

# 15th Saarc Summit productive for region's peoples: Ifttekhar

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Adviser Ifttekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday said the 15th Saarc Summit in Colombo was "productive for the region's peoples" and that Bangladesh, under the leadership of Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed "made a significant contribution to its outcome."

Ifttekhar who returned to Dhaka from Colombo yesterday evening said the summit made advances on four key issues - food security, energy, trade and climate change, all of which are priority for Bangladesh.

Besides, he said several new agreements, South Asian Development Fund (SDF) Charter, and the South Asian Standard

Organisation (SARSO), whose headquarters would be located in Dhaka, were signed.

Ifttekhar said the chief adviser raised two new issues: one was the need for a common strategy to negotiate the welfare and protect the rights of South Asian migrant workers in the other parts of the world, and the second one was the proposal to set up a mechanism for interaction between senior military officers in the region.

He said the South Asian countries also endorsed Bangladesh's candidacy for membership of the UN Security Council in 2015.

"Similarly we endorsed Maldives for 2018. This idea of common candidacy is a new and positive development in Saarc," he said.

Ifttekhar said the chief adviser held bilateral meetings with each one of the eight leaders attending. Each of these meetings led to useful outcomes," he added.

The advisor said this was also an important year in the sense that many Saarc nations are undergoing major constitutional and political transformations. Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives are among them.

"We ourselves will be holding elections in December. The meeting provided us an occasion to exchange experiences and learn from one another," Ifttekhar said.

The advisor said, "South Asia is seen as politically a major force in global politics. That is why a large number of countries and organisa-

tions are keen to join as observer. We already have on the list European Union, the US, Japan, China, South Korea, Iran, Mauritius, Australia, and Myanmar. We have now decided to put a three year moratorium on fresh membership and are drawing up a set of modalities in that connection."

He said, "It is true that the development of Saarc is not spectacular. That is understandable given the nature of our history. But the future is bright and I have every confidence that the future belongs to South Asia."

Ifttekhar said, "every achievement of Saarc fills Bangladesh with pride as it is Bangladesh which conceived the idea that led to the establishment of this body."



Founder and Chairperson of Brac Fazle Hasan Abed speaks at the launching ceremony of the Centre for Gender, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday. On his right are Dr Alejandro Cravioto, Dan Odallo and Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury.

## Centre for Gender, Sexuality & HIV/AIDS launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Brac School of Public Health (BSPH) in collaboration with UNAIDS launched the Centre for Gender, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS yesterday with a view to increasing facilities for research, advocacy and networking in this arena.

Equipped with state-of-the-art technologies for teaching and learning, the centre is designated for research, policy, advocacy and training activities. It would deal with gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS issues in Bangladesh and other developing countries.

The centre would combine research, advocacy and policy development in these three distinct, often interrelated, areas, said Dr AMR Chowdhury, dean of James P Grant School of Public Health, Brac University, at the launching ceremony in the city.

Elaborating the objectives of the centre, he said that it would focus on creation and generation of knowledge, promoting a creative discourse, dissemination of infor-

mation, experience and knowledge, building network and partnership and advocacy on gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS.

Founder and Chairperson of Brac Fazle Hasan Abed attended the launching ceremony as the chief guest. AKM Zafar Ullah Khan, secretary of the health ministry, Dan Odallo, country coordinator of UNAIDS, Dr Rounaq Jahan, convenor, advisory committee of Bangladesh Health Watch, and Dr Alejandro Cravioto, executive director of ICDDR,B, also spoke.

Vice Chancellor of Brac University Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury chaired the session. The major goal of the centre is very close to the Brac's mission and it is the eradication of poverty. But there is no single way to eradicate poverty. So Brac has been working in different sectors and different ways to achieve the goal, said Fazle Hasan Abed.

"The centre will also be the medium of disseminating information," Dr Rounaq Jahan said. "Due to cultural norms, we don't

like to talk about sexuality. But we need to talk honestly to make the people aware of HIV/AIDS."

