

# Expedite research to boost agri production: PM

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the agricultural scientists to expedite research to boost agricultural production aiming at ensuring food security keeping in mind the country's huge population.

"We have to expedite our research so that we can produce more food in our limited farm lands as Bangladesh is losing agricultural lands due to population boom and natural disaster every year," she said.

Hasina was addressing the inaugural session of a two-day 4th National Convention of Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh on the institution premises in the city yesterday.

She said Bangladesh would be able to feed its people if it can produce adequate foods in the limited farmland. In this context, she asked the scientists to innovate more salinity, draughts and flood tolerant varieties to boost rice production.

"Not only that we have to increase our production so that we can export our rice after meeting our domestic demands," she added.

She said her government would provide all out support including offering various incentives to the researchers to conduct research in innovating new varieties of rice that could help increase production of food.

Mentioning success of her previous government (1996-2001) in agriculture sector, Hasina said her government in 98-99 fiscal has created a new record in the country's food production by turning Bangladesh into a food sufficient country.

"We had been able to ensure food security in our 1996-2001 tenure due to your sincere efforts," she said and thanked the agriculturists and farmers in this regard. She said the main objective of her government is to strengthen rural economy for the overall development of the country.

Referring to global climate change, she

asked all concerned including the agriculturists to play due role in protecting environment and bio-diversity.

In this context, she stressed reducing use of chemical fertiliser in farmland and increase use of organic fertiliser to protect fertility of croplands. Besides, she called upon all to take environment-friendly measures in pest management.

Laying emphasis on providing adequate protein to the people, she asked all concerned to increase fish cultivation in the rivers, ponds and open water bodies to meet requirement of protein.

She said her government is implementing capital and maintenance dredging to restore navigability in the major rivers that would help boost food production in the country.

Seven agriculturists were awarded for their outstanding contribution to the agriculture sector.

Later, Hasina inaugurated the two-day convention by hoisting national flag and releasing pigeons and balloons.

# Youths vow to fight corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is not enough just to talk against corruption and dreaming of a poverty-free country, rather the youths of today must wage a united social movement and work in their own capacities to see their dream come true.

That was the electrifying determination expressed by students at a youth festival yesterday.

They debated, sang, danced and performed in drama and fashion show, but the central point of all was how they could energise the spirit of the youths, saying it was the youths who played significant roles in all the stages of the country's liberation.

Anukshan, an organisation of HSC Batch Community 2009, organised the programme 'My Bangladesh: Well Governed Bangladesh' in association with Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) at the



Advocate Sultana Kamal and writer Selina Hossain launch the souvenir of Anukshan, an organisation of HSC Batch Community 2009, at a youth festival at the Institution of Engineers in the city yesterday. On their left is TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman.

Institution of Engineers, Students from 15 colleges and universities attended the festival.

"We, who are today's youths, will be the leaders of tomorrow. So, if we can take a

resolution that we will not do or allow corruption, we can build a nation free of it," said Nazmus Sakib, a student of Dhaka University.

"Time has changed. We also want a change," he said.

Asif Azad Jisan, a BBA student of Brac University, said they don't want to be like the so-called politicians who make promises only to cheat people.

Speaking as the chief guest, Advocate Sultana Kamal of Ain O Salish Kendra said youths can only take the country forward.

"The youths' voting against the war criminals, corruption and poverty in the last general elections prove that they want a country, which is well governed."

Novelist Selina Hossain, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman, popular TV host Abdun Noor Tusher and Igloo Brand Manager Raju Chowdhury also spoke.



Rajuk demolishes illegal structures at Purba Hajipara on DIT Road in the city yesterday.

# PM'S INDIA VISIT, GENERAL ELECTION BNP leaders differ with US envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leaders yesterday differed with the US ambassador in Dhaka on certain issues like the last general election and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to India.

Participating in a dialogue, they also drew the envoy's attention to human rights violation and politicisation in the country, and killing of Bangladesh nationals in the bordering areas by Indian Border Security Force.

