

Protect environment to keep natural calamities at bay

Says Nobel laureate Prof Ernst

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If the environment is protected, human beings need not be protected from natural calamities, Nobel laureate Prof Richard R Ernst said at a lecture in the city yesterday.

A dynamic equilibrium between man, water and land can create a sound condition of nature. For this, men must take some measures such as controlling population growth, proper management of health system, providing real education and changing

behavioural pattern between man and nature, he said.

Bangladesh Academy of Science (BAS) and Southeast University jointly organised the programme titled 'Dr MO Ghani Memorial Lecture 2008' at Nabab Nawab Ali Senate Bhaban at Dhaka University in memory of Prof MO Ghani, founder fellow of the academy and former vice-chancellor of DU.

In his lecture on 'Man and Nature', Prof Ernst mentioned a wide range of adverse impacts of man-made problems on the nature. He blamed CO₂ emission,

exploration of crude oil resources, prodigal life style, eating habit and human's lust, arrogance and vanity for the global climate change.

Countries should be governed by the people who own it and not by the community who create free market with an aim to make maximum profit, Prof Ernst said.

Hurry sickness is another phenomenon in modern world creating most of the mental disorders among people, he said, adding that improper recycling process is also behind many health hazards among poor children.

Man makes the planet hazardous but the planet has sufficient resources to feed its children, but its resources are not enough to cope with the greed of man, he said. If such practice continues, someday nature may wipe out all living creatures on this planet, he added.

He stressed the need for people to learn how to lead their lives and explore natural resources without harming nature.

Prof Ernst, a citizen of Switzerland, was awarded Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1991.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz, Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, President of BAS Prof M Shamsheer Ali and former education minister Dr Osman Faruq, son of Dr MO Ghani, also spoke at the programme.

Kali Puja today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kali Puja, the second largest religious festival of the Hindus, will be celebrated today.

Hindu devotees will also celebrate Dewali, festival of lights, during this puja.

They will illuminate the doors and windows of their houses with candles, while others will light lamps inside small paper houses to be elevated on top of long bamboo poles.

Several Puja mandaps have been set up in different parts of the capital including Dhakeswari Temple, Ramna Temple, Siddeshwari Temple and Jagannath Hall Temple of Dhaka University.

On the eve of the occasion, Mohanagar Sarbojaneen Puja Committee yesterday organised a discussion meeting at Dhakeswari Temple where Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said caretaker government will take effective measures so that minority people can cast their vote fearlessly in the upcoming parliament election.

"Next parliament election is a milestone for the nation. We will provide sufficient security to minority people so that they are not affected by pre-and-post-period election," he added.

Kali Puja is performed by the faithful to ask for protection from evil and to pray for good health, wealth, peace and happiness.

According to legend, Kali was a fearless warrior who rid the kingdom of devils and demons that had overrun the virtuous gods.

Our Barisal Correspondent adds: More than 150-year-old Maha Shamsan Dipali, a festival of the Hindu community, was observed in the city last night.

In the sub-continent, 'Shamsan Dipali' festival is observed only at Adi-Shamsan Ghat and Natun Shamsan Ghat, two crematoriums in Barisal city.

Several thousand people from different parts of the country and also from across the border attended the festival.

CUT IN FARE Transport owners ignore decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government decision to decrease the transport fares was not implemented practically yesterday.

The passengers and transport owners were found scuffling with each other in and out of the city.

According to the decision, the

fares of diesel-run buses ply on the inter-city routes and out of the city routes were supposed to decrease at Tk 0.7 per kilometre from yesterday.

But none of the bus operators was seen implementing the government decision.

The transport operators claimed that they could not buy fuel at the decreased cost and, therefore, they did not reduce the fares.

Talking to The Daily Star at Sayedabad inter-city bus terminal, Zahurul Islam, a driver of Prince Paribahan on Dhaka-Comilla route, said, "We had to buy fuel at the higher cost three days ago as it was not available in the last three days."

