

CONFERENCE ON COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY FOR S ASIA FM favours talks with extremists to resolve any problem

UNB, Dhaka

There is scope for discussions with extremists for the sake of resolving any problem, Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni said yesterday, as an international meet began brainstorming here on counter-terrorism measures.

"There remains scope for discussions in case of resolving any kind of problem," she told reporters when asked if, like the insurgency-problem resolution in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, there is any scope for a negotiated solution of the problem of extremism the country faces off and on.

She was speaking to newsmen after the inaugural session of a two-day international conference on

Counter-terrorism Strategy for South Asia, organised by Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) at a local hotel.

In her speech as the chief guest, Dr Dipu Moni said the Awami League-led centre-left coalition government, after assuming office, has identified counter-terrorism as one of the key areas where it will focus its efforts while marching on the path of democracy and development.

"However, rather than being just reactive to this threat, we want to confront the very root of terrorism and extremism in this country through a spectrum approach to roll back this menace," she said explaining the new government's policy.

The FM said, "We would also be undertaking initiatives for counter-extremism, counter-radicalisation and countering the terror finance in the country. The process of re-education and rehabilitation is always on."

"However, we are firm to deal with any force which may destabilise society and disrupt peace and security of the common people. In this endeavor we plan to work very closely with our partners across the South Asian region and beyond," Dr Dipu Moni said.

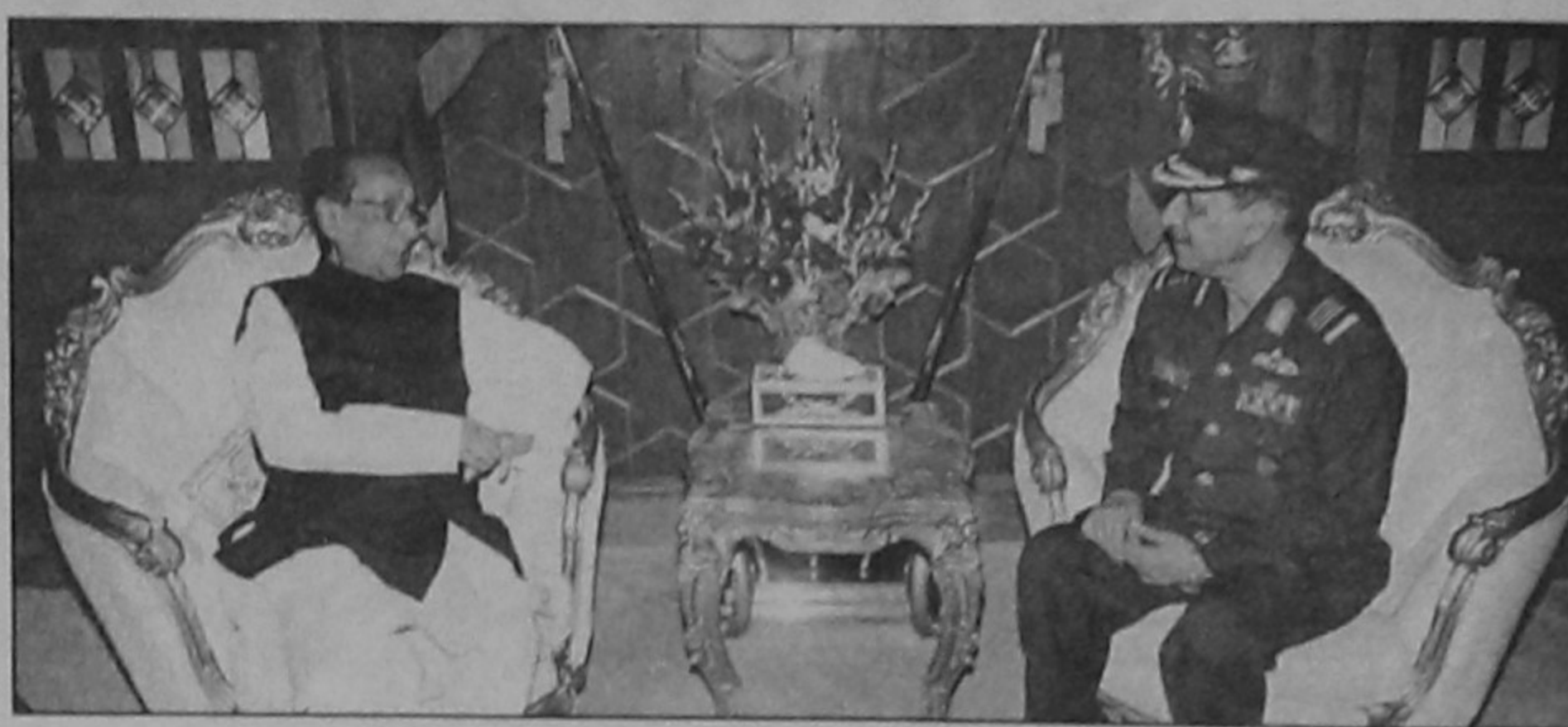
Later, responding to a query about the proposed formation of South Asian taskforce, she told journalists, "We are talking to our neighbours about it and getting

positive response."

