCI, an NGO that has got its activities spread in about 150 countries, focuses on youth empowerment.

During the meeting, the JCI world president apprised the chief adviser of the activities of the organisation and said the government could 'feel free to call the JCI in any need for the help of Bangladesh'.

Hanlon said positive news of government could also be projected through JCI.

The chief adviser said Bangladesh is well known for women empowerment.

He said the proportion of younger population in Bangladesh is bigger compared to other countries and empowerment of the youth is important for facing the future challenges of the country.

CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munim was also present during the meeting.

20 govt officials get Japanese scholarship

Twenty young government officials have been nominated finalists for this year's Japan Development Scholarship (JDS), says a press release.

It was announced at a ceremony at the NEC Building in the city. Aminul Islam Bhuiyan, secretary of ERD, Ministry of Finance, and Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Masayuki Inoue were present on the occasion.

The finalists, who have been selected from 302 candidates, will soon leave for Japan for two years to obtain a master degree after finishing a two-month Japanese language training programme that began yesterday.

Vehicle owners, drivers defy new traffic system in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

The owners and drivers of city service buses and motorised three wheelers threw an apparent challenge to the traffic department of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) yesterday, completely defying its new traffic system that aimed at easing passengers' hassles and streamlining commuter services in the port city.

Under the new rule introduced on the first day of Bangla New Year, no passengers were said to be allowed to sit beside drivers of CNG-run auto-rickshaws or tempos in the CMP areas. Besides, commuters were prohibited to travel standing on the back of a tempo.



PHOTO: STAR
Islamic Ain Bastabayan Committee holds a rally occupying a road in front of Baitul Mukarram Mosque in the city yesterday, demanding cancellation of the National Women Development Policy 2008.

Bus routes will be reduced to 40 to end city traffic jam

BSS, Dhaka

The government yesterday decided to reduce the bus routes to 40 from the existing 129 to avert traffic jam in the city.

The decision came from an inter-ministerial meeting held yesterday to implement the recommendations of a committee constituted to develop traffic management for reducing traffic congestion in the metropolis.

LGRD and Cooperatives Adviser M Anwarul Iqbal presided over the meeting in the conference room of the Local Government Division, said an official handout.

The meeting reviewed the progress of implementation of the

short, medium and long-term recommendations.

It directed the owners of the CNG stations to install several supply lines for increasing supply capacity and also to install own generators.

The Dhaka City Corporation was directed to prevent the inter-district buses from entering the city to carry passengers. The meeting also decided that the inter-district buses should procure fuel from the bus terminals.

Local government division Secretary Sheikh Khurshid Alam, committee convener and director general of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics AYU Ekramul Haque and high officials of various ministries and divisions attended the meeting.

South Korea doubles workers' quota

Says adviser

UNB, Dhaka

The recruitment quota for Bangladeshi workers in South Korea has been doubled this year.

"The quota for Bangladeshi recruits for jobs in Korea during March 2008 to February 2009 has been raised to 8000, which will be a cent percent increase over the previous year," Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, also in-charge of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry, said yesterday.

The foreign adviser expressed 'satisfaction' over the increase and also directed the relevant authorities in Bangladesh for 'speedy and transparent selection process under this Employment Permit System Scheme'.

Stressing the need for 'upgrading skills', the adviser said, "If we

can adequately meet this demand to the satisfaction of the employers in the Republic of Korea, next year our quota can be raised. We must bear in mind that these jobs call for some specific skills."

"This progress is in line with our new seven-point policy for expatriate workers," Iftekhar observed.

"Also this is a reflection of our excellent relations with the Republic of Korea," said the adviser, who had visited Seoul last year and had meetings with the Korean leaders.

The adviser hoped that this relationship would expand to include much larger economic cooperation. "The Republic of Korea is becoming a key partner, a development that will bring great benefits to both countries," Iftekhar further stated.

