



Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sheikh Hasina attends her office at Armed Forces Division (AFD) in Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

PM attends office at AFD

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sheikh Hasina attended her office at Armed Forces Division (AFD), Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

On her arrival at Armed Forces Division, the prime minister was received by Principal Staff Officer of AFD Lt. General Abdul Wadud. Chief of Army Staff General Md Mubeen, Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral ZU Ahmed and Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and apprised her on different activities of respective services.

Among others, Defence Adviser to Prime Minister Major General (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, Press Secretary to Prime Minister Abul Kalam Azad and senior military officers were present.

Shah Alam acting law commission chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Shah Alam, member of Bangladesh Law Commission, has been given charges of chairman of the commission, as Justice MA Rashid resigned from the office on October 19.

The ministry of law yesterday issued a gazette notification stating that Shah Alam will discharge as chairman of the law commission until a new chairman is appointed.

Call to ensure food security in S Asia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday underscored the need for toning up regional cooperation to enhance food production and ensure food security in South Asia.

"Most of the countries of this region are trailing far behind the required amount, forcing millions of people suffer from malnutrition. Over 36 percent of the total malnourished population of the globe live in this region. That is why regional cooperation is very essential to increase food production here," he said.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at a seminar titled "Expectation of Hungry People and SARRC Food Bank" at the Jatiya Press Club, just the day before the 4th meeting of board of governors of the SARRC Food Bank in Dhaka.

Praising at the dearth of investment in agriculture sector, the minister said it is impossible to boost food production without ample investment in this sector. "For the last few years, a total of 22 billion metric tonnes (MT) of food was produced globally. This amount can't be increased due to lack of investment."

He informed that the Indian government has recently given a green signal to export 3 lakh MT of rice and 2 lakh MT of wheat to Bangladesh.

President of parliamentary standing committee on agriculture ministry, Shawkat Momen Shahjahan told the seminar that the government has taken a number of initiatives to encourage farmers to increase food produc-

tion. This would help the country to achieve self-sufficiency in food by using domestic resources, he added.

Former agriculture minister and BNP standing committee member MK Anwar said the country loses one percent of total farmlands every year to industrialisation and urbanisation. To produce more food and fulfil the entire demand, it is imperative to provide maximum facilities to the farmers, observed the BNP leader.

Director of food department Elahi Dad Khan said his department distributes around 25 lakh

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MT of food every year among the poor. Eighty percent of it is distributed through the government's safety net programmes.

Presenting the keynote paper, Dr Sohel Iqbal, research fellow of EquityBD, made some recommendations to address food crisis.

The recommendations include formation of an international court relating to rights to food, functioning of SARRC Food Bank, conducting more research on agriculture, protecting land fertility and development of agriculture technology.

EquityBD, Agriculture Reporters' Forum (ARF), Bangladesh Krishok Federation, South Asian Alliance for Poverty Eradication, Media Foundation for Trade and Development and Coastal Development Partnership jointly hosted the event.

EquityBD chief moderator Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, coordinator Mustafa Kamal Akanda, ARF president Ashraf Ali were present, among others, at the seminar.

Appoint more judges in Appellate Divn SCBA urges president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday demanded of the president to appoint judges in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court from the judges of High Court Division on the basis of seniority.

The bar made the demand at a general meeting at its South Hall yesterday afternoon with its President Khandker Mahbub Hossain in the chair.

Six posts of the Appellate Division judges are now vacant and two of five judges are on leave

The meeting expressed annoyance, saying that only three judges of the Appellate Division out of 11 are now sitting for judicial functions, and so, a big number of cases have remained pending at this court.

Six posts of the Appellate Division judges are now vacant, and two of five remaining judges of this division are now on leave,

sources said. The SCBA adopted a resolution urging the chief justice to take necessary steps in this regard.

The lawyers' body demanded of the chief justice to take steps so that the copies of the High Court judgements in the cases are released quickly after their announcements.

It also requested the chief justice to reconstitute the benches in the High Court with senior judges for hearing and disposing of the important cases including writ petitions.

SCBA Secretary Badruddoza Badal and its Assistant Secretary AZM Morshed Al Mamun, Momtajuddin Ahmed Mehedi, Azher Ullah Bhuiyan, and ABM Waliur Rahman, among others, spoke at the occasion.

Effective public transport systems demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday demanded government initiatives to make the public transport system more effective and passengers-friendly to reduce the city's traffic congestion.

Around 95 percent of city-dwellers commute on public transports, on rickshaws and on foot. So it is a must to make the public transport comfortable to ease traffic jam, they said.

The speakers placed the demand at the press conference on "Initiatives of the communication ministry to reduce traffic jam: Our views" organised by Poribesh Bachao Andolan (POBA) at its office, said a press release.

They viewed that without imposing restriction on private cars, it is impossible to ease traffic congestion in the city.

Critical of the government's decision that people who will not use foot overbridge have to face a day's imprisonment, the speakers said pedestrians will be seemed criminal for this action, although there is not initiative to control reckless driving.

POBA Chairman Abu Naser Khan, urban planner Maruf Rahman, and policy analyst Syeed Mahbulul Alam, among others, were present at the function.

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