About the timeline of forming such a taskforce, the FM said, "There is no set timeline. We are talking. A platform will be set through discussions."

Asked if the issue would be discussed in the meeting of foreign ministers in Colombo, she said, "The issue may come up in discussions."

BIPSS President Maj Gen (Retd) ANM Muniruzzaman gave the welcome address while Laila Bukhari, research fellow of Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, presented a keynote on 'Deradicalisation and Rehabilitation programmes targeting religious terrorists and extremists in the Muslim world'.



Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal S M Ziaur Rahman calls on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

Air chief calls on president

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal S M Ziaur Rahman called on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban yesterday.

They discussed about activities of the force.

The air chief apprised the president of different ongoing development activities of the Air Force.

He also apprised the president that the Air Force members have been awarded certificate of appreciations from the United Nations for their outstanding performances in different UN peacekeeping missions.

Zillur expressed his satisfaction over the role of the Air Force for their professionalism and active participation in different nation building activities, especially in relief operations at times of natural calamity.

The president assured the Air Chief of providing "all out cooperation in discharging his duties".

VoIP equipment seized in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detective branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) seized huge quantity of illegal Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) equipment from Enayet Bazar in Chittagong yesterday.

Sources said a team of DB police raided a building at Enayet Bazar at around 7:30am and seized the equipment from a room on the third floor of the building.

The seized equipment include two quantum, 27 tellurium sets, one telephone set, one monitor, one CPU, one IPS, 25 chargers, one media converter, SIM cards and other computer accessories. Police said the seized equipment worth Tk 5 lakh were being used in illegal VoIP business.

During interrogation, owner of the building Mir Sakib Ahmad, told police that one Jamshid Uddin, son of Shafiqul Alam hailing from Paraikora in Anwara upazila rented the room four months ago. Police said they are trying to arrest Jamshid.

Students block road

RU CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred students of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet) put up a barricade on Dhaka-Rajshahi highway yesterday night protesting against a Ruet teacher by ticket sellers at Rajshahi rail station.

Nazmul Haque, a teacher of Mechanical department of Ruet, went to Rajshahi rail station to purchase a ticket. Then he was assaulted by a group of ticket sellers. Later, he returned on the campus and students got information of his assault.

At around 8:00pm, around one hundred students went to the station and met with the stationmaster and demanded punishment to the responsible ticket sellers.

Then the ticket sellers along with some local youths chased the Ruet students. They also assaulted the agitating students, sources said.

Later, the students returned to the campus and staged a demonstration on the campus and blocked Dhaka-Rajshahi highway.

Prof Yusuf new CU VC

Prof Alauddin Pro-VC
CU CORRESPONDENT

Former pro-vice chancellor Prof Abu Yusuf Alam has been appointed the vice chancellor (VC) of Chittagong University (CU) yesterday.

Prof Yusuf, a teacher at the Islamic history and culture department, replaced Prof M Badiul Alam, who was supposed to complete his four-year tenure in February 2010.

Meanwhile, Prof Alauddin of biochemistry department was made the pro-vice chancellor of the university.

CU Registrar Mohammad Jahurul Islam said they received a fax from the education ministry to this end at 4:00pm.

Prof Badiul was appointed the CUVC during the tenure of BNP-led four-party alliance government in February 2006.

On January 17, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) CU unit imposed a two-day strike demanding resignation of the VC for his alleged involvement in patronising Islamic Chhatra Shibir and corruption.

On the other hand, the post of pro-vice chancellor remained vacant since November 23, 2005 after the tenure of the then Pro-VC Prof Mohammad Shamsuddin had expired.

Owners renting rooms to militants will also face trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafiq Ahmed yesterday warned that any house owners renting rooms to people linked to militants or involved in militancy would be charged with aiding and abetting the militants and face trial.