He, however, said they would implement the government decision very soon.

Rafiqul Islam, conductor of Al-Falah Paribahan on Dhaka-Chattkhil route, said, "According to the government rate, the actual fare on this route is Tk 216. But we receive only Tk 150. As we always receive the lower fare than the government fixed rate, it is not possible to decrease the fare further."

Meanwhile, the city commuters also locked into clashes with the bus employees, demanding the decrease of fare. But the government did not decrease the fares of the city buses.

Association of Bus Companies (ABC) President Khandaker Rafiqul Hossain told The Daily Star, "The passengers of the city buses are quarrelling with the employees due to a misunderstanding over the government decision."

On the other hand, the government did not re-fix the fares of launch, truck and other diesel-run vehicles that have added fuel to the flames among the operators and passengers.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A war-maimed freedom fighter seeks financial assistance for his treatment as he is suffering from various complicated diseases, says a press release.

Md Saïdur Rahman Khan, now nearly 60, joined the Liberation War in 1971 under Sector 9. He received a bullet in his left leg during a fight with the Pakistani forces at Sharankhola in Bagerhat. Later, he had to have the leg amputated below the knee.

After independence, he began working as a rickshawpuller in Dhaka to earn a livelihood. In October 1996, he gave up pulling rickshaw after his son got a job in an NGO.

Saidur Rahman has now been suffering from various diseases, but it is not possible for him to afford the treatment cost with the meagre income of his son Shahidul Islam, the bread-winner in the four-member family.

So, the freedom fighter, who hails from Rajeshwar village in Bagerhat, has appealed to generous people, freedom fighters and organisations to extend a helping hand.

Contributions can be sent to Shahidul Islam, Savings Account No. SB-002069246, Sonali Bank Limited, Jhigatola Branch, Dhaka.

Interested persons can also contact him at 54/9 Uttar Adabar, Dhaka. Mobile: 01911292963 or 01198152780.

Body to safeguard

FROM PAGE 16 senior assistant superintendents of police (ASP), 77 ASBs, 53 inspectors, 189 sub-inspectors (SI), 253 assistant sub-inspectors (ASI), and 1,331 constables.

Two months ago Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) launched a Special Women Police Contingent (SWPC) comprising only women personnel.

A woman additional DIG, seeking anonymity, told The Daily Star, "There are some allegations of harassment of women personnel by their male colleagues, although senior women personnel haven't been the victims of such harassment."

She said if the new organisation can carry out its activities, women members of the force will be able to work more freely.

The executive committee of the network will be comprised of a president, two vice-presidents, an executive secretary, two joint secretaries, a treasurer, a social welfare secretary, a cultural secretary, and 16 executive members, all of whom will be women elected by their women colleagues.

Senior women personnel already prepared drafts of the organogram and the constitution of the organisation.

The office of the network will be set up in the Police Headquarters.

The organisation is about to make its appearance with 21 objectives including identifying practical problems women personnel face at work, taking steps to solve the problems, ensuring participation of women in policymaking process, promoting empowerment of women police personnel, and taking steps for recruiting more women into the force.

The organisation will also look to network with women police organisations in other countries.

According to the draft constitution of Police Women's Network, being the chief of the police department the IGP will be the chief patron of the organisation, while there will also be a six-member advisory committee which can be comprised of both males and females.

The advisory committee will be comprised of the additional IGP (administration), three joint secretaries from the ministries of home, women and children affairs, and social welfare, and two others from former senior women police personnel.



Awami League leader Tofail Ahmed speaks at a view exchange meeting on election manifesto at Cirdap Auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left is Selima Rahman and on his right are Ranjan Karmaker and Salma Khan. Steps Towards Development organised the meeting. (Story on page 5)

'Apply clubfoot-ponseti method in workplaces' Seminar on awareness begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A four-day seminar on 'Awareness and Management of Clubfoot-Ponseti Method' began in the city yesterday.

The Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) jointly organised the seminar at CRP centre at Mirpur.

