

# Int'l solidarity crucial to address human displacement issues

## Says UN secy general

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon yesterday made an urgent call to the international community to redouble their efforts to address both the causes and consequences of forced human displacement.

"Greater international solidarity is crucial if we are to share the burden of protection more equitably," he said in his World Refugee Day message, adding that the number of refugees increased to more than 11 million worldwide

last year.

In the written speech circulated at the discussion, jointly organised by Liberation War Museum and United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in the city to mark the day, the UN secretary general said the goal must be to ensure that refugees will be freed to return their homes in safety and dignity.

"But, on the World Refugee Day, let us first reaffirm that all refugees have their rights to asylum, and let us do everything we can to give them the full protection they deserve."

The UN secretary general said conflicts and poverty, the most common reasons that compel people to leave their homes, are now amplified by the effects of climate change, increasing scarcity of resources and food shortages -- factors that may lead to greater insecurity in the future.

"...the responsibility of providing asylum currently falls disproportionately on developing nations. Contrary to public perception in many industrialised nations, developing countries actually bear the burden of hosting

a larger number of refugees, despite their limited resources."

Speaking as the chief guest at the discussion, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representative Pia Priydz Phiri said, "Thousands of people in Bangladesh are getting displaced due to poverty, limited arable land and river erosion." We need to be conscious about their protection, she added.

Phiri said she was happy that the situation of around 27,500 Rohingya refugees in two camps in Cox's Bazar is now much better in terms of education, health, housing, water and sanitation, which was in precarious condition just two years ago.

She further said some developed countries like Canada, the UK and New Zealand have agreed for resettlement of some Rohingyas, but this scheme is limited.

Referring to reported criminal activities by the Rohingyas, the UNHCR representative said, "If some refugees are criminals, we are not going to protect them. Police should take actions as per laws."

Liberation War Museum Trustee Mofidul Hoque said it is a day that reminds the history back in 1971 when around one crore Bangladeshis took shelter as refugees in India and that they were treated humanely.

"We express our gratitude to India. This day helps us to be humane," he added.

Liberation War Museum Trustee architect Rabiul Hussain and UNIC official Kazi Ali Reza also spoke.



Sarwar Nipa and Mahmuda Akter read out excerpts from a book titled 'Sonajhara Din', the Bengali version of a novel 'A Golden Age' by Tahmina Anam, at a programme marking the World Refugee Day at the Liberation War Museum yesterday. UN Information Centre and the museum jointly organised the event.

## Two traders robbed of Tk 3.2 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Agyan Party robbed a rice trader of Tk 2.85 lakh on his way to Gazipur on Thursday night while a gang of muggers looted six mobile phone sets and Tk 40,000 from a mobile phone trader after stabbing him in the city's Badda area early yesterday.

Rice trader Abdul Hai, 50, owner of Al-Amin Traders at Rajanigandha Super Market in Cantonment area, was going to Gazipur by a bus to buy rice but fell victim to the Agyan Party members who drug people before robbing them.

Finding him in an unconscious state, bus staffers searched his pocket and got a telephone list. They then called his family members who rushed to the spot and took the trader to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at around 12:30am yesterday.

His brother Nur-un-Nobi suspect that the Agyan Party men might have taken away his money.

In the other incident, a gang of muggers intercepted mobile phone trader Mohammad Ripon, 30, of North Badda when he was returning home by a rickshaw at around 2:00am.

The muggers stabbed him in the head, hands and legs and took away six mobile phone sets and money. Ripon was later admitted to the DMCH.

## Robbers strangle housewife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A gang of armed robbers yesterday strangled a housewife at a village in Doarabazar upazila in Sunamganj.

The raiders broke open the back door and entered the house of Shishir Chakravarty at Durgapur village in the early hours.

They beat up the family members, including housewife Anima Chakravarty, 55, and her sister Shefali Chakravarty, 45. Shishir was out of the house during the incident.

At one stage, the robbers strangled Anima as she tried to resist them. The robbers looted three tolas of gold ornament and valuables worth around Tk 1 lakh from the house.

## Jubo Union demands withdrawal of bus fare hike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jubo Union yesterday strongly protested the bus fare hike on different routes in the city.

