

President hosts Christmas reception

BSS, Dhaka
President Zillur Rahman hosted a reception to the Christian community at Bangabhaban here on the occasion of Christmas yesterday.

Archbishop Paulinus Costa, ambassadors and representatives from different foreign missions including the US, the UK, Italy, Vatican City, France, Russia, the Philippines, and South Korea, distinguished persons of Christian community, religious leaders, and professionals joined the reception.

The president welcomed the guests and exchanged greetings with them saying that Bangladesh is a secular country where people of all religions and beliefs have been performing their respective religious rites peacefully.

A decorated Christmas tree was set up while a group of young singers performed the Christmas carol at the reception. A Santa Clause was roaming and distributing chocolates among the children.

Later, President Zillur Rahman cut a big Christmas cake with the members of the Christian community.

AL mouthpiece 'Uttaran' publication today

BSS, Dhaka

The publication ceremony of official mouthpiece of Bangladesh Awami League (AL), 'Uttaran,' will be held at Ganobhaban in the city this evening.

AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will attend the function as the chief guest, party sources told the news agency last night.



Burnt remains of mosquito coils and sprays are seen at the warehouse of Good Knight Mosquito Coil and Spray in the city's Khilkhet area that caught fire on Friday night. Six workers died and five others were critically injured in the blaze. (Story on Page 1)

Govt set to modernise armed forces: Minister

BSS, Dhaka

Information and Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad yesterday said the government has undertaken to update the armed forces division of the country.

"The incumbent government has taken some programmes to modernise the armed forces including raising facilities for the retired armed forces officials so they can contribute to different peace keeping programmes home and abroad," he said.

Azad was speaking as the chief guest at a memorial meeting at Raowa Club in the city. Hridom cultural society organised the function on the 7th death anniversary of 15 armed forces officials killed in a plane crash in Benin.

The minister said the government has already included information communication and technology (ICT) in the education curriculum of Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA).

Azad also praised the members of army, navy, air force, BDR (now BGB), police for their contribution during any natural calamities and the global peace keeping missions. "And that is why the whole nation is very proud of them."

The information ministry is also ready to cooperate to broadcast the contributions

especially by the armed forces through the state-run media including Bangladesh Television (BTV).

Azad recalled the country's achieving the Dag Hammarskjöld medal. "Bangladesh won the award for the contribution in the UN peace keeping mission between 2002 and 2007."

Maj (ret'd) Amin Ahmed Afsari and founder of Hridom cultural society delivered the welcome speech at the meeting presided over by Raowa Chairman Maj Gen (ret'd) Jamil D Ahsan.

Dr NI Khan, former divisional head of the World Bank; Gen Jahir, force commander at the UN mission; Brig Gen Sharif Aziz, Brig Gen Shahjalal, Dr Fazley Selim, brother of martyred intellectual, Dr Fazley Rabbi; managing director of the state-run Bibna Bima Corporation; and civil and military officials, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Foni Bhusan Chowdhury, former Inspector General of Police (IGP); Maj Gen Zia Ahmed, chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC); Shawkat Nasrin, widow of martyred Lt Col M Shamsul Arefeen; Shabnam Mustari, renowned singer and winner of Ekushey Padak; and Shamsun Nahar Afsari, director of Hridom cultural society; attended the function.

'One home one homestead' scheme implementation soon

Says Nanak

BSS, Dhaka

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Jahangir Kabir Nanak yesterday asked the concerned officials to complete the training arranged for the beneficiaries of the 'one home one homestead' project and provide them with necessary resources to implement the programme as quick as possible.

Everybody has to work sincerely to implement the Vision 2021, he said in a meeting organised for reviewing the progress and ascertain the future course of action of the project at the Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) conference room in the city.

The meeting was told that so far Tk 65 crore were disbursed among the beneficiaries in 9,640 villages till November this year. At the same time, a deposit of Tk one crore has been created with the contribution of Tk

10 from each beneficiary.

Secretary of the rural development and cooperative divisions Gullam M Quddus, joint secretary AH Abdullah and project director Prashanta Kumar Roy were present while director general of BRDB Humayun Khaled was in the chair.

Deputy directors of BRDB from 64 districts and concerned senior officials attended the meeting.

Jahangir Kabir Nanak said the present government is relentlessly making its efforts for welfare of the countrymen. He said the officials should work with utmost sincerity and be careful so that the beneficiaries of the project do not face any difficulty in getting government support.

The government allocated Tk 137 crore for 'one home one homestead' project for 2010-2011 fiscal, out of which Tk 65 crore were disbursed so far till November.

Japanese science team visits BAS

BSS, Dhaka

A delegation of Science Council of Japan (SCJ) visited Bangladesh Academy of Sciences (BAS) at the National Museum of Science and Technology Bhaban in the city yesterday.

The five-member team headed by SCJ Vice President Prof Hidcaki Karaki met BAS council members and discussed matters relating to possible collaborations and mutual interests between the two organisations.

During the delegation, BAS President Prof M Shamsur Ali recalled the friendly relations and mutual benefits including exchange of experience of both the organisations.

During the meeting, BAS Secretary Prof Naiyuum Chowdhury highlighted the ongoing activities of the academy to the members of the visiting SCJ team.

Shafique terms TIB report 'incorrect'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday branded Transparency International Bangladesh's (TIB) recent report "confusing" and "incorrect".

He said the people may lose confidence in the judiciary due to such reports prepared without proper data and information.

TIB in its latest survey found the judiciary most corrupt sector. The survey findings were disclosed on Thursday.

The law minister said it is true some people in the judiciary are corrupt, who solicit money from people providing them with wrong advices.

