

# Govt prioritises food output rise to fight calamities

Food minister tells int'l workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will prioritise introducing new farm technologies to enhance food production and income of the poor in coastal districts to help them fight natural calamities, said Food Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque yesterday.

"Natural disaster is the number one threat to food security," he said while speaking at the inaugural session of an international workshop on 'Tsunami/Storm Surge Hazard Assessment and Management in Bangladesh' at a hotel in the city.

Seeking support of the international community to help the government in undertaking income generation schemes for people, he said, "We focus more on post-disaster management, but we should also concentrate on empowering them so that they can have good houses."

The two-day workshop has

been organised by Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and European Commission (EC).

Experts from different countries are taking part in the workshop.

Speaking as chief guest, Dr Abdur Razzaque said price hike of food commodities following crop losses by cyclone Sidr in 2007 pushed several million people back into poverty and it is a great challenge for the government to improve their livelihoods.

"The farming system in the coastal zones is different. Therefore, we have to introduce new farming technologies for those areas for more crop production," said the

agriculture minister citing a success story of growing crops in a coastal district.

Dr Razzaque said the government is now thinking of sustainable housing patterns and cattle shelters apart from building more shelters for people in disaster-prone areas.

Asked about corruption in disaster management process after the inauguration of the workshop, he told newsmen, "In developing countries corruption takes place, but the government will check any corrupt practices."

Speaking as special guest, Brac University Vice-chancellor Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury laid emphasis on developing an early warning system and finding out the sources of Tsunami accurately for better preparedness.

"In case of Tsunami, you get less time for warning," he said, adding that many people in coastal zones did not

respond to cyclone warnings thinking that those were not true.

People must be made aware of it, he noted.

Emaduddin Ahmed, executive director of the Institute of Water Modeling, in a presentation said existing facilities to record data on elements of disasters is very poor, and regular update of the storm surge and Tsunami models is an urgent job.

Food and Disaster Management Secretary Molla Waheeduzzaman chaired the session, while Ian Rector, CDMP chief technical adviser, Stefan Priesner, UNDP country director, Milko Van Gool, head of the Delegation of EC to Bangladesh, Kenji Satake, chair of International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, and KH Masud Siddiqui, director general of Disaster Management Bureau, also spoke.



President Iajuddin Ahmed addresses editors and senior journalists at a tea party at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday. On his right is Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad and on his left are columnist ABM Musa and National Press Club President Shaikat Mahmud.

## Prof Harun new DU pro-VC, Prof Mizan treasurer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Harun-or-Rashid of political science department and Prof Mizanur Rahman of marketing department were yesterday appointed pro-vice chancellor and treasurer of Dhaka University (DU) respectively.

Besides, the new government also appointed Prof Aminur Rashid of physics department at DU as vice chancellor of Open University.

Education and Primary and Mass Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid confirmed the new appointments and said the ministry had already sent the appointment letters to the authorities concerned.

Prof Harun is also an elected dean of the university's social science faculty.

Earlier, on January 14, outgoing DU Treasurer Prof Syed Abul Kalam Azad submitted his resignation letter to education secretary. Education ministry sources said Prof Azad and outgoing Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof AFM Yusuf Haider also met education minister on the same day.

Prof Azad took over the office on February 4, 2006 and his tenure will end next year while Prof Yusuf took office in July 2002 and was reappointed in July 2006. His four-year tenure was supposed to end in July 2010.

Prof Azad and Prof Yusuf told

The Daily Star that they are fully prepared to hand over the charges to newcomers.

## Scrap ordinances on local govt bodies

DCC mayor asks govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday urged the government not to ratify the ordinances on local government bodies promulgated by the immediate past caretaker government aiming to strengthen the local bodies.

"The ordinances are anti-people and barriers in the way of smooth functioning of local government," he told reporters after a meeting with LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam at the ministry office.

The mayor also demanded the government scrap the Local Government Commission.

Saying that the activities of the local government bodies became sluggish due to promulgation of the ordinances.

"Thus I urged the minister so that the ordinances are not ratified in the next parliament," he said, adding, "I have talked to other mayors and they all agree with me."

Khoka, also a BNP leader, strongly opposed the idea of naming the elected representatives of municipalities as mayor and demanded a change in it.

"It can't be fair if the DCC mayor and the mayor of a small pourashova are treated equally," said an unhappy Khoka.

The mayor said he discussed various problems of the DCC with the minister and

requested him to increase budgetary allocation, adding that the city corporations must in turn be under the prime minister's office.

Later, the LGRD minister held a meeting with the members of the commission to discuss the role of the MPs on the upazila parishes.