In a statement, Union President Kafi Ratan and General Secretary Hasan Hafizur Rahman Soheli also demanded withdrawal of the fare hike.

The sudden bus fare hike came as another blow when the people have already been badly affected by the price hike of essentials, they said.

## RIVER EROSION 500 families become homeless a year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 300 to 500 families become homeless every year due to river erosion causing massive displacement of people in the country, said University Grants Commission Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam yesterday.

"This is like a silent tsunami in Bangladesh," he said at a discussion at the three-day South Asian Leadership Conference that began at a city hotel on Thursday. Habitat for Humanity International organised it.

Around 100 participants working on urban housing and poverty issues across Asia attended the conference, says a press release.

Speaking as the chief guest at the discussion, urban expert Prof Nazrul Islam said such river erosion forces hundreds of thousands of people to migrate to urban areas creating housing problems in the urban centres.

The work of Habitat for Humanity International that has been building households for urban poor therefore is laudable, he said.

Prof Nurul Islam Nazem of Geography and Environment department, Dhaka University at the conference said slum dwelling is the biggest constraint for urbanisation in Bangladesh. Around 35.2 percent of urban population live in slums, he added.

In a presentation on "Trends in urban housing in South Asia with focus on Bangladesh", he said resource shortages, lack of political commitment and apathy of policy frameworks and elites towards the poor as city dwellers are main constraints to their housing problems in urban areas.

The speakers called upon the authorities to take strong measures to ensure good housing facilities for the poor people in the urban areas.



Students of Korail North Primary School pose with British Minister for International Development Shahid Malik during his visit to the Brac school in the city on Thursday.



UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 33.0 degree Celsius and the lowest temperature of 23.9 degrees were recorded at Rajshahi.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:49pm today and rises at 5:12am tomorrow.

The 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	30.3	24.6	85	90
Chittagong	29.5	25.2	91	77
Rajshahi	33.0	23.9	98	88
Khulna	31.5	25.3	92	97
Barisal	30.5	25.3	90	90
Sylhet	29.9	24.2	98	89
Cox's Bazar	29.0	25.0	93	87

## First anniversary of Jalladkhana Killing Field Memorial today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberation War Museum will observe the first founding anniversary of Jalladkhana Killing Field Memorial today.

On the occasion, a cultural programme will be held on the memorial premises at 4:00pm.

Inaugurated on June 21 last year, Jalladkhana Killing Field Memorial is the result of an excavation in the year 1999 by the Liberation War Museum along with the support of the Bangladesh Army.

The project succeeded in recovering 70 skulls and 5392 bones of men, women and children. They also found an assortment of personal belongings of those who were killed during the liberation war.

The memorial is a reminder of the inhuman acts of 1971, one of them being the indiscriminate killing of civilians by the Pakistani army and its string of collaborators at a deserted Wasa pump-house.

## British minister visits Brac school in city

British Minister for International Development Shahid Malik visited a Brac primary school in the city's Korail slum area on Thursday during his three-day tour of Bangladesh, says a press release.

The minister spent some time with the students of Korail North Primary School and enjoyed a cultural programme staged by them.

Following the visit, the minister said, "The future of Bangladesh is very bright if everybody is getting the education that these children are getting," he said. "And the good thing is that over 93 percent of the children who go to Brac schools end up going into the state sector, so it's a really positive initiative," he also added.

He hoped that if the government continues to work closely with civil society organisations like Brac in the education sector, Bangladesh would be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in education.

## BDR Qirat, Azan competition ends

UNB, Dhaka

The concluding ceremony of inter-sector Azan and Qirat competition-2008 of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) was held at Pikhana Central Mosque yesterday.

BDR Director General Major General Shakil Ahmed attended the occasion as the chief guest.

In the final competition, sepoy Mohammad Jhadul Islam of sadar rifle battalion got first place in Azan while honorary lance nayek Mohammed Qamrul Islam of Khulna sector earned first place in Qirat.

Both the first place holders would be sent to Saudi Arabia for performing holy haj this year.

In overall competition, Khulna sector became champion while Sadar rifle battalion became runner-up.