Mujibnagar Day tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League has chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the historic Mujibnagar Day tomorrow, commemorating the formation of Bangladesh's first government at the Baidyanathola mango grove in Meherpur on this day in 1971.

The place was later renamed Mujibnagar as a tribute to the hero of the country's independence, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was declared the president of the government-in-exile and the supreme commander of the armed forces.

The party will hoist the national and party flags atop the Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi and the party office at Bangabandhu Avenue at 6:00am, says a press release.

AL Acting President Zillur Rahman and central leaders will place wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Wreaths will also be placed at the graves of Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed and Captain Mansur Ali at Banani Graveyard in the city and at the grave of AHM Quamruzzaman in Rajshahi.

In Mujibnagar the national and party flags will be hoisted at 10:00am and party leaders will place wreaths at the mausoleum at 10:15am. A discussion on the significance of the Mujibnagar Day will also be held on the Sheikh Hasina Stage.

'No polls if people don't get food'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday said politics would not sustain and there will be no election if people don't get food. He said this at a meeting of the party executive committee at the KC Memorial Clinic at Baridhara in the city.

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh Secretary General Maj (ret'd) MA Mannan, Presidium Member Brig Gen (ret'd) Giasuddin Chowdhury, Joyal Abedin Khan Bir Pratik and Vice President Dr Abu Muzaffar Ahmed were also present at the meeting.

The meeting also approved the party constitution.

Badruddoza also urged the government to stock sufficient food grains for the future.

DHAKA

TODAY

Conference

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) and Safarwani, UK jointly organise a conference on 'Bangladesh Human Security Survey 2007'. Venue: BISS auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

Workshop

Bangladesh Heritage Foundation organises a workshop on 'Reform measures undertaken by the caretaker government: How to sustain them in the post-election scenario'. Venue: Hotel Lake Shore. Time: 9:00am.

Seminar

Advancing Public Interest Trust (APIT) and Shaptakik jointly organise a seminar on disaster and education. Venue: Chhayanaut Sanskriti Bhaban. Time: 9:30am.

Roundtable

The daily Amar Desh organises a roundtable on means of ensuring health services for all. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 2:00am.

Memorial meeting

A memorial meeting will be held to mark the 29th death anniversary of Justice Sayed Mahub Murshed. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

Tex Bangla

The inaugural ceremony of the TEXBANGLA-2008 will be held. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 10:00am.



PHOTO: STAR
British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury and Asian Development Bank Country Director Hua Du share a happy moment with a cultural team during the inaugural ceremony of Dhaka-Kolkata train service at Dhaka Cantonment Railway Station on Monday.

Help face threats to sustain achievements

Finance adviser urges international community

UNB, Dhaka

Finance Adviser Dr AB Mirza Azizul Islam yesterday sought specific proposals of additional assistance from the international community to help Bangladesh face the threats to sustain the progresses the country has so far made.

"The progress we achieved so far is now under threat... Bangladesh has no contribution to global issues like climate change and consequently the global warming, but it is the worst victim," he said at the inaugural session of a symposium on social protection at Sonargaon Hotel.

Policymakers from eight South Asian countries are participating in the three-day symposium titled 'Social protection as a strategy in transformative social policy'.

Unicef Regional Director for South Asia Daniel Toole, who also spoke on the occasion, told reporters after the meeting that "the government has to ask the donors what they need to face the situation."

Saarc Social Affairs Director Hassan Shifau also spoke at the session, chaired by Unicef Bangladesh Officer-in-Charge Uhaa Lyorlumun.

The adviser said the increase in prices of fuel oil, fertiliser, and especially the food has also threatened family budget, affecting the government ability to provide social safety net for the people.

I hope, the symposium will come up with specific proposal about what the international community should do, the adviser added.

He pointed out that international donors frequently commit to provide assistance to social safety net programmes and climate

changes issues, but so far they have not provided any additional assistance in these regards.

"At present, the World Bank and IMF are very much concerned about food price increase, but they have taken no concrete initiative so far," he said.