He observed that the commission would play an important role in strengthening the local government bodies, adding that both the lawmakers and elected chairmen of upazila parishes could contribute to their respective areas.

Briefing the newsmen after an hour-long meeting, Commission Chairman Mohammad Faizur Razzak said decision regarding bestowing local government authority on the lawmakers will be taken based on reality.

Asked whether the local government system will be weakened if the MPs are given the authority to intervene in their affairs, he said they do not want the local government to be weakened.

"As discussion is going on regarding the issue, no final decision was made. Further discussion will continue before reaching a final stage," he added.

Responding to a query, Razzak said, "We think that the ordinances have been promulgated in a bid to strengthen the local government system."

## Ulemas demand removal of new Khatib

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of Ulemas (Islamic scholars) yesterday demanded removal of newly appointed Khatib Mufti Mohammad Salauddin of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque before Friday.

Otherwise, they will take to the streets, they warned.

At an Ulama Mashayekh conference, the Ulemas alleged that the new Khatib cannot recite the holy Quran perfectly and that he is a follower of Atroshi Pir.

They urged the government to form a committee comprising top ulemas in the country to select a new Khatib.

The religious leaders warned that they would announce fresh programmes on January 26 if their demand goes unheeded.

They also urged their followers not to create any chaos inside the mosque by throwing shoes at each other.

Muhammad Habibullah,

member secretary of Sammilito Iman-Akida Hefazat Committee, read out a written speech at the conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

Presided over by Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB) secretary general Principal Yunus Ahmed, the conference was also addressed by Maulana Abdul Latif Chowdhury, IAB organising secretary Syed Belaet Hossain and several madrasa students.

## VIOLATION OF CONSTITUTION MPs urged to take measures against president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Citizens' Rights Movement (CRM) yesterday urged the members of parliament (MPs) to take measures against President Iajuddin Ahmed for, what it said, the violation of the constitution by taking over the power of chief adviser on October 29, 2006 and taking decisions one by one according to his own whim.

The CRM made the demand at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city.

The speakers said being head of the state the president cannot act against the constitution and create a state of uncertainty when the country was in a transitional period.

In his keynote speech, CRM Secretary General Tushar Rahman urged the MPs not to make parliament only a place of enacting laws.

"Parliament should not let the incident of violating the constitution go unnoticed," he added.

Tushar said the president also misused his power by gaining illegal properties and spending public money for personal interests.

So he should be brought under trial along with his family members who are also involved in these corrupt practices," he added.

The speakers also demanded trial of former chief election commissioner MA Aziz for wasting Tk 163 crore for an unauthentic voter list.



Advocate Fauzia Karim speaks at a conference at LGED Bhaban in the city yesterday. On her left are Attorney General Advocate Mahubey Alam and Advocate Salma Ali.

## Select a woman with disability as MP for reserved seat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a conference yesterday demanded steps to select a disabled woman as a member of parliament (MP) for the reserved seat and formulate a committee on disability in the parliament to ensure rights of people with disabilities.

They highlighted the discrimination that the physically and mentally challenged people have been experiencing for the lack of a suitable law and for not implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD).

The speakers said this at the two-day conference on 'Implementation of UN Convention

on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' organised by Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) at LGED auditorium in the city.

They also placed some recommendations so that 10 percent of the total population with disabilities can enjoy their rights properly.

"The hospitals, courts, schools, colleges, secretariat and the prime minister's office - nothing are suitable and accessible for us and those are constructed in such a way where we can enter hardly," said Abdus Sattar Dulal of Bangladesh Protibondhi Kalyan Samity.

The speakers said even the offices of the social welfare

ministry that is mainly handling the issues of the people with disabilities situated at the 2nd floor of the buildings where the people using wheel chairs cannot go at all.

They also raised a question why there will have only one ministry to address the issues of the people with disabilities where there are distinct ministries for others to address their different issues like education, health, employment and others.

BNWLA Executive Director advocate Salma Ali said, "Bangladesh signed and ratified the UNCPRD with all its optional protocols but as it is not incorporated with the domestic law through the parliament, we are yet to see its implementation."

At the same time, there is no mechanism for implementation of the law enacted in 2001 that needs to be updated."

"BNWLA will prepare a guideline for updating the law and will also file a public interest litigation case later to ensure the rights of the people with disabilities," she said.

Attorney General advocate Mahubey Alam was present on the occasion as the chief guest, while former member of Caw Committee Salma Khan, Dr Shahnaz Huda and Dr Sumaiya Khair of Dhaka University, Obaidur Rahman of Save the Children-Sweden Denmark, Shirin Akhter of NADPO and Hedayetullah Al Mamoon also spoke.