The image of the judiciary is besmirched for those people, he said, adding that it will not reflect the democratic country if the whole judiciary were questioned for those few people.

Shafique slated and doubted the TIB's survey report, which he says has tarnished the judiciary's image, and said it should be examined if it is objective or not.

As the chief guest, the law minister was addressing the first session of the new executive committee to Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) and award giving ceremony for the best reports at DRU in the city.

Shafique also said the trial of identified war criminals will start in next January-February, which the nation is eagerly awaiting.

There is no political intention behind the trial and the accused can appeal to the higher courts, he added.

Mahbubul reinstated in BTV after court order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mahbubul Alam has been appointed as deputy director general (DDG) of state-owned Bangladesh Television (BTV) after court ordered to reinstate him with the same dignity.

He joined the BTV on December 22, says a press release.

Mahbubul was sent to forced retirement in March, 2007. He sought justice to the administrative tribunal, which termed the retirement illegal and issued notification saying his retirement was beyond jurisdiction.

Officials of BTV greeted Mahbubul's arrival. He is noted for producing and writing many dramas and directing programmes.

Power crisis to end by 2015: Muhith

BSS, Sylhet

Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith yesterday said power crisis will be resolved by 2015 with improved generation and supply.

He said the country will have 2000MW more electricity by 2011 which will ease significantly the persisting shortfall.

Muhith was in Sylhet to formally begin electricity supply to 350 households in Khadimnagar union of the district.

Only 45 percent households now have access to national grid with the majority remaining out of the formal electricity supply system, he said.

But the government, according to Muhith, is keen to improve the power sector, which the

previous government left in sorry state.

The minister said the BNP-led four-party government added no power to the national grid creating a huge gap between power production and supply, which triggered the existing crisis.

The government has added 1200MW electricity to the national grid, but the shortfall remains because of higher demand, he said.

About gas shortage, Muhith said the government already lifted all taxes and tariffs on gas cylinder imports so people can get cheaper gas for household use until the regular supply improves.

Earlier, the minister visited a Christian mission in Sylhet and greeted the members of Christian communities on the Christmas Day.



President of Old Ideals, an alumni association of Ideal School and College, NM Lutful Kabir presents a crest to lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon at a reunion function of the school's former students on its Motijheel campus in the city yesterday.

Reunion at Ideal school held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of ex-students converged on the Motijheel campus of Ideal School and College in the city yesterday to recollect the fond memories of their beloved alma mater amidst fanfare.

Old Ideals, an association of ex-students of the renowned city school, organised the 'Grand Reunion 2010' for the first time in the school grounds with lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon, also chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on education ministry, speaking as the chief guest.

After 45 years of its establishment, the school continues to contribute in delivering quality education in the country, observed ex-students representing different batches since late 60's.

Ideal School and College Principal Dr Shahan Ara Begum, Old Ideals President NM Lutful Kabir and Secretary Kazi Rajibuddin Ahmed spoke, among others, on this occasion.

The daylong reunion rounded off with a cultural programme and all taking pledge to organise a gala 'golden jubilee' programme in 2015.

Udichi central committee formed

BSS, Dhaka

A 75-member central committee of Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigosthi was formed yesterday with Golam Mohammad Edu as its president and Habibul Alam general secretary.

The committee was formed in the two-day national convention ended at the Central Public Library in the city.

Minister for modernising land management

BSS, Magura

Land Minister Rezaul Karim Hira here yesterday said the government has undertaken a plan for modernisation of land management to materialise Vision-2021.

"As part of the plan, a law has been framed against uncontrolled extraction of soil and sand to check land erosion," he told a memorial meeting as the chief guest.

Held at the local Nomani Maidan, the memorial meeting was organised on the

occasion of the 17th death anniversary of noted parliamentarian Advocate Asaduzzaman.

With District Awami League (AL) President Altaf Hossain in the chair, the meeting was also addressed, among others, by District AL General Secretary Dr Sirajul Akbar, MP, Vice President Munshi Rezaul Islam, Joint Secretary Abu Nasir Bablu, Organising Secretary Shafiquzzaman Bachchu and Assistant Private Secretary to the prime minister

Saifuzzaman Shikhar.

Earlier, leaders and workers of district AL and its associate organisations brought out mourning procession in the town. After the procession, they placed wreaths and offered prayers at the deceased's grave.

Asaduzzaman, who was president of Magura District AL from 1976 to 1993, was elected parliament member thrice. He was also elected member of provincial assembly and national assembly.

LAND GRABBING ATTEMPT BNP MP sued

A CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

One brother of BNP lawmaker Mostofa Kamal Pasha of Swandvip filed a case against Kamal, accusing him of attempting to grab land here on Friday.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Rafiqul Islam of Double Mooring Police Station said Kamal's elder brother ABM Asraf Ullah filed the case.

The OC said a family feud is going on over the land and

house where Asraf has been living with his family for a long time. Though Asraf disagreed to build an apartment there, Kamal signed a contract with a developer to build one, he added.

Police said Kamal filed a case against Asraf in 2009, which is still under trial.

Abdul Wahed Khaled, Asraf's son, said Kamal and his son Iqbal Pasha attacked their house in Ice Factory road with 20 to 30 people to evict them on Friday.



Initiative for Peace, an organisation, holds a rally in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding implementation of the Detailed Area Plan in order to develop Dhaka into a more environment-friendly and habitable city.

Advertisement for Genetic Limited featuring a 'Luxurious Apartment at Banani' with 3000 sq ft. The ad includes contact information for House # 19, Road # 49, Gulshan - 2, Dhaka-1212, phone numbers, mobile numbers, and an email address. It also features a logo for Genetic Limited and a small image of a modern apartment building.