Boat sellers wait for customers at a market near Rajendrapur bus stand in Keraniganj yesterday. With the outset of monsoon, supply of new boats has increased. The price of a boat ranges from Tk 1800 to Tk 3000 depending on their size.

## Allow non-govt teachers in local govt polls

Dr Kamal urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday urged the caretaker government to allow the teachers of non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas to take part in the upcoming local government election.

In a statement, the renowned jurist also urged the government to give 20 percent dearness allowance to non-government teachers and raise their basic salary.

Meanwhile, Chief Coordinator of Shikshak Karmochari Oikya Jote Selim Bhuiyan has said their series of protest programmes have been postponed following the announcement of the finance adviser that they will also be given 20 percent dearness allowance, says a press release.

## Hydrographic Day today

UNB, Dhaka

The 3rd World Hydrographic Day will be observed in the country today as elsewhere across the globe.

The theme of the day this year is 'Importance of capacity building within international hydrographic community', says an ISPR release.

Following the declaration of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on the agenda of oceans and the law of the sea, the day is being observed since 2006.

The day is marked with an aim to give suitable publicity to hydrographic works, increase the coverage of information on a global basis and also to call on all states in order to promote safe navigation at sea.

Like other International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) member states, the National Hydrographic Committee (NHC) and other hydrographic organisations of the country will observe the day. Bangladesh is the 70th member state of IHO.

## Fatal bacteria found in drinking water in Rajshahi div: Survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Coliform, a fatal bacteria, has been detected in the drinking water of several northern districts including Bogra, says a survey report of the environment department of Rajshahi division.

Director of the department Mohammad Abdus Sobhan said the bacteria, harmful for human being, was found in the drinking water supplied to several government and non-government establishments including educational institutions.

The survey was conducted in Rajshahi, Bogra, Pabna, Rangpur, Gaibandha, Sirajganj, Lalmonirhat, Joypurhat and Naogaon districts from March to May this year.

