

CHILDREN'S CLIMATE FORUM

Vow to fight climate change

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children from 44 countries, including Bangladesh, who attended the Children's Climate Forum in Copenhagen pledged to educate and empower themselves in order to combat the climate change in collaboration with the adults.

At the seven-day forum that ended on December 4, some 164 children declared their commitment to bring changes to personal lifestyle to help fight the climate change.

Demanding action, they announced that the time for talk is over. They decided not to sit back and watch anymore but to engage themselves actively to adapt to the climate change and hold heads of state and government accountable for their commitments in the future.

Unicef and the City of Copenhagen jointly organised the climate forum.

Four Bangladeshi children -- Miti Annesha of Rajshahi, Tariqul Islam of Bhola, Fatema Akhter of Noakhali and Arif Arman of Satkhira -- took part in the climate forum.

At a media briefing at the Unicef conference room in the city, they reiterated the points of declarations of the children's climate summit.

Describing his experiences, team leader Tariqul said, "Our purpose was to make our voices heard at the summit, as children are the most vulnerable groups facing the effects of the climate change all around the world."

He said, "We become the victims of diseases. Supply of drinking water system breaks down whenever there is flood. Education system faces the worst blow as schools are often

destroyed or used as cyclone shelters."

He added that natural disasters also create social unrest and lead to displacement of children and breakdown of families. Different forms of violence against children, including trafficking, also increase at that time, he pointed out.

Annesha said, "Because we are the worst victims and we are the future leaders, we should have a say in what is being done to save the planet."

The children who participated in the event were between the age of 14 and 17. The Bangladeshi delegates were selected through an essay writing competition on climate change among the child reporters of Shishu Prakash, a publication of Mass-Line Media Centre (MMC), sponsored by Unicef.

At the children's climate summit, the young delegates prepared a

declaration along with recommendations. The document was presented to the President of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15) Connie Hedegaard.

Children also shared ideas among themselves about potential solutions and took part in life skill trainings.

The children's climate forum recommended that the industrialised countries should spend more on adaptation and technology transfer, promote environment-friendly fuel, cities should be well planned and sustainable, safety standards, regulations and emergency protocols be established to prepare for natural disasters, better water conservation be practised, and education on climate change, its effect and related subjects should be included in school curriculum.



Parents and guardians wait outside Motijheel Ideal School and College in the city yesterday as their children appear at the admission tests for class one.

Govt firm to safeguard spirit of secularism

Says Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the people of Bangladesh are religious but not fanatics.

She also vowed to safeguard the people's spirit of non-communalism.

"The government is strongly committed to guaranteeing all rights and dignity of the people of every religion and caste and creed," she said when a delegation of Bangladesh Christian Association met her at her official residence Jamuna in the city on the occasion of Christmas.

Bishop Paul Shishir Sarker moderated the programme, which was addressed by State Minister for Cultural Affairs and President of the Christian Association Promod Mankin and Archbishop Paulinus Costa. The function began with recitation from the Bible and a special prayer. Later, the prime minister cut a Christmas cake.

Speaking on the occasion, Hasina greeted all the Christian people across the globe and wished them peace and prosperity.

She noted that December is



PHOTO: PID

A delegation of Bangladesh Christian Association presents a bouquet to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Jamuna in the city yesterday on the occasion of Christmas.

the month of victory and the Christmas Day is also observed in this month. "For all of us, December is a very important month," she said.

"The present government is strongly committed to maintaining peace and stability in every sphere of life," she said.

The prime minister said that during the 1971 liberation war, people of all faiths fought together to defeat the occupation forces.

She also criticised the previous BNP-Jamaat alliance govern-

ment. "The way the people of the minority communities were tortured by the BNP-Jamaat rulers is beyond expression. Uncountable girls from the minority communities were raped just because their family members 'cast their votes' in favour of Boat," she said.

"The 1/11 political change-over was the result of limitless oppression and corruption by the ministers, MPs, leaders and activists of the BNP-Jamaat alliance," Hasina added.

Stop illegal logging in CHT: JS body

BSS, Dhaka

The parliamentary standing committee on planning ministry yesterday asked the concerned authorities to take necessary measures for dredging Kaptai Lake and stopping illegal logging in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area (CHT).

At a meeting, the committee members also called for taking proper steps to promote tourism industry in the CHT area for the greater interest of national economy.

