

# Resolve water sharing issue with India multilaterally

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh must take an initiative to resolve the water sharing disputes with India at the multilateral level, speakers at a regional seminar said yesterday.

India's bilateralism with Bangladesh has not only been fruitless but also highly frustrating, particularly in regard to the sharing of water of the cross-boundary rivers, said Mohammad Asafuddin, a former secretary to the water resources ministry.

The Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD) and Bangladesh Centre for International Studies (BCIS) jointly organised the two-day regional seminar on 'Water Disputes in South Asia: Threats to Security' at the Brac Centre Inn in the city.

Participants from China, India, Nepal and Pakistan took part in it.

Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, vice-chancellor of the University of Development Alternative, said that India has been bent on building the Tipaimukh Dam on the river Barak unilaterally in defiance of the concern of not only the people of lower riparian Bangladesh but also its own people in Manipur state.

The issue of sharing the cross-boundary river water must be resolved at multilateral level under the Saarc framework, not bilaterally, he said.

Sajjadur Rasheed, a former professor of Dhaka University,

said that though India has been advocating for bilateralism, it has been going ahead with the Tipaimukh Dam project unilaterally.

Anwar Hashim, a retired ambassador, said that numerous international conventions and agreements, including the Indo-Bangla water treaty of 1996, provide the principle of equity and no-harm to each other.

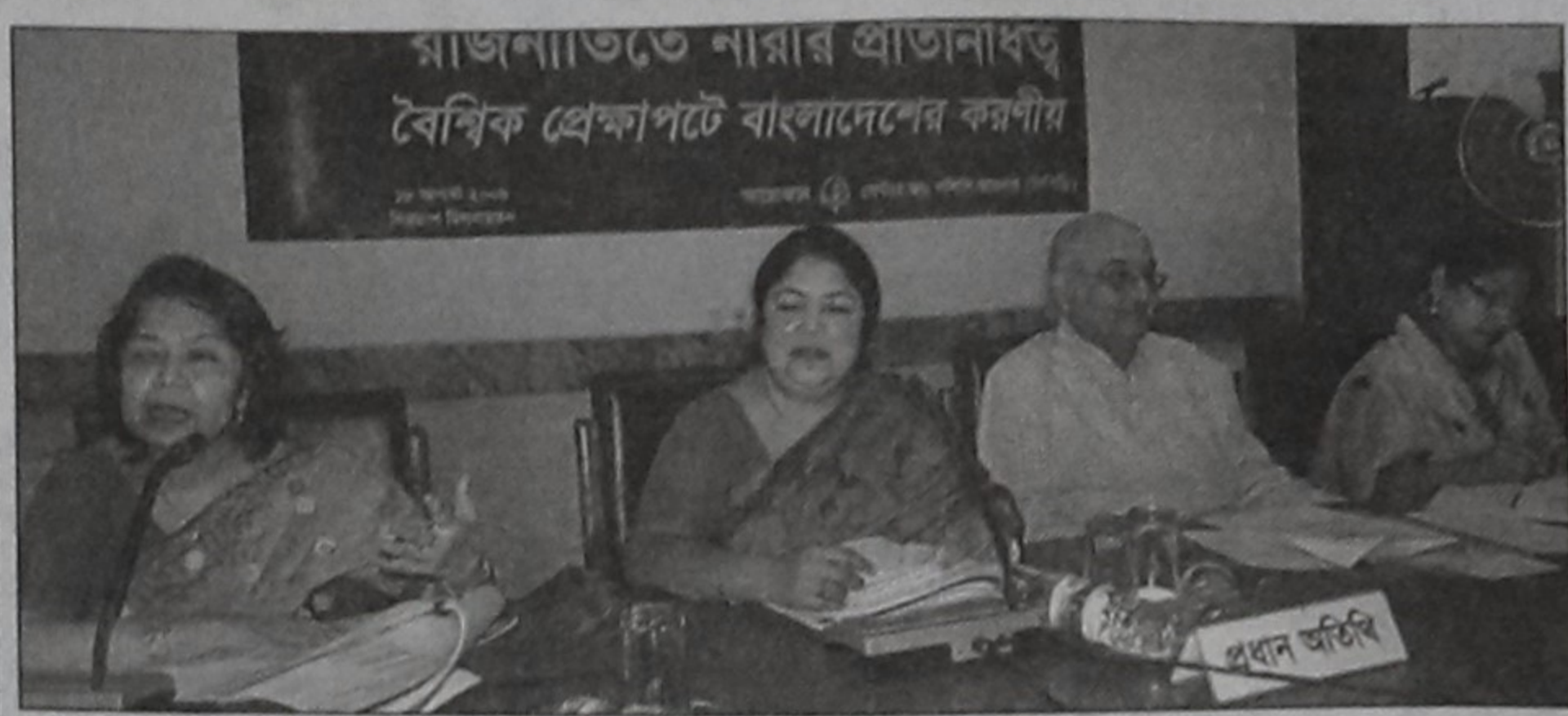
The Farakka Barrage was put on operation with a 40-day permission from Bangladesh for a trial run, but it has been operational ever since it was commissioned and opened, said Asafuddin.

