



Norwegian environment minister due in city today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Norwegian Minister for Environment and International Development Erik Solheim will arrive in Dhaka on a two-day visit to Bangladesh today.

Solheim will be a special guest at the inauguration of Grameenphone House, Grameenphone's new headquarters.

Telenor, which is partly owned by the Norwegian government, is the majority owner of Grameenphone.

He will inaugurate the Nordic Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which will bring together Danish, Icelandic, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish businesses in Bangladesh.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Ministry of Shipping, the minister will be paying a visit to ship-breaking yard in Chittagong, said a press release.

The minister will also go to Char Kukri Mukri to visit a project site of the UNDP administered Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP), which is supported by the Norwegian government.

The Norwegian minister will meet with the Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Commerce Minister Muhammad Faruk Khan and Foreign Secretary Mohamed Mijarul Quayes.

Worker dies as ceiling fan falls on him

A CORRESPONDENT

One worker was killed in a scrap selling shop as a ceiling fan fell on him at Madambibir Hat of Shitakundo upazila in Chittagong yesterday.

The victim was identified as Belal.

The ceiling fan, procured from a ship, was hanged from the roof of the shop with rope.

The accident occurred as the rope torn and the fan fell on Belal while he was working in the shop.

Belal was sent to Chittagong Medical College Hospital in a critical condition where doctors declared him dead at about 12:30pm.

President lauds army

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Army Staff General M Abdul Mubeen, Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral Z U Ahmed and on behalf of Chief of Air Staff, Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Admin) Air Vice Marshal Muhammad Enamul Bari, called on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban yesterday on the occasion of Armed Forces Day.

During the meeting, the president wished continued success, happiness and bright future of all members of the Armed Forces. The chiefs of the three services informed the president about various programmes taken by the Army, Navy and Air Forces across the country to observe the Armed Forces Day in a befitting manner.

Zillur appreciated the role of all members of the Armed Forces in nation-building activities along side their regular call of duties.

Secretary of the President's Office Mohammad Shafiqul Alam, Military Secretary to the President Maj Gen Abul Kalam Md Humayun Kabir and President's Press Secretary AKM Nesar Uddin Bhuiyan were present during the meeting.

Earlier, president paid his deep homage to the members of the Armed Forces, who made supreme sacrifice in the War of Liberation by placing wreaths at the 'Shikha Anirban' (the Eternal Flame) at the Dhaka Cantonment.



Chief of Army Staff General M Abdul Mubeen, Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral Z U Ahmed and acting Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Muhammad Enamul Bari call on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban, right, and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Armed Forces Division in Dhaka Cantonment, left, yesterday on the occasion of Armed Forces Day. (Related stories on Pages 1 and 16)



Police service under judiciary demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday demanded the government set up a separate police service and investigation cell under the judiciary for quick and fair investigation into the pending criminal cases.

SCBA Secretary Bodruddoza Badal placed the demand at a press conference at the South Hall of the association in the afternoon.

Separate police service and investigation cell should be formed under the judiciary in the interest of quick investigation into all pending criminal cases including the case of cocktail blast at the chief justice's official residence, and to bring the real culprits to book, he said.

Bodruddoza condemned the incident of cocktail blast and expressed deep concern over it.

He termed the incident a threat to the judiciary, litigants and lawyers, and demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits involved in the misdeed.

The SCBA secretary urged all concerned, including ministers and lawyers, not to make any comment about the cocktail blast until the investigation into the incident is completed.

Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum President Rafiqul Islam Mian and Secretary General Mahbub Uddin Khokon, its leaders Zainul Abedin, Golam Mohammad Chowdhury Alal, Fahima Nasrin and SCBA's Assistant Secretary AZM Moshleh Al Mamun (Liton), among others, were present at the conference.

'Pollution causing death of city trees'

UNB, Dhaka

Industrial pollutants, including sulphur dioxide and other poisonous gases emitted especially from brick kilns around the cities, are polluting the air, causing death of trees and serious diseases among city dwellers.

An accomplished agriculturist said the government should take immediate action against such industries causing pollution.

He was reacting over a recently published newspaper report which said nearly 500 trees have died in the Bashundhara residential area, 20 around the Baridhara Lake, 25 near the Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University and ten more at the Farmgate Park.

Centre for Global Environmental Culture (CGEC) Director Dr Mohammed Ataur Rahman said thousands of raintrees and acacias trees died in many areas of the city but nobody raised any doubts over their deaths.

He mentioned that in 2003-2005, many big raintrees died in Chittagong (Polo-ground and CRB, etc). Some nageshwar and acacia trees died in Cantonment area. Thousands of sissoo trees died after 1988 floods throughout Bangladesh especially along roads by floodplains.

Rahman noted that raintrees were planted in the late nineteenth century in Mymensingh, Gouripur, Shambhuganj and tea gardens but they are still

surviving. The huge raintree of Amail Tea Estate (about 35 ft in girth) and some in Satgaon are growing well.

He said indiscriminate plantations without respecting the habit and habitats or natural laws are causing huge damage to wealth each year.

He questioned on why people are being advised to plant Sissoo plants along the roadside where they can suffer from water logging, as they cannot tolerate water logging even for short durations.

