

## 'FORMING NATIONAL GOVT TO DELAY RETURN TO DEMOCRACY' Join dialogue for sake of democracy

### Prof Muzaffer urges political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent academic Prof Muzaffer Ahmad yesterday said forming national government at this stage would delay the return to democracy.

"The move towards democracy would tumble if national government is formed now. Any change in the pattern of the government at this stage would delay the return to democracy by holding election at the end of this year," he said at a roundtable.

The roundtable titled 'Prospect of national government in Bangladesh: Hard power or soft power approach' was organised by Bangladesh Heritage Foundation (BHF) at Billa auditorium in the city.

Speaking as chair, Prof Muzaffer urged the political parties to join the dialogue and hold meetings within themselves to reach consensus on national issues.

"For the sake of democracy the

political parties should join the dialogue and hold talks within themselves to arrive at consensus on some national issues," he added.

"We want a free and fair election by the end of this year so that a new elected government can speak for people from the next year," Prof Muzaffer said.

"We have seen three caretaker governments in the past one and half years. We had to rescue the country from the first one, the second one tumbled in the middle of their path, and now the third one is going on. We do not want any other changes which may delay the return to democracy. We should move towards participatory democracy," he added.

Prof Muzaffer urged the civil society to be vocal for the right of people, raise voice for good governance and sensitise people about good governance and their rights.

"The present government assumed its responsibility with a lot

of support from people but their popularity has decreased, perhaps they have taken a long time for transition," he added.

Prof Muzaffer said they also had problems of working with non-neutral bureaucracy, and the next government will also face the same problems which must be removed."

Journalist Sadek Khan presented a keynote paper at the roundtable.

Earlier in his welcome speech, BHF Chairman and former Ambassador Wali-ur Rahman said in the backdrop of socio-political reform programmes of the caretaker government, the state could look for a national unity government for an interim period to fill the political vacuum.

Gono Forum presidium member Pankaj Bhattacharya, former Ambassador Harun Ar Rashid, and Sinha MA Sayeed, executive director of the Institute of Leadership and Security Studies, also spoke at the roundtable.

## Hannan Shah briefs Crowley

BSS, New York

Adviser to BNP chairperson Brig Gen (Retd) Hannan Shah on Tuesday met Co-chairman of Bangladesh Caucus in US Congress Joseph Crowley at the latter's office in Washington.

Crowley's office sources said Hannan Shah briefed the US Congressman on political and human rights situation in Bangladesh.

The Congressman told Hannan Shah that he was aware of the situation. He also met Tara E Paula, the State Department's human rights official on South Asia.

## 2 DU students mugged

DU CORRESPONDENT

Muggers took away mobile phones and wallets from two Dhaka University students after hitting one of them in the head with a machete on the campus in the early hours of yesterday.

The injured student, Md Abul Hasnat of Islamic history and culture department, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he received stitches to his head.

Hasnat said a gang of four muggers in a private car intercepted him and his classmate Tanvir Ashraf near the Central Shaheed Minar at around 12:15am.

One of them hit him in the head with a machete, while two others snatched the mobile phone sets and wallets from them. Another member of the gang was driving the car.

He said a team of patrol police was only some 50 feet away from the spot, but they failed to notice it.

When the two students informed the police, they tried to chase the muggers, but could not arrest anyone.

## Obituary

BSS, Dhaka



Humayun Murshed Chowdhury, father of Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury, project coordinator of Gono Sasthaya Nagar Hospital, died of old-age complications at the hospital in the city on Tuesday night at the age of 100.

Humayun Murshed left behind his wife, five sons and five daughters. His body has been kept at BIRDEM mortuary. His namaz-e-janaza will be held today after Ast prayers on Alia Madrasa premises after his eldest son Dr Chowdhury's return from Switzerland.

Humayun will be buried at his village home at Quapara of Rawjan upazila in Chittagong.

His quikhwani will be held tomorrow at his village home after Juma prayers.

