

CG should quit power holding credible polls

Hasina tells party men in Toronto

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the incumbent caretaker government should quit power through holding a free and fair election within a short time.

"The constitutional jurisdiction of the caretaker government is to hand over power to people's representatives through holding a free, fair and credible election," she said while exchanging views with the leaders of her party's Canada chapter at Ellis Hall in Toronto.

Hasina, who has been staying in Toronto with her daughter Salma Wazed Putul, reminded the government that it assumed power with a promise to conduct a credible election in the country.

The AL chief left Dhaka on June 12 for US, a day after she was temporarily released from the special jail within the Jatiya Sangshad Bhaban premises in the capital.

Hasina urged all to work together by forgetting all disputes to make Bangladesh a medium-income country by 2020, according to a report of New York-based news agency NewsWorld from Toronto.

The former prime minister said when her party was in power from 1996 to 2001, the country was self-sufficient in food and the price of rice per kg was Tk 10 which is now Tk 40.

She said people are now understanding it clearly that they have to suffer a lot if AL is not in power, according to another report of US-based Bangla News agency American News Agency (ANA).

Hasina, the eldest daughter of

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, said she was arrested on "false and fabricated" charges.

"My main power is the faith in almighty Allah and people's confidence in me, and with these faiths the AL intends to assume power in the coming days," she added.

The AL president said Allah saved her life from the gruesome grenade attack on her party rally on August 21, 2004 killing 24 party leaders and workers.

Hasina said the government did not take proper steps for her treatment while she was detained.

She said she always worked for the welfare of people and wants to build a golden Bangladesh as dreamt by Bangabandhu.

Hasina could leave Canada for London on July 4 or 5, said the reports.

Biman receives leased aircraft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 512-seater Boeing 747-300, which the Biman Bangladesh Airlines has leased from a Thai airline for one year, has arrived at Zia International Airport last night.

The aircraft belonging to Orient Thai Airlines landed at ZIA at around 9:30pm, a Biman high official told The Daily Star.

Biman signed an agreement with Orient Thai on June 1 to take a lease on the aircraft in a bid to minimise disruption in its flight schedules.

The national flag carrier has been facing serious troubles in maintaining flight schedules due to acute shortage of aircraft for quite some time now. With the leased one, the number of Biman's aircraft will rise to 10.

The leased aircraft will be used to operate Biman's flights to Gulf and Middle East countries.

Under Aircraft-Crew-Maintenance-Insurance (ACMI) lease process, the Orient Thai, which started operations in 2000, will provide staff and crew of the wide-bodied aircraft while Biman will supply fuel.

"As per the lease conditions, Biman will have to pay \$5,395 to Orient Thai for per block hour (every flying hour from take-off to landing)," a Biman official said. Biman currently owns three types of aircraft -- four DC10-30s, two F28s, and two A310-300s.

HC quashes proceedings of graft case against Pintu's wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday quashed the proceedings of a graft case against former BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Pintu's wife Nasima Akter Kalpana.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case with Hajjaribagh Police Station against Pintu and his wife Kalpana on July 13, 2007 for amassing wealth through illegal means and hiding information in their wealth statements submitted to the ACC.

After hearing a petition filed by Kalpana, a HC division bench of Justice Mohammad Abdur Rashid and Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam delivered the verdict quashing the case proceedings against her.

HC issues rule on govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon the government to explain within two weeks as to why it (government) should not be directed to remove three commercial establishments from the city's Banani residential area.

A HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Farid Ahmed issued the rule after hearing a writ petition.

Two businessmen -- Kazi Siraj and Giasuddin Ahmed -- filed the writ petition as public interest litigation (PIL) seeking a court order to remove three commercial establishments -- Amin Tours and Travels, Nova Medical Centre and Saudia Diagnostic Centre.

In the writ petition, they stated that the caretaker government has recently taken a decision that no trade licence would be issued to commercial enterprises in the residential areas in Dhaka.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed holds talks with the Jatiya Party as part of the dialogues with the political parties at his office in the city yesterday.

SAFMA CONFERENCE BEGINS IN KOLKATA

People-to-people contact stressed to strengthen ties

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, Kolkata

India wants Bangladesh to open up its road and river routes to facilitate better link between Kolkata, Myanmar and the Northeast, said Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee while inaugurating a conference of the Saarc-backed South Asia Free Media Association (Safma) in Kolkata yesterday.

He said there is a possibility of passenger train service between Kolkata and Agartala via Dhaka.

Pranab said India would build a 60-km road link with Myanmar and develop a port in that country.