## Tigers finally beat Zimbabwe

FROM PAGE 16

Rubel Hossain who got the success to annihilate the visitor's top order as Zimbabwe were reduced to 47-6.

While everybody was thinking of witnessing the lowest total in the tournament, Sean Williams and captain Prosper Utseya came up with unlikely resistance as the pair contributed 96-runs which is the highest seventh wicket stand for Zimbabwe in ODIs.

Left-handed Williams struck his eighth ODI fifty when he made 59 off 89 balls with the help of three fours and a six before falling victim to a run out while Utseya added 38 off 101 balls that comprised two fours and a six.

Chasing a modest target of 161, opener Tamim Iqbal began on a bright note as he came up with his natural aggressive style of play and

added 32 runs in the opening stand with Mehrab. Mehrab returned to his former role as an opener to make 43 off 85 balls, while Tamim threw his wicket away swinging across the line to T Mupariwa. Bangladesh looked set to repeat their fragile top order act when captain Ashrafur perished trying to force Ed Rainsford past cover only to reach the safe hands of Utseya for five runs.

But, Mehrab, was then joined by Rokibul to repair the damage by associating 52-runs for the third wicket stand before he unnecessarily lobbed left-arm spinner Ray Price to skipper Utseya at short midwicket.

In-form Shakib Al Hasan was the other batsman dismissed for a 24-ball 22.

Mushfiqur Rahim then finished off the match in style when he went down on one

knee and lofted a slower ball from Tawanda Mupariwa one bounce for four over midwicket and flicked the next ball well over long-on to seal an all important victory for the Tigers.

## Extortionists attack shop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals ransacked a crockery shop at West Tejgaon bazaar in the city yesterday and assaulted the shop owner as he refused to pay toll.

The shop owner Kalam Sikdar, owner of Soheli Enterprise, filed a case with Tejgaon Police Station accusing seven local people for extortion and beating him up.

Police said the criminals beaten up him and ransacked his shop at around 12:00pm as he denied to pay them Tk 5 lakh.

## 67 roads renamed on plaque

FROM PAGE 16

address but did not get any response. "I also made similar requests to the authorities of several educational institutions situated on the road but nothing changed," he said.

Many government offices including those of Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd and Deso also do not use the new name of the road as their address, Sumon said.

He alleged that even the DCC, which itself renamed the road, is not issuing trade licences or renewing them under the new address. "I myself have found that sweetmeat shop Rasa in Nahar market renewed its trade licence using the old address," he said.

Most holdings on Bir Uttam CR Dutta Road from Kantabon crossing to Sonargaon crossing via Hatirpool (renamed after the commander of sector-4 of the Liberation War) are still using the old name of the road. Similar picture was found in case of Bir Uttam Kazi Nuruzzaman Road, the link road between Russel Square and Sonargaon crossing renamed after the sector-7 commander.

Except for a few cases, a better picture was seen in case of Bir Uttam MA Rabb Road from Science Laboratory to the BDR gate in Jigatola.

Ekrumul Islam, a shop owner on Kazi Nuruzzaman Road, said it is difficult to change a name that has been in use for the last 30 years. He suggested that the authorities should rather name new roads

after the great heroes.

Md Saidur Rahman Khan, taxation officer for zone-5 of DCC, however said they are strict about the use of the new address while renewing or issuing new trade licences.

In most cases people are reluctant to use the new addresses because of the familiarity of the old road names. It will take time to establish the new names of these roads, he said.

Syed Ehsanul Huda, a dealer of Dhaka Phone on MA Rabb Road, reacted sharply when asked why he does not use the new name of the road. "Why will I use the new name? I have known this as Dhanmondi-2 road since my boyhood, why should I change it all of a sudden?" he said.

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## Fishermen earn right to fish

FROM PAGE 1

Until recently when the leasing system of the haor was active fishermen resorted to stealing fish. And if the leaseholders caught them they would be punished. In some cases fishermen were reportedly killed.

"In the past we risked our lives because we depended on the leaseholders' goons used to beat them up if they found any fish being cooked in our houses. But now we can fish as much as we want without fear of intimidation," he added.

Following years of pilferage by influential locals that depleted its resources and damaged the ecosystem, the government banned the leasing system of the Tangaur haor in 2000 and declared it an 'Ecologically Critical Area' (ECA).

Located in the foothills of Meghalaya, the Tangaur haor covers about 10,000 hectares of water bodies in Sunamganj and parts of Habiganj, Netrokona and Kishoreganj districts and provides for livelihood of over 55,000 people in 88 villages around it.

The haor was declared a Ramsar site, the second one in Bangladesh, in 2000 considering

its potential and international importance.

