

Implement Nat'l Women Dev Policy

Prominent citizens urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 51 prominent citizens in a written statement yesterday urged the government to take an effective step to implement the National Women Development Policy 2008 and cancel the review committee that recommended amendment and cancellation of some provisions from the policy, says a press release.

The statement criticised the caretaker government for its soft stance against the communal forces that demonstrated violently in front of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque injuring police and journalists.

The citizens asked writers, journalists, intellectuals, artists, lawyers and, above all, the women-folk to extend their support to have the women development policy implemented without any amendment.

The statement also criticised

the government for holding meeting with the Khatib of the mosque and forming a review committee comprising ulemas (Islamic scholars) headed by the Khatib who, the statement said, is just a government employee to the rank of joint secretary.

The statement also mentioned that the government has failed to stand by the decision or announcement they made in the meeting of advisory council, giving rise to the question whether the government will bow to the communal force or let constitution be stamped.

The statement said in addition to obligation by constitution the government has already signed different international policies regarding equal rights to women. It, thus, cannot move away from its stance.

The citizens opined that the people, who are waging the movement against women development policy, have a connection with war

crimes and are creating unrest only to divert peoples' attention from the issue of trying war criminals.

They also mentioned that the unrest regarding women development policy is a motivated one against the fact that the prices of essentials are on the rise.

They urged the government to set up a tribunal and strengthen the movement against war criminals. The statement also demanded that the power be handed over to peoples' representatives immediately through a fair election and cancellation of the state of emergency.

The signatories are Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Prof Anwar Hossain, Shirin Akhter of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation Shaheen Anam, Shirin Banu of Prip Trust, Shamokal Editor Abed Khan and Parvin Sultana of Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra, among others.

Worker falls off iron structure, dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A young construction worker died after falling from a high iron structure at a steel mill in the port city yesterday.

The victim, identified as Barun Barua, 22, of Rangunia upazila in the district, was working at Bayezid Steel Mill in East Nasirabad area under Panchlaila Police Station.

Police said the accident occurred at around 9:30am when Barun slipped down from the iron structure around 30 feet high from the ground and fell on iron rods. He sustained severe injury in his head.

The critically injured worker was rushed to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where the on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Int'l cable TV expo begins in city

DU CORRESPONDENT

The second Dhaka International Cable TV Exhibition began at Bashundhara City in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh (COAB) organised the three-day exhibition.

Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Annisul Huq inaugurated the function as the chief guest.

Annisul Huq said we all are closely involved with television channels of the country. People who are related with technology should come forward so that we can go forward.

He expressed hope that COAB will take steps to telecast Bangladesh channels in the India.

COAB President SM Anwar chaired the function while the first vice president of the FBCCI Abul Kasem Ahmed attended as the special guest.

Binot Snchiti from India, Brig Gen (ret'd) Mustafizur Rahman, senior executive director of Bashundhara Group, COAB Secretary Nizam Uddin Masud also attended the function.

Chhatra Union's founding anniversary today

DU CORRESPONDENT

The 56th founding anniversary of Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU), a left-leaning student organisation, will be observed today on Dhaka University (DU) amid a series of programmes.

BCU leaders and activists will take out a founding anniversary rally on the campus in the morning, while a discussion and a cultural function will be organised at Battala (in front of arts building) in the evening.

"Prometheus", a publication of BCU's DU unit, will be published today to mark its founding anniversary.

The BCU was established on April 29 in 1952 and played a vital role during the mass demonstrations in 1954, 1962, 1966, 1969 and finally during the liberation war in 1971.

BCU brought out first mourning procession after the assassination of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975.

Leaders and activists of the student body also took to the street in 1990 to oust the then autocratic government.

BCU DU unit President Golam Kibria Shaheen said, "Following the history of BCU, its leaders and activists would continue their movement against any sort of repression and illegal activities of the society".

Reunion of navy officers held

BSS, Dhaka

A reunion of retired and active officers of Bangladesh Navy was held at the Multipurpose Hall of Naval Headquarters at Banani here on Thursday night.

Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam attended the function as the chief guest, an ISPR press release said yesterday.

Speaking on the occasion, the naval chief thanked all retired officers and urged them to build a heartiest relationship with the officers of new generation.

He advised the active officers to enrich their knowledge and gather experiences from the retired officers.

The naval chief proposed to establish a Retired Naval Officer Welfare Association (RNOWA).

Among others, former naval chiefs and presidents of Bangladesh Navy Family Welfare Association, retired naval officers and their spouses and senior officers of Naval Headquarters were present on the occasion.



Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi calls on Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed at Army Headquarters at Dhaka Candonment yesterday.

Form authority to save Buriganga, other rivers

Environmentalists ask govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concern over the precarious condition of the rivers around the capital, environmentalists yesterday called for forming an 'authority to save Buriganga and other rivers' and introducing a river patrolling team to take care of their.

Addressing a meeting, they also urged the government to complete demolition of illegal structures and remove the wrecks that were earlier dumped into the rivers after the demolition of illegal structures, said a press release.

The discussion titled 'Immediate measures to save the Buriganga and other rivers' was organised jointly by Save the Buriganga Movement of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Old Dhaka Environment Development Forum at Dr Shahidullah College auditorium in the city.

The speakers urged the government to make it sure that the Wasa (Water and Sewerage Authority) disconnects sewerage pipes linked to the rivers and ask businesses to make special arrangements to discharge factory wastes.

In his keynote paper, Save the Buriganga Movement Coordinator Mihir Biswas said the rivers around the capital have been turned into dumping grounds where dissolved oxygen in water at some points of the rivers has reached at zero level.

"To save the environment of Dhaka, the rivers around it must be saved," Mihir said, adding mea-

sures should be taken immediately to save the rivers.

Local people could start the dredging of the rivers manually if these were demarcated, he added.

The environmentalists said solid and liquid wastes of different factories are being dumped in Buriganga, Balu and Turag causing serious pollution of waters and silting of riverbeds.

As a result, vessels cannot ply in the Buriganga stretching from Kamrangirchar to China-

Bangladesh Friendship Bridge, they added.

Principal of Dr Shahidullah College Abdul Halim, Lalbagh Ward Commissioner Anwar Parvez Badal, General Secretary of Old Dhaka Environment Development Forum Ashraf Amirullah, Dr Mahbub Hossain, Ifma Hossain, Tusher Rehman and Advocate Zakir Siraji also spoke at the discussion presided over by Mahbub Uz Zaman.

20 held for forging British passports in Paris

STAR REPORT

French police have smashed an international network that printed and sold fake British passports across Europe, reported The Daily Mail of UK yesterday.

Around 20 people, mostly from Bangladesh and Pakistan, were arrested in this connection in co-ordinated raids across the Paris suburbs on Tuesday.

All have been placed under official investigation, the daily added.

Officials at the French frontier police said they seized more than 100 forged British passports, as well as stamps used for forging British birth certificates and tax documents.

They also found order forms and

passport-size photographs of potential buyers.

"The passports were being sold for between £2000 and £4000 to illegal immigrants in Britain, France, Belgium and Germany," said a spokesman of the frontier police.

"We found more than 100 forged passports, all of very high quality."

These were destined to be sold to immigrants or others not entitled to British passport, and we have a list of potential buyers who had placed advance orders," he added.

The passports were being made in several separate buildings around Paris, and also in a mobile forging and printing unit based in a transit van.

One of the "manufacturing units" was based in a specially adapted van that moved around the Paris region.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Regulatory Reforms Commission Chairman Dr Akbar Ali Khan speaks at a roundtable on 'Corruption in education, problems in higher education and its importance in national development' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are Poet Mostafa Allama and Dr Shamsher Ali. (Story on Page 1)

Five killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Five people were killed and two others injured in separate road accidents in Kushtia and Magura yesterday.

