

Bangladesh gets into Trans-Eurasia Info Network

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh gets into Trans-Eurasia Information Network (TEIN3) to derive immense benefits in spheres of research and education, enhance global connectivity and get high-speed connection to the information superhighway where every stroke is money.

The National Task Force on ICT affairs yesterday approved a proposal to connect Bangladesh with the TEIN3. The taskforce in its sixth meeting, presided over by Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, endorsed the country's accession to the Network that will also help in regional networking and accessing digital library.

India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and

Nepal have already got connected with the Trans-Eurasia Information Network (TEIN3).

The meeting also approved in principle a five-year (2008-12) project titled ICT Professional Skill Assessment and Enhancement Programme (IPSAEP) for grooming IT professionals in the country to catch up with the present world's fastest-growing sector, dubbed knowledge economy.

"The project should be run independently in tripartite way—by government, academia and businessmen," the meeting was quoted having viewed during discussion, elaborated with a power-point presentation.

Prof Zafar Iqbal made a power-point presentation on IPSAEP at the

meeting.

At the meeting, Fakhruddin said ICT sector "should have a vision and target and advance accordingly".

Giving some guidelines for flourishing the promising IT sector, he said soon there should be another meeting of the national taskforce on ICT affairs and focus should be given on IT as "this is an important subject".

He appreciated the initiative for making IPSAEP project as a very good and important piece of work.

At the meeting, Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Service (BASIS) sought government cooperation in getting credit facility for working capital for software development and IT services.

The matter could be discussed with the finance ministry and Bangladesh Bank, the meeting was told.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim briefed news-men about the meeting.

Finance Adviser Dr Mirza Azizul Islam, Special Assistants to the Chief Adviser Brig Gen (Retd) MA Malek, Dr M Tamim and Manik Lal Somaddar, Prof Zafar Iqbal, president of Bangladesh Computer Society, Mostafa Jabbar, the chairman of BTRC, cabinet secretary, secretary of CA's office, CA's press secretary and secretaries concerned were among others present at the meeting.

CONTEMPT OF COURT HC rule on five secretaries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon five secretaries of the government to explain to this court by August 25 why contempt proceedings should not be drawn against them for not complying with its (HC) direction to give promotion to a petitioner.

Upon a contempt petition filed by Shamsul Kibria, now deputy secretary at the post and telecommunications ministry, a HC bench comprising Justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice Md Abu Tariq passed the order.

The officials, against whom the HC issued the contempt rule, are cabinet secretary and chairman of superior selection board (SSB) Ali Imam Majumder, establishment secretary and SSB member Abdus Salam, home secretary and SSB member Md Abdul Karim and law secretary and SSB member Kazi Habibul Awal and Public Service Commission (PSC) secretary and SSB member Md Abdus Sattar.

Following separate writ petitions filed by Shamsul Kibria and four other senior assistant secretaries, the HC, on February 13, 2002, directed the government to promote the petitioners to the posts of deputy secretary.

The government filed an appeal with the Supreme Court against the HC verdict. The SC on February 20 this year dismissed the government appeal.

After receiving the judgement, the secretaries concerned did not comply with the HC direction.

On July 17 this year, Shamsul Kibria filed a contempt of court petition with the HC against the secretaries.

Barrister Shafique Ahmed assisted by Barrister Mainul Hossain moved the contempt petition.

Concert for children with autism held

METRO DESK

Society for the Welfare of Autistic Children (SWAC) organised a charity concert at Radisson Water Garden Hotel in the city recently to create awareness about autism in the society, says a press release.

The concert, which featured Close-Up One stars, Renaissance and Souls, also aimed at raising funds for SWAC.

SWAC Chairman Anwar Hossain said that the organisation was formed on February 3, 2000 by a group of very enthusiastic and devoted parents of autistic children and since then it has been running its programmes successfully for the betterment of the autistic children.

SWAC is a non-profitable, non-government, non-political and voluntary organisation that is registered with the Social Welfare Department under the Ministry of Social Welfare, the release added.

Vice Chairman of SWAC Naquib Khan expressed his gratitude to the audience, sponsors, artists, musicians and others who extended their support for the greater interest of children with autism.

The concert was sponsored by NOKIA and Dano Vitakids and supported by Radisson Water Garden Hotel.

3 Navy officers promoted to commodore

BSS, Dhaka

Three officers of Bangladesh Navy have been promoted to the rank of commodore from captain yesterday.

