

**DHAKA TODAY**

- Human Chain**  
Bangladesh Shanti Parishad will hold a human chain; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 4:00pm.
- Rally**  
Communist Party of Bangladesh will organise a rally; Venue: CPB central office; Time: 4:30pm.
- Discussion**  
Citizen Solidarity will hold a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.
- Procession**  
Online Knowledge Centre will hold a procession; Venue: TSC, DU; Time: 11:00am.
- Dialogue**  
Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad will hold a dialogue; Venue: PKSF auditorium; Time: 12:15noon.
- Rally**  
Anti-war Movement, Bangladesh will hold a rally; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: 4:00pm.
- Inaugural**  
UNDP will organise an inaugural programme; Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre; Time: 9:00am.
- Seminar**  
Anti-corruption Commission will hold seminar; Venue: commission's office; Time: 10:00am.
- Procession**  
Gonotrik Bam Morcha will hold a procession; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 4:00pm.
- Discussion**  
Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan will organise a discussion; Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Unity; Time: 11:00am.
- Discussion**  
Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh will hold a discussion; Venue: IDEB auditorium; Time: 5:30pm.
- Conference**  
Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies will hold a conference; Venue: Hotel Sheraton; Time: 9:00am.
- Programme**  
Bengal Gallery will hold a programme; Venue: gallery premises; Time: 6:00pm.
- Discussion**  
Centre for Global Change will hold a discussion; Venue: Girdap auditorium; Time: 11:00am.
- Human Chain**  
Bangladesh Sikkhak-Karmachari Oikya Parishad will hold a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 12:00noon.
- Discussion**  
Muktijoddha Jubo Command Kendria Committee will hold a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 3:30pm.

# Moriarty's remark untrue: Sahara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday brushed aside US Ambassador James F Moriarty's remark that Bangladesh is under threat of militants.

"It is not true that Bangladesh is under militants' threat" said Sahara when asked about the envoy's remark citing media reports.

The minister was talking to journalists at her office after a meeting with lawmakers from the city on law and order. She avoided a reply when asked whether Dhaka will protest Moriarty's comment.

State Minister for Home Shamsul Huq Tuku however said not only Bangladesh but the whole world is under militants' threat.

Sahara said they have decided to hold meetings with local lawmakers every two months to assess law and order in the capital.

Meeting sources said lawmakers present at yesterday's meet expressed concern that widespread use of drugs is causing deterioration of law and order in the capital.

They also said the law enforcement agencies have been asked to take proper steps to maintain law and order during the April 4 hartal called by Islami Oikya Jote, a component of the BNP-led opposition alliance, in protest against the new women policy.

# Draft health policy awaits approval

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Draft document of the health policy is waiting to be placed under the National Committee, said Health Minister Prof AFM Ruhul Haque yesterday at a view exchange meeting with the press.

At the end of discussions on the policy at the conference room of health ministry, the minister said the government is trying its best to finalise the policy to make health service available to all.

"After the national committee's approval, the draft document will soon be placed at the cabinet and then in parliament," he said, adding that reporters working on health issues can submit their opinion regarding the policy within a week.

Three specific goals of the policy are ensuring primary and emergency health services for all, expanding equity based quality health services and encouraging people to seek healthcare.

There are 16 principles and 38 working strategies in the policy including formulation of National Health Development Council to strengthen inter-ministerial health related tasks and provide guidelines in implementing the policy.

State Minister for Health Mozibur Rahman Fakir, Director General of Directorate General of Health Services Prof Khondhaker M Shefyetullah and Joint Secretary (hospital, nursing and clinic) Abu Taher were also present.



Representatives of Jica and Jica Alumni Association pose for a photo after the association donated Tk 5 lakh to Jica to aid victims of the Japan's devastating tsunami and earthquake.

PHOTO: COURTESY

# Partex Group chairman gets bail in tax evasion case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday extended the bail term till April 7 to Partex Group Chairman MA Hashem and nine others including his wife and sons in a tax evasion case.

Judge (in-charge) Fozila Begum of the Metropolitan Session Judge's Court passed the order and set the hearing on charge framing against the accused on the same date, after the defendants submitted a petition seeking extension of bail term on its expiry yesterday.