"Those who will provide accommodation facilities and financial assistance to militants will be treated as having committed crimes similar to those committed by the militants," he said, adding that the house owners are responsible for monitoring what their tenants are doing at their houses.

The landlords concerned will stand trial if their tenants are found involved in militant activities, regardless of whether there is any contract signed with the tenants on house rent, the minister told reporters at his secretariat office.

"The Anti-Terrorism Ordinance 2008 will be made a

law providing for the death penalty as maximum penalty and two years' imprisonment or fine as minimum penalty for the culprits involved in militancy," he said, adding that the accused will be tried in tribunals which will be formed under this law.

When asked what action will be taken against foreigners aiding the militants, Shafiq Ahmed said the government has not taken any final decision in this regard, but action will be taken as per the law.

The government will formulate stringent laws, if necessary, to maintain peace and discipline in society and to stamp out terrorism, he added.

Replying to a question, the minister said the Representation of Peoples Order (RPO) (Amendment) Ordinance will be made a law, with the provision for voting rights of Bangladeshi expatriates.

About the provision for 'no

votes' in the RPO, Shafiq Ahmed said that he personally thinks there should not be any such provisions, as there are no such rules in any other country of the world.

"The candidates are elected by the votes of the people in every democratic country in the world. If any voter does not wish to cast his or her vote for any candidates, they may refrain from going to polling centres," he said.

Earlier, the law minister held a meeting with a two-member delegation of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (BELA) led by its chief Syeda Rizwana Hasan.

At the meeting, the minister assured them that the government would make the Real Estate Development and Management Ordinance 2008 a law incorporating provision for protecting the interests of both the buyers and developers.

TANGUAR HAOR 'Co-management vital to ensure livelihood, revenue'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday underscored the need for introducing co-management system involving local communities in the management of the country's water bodies to ensure livelihood of the rural communities as well as generating revenue incomes.

The driver and helper of the mobile library were freed from the police station yesterday while police took the librarian along with the mobile library into their custody.

Lalbagh police said they seized around 2,500 books and 90 percent of the books are written on Islamic issues.

Concerted effort of all is imperative for the development of the natural resources of the country, they added.

Ministry of Environment and Forest and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Bangladesh jointly organised the workshop at a city hotel to share achievements of a project in Tanguar haor in Sunamganj.

The ministry with the technical assistance from IUCN Bangladesh initiated the project

titled 'Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor' at Tanguar haor in Sunamganj with the financial assistance from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in 2006. The preparatory stage of the project will be ended by this month.

Giving an overview of the project, IUCN Country Representative Dr Ainun Nishat said the haor, which is one of the largest freshwater inland wetlands, is important for its resource and biological diversity. But the people living around it are extremely poor.

The condition of the people, especially the fishermen, started changing after initiating the co-management system in the haor which also ensures their rights to the water body, he added.

Environment and Forest Secretary AHM Rezaul Kabir said

rights of the local people have been ensured by the co-management system and the government will increase the administrative and institutional support to ensure the community's rights.

Putting emphasis on evaluating local community's knowledge to ensure sustainable development, he said the government is planning to use the co-management approach in other haors in the country.

Joint Secretary Joyal Abedin Talukder and Head of Cooperation of the Swiss agency Joseph Gunterm also spoke.

Tanguar haor covers about 10,000 hectares of water bodies in the district and provides for livelihood of over 55,000 people in 88 villages around it. It was declared a Ramsar site, the second one in Bangladesh, in 2000 considering its potential and international importance.

MILITANCY Madrasa students catch 3 mobile library men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Madrasa students with the help of locals caught three persons of a mobile library in the city's Bakshi Bazar area Monday night and handed over them to police suspecting their involvement in militancy.

Police said students of Government Madrasa-e-Allia and local people intercepted a bus used as the mobile library of Bangladesh Sangkritik Kendra and caught librarian Nazrul Islam, bus driver Masum and helper Shahidullah around 8:00pm.

The three persons were interrogated to find out whether they have any connection with militancy or not, police said.

Lalbagh police showed librarian Nazrul arrested under section 54 and produced him before a Dhaka court yesterday with a prayer for a three-day remand but the court sent him to jail denying the remand prayer.

The driver and helper of the mobile library were freed from the police station yesterday while police took the librarian along with the mobile library into their custody.

Lalbagh police said they seized around 2,500 books and 90 percent of the books are written on Islamic issues.

Contribution of Dr Ahmad Sharif recalled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 10th death anniversary of Prof Dr Ahmad Sharif, a renowned scholar, researcher and a forerunner of free thought movement, was observed yesterday.