Additional Director General of DGHS Prof Hosne Ara Tahmin inaugurated the seminar as the chief guest, which will be concluded on October 31.

She said the participants would be able to learn a lot about clubfoot-ponseti method from the seminar, adding that they should apply the method in their workplaces to make it successful.

Ponseti is a technique to straighten the feet, which has been successfully used in the US for over 45 years. The treatment manipulates the bones and stretches the contracted tissues of the foot. The foot is held in place with a plaster cast. The cast is left for five to seven days. This allows enough time for the muscles and ligaments to relax and for the bones to grow into the corrected position.

ICRC Mission Chief Finn Ruda addressed the inaugural session as the special guest, while Valerie A Taylor was in the chair.

Dr Angela M Evans of University of South Australia spoke on the

background of clubfoot and the technique, while Consultant of Orthopaedic and Spinal Surgery at Square Hospital Dr Fazlul Haque discussed on clubfoot treatment in the country.

Dr Paul Warren Wade of the same university also spoke on Ponseti technique.

Nearly 150 representatives from different hospitals, clinics and NGOs participated in the seminar.

Saarc psychiatric confce on Nov 1

UNB, Dhaka

The fourth Saarc Psychiatric Federation Conference and fourth International Conference on Psychiatry-2008 will be held in the city on November 1 focusing on mental health.

President Iajuddin Ahmed is expected to inaugurate the three-day conference to be held at Sonargaon Hotel.

Bangladesh Association of Psychiatrists (BAP) with the assistance of some other organisations will organise the conference titled 'Mental health in South East Asia: Challenges and strategies'.

About 300 psychiatrists and physicians from home and abroad are expected to participate in the programme.

Govt finally acts on HC ban order

FROM PAGE 1

Karim, Health Secretary AMM Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, Commerce Secretary Feroz Ahmed and IGP Nur Mohammad to explain why contempt of court proceedings will not be issued against them for not complying with the HC order.

He prayed to the HC bench of Justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice Md Abdul Hye to take up the contempt petition for hearing the same day, but the bench fixed today for hearing.

Manzil in his petition stated that his petition involved great public importance and a question of safety of future generation, but the government did not take any step to comply with the order.

Talking to The Daily Star, Zillur Rahman, deputy commissioner (DC) of Dhaka, said, "I have not received any order of forming any

committee. The order may come tomorrow [Tuesday]. We will work as instructed."

Sellers, mainly the retailers, were seen still displaying the banned milk brands.

Some retailers however hid those in fear of drives. The brands were not found in most department stores in the capital.

The Bogra district administration also did not receive any instruction regarding drives or monitoring the markets, says our staff correspondent in Bogra quoting the DC.

A team of executive magistrates on Saturday went to the markets to see if sellers were displaying the banned brands, reports our staff correspondent in Chittagong.

The drive may officially start tomorrow [Tuesday] on receipt of the government order," an official of Chittagong district administra-

Mayor Mohiuddin goes to Bangkok for treatment tomorrow

UNB, Chittagong

Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury leave for Bangkok tomorrow for medical treatment.

Family sources said the CCC mayor, who has been suffering from various diseases, including diabetes and complications of heart and eyes, will take treatment at a hospital in Thailand.

Mohiuddin Chowdhury, who was going through an ordeal as he was not allowed to resume his position as CCC mayor after his recent release on bail, will also go to Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah after completing treatment, the sources added.

Mohiuddin was released on October 8 on bail from the prison cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

He, however, could not hold his scheduled meeting with the CCC councilors at the City Corporation Bhaban on October 15 due to a government order restraining him from resuming his duty.

M Manjur Alam was made acting mayor after Mohiuddin's arrest from his Chashma Hill residence in the city on March 7, 2007 as part of an anti-graft campaign by the military-backed interim government.

About emergency, the CA told Sharma about the recent elections to four city corporations and nine municipalities amid relaxation of some provisions of the state of emergency. He said people cast their votes freely and peacefully in those elections and turnout was 80 to 90 percent.

