

DHAKABASHI TEAM MEETS CHIEF ADVISER

Call to save Buriganga, convert central jail into park

UNB, Dhaka

A delegation of 'Dhakabashi', an organisation that carries out activities for preserving traditions of Dhaka city and social welfare, yesterday called on Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed and apprised him of its long-drawn agenda for celebration of 400 years of the city.

The celebrations will start from August 30 and last until 2010. The CA suggested celebrating

the 400 years of Dhaka city in a coordinated manner as some other organisations have also taken initiative for the celebration.

President of 'Dhakabashi' Md Shukur Salek and Secretary General Sheikh Khoda Baks led the 12-member delegation to the meet at the CA's office.

The delegation leaders said Dhaka City Corporation can take initiative to coordinate the celebrations on the occasion of the grand festival. In this regard, they men-

tioned that Kolkata has also celebrated 400 years under supervision of Kolkata City Corporation.

The CA said he would look into the matter.

Dr Fakhruddin thanked 'Dhakabashi' for taking the initiative and a lot of programmes for celebration of 400 years of the city, saying: "History of Dhaka, its culture, tradition and heritage should be highlighted and the opportunity has come through this celebration."

Dhakabashi, which took initiative in 2006, has chalked out extensive programmes including seven-day 'Dhaka Utsab' from August 30 which contains function on folk culture, rally and folk fair, painting competition, exhibition of Bakhorhani, a traditional food item of the city, Jamdani sari and book fair, programme of Kwalli, Kashida and distribution of Ratnapadak of Dhaka, discussion, staging drama based on dialect of Dhaka and civic reception to distinguished persons.

During the meeting, 'Dhakabashi' put forward some demands and problems for solving those for civic facilities of dwellers of old Dhaka on the occasion of the celebrations.

The demands include recovering the Buriganga from illegal grabbing, shifting Dhaka Central Jail from Nazimuddin Road and converting the place into a park, resolving long-standing housing problems at Shakhari Bazar and immediate renovation of houses, roads and other infrastructures as residents are leading a substandard life, opening the road for public vehicles through BDR-gate no 1 to gate no 3 to solve traffic congestion and not changing the names of traditional areas of the city.

The CA assured them that he would look into the matters.

CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim was present at the meeting.



PHOTO: PID

A delegation of Dhakabashi, a socio-cultural organisation, calls on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office in the city yesterday.

MANPOWER AGENCIES' CHEATING
27 Bangladeshis return from Iraq

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-seven Bangladeshis who were promised of lucrative jobs in Dubai or elsewhere by manpower agencies but were dumped in Solaimania in Iraq returned home yesterday with the help from International Organisation for Migration (IOM) yesterday.

IOM officials received the cheated Bangladeshis landed at Zia International Airport yesterday morning.

"Most of them went to Iraq in April this year. They said there are more Bangladeshis languishing in Solaimania, but we are not sure of the numbers," IOM official Asif Muner told The Daily Star.

These people were not provided the jobs they were promised. Being informed of these stranded Bangladeshis, IOM office in Iraq contacted its Dhaka office and arranged their repatriation.

IOM also helped repatriation of 49 Bangladeshis in March and 42 in April. Some also came back home on their own arrangement.

IOM will apprise the government of the information it collected from the returnees, Asif Muner said.

According to Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, Bangladesh presently does not allow any of its nationals to go to Iraq with work visas.

Woman dies being entangled in generator engine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman died after being entangled in the engine of a generator at Haji Fazlul Karim Steel Market at English Road in the city yesterday.

The victim, Nargis Begum, 35, became entangled in the engine when she was filling the water tank of the generator in the afternoon.

Witnesses said her saree first got entangled in the engine and then pulled her body into it.

She died on the spot.

WORK PERMIT
Bahrain urged to lift suspension on Bangladeshis

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday urged Bahrain to lift its suspension order on issuance of work permits to Bangladeshis workers.

Foreign Adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury phoned State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain Dr Nejar Sadik Al Baharna yesterday noon and discussed the matter with him.

Dr Nejar assured Iftakhar that he would try to do his best to take an initiative for lifting the suspension order.

Bahrain has recently issued an order suspending fresh recruitment of Bangladeshis workers and issuance of work permits after a Bahrain national was killed by a Bangladeshi.

Meanwhile, a spokesman of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry advised Bangladeshis workers to obey the rules of the country concerned, as public sentiment is getting stronger in the Middle East countries against the breach of laws by foreigners.

7 to die for killing college student in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A Jhenidah court yesterday sentenced seven people to death for killing a college student six years back.

The convicts are Abdur Rob, Santosh Kumar, Swapan Kumar, Kartik Chandra Biswas, Baikuntha Sarkar, Krishnapada Biswas, and Akhsay Kumar, of Badargachha village in Kaliganj upazila.

