

INT'L DAY OF RURAL WOMEN OBSERVED

'Utilise cultivable lands properly for food autarky'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country can become self-sufficient in food if the existing cultivable lands are properly utilised, said the speakers at a seminar yesterday.

not include the citizens in its important meetings, the speakers called for making the forum democratic.

mentations of the seminar into his party's election manifesto. The recommendations were formulated basing on the opinions at the grassroots level.

100 illegal structures demolished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 100 illegal tin-shed and semi-concrete structures were demolished yesterday on the link road between Pragati Sarani and Bashundhara connecting road in the capital.

Land grabbers constructed the illegal structures blocking the 30 feet wide and 300 feet long road. Executive magistrate of the deputy commissioner's office Lokman Ahmed accompanied by 50 policemen led the drive that started at about 11:00am and continued until 4:00pm.



Lt Col (ret) Kazi Sazzad Zahir Bir Pratik hands over a set of books titled 'Muktijuddha Chitrakahini', portraying the life stories of the Birshreshthas, to President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

People should choose their own government

Says British minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British Minister of State for Asia, Africa and the United Nations Lord Mark Malloch Brown yesterday said election under a state of emergency is not the easiest task.

that his country is counting down to the exit of the caretaker government and Bangladesh's return to democracy.

as possible free and fair with little emergency legislation as possible," he added.



Public Works Department authorities dismantle illegal structures at Mirpur in the city yesterday.

World Hand Washing Day to be observed on Oct 22

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will observe the 'World Hand Washing Day' on October 22 to create awareness on cleanliness and hand washing.

More than 16 million children from 73,000 primary schools will wash their hands with soap and will pledge to promote hand washing with soap after defecation and before meal.

Mustafizur Rahman, chief engineer of Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), told reporters at a briefing at the DPHE auditorium in the city yesterday.

Adcomm executive wins brand leadership award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nazim Farhan Choudhury, deputy managing director of Adcomm Limited, was honoured with the brand leadership award in the 17th Asia Brand Congress recently, says a press release.

Asia Brand Congress, an annual gathering of leading brand marketers from the Asia, was held at the Taj Land's End Hotel in Mumbai, India.

Choudhury was awarded for his contribution to practising and promoting the brand building discipline in the country.

Adcomm is one of the leading advertising and communication agencies in the country with an impeccable reputation of building strong Bangladeshi brands.

Choudhury has been serving in the agency for 14 years.

Call to resist move to lease out 9 gas blocks to foreign cos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criticising the role of M Tamim, special assistant to the chief adviser (CA) of the caretaker government, the speakers at a press conference yesterday urged people to forge unity to protect country's natural resources from the grab of multinational companies.

They said Tamim has already managed the approval of the fuel ministry and sent the proposal to CA's office to get his approval for finalising the process of leasing out nine gas blocks out of total 28 blocks in deep sea to foreign companies leaving the future of the country in severe crisis.

The press conference was organised by the National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Mineral Resources, Electricity and Seaport at Mukti Bhaban in the city.

They also threatened the government that they would file lawsuit against the government if it leases out the nine blocks to foreign companies.

They said they will form human chains at 3:00pm on October 27 at Muktangan in the capital and across the country on the same day, while the students of public universities will stage demonstrations on their campuses to put pressure on the government not to lease out the gas blocks.

Restore civil, political rights

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everything to organise the elections on December 18 and they hope that it will take place.

The EC mission chief made the observations at a press meet with the members of Diplomatic Correspondents Association Bangladesh (DCAB) at Lake Shore hotel in the capital.

Stressing the restoration of civil and political rights in the run-up to the polls, if full lifting of the emergency is not possible, he said, "This is a critical step to install confidence in the electoral process and create a climate conducive to peaceful and participatory elections."

In reply to a question, Frowein said the EC has not yet taken any decision on sending the EOM to Bangladesh as they are waiting to get a clear signal from the caretaker government as to whether they are lifting the state of emergency in full or, if not, how far it is being relaxed to meet the conditions for free and fair elections.

On principle, he noted, the EC does not send its EOM to observe election to any country where the state of emergency is in place.

However, he observed that the state of emergency in Bangladesh is not like the state of emergency in Pakistan. It is a different emergency. Here emergency is formally in place but with some relaxations that already exist.

Referring to the chief adviser's last address to the nation where he stated that the government has intention to lift the state of emergency or relax it as soon as possible, the envoy said the EC wants to

know how far the emergency rules will be relaxed.

He also mentioned the meeting between Foreign Adviser Iftikhar Ahmed Chowdhury and EC Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner on September 22 when the commissioner had told him that she would look for the chief observer who will head the mission based on the government's clear actions.

"We are keen to observe the elections, but we need conditions that will ensure free and fair election. The relaxation would be like that there is no emergency situation so political parties can campaign, media get access, freedom of association and expression is ensured and where people can vote freely," he said.

Asked when the EC will take its decision as to whether or not to send the EOM, Frowein said in next 2-3 weeks.

Explaining the work plan of the Election Observation Mission to be manned by 150 observers, he said first of all they will appoint the chief observer who must be a member from the EU parliament. He will have a 10-member core group consisting of technical, legal and security experts.

