

'No dredger purchased since 1975'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) Chairman Abdul Mannan Howlader yesterday said every year around 60 lakh cubic feet of silt cannot be excavated because no dredger has been purchased since 1975.

"At least 90 lakh cubic feet of silt should be removed yearly to facilitate water transport but we can dredge only 30 lakh cubic feet. BIWTA purchased two dredgers in 1972 and five in 1975. The demand of dredging is increasing every year," BIWTA chairman said at a discussion yesterday.

He also said that only Tk 18 crore is allocated yearly for dredging, which is very much inadequate for ensuring proper navigability.

MN Creations organised the discussion on 'River and Waterways' at the National Press Club in the city where a documentary on 'Nadir Katha' (The story of the rivers) was also screened.

The speakers said environment-friendly technologies should be used for keeping the navigability of the rivers.

They underscored the need for a social campaign for creating mass awareness about rivers, water and environment.

Bangladesh Telecommu-

nication and Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Chairman Syed Margub Morshed said the problems are created due to the indifference of the government about the issue and lack of coordination among the bodies concerned.

"Country's 30 percent passengers and goods are carried through the waterways but we don't give proper attention to dredging," he added.

Launch owner Sahab Uddin Milon presided over the programme where leaders of launch owners' association, workers' association and water and environment experts also took part.

4,000 students go to India a year for study

Says Indian envoy

BSS, Dhaka

Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty has said some 4,000 Bangladeshi students go to India on educational pursuits every year at different levels.

"We value our traditionally warm and shared heritage with Bangladesh. Bangladeshi students who studied in India are very important links in the bonds of friendship between our two countries," he said as the High Commission hosted a reception to mark the ICCR Alumni Day, International Students Day and Education Day on Thursday evening.

Pinak Chakravarty said India offers 100 scholarships to Bangladeshi students and scholars every year while the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) facilitates admission to students from Bangladesh under self-financing schemes.

Several hundred Bangladeshis, who studied at different times in India since 1972 and now representing various professions, joined the reception followed by a musical soiree.

Ctg BNP leader Afsar Ahmed passes away

BSS, Chittagong

Afsar Ahmed Chowdhury, a freedom fighter and senior vice-president of BNP Chittagong north district unit, passed away at the Apollo Hospitals in Dhaka yesterday at the age of 55.

Family sources said Chowdhury was admitted to a clinic in the port city last week with complications in his lung and spinal cord. As his condition deteriorated, he was shifted to Apollo Hospitals on Tuesday.

The BNP leader, also a businessman, is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter.

His first namaz-e-janaza will be held at Jamiatul Falah Mosque in Chittagong at 10:00am today and the second janaza after Zohr prayers at Nazirhat College.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia expressed deep shock at the death of Afsar Ahmed Chowdhury.

Death anniversary

BSS, Dhaka

Today is the 10th death anniversary of Zebun Nisa Jahangir Suraiya, wife of martyred Lt Col Dr NAM Jahangir and daughter of late Abdul Wahab Khan, former speaker of National Assembly of Pakistan (1954-58).

On the occasion, a doa mahfil and destitute feeding programme have been arranged at her residence at Dilu Road in the city.

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable on foreign policy

The Daily Star organises a roundtable on 'Future directions of Bangladesh foreign policy'. Venue: Daily Star conference room. Time: 10:00am.

Workshop

Imagine a New South Asia (INSA) organises a workshop on economic management of South Asia under new global perspective. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Dialogue

Global Affairs Forum of Brac University organises a dialogue on 'Fight against corruption: Our goal'. Venue: Brac University indoor games room. Time: 4:00pm.

Lecture

Brac Chairman Fazle Hasan Abed will deliver Barrister Syed Ishiaq Ahmed Memorial Lecture 2008 on 'Development as right: The role of legal empowerment in the making of a just society'. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

CNG exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of the international exhibition on CNG will be held. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 3:30pm.

Seminar

Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Society organises a seminar on 'Development of hospital pharmacy in Bangladesh'. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 9:30am.



Awami League President Sheikh Hasina talks with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed at Armed Forces Day reception at Senakunja in Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

Policewomen's Network launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Policewomen's Network, a forum to safeguard the interests of female police members, was formally launched at a function at a city hotel yesterday.

Home Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin while inaugurating the new forum as the chief guest, said the forum would help take appropriate measures in solving the problems of the policewomen as well as the women in the country.

Women and Children Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury welcomed the

new forum, terming it an appropriate step.

IGP Nur Mohammad said the network is a professional forum for ensuring a women-friendly environment as well as service.

Additional IGP (administration) NBK Tripura said the policewomen's network will promote empowerment of women in an effort to create gender equality in the force.

Presided over by only female DIG Fatema Begum, also the first president of the forum, the inaugural function was attended by Home Secretary Md Abdul Karim, UNDP Resident Represen-

tative Reneta Lok Dessallien and First Vice-President of International Association of Women Police Jane Townsley.

The newly launched policewomen's network is a 23-member executive committee of which all the policewomen are the general members. The leaders of which will be elected for two years through direct votes of the women personnel.