According to the prosecution, the convicts indiscriminately beat up and chopped college student Sandip Kumar Biswas after dragging him out of his Badargachha village home on 14 September night in 2002 following an altercation with him the previous day.

He was rushed to a Khulna hospital in a critical condition where he succumbed to his injuries the following day.

PASSPORT FORGERY

Probe body likely to visit Malaysia

UNB, Dhaka

An official team is likely to go to Malaysia in order to investigate how 45 migrant workers managed forged Bangladeshis passports from Kuala Lumpur to return home.

The 45 workers returned home last month after they were cheated, compelled to leave the job and buy the fake passports. The workers have alleged that the Bangladesh High Commission did not help them in obtaining the travel documents required to return home.

The investigators will also inquire officials of GMG Airlines that carried them back home.

Zia International Airport (ZIA) police on April 26 filed a case against the fake passport holding returnees, their recruiting agencies, manpower exporters, cabin crew and management of GMG Airlines.

Investigation Officer (IO) Assistant Police Super (Immigration Administration) Wahiduzzaman told the news agency that they have done the preliminary work. "We have identified four brokers in this connection and arrested one of them," he said.

The arrested person was identified as Abu Kaiser alias Shahin, 32. Police are also investigating into the recruiting agencies that sent the workers to Malaysia.

But IO Wahiduzzaman did not disclose anything about their findings at this stage for the sake of investigation.

The returnees informed the investigators that their passports were confiscated by the manpower agents or Malaysian employers, deprived them of due wage and abused them in different ways. Finally they were compelled to leave the job.

They told the immigration at ZIA that they had to pay 3,000 to 4,000 Malaysian Ringgit equivalent to Tk 60,000 to Tk 80,000 to get each of the fake passports, not in real name.

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2 postal deptt employees get 10 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday sentenced two postal department employees to 10 years rigorous imprisonment for misappropriating allowances of other employees of the department.

Judge Sirajul Islam of Special Court-7, set up on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises, handed down the verdict to Krishna Kumar Dasgupta, an accountant, and Abul Kalam, cashier of the department.

The court also fined them Tk 2 lakh each. If they fail to pay, they would have to serve one more year in jail.

Krishna Kumar and Abul Kalam were both tried in absentia. But Krishna Kumar suddenly appeared in the court yesterday to know the fate of the case. He was then arrested and sent to jail.

According to the prosecution, the convicts misappropriated Tk 1.53 lakh in allowances of employees through submitting fake vouchers.

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PHOTO: STAR

Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) Prof Abul Faiz speaks at a discussion titled 'Achieving Acceptable Level of Maternal Mortality Rate: Status, Achievement and Expectation' at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right is Prof Saira Akhtar and on his left are Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam and Dr Rowshan Ara.

INT'L SAFE MOTHERHOOD DAY OBSERVED

3 women die in childbirth an hour: Experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Safe Motherhood Day was observed across the country yesterday with a call for reducing the maternal mortality rate to 1.4 percent by 2015 to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG).

At a discussion organised on this occasion, the experts said though the rate of maternal mortality has been reduced in last few years, it is not significant and currently the rate is 2.64 per thousand live births.

They said that three women die during childbirth every hour.

The experts identified lack of awareness about maternal health, skilled birth attendants and healthcare services in rural areas as the reasons for high maternal mortality rate in the country.

Furthermore, early marriage is

one of the main reasons behind the maternal mortality, as the body is not ready to be a mother at that time, they said, adding that in Bangladesh the rate of adolescent mother is 80 percent and still 87 percent delivery take place in the hands of unskilled birth attendants.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad organised the discussion titled 'Achieving acceptable level of maternal mortality rate: Status, achievement and expectation' at Cirdap auditorium.

The experts said maternal mortality is not a health issue only. "It also involves social factors as still many people don't want to take their wives to hospitals and clinics. Besides, violence against the expecting mothers, frequent pregnancy, unsafe abortion, unsafe sexual behaviour and lack of knowledge on reproductive health also stand for high maternal mor-

tality rate in the country," said Laila Anjuman Banu of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

Prof Abul Faiz, director general of DGHS, said the district and upazila level hospitals should be well equipped to give better health services.

"It is very unfortunate that there are only 80 upazilas in the country where we have caesarean facilities," he added.

To mark the day Nari Maitree organised a seminar titled 'Nutrition fair and safe delivery' in association with Urban Primary Health Care project at the Institute of Diploma Engineers where 250 pregnant mothers took part.

Health Adviser Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali said due to lack of awareness still many people do not go to skilled birth attendants and they should be encouraged to go to hospitals and clinics for safe delivery.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Emergency may be needed for security reasons

Says acting British high commissioner

UNB, Dhaka

Acting British High Commissioner Duncan Norman yesterday said none wants the state of emergency, but it might be necessary for security reasons during parliamentary elections slated for December this year.