The accused are Hashem's wife Sultana Hashem and five sons Aziz al Kaiser, Aziz al Mahmud, Aziz al Masud, Shawkat Aziz and Ashfaque Aziz who are directors of Partex Group's beverage company, while Rubel Aziz is its incumbent managing director.

The accused officials are the company's accounts officer Mozammel Haque and general manager (finance and accounts) Peyar Ahmed.

The defendants' counsel, Anisul Haq said the National Board of Revenue (NBR) would sit with the accused on April 6 for settling the matter, which is why they need an extension on their bail terms.

Earlier on February 28, another Dhaka court granted a one-month bail to Hashem and seven others in the case.

The NBR filed the tax evasion case against the accused on February 27. Later, after scrutinising the documents relating to tax evasion, the court issued arrest warrants against the accused.

In the complaint, Deputy Tax Commissioner of NBR Ayesha Siddiqua Shelly said the accused withheld information of around Tk 597 crore as income from the company in their tax returns for fiscal years 2005-06 and 2007-08. Moreover, they provided false information about the company's expenditure.

The court also fixed the same date for hearing on charge framing against Hashem in another tax evasion case.



Italian Ambassador to Bangladesh Giorgio Guglielmino pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

# 40 get Indian scholarship

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Indian High Commission in Bangladesh has distributed scholarships to forty students in Barisal division, who are direct descendants of the freedom fighters of the 1971 war.

Each recipient student from graduate level obtained a yearly amount of Tk 24,000 for four years and each from undergraduate level Tk 6,000 for two years.

The scholarship distribution ceremony was held at Abdul Khalek Auditorium in the city on Tuesday.

# Invest more in Bangladesh

PM urges Italy

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought more Italian investment in Bangladesh in infrastructure, energy and power, port expansion, telecommunications, civil engineering and construction projects.

Hasina made the request when Italian Ambassador to Bangladesh Giorgio Guglielmino paid a courtesy call on her at PM's office in the morning.

The PM called for boosting bilateral trade and commerce for mutual benefits, said her Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

Hasina hoped that Italy would recruit more workers from Bangladesh.

"Italy can be benefited by recruiting seasonal workers and service sector workers from Bangladesh," she said.

Ambassador at Large M Ziauddin, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister M A Karim, Prime Minister's Office Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman and Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Abul Kalam Azad were present.

# Support bill against torture

Urges HR Watch

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh government should offer its full and public support to a bill before parliament that would criminalise torture, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said.

The New York-based HRW in a statement issued Tuesday urged the government to make parliamentary time for the bill soon to ensure its conformity with the international Convention against Torture, to which Bangladesh is a state party.

The bill was drafted by ruling Awami League MP Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

"Torture is used routinely by law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh," said Brad Adams, Asia director at HRW. "The bill in parliament presents an important opportunity for this government to show its commitment to upholding the rule of law and to show that it is different from its predecessors."

It said the HRW and others have long documented the systematic use of torture and deaths in custody in Bangladesh by its various security agencies. Detainees have been subjected to electric shocks, rape, severe kicking, and beating with objects that include iron rods, belts, and sticks.

The Rapid Action Battalion and the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), the army's intelligence unit, have routinely engaged in torture, which has often led to the deaths of suspects in their

custody, the statement observed.

"Torture seems to have become the accepted norm among security agencies, both as a method of investigation and as a means of law enforcement," Adams said.

He said enacting this law will prevent law enforcement agencies from claiming that torture is a legitimate way to extract information from suspects or to punish them.

"After many years of turning a blind eye to an acknowledged problem, the government and parliament have an opportunity to back meaningful change and end this shameful practice," Adams said.

The bill in its current form goes a long way toward closing these loopholes and to meeting the standards set forth under the Convention against Torture, and would create a simplified process and venue for redress for victims of torture, said the statement from HRW.

It would create a regimen under which public officials would be held accountable for the physical and mental well-being of anyone taken into custody, from the process of arrest onwards. The bill, in an important provision, strips away the often cited excuse of public welfare to justify deaths in custody.

However, the HRW urged the government and parliