

## Uphold secularism

President urges all

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman said Secularism is a must for building prosperous Bangladesh. Talking to the journalists yesterday during a reception hosted for the members of the Hindu community at Bangabhaban on the occasion of Durga Puja, the president said, "Secularism doesn't mean absence of religion."

Describing Bangladesh as a secular country, Zillur Rahman said people of all religions and creeds could perform their respective rituals in Bangladesh peacefully with due festive mood and in a brotherly atmosphere.

He mentioned that Durga Puja is one of the most ancient festivals of the country.

"Members of the Hindu community have celebrated the Durga Puja across the country in a very peaceful and cheerful manner this year which is a success of the present government."

The president hoped that people of all

religions, including Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians, would work together for building the Sonar Bangla dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

During the reception, President Zillur Rahman welcomed the guests at Bangabhaban and exchanged greetings with them.

Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen and diplomats, including High Commissioners of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka to Bangladesh, attended the reception.

Distinguished personalities, including principal of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission Swami Aksarananda Moharaj and major general (retd) CR Dutta, judges, editors, academics, freedom fighters, senior journalists, lawyers, doctors, businessmen, artistes, high civil and military officials and retired government officials also attended the programme.



Glasses of a business establishment at Dholaiarpur in the city have been damaged as a safety tank inside it exploded yesterday.

## Regional conference begins in city Oct 19

UNB, Dhaka

A three-day regional conference will be held in the city on October 19-21 for taking preparations prior to Mexico Climate Conference in December to address health related problems caused by climate change.

Eleven countries under South-East Asia Regional Office of the World Health Organisation (SEARO-WHO) including Bangladesh will take part in the conference.

The regional conference on climate change will be held at the Sheraton.

Sheraton, Bangladesh government and SEARO-WHO will jointly organise the conference.

Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haq will inaugurate the conference as the chief guest while PM's Adviser on Health and Social welfare Prof Dr Mudassar Ali and State Minister for Environment and Forests Dr Hasan Mahmud will attend the session as the special guest.

The conference will work out health hazards caused by climate change in the region and a set of recommendations will be placed at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 16) in Mexico conference.

Sri Lankan Health Minister Maithripala, Nepali Health and Population Minister Umakant Chaudhary, Maldives Health Minister Dr Aminath Jameel, Maldives Forests Minister Mohamed Aslam and SEARO-WHO Director Samle Plianbangchang are expected to attend the conference.

Several scientific and technical papers will be presented during the conference about the impact of the climate change on infectious and non-infectious diseases and identification of health hazards due to climate change.

## Drive to recover city canals from today

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) and Dhaka District Administration will jointly launch an eviction drive today to recover Ramchandrapur canal in the city's Mohammadpur area.

Wasa officials say the eviction will start at 10:00am and continue until October 20.

During the drive, all illegal structures will be removed from the canal while rock blocks will be placed to protect the canal's border.

They said the drive is being carried out as a part of the decision taken by a joint task force of the shipping ministry and the LGRD ministry.

A joint meeting of the two ministries on September 29 formed the task force and took a decision to recover a total of 13 canals across the city and preserve those in their original state.

Of the 13, four canals were initially selected to be recovered which includes Rayerbazar canal, Ramchandrapur canal and Hazaribagh canal.

A similar drive was conducted on October 4 to recover the Rayerbazar canal from illegal occupants.

After the eviction, rock blocks were placed to protect the bordering area of the canal, a senior Wasa official told the news agency.

He informed that the Wasa chairman, its acting managing director and other officials of the Dhaka district administration would be present during today's eviction drive.

## 5 assaulted at DU hall

DU CORRESPONDENT

Some resident students of Salimullah Muslim Hall of Dhaka University beat up four outsiders and a student of the hall yesterday for unruly behaviour inside the dormitory compound.

The injured were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Provost of the hall Prof GM Chowdhury told The Daily Star that some outsiders locked in an altercation with a group of students of the hall when the outsiders were creating a noise nuisance in the early hours.

Later, the resident students woke up and beat the outsiders and a student of the hall at around 4:00am. The outsiders were identified as Sakib, Reaz, Shameem, Imran and Ziaur Rahman.

Ziaur, resident of the hall, is a second year student of banking department of DU.

Hall sources said the outsiders came to the hall with Ziaur in a drunken state and were creating commotion inside the dormitory.

## Plan to extend irrigation facilities on 19,685 hectares

UNB, Dhaka

The government has taken an initiative to extend irrigation facilities to some 19,685 hectares of land through modern technology to have some additional harvest of 49,213 tons of food grains after 2013.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) approved the greater Dhaka district irrigation area development project (2nd phase) at a cost of Tk 99 crore on October 12.

Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) will implement the project funded by the government.

The project also aims to create employment opportunities and alleviate poverty through imparting training to some 3,045 owners of irrigation machine, managers, drivers, field men, farmers and officials, said sources at the planning ministry.

The project has been undertaken to extend irrigation facilities and bringing more arable land under cultivation aim-

ing to increase the income of small, medium and marginal farmers as well as to implement poverty alleviation programme.

The project area possesses some 4,80,404 hectares of arable land in 35 upazilas under six districts where 3,170 hectares of land earlier came under the irrigation facilities in the first phase of the project.

However, some 2,34,068 hectares (49%) of land of the project have already been brought under the irrigation facilities mostly because of self provided irrigation as well as the facilities provided by the BADC.

The project will provide extended irrigation facilities to some 19,685 hectares (4.01%) of land out of the remaining 2,46,336 hectares of land (51%), which remained out of the irrigation facilities.

The project will also maintain the consistency of the greater Dhaka district irrigation area (first phase) and Shaheed Mayeed Uddin Gazipur-Narsingdi coordinated area development project.

The sources said the Development Project Proposal (DPP) of the project has been restructured following recommendations of the pre-Ecne Meeting (PEC) on June 6 this year.

The project activities include proper use of surface water and deep water through modern technology and developing the irrigation infrastructures.

The project activities also include supply of 70 necessary smart card pre-paid meters, its set up and commissioning, procurement of 35 5-cusec low-lift pump, establishment of 40 electric lines for 5-cusec low-lift pump, construction of 50 surface irrigation lines for 5-cusec low-lift pumps, procurement of diesel engine, pump and other materials for 2-cusec low-lift pump, construction of new lines for 2-cusec deep tube well, procurement of 30 submersible pumps, 400 kilometer canal re-excavation, construction of 8 RCC sluice gates, 100 hydraulic structures and 2,000 meter RCC overhead channel.

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