He said the psychological barrier between India and Bangladesh had been broken in the recent past and stressed on more people-to-people contact to take bilateral relations forward.

When a Bangladeshi journalist pointed out that 'Maitree Express' was not finding passengers owing to abnormal delay in customs and immigration clear-

ance, he said such problems would be sorted out soon.

"We are also looking at the possibilities of extending the train service to Agartala," he added.

Asked why the promised five lakh tonnes of rice from India as relief for survivors of deadly cyclone 'Sidr' that hit Bangladesh last year had not reached that country, Pranab said one lakh tonne had already been sent through Kolkata and Vizag ports.

Besides looking for another port for sending the rice to Bangladesh, efforts are also being made to send it by rail, he added.

Acknowledging that there was trade imbalance with Bangladesh, he said India had recently allowed import of eight million pieces of garments from that country.

"Let Bangladesh identify what it wants to export to India. We are also open to joint production of these export items," he said.

On the maritime boundary dispute with Bangladesh, Pranab

said another round of meeting is to be held soon and expressed the hope that a solution would be arrived at in that meeting.

West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee said besides trade and commerce, relation between India and Bangladesh could be made stronger through cultural exchanges.

"Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam belong to both the countries. Why can't we jointly celebrate Tagore's birthday here or Nazrul's birthday in Bangladesh?" he posed a question.

Pointing out that Bangladesh was in the throes of change, Speaker of West Bengal Assembly Hasim Abdul Halim said, "It seems that the agony you went through in creating Bangladesh is not over yet. It is not good for the people or the country."

"What we want is an intense interaction between the peoples of the two countries, especially the youth. The journalists also have a role in making this interaction possible," he added.

Preliminary test of 28th BCS by Aug

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public Service Commission (PSC) Chairman Prof Dr Saadat Hussain yesterday said the preliminary test of the 28th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examinations will be held by August and its final result will be published by December 2009 after completion of the written test and viva voce.

"The preliminary test for the 28th BCS will be held within one or two months. We hope that we will publish its final result by December 2009," he said at a seminar at Spectra Convention Centre in the city.

The PSC chairman also said that the recommendations on BCS quota will be sent to the establishment ministry by the first week of August. Saadat Hussain also said that quota should be reviewed every year as eligible candidates are not often found in some quotas.

"There is no need for a separate district quota. Eligible candidates often cannot be found in women and tribal quota," he added.

Only 45 percent of the public servants are selected on merit. The remaining of both cadre and non-cadre service holders includes 30 percent freedom fighters or their offspring, 10 percent women, 10 percent residents of certain districts and five percent indigenous people.

Indian HC presents books to DU library

Indian high commission (HC) yesterday presented 55 volumes of books on the history of Indian science, philosophy and culture to the central library of Dhaka University (DU) as a gift, says a press release.

Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty handed over the books to DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz at a ceremony at the Senate building.

Deans of all faculties and academicians were present on the occasion.

The volume of books are a part of a research project presently being administered by the New Delhi-based NGO 'Centre for Studies in Civilisation' under the chairmanship of Prof DP Chattopadhyaya.

Obituary

Dr Mirza Abdul Bares, director of Directorate of Family Planning and founding president of Family Planning Doctors' Association, passed away due to cancer at Modern Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 56, says a press release.

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

Sufia Khatun

Sufia Khatun, wife of Md Jahangir Miah, deputy managing director of Janata Bank Ltd, passed away at Apollo Hospitals in the city on Sunday, says a press release.

Chairman, CEO and managing director of Janata Bank Ltd expressed their deep shock at her death.

Death anniversary

Today is the 3rd death anniversary of Nasrin Sultana, wife of Mujibur Rahman Khoka, a publisher, says a press release.

Relatives and admirers are requested to pray for eternal peace of her departed soul.



Communist Party of Bangladesh forms a human chain in front of the party office at Purana Paltan in the city yesterday protesting price hike of essentials and demanding introduction of rationing system.

DU Day today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) will celebrate the 'DU Day' today on the campus amid a series of colourful programmes.

The day's main event will begin with a laser show presentation at the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) auditorium at 9:50am. A drama titled 'Eksho Bosta Chal' (100 Sacks of Rice) will be staged at the same venue at 10:00am.

A discussion will also be held at the TSC auditorium at 11:00am. Former vice chancellors (VCS) and pro-VCS, recently awarded four emeritus professors, distinguished guests, teachers and students will participate in the event.