More than 1,000 thuja plants were planted under the flyover bridge at Mohakhali though they highly demand sunlight. But now they are again replaced with Jhiri bot tees (Ficus), he mentioned.

"Why did they not consider the habit and habitat of thuja plants? Was it not a waste of public money?"

Dr Rahman said even rural farmers know that coconut trees need to be spaced with a minimum of 20 feet between each other but along the highway near Cantonment and Nikunja, the spacing of the coconut trees is only 8-10 feet.

Are the coconut plants ornamental, for wind-breaks or fruiting? If ornamental, there is nothing to say but for windbreaks and fruiting, the spacing needs to be 20 to 30 feet, Rahman added.

Poor villagers have also been misguided by some agencies into planting mahogany, raintree, acacia, rajkorai (Albizia richardiana) and eucalyptus trees

in the rural homes to get short-term benefits. This practice is leaving traditionally growing eco-friendly trees like mango, jackfruit, blackberry, kadam, palmyra palm, areca palm, coconut, ebony and others, he added.

He said acacia and eucalyptus grow fast but their dead leaves are not easily decomposable and do not allow undergrowth. The large canopy of raintree shades huge areas and disturbs the growth of other homestead crops. Sometimes this leads to quarrelling among neighbours, he said.

Certainly the timber value of mahogany trees is superior to jackfruit trees but the latter provides fruits that can provide food and energy to our hungry people, he said.

Indiscriminate plantation of some exotic trees caused huge damage during the strong winds of cyclones like Sidr and Aila. Uprooted and broken trees damaged houses and constructions and disrupted power transmission lines, he added.

Rahman said plantations without considering the plants' habit and habitat is a punishable act and waste of public money. We must consider our environment first and it should be of national interest, he said.

Rahman was stern in saying that so-called environmentalists should respect the habit, habitats and laws of the nature. They should learn from nature before claiming themselves to be naturalists or environmentalists, he said.

China keen to increase trade CPC leader tells president

UNB, Dhaka

China is keen to increase its cooperation in different sectors including agriculture technology, trade and commerce, ICT and communication to help boost the development of Bangladesh.

The interest was conveyed when a Chinese delegation led by Lu Hao, member of the central committee of the Communist Party of China

(CPC), called on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban yesterday.

During the meeting, Zillur sought more Chinese cooperation in the country's socio-economic development.

Describing China as one of the great friends of Bangladesh, he recalled that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman visited China first after the country's independence.

Mentioning that China is one of the development partners, he said Bangladesh always supports 'One-China' policy in conducting its foreign relations.

He emphasised high level visits between the two countries to further increase the bilateral cooperation.

Describing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as a sincere friend of the Chinese people, Lu Hao, also secretary of Gansu Provincial Committee of CPC, expressed gratitude to Zillur for showing support to the 'One-China' policy. He expressed the hope that cooperation between the two countries would further strengthen in the future, opening up a new horizon in bilateral relations.

LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam and Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Zhang Xianyi were present.



Members of a Chinese delegation pose for photograph with President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

BANK OFFICIAL MURDER Five on 4-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted a four-day remand against each of five arrestees in connection with the killing of a retired bank official on November 17 in the city's North Basabo.

The arrestees are Rusia Begum alias Mafia Churni, 55, an alleged drug peddler, Roni, Babu, Sabbir Ahmed and Farid Ahmed.

Third Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Ali Hussain passed the order after Sub-Inspector Ezaz Shafi produced them before it with a seven-day remand prayer for each.

In the forwarding report, Shafi, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, said the arrestees need to be remanded to find out the whereabouts of the others involved in the killing and to reveal the motive behind it as they were directly involved with the incident.

Defence lawyers submitted petitions seeking bails for the arrestees that, however, were rejected by the court.

Mahfuzul Haque Khan, 73, was beaten to death by a group of unruly youths in front of his house as he protested their assembling opposite the house.

Japanese funding for Padma bridge discussed

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Ahead of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's four-day visit to Japan from November 28, four important members of the House of Representatives of Japan yesterday met with foreign minister and discussed Japanese funding for the Padma Bridge.

Official sources said the Japanese delegation also discussed various aspects of bilateral relations, including trade and investment and Japanese cooperation in Padma Bridge, Dhaka-Chittagong highway expansion and railway expansion projects.

Welcoming the delegation, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni referred to the upcoming visit of the prime minister to Japan.

She appreciated that Bangladesh and Japan would celebrate in 2012 the 40th year of diplomatic relations, said a foreign ministry press release.

Dipu Moni reiterated the need for more interactions between political parties, government officials and peoples of both the countries for cherishing the spirit of close bond- age.

She also requested them to invest more in infrastructure sector and pursue the Japanese business people in this regard.

The visiting members were Akira Ishii, Kazumi, Yoshiko and Koichi. Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Tamotsu Shinotsuka and senior officials from both the sides were present.

The House of Representatives has 480 members elected for four-year terms. Of them, 180 are elected from 11 multi-member constituencies by a party-list system of proportional representation and 300 are elected from single-member constituencies. A total of 241 seats are required for majority.

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