## Road crashes kill two

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Sathkira yesterday. The victims were identified as Solaiman, 55, a porter of Sathkira bus terminal, and Shuk Chand Ali, 60.

The accident occurred when a bus dashed Solaiman on the wall while he was bringing down goods from the roof of the bus, leaving him seriously injured.

He was taken to Sathkira Sadar hospital in critical condition where he succumbed to his injuries.

The other accident occurred when a motorcycle hit Shuk Chand Ali while he was crossing the road at Brajabaksa Bazar on Sathkira-Jessore highway.

Seriously injured, he was taken to a Kalaroa hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.



Apollo Hospitals Dhaka organised a healthcare awareness programme for American Alumni Association at the Apollo Auditorium in the city recently. Dr AHM Waliul Islam and Dr Md Mohiuddin Araf conducted the programme.

## Autorickshaw-lifting gang ringleader held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch (DB) of Police arrested a ringleader of a CNG-run autorickshaw-lifting gang that lift the vehicles cheating the drivers in various ways.

A car-lifting-prevention team of the detective branch led by Additional Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Masudur Rahman also recovered two lifted autorickshaws from city's Khilkhet area on Sunday night.

The DB team arrested ringleader Shahin Ahmed, 40, alias Babu Molla alias Hafez Molla of

Madaripur in a raid in the Lake City area at Khilkhet.

DB police said of the two recovered three-wheelers, one was lifted on July 27 by killing its driver.

The body of driver Jahangir was recovered from BRTC factory in Gazipur on July 29.

Another auto-rickshaw was lifted on July 31 after dopping its driver.

During interrogation, Babu Molla confessed that he is the chief of a professional car-lifting gang. There are women also in his group of thugs that consists 8 to 10 members.

## PSC's first half-yearly exam starts Aug 18

BSS, Dhaka

The first half-yearly departmental examination of 2008 for BCS cadre and non-cadre officials will begin on August 18.

The examinations from August 18 to 21 will be held at the Public Service Commission (PSC) secretariat.

The examinations of August 22 and 23 will be held at Dhaka Polytechnic Institute at Tejgaon, an official handout said yesterday.

Any candidate, if does not get interview card, could collect the duplicate card by submitting an application with two attested photographs two to three days ahead of the examination, the handout added.

## 46.63pc pass in BOU HSC exams

METRO DESK

The results of the first and second year final examinations of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) Programme under Bangladesh Open University (BOU) have been published in the grading system, says a press release.

A total of 89,848 students appeared in the HSC first and second year final examinations of which 38,336 students appeared in the final examinations. The pass percentage is 46.63.

Of the successful examinees, 19 got grade A, 221 got grade A-, 1500 got grade B, 9843 got grade C and 6292 students passed in grade D. The total number of successful candidates is 17,875.

The authorities also published the results of the first year final examination that was appeared by a total of 51,512 students.

Examinees have been advised to contact only their respective HSC Tutorial Centres (TC) to know the result.

## Applications invited for Pak scholarship

METRO DESK

Pakistan government has decided to award scholarship to eligible candidates from Bangladesh to undertake postgraduate studies (Masters/PhD) in various universities in the fields of natural and social sciences for the academic year 2008-2009.

The scholarships are fully funded by the Pakistan government, says a press release.

Aspiring candidates are advised to collect application forms from the Pakistan High Commission located in House No NE (C) 2 Road No 71, Gulshan-2, Dhaka against a payment of Tk 200.

They can also dial 8825388/9 (Extension 26) for further information.

The Pakistan High Commission can be contacted from 10:00am to 3:00pm from Sunday to Thursday. Last date for submission of application forms is August 12.

A candidate must submit a two-page write-up typed on A4 size paper in English along with the application form, explaining why he/she wants to take up postgraduate studies in that subject and how it will help the candidate to improve his/her career opportunities in future.