Desertification has destroyed thousands of acres of arable lands in the western region of Bangladesh due to

the Farakka Barrage, he added.

India promised with the same words that it would not do any harm to Bangladesh with Farakka and Teesta Barrages, but all know all the subsequent events and consequences of those structures on the cross-boundary rivers, he said.

CSD Secretary General Mahfuz Ullah, BCIS Secretary General Sajjad Hossain, and Wang Weihua, a research fellow of Shanghai Institute of International Studies, and Vice Chancellor of Manarat University Dr MA Rob also spoke in the first session chaired by former vice chancellor of Dhaka University Prof M Maniruzzaman Miah.



Dr Rounaq Jahan of Columbia University speaks at a dialogue on 'Women's political representation: Lessons from global experiences for Bangladesh' at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On her left are State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, Prof Rehman Sobhan and Meher Afroz Chumki MP. The Centre for Policy Dialogue organised the dialogue.

## JS body for autonomy of medical college hospitals

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary subcommittee yesterday strongly recommended that the government give full autonomy to all medical college hospitals and institutes up to district level to ensure better health services.

The subcommittee on health ministry also recommended changing existing Public Procurement Regulations (PPR) exclusively in medical sector to ensure 'best buying' of medical equipment.

"It takes five or six months to disbursement of money from the health ministry to buy or repairing any medical instruments that greatly hamper to ensure health services," Dr M Amanullah, head of the subcommittee, told some reporters after

a meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Pace of medical services and its quality will not increase unless medical hospitals and institutes are given full autonomy," said Dr Amanullah, also a ruling Awami League lawmaker.

"We have recommended the government give full autonomy to medical hospitals and institutes at district level and then across the country phase by phase," said the subcommittee head, also a former state minister for health.

He further said: "We want it so that hospitals and medical institutes can independently take decisions to buy or repair their medical equipment."

Partial autonomy or only financial autonomy is not enough, they should be given full

autonomy, commented Dr Amanullah, also a cardiologist by profession.

They have to face lots of hassle while buying or repairing any medical equipment for their respective hospitals or medical institutes," he said, adding that sometimes it takes long time to get money from the respective ministry to buy any medical instruments.

Principals and heads of different medical college hospitals and institutes attended the meeting who said in favour of autonomy to ensure better health services.

They told the meeting that transparency and accountability of the respective hospitals and institutes will ensure once they are given autonomy.

About bringing change in the PPR, Dr Amanullah said in the present PPR, there is no option of mentioning brand name and country of origin of the respective medical equipment.

Besides, hospitals and institutes often bound to buy low quality and less perfect medical equipment due to obligation of awarding the lowest bidder.

"Chinese and Taiwanese firms often win the jobs due to their lowest offers in the tender. They can offer lower costs as their medical equipments are not that much of sound and perfect like that of Germany, the US or Canada. Many Chinese and Taiwanese companies manufactured medical equipment, especially for the third world countries like Bangladesh. Therefore, companies from these countries can easily offer lower prices than those companies from the US or Germany," Dr Amanullah said.

"We, therefore, recommended the government change the existing PPR especially in the medical sector to ensure buying of best equipment."