The CA also said if necessary, the state of emergency will be further relaxed to facilitate electioneering by the political parties.

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Secretary to CA's Office Kazi Aminul Islam and CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim were present at the meeting.

Meanwhile, Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury has said the Commonweal will immediately send an assessment team for elections.

"This team is likely to be followed by an observer mission," he said while speaking to the media after a meeting with visiting Commonwealth Secretary General Kamalesh Sharma at the foreign ministry yesterday, said a press release.

Obituary

METRO DESK

Md Ashraf Hossain, former food inspector and father of Akhter Hossain Masud, news editor of The News Today, passed away due to old age complications at his residence in the city yesterday at the age of 72, says a press release.

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

He was buried at his family graveyard at his village in Feni yesterday.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the second death anniversary of M e h e r u n Nahar, wife of Md Mahabubur Rahman, an official of Buet, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at Mansurbagh Miftahul Ulum Madrasa at Ashulia and fataha will be offered at her grave at Mirpur in the city.

Dec 18

FROM PAGE 16 Bangladesh and will first send an assessment team.

He informed the CA that during his meeting with the chief election commissioner he would suggest forming an alliance among the Commonwealth member countries having independent election commission for sharing experiences.

The CA appreciated the idea, saying the present Election Commission is totally independent.

After the announcement of election schedules, all government officials and security forces engaged in election will come under the Election Commission, he said.

The Commonwealth secretary general lauded the socio-economic achievements and the steps taken by the caretaker government in the areas like completion of voter list with photograph, separation of judiciary, making the Election Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission independent and setting up of National Human Rights Commission.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim said the chief adviser informed the Commonwealth secretary general that the institutional reforms have been made by the present caretaker government to give a strong foundation of democracy.

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Intelligence focused only on accused JMB men

FROM PAGE 16

The executed kingpins of JMB Abdur Rahman and Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai in an interview with The Daily Star in 2004 said they had three tiers of workers. They claimed JMB had 10,000 full-time trained activists in the first tier and over one lakh part-timers across the country.

A top official in a law-enforcement agency however disputes such a huge number of JMB activists. He believes thousands of people, who heard speeches of the militant leaders in different mosques and madrasas for many years, have not turned militants.

As many as 283 cases were filed in connection with 459 bomb blasts across the country on August 17, 2005 against 822 JMB leaders and activists. The investigators have so far submitted charge sheets in 241 cases accusing 743 of their involvement in the serial blasts.

Rab sources confirm around 250 of the charge-sheeted accused still remain out of the dragnet.

During investigations, Fakhruddin Raji of Sakhira and 'Boma' Mizan of Jamalpur were found to be important figures for their significant roles in the country-wide synchronized blasts. But they are still on the run and none of the agencies has any clue to their whereabouts.

When JMB supreme Abdur Rahman and second-in-command Bangla Bhai were held in early 2006, a leadership crisis emerged and the grassroots attempt to rebuild the network failed.

But within a few months into the arrests of the JMB kingpins, who were executed in March last year, some militants started to establish their network again.

The investigators finally learned from other militants arrested early last year that Saidur Rahman was leading the outfit as its ameer.

The investigators believe JMB no longer has the strength to regroup for further attacks. But an intelligence source says some JMB 'ehsar' (full-time member) have held meetings in Bogra, Muktagachha in Mymensingh, Tangail and in other places to discuss their reorganisation bid.

They have also tried to regroup in some shoal areas of the Padma and across the Brahmaputra basin in the northern region.

Fakhruddin Raji and 'Boma' Mizan are also spearheading the reorganisation attempts with Saidur, adds the source.

The Rab learned about the new JMB ameer in July 2006 and started gathering information about the militants' regrouping bid following arrests of some JMB operatives at that time.

However, they could not determine straightaway how well the JMB operatives reorganised themselves, says a top Rab official asking not to be named.