## Death anniversary



Today is the second death anniversary of Golam Rasul Mallick, founding chief editor and managing director of now defunct Eastern News Agency (ENA), says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and Quirkhwani will be held at his office at B/A A, Topkhana Road at Segunbagicha in the city after Ast prayers today.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the milad and pray for salvation of the departed soul.



PHOTO STAR

Prince Karim Aga Khan lays the foundation for Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre at Basundhara in the city yesterday while Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury looks on.

## \$1.4m Aussie grant for Rohingyas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

United Nations High Commissioner for the Refugees (UNHCR) is going to build new homes for 10,000 Rohingyas refugees at Kutupalong Camp in Cox's Bazar at a cost of US\$1.4 million donated by the Australian government.

Each of the 280 new six-unit bungalows will house six families in more spacious shelters than the decrepit huts they had been living in, said a press release issued by UNHCR office in Dhaka yesterday.

"This is a major achievement," said Pia Prytz Phiri, UNHCR representative in Bangladesh.

"Shelter is of course at the very centre of refugees' lives. Improved shelter means a better quality of life, better protection and better health. It's really hard to overstate how important this improvement will be for the 10,000 refugees who will be benefited. I visit the camps often, and know how excited the refugees are to get new homes after too many years in the old hovel."

Kutupalong Camp is home to almost 10,800 Rohingyas refugees while Nayapara Camp, a second

camp near Cox's Bazar, houses nearly 17,000 refugees. The Rohingyas have been in Bangladesh since fleeing Myanmar's northern Rakhine state in the early 1990s.

Over the last two years, the Bangladesh government has allowed UNHCR, other UN agencies and non-governmental organisations to make substantial improvements such as new housing, improved medical care and greater vocational training -- in the two camps, which are funded by UNHCR but administered by the government.

Thanking Australian government for the donation, Phiri said, "This is the first time Australia has contributed to UNHCR's programme in Bangladesh, and its contribution is going to make a huge and very welcome improvement in many refugees' lives."

The contribution came at different times in two parts from the Australian International Refugee Fund (US\$517,000) and from the Australia Minister of Immigration (US\$883,000), the press release said.

## WEATHER TODAY

### No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over all the six 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 36.3 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Mongla and lowest 22.3 degrees Celsius at Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:38pm today and rises at 5:13am 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	35.2	26.6	58	55
Chittagong	32.1	25.5	56	80
Rajshahi	34.0	24.7	73	57
Khulna	35.8	24.5	59	51
Barisal	35.6	25.5	78	63
Sylhet	30.4	22.3	99	86
Cox's Bazar	33.0	24.3	67	75

## Aga Khan lays foundation stone for Jamatkhana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visiting Prince Karim Aga Khan, the spiritual leader of Shia Ismaili Muslims, and Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury jointly laid the foundation for the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre in Dhaka yesterday, which will be used as a place for congregational gathering of the Ismailis and their administrative functions.

"We see this new addition to the Dhaka cityscape as a symbol of our continuing historic commitment to this country and further reinforcement of the warm relationships which the Ismaili people have enjoyed here," Prince Karim said at the foundation stone laying ceremony.

The centre, which will be built in Bashundhara Residential Area, will also bring the community members together at seminars, lectures, cultural and educational events and other programmes.

Saying that the Jamatkhana will be a place of peace and tranquillity, filled with the spirit of humility and prayer, the Aga Khan said: "It will not be a place for conceit or self-satisfaction, but a place for search and enlightenment."

Recalling his grandfather Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan's call to Ismailis to settle in the then East Pakistan after the partition of subcontinent, he said the commitment to Bangladesh has continued in more recent years, often channelled through the activities of the Aga Khan Development Network.

He said the Jamatkhana and the Aga Khan Academy in Dhaka will play complementary roles as they will work to dispel ignorance, cultivate a cosmopolitan outlook and nourish the cause of peace and harmony among peoples and cultures within this country and around the world.

