

WORLD WETLANDS DAY
Call to
conserve
water bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion meeting yesterday urged the government to take effective measures to conserve wetlands to protect environment and biodiversity.

They stressed on the need to build national consensus to preserve and conserve wetlands according to Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental treaty to maintain ecological character of wetlands.

They were speaking at the discussion jointly organised by Ministry of Environment and Forest and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to mark World Wetlands Day at the city's Cirdap auditorium, said a press release.

Speaking as the chief guest Dr Mohammad Nasiruddin, joint secretary (Development) of the ministry, termed wetlands as valuable natural resources and urged people to change their attitude and mindset to manage natural resources properly.

Delivering a presentation, AKM Rezaul Karim, team leader of Tangar Haor project, said Tangar Haor is a unique wetland ecosystem and the second Ramsar site in Bangladesh, which has both national and global significance.

Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan, country representative of IUCN Bangladesh; Farid Ahmed, senior programme officer of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; and over hundred academicians and professionals attended the discussion.

HC rejects plea to bring back Pak POWs for trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday rejected a writ petition that was filed challenging the 1974 agreement among Bangladesh, India and Pakistan under which 195 Pakistani prisoners of war (POWs) were released.

A bench of Justice M Imman Ali rejected the petition considering that the petition was not placed before it for moving.

Earlier in November, a division bench of the HC had passed split orders on the petition filed by Wing Commander (retd) Hamidullah Khan in August last year.

Senior member of the bench Justice Mohammad Anwarul Haque had rejected the petition while junior member of the bench Justice Syed Abu Kowser Md Dabirush-shan issued a rule upon the government to explain why the tripartite agreement should not be declared illegal.

The rule had also asked the government to explain why it should not be directed to bring the 195 POWs back to Bangladesh to put them on trial. The division bench then sent the petition to the chief justice for his decision.

Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque has recently sent the petition to the bench of Justice M Imman Ali for its final disposal.

Burglary at Kali Mandir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Yet another theft occurred at Sri Kali O Shib Mandir in the city's Sutrapur early yesterday.

The burglars stole around five tolas of gold, seven tolas of silver and Tk 7000 in cash, said Babul Devnath, secretary of Mahanagar Sarbojaneen Puja Committee.

Earlier on January 9, around 200 tolas of gold ornaments and Tk 4.5 lakh in cash were stolen from Dhakeshwari Mandir while three other burglaries took place at different temples in the city in the last few months.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at the eighth session of the ninth parliament at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: PMO

57,000 die of tobacco habit a yr

BSS, Dhaka

More than 57,000 people aged above 30 die every year due to tobacco consumption across Bangladesh, according to anti-tobacco campaigners.

The campaigners called for strict implementation of tobacco related laws in the country to discourage its production and raising people's awareness about its harms.

The call came from the launch of an anti-tobacco programme organised by National Heart Foundation Hospital and Research Institute and United

Forum Against Tobacco (UFAT) in the city yesterday.

Speakers quoted the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimate showing tobacco in smoking and non-smoking form causes 54 lakh premature deaths globally a year.

Over 80 lakh will die every year by 2030 in the world, 80 percent of them in developing nations, unless urgent action is taken against spread of tobacco use, they said.

Planning Minister Air Vice Marshal (retd) AK Khandker attended the event as the chief guest with the heart foun-

dation President Justice Chowdhury ATM Masud in the chair.

UFAT organising secretary Dr Sohel Reza Choudhury presented the keynote paper while secretary general of the forum Dr Md Serajul Islam welcomed the guests.

Currently some 43.3 percent adults in the country consume tobacco which causes heart diseases, cancers, and chronic respiratory diseases.

Moreover, around 30 percent deforestation in Bangladesh is related to the tobacco processing and cultivation.

Ziaul Haque acquitted from charges

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday cancelled a lower court verdict and acquitted former BNP state minister Ziaul Haq Zia of a case filed for providing false information to Rajuk for getting government flat and plot in the city.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Waliul Islam on July 1, 2008 sentenced Zia to ten years' imprisonment.

Judge Kader Newaz of the Special Judge's Court-2 passed the order following an appeal. On July 11 of 2007, CID filed the case.

French MPs meet Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

A visiting French parliamentary delegation called on Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office last night.

The four-member delegation led by Paul Giacobbi MP, also chairman of France-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship Group, discussed various issues of bilateral relations of Bangladesh and France during the meeting.

The delegation members comprise two ruling party MPs and two opposition MPs Khaleda Zia requested them to play role for creating the scope for a visit by a parliamentary delegation from Bangladesh to France, said BNP Vice-chairman Shamser Mobin Chowdhury who was at the meeting.

Both Khaleda and the delegation members agreed that such exchange of views will help further strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Khaleda's adviser Reaz Rahman and Sabihuddin Ahmed and French Ambassador in Dhaka Charley Causeret were also present at the meeting.

2 city shop staff shot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals shot two employees of a tailor's shop at city's Gendaria yesterday.

The injured employees Omor Faruq, 30 and Jahangir Alam, 33, of M Muslim Tailors at Satish Sarkar road, were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Omor said he and four employees were working inside the shop when two armed youths entered around 2:10pm.

The youths fired four to five rounds of bullets, one of which hit his right leg, while Jahangir received two bullets on the chest and right wrist, he said.

The shop's owner Mohammad Muslim Uddin alleged that the youths were extortionists who were demanding Tk 10 lakh over phone for the last three days and threatening to kill him if he did not comply.

SAIFUDDIN MANIK MEMORIAL MEETING 'Ethics gone from politics'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a memorial meeting yesterday said ethics and sacrifices have become a thing of the past in the country's politics.

They told the meeting at Liberation War Museum in the city arranged for the third death anniversary of Saifuddin Ahmed Manik to be observed today.

"He was a modest, friendly, and ever-smiling personality who treated his fellow leaders, colleagues, and subordinates with equal respect and affection," said Awami League leader Tofail Ahmed.

Workers' Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon, Mujahidul Islam Selim, general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CP), Sammilita Samajik Andolon (SSA) President Ajoy Roy, Gano Forum Presidium Member Pankaj Bhattacharya, and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam, among others, also spoke.

Saifuddin Ahmed Manik was a veteran politician and former general secretary of Gono Forum.

Jaglal to join breakfast with US president

METRO DESK

Dr Jaglal A Mozumdar, also vice district governor of Lions District 315 A-1, has been invited to the annual national prayer breakfast today (February 3) in Washington DC with the president and top government officials of the US, says a press release.

Following the session, he will participate in bilateral discussion with US president and other world delegates on the upcoming peace and development issues.

CORPORATE BOOKING

Fantasy Kingdom, Heritage Park, Water Kingdom, Motel Atlantis & Xtreme Racing will be reserved on 4th February, 2011 (Friday) for Corporate Booking.

From 5th February, 2011 (Saturday) Fantasy Kingdom, Heritage Park, Water Kingdom, Motel Atlantis & Xtreme Racing will remain open for all.

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Another 25 couples will celebrate Valentine's Day at a romantic Musical Gala and Dinner at Radisson Water Garden Hotel.

Last date for registration - 10 February 2011