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Govt to encourage single-child families

Draft population policy targets to introduce it by 2015 to check rising population

ALPHA ARZU

A draft population policy advocates introducing "single-child families" at national level by 2015 to avoid a serious socio-economic debacle due to the country's ever-increasing population.

The draft policy, now in the final stage with the health and family welfare ministry, strongly suggests involvement of at least 20 other ministries for its implementation.

To speed up family planning activities in the country, the government has taken the initiative to formulate the policy focusing on one child per family instead of current average of 2.7, said Health and Family Welfare Minister AFM Ruhul Haque.

He added, "Overpopulation is a burden for the country. If we fail to achieve our target to reduce the present birth rate, it will soon be difficult to meet the basic demands of people. We may even fail to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by its targeted period of 2015."

The Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP) under the health ministry prepared the draft "Population Policy 2009" to popularise the slogan "no more than two children, one is best".

According to the draft policy, the parents who have only one child would be provided with due preference in all state facilities including government assistance during admission to educational institutions. They would also be provided with financial grants and given priority

during issuance of VGF/VGD cards.

DGFP Director General Abdul Quayyum said the country at present has a population of 14.88 crore which increases by 18-20 lakh each year.

The growing population would create a huge pressure on food security, education, health, housing, sewerage system, power and energy and other sectors, he observed.

"So, we need to address the issue properly by upgrading the population policy 2004 and ensuring its proper implementation," Quayyum added.

The policy will also encourage every fertile woman to give birth to only one girl child during her total reproduction age.

As the people in the country take several

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Graduates and gold medallists yesterday at the Dhaka University central playground take part in a dress rehearsal of the university's 45th convocation to be held today. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: SHAFIQUL ALAM

CLIMATE-CHANGE AID

Poor nations to get 7.2b euros from EU

AFP, Brussels

European Union nations have agreed to give 7.2 billion euros to help developing nations tackle climate change, the Swedish EU presidency announced yesterday.

"The EU total is equal to 2.4 billion euros per year," over the next three years, with voluntary pledges coming in from all 27 EU member states, Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt said after a two-day EU summit in Brussels.

The "fast start" money is Europe's contribution to helping the developing world to adapt to global warming over the next three years and to encourage the ongoing UN climate change conference in Copenhagen to do more.

"It was also possible through the night to get contributions from all 27 member states," and the European commission, Reinfeldt said, as the voluntary pledges topped the six billion euros target set by the Swedish EU presidency.

EU commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso said he hoped other nations would now match the EU's ambitions.

British premier Gordon Brown and French President Nicolas Sarkozy also demanded that leaders in Copenhagen agree a treaty that would be "legally binding within six months," and issued a new target for a global reduction in deforestation which should reach 25 percent by 2015.

Brown raised recession-mired Britain's contribution to 1.2 billion pounds (1.3 billion euros) with Sarkozy all but matching the figure, meaning that between them Britain and France pledged 2.5 billion euros.

Downing Street said Britain would boost its contribution further "if others are equally ambitious in Copenhagen."

The British PM said a final Copenhagen deal must be consistent with a Group of 20 leaders' commitment to maintain global warming to a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

NEGOTIATIONS AT FINAL STAGE

Coalitions yet to solve all disputes

PINAKI ROY, from Copenhagen

Despite the UNFCCC secretary general terming the ongoing negotiations of coalitions satisfactory, different coalitions could not reach a common stance with only a day remaining before high-level segment of climate talks begin in Copenhagen.

However, the chairs of two working groups, Long-term Cooperative Action Plan (LCA) and Amendment Working Group on Kyoto Protocol AWG-KP, have accepted draft texts yesterday evening.

The draft texts will be discussed next week in the plenary session before making the final agreement.

Different coalitions are still fighting with each other and there are disputes within themselves.

The negotiations now depend on whether the world leaders will agree on the temperature rise of 1.5 degrees or two degrees Celsius. Depending on the rise of temperature, long- and short-term emission-cut goals will be set.

"Apart from that the meeting of adaptation fund is going on where the developed nations are pledging peanuts and the affected countries and collations are demanding more," said one of the key negotiators of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, other deltaic countries, LDCs, small islanders

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Bangladesh showcases adaptation experiences

PINAKI ROY from Copenhagen

Vulnerable communities of Bangladesh are already adapting with the changing climate and the world can learn to acclimatise to the impacts of climate change from them and disseminate the knowledge.