Group 2009 (G9), a forum of pro-BNP professionals, organised the dialogue between BNP leaders and Ambassador James F Moriarty on 'Changing Realities and Bangladesh US Relations' at a city hotel. It was conducted by Sayeeful Islam, president of the G9.

In his speech, Moriarty said his country was pleased to see the transition taking place peacefully following the elections in December 2008. The polls were widely seen as the most free and fair in Bangladesh's history, he mentioned.

In response to the envoy's remarks, BNP standing committee member Brig Gen (ret) ASM Hannan Shah said it is

true that the last election was held peacefully and smoothly but even some ruling party leaders admitted that it was engineered. "It was a stage-managed election based on a blueprint."

Hannan went on, "But we accepted the election result as we wanted to see an elected government. Bangladesh suffered a lot under autocratic governments which ruled the country several times."

Moriarty said there is no viable alternative to democracy in Bangladesh. The US recognises that democracy consists of more than election alone but it is also important to strengthen the institutions that allow for better governance, he added.

A vibrant democracy requires the participation of all elements of a society, and there is an important role to be played by the opposition parties, the envoy observed.

BNP Vice President Shamser Mobin Chowdhury said election alone is not enough to strengthen democracy. Tender manipulations and politicisation of admission to educational institutions have become big problems in the country, he said.

Moriarty said, "My government welcomed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to India and the desire manifest both in Dhaka and New Delhi to address longstanding issues between the two countries. At the same time, there is no doubt that US and Bangladesh relations will be determined by our two countries."

"I can say without any hesitations that the trends you are witnessing provide far more opportunities than dangers for Bangladesh and its citizens."

Prof Abu Ahmed said there is a lot of apprehension in Bangladesh about the outcome of the prime minister's visit since it had no positive outcome regarding Tipaimukh dam and water-sharing of common rivers including the Teesta.

BNP Vice President Hafizuddin Ahmed said US remains silent on frequent killings of Bangladesh nationals by the Indian BSE. "US is vocal against human rights violation but such violation and political repression are happening here regularly."

Others who spoke included Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan, Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, Prof Mahubullah and Shafiq Rehman.

## Fire in Japan Garden City

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire broke out at a flat of a multi-storied building at the Japan Garden City, a shopping-cum-residential complex, in the capital last night.

Witnesses said the fire started at about 10:00pm on the 10th floor of Building No. 6, causing huge smoke and creating panic among the residents of the complex.

Several hundred residents of the buildings rushed out of the complex in panic.

However, firefighters brought the fire under control after struggling for over one hour.

The police said the fire might have been caused by an electrical short-circuit.

However, no casualty was reported as of filing of this report at 1:00am today.

## RU VIOLENCE 'Launch combing operations to nab Shibir cadres'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday ordered the law enforcement agencies to launch combing operations at all the places that are considered strongholds of Jamaat-Shibir across the country.

State Minister for Home Affairs Shamsul Haque Tuku said this to reporters after a special meeting with heads of the law enforcement agencies at the ministry.

The meeting was convened in the backdrop of Tuesday's violence at the Rajshahi University and killing of Faruk Hossain, a final year student of the university's mathematics department. Faruk was an activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League, the student front of ruling Awami League.

A combing operation has already started at Rajshahi University and its adjacent villages to nab the Shibir cadres involved in the killing.

The university and the villages around the campus are known as strongholds of Jamaat-Shibir.

Jamaat-Shibir men are

involved in acts of cruelty. Police will conduct operation in different universities, colleges or educational institutions where the anti-liberation forces have a strong base in a bid to stop the trend of cutting tendons and criminal activities, Tuku said.

Asked about the demand from various quarters to ban Jamaat-Shibir, the state minister said that the demand has become universal.

The meeting discussed the heinous activities of Shibir in RU. It also discussed the possible motives behind the planned attack, meeting sources said.

However, Tuku avoided replying when he was asked whether the intelligence agencies failed again if the attack was a planned one.

Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder, Inspector General of Police Nur Muhammad, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haq and chiefs of intelligence agencies were present at the meeting presided over by Home Minister Sahara Khatun.