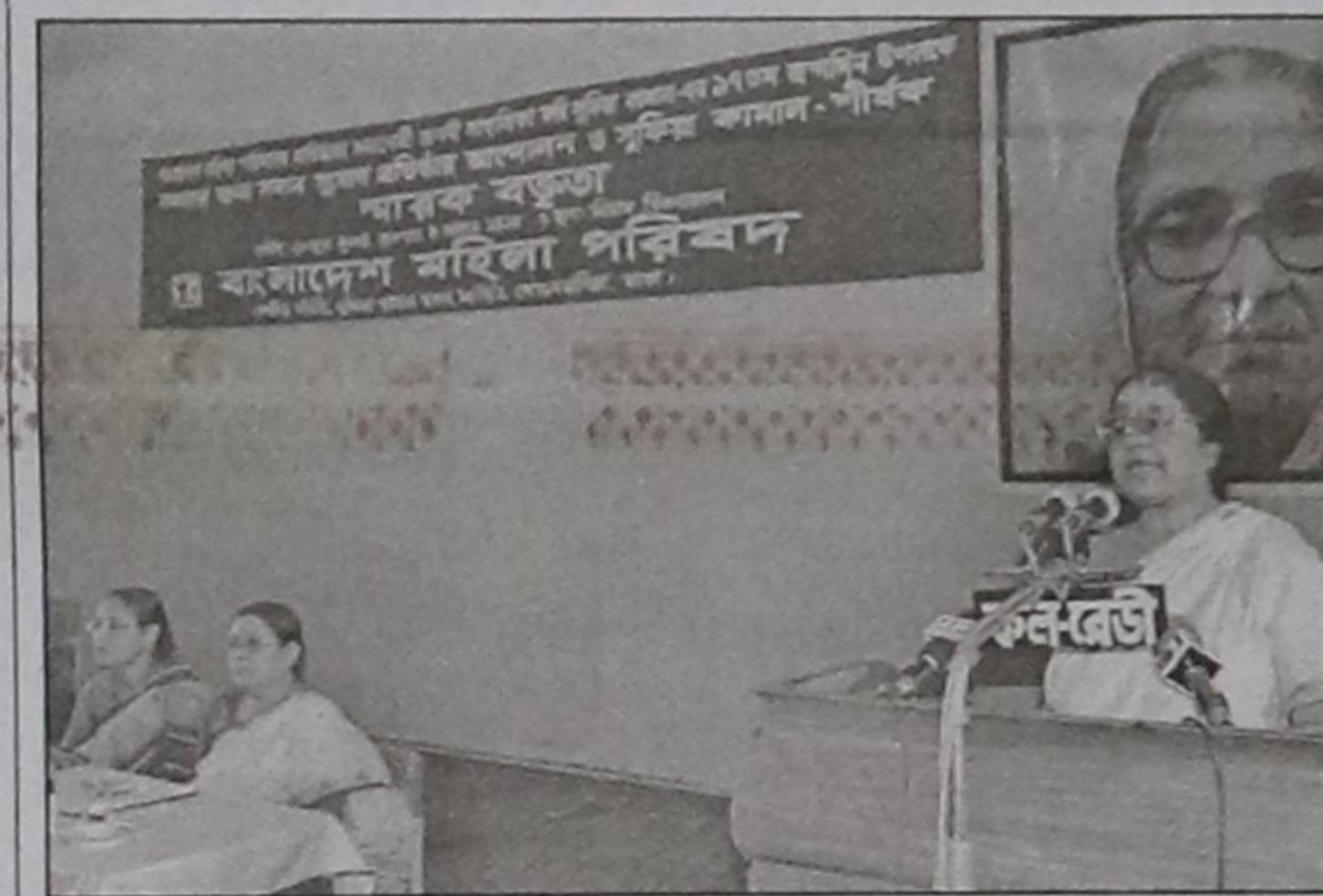
The report says the highest

quantity of coliform bacteria was found in the drinking water of Bogra town and its adjacent areas while the lowest quantity was found in Naogaon districts.

Sources said the tested 204 samples of drinking water was collected from different sources including restaurant, residential houses, educational institutions and government and non-government offices.

Prof Mainul Hasan Sadik, head of the department of medicine at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College and Hospital in Bogra, said coliform bacteria is the main cause of stomach disorder.

Long time intake of water with coliform bacteria is harmful for health and fatal for children, he added.



Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam speaks at a memorial lecture on the occasion of the 97th birth anniversary of poet Sufia Kamal at Biam auditorium in the city yesterday. The Mahila Parishad organised the event.

## Grameen Shakti wins green energy award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grameen Shakti, which has installed 150,000 solar home systems in the country and is adding around 5,000 new systems each month, was awarded the 2008 Outstanding Achievement Award at the Ashden Awards ceremony in London on Thursday.

The non-profit organisation -- a 2006 Ashden Awards prizewinner -- bagged the award for its role in income generation among rural population through installation of solar home systems, says a press release received in Dhaka.

The Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy was founded in 2001 by the Ashden Trust, a Britain-based charity that works to increase the use of local sustainable energy worldwide.

In November 2007, when cyclone Sidr struck Bangladesh, solar was a lifeline: solar mobile phones warned people of the cyclone's approach, and the majority of solar installations survived its impact.

Sarah Butler-Sloss, founder and chair of the Ashden Awards said: "We continue to be astounded by the way Grameen Shakti links renewable energy technologies with income generating activities, and provides efficient services at the local level through renewable energy entrepreneurs. We hope that the Outstanding Achievement Award supports Grameen Shakti in the ambitious goal of installing one million solar home systems and 10 million improved cooking stoves by 2015."

Grameen Shakti promotes, develops and popularises renewable energy technologies in remote, rural areas of Bangladesh. Nearly 70 percent of homes in the country have no electricity and rely on kerosene for lighting, which is smoky and a fire risk.

It sets out to make solar systems affordable to the poor by supplying small 20Wp systems -- typically for

two lights and a radio or phone charger -- that can be paid for through micro loans.

Grameen Shakti continues to make impressive inroads with solar energy, and is now diversifying, using its robust infrastructure to roll out programmes for biogas plants and improved cooking stoves.

The organisation now has 400 local offices and opens 10 new offices every month. It also has a network of 20 'Grameen Technology Centres' which have trained 1,000 women entrepreneurs to assemble solar home systems and cooking stoves. 50 of these women have now set up their own businesses.