Speakers said this during a presentation at a session on "Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change: Approaches, Practices and Early Learnings" arranged by

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Notice

Today's issue includes an 8-page special supplement on "Global Warming: Endangered Planet".

Convicted war criminals can now join BNP

Party's new charter also allows them to take leadership, but takes tough stance against graft

SHAKHAWAT LITON and RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

War criminals convicted under Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) Order, 1972 can now have membership or leadership of BNP's committees at any level since the party has deleted the barring provision from its constitution.

The war criminals of 1971 will also be eligible for getting BNP nomination to contest parliamentary elections.

The national council of the party on Tuesday approved the BNP national standing committee's proposal for abolishing the provision.

The deleted provision said an individual convicted under the president order no-8 of 1972, which is Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) Order, will be disqualified from being a member of the party's national council, national executive and standing

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Rich nations must give compensation

Says Matia on climate change impact

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday said the government has a firm position over realising compensation from the developed nations responsible for climate change already affecting Bangladesh and low-lying countries.

"They (developed countries) must compensate adequately for the damage caused by the climate change. It can't be that in a global village we will be floating on water and they will be safe," said the minister.

She was addressing a seminar on "Climate change, sea level rise and facing the challenge: the Netherlands and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

BDR jawan, cook die

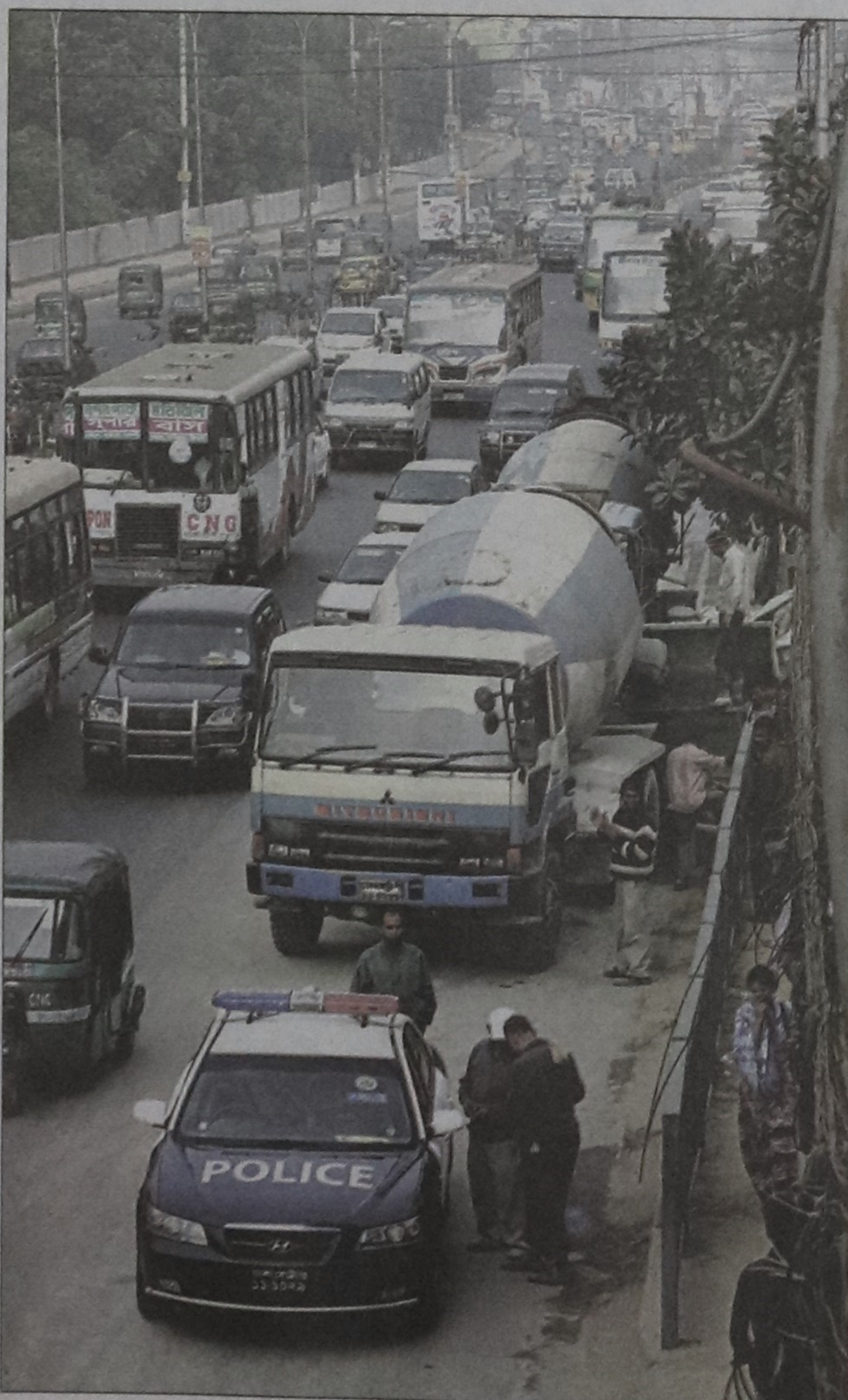
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) man died yesterday at the prison cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) raising the death toll to 54 in separate incidents since the mutiny on February 25-26.