On the occasion, Swadesh Chinta Shangha arranged a memorial lecture and award giving function at the Business Studies Faculty auditorium of Dhaka University.

Indian intellectual and former vice-chancellor of Vishwa Bharati University Prof Amlan Dutta delivered the memorial lecture.

Sector Commander Col (ret) Quazi Nur-uz-Zaman, Biruttam, and eminent journalist and cultural activist Kamal Lohani was honoured with this year's commemorative awards.

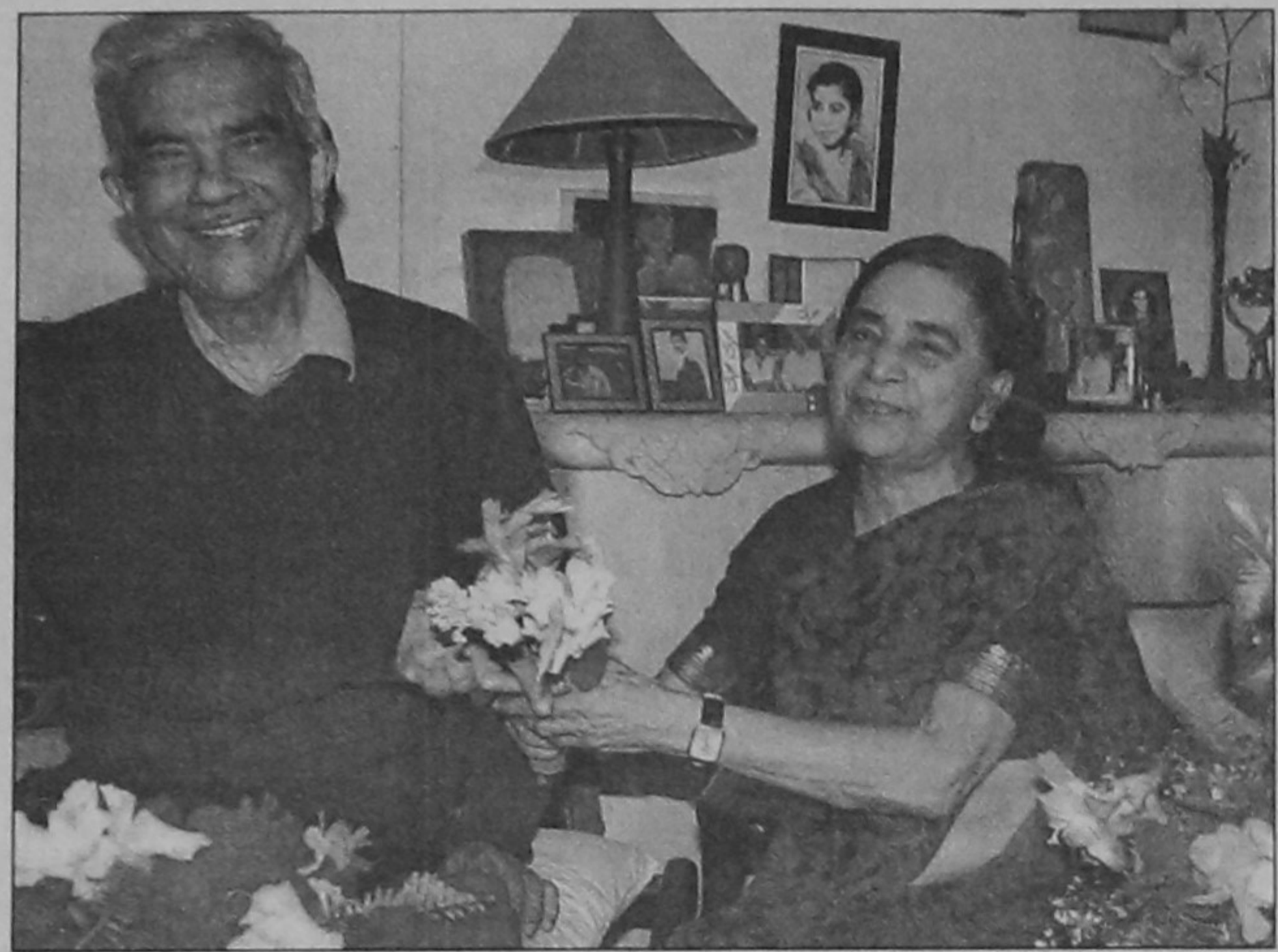
Prof Dutta in his speech said, "Through the passage of time the human race faces many predicaments. To unravel the situation society makes changes, incessantly. Difficulties in life makes way for free thoughts. Prof Sharif throughout his life made an effort to change the society."