They are Commodore ZU Ahmed, Commodore Shakhawat Imran and Commodore M Anwarul Islam, said an ISPR release.

Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam adorned them with the badges of the rank of Commodore at Naval Headquarters yesterday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Navy chief called on all the officers to take higher responsibilities while working at home and abroad.



Potholes have developed on the road in front of a fish market at Jurain in the city, causing suffering to pedestrians as well as passengers, but the authorities have turned a blind eye. The photo was taken yesterday.

Groundwater arsenic problem may worsen in Bangladesh

Experts tell international symposium

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh may find it difficult in future to cope with the growing arsenic problem in its groundwater due to reluctance of the concerned parties, including the government and NGOs, experts told an international symposium in the city yesterday.

"The concerned parties, including the government and NGOs, are reluctant about the severity of the arsenic problem in Bangladesh and it might make the matter worse in the future," said Dr Dipankar Chakraborty, director of research of the School of Environment Studies, Jadavpur University, India.

The symposium titled 'Arsenic calamity of groundwater in Bangladesh: Contamination in water, soil and plants' was organised at a city hotel as part of a research programme of a group of scientists from Japan and Bangladesh. Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Masayuki Inoue was present at the function as the special

guest.

The research team, led by Dr Kingshuk Roy, associate professor at Nihon University in Japan, has been conducting periodical field surveys on arsenic contamination in soil, water and plants in different parts of Bangladesh.

Dr Kingshuk was supported by Dr Nobuyuki and Dr Sadao Nagasaka, two of his colleagues from Nihon University, and MIM Zulfikar of Social Development Foundation in Bangladesh.

Some findings of their survey conducted on plants species in different villages of 'Narayanganj' showed some crops such as roots of water spinach (Pui shak) and the roots of wax gourd (Chal kumra) having strong affinity to absorb arsenic from soil water.

According to the findings, contamination of agricultural food crops is a secondary contamination through the soil, water and plant continuum, and shows a weak correlation to water concentration in

arsenic, but this does not mean that all crops are safe. "Some crops, such as arum, have been reported to be contaminated much more than the internationally allowable standards," showed Dr Roy's research team in its findings.

About tube-well water, the scientists said in arsenic-affected areas there is still much confusion among the rural people about which tube-well is safe and which one is not. They said water from arsenic-affected tube-wells should not be used for irrigating homestead and agricultural crops.

"According to them, a tube-well is not safe forever and needs regular check-ups. They said arsenic is now a great threat to the future generation of Bangladesh as it has emerged as the most vulnerable place when it comes to arsenic pollution and the spread of the problem has taken a serious turn.

The arsenic problem of groundwater in Bangladesh, the scientists said, is not only related to the geogra-

phy and the geology, but also to the culture and patterns of water use. "So, it's time to stop the silent killer through coordinated efforts."

BANGABANDHU MURDER BCL hunger strike for execution of HC verdict

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of Awami League (AL), yesterday observed a three-hour token hunger strike on the Dhaka University (DU) premises demanding immediate execution of the High Court (HC) verdict in Bangabandhu Murder Case.

Around 200 BCL leaders and activists led by its President Mahmud Hasan Ripon observed the hunger strike at the Teacher Students Centre (TSC) from 11.00am to 2.00pm to press home their demand.

Expressing solidarity with the programme, former president of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique demanded execution of the HC verdict against the identified killers of Bangabandhu. He also demanded immediate withdrawal of the state of emergency to hold a free, fair and neutral national election in the country.

Speaking as chief guest, AL Presidium Member Motia Chowdhury said it is really unfortunate that the HC verdict against the killers of Bangabandhu is yet to be executed.

She apprehended that due to emergency, people would not be able to express their grief for Bangabandhu by holding rally or procession across the country on August 15.

She called on the BCL leaders and activists to take lesson from the eventual life of Bangabandhu in order to go a long way in their lives.

Duta General Secretary Prof Anwar Hossain and its executive member Prof Harun-or-Rashid, Prof Golam Rabbani and Dr Wahiduzzaman also expressed their solidarity with the programme.

The hunger strike came to an end when Motia offered water to the participants.

Air pollution major cause of mortality, morbidity: Study

UNB, Dhaka

Air pollution has been identified as the leading cause of mortality and morbidity in Bangladesh, according to a study.