Short listed candidates will be called for interview and the high commissioner will make the final selection.

## Stolen child rescued after 4 days: 4 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

An eleven-month-old boy, who was stolen in the town four days ago, was rescued from Keraniganj near Dhaka on Sunday.

Police also arrested four people in this connection.

The boy is identified as Sajib, son of Swapan, a rickshaw puller of Nalua road of the town while the arrestees are Hasina Begum, 30, a neighbour of Swapan, Setara Begum, 45, a broker of Narayanganj Sadar Hospital, and Bilkis, 30, and Hena, 30, brokers of Mitford Hospital in the capital.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Narayanganj Sadar Police Station Kazi Mahfujul Karim said Hasina had stolen Sajib on July 31 and later sold him to Setara Begum, a broker of Narayanganj Sadar Hospital.

Police arrested Hasina from her village home at Sagharia of Gopulpur in Tangail.

On her confessional statement, Narayanganj Sadar police arrested Setara from her residence in Rail Line area of Narayanganj town.



Members of Jubo Union stage a demonstration at Purana Paltan in the city yesterday protesting the forced repatriation of Bangladeshi workers from Kuwait.

## Worker unrest in Kuwait Compensation for deported workers demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

A group of Dhaka University (DU) students yesterday staged demonstration on the campus protesting silent role of the government regarding deportation of around 700 Bangladeshi workers from Kuwait.

Students under the banner "Anti-capitalism students" brought out a procession at around 12:00pm that marched different streets on the campus.

Students alleged that while the Kuwait government illegally deported hundreds of Bangladeshi workers, the government was silent and did not take any step on behalf of the dismissed workers.

The students demanded compensation from the Kuwait government and urged Bangladesh government to take steps to realise the compensation.



The National Association of Unesco Clubs in Bangladesh organised seminars on 'Awareness raising on HIV/AIDS for youths in Bangladesh' in different districts recently. The photo shows Mahbubuddin Chowdhury, secretary general of the organisation, giving away a certificate to a participant at Mukul Niketan in Mymensingh.

## 'Extend time for submitting Moallem fees'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Olama Mashaek Samannay Parishad yesterday called on the government to extend the time for submitting Moallem fees so that 12000 more prospective pilgrims can perform hajj this year.

The Parishad leaders also demanded that a National Hajj Committee be formed with religious personalities instead of bureaucrats who create problems during the hajj period every year.

Ministry officials involved in hajj management are trying to tarnish the image of the government as they stopped receiving Moallem fees four months ahead of hajj, whereas people could submit the fees even long after holy Ramadan in previous years, the leaders said at a press conference.

They warned the government that the issue can lead to angry outbursts across the country, if it is not settled immediately.

They also urged the government not to charge the prospective hajj pilgrims extra plane fare in order to minimise the loss of Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

"The hajj management in the neighbouring countries is very efficient, but irregularities have gripped the hajj management in our

country as the government depends on bureaucrats to a great extent," Parishad President Moulana Abdul Latif Chowdhury said.

Parishad Vice President Abdul Quayum Sobhani and Delwar Hossain also spoke at the press conference held at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

## Indian goods worth Tk 1cr seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) seized huge quantity of smuggled India sarees at Feni early yesterday, says a press release.

A patrol team of BDR seized the goods worth about Tk 1 crore at East Madhugram village.

## Trial of war criminals demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

Pragatishil Chhatra Jote (PCJ), an alliance of left leaning student organisations, yesterday staged demonstration on Dhaka University (DU) campus demanding trial of war criminals and ban on communal politics in the country.

In support of their demands, PCJ leaders and activists brought out a procession from Madhu's Canteen at around 12:00pm that marched different streets of the campus and ended holding a protest rally in front of DU central library.

Leaders at the rally condemned the role of government towards trial of war criminals and alleged that despite repeated demand by the people of the country, the present caretaker government is yet to take any effective step to start the trial of war criminals.

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