"Bangladesh has made a courageous commitment through the years to values which have grown out of Islamic traditions, but which are of universal applicability: a dedication to human dignity; to taking and giving the hand of friendship; to humility in the all-enveloping divine presence which impels one to celebrate God-given differences, rather than denigrating them, and to the persistence of hope, and to the resolution of problems peacefully."

Bss adds: Education Adviser Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday called on visiting Prince Karim Aga Khan at his hotel suite.

During the meeting, he proposed a forum for holding annual exchange of views session, which would play a pioneering role in the country's education sector. The prince supported the proposal, an official handout said.

Aga Khan suggested further promotion of the university research activities and improvement of the child-level madrasa education. He also recommended inclusion of moral education, culture and subjects related to freedom from fundamentalism in the curriculum.

Prince Aga Khan assured of providing all possible assistance in the education sector of Bangladesh, the handout said.



PHOTO STAR

## Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Salma, a six-year-old girl, has been suffering from Guillain-Barre Syndrome, a condition which affects the nervous system and paralyses sufferers.

Her whole body has already become paralysed and she is also suffering from acute breathing difficulty, says a press release.

She is now undergoing treatment at the intensive care unit of Asian Cardiac and General Hospital at Lalmitia in the city.

But the treatment cost is too high. Around Tk 10,000 is being spent everyday and about Tk 7 lakh will be needed to complete her treatment.

But it is impossible for her father, a labourer, to manage such a huge amount of money.

The hospital authorities have been bearing the treatment cost considering the financial situation of her family. They are also providing the girl and her mother with foods.

Her parents have now appealed to generous people to extend a helping hand to save their daughter's life.

Contributions can be sent to Asian Cardiac and General Hospital, 3/3, Block-B, Lalmitia, Dhaka-1207, or to Account No. 010271800006899, Mercantile Bank, Dhanmondi Branch, Dhaka.



PHOTO STAR

Former adviser to the caretaker government Rokia Afzal Rahman along with other renowned personalities inaugurates the celebrations marking the 10th founding anniversary of the Shaptahik 2000 and Anandadhara by cutting a cake at the magazines' office in the city yesterday.

## HARASSMENT OF FEMALE STUDENT DU teacher relieved of academic activities

DU CORRESPONDENT

Authorities of Psychology Department at Dhaka University (DU) temporarily relieved a teacher of all kinds of academic activities at the department for his alleged involvement in sexually harassing a female student of the same department.

The decision was taken unanimously at the coordination and development committee meeting of the department on Tuesday.

Earlier, the academic committee relieved the accused teacher of examination-related activities at the department.

The student along with her father submitted a memorandum to the DU Vice-Chancellor (VC) Prof SMA Faiz accusing the teacher of sexual harassment on April 23.

In response to the memorandum, DU administration on May 13 formed a five-member probe committee headed by DU Treasurer Prof Syed Abul Kalam Azad to investigate the incident.

Meanwhile, students against repression, a platform mainly formed by the left-leaning student organisations, yesterday demanded proper investigation into the incident.

At the rally, student leaders demanded formulation of anti-sexual harassment rules and formation of a complaint cell on the campus to avoid recurrence of such incidents.

Talking to The Daily Star, the accused teacher dismissed the allegations as baseless and said, "All the decisions which have been taken against me so far are illogical and have been taken to vandalise my popularity at the department and to make me mentally nervous."

## DHAKA TODAY

### Seminar

Maxwell Stamp Ltd organises a seminar to share output of the project on efficiency enhancement of fiscal management. Venue: Hotel Purbani International. Time: 10:00am.

### Roundtable

Bangladesh Naya Samaj Party organises a roundtable on national charter and dialogue. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:30am.

### Award giving

The Merit-Prothom Alo Award 2007 giving ceremony will be held. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 6:00pm.

## 400 YEARS OF DHAKA Walk to preserve heritage sites

DURDANA GHAS

On the eve of celebrating 400 years of Dhaka, the city is losing its past glory to the current trend towards shiny new apartment buildings.