"We, the professionals know which country manufactures best medical equipment, but we cannot buy them due to obligation of existing PPR," he observed.

## British envoy, SQ Chy hold closed-door meeting

BNP leaders express surprise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British High Commissioner Stephen Evans met BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury at his Dhanmondi residence in the city yesterday, much to the 'surprise' of many in and outside the party.

The meeting lasted for about two hours from 4:30pm.

SQ Chowdhury, who does not hold any major post of the party, has recently strongly criticised former British envoy Anwar Choudhury, terming him a 'mastermind' of 1/11 political changeover.

However, neither SQ Chowdhury nor Evans made any comment to reporters on whether the issue of the remark was discussed in their closed-door meeting.

"The issue of our relations with Bangladesh, policy of the British government regarding the development of this country, climate change and the necessity of learning English for Bangladeshi people came up in the discussion," Evans told reporters after the meeting.

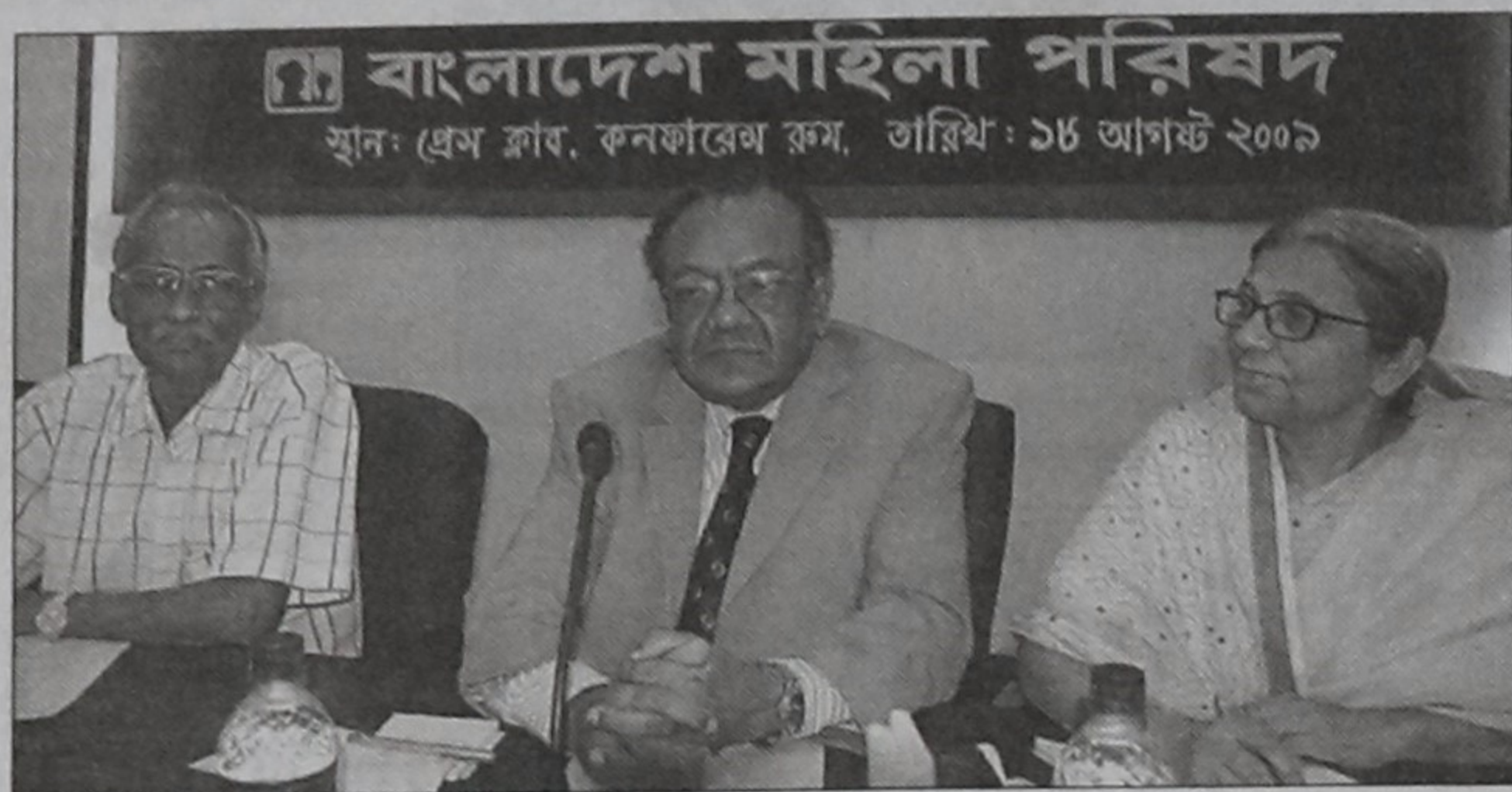
Talking to reporters, SQ Chowdhury termed the British envoy's visit to his house a positive step. "He [Evans] was not known to me before. He is a foreign diplomat and enquired about my family. I also wanted to know about his family and exchanged pleasantries."