Bangladesh Police first introduced women members to its ranks in 1974 with recruitment of 12 women. The total number of policewomen now stands at 1,937.

AL men call to review

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) leader Dr Jamal Uddin Chowdhury got the AL ticket to vie for the parliamentary seat.

Member of AL Chittagong North District unit Md Rafiqul Islam read the written statement at the press conference held at Chittagong Press Club (CPC).

Around fifty leaders from north district, upazila and different union units of AL and its front organisations were present at the conference.

Meanwhile, already declared nomination of businessman Abdus Salam for Chittagong-7 (Boalkhali-Chandgaon) seat may be changed as Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) Executive President Mainuddin Khan Badal is trying to get alliance nomination for the seat.

Leaders of six city ward committees of AL under the constituency at another press conference at CPC on Thursday night urged the AL central committee not to give the seat to alliance partners.

Hailing AL chief Sheikh Hasina for nominating Abdus Salam for the seat they said the

decision was the reflection of wishes of grass roots leaders and activists.

AL nominees could never win the seat before as the party failed to select a competent candidate, they said.

Terming JSD leader Mainuddin unit for the seat they said AL would lose the seat if the nomination is changed in favour of the JSD leader.

Former Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan won the seat thrice with BNP ticket in last three parliamentary elections.

As Morshed, who has been convicted in a graft case recently, lost his eligibility to stand in the election BNP is in search of a competent candidate for the seat.

Sources said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia might contest for the constituency.

Supporters of AL nominee for Chittagong-4 (Hathazari) MA Salam are also in a fix as Jatiya Party acting Chairman Anisul Islam Mahmud is seeking the seat from AL.

JP wanted that three of its candidates be given nominations by the alliance in Chittagong-4 (Hathazari), Chittagong-5 (Raozan) and Chittagong-9 (Double

Mooring) seats.

Our Rajshahi Correspondent adds: Rajshahi district Awami League yesterday demanded reconsideration of the grassroots opinions for party nominations in three Rajshahi constituencies and cancellation of the party tickets to 'outsider' businessmen.

Hundreds of the party leaders and activists in a press conference held at Miapara Public Library in the afternoon threatened to resign en masse if their demand is not met.

They also threatened to sue the party high command for violating its own constitution and the Representation of the People Order (RPO) ignoring grassroots opinion and giving nominations to outsiders.

"We will wait for the reconsideration until the last date of filing nominations. If our demand is not met, we will take legal actions," said Rajshahi district AL president Tajul Islam M Faruk.

Nomination seekers Raihanul Haque, Bazlur Rahman, Sajjad Hossain Mukul and Abdus Samad attended the press conference along with hundreds of supporters while

Set up separate ministry for minorities

Demands Hindu Mohajote

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jatiya Hindu Mohajote at a press conference placed a three-point demand yesterday to ensure rights of the minority communities.

The demands included a separate ministry for the minorities, a vice-presidential post representing the minorities and adequate reserved seats at parliament and local government institutions.

The speakers placed the demands at the press conference at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city.

A full-fledged ministry for the minority groups should be set up and a minister be assigned for that particular ministry from the minority groups, said the speakers.

They called for a vice-presidential post beside the president. The post should be preserved for the minority candidates only.

Bangladesh Jatiya Hindu Mohajote General Secretary Gobinda Chandra Pramanik presented a keynote paper at the programme.

Durga Puja Parishad Chairman Rupa Ganguli, Mohajote Vice-President Shyamol Roy, Chairman Chidananda Swarawati and Manoj Kumar Mandal of Prithok Nirbachon Bastobayon Parishad also took part in the programme.



Supporters of Awami League leaders who did not get party nomination for the general elections stage a demonstration in front of Sudha Sadan at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

Hasina against use of children in election campaign

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her party would not use children in election campaign during the upcoming parliamentary polls.

"Our leader Sheikh Hasina has assured a delegation of Children's Parliament that children would not be used in election campaign and steps would be taken so that children have reserved seats at the visitors' gallery of Jatiya

Sangsad," Mahbubul Huq Shakil, deputy press secretary of AL President Sheikh Hasina, told reporters quoting her as saying.

The delegation of the Children's Parliament, an organisation of children and juveniles, made a courtesy call on Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence at Dhanmondi yesterday morning.

Hasina's assurance came when the delegation, led by Children's Parliament speaker Nargis Akhter Ronny and

deputy speaker Sultana Nimi, urged the former prime minister to take initiatives, if her party comes to power, against using children in politics.

Hasina also said her party would take extensive programmes for the welfare of children if it is voted to power again.

"Our leader (Hasina) also said she would introduce free education up to degree level and stop child labour," Mahbubul Huq told the journalists.

Sunil celebrates 75th birthday at his birthplace

A CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

Poet Sunil Gangopadhyaya celebrated his 75th birth anniversary at his birthplace at East Majipara village in Kalkini, Madaripur, yesterday.

During the birthday bash, the poet cut a cake at 4:00pm at the house where he was born and bred until the family left for India.

Later, he inaugurated a three-day Sunil Fair at his ancestral village.