Due to its status as an ECA and Ramsar site, the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) with technical assistance from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) initiated a project titled 'Community Based Sustainable Management of Tangaur Haor' at Tangaur haor in 2006.

The project is being implemented in Tahirpur and Dharmapasha upazilas of Sunamganj district with the aim at building the capacity of the rural communities around the haor to share in the management of water, fisheries, forest and other resources for generating income.

However, the goal of the first phase of the project is to initiate and test a pilot co-management system for Tangaur haor. The test fish harvesting programme was part of a first phase. Last year, a token fish harvesting was held.

As part of the scheme the fishermen were provided with a card along with a yellow sleeveless shirt for identification purposes. Besides, a monitoring group also patrolled the haor.

Any fish they caught were sold through open bid where the fish mongers had no scope to

deprive the fishermen.

"This has been done to ensure transparency as well as ensuring their share in the management," said Raquibul Amin, programme coordinator of IUCN.

Only enlisted fishermen can catch operate in the haor, he said adding that initially fishermen of 46 villages will enjoy the right to fish. Eventually fishermen of all 88 villages will be engaged in the programme, he added.

Forty percent of the fish sale will go to those who catch fish, 36 percent will go to the community-based organisations which will eventually take over management system of the haor. The rest 24 percent will go to government, he said.

The fishermen said that they are happy with the system.

"None without the card can catch fish now," said Nekbar Ali of Dakshin Sripur, adding that the malpractice of catching during the breeding season and bribing the Ansar guards for catching at night will cease.

DC Farid Ahmed Bhuiyan said it is essential to involve more communities in the process so that they can benefit from the haor and also feel encouraged to protect its ecology and biodiversity.

## BCL expels DU Jagannath Hall leader

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday expelled Utpal Saha, a leader of Dhaka University's (DU) Jagannath Hall unit of the organisation, for his anti-organisational activities.

Utpal has established such oppressive dominance over the hall following the landslide victory of the Awami League-led grand alliance in December 29 elections that resident students have been afraid of him, hall sources said.

In the early hours of yesterday, Utpal along with his fellows and some outsiders beat up Sujon Mandal, a third year student of fine arts, and forced him out of the hall as he protested a decision of Utpal.

Sources said a number of outsiders have been staying in many rooms at the hall under the patronisation of Utpal, who got enrolled in the management department under 1999-2000 session but could not complete his honors degree in the last nine years.

They also alleged that Utpal has demanded Tk 7000 in toll from Babul Pal, who has been making an idol of Saraswati Devi for Saraswati Puja scheduled for January 31.

He had even demanded several lakhs of taka in toll from the contractor engaged in the construction work of a five-storey building for the students at the hall in October last year, hall sources said.

Protesting the incident of beating up Sujon, also a BCL activist, a group of BCL leaders and workers led by its president Shohel Rana Tipu urged DU VC Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique of taking legal action against Utpal.

When contacted, Prof Arefin Siddique said he would discuss the issue in the provost committee meeting today.

## Suspected killer held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-4) yesterday arrested one of the suspects in four-murder incident that took place on December 21 last year at Manikdi under Cantonment Police Station.

Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Nazmul Islam of Rab-4 said they arrested Amir Ali, 45, for his alleged involvement in the killing.

Four people were killed during a gunfight between two groups of criminals on December 21 last year.

## Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 3rd death anniversary of former industries minister Shamsul Islam Khan, says a press release.

His family members requested all to pray for eternal peace of the departed soul.

## DHAKA TODAY

### Workshop

Department of Environment and Asiatic Marketing Communications Limited jointly organise a workshop on communication strategy and message development. Venue: Bengal Café, Dhanmondi. Time: 10:00am.

### Education expo

The inaugural ceremony of the 3rd Education Worldwide Expo 2009 will be held. Venue: Bashundhara city. Time: 11:00am.

### Pharma expo

The opening ceremony of the Asia Pharma Expo 2009 will be held. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 10:00am.

### Ahsanullah Fund Trust

The inaugural ceremony of the Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah Trust Fund will be held. Venue: Asiatic Society auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

## WEATHER TODAY

### Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins during midnight until morning. Met Offices said.

Slight rise in night temperature is expected over the country.

Highest temperature 28.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 10.8 degrees Celsius at Ishwardi.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:38pm today and rises at 6:42am 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	25.5	14.3	65	56
Chittagong	26.6	14.5	75	59
Rajshahi	23.4	11.5	85	79
Khulna	25.8	14.0	74	58
Barisal	27.0	13.0	84	60
Sylhet	25.7	17.4	85	64
Cox's Bazar	28.8	15.5	70	59