With the aim to preserve the city's heritage sites, Urban Study Group (USG) arranged a heritage walk yesterday afternoon at Farashganj in the old part of the city.

"One of the aims of our walk is to create awareness among people so that they come forward to save the heritage of the city," said Taimur Islam, a conservation architect of USG.

Rows of newly constructed buildings are emerging as a prominent feature of Farashganj area, which was once famous for its heritage buildings. Still there remain some old buildings bearing the old features of the colonial period.

Barabari, a heritage site with rich archaeological features, is now being demolished. On entering the house a mastaan (miscraan) tried to resist the campaigners and journalists from taking pictures of the house.

Ruplal House, a 150-year old palatial house enlisted by the Department of Archaeology, is now turned into a godown of vegetables, spices and grains.

Lack of awareness is one of the reasons of its demolition.

"This is not a historical place. This is our godown," said spice trader at Ruplal House.

"If we lose these sites, an irreparable damage will be done to the nation's values and wisdom," said architect Shamsul Wareh, former president of Institute of Architects Bangladesh, while walking by the lanes.

"If it goes on in this way, one day we will lose our identity," Dr Parveen Hasan of Department of Islamic History at Dhaka University took part in the walk.

"The issue of economic benefits of the property owners is the main

stumbling block to conservation of such heritage sites," said Taimur.

"Transfer of Development Right (TDR) approach can be taken to save the financial benefits of the owners," he said.

TDR is practised in major cities of India to protect the financial benefits of the owners of heritage buildings. It allows the balance of Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of a historic building to be transferred through sale of development right by providing additional development on a different site beyond its allowable FAR.

The walk started from in front of Sutrapur Police Station and ended at Lalkuthi at Farashganj.

Campaign for Heritage Conservation of USG Vice President Prof Nazrul Islam, architect Homaira Zaman, architect Abdur Rashid and engineer Sheikh Md Shahidullah took part in the walk.

## Dhaka elected to WHO Executive Board

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has been elected to the Executive Board (EB) of the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a member for the period 2008-11.

The election took place on Tuesday in Geneva during the ongoing session of the World Health Assembly, the highest governing body of the WHO.

The EB, comprises of 34 members, follows up on the decisions of the World Health Assembly and discusses various topics, including health policy, health services, access to medicine and tropical and emerging diseases.

The EB also looks after the programme budget of the WHO.



PHOTO STAR

A delegation of Islamic leaders exchanges views on 'The trial of war criminals' with the leaders of Sector Commanders Forum at its office in the city yesterday. (Story of Page 16)

## Nazrul's birth anniversary celebration begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nazrul Academy is going to organise an eight-day programme beginning tomorrow in the city to mark the 109th birth anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

The main programme will be held at Shaheed Zia Auditorium at National Museum on May 25 at 5:00pm where Nazrul Academy Medal-2008 and Nazrul Academy Citation-2008 will be conferred.

He further said former chief justice Mostafa Kamal will attend the programme as the chief guest, while noted Nazrul researcher Abdul Mannan Syed will be present as the key speaker.

Nazrul Academy President Dr Ashraf Siddique will preside over the programme, while Begum Khil Khil Kazi, granddaughter of the poet, Khalid Hossain, principal of the academy and Arif-Ud-Daula, senior sub-editor of the Ittefaq, will give their welcome speeches, said the organisers.

General Secretary of the academy Mintoo Rahman said Nazrul Academy Medal-2008 will be awarded to late AH Saidur Rahman in recognition of his contribution to Nazrul songs and Dr Askar Ibne Sykh for his contribution to Nazrul's dramas.

He also said singers Joseph Kamal Rodriguez and Ferdousi Ara will be given Nazrul Academy Reception Crest-2008 in recognition of their contribution to Nazrul songs.

Besides, Lutfur Rahman Sarkar, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, will be awarded Nazrul Academy Citation-2008 and artist Jannat Ara will be given the honorary award (posthumous), he added.