Hearing the news of his arrival, hundreds of people converged on the village from different areas of the district on Thursday night to meet the legendary poet.

Asked about his feelings after coming here, he said, "The love of the people of Kalkini has amazed me. In my childhood, I left my ancestral house and went to Kolkata to join my parents there. Later, I came to Dhaka several times but came to Majipara only once in 2003."

"There is a gulf of difference between my arrival at Bangladesh at those times and coming this time. I feel myself proud that I have been able to unveil the plague of Sunil Akash Bhaban for the practice of literature and health care centre with the generous help of the people of my village," he added.

He said one needs to read a lot first to become an author. "In my childhood, I was a voracious reader. I used to read whatever I found even on the roads and writings on small paperbags."

Asked about the Bangladeshi writers, Sunil, the author of over 200 books, said, "Poet Shamsur Rahman was my friend. I like the writings of many others, including poet Al Mahmud and Nirmalendu Goom."

Recalling his childhood memory, Sunil said, "I had a strong sense of déjà vu as I entered the village. Once I fell from a date tree beside my house when I climbed up to take juice there. The trees are no longer there. The village has also changed a lot. Overall, the village is now more beautiful."



Poet Sunil Gangopadhyaya cuts a cake celebrating his 75th birthday at his birthplace at East Majipara in Madaripur yesterday.

Housemaid takes away Tk 5 lakh valuables from city house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A housemaid took away gold ornaments, mobile phones and other valuables worth about Tk five lakh from a Dhanmondi house yesterday morning.

Atiqur Rahman, employer of housemaid Fatema Begum, 42, filed a case with

Dhanmondi police, accusing her of taking away 20 tolas of gold ornaments, three mobile phone sets and other valuables from his house at Dhanmondi 4/A in the morning.

Fatema, who lives at Rayerbazar Tila slum, started working at the house only two days ago.



WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country and chances of light rain at one or two places over Rajshahi division in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

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

Yesterday's highest temperature of 31.9 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 15.0 degrees at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm today and rises at 6:19am tomorrow.

The 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
Dhaka	30.7	18.5
Chittagong	29.3	19.8
Rajshahi	29.6	16.6
Khulna	30.5	19.5
Barisal	30.8	18.4
Sylhet	29.7	18.1
Cox's Bazar	31.8	20.0
	Morning	Evening
	65	72
	78	74
	87	77
	80	81
	76	89
	76	74
	73	67



Participants of a workshop on 'Effective presentation skill and public speaking' pose for photograph with the guests at the end of the workshop at the daily Prothom Alo office in the city yesterday. The Prothom Alo Jobs organised the workshop.

Poverty assessment report

FROM PAGE 16

and Chittagong act as the main domestic and international trading hubs, are also attracting large numbers of migrants from other parts of the country. There is also evidence that spatial concentration in Dhaka and its surrounding areas has increased in recent years."

A substantial part of the economic activities in Bangladesh is clustered around Dhaka and to a lesser extent, Chittagong.

The concentration of economic activity around Dhaka and Chittagong is also seen from the spatial distribution of employment by industries. Employment in the largest category of industry, agro processing industry, is concentrated in Dhaka and to a lesser extent in Chittagong. Dhaka alone accounts for 80 percent of the country's readymade garments (RMG) output and half of manufacturing sector employment.

Complementary business services, particularly finance

and real estate, account for a much higher share of total employment in Dhaka relative to the rest of the country. Most of the medium and small towns/cities do not have significant employment in formal manufacturing sectors.

The major rivers Padma and Brahmaputra slice Bangladesh into three parts. The natural border defined by these two rivers can be used to group regions in terms of their access to Dhaka and Chittagong. Territories lying to the east of the Padma and Brahmaputra are defined as integrated region covering the divisions of Chittagong, Sylhet, and most of Dhaka. Areas to the west of Brahmaputra (Rajshahi division) and south of Padma (Barisal and Khulna divisions, and the greater Faridpur districts of Dhaka division) are separated from Dhaka and Chittagong by one of the two rivers and are defined as less integrated region.

Spatial characteristics like travel time to Dhaka and access to infrastructure partially account for the effects of location on household expenditures. The average travel time to Dhaka for people living in integrated region is 33 percent lower than that of people in less integrated region. Forty-five percent households in integrated region are connected to electricity compared to 22 percent in less integrated region.

Given the importance of market access and infrastructure for the private sector, difference in these indicators explains why employment in the non-farm sector (including self-employment) grew much more rapidly in the East than in the West between 2000 and 2005.

In recommendations, the World Bank suggested that improving connectivity of remote areas to growth poles, establishing interregional transport and communication systems, investment in infrastructure, bridging the information gaps between integrated region and less integrated region can promote regional development.

Poverty differs substantially between integrated region and less integrated region, according to the HIES 2005. The poverty rate in the integrated region was 33 percent while less integrated region was 50 percent, a gap of 17 percentage points. In 2000, the poverty headcount rate was 46 percent in the integrated region and 53 percent in the less integrated region, a difference of only seven percentage points.

Factors like remoteness

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