The deceased, Rezaul Karim, 45, a havildar of Rifles Battalion-44 at Pikhana, was an accused in the BDR mutiny case. He was undergoing treatment at the BSMMU under jail custody since November 24 and died in the morning.

His family members alleged that tortures during remand period caused his

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



This cement mixer, rented for the construction of a roadside building, is occupying a segment of Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday. Police officials even failed to remove it as the building owner claimed to have DCC permission.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Waterbuses on circular waterway by June

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will introduce waterbuses to ply the waterway around the capital from June next year with a view to making the route effective and reducing traffic congestion in the city.

Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan made the remark as the chief guest yesterday while addressing an inaugural function of a new bus service launched by Kanak Paribahan.

He said the plan for running waterbuses has already been approved and initially the service will be provided on Sadarghat-Ashulia route.

The government is going to start cleaning up the bed of River Buriganga manually

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Bangladesh exit with a whimper

India face Maldives in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Bangladesh put on a listless show as they bowed out of the Bangabandhu sixth SAFF Championship with a 0-1 loss to a youthful India at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Indian captain Sushil Kumar Singh scored the only goal of the game courtesy of a free-kick, but the Indians dominated from the off and could have had at least two more goals had it not been for the interventions of Bangladesh captain and skipper Aminul Haque.

A packed house at the Big Bowl was left dejected as India proved to be better than the hosts at every department. The loss was particularly hard to take as Bangladesh were tipped heavily to win against the young Indian side.

However they played a thoroughly frustrating game, lacking penetration and purpose and failed to threaten the Indian goal throughout the game. In-form strikers Zahid Hasan Emily and Enamul Haque were virtual spectators as the midfield put on another no-show.

India had made four changes to their side as they missed their two influential midfielders Jagpreet Singh and Manish Mathania to injury.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

BSF shoots 4 Bangladeshis

STAR REPORT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot and wounded four Bangladeshi nationals in two separate incidents in Lalmonirhat and Chapainawabganj districts early yesterday.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent reports, BSF shot and critically injured a Bangladeshi farmer near the main pillar no 901 at Doikhawa border of Hatibandha upazila in Lalmonirhat yesterday morning.

The injured was identified as Tazez Uddin, 34, son of Al-Amin Miah of Char Gotamari village of the border area.

The Doikhawa BDR camp commander Subedar Sahidur Rahman said, BSF men of Baro Marich camp under

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Bimstec signs deal to fight terrorism

Agrees to conclude FTA

UNB, Dhaka

The seven-member Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec) yesterday signed a convention to combat terrorism and agreed to conclude a free trade agreement (FTA) soon.

Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Thailand and Nepal signed the 'Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Trans-National Organised Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking' at the 12th Bimstec ministerial meeting in Myanmar's new capital Nay Pyi Taw.

Inaugurating the meet, Myanmar Prime Minister Thein Sein stressed on cooperation in

combating terrorism and trans-national organised crime.

With the ongoing Copenhagen climate conference in mind, the ministers agreed to include climate change as an important area of cooperation and work together in mitigation and adaptation efforts in the region.

"We are confident that the inclusion of this new area of cooperation will contribute significantly to the joint efforts on the mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the Bimstec region," said a joint statement, according to IANS.

The seven countries also decided to sign pacts on establishment of Bimstec Energy

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

PM flies to Copenhagen on Dec 14

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves here on December 14 to lead the Bangladesh delegation at the crucial UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

On December 16, she will attend the Joint High-Level Segment of Conference of the Parties (COP) and Conference Meeting of the Parties (CMP) at Bella Centre in the Danish capital.

The same day, she will attend a community reception in the evening.

The PM will join the second day's Joint High-Level

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