On May 31, the last day of the eight-day programme, a discussion will be held at Doctor Maleka University College Bhaban in the city at 4:00pm with Dr Ashraf Siddique in the chair, added the organisers.

will be held at 5:00pm at National Museum where artists from across the country will participate.

Besides, renditions of solo Nazrul songs will be held everyday on May 22, 23, 24, 27 and 28 at the academy bhaban from 6:00pm to 10:00pm.

Artists Joseph Kamal Rodricks, Ferdousi Ara, Nashid Kamal, Khairul Anam Shakil, Fahmida Rahman, Yeakub Ali and a host of singers will perform on the days.

On May 31, the last day of the eight-day programme, a discussion will be held at Doctor Maleka University College Bhaban in the city at 4:00pm with Dr Ashraf Siddique in the chair, added the organisers.

Channel-i is the media partner of the programmes, while Eskeyef Bangladesh Ltd is the key sponsor.

Nazrul Academy President Dr Ashraf Siddique, Vice President Mizanur Rahman, International Affairs Secretary Masud Mannan, Joint Secretary Atiqur Rahman and former city editor of the Ittefaq Syed Akter Yusuf took part in the press conference.

## Shaptahik 2000, Anandadhara celebrate 10th anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shaptahik 2000, a weekly magazine, and Anandadhara, a fortnightly entertainment magazine, celebrated their 10th founding anniversary yesterday.

On the occasion, a daylong programme was held on the office premises.

Politicians, writers, journalists, cultural activists, businessmen and other distinguished personalities joined the colourful celebrations and wished the magazines greater successes.

Former adviser to the caretaker government Rokia Afzal Rahman along with other renowned personalities inaugurated the celebrations by cutting a cake.

Senior journalists ABM Musa and Ataus Samad, special assistant to the chief adviser Mahubul Jamil, politicians Mota Chowdhury, M Osman Farruk, Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Haq Inu, Mujahidul Islam Selim, Prof Abu Syeed, col (retd) Faruk Khan and Asaduzzaman Noor, cultural personality Nasiruddin Yousuf Bachchu, business leader Mir Nasir Hossain, litterateurs Shawkat Ali and Imdadul Haq Milon, freedom fighter Habibul Alam Bir Pratik, Editor of the Shaptahik 2000 Mainul Ahsan Sabar, Editor of the Anandadhara Arun Chowdhury, Author and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfiz Anam and Selina Chowdhury, wife of late Shahadat Chowdhury, founder editor of Shaptahik 2000 and Anandadhara, were present.

Speaking on the occasion, they recalled the memory of Shahadat Chowdhury and his dedication to bringing out the magazines.

The Shaptahik 2000 is a symbol of creativity and it highlights the crisis and problems without fear, they said, adding that it is a weekly magazine of literature, politics, economy and society.

Mainul Ahsan Sabar hoped that the weekly would get closer to the people in the future.

Arun Chowdhury said Anandadhara has set a new trend in the field of entertainment magazine, which is a great success of the magazine.

Media personality Abdun Noor Tusher moderated the programme while renowned singers rendered songs.

## Lions urged to work more sincerely for humanity

BSS, Dhaka

Speakers at a function here yesterday urged members of the Lions Clubs to dedicate their sincere service more vigorously to the people in distress across the country.

Addressing the silver jubilee celebration of Bangladesh Lions Foundation (BLF) at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre, they said each member of the clubs should remain always aware about his or her duty towards ensuring welfare of the poor and distressed humanity.

Lion Sk Kabir Hossain, former international director, addressed the function as the chief guest while chairman of the Silver Jubilee Celebration committee and vice-chairman of BLF Lion Saiful Islam presided over.

Among others, Lion Md Omar Shafayet Kausar, Lion Qazi Akramuddin Ahmed, Lion MA Matin and Lion Engr Shahjahan Khadem also spoke on the occasion.

Terminating the foundation as a symbol of service to the distressed people, the speakers urged the fellow members to devise new plans keeping in view the need of the time to initiate various development activities for the poor masses.