## Elderly woman burnt to death in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 75-year-old woman was burnt to death in a fire originated from a gas oven at East Shakhura village under Boalkhali upzila in Chittagong district yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Fenu Bala Shil, wife of late Nani Gopal Shil.

Sources said the fire broke out at the thatched house of Fenu Bala at around 12:00 midnight and spread fast engulfing another adjoining house.

Renu was in sleep and met the tragic end.

A fire-fighting unit from Patiya Fire Station rushed to the spot and doused the fire. The extent of damage was estimated at Tk 3 lakh, said the sources.

An unnatural death case was filed with the Boalkhali Police Station and the body was sent to Chittagong Medical College Hospital Morgue for autopsy.

## Jamaat demands release of Aatur, Shibir men

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday demanded unconditional release of its leader Aatur Rahman and the Chhatra Shibir activists arrested in connection with Monday night's killing on the Rajshahi University campus.

"We had earlier demanded the government form a judicial probe body to look into all the student killings, not only the recent RU one, to restore academic atmosphere. But, the government is maintaining a lopsided policy and reluctant about our demand," Jamaat Secretary General Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid told a press conference in the city.

Criticising State Minister for Home Affairs Shamsul Haque Tuku for his statement on the RU incident, Mujahid said the arrest of Aatur followed Tuku's remarks that 'Jamaat-Shibir would be eliminated from Rajshahi by demolishing their dens.'

He sought Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's intervention to stop repression on Jamaat-Shibir activists.

## Attack on Mahmudur Rahman

UNB, Dhaka

Acting Editor of the daily Amar Desh Mahmudur Rahman came under attack again by 'cadres of the ruling party' at Satrastra crossing in the city's Tejgaon area yesterday.

"I came under attack at about 7:45pm when I was returning home from office in my car," he told the news agency over phone after the incident.

However, Mahmudur Rahman escaped the attack unhurt.

Rahman said he suddenly heard a big bang and found his car's rear window damaged. "They smashed the window with a hammer, as they tried to hit me," he added.

He blamed the 'cadres' of the ruling party for the attack.

He also said it was the third attack on him.

Meanwhile, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia expressed concern over the attack on the acting editor of the Amar Desh.

In a statement, she condemned the attack and demanded punishment to the attackers.

## KILLING OF DCC COUNCILLOR Link of close aides suspected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hired killers gunned down Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) councillor Ahammad Hossain on Tuesday night and some of his close aides having a link to the killing went into hiding, police said.

Meanwhile, a half-day strike called by BNP at the city's Ward No. 70 protesting the killing was observed peacefully yesterday.

Deputy Commissioner Anwar Hossain of Lalbagh zone told The Daily Star, "Though there is no arrest, we have already targeted four persons who were close aides to Hossain. All the suspects went into hiding."

"We are hopeful of unfolding the mystery behind the killing by arresting the criminals involved," he said, adding: "Hired killers carried out the operation, but Hossain's close associates might have their involvement in the murder."

A local source said during the killing, both the bodyguard and secretary of

## US embassy closed on Feb 14, 21

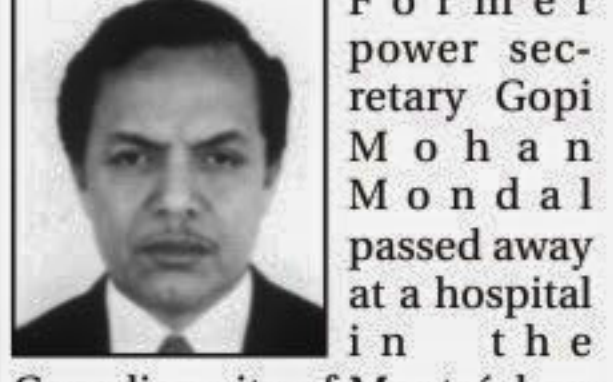
METRO DESK

The American Embassy, including the consular section and the American Centre with the Archer K Blood American Centre Library and the Student Advising Centre, will remain closed on February 14 in observance of President George Washington's birthday, an American national holiday.