"As he [Evans] is a foreign diplomat, I don't want to say anything more than what he said about our meeting. And I cannot make any comment which might be harmful to the interests of the government," Chowdhury said in reply to a question from a reporter.

"Apart from the climate change issue, the political atmosphere also came up in our discussion," he added.

Meanwhile, a number of BNP leaders, talking to The Daily Star, expressed surprise over the meeting between SQ Chowdhury and British envoy Evans.

They, however, said the issue of Chowdhury's recent remarks on foreign diplomats, including Anwar Choudhury, might have been the main reason for holding the meeting.



Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque speaks at a discussion on the national health policy at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Dr Sarwar Ali and on his left is Dr Fawzia Moslem.

## ACTION AGAINST RID PHARMA DEMANDED Refrain from unethical practices

Speakers urge doctors, pharmaceutical cos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday demanded strict action against the authorities of Rid Pharmaceuticals Ltd responsible for the deaths of 27 children after intake of paracetamol manufactured by the company.

The wrongdoing of just one company is damaging the reputation of the entire industry, which is thriving internationally, they added.

The speakers urged the government to introduce a quality control mechanism in the country, which is currently absent.

They called on the doctors and pharmaceutical companies to refrain from unethical practices for the promotion of brands.

## Three killed in road crashes

METRO DESK

Three people were killed in separate road accidents in Chittagong and Madaripur yesterday.

Staff correspondent in Chittagong reports: Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Chittagong yesterday.

One of the dead was identified as Manjurul Alam, 35, while other could not be identified.

Sources said Manjurul was injured when a truck knocked his motorbike from behind on Sagorika Road at Pahartali at around 1.00am.

He was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

In another accident, a bus ran over an unidentified person aged around 40 years in front of Bakolia Police Station at around 1.30am.

The critically injured man was taken to the CMCH where he succumbed to his injuries, sources said.

A correspondent in Madaripur adds: One person was killed in a road accident at Bolgram on Dhaka-Barisal under Rajoir upazila in Madaripur yesterday.

The dead was identified as Momrej, 45.

Police and locals said the accident occurred when Momrej was crossing the road, a speeding bus ran over him, leaving him dead on the spot.

The roundtable titled 'Our drug industry and drug policy' was organised by the daily Destiny at the National Press Club in the city.

M Mohibuzzaman, chief operating officer of ACI Ltd, said the recent paracetamol scandal is going to have a vast impact as Bangladesh is beginning to make its mark as a drug-exporting country in the international market.

He stressed the need for strengthening the Drug Administration which is suffering from severe manpower shortage.

With the already existing manpower crisis, the drug administration has failed to fill up the positions, which remain vacant after the retirements of many employees, he mentioned.

Dean of Pharmacy Faculty of Dhaka University Prof Md Abdur Rashid presented a keynote paper.

He said the local companies meet about 97 percent of the internal demand for medicine. There are about 838 companies in the country producing allopathic and alternative medicines. These companies export drugs to 70 countries all around the world, earning around Tk 315 crore annually. The drug industry has an annual growth rate of nine

percent.

For further development of the industry, the country needs to reduce its dependency on foreign countries for raw materials by producing them locally, he mentioned.