"None wants to see the state of emergency in Bangladesh. Emergency cannot be ideal for democracy. But emergency might be necessary on security reasons and even for holding free and fair elections," he said.

Norman made the remarks at a 'Face to Face' programme with young journalists, arranged by Bangladesh Centre for Development Journalism and Communication (BCDJC) at the Daily Amader Somay office in the morning.

Asked whether the ongoing government-political party dialogue and next general elections will be acceptable to the British government without Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, Norman said: "We hope Awami League president Sheikh Hasina and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia will get justice."

"But in democracy," he said, "Individuals should not be given the

priority. Here, institutions and parties, and finally the people should be focused mainly."

The British diplomat urged the caretaker government and the military to play impartial role ahead of the next parliamentary polls as "Bangladesh needs sustainable democracy."

He also called for effective steps so that the political parties can launch free election campaigns.

Asked about the AL's decision to boycott the dialogue, he said political parties should play positive role for holding timely and credible elections as per the Election Commission roadmap.

Asked if AL and BNP boycott the election and the fundamentalist force comes to power, would the British government recognise such force, Norman said they don't think such a thing will happen in Bangladesh.

About the necessity of a national charter despite having a constitution in place, he said it is the political parties and the government to decide what would be the best for Bangladesh.

He said the British government would continue to assist Bangladesh for attaining sustainable democracy for economic and social prosperity.

Dialogue should be held between AL, BNP chiefs

Says SQ Chowdhury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury yesterday termed the ongoing dialogue 'rubbish' and said a dialogue should be held between the two chiefs of BNP and Awami League to overcome the present crisis.

"There has to be a settlement between the BNP and Awami League. To overcome the present crisis, a dialogue will have to be held between the two chiefs of BNP and Awami League where the politicians will play a supportive role," he told reporters while coming out of the Special Court-4, set up on Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises.

The trial of a corruption case against him was going on in the court. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has filed the case against him for amassing wealth of Tk 9.45 crore illegally and concealing information about Tk 91.42 lakh wealth in the wealth statement submitted to the ACC.

The BNP leader was brought to the court at 12:00 noon.

The court yesterday recorded statements of six prosecution witnesses in the case.

Workshop on fundraising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Freedom Foundation (BFF) yesterday organised a workshop on 'Effective communication for successful fundraising' in collaboration with Resource Alliance-UK.

The workshop focused on understanding the non-profit super bands, crafting message to win more supporters and how to write successful fundraising appeals.

Twenty-nine representatives from 26 non-profit organisations from 13 districts participated at the workshop.

Chairperson of Resource Alliance Mal Warwick conducted the workshop that was inaugurated by Safi Rahman Khan, executive director of BFF.

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MANPOWER, TRANSPORT FOR MAGISTRATES
SC asks govt to comply with earlier order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday once again directed the government to comply with its earlier order for providing manpower and transports for judicial magistrates as part of completing separation of judiciary from executive by July 1.

The six-member full bench, headed by Chief Justice Md Ruhul Amin, passed the order after hearing the judiciary separation case.

The court fixed July 2 for further order.

Earlier, the apex court had at least five times asked the government through the attorney general (AG) to recruit manpower and provide transports for judicial magistrates.

As the court sat yesterday morning for hearing the case, Attorney General Fida M Kamal presented before it some papers detailing the government's actions in implementing the court order.

POWER PLANT CASE
HC verdict in Hasina's writ petition June 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will deliver its verdict on June 1 in the writ petition filed by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina challenging the legality of the trial proceedings of the barge-mounted power plant corruption case.

A HC bench of Justice Mohammad Abdur Rashid and Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam yesterday fixed the date at the end of the hearing on the writ petition.

The trial of the power plant corruption case against Hasina is going on in the Special Judge's Court-1 on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case.

Following Hasina's writ petition, the HC on May 12 issued a rule asking the authorities to explain within eight days why continuation of trial proceedings of the case should not be declared illegal.



Poet Khaleda Edib Chowdhury passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent poet and litterateur Khaleda Edib Chowdhury passed away at her residence at Uttara in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

Born in 1937 in Comilla, she was the editor of juvenile magazine 'Naburun' and 'Sachitra Bangladesh'.

She received many awards and wide acclaim for his contribution to Bangla literature. The awards include Bangla Academy Literary Award, Aalo Literary Award, Poet Jasimuddin Literary Award, and Bangladesh Lekhika Sangha Award.

Khaleda Edib Chowdhury, wife of late Anwarul Haque, is survived by her only son, Rehab President Tanvirul Haque Probal, and two daughters Sangita Khan and Sumona Haque.

Her kulkhawi will be held at her residence in Uttara Sector # 4, Road # 6, House # 53 after Asr prayers on Friday. Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the kulkhawi.

The Bangla Academy and the BCS Information Association has expressed deep shock at the death of Khaleda Edib Chowdhury.

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