Nazmul, Rafiqul new president, GS of IBA Alumni Assoc

Nazmul Hassan, chief executive officer of Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd (BPL) and secretary general of Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI), and M Rafiqul Islam, CEO of Management Consulting Group, have recently been elected president and general secretary of IBA Alumni Association respectively, says a press release.

Other office-bearers of the Executive Committee are Vice Presidents Niaz Habib and Johra Bebe, Joint Secretary Md Kamrul Hossain, Treasurer Shariful Moslem Khan, Organising Secretary M Salahuddin Chowdhury, Seminar Secretary Asif Touhid, Publication Secretary James Jakob Ribero, Cultural and Sports Secretary Afzalul Hasan Khan and Members Syed Monzurul Haq, Neaz Ahmed, Nurul Haq Majumder, M Shakil Wahed, Shoaib Ahmed Masud, Syed Masud Hossain, Masudul Haque Bhuiyan, Sk Shabab Ahmed, Quazi Mahmud Ahmed, Gazi Munir Uddin, Mohammad Emran and Rahat Khan.

SEDITION CASE AGAINST BHAUDDIN NASIM Arguments on July 16

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed July 16 as the date for the hearing on arguments in a sedition case filed against Awami Swechchhasebak League President AFM Bahauddin Nasim, who is now at large.

Judge Aman Ullah of the Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court set the date for arguments in the case after the completion of deposition of statements by 11 prosecution witnesses.

Earlier, the court framed charges against him in absentia in the case filed five years ago. The court also issued arrest warrant against him.

On July 25, Investigation Officer Munshir Atiqur Rahman, also an assistant commissioner of police (ASP) at Criminal Investigation Department (CID), submitted the charge sheet to Dhaka's chief metropolitan magistrate's court, showing 17 people as prosecution witnesses.

Mohammad Dulal Uddin

Akand, the then ASP of Faridpur zone CID, arrested Bahauddin Nasim on February 27, 2002 at Zia International Airport and seized US\$6,300, three passports, two tickets, eight books and some CDs.

Later, Akand filed the case with a Dhaka court on March 11, 2002, accusing Nasim of acting against the country's sovereignty and tarnishing its image abroad.

The complainant alleged that the CDs contain 'false and fabricated footage of torture' of the minority Hindu community and acts of vandalism in Dhaka University halls and houses at different parts of the country by the activists of the four-party alliance.

"Such activities might destroy communal harmony and worsen the country's law and order," the plaintiff said in his case statement.

Nasim was granted bail by the High Court, which was cancelled on August 14 last year as he did not appear in the court.



Moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty 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 rainfalls are also likely at places, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 33.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Rajshahi and the lowest of 23.6 degrees at Teknaf.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:15am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

International Finance Corporation organises a seminar on 'Public private partnership: Concepts, case studies and management'. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 8:30am.