Our correspondent in Kushtia reports: Three vegetable traders were killed in a road accident at Botail Bazar on Kushtia-Khulna highway in Kushtia Sadar yesterday.

They deceased were identified as Abdul Mannan, 45, Nannu, 43, and Amirul.

The accident occurred when a

Jhenidah-bound passenger bus from Dhaka hit a vegetable-laden Nasiman (human hauler) at about 2:00pm.

The traders were going to Iswardi in Pabna to sell vegetable. Police caught the driver of the bus.

Our correspondent in Magura adds: Two people were killed and two others injured in separate road accidents in Magura yesterday.

Arickshaw-van puller was killed and two others were injured when a speeding bus from Jessore hit a rickshaw-van from behind in

Alamkhali area on Magura-Jhenidah highway at around 2:15pm.

The deceased was identified as Abdul Halim of village Bashtoil in Magura Sadar while the injured were Rakhu, 28, and Mofiz Mia, 35, of Madhupur village in Jhenidah Sadar.

In another road accident, one Shamsul Molla, 55, of village Bhellakandi was crushed under the wheels of a truck while he was crossing the Magura-Faridpur highway near Gorai bridge at around 3:00pm.

Prisoners in Britain don't use opportunities to escape

BSS, London

Prisons in Britain are so comfortable that inmates do not use opportunities to escape, according to a prison officers' union leader.

Inmates have access to mobiles, drugs and even sex in prisons, Glyn Travis, assistant general secretary of the Prison Officers' Association told a radio station.

Travis told talk sport radio on Thursday that drug problem in prisons is now "out of control" and added that even prostitutes were sometimes smuggled in.

Citing the example of the Everthorpe Prison in East Yorkshire, Travis said that members of the public were using ladders to climb over the prison walls to smuggle drugs inside, yet none of the prisoners had tried to escape.

President, CA greet Tanzanian president

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed congratulated Tanzanian President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete on the occasion of Union Day of the country.

In a message to Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, Iajuddin said the friendly relations that so happily exist between the two countries will be strengthened in the days ahead.

Fakhruddin Ahmed, in a separate message to the Tanzanian president, said, "The bonds of friendship and cooperation that so happily exist between the two friendly countries would be further expanded in the years to come."

Both the president and chief adviser wished Kikwete's good health and happiness and for the continued peace, progress and well-being of the people of Tanzania.



No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Mild heat wave that is sweeping over Dhaka and Khulna divisions and the regions of Rajshahi, Ishwardi, Srimongal, Rangamati and Chandpur may continue, Met Office said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

Highest temperature 38.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 22.8 degrees Celsius at Syedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:25pm today and rises at 5:28am 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	36.0	23.0	66	50
Chittagong	32.4	25.0	77	71
Rajshahi	38.8	25.2	74	44
Khulna	35.5	26.0	76	62
Barisal	34.7	25.8	83	65
Sylhet	34.5	26.0	68	59
Cox's Bazar	34.2	25.2	68	--