Nazmul Hasan MP, managing director of Beximco Pharma Ltd, said around eight percent of the medicines sold in the world is counterfeit.

He underscored the importance of introducing good manufacturing practice similar to the one being enforced by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and standards set by the World Health Organisation.

Prof Abdul Mannan MP, member of parliamentary standing committee on health; Mizanur Rahman Sinha, former state minister for health and managing director (MD) of Acme Laboratories; Abdul Muktedir, MD of Incepta Pharma; Prof AQK Talukder, adviser of Bangladesh Breastfeeding Foundation; National Prof Dr MR Khan, chairman and managing director of Central Hospital; Prof Gulshan Ara, vice principal of Medical College for Women and Hospital; and Editor of the daily Destiny Mohammad Rafiqul Amin also spoke.

## EXTORTION CASE Charge framed against former Jamaat lawmaker Shahjahan Chy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A charge was framed against former Jamaat lawmaker Shahjahan Chowdhury in a toll extortion case here yesterday.

After framing the charge, Judge of District and Sessions Judge's Court Abdul Kuddus Mia fixed October 4 for hearing.

Sources said one Jamal Uddin of Mirzakhil Kutubpara under Sonakania union of Satkania upazila filed the case against 42 people, including the former local Jamaat lawmaker, on May 14, 2007.

In the case, the plaintiff accused Shahjahan and others for realising Tk two lakh from him at Mozaddede Fashohede academy under Satkania in Chittagong on June 24, 2005.

The charge sheet of the case was submitted in December last year, accusing Shahjahan and 15 other Jamaat and Shibir men and exempting 26 people, said Public Prosecutor advocate Abul Hashem.

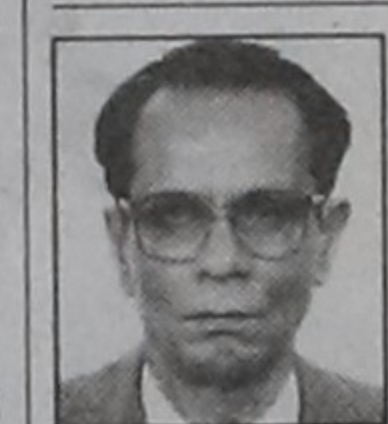
All the 16 charge-sheeted accused were present at the court yesterday, he added.

Among the defence lawyers, advocate Sadhanmoy Bhattacharya and Advocate Khatluddin were present during the charge framing.

Regarding the case, the former lawmaker said, "The case is completely false and fabricated. It was filed under threat and pressure during the caretaker government."

## Obituary

METRO DESK



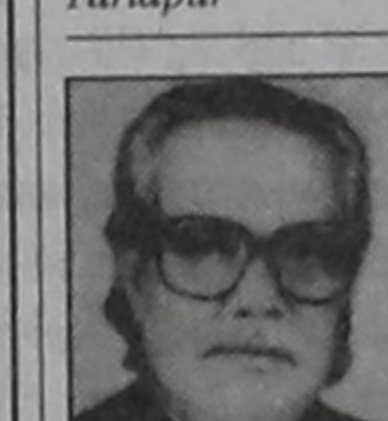
Abul Mohsin Khan, former senior executive of Padma Oil Company, passed away due to lung cancer on August 17, says a press release.

He was buried at Banani graveyard. His qukhwan will be held at Ramna Apartment Complex at Moghbazar in the city after Asr prayers on August 21.

Friends and relatives are requested to join the prayers for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

## Death anniversary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur



Today is the 10th death anniversary of Advocate Mosharraf Hossain, a Language Movement veteran, one of the organisers of the War of Liberation and former Awami League lawmaker, says a press release.

On the occasion, Faridpur district AL and his family have taken different programmes, including placing of wreaths at his grave at Alipur in the town, discussion, recitation from the holy Quran, milad mahfil and doa and distribution of foods among the destitute at Sadarpur, Charvadrason upazila town and at his Jhiltuli residence in the town.

## Lord Eric lauds role of Ahmadiyyas

METRO DESK

Lord Eric Avebury in his speech at a reception on Monday praised Ahmadiyya Muslim chapters worldwide for their efforts and contributions to establishing inter-religious harmony, peace and various humanitarian activities at different countries of the world, says a press release.

Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, Bangladesh organised the reception in honour of Lord Eric, a senior member of the House of Lords in the UK and a world-famous human rights defender, at its national headquarters at Bakshibazar in the city on Monday.

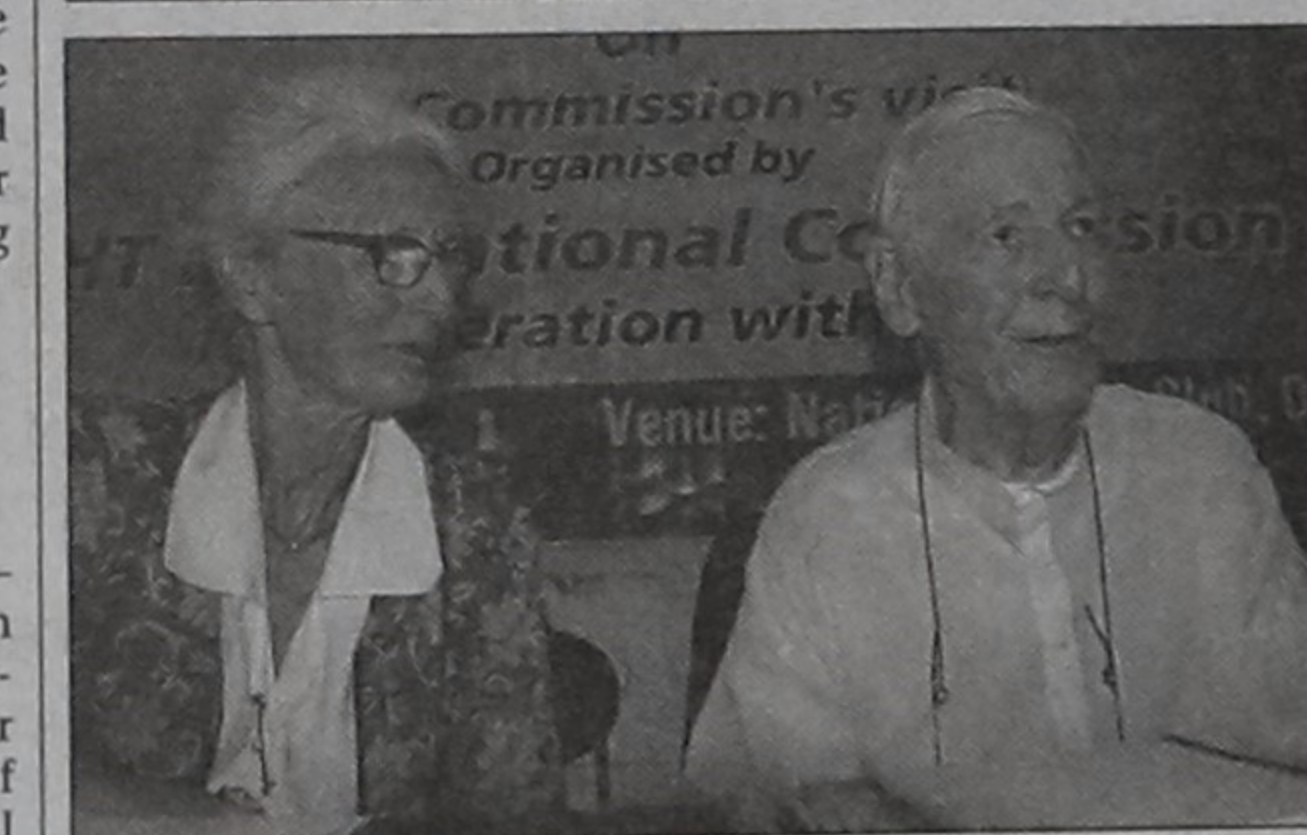
Lord Eric thanked Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, Bangladesh for hosting such a reception.

The aim of the reception was to greet Lord Eric on his being awarded the Ahmadiyya Muslim International Peace Award for Advancement of World Peace in London recently.