Committee Chairman Col (retd) Oli Ahmed Bir Bikram presided over the meeting, held at the conference room of the Rangamati Hill District Development Board, a parliamentary secretariat press release said.

The meeting also discussed various projects being implemented by the planning ministry and development programmes of UNDP.

RECKLESS DRIVING
Ershad's son released

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The police released Arman Ershad, son of former president HM Ershad, yesterday a day after he was detained on charges of reckless driving.

The police detained Arman, 22, as his car hit and injured three people while he was driving recklessly at Banani in the city around 3:00pm on Tuesday. Officer-in-charge (OC) Kamal Uddin of Gulshan Police Station said.

A team of patrol police with the help of locals chased and intercepted his car, as it got stuck in a traffic jam at Banani intersection. The police then took him to the police station along with the car.

The OC said they made repeated attempts to contact Arman's family members, but to no avail.

He also said the police released Arman after a caretaker of Ershad's residence, Jahangir Hossain, came to the police station yesterday and signed an undertaking that Arman would not drive recklessly in future.

Result of DU 'Gha' unit published

DU CORRESPONDENT

The result of the admission test under 'Gha' unit at Dhaka University (DU) for the academic session 2009-10 was published temporally yesterday.

A total of 7,031 students came out successful out of 29,430 candidates, says a DU press release.

The result will be available on noticeboard at main gate of university's arts building. It will also be available on the DU website: 'www.univdhaka.edu'.

Interview of the successful examinees of science group from the merit -- 01 to 1,200 -- will begin on January 4 while interview of the successful candidates of business studies group from the merit list -- 1 to 400 -- and of humanities group from the merit list -- 1 to 200 -- will be held on January 7 and 8 respectively.

The students who want their answer scripts to be re-examined have been asked to submit their applications to the dean of social science faculty with a fee of Tk 500 within December 26-31.

BDR MUTINY TRIAL

Army to be deployed in special court areas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alongside police, members of the armed forces division will be deployed at the places where special courts of the Bangladesh Rifles have been formed to hold trial of February 25-26 mutiny, for ensuring security during the hearing.

This decision has been taken following a proposal of the BDR headquarters last week, home ministry officials said.

One platoon of soldiers would be deployed at 27 places where the special courts are supposed to hold trial of the mutiny in the coming days. The deployment will be made under the Operation Rebel Hunt, they added.

"We have decided to deploy adequate number of police and army personnel to ensure security at the places where hearing of the special courts will take place," Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder told The Daily Star

yesterday.

Earlier the government approved deployment of one platoon of army under 'in aid of civil government' before mutiny trial in Satkhira on December 7 and 8. The 41 Rifles Battalion of BDR demanded the deployment.

Asked if there is any security threat, the home secretary said police provide security during hearing under a normal court. The mutiny trial is taking place in some designated areas. So, both police and army will be deployed at those courts to ensure security, he added.

Meanwhile, a meeting was held at the armed forces division on December 14 to ensure proper deployment of the forces and their cooperation. It was decided that the BDR sectors concerned will communicate with the nearest army formation and take measures to ensure security during hearing of the trial.

As per the decision of the

meeting, one platoon force will remain standby after date of a hearing of a special court is set. Force deployment will depend on the number of accused and location of the court, according to the sources.

"The home ministry will bear the expenditure of the deployment, including daily allowance and contingency and fuel cost, under the Operation Rebel Hunt," said a home ministry official wishing anonymity.

He said 'rules of engagement' of the deployment will be like those of the Operation Rebel Hunt.

Hearing of the cases in connection with the mutiny has started in Rangamati, Feni and Satkhira districts.

Earlier the government had formed six special courts to hold trial of the mutiny in BDR Pikhana headquarters and its upits in other districts. Director General of BDR Major General Md Mainul Islam heads the courts.

Reshuffle in admin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a reshuffle in the administration, the government yesterday transferred six acting and additional secretaries and gave new postings in the administration.

Badrul Alam Tarafdar, acting secretary of primary and mass education ministry, has been made acting chairman of Land Appellate Board while Abu Alam Mohammad Shahid Khan, additional secretary of primary and mass education ministry, has been made as the acting secretary of the same ministry, said an official handout.

Firoz Kibria, acting secretary of liberation war ministry, has been made an officer on special duty (OSD) and was attached to the establishment ministry while Uzzal Bikash Dutta, additional secretary of education ministry, replaced him.