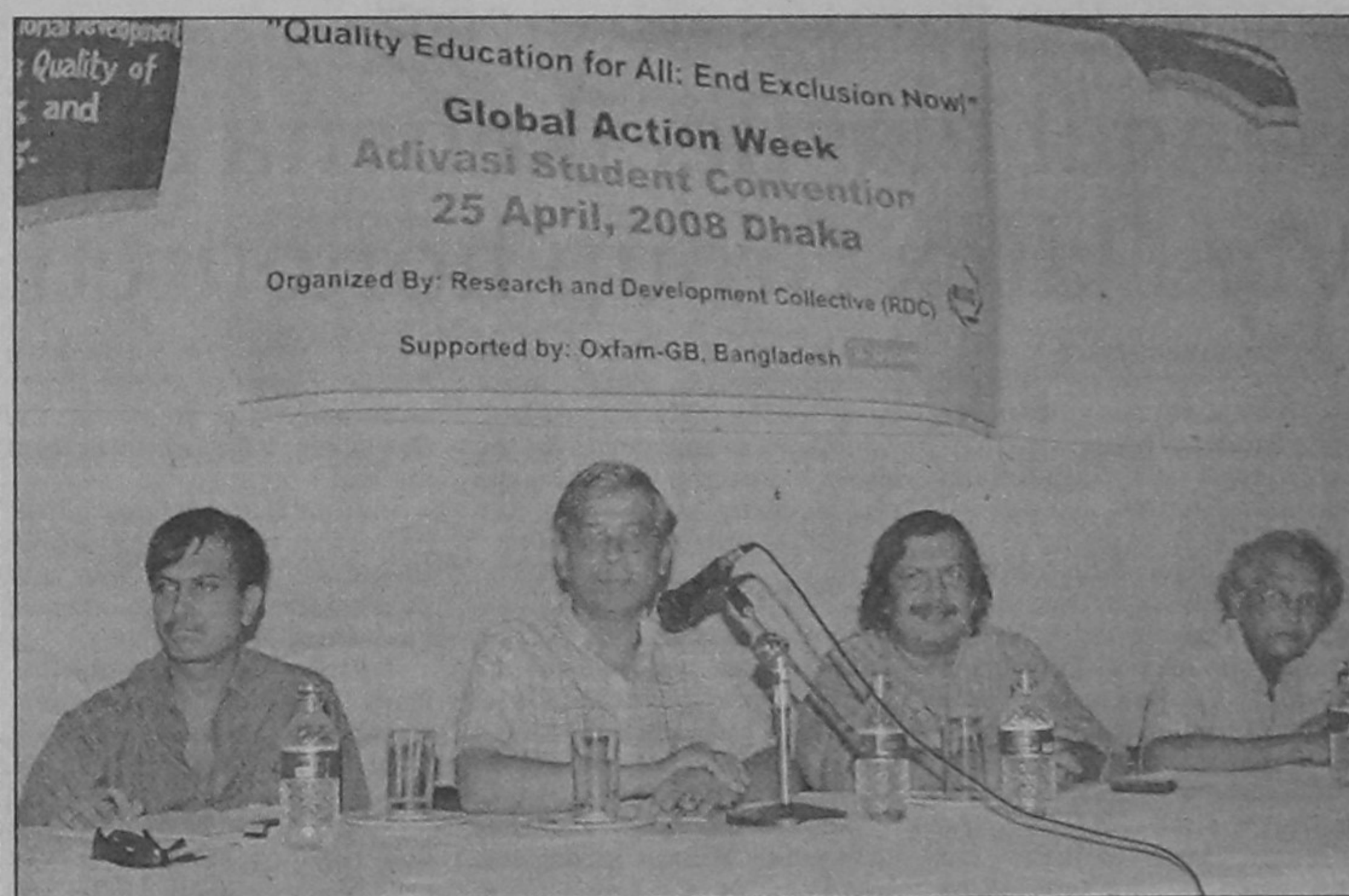


PHOTO: STAR

Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal speaks at an Adivasi Student Convention on "Quality Education for All: End Exclusion Now" on the occasion of Global Action Week at CBCB Centre at Asad Gate in the city yesterday. Research and Development Collective (RDC) organised the event.

4 killed as car bomb ends lull in Pak violence

AFP, Mardan

Four people were killed and 30 hurt when a car bomb ripped through a police station in northwest Pakistan yesterday, ending a lull in attacks since a new government took power last month.

The powerful blast in the city of Mardan reduced the police station to a pile of rubble and wrecked an adjoining hotel and several shops, said senior police officer Mohammad Akhtar Khan.

"There was a huge explosion. It was an apparent car bomb planted next to the wall between the hotel and the police station and both were wrecked," Khan told AFP by telephone.

"Two policemen including an officer and two civilian workers were killed," Khan added. A security official said 30 people were wounded in the explosion

and that some of the shops were also practically destroyed by the force of the blast.

"There were some people inside the hotel and the shops were opening, then there was a deafening blast. Debris flew in the air and there was thick black smoke," witness Sikander Khan told AFP.