Sources in the elite force say five JMB members were arrested in Gopalganj in July who divulged that they were collecting information about schedules for hearing of cases against their detained fellow members.

Indicates that fugitive JMB operatives are trying to communicate with those behind bars or even "snatch" them, if possible.

The sources however say they made the arrest in Gopalganj at the very preliminary stage of JMB's latest action plan.

Intriguingly, the law enforcers did not reveal the information of the arrest in Gopalganj, although they usually announce the arrest of militants through news briefings.

The sources say as the arrestees revealed important information, the law enforcers have kept it secret and chalked out a plan to start a special clampdown on the identified JMB men.

They add the arrestees told the Rab investigators they have not met their new chief Saidur Rahman, ex-ameer of Habiganj district Jamaat-e-Islami, but they know they are working at his instructions to "snatch" detained JMB members.

Against this backdrop, Rab has kicked off another special drive against the trained militants, says a top official of the elite force.

"We've assigned some officers to concentrate on searching the identified JMB leaders and activists who are on the run since the country-wide bomb blasts," said another top Rab official. He added the task of hunting down the JMB operatives would be the top priority for the assigned officials.

"We've already formed special teams within every battalion to net the charge-sheeted JMB leaders and operatives who have went into hiding," Rab Additional Director General Col Gulzar Uddin Ahmed

told The Daily Star.

Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad, however, told newsmen during his visit to once JMB infested Bagmara in Rajshahi weeks ago: "I can assure you that militants have no organisational capacity to carry out any organised attacks."

During a visit to Bagmara in Rajshahi and Atrai in Naogaon, locals were found worried about a good number of Bangla Bhai's aides, who could not be arrested.

They said though Bangla Bhai's cadres have no open activities, around 500 local operatives of the outfit are still at large.

A top Rab official in Rajshahi also confirms that they have a list of around 500 JMB operatives who have evaded arrest.

Several thousands of JMB supporters withdrew their support from the outfit soon after the serial blasts and other deadly attacks and are not a threat at all, observes another official.

A senior Rab official claims they have already recovered almost all explosives JMB smuggled into the country from India. They have also torn down the channels in Bangladesh through which JMB used to smuggle the explosives, he adds.

He says they have names of five people who supplied the explosives from India and handed over their names to Indian authorities in 2006. He however does not know what action the Indian authorities have taken against them, as Rab did not follow up the matter any more.



Participants at a discussion marking the third death anniversary of insurance legend and founder of BGIC MA Samad held at Dhaka Ladies Club recently.

Tribute paid to MA Samad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The third death anniversary of insurance legend and founder of Bangladesh General Insurance Co. Ltd. MA Samad was observed on October 18, says a press release.

On the occasion, a discussion was held on the eventful life of MA Samad, one of the pioneers of insurance industry and internationally recognized insurance specialist.

The participants discussed his pioneering role in the field of insurance industry, his contribution to literary and cultural field and his unique role in creating job opportunities and in social service.

Eminent personalities, high government officials, artists, litterateurs and journalists attended the programme at Dhaka Ladies Club.

MA Samad's wife Fawzia Samad, only son and Chairman of BGIC Towhid Samad, Managing Director of BGIC AK Azizul Haque Chaudhuri and all officers and staff of the company were also present.

A prayer session was also held on the occasion.

Mostafa Zaman Abbasi and Asma Abbasi moderated the function while Pesh Imam of Gulshan Azad Mosque Maulana Abdur Rahim led the prayer.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporarily gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over all the six divisions with moderately heavy to heavy rainfalls in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may rise 2-5 degree Celsius over the country, Met Office said in a forecast.

Highest temperature 30.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 18.3 degrees Celsius at Khulna.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:21pm today and rises at 6:03am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	22.5	19.2	94	87
Chittagong	28.3	23.0	97	87
Rajshahi	24.5	18.6	90	88
Khulna	25.0	18.3	96	86
Barisal	24.4	20.5	95	91
Sylhet	24.5			