Mujibar Rahman Hawlader, officer on special duty (OSD) of establishment ministry, has been made chairman of Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation (SPARSSO), the handout added.

Begum Dilruba, OSD of establishment ministry, has been appointed chairman of Bangladesh Jute Corporation (BJC).

Communications snapped as rail engine derailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Train communications on one of the two tracks at Khilgaon Rail Gate in the city remained suspended for over three hours yesterday when a shuttle train engine derailed after it had skidded off the track in the Kamalapur Railway Station boundary.

Sub-Inspector Abdul Hai of Kamalapur Government Railway Police Station said the engine reached the footpath ramming through several shops and stalls around 4:00pm.

There was no report of casualties. Several hundreds of curious people thronged the scene to witness the accident, halting the movement of transports on Khilgaon Road for about one hour.

The railway communications resumed at around 7:00pm after the shuttle engine was removed.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 19th death anniversary of Farukuzzaman Faruk, former vice-president of Bangladesh Chhatra Maitree, Chittagong University unit, says a press release.

On the occasion, Chhatra Maitree will hold different programmes, including rally and discussion.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Sharif Mohammad Anwar Hossain, a geriatric consultant, passed away at his residence in England on Monday at the age of 75, says a press release.

He was buried at Sheffield in England the same day. He left behind his wife, one son, one daughter and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

Relatives and friends are requested to pray for salvation of his departed soul. Dr Sharif was born in village Pachuria of Lohagara in Narail.

Tk 5cr foreign currencies seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs surveillance personnel seized foreign currencies totalling about Tk five crore at Zia International Airport (ZIA) and arrested a Dubai-bound passenger in this connection yesterday.

The arrestee, Mazharul Islam, who hails from Chittagong, is a shop owner in Dubai. Customs Department

Assistant Commissioner Mohammad Salauddin Ripon told The Daily Star that Mazharul was arrested at around 11:30am when he was crossing the Civil Aviation border to board his flight.

Customs officials searched his luggage before they were being kept in the container of the flight, he said.

They found foreign currencies, including Euro, Saudi rials, US dollars and dirhams,

and Bangladeshi taka totalling Tk 4.72 crore in the luggage.

Replying to a question, Assistant Commissioner Salauddin said they suspect that Mazharul might have been the carrier of the currencies and that there is an organised gang behind the smuggling.

Mazharul, however, claimed that the bag containing the currencies does not belong to him.

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable

Unnayan Shamannay and Concern Worldwide will jointly organise a roundtable on safety net and education in island chars of northwest Bangladesh. Venue: Biam auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of 'Smriti Bagane Shesh Bikler Meye', an autobiographical book by Prof Rawshan Ara Rahman, will be held. Venue: WVA auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

View exchange meet

Nagorik Sanghati organises a view exchange meeting on fish sanctuaries and its management. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:30pm.

Medical camp

Diabetic Association of Bangladesh organises a three-day 'Camp for Diabetic Children'. Venue: Birdem auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

Workshop

Gender and PRSP Group (GPG) organises a workshop on the 2nd PRSP and local government. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 10:30am.

Book launch

A book titled 'The autobiography of a civil servant' will be launched. Venue: University of Asia Pacific auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

Discussion

Coalition of Local NGOs, Bangladesh (CLNB) will hold a discussion in memory of the Bangladeshi peacekeepers who were killed in a plane crash in Benin. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:30am.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Consultant Nephrologists Dr Lye Wai Choong and Consultant Urologist Dr Sam Peh Oon Hui of Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore preside over a health talk titled 'Prevention of kidney diseases and treatment options' in the city recently. Meno Liew, manager, corporate marketing, and Zahid Khan, director of Parkway Health, Bangladesh office, were present.



Cold wave may continue

UNB, Dhaka

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

Prevailing cold wave over the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Rajshahi Ishwardi and Srimongal may continue, Met Office said. Night temperature may fall slightly over the country during the period.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:18pm today and rises at 7:39am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 28.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 8.5 degrees Celsius at Chuadanga.

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	25.2	15.8	67	53
Chittagong	25.5	14.6	69	60
Rajshahi	23.6	09.4	82	81
Khulna	25.2	12.0	85	70
Barisal	26.4	12.6	84	86
Sylhet	27.3	13.2	66	61
Cox's Bazar	28.4	15.2	67	67