The US mission will also remain closed on February 21 on the occasion of the Language Ministry's Day and International Mother Language Day, says an US embassy press release.

## Obituary

UNB, Dhaka



Former power secretary Gopi Mondal passed away at a hospital in the Canadian city of Montreal on Tuesday at the age of 69.

Mondal left behind his wife, two sons, a daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death. He had long been suffering from lung-related diseases.

He served various important posts in different division and ministry, including field administration, establishment, ERD and commerce ministry.

## Md Rezaul Kabir

METRO DESK



Md Rezaul Kabir passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Labaid Hospital in the city on February 7 at the age of 54, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa and milad mahfil will be held at his residence at House No # 29, Road No#6 at Dhanmondi in the city after Asr prayers today.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the milad and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

## CPA receives oily waste collection vessel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Western Marine Shipyard Limited yesterday handed over an oily waste collection vessel to the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

The vessel Bay Cleaner-2 would prevent spillage of wasted oil into the sea from ships, tankers and other vessels, sources said.

Shipping Minister Md Shahjahan Khan was the chief guest at the handover ceremony held at the shipyard at Kolagaon under Patiya upzila on the other part of the river Karnaphuli yesterday afternoon.

Nur-E-Alam Chowdhury MP, chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Shipping Ministry, was special guest at the ceremony.

The minister said building of specialised vessels at local shipyard is a leap forward to country's increasing ship-building industry.

He assured of all sorts of support from the government to develop the sector.

Western Marine Chairman Saiful Islam sought cooperation from the government to help the sector overcome its existing limitations.

### WEATHER

## Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Light fog may occur over the river basins of the country during late night till morning, Met Office said.

It said slight rise in night temperature is expected over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:52pm today and rises at 6:33am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 32.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 13.0 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	30.7	17.8	55	31
Chittagong	31.8	17.5	75	40
Rajshahi	29.7	14.2	92	49
Khulna	30.5	17.0	85	48
Barisal	30.3	16.2	96	69
Sylhet	31.7	16.4	61	32
Cox's Bazar	32.5	17.5	61	56

### TODAY

- Math Olympiad**  
The National Math Festival and 8th Bangladesh Math Olympiad will begin. Venue: St Joseph Higher Secondary School. Time: 9:00am.
- Publication ceremony**  
The publication ceremony of 'The Bangladesh Poet of Impropriety' by noted singer Magsoodul Haque will be held. Venue: British Council auditorium. Time: 5:00pm.
- Reunion**  
Reunion of the graduates of Khulna University and conference on climate justice will be held. Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. Time: 10:00am.
- Book launch**  
Two books titled 'Nano' by Dr Farsim Mannan Mohammadi and 'Sukumar Britty' by Farhana Mannan will be launched. Venue: Seminar room, civil engineering department, Buet. Time: 4:30pm.

## Use some climate fund for poverty alleviation

Says food minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday said the climate change fund should not be used only in carrying out campaign, awareness building and research.

Some of the fund should be used to eradicate poverty as 40 percent people of Bangladesh are living below poverty line, he added.

Millions of poor people are directly or indirectly affected by climate change here, he said, adding that if they can upgrade their lives, it will be easier for them to fight the climate change impacts.

The minister said this as a chief guest at the concluding session of a policy dialogue on 'Climate change science' organised by Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Study (BCAS).

"Farmers yielded Aman rice less than usual this year also

what ultimately affected the rice market in the country."

Dr A Atiq Rahman, executive director of BCAS, highlighted the summary of the dialogue.

Stressing the need for taking policy on science-based researches, he said good policy cannot be taken based on bad science.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) authors Prof Braja Gopal of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India, Prof Manirul Kadir Mirza of Toronto University and Manmahan Kapshe of School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal, India, also spoke.

Dr Gopal said Bangladesh is facing the dire consequences of climate change from two sides -- from the coastal area as the sea level is rising and from the Himalayas as glaciers are melting.