Lord Eric was awarded the peace prize for his commendable achievements and contribution to the advancement of world peace, especially his stand against violations of human rights and religious freedom in different countries, Bangladesh campaign for trial of war criminals where he advised the lawmakers how to proceed with this legitimate trial, and for his continuous efforts for the release of the democracy leader of Myanmar Aung Sung Suu Ki.

Presided over by National Ameer of Ahmadiyya Muslim Mobasher ur Rahman, the programme was addressed by Naib National Ameer Prof Meher Mubashsher Ali and Naib National Ameer Maj Gen (ret) AM Mahmuduzzaman read out the credentials of the guest of honour.

The reception was also attended by lawmakers, representatives of civil society, diplomatic corps and people from all walks of life.



CHT International Commission Co-Chair Lord Eric Avebury speaks at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday on the commission's recent six-day visit to three hill districts. On his right is CHT Commission Co-Chair Ida Nicolaisen. (Story on Page 16)

## CHT DISTRICT COUNCIL POLLS EC cannot take decision without govt order: CEC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said the Election Commission (EC) cannot take any decision about the district council elections of Chittagong Hill Tracts without a government order.

"Constitutional amendment is necessary for preparing separate voter lists for the council elections as mentioned in the CHT Peace Accord. It is a political issue," he said.

He was speaking at a discussion on selection of site for proposed server stations for all upazilas in Rangamati district. The discussion was held at the conference room of the deputy commissioner.

The CEC said the EC is ready to hold the election anytime

after the government takes decision to this end.

Saying that the EC had placed a proposal before the immediate past caretaker government in this regard, he expressed hope that the present government will consider the issue as it is working on many significant matters of CHT affairs.

Our correspondent in Bandarban adds: CEC Shamsul Huda yesterday said separate voter list for a special area of Bangladesh is against the constitution.

He said this while replying to a question from the journalists.

"The election commission is a constitutional institution, which is our main guideline. There is no scope for the EC to go beyond the constitution," said the CEC.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Seminar on HIV/AIDS held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A seminar on 'Role of youth to stop HIV/AIDS' was held at Stamford University auditorium in the city yesterday.

Dr Fazle Rabbi Foundation organised the seminar.

Speakers at the seminar stressed the need to control and reduce the threat of HIV/AIDS in the country. They also stressed creating more awareness especially in district and upazila level.

Former adviser to caretaker government Maj Gen (ret) ASM Matiar Rahman underscored the need for collaboration of government and non-government organisations to ensure that the disease does not spread as an epidemic.

### Fix minimum wage at Tk 7,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of Samajtantrik Sramik Front yesterday demanded to fix minimum wage at Tk 7,000 for all workers and rights to form trade unions in Export Processing Zones.

They said these at a rally at Muktangan in the city to mark the organisation's 'demand week'.

The leaders said though price of essentials and livelihood costs are skyrocketing, the authorities have been denying the workers from their rightful wages.

### Bhasani varsity opens Aug 23

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Maulana Bhasani University of Science and Technology will resume its classes on August 23, says a press release.

Vice Chancellor of the university Prof Dr M Nurul Islam at a view exchange meeting on the campus on Monday sought cooperation from all concerned to keep the academic atmosphere of the campus normal.

Following a clash between the students and the locals at Santosh Bazar, the university authorities closed the campus for an indefinite period.

### Varsity officers' fed takes over

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The new committee of Bangladesh Inter-University Officers' Federation took charge on August 13, says a press release.

The new committee was formed on July 4 with Dr ATM Abdul Hannan, president of Jahangirnagar University Officers' Association, as its president and Syed Akbar Ali, general secretary of Dhaka University Officers' Association, as its secretary general.



## Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at most places over all the six divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over the country during the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

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

The sun sets in the capital at 7:29pm today and rises at 6:35am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Khulna and Jessore, and lowest 24.4 degrees Celsius at Rangpur.

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	33.3	26.8	82	97
Chittagong	30.6	25.8	86	83
Rajshahi	30.6	26.4	92	95
Khulna	34.6	27.5	80	89
Barisal	32.8	25.2	84	87
Sylhet	31.5	24.9	87	96
Cox's Bazar	32.5	25.2	93	89