"If the exposure to urban air pollution was reduced by 20-80 percent, it would result in saving 1,200 to 3,500 lives annually and avoiding 80-230 million cases of disease," said Country Environmental Assessment (2006) report released recently.

The government of Bangladesh (GOB) and the World Bank jointly conducted the assessment while government recognised the need to address the problem of urban air pollution because of its wide ranging adverse impacts, said a World Bank information note yesterday.

It developed the 'Clean Air and Sustainable Environment (CASE)' project with proposed World Bank financing to facilitate the adoption

of sustainable environmental initiatives in the key polluting sectors (urban transport and brick-making) with a focus on reducing air pollution and improving safe mobility.

The proposed CASE project aims at demonstrating innovative approaches to addressing the problem rather than the traditional regulatory approach.

A "co-benefits" approach to help reduce urban air pollution will be demonstrated in the project. This will include mitigation of GHG emissions from key polluting sectors, as well as addressing traffic management and safety issues in the transport sector.

The major two components of the proposed project are environment (which includes addressing brick kiln emissions in Bangladesh) and transport (which includes addressing traffic management and safety issues in Dhaka).

Recently, a World Bank team conducted an appraisal of the proposed project during which the World Bank team and government counterparts reviewed the progress of the project preparation.

The proposed CASE project builds on the experiences and lessons of two past bank-supported projects in Bangladesh, namely the Air Quality Management Project (AQMP) and the Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP). Both the AQMP and DUTP projects had a major impact on improving Dhaka's air quality.

Through its portfolio of Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects, and more recent projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), the World Bank has a rich experience in designing and implementing projects that reduce local and GHG emissions from urban transport and small industries.



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16.1pc people suffer from mental illness

Says survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Recognise the schizophrenia patients as valued citizens of the country and raise sensitivity about them in the society, said the speakers at a press conference yesterday.

The press conference was organised by the Welfare Society for Mental Health and Rehabilitation at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

Quoting a survey, Chairman of Clinical Psychology Department of Dhaka University Dr Mahmudur Rahman said 16.1 percent people of the country were found suffering from mental illness and 1.1 percent of them are schizophrenic patients.

The survey was conducted jointly by the World Health Organisation and the National Institute of Mental Health among the 13 thousand people in six dis-

tricts, and of them 2100 people were found with mental disorder.

In a keynote paper at the press conference Association General Secretary Badrul Mannan said 25 percent of the total schizophrenic patients attempt to commit suicide, and 10 percent of them become successful.

Mohammad Amanullah, former district judge and member of the association, said the existing Lunacy Act, which was formulated in 1912, has become obsolete.

The definition of lunacy needs to be updated and the terms like 'asylum' and 'civil court' have also become obsolete, he added.

An eight-point demand was placed at the press conference which included a comprehensive research on the social status and medical treatment of schizo-

phrenic patients, multi-faceted steps so that the families of these patients do not feel hesitation in the society, amendment to Lunacy Act 1912, sensitising the local government bodies in favour of these patients and modernisation of Pabna Mental Hospital.

Keeping the World Mental Health Day ahead on October 10, the association also declared different programmes.

These include a roundtable at the National Press Club at 3.30pm on August 29 and a seminar at the Cirdap auditorium on October 10.

Dr ASM Atiqur Rahman of the Institute of Social Welfare and Research at Dhaka University, and General Secretary of Nagarik Sanghati Sharifuzzaman Sharif also addressed the press conference.



Bangladesh Chhatra League stages a token hunger strike at Teacher-Students Centre on the Dhaka University campus yesterday demanding execution of the High Court verdict in Bangabandhu murder case.

Memorabilia of Principal Abul Kashem donated to Ducus

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Principal Abul Kashem Trust donated different memorabilia of Language Movement veteran Principal Abul Kashem to the collection centre of Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducus) yesterday.

His son handed over the memorabilia to Dhaka University (DU) Treasurer Syed Abul Kalam Azad at a ceremony at the collection centre.

The memorabilia include crests and citations, books and some copies of Language Movement's weekly publication 'Sainik'.

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique DU acting registrar Syed Rezaur Rahman, researcher MR Mahub and Language Movement Museum President Piyaree Mahub were present on the occasion.

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Colombo - Dhaka	Mon, Fri	1615	2000

Flight	Days	Departure	Arrival
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Male - Dhaka	Mon, Fri	1330	2000

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