Naxalbari Movement leader Comrade Azizul Haq sent a commemorative piece on the occasion which was read out by Prof Ahmed Kabir.

During his lifetime Prof Sharif had written around 70 books and abridged more than 100.

His area of interest in writing was Bangladesh, Bengali society and Bangla language and literature.

He was well known for his dedicated, fearless intellectual stance. Ahmad Sharif criticised any government that resorted to unjust and anti-people policies. He wrote and spoke strongly against fundamentalism, military rule, autocracy and the enemies of liberation.



Prof Emeritus Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam, an eminent scientist, receives a bouquet from his wife on the occasion of his 70th birth anniversary at his residence in the port city yesterday.

Birth anniversary of Prof Jamal Nazrul celebrated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The 70th birth anniversary of Professor Emeritus Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam, an eminent scientist, was celebrated in the port city yesterday.

People from all strata, educationists and activists of political and cultural organisations greeted him with bouquets at his house Surson Road.

Speaking to the guests, Prof Jamal, also a social activist, hoped to work for many more years to contribute to the field of science as well as to promote humanity and justice.

Dr Jamal, born in 1939 in Jhenidah, had studied and taught at renowned institutions abroad.

He came back home in 1986 and joined the Chittagong University where he established the Centre for Mathematical and Physical Sciences.

"Since my childhood, I have always dreamt of working for my country," said Prof Jamal, who refused a job offer from Cambridge University only to come back to the country.

Over 50 international science conferences were held in his research centre in the last 20 years, Dr Jamal said, adding that Chittagong could be made the second Shantiniketan.

He urged the government to provide more allocations for research in public universities.

BMSPP executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bino Krishna Mollick was elected president of the executive committee of Bangladesh Manobadhikar Samonny Parishad (BMSPP) recently.

Other office bearers are: vice-presidents -- Nilufa Nasreen Reema, Nasrin Sultana, Mozammel Haque, Golam Rahman Bhuiyan, and Md HM Zakir Ahmed; and treasurer -- Md Mahbul Haque.

Members are Mazeda Shawkat Ali, Zinnat Ara Rahman, Rabeya Afroz Kanak, Azizul Islam Bachchu, Jashimuddin Ahmed Jahangir, Jashimuddin Chashi, AHM Faisal, and Sheikh Arif Ahmed.

CENT PERCENT LITERACY RATE Literacy target deferred for 3 yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Evaluating the present situation in primary education, the government has deferred one year from the target to bring all children in schools and three years another goal to ensure cent percent literacy rate in the country.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday said the government would take effective measures to ensure cent percent enrolment by 2011 and total literacy rate by 2017 targeting to make digital Bangladesh by 2021.

However, Awami League at its election manifesto pledged that they would work to get 100 percent children enrolled by 2010 and total literacy rate by 2014.

The minister said this at a seminar on 'Primary and Informal Education' at the auditorium of Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) in the capital where three keynote papers on primary education system, registered and community primary school system, and informal education system were presented.

"Our primary education is running with many limitations, especially with remaining 50 percent dropouts and many villages where there are no primary schools. So, we will

introduce a unified education system where same curriculum will be imparted in all 11-types primary schools," he added.

Speaking as chief guest, Nahid also said a new pay scale for all primary teachers, including government, registered and community primary school, will be introduced from the next fiscal year where all quality teachers will get the same salary and other allowances.

At a presentation on the government primary school, DPE Director General Shymal Kanti Gosh said dropout, extreme poverty, infrastructure development, decentralisation, policy reforms and establishment of ICT are the main challenges in primary education.

State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Mota Har Hossain said they will improve the quality of primary schools through expanding primary education to class eight and introducing same curricula in all types of primary schools.

Acting Secretary to Primary and Mass Education Ministry Badrul Alam Tarafder conducted the seminar where former VC of Jahangirnagar University Kazi Saleh Ahmed, informal education bureau director general Rejaul Kader and Save the Children USA Director M Habibur Rahman also took part.



No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

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

Highest temperature 33.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 13.6 degrees Celsius at Srimongol.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:00pm today and rises at 6:23am 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	30.8	21.5	76	63
Chittagong	27.6	17.0	91	78
Rajshahi	33.8	14.6	67	37
Khulna	31.4	22.0	91	75
Barisal	31.7	22.0	91	73
Sylhet	30.8	17.3	72	57
Cox's Bazar	29.0	19.5	82	60