Accepting the award, Dipul Barua, managing director of Grameen Shakti, said: "When I was here two years ago, I was inspired by my fellow Ashden Awards winners to diversify into improved cooking stoves and biogas systems. In those two years we have installed 15,000 improved cooking stoves, 3,500 biogas plants, and expanded our solar home systems to 160,000."

"For the future, I plan to install one million solar home systems by 2010, 10 million cooking stoves, and one million biogas plants; and will be able to create 100,000 green jobs by 2015 in Bangladesh," he added.

## Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Mohammad Giasuddin, a freedom fighter and former government official, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Disease (NICVD) early yesterday at the age of 69, family sources said.

He left behind his wife, three sons and a daughter, and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

## Lift emergency for credible election

Menon urges govt

A CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Workers' Party of Bangladesh (WPB) President Rashed Khan Menon has again urged the government to withdraw the state of emergency to establish a congenial atmosphere for free, fair and credible election.

He also called for holding general election ahead of other polls.

Menon was addressing a meeting of the party workers at Thakurgaon Press Club auditorium yesterday.

The meeting was part of a mass signature campaign to realise its 16-point demand.

The WPB chief said if the government tries to control the election and want to help the win of selected people, the country will head for uncertainty and instability.

He said the trial of war criminals would free the country from the politics of betrayal and conspiracy.

Menon said people of low-income group and lower middle class are living in misery due to price hike of essentials.

He urged the government to start immediately rationing system for common people across the country.

## Poet Sufia Kamal's birth anniversary observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 97th birth anniversary of poet Sufia Kamal was observed yesterday with a call for ensuring equal rights of women in every sphere of life.

Different organisations chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the day.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP), founded by Sufia Kamal, organised a memorial lecture and cultural function at the Biam auditorium.

In his written lecture, Journalist Abul Momen said Sufia Kamal had always fought for the rights of women.

The lecture was read out by Kazi Sufia Akter Sheli, publicity and media secretary of the organisation.

Speakers at the programme called for ensuring equal rights of women.

They also urged the government not to bow down to fundamentalist forces and to implement the National Women Development Policy 2008.

BMP President Ayesha Khanam presided over the programme which was attended by Sultana Kamal, daughter of Sufia Kamal and former adviser to the caretaker government, Hena Das, former president of BMP, and Dr Maleka Banu, general secretary of the organisation.

Karmojibi Nari (KN), a platform for working women, organised a discussion meeting at its office in the city.

KN President Shirin Akter said Sufia Kamal had always struggled for establishing educational and other rights of women in the society.

## BAF certificate award ceremony

A certificate awarding ceremony of the 14th Fighter Conversion Course (FCC) of Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) was held at BAF Base Zahurul Haque in Chittagong on Thursday, says an ISPR release.

Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman handed over certificates to 17 trainee pilots as the chief guest. Senior BAF officers were present at the programme.

Addressing the ceremony, the air chief said, "You would be greatly benefited to find the fruits of this standardised training when you would fly in the operational fighter squadron."

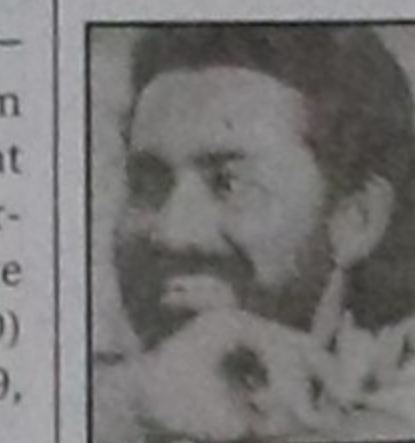
It would help the pilots to further enhance their concept of fighter operation and their ability to handle a demanding situation in the air, he added.

## Death anniversary



Today is the 21st death anniversary of AKM Israil, an anti-British movement veteran, says a press release.

On the occasion, Rudra Sangsad will place wreaths at his grave and hold a milad mahfil and discussion at his village home at Mitkehali.



Today is the 17th death anniversary of poet Rudra Mohammad Shahidullah, says a press release.