



Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert McDougall pays a courtesy call on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

Invest more in Bangladesh

President urges Canadian entrepreneurs

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday urged the Canadian entrepreneurs to invest more in the country's potential sectors, including power, energy, textile, garments and food processing, and avail the investment facilities offered by the government.

"In this regard, the envoy can play a great role in providing comprehensive information about the Bangladesh's incentives, including tax exemption and full repatriation of capital and profit," he said while Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert McDougall paid a courtesy call on the president at Bangabhaban.

Welcoming the envoy, the president thanked him for his supportive role at different times and expressed his great appreciation for the people and the government of Canada for their assistance in strengthening democracy in Bangladesh providing 240,000 transparent ballot boxes for

general elections held on December 29 last year.

Termining Canada as an important development partner of the country, he said Bangladesh attaches great importance to her relations with Canada and hopes that the bilateral relations between the two countries would strengthen further in the coming days.

Zillur mentioned Canada's laudable contributions to Bangladesh through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), particularly in rural electrification, communication infrastructure and social development.

He proposed that the two countries could cooperate in a variety of fields including technology transfer, scientific, cultural and educational exchanges, and poverty alleviation through establishing Canadian projects.

Canadian High Commissioner Robert McDougall, who presented his credentials on October 20 last

year, expressed his happiness over seeing the last general election held in a free, fair and credible manner.

Termining Bangladesh as a country with immense potential, he said this country would be able to reach the zenith of development in coming days as Bangladeshis are both hard working and courageous enough to face any problems.

Referring to the recent carnage at BDR headquarters, the High Commissioner expressed his great sorrow and deep sympathy to the bereaved families and the government.

He also assured the president that his government would extend more cooperation in strengthening the existing bilateral relations.

Secretary to the President's Office Mohammad Shafiqul Alam, Military Secretary to the President Brig Gen Md Ehtesham Ul Haque and President's Press Secretary Abdul Awal Howlader were present during the meeting.

GRAFT CASES Salauddin, Naser Rahman granted bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted bail to former state minister for communications Salauddin Ahmed and former BNP lawmaker Naser Rahman in three separate cases.

Salauddin secured bail for one year in two separate cases -- one for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and another for extortion.

He was sentenced for 13 years for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information to ACC and seven years for extortion by separate special courts during the emergency period.

Meanwhile, Naser, son of former finance minister Saifur Rahman, got bail for six months in a case for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information about it.

He was convicted for 13 years in the case filed by the ACC by a special court.

The HC bench of Justice MA Wahhab Miah and Justice Delwar Hossain granted them bail after hearing on separate appeals.

Their counsel Barrister Moudud Ahmed yesterday told newsmen that there was no legal bar left for his clients to get released from jail following the HC orders.

BCSIR science fair prize giving ceremony held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prize giving ceremony of the four-day science fair organised by Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) was held on its campus yesterday.

Forty-seven schools and colleges across the country took part in the fair with their innovative projects. The students displayed 152 projects in three groups.

In the higher secondary group, the first three prizes were taken respectively by Holy Cross College (remedying natural calamities), Notre Dame College (cheap microscope) and Chittagong Cantonment Public School and College (eliminating waterlogging in Chittagong city).

In the secondary group, the first three prizes were taken by Government Laboratory High School, Rajshahi (trustworthy gatekeeper), BCSIR High School (producing electricity from tree leaves) and Siroil Government High School, Rajshahi (cheap IPS).

In the lower secondary group, first three prizes were taken by Dhaka Residential Model School and College (Azoles: substitute of urea fertiliser), Rajshahi University School (producing electricity from cycle) and Dhaka Residential Model School and College (producing high quality oil from the seed of mahogany).

The winners received cash (first Tk 30,000; second Tk 20,000 and third Tk 10,000), crests and certificates. All the participants also received certificates.

Yafes Osman, state minister for science, information and communication technology, was the chief guest at the ceremony and Md Nazmul Huda Khan NDC, secretary of the ministry, was the special guest.

BCSIR Chairman Dr Akram Hossain presided over the ceremony.

Produce salinity-tolerant variety of rice

Matia urges agri scientists

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday underscored the need for cultivating salinity-tolerant variety of rice.

The minister said the main obstacle in cultivation of paddy in the southern region during the dry season is salinity.

She was speaking as the chief guest at the annual research review 2007-08 of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI).

The review meeting that started yesterday would continue till March 18 where nine keynote papers and 27 reports would be presented.

The agriculture minister said the main problem in north Bengal is brown grasshopper. She urged the scientists to do research on the gene of brown grasshopper to stop its menace.

Matia Chowdhury said winter is the safe season for

paddy in these fields during the dry season has to be increased.

Matia Chowdhury said paddy has to be cultivated in the land, which remains after shrimp farming during the dry season.

"Bio-technology is now the demand of time. But it is sad that we could not yet formulate bio-safety rule," she added.

She urged the agricultural scientists to take initiative in this regard.

The minister said, "We have to be careful about using hybrid variety." She also advised cutting import of hybrid seed.

The agriculture minister said the main problem in north Bengal is brown grasshopper. She urged the scientists to do research on the gene of brown grasshopper to stop its menace.

Matia Chowdhury said winter is the safe season for

crops. More crops have to be produced in this season. She said, "We are going to expand cultivation of salinity-tolerant variety of rice (BR-47) quickly."

The minister criticised the irrigation system in the northern area using deep tube-wells. She said it depletes water level alarmingly.

The government is trying to take necessary steps for excavation of the Gora, she added.

"We are speaking against use of chemical fertilisers, but we are not taking the reality into consideration," she said, adding that the Awami League government in its stint from 1996 to 2001 took a number of steps in this regard.

She said the immediate past caretaker government also gave emphasis on the use of bio-fertiliser but the project money was misused.

Director General of BRRI Dr Mohammad Firoz Shah Sikder presided over the programme while Awami League lawmakers from Gazipur-1 and 2 constituencies AKM Mozammel Haque and Zahid Ahsan Russell and Agriculture Secretary Dr CQK Mustaq Ahmed also spoke.

BRRI invents four varieties of rice

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) last year invented four new varieties of rice -- BRRI Dhan-48, BRRI Dhan-49, BRRI Dhan-50 (Bangla Moti) and BRRI Hybrid Dhan-2.

With these the number of rice varieties invented by the organisation stood at 51, scientists at the BRRI informed.

Scientists said BRRI-48 is medium in size and can be transplanted in 'Aus season'. Yield per hectare is 5 metric tons.

BRRI-49 is similar to 'Nazirshail' rice. It can be transplanted in 'Aman season'. The variety has higher disease resistance power. Rain and storm cannot damage the rice much.

BRRI-50 is known as Bangla Moti rice. This aromatic rice is suitable for 'Boro season'. The size of the variety is better than Indian and Pakistani 'basmati rice'.

BRRI Hybrid Dhan-2 is suitable for 'boro season'. It is medium fine and tasty and yield is 8.5 metric tons per hectare.

JICA's EPI kits for field workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the JOCV (Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers) activities/contribution in (Expanded Programme on Immunisation) EPI, a commemorative gift handing over ceremony was held at Director General of Health Services (DGHS) office in the city yesterday.

Nobuko Suzuki Kayashima, chief representative of JICA Bangladesh, handed over 4000 carrying bags for EPI kits to Dr AKF Mujibur Rahman, deputy director, EPI and surveillance.

The kits will be distributed among the field workers in seven districts -- Sylhet, Brahmanbaria, Comilla, Feni, Noakhali, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar -- where JOCV volunteers are working.

At present 43 volunteers are working in different organisations in Bangladesh.



The newly elected executives of the fourth class employees' union of Dhaka University pose for photograph with Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique at an installation ceremony at TSC auditorium on Saturday. Pro-VC Prof Harun-or-Rashid and Treasurer Prof Mizanur Rahman were also present.

35 houses gutted in Thakurgaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

At least 35 houses were gutted in a fire at Sarcarpa village under Sadar upazila in Thakurgaon yesterday.

Fire Service and Civil Defense sources said the fire originated from an oven of a kitchen at about 10:15am and soon engulfed the adjacent houses.

On information, fire fighters rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control after hectic efforts with the help of local people.

Local people claimed the fire destroyed properties worth around Tk 20 lakh. But Fire Service and Civil Defense officials told that estimation of loss yet to be completed.

Make by-polls free, fair

EC Sohul tells officials at Bogra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The Election Commission has sent a letter to the speaker so that lawmakers do not visit the constituencies where by-elections for a total of seven vacated seats will be held on April 2.

Election Commissioner Muhammad Sohul Hossain yesterday said this at a views exchange meeting with the election and administrative officials involved in the by-polls at Bogra Circuit House.

The meeting was organised with an aim to hold the by-elections to Bogra-6 (Sadar) and Bogra-7 (Gabtol-Sajahanpur) constituencies in the free and fair manner.

Sohul advised the officials to keep a keen eye so that nobody can become biased during the elections. He also called on them to make people aware so that all abide by the electoral code of conduct.

Rajshahi Divisional Commissioner Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan, DIG Mokslesur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner of Bogra Humayun Kabir, District Returning Officer Syed Mohammad Musa, Rab-12 Bogra camp Deputy Director Maj Abu Naser Md Mostafa, Police Super Akram Hossain, District Adjutant Shah Ahmed Fazle Rabbi, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Sajahanpur Dewan Abdus Samad also spoke.



Employees of the Bangladesh Observer and Weekly Chitrali form a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding arrear salaries of 72 months.

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