Besides, there will be long-term 40 observers who will go to different places outside Dhaka to talk to people, election officials, political parties and candidates to see whether the atmosphere prevails for free and fair polls.

Then, there will be short-term 100 observers who will come 4-5 days ahead of the election. The EU observers will examine the climate

before the elections, during the elections and after the elections and issue a statement on the fairness of the vote at the end of the day.

Frowein said the EC needs adequate time to organise the full Election Observation Mission. He did not say the cut-off date for sending the observers but said it would be convenient for them to take the decision by end of October or early November.

Asked about US ambassador James Moriarty's recent statement that the USA would send observers disregarding whether or not the state of emergency would be in force, Frowein said if the US ambassador said they would come to observe anyway, "I say we are not coming anyway. We want to come and will come when conditions are right."

He said they are looking for convincing restoration of civil and political rights in good time for elections. "It does not necessarily mean the lifting of emergency; it can be relaxation that creates a situation where the emergency will not be felt."

Asked what would be the credibility of the elections if not observed by the European Commission, the ambassador said the credibility of the elections would be less in a sense that people would question as to why the EC could not observe the polls. "It will send a bad message to the outside world," he noted.

DCAB President Masud Karim presided over the briefing and General Secretary Raheed Eajaj made the welcome address.

DU Mourning Day observed

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University authorities yesterday paid tributes to the memories of students, employees and guests killed in a building collapse at Jagannath Hall.

On that day in 1985, a total of 39 people, including 26 students and 13 guests, died in a tragic collapse of the roof of a one-story building at the dormitory.

The authorities chalked out different programmes to mark the DU Mourning Day with due respect.

A mourning procession was taken out from the foot of Aparajeyo Bangla that paraded through different streets on the campus and ended placing wreaths at the memorial inside the Jagannath Hall.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz, Pro-VC Prof AFM Yusuf Haider, Treasurer Prof Syed Abul Kalam Azad, Jagannath Hall Provost Prof Ajoy Kumar Das and provosts of other dormitories participated in the procession.

Different student organisations also placed wreaths at the memorial in the morning.

Black flags were hoisted at the administrative building and dormitories while the university flag was kept at half-mast at the buildings.

Special prayers were also offered at the worship venue of Jagannath Hall and the university mosques.

The museum of October tragedy at the hall remained open to all from 9:00am to 6:30pm.

Pakistani, Chinese presidents meet in Beijing

AFP, Beijing

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari met his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao yesterday as he looked to Islamabad's loyal ally for crucial financial and nuclear energy investments.

Zardari, on his first state trip since taking office in September, was welcomed by Hu at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, the seat of power in China.

The two leaders were to sign agreements as part of a four-day trip that the Pakistani leader has said would focus on economic ties and which reports have said could include China offering a loan to its nearly bankrupt ally.

Hu extended an effusive welcome stressing close bilateral ties going back to the premiership of Zardari's late wife Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated last December, and her father, late president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

"Your entire family are old friends of the Chinese people," Hu told Zardari.

Chehlum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chehlum of Alhaj Ahmed Yunus, former joint secretary of Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation, will be held at his residence at House 17, Road 14, Sector 3, Uttara in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow.

His friends, relatives, acquaintances, colleagues and admirers have been requested to attend the programme.

Alhaj Ahmed Yunus, also the founder president of Rajshahi Zila Samity, passed away on September 5.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Maj (ret) Syed Azizur Rahman passed away due to a cardiac arrest at his residence in the city on October 10 at the age of 65, says a press release.

His kulkhwani will be held tomorrow at his residence (House-310, Lane-4, Bandhara DOHS) in the city.

Friends, relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programme.

Dr Shafi Ahmed Sultan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Shafi Ahmed Sultan, an expatriate physician in the US, passed away due to kidney problems at a US hospital on October 11 at the age of 62, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, mother and siblings to mourn his death. He was buried at a graveyard in Tennessee in the US.

His kulkhwani will be held after Juma prayers on Friday at Dhanmondi Eidgah Mosque in the city.

Arrest of killers of freedom fighter demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Sector Commanders Forum yesterday demanded immediate arrest and punishment to killers of freedom fighter Sazzad Hossain in Rajshahi, says a press release.

They also demanded punishment of the Jamaat-Shibir cadres who assaulted freedom fighter Sheikh Mohammad Ali.

In a statement they said freedom fighters are becoming victims of repression by Jamaat-Shibir cadres in recent times but concerned authorities are not taking effective measures against them which is really regrettable.

"We will go for a tougher movement along with students and general people if the killers are not punished," the leaders said adding that there is no scope to avoid the trial of war criminals.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 24 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 35.3 degree Celsius was recorded at Sylhet and the lowest of 22.2 degrees at Jessore.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:31pm today and rises at 5:57am 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.



Seminar

INCIDIN Bangladesh will organise a seminar on food security and agriculture trade. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 2:30pm.

Discussion

Voice will organise a discussion on connection of food, foreign aid and climate change with current financial crisis. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Bonsai exhibition

The opening ceremony of the 10th annual bonsai exhibition will be held. Venue: WVA auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

Award giving ceremony

The Ibn Sina Trust organises the Ibn Sina Award giving ceremony. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 12:30pm.