Consultation

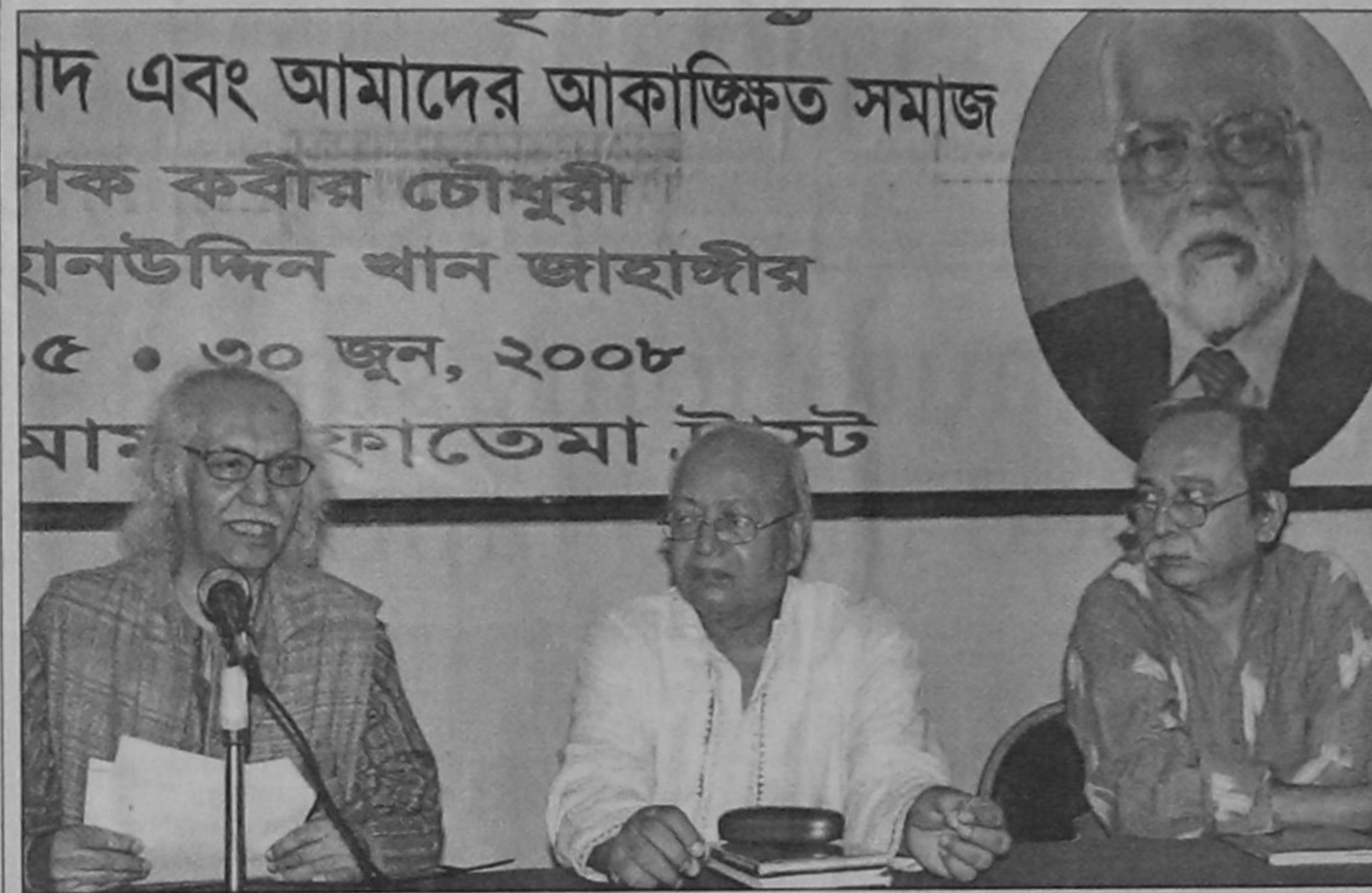
The national consultation on safe migration and Saarc policy on anti-trafficking will be held. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 9:30am.

Report launching

The launching ceremony of a survey report on women with disabilities in Bangladesh will be held. Venue: Biam conference room. Time: 9:30am.

Rotary Dhaka

The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka will be held. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5:30pm.



Prof Kabir Chowdhury delivers the Misbahuddin Khan Memorial Lecture-1 on 'Fundamentalism in Bangladesh and our desired society' at WVA auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left are Dr Burhanuddin Khan Jahangir and Prof Muntasir Mamun. Muntasir Mamun-Fatema Trust organised the event.

Take up disaster management programme for people with disabilities

Speakers at dialogue urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a dialogue yesterday called on the government to take disaster management programme for the people with disabilities in a bid to mitigate their untold sufferings during and after any natural disaster.

Titled 'Disability inclusive disaster management programme', the national dialogue was organised by Action on Disability and Development (ADD) at the Brac Centre Inn auditorium in the city.

Chaired by ADD Country Director Mosharrar Hossain, the dialogue was addressed by ADD-UK Programme Coordinator Shikuku Obosi, Alfred Osunsanya of Food and Agriculture Organisation, team leader of UNDP Humanitarian Response

Team Shashanka Sadi, DFID Social Development Adviser Shailla Rahman, Tusuka Texel Chairman Arshad Jamal Dipu, Centre for Disability in Development Executive Director AHM Noman Khan and Programme Manager of Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme AKM Mamunur Rashid.

Nayeem Wahra of Disaster Forum moderated the programme, while Assistant Prof Hasan Shafie of the department of Anthropology at Dhaka University placed a keynote paper.

The speakers said Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to flood, cyclone, tornado, drought, salinity, river bank erosion and some other natural disasters. Persons with disabilities suffer most due to high degree of vulnerabilities and over exposure of hazards.

In addition, cultural beliefs or community attitudes towards the persons with disabilities also contribute to an increase in the risk of disaster, they added.

The speakers further said that persons with disabilities, women and children face 85 percent of deaths during disasters. They urged the government to formulate a disaster management programme and provide proper facilities for the vulnerable people.

People with disabilities are the most vulnerable group. So, all development-based programmes should be made disabled people-friendly, they added.

Established in 1985, ADD works in 13 countries in Asia and Africa regions. The organisation has network in 23 districts in Bangladesh.