"People are saying that a man in a Suzuki car came to the hotel, parked his car outside and then entered to order a cup of tea and then disappeared," he said.

Several people were earlier believed to be buried in the rubble but police had now accounted for everyone, said another police official, Mohammad Zulfiqar.

"We are using bulldozers to clear the massive debris, hopefully no one is still buried under it," he added.

Ten policemen inside the station were injured by shrapnel, Zulfiqar said, adding that an esti-

mated 45 kilograms (99 pounds) of explosive was used.

There was no immediate claim or attribution of responsibility.

The blast is the first since Pakistan's new government was sworn in at the end of March, vowing to hold talks with Taliban militants and to reverse pro-US President Pervez Musharraf's strongarm tactics.

It came despite a unilateral ceasefire announced this week by Pakistani Taliban commander Baitullah Mehsud, who has denied accusations by the previous government of masterminding the assassination of ex-premier Benazir Bhutto.

Mardan is the home town of the new chief minister of North West Frontier Province, Amir Haider Hoti, a secular politician who is playing a key role in negotiations with the rebels.

Military-military cooperation important part of overall ties

Says Chinese FM

UNB, Dhaka

Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi yesterday said military to military cooperation is an important part of overall bilateral relation between Bangladesh and China.

Jiechi, who met Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed in the morning, made the remark to journalists prior to his departure for Pakistan ending a two-day official visit to Bangladesh.

During the meeting, they discussed exchange of training programmes of military personnel of the two countries.

Jiechi conveyed greetings of the Chinese Defence Minister and the Chief of Army to Gen Moeen.

Bangladesh is a traditional importer of the Chinese military hardware.

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury saw off the Chinese Foreign Minister at the Zia International Airport.

During his visit, Jiechi announced 60 million RMB as free aid for Bangladesh this year and a token grant of 5 lakh RMB to mark his first trip to Dhaka as the foreign minister of his neo-rich socialist country.

The two countries signed an Exchange of Notes for construction of Bangladesh-China Exhibition Centre in Dhaka at a cost of Tk189 crore.

Price hike of CNG condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday condemned the government decision to hike price of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

Dhaka Zila Auto-rickshaw, Auto-tempo, Mishuk Janbaban Sramik Union President Mojibur Rahman Master and General Secretary Golam Faruque in a statement said that the gap between income and expenditure has been increasing day by day because of the skyrocketing price of essentials.

Under this circumstance, the price hike of CNG would make the condition of the transport workers more vulnerable.

Demanding cancellation of the decision, Bangladesh Truck Covered van Malik Samity said that the rate of converting the diesel-run vehicles into CNG would slow down as an aftermath of this decision. They questioned the rationality of 100 percent increase on CNG price.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) said that the countrymen expected that the government would contain the price hike of essentials. But increased rate of CNG would amplify transport costs that would further increase prices of essentials.

They demanded removal of the special assistant to the chief adviser who is in charge of the energy ministry.

Left Democratic Front also demanded that the government cancels the 'anti-people' decision.

Bus bomb kills 23 passengers near Lankan capital

AFP, Colombo

A bomb ripped through a crowded bus just outside Sri Lanka's capital yesterday, killing at least 23 passengers and wounding more than 50, police said.

The bomb exploded inside a privately owned bus at the Piliyandala bus station, a police spokesman said, adding that victims were rushed to a nearby hospital.

"At least 10 people died on the spot," a police official at the scene said. Another 13 died on the way to hospital.

"Fifty two people are being treated in two hospitals," he added.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the authorities have laid the blame for similar attacks on Tamil Tiger guerrillas who are fighting for independence in the island's north-east.

A similar blast in February wounded 18 bus passengers.

In the same month, suspected Tamil Tiger rebels used a parcel bomb to blow up a crowded bus in northern Sri Lanka, killing at least 20 people.

The latest blast came as security forces and Tamil Tiger rebels were locked in combat in the north of the country where both sides were reported to have suffered heavy casualties.