Dr Aziz said no matter what development programmes a country undertakes, there would always be a group of people to remain unattended and cannot participate in the development process.

"At this point, there is a role of the government which can be done in coordination with NGOs and private sector to bring this missing middle under safety net," he added.

During the three-day delibera-

tions, around 70 senior government officials, representatives from international NGOs and development agencies, researchers and experts will discuss how could social protection systems, legislation and policies contribute to the achievement of MDGs.

"Women and children, and notably those excluded from resources, incomes and social services, are the most affected by the disconnect between high economic growth rates and low progress on human development indicators," said Daniel Toole, the Unicef regional director for South Asia.

Meanwhile, Bangabandhu Sainik League (BSL) yesterday staged a token hunger strike demanding release of Hasina and proper treatment of her illness.

Senior AL leaders expressed their solidarity to the programme held at central office of BSL.

Expressing solidarity to the programme AL Presidium Member Abdul Razzak demanded unconditional release of Hasina and said people of the country are not thinking anything but Hasina's release.

Prakaushalee Parishad

Meanwhile, Bangabandhu Prakaushalee Parishad (BPP) on Monday launched a mass signature campaign at the Sudha Sadan in the city demanding release of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina.

Dr Wazed Miah, husband of the detained AL chief, inaugurated the mass signature campaign.

Meanwhile, Awami League has launched another mass signature campaign demanding release of the former premier on April 5.

BSF returns 3 Bangladeshis

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Border Security Forces (BSF) of India yesterday handed over to Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) three Bangladeshis who spent 13 months in a Kolkata jail after they had been trafficked to India in February last year.

Sources in BDR and police said human traffickers trafficked Noor Islam Mollah, his wife Taslima Begum and his brother Yasin Mollah through Sadipur border of Benapole, promising them of good jobs in India.

BSF arrested them at Haridas border of India on February 28 last year and put them in Kolkata Presidency Jail.

The victims, who hail from Barakpur village at Zibarkpur Police Station in Khulna, are now under custody of Benapole port police.

Obituary

Qazi Anwarul Mahbub, general manager (Finance) of Expolanka Group, passed away at Berdem Hospital in the city on April 13, says a press release.

Mahbub, eldest son of late Qazi Mahtabuddin Ahmed of Cheora Kazi Bari of Comilla, left behind his mother, wife, one son and two daughters to mourn his death.

He was buried at Banani Graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at Bakshi Bazar Ground after Asr prayers.

His qulhwani will be held at his Bakshi Bazar residence after Asr prayers on Friday.

Death anniversary

Today is the second death anniversary of MA Bashir Jorjard, former joint secretary to the government and freedom fighter, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his residence.

Chehlum

Chehlum of LM Mahmud, a former police official, will be held on Friday, says a press release.

Mahmud passed away due to old age complications on March 10 at a city hospital at the age of 80.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at Banamaltipur Madrasa premises under Boalmari upazila in Faridpur.

SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN
City AL demands unconditional release of Hasina

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka city Awami League yesterday demanded unconditional release of detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina before ending of their on-going mass signature campaign, says a press release.

The AL leaders made the demand at a workers' meeting at Lalbagh to make a success their on-going signature campaign.

City AL Acting President MA Aziz said the demand for the release of Hasina has become a demand of heart of the people.

"The popularity of Hasina has reached at top. People would not wait anymore. The voice of people could not be gagged for long," he headed.

He also said price spiral of essentials going beyond people's ability. If such situation continues a mass explosion might be occurred.

He said millions of people have participated in the mass signature campaign demanding release of Hasina. He urged government to understand the expectation of people's mind and demanded release of Hasina for the development of the country.

Acting General Secretary of city AL Advocate Kamrul Islam also demanded release of Hasina before ending of the signature campaign. He said there are no alternatives of Hasina's release for the sake of democracy and development of the country.

Meanwhile, Bangabandhu Sainik League (BSL) yesterday staged a token hunger strike demanding release of Hasina and proper treatment of her illness.

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