# 'Utilise cultivable lands properly for food autarky'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country can become selfsufficient in food if the existing cratic. cultivable lands are properly utilised, said the speakers at a seminar tion can be ensured, the organisa-

They called upon the policy planners to device proper plan for tion on the justification of selling bringing all agricultural lands food from the Saarc Food Bank to under cultivation.

They said the government international price. subsidy in agricultural sector is also an important factor in attain-

ing self-sufficiency in this sector. part of the programme to observe the International Day of Rural

Women in the city. observed for the first time in the country, was 'Climate change: Rural

women are part of the solution' Media Foundation for Trade and Development, Equity and Justice Working Group (EquityBD) and Rupantar organised the seminar titled 'Saarc Food Bank and Saarc Agricultural Development Policy hike.

2020' at the National Press Club. Criticising that Saarc is the only

important meetings, the speakers called for making the forum demo-

They said if people's participation can best serve its purposes.

The speakers also raised quesmember countries in need as per

Former lawmaker and Agricultural Secretary of Awami League Dr Abdur Razzak recom-The seminar was organised as mended for government subsidy in agricultural sector to face the challenge of price hike.

He said besides strengthening The theme of the day, which was the agricultural sector, the industrial sector should also be strengthened for creating employment opportunity for increasing number of unemployed youths.

General Secretary of EquityBD Shamsuddoha, in a keynote paper, said the reduced production of rice after 2000 is the reason for its price

BNP Agriculture Secretary Shamsuzzaman Dudu said he will regional organisation which does try his best to include the recom-

not include the citizens in its mendations of the seminar into his

party's election manifesto. The recommendations were formulated basing on the opinions

at the grassroots level. He opposed the use of agricultural lands for non-agricultural purposes and added that emphasis on agricultural should be given but industrial sector cannot be ignored for the interest of creating employment opportunity.

Swapan Guho, president of the national observation committee for the day and moderator of the seminar, proposed to the government for providing insurance support to farmers for ensuring food security. Former Ambassador Waliur

Rahman was present at the seminar. Meanwhile, Jibika Mahila Unnayan Sangstha comprising 25 organisations organised a rally and formed a human chain at Paltan in the morning to observe the day.

Demanding labour law for agricultural workers and legal recognition of the works of rural women, Karmojibi Nari held rallies and formed human chains in Rajshahi, Rangpur, Kushtia, Narshingdi, Feni and Manikganj.



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

# FAO urges govts to avoid reducing aid to agriculture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Diouf Director General Jacques Diouf yesterday called on the governments to avoid reducing aid to agriculture of the developing countries and introducing protectionist trade measures in response to the unfolding global financial crisis.

In a statement marking the 34th Session of FAO's Committee on World Food Security (CFS) from October 14-17, FAO Director General Jacques Diouf yesterday cautioned that such steps could increase the risk of another food crisis occurring next year.

That could happen despite the record 2008 cereal harvest, which is now expected. According to the latest issue of FAO's Crop Prospects and Food Situation report, production this year is forecast to increase 4.9 percent to a record 2232 million

However, some 36 countries around the world are still in need of external assistance as a result of crop failures, conflict or insecurity or continuing local high prices, the report added.

### 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.

"The great uncertainty now enveloping international markets and the threat of global recession may tempt countries towards protectionism as well as reassessing their commitments to international development aid," Diouf said, according to a report posted

at FAO website yesterday. "It would be unfortunate if this were to be the case and the recently mobilised political will towards enhanced international support for developing countries' agriculture were to evaporate," he

Diouf further said the financial crisis, following hard on the heels of the soaring food price crisis which threw an additional 75 million people into hunger and poverty in 2007 alone, may well deepen the plight of the poor in developing countries. "Last year it was the pan," adding, "Next year could be

Commodity prices are currently dropping mainly on expectation of favourable crop prospects, but also because of a slowing world economy among other factors. This could mean a cutback in plantings followed by reduced harvests in

major exporting countries.

Given continuing low grains stocks, this scenario could lead to another turn of record food prices next year - a catastrophe for millions who by then would be left with little money and no credit.

The impact of the financial crisis may also be felt in developing countries at the macro level, with further potentially negative effects on agriculture and food security, Dioufsaid.

"Borrowing, bank lending, official development aid, foreign direct investment and workers remittances - all may be compromised by a deepening financial crisis", he noted.

He said, "The international community needs to take urgent and coordinated action to combat the negative impacts of soaring food prices on the world's most vulnerable countries and popula-

"The global financial crisis should not make us forget the food crisis. Agriculture needs urgent and sustained attention too to make hunger and rural poverty part of history," he added.



## 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 coun-

try, 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: Humidityin Temperaturein City/Town Celsius percentage Evening Morning Max Min 63 25.2 65 Dhaka 74 25.9 Chittagong 75 33.0 23.2 80 33.8 78 Rajshahi 89 33.7 24.0 69 Khulna 92 24.7 80 34.0 Barisal 76 23.8 66 35.3 Sylhet 72 69 35.0 26.0 Cox's Bazar

#### 100 illegal structures demolished STAFF CORRESPONDENT

METROPOLITAN/NEWS

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.

Around 30 labourers and two bulldozers were used to knock down the illegal structures.

"We have demolished the illegal structures on the 30 feet wide and 300 feet long khas land which had also been used as a link road," said magistrate Lokman.

The residents at Nadda and Jagannath said the illegal structures blocked the entrance to their

"We could not use the entrance to our house for the last one year as it was totally blocked by the illegal structures," said Ruma, a resident at Jagannath.

The illegal structures also contributed to water logging in the area, said MN Islam, another residentin the area.

Hamidul Islam, president of Pragati Sarani Nadda-Bashundhara Sangjok Sarak Uddhar Committee, said the land grabbers started encroaching the century old road about 20 years back and encroached it completely four years ago.

He called upon the Dhaka City Corporation to reconstruct the road immediately.

### 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.

Many countries of the world observed the day yesterday. Bangladesh will observe the day on October 22, as most of the schools in the country were closed yester-

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.

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

Observing the day is an initiative of the global public-private partnership on hand washing, involving soap companies, NGOs, and UN bodies, as a contribution to the International Year of Sanitation.

#### 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

ers from the Asia, was held at the Taj Land's End Hotel in Mumbai, Choudhury was awarded for his

gathering of leading brand market-

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.



#### Seminar

INCIDIN Bangladesh will organise 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.



Lt Col (retd) Kazi Sazzad Zahir Bir Pratik hands over a set of books titled 'Muktijuddha Chitrakahini', portraying the life stories of the Birshreshthas, to President lajuddin 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.

"Elections gain legitimacy if they are held under normal legal conditions," the minister told reporters after a meeting with Home Adviser Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin at the secretariat.

"But the government wants to enforce some provisions of the emergency power rules for the purpose of maintaining law and order," Brown said, adding that "It would be good if there is as little emergency legislation as possible."

Later, the British minister held a meeting with Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury at the foreign ministry and told reporters

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

"We are counting on the elections going forward on December 18 and being held under conditions which allow free and fair vote for the people of Bangladesh to choose again their government," he

"We think the caretaker government has played a very important role and it is time for Bangladeshi people to choose their own government," said Malloch Brown. Britain cannot dictate what

Bangladesh should do, he said, adding that the government, the political parties and the Election Commission should hold dialogue to resolve their difference of opin-

"Our message is we are on the side of the polls being held as much

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

The foreign adviser said they discussed the political developments in the country leading to the election scheduled for December 18.

"I apprised him of the government's determination to make the elections free, fair and credible, and that we are able to demonstrate once again what is now generally acknowledged that Bangladesh is the most peaceful country in the region," he added.

The adviser said the UK and Bangladesh have similar positions on many contemporary issues and one such issue is climate change.

"I thanked him as the UK hosted an important conference on climate change and Bangladesh on September 10 and pledged support for us in this regard," he added.

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

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mustafizur Rahman, chief | Criticising the role of M Tamim, hampered, Tamim, an alleged 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 finalisng 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.

organised by the National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Mineral Resources, Electricity and Seaport at Mukti Bhaban in the city. The speakers said due to short-

age of gas when the production at fertiliser and power plants is being agent of multinational companies, is hatching a conspiracy to lease out the country's gas blocks to They said as per a treaty, 80

percent of the produced gas from

the nine blocks will be exported to foreign countries while Bangladesh will get only 20 percent of the gas. They said Tamim is in a hurry to finalise the process of leasing out

the blocks before the handing over of the state power to next elected government. The speakers said it is not the The press conference was duty of the caretaker government to handle the mineral resources of

the country and asked the govern-

ment to mind its own business of

holding a free, fair and credible

ernment that they would file lawsuit against the government if it leases out the nine blocks to foreign companies. They said they will form human

They also threatened the gov-

chains at 3.00pm on October 27 at Muktangon 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.

Committee Convener Eng Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah Justice Golam Robbani, Prof Dr SM Akash, Convener of Democratic Left Alliance Advocate Salam, Convener of Gono Sanghati Andolon Junaed Saki and Convener of Biplobi Oikya Front Moshrefa Mishu attended the press conference.

# Restore civil, political rights

general election.

FROM PAGE 1 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 elec-

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 emerthat already exist.

gency. Here emergency is formally in place but with some relaxations Referring to the chief adviser's last address to the nation where he stated that the government has

intention to lift the state of emer-

gency or relax it as soon as possible,

the envoy said the EC wants to

will be relaxed.

He also mentioned the meeting between Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and EC

Commissioner for External Relations Benita Fererro-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 ensured and where people can vote to observe anyway, "I say we are not

freely," he said. 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

know how far the emergency rules 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

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 of association and expression is ambassador said they would come coming anyway. We want to come Asked when the EC will take its 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 observers will examine the climate 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 memo-

rial 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 itsnearly bankrupt ally.

who was assassinated last December, and her father, late president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. "Your entire family are old

friends of the Chinese people," Hu

Hu extended an effusive wel-

come stressing close bilateral ties

going back to the premiership of

Zardari's late wife Benazir Bhutto,

## told Zardari.

Chehlum STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The Chehlum of Alhaj Ahmed Yunus, former joint secretary of Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation, will be held at

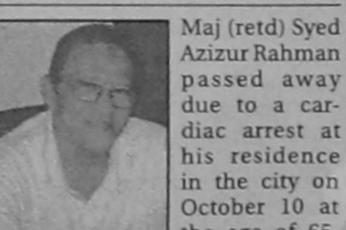
Sector 3, Uttara in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow. His friends, relatives, acquaintances, colleagues and admirers

his residence at House 17, Road 14,

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



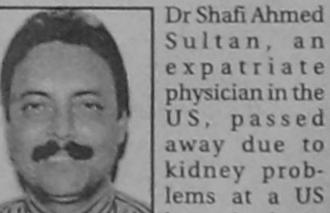
his residence in the city on October 10 at the age of 65, says a press release. His qulkhwani will be held tomorrow at his residence (House-310,

programme. Dr Shafi Ahmed Sultan STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lane-4, Baridhara DOHS) in the city.

are requested to attend the

Friends, relatives and admirers



press release.

kidney problems at a US all hospital on October 11 at the age of 62, says a

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

His qulkhwani will be held after Juma prayers on Friday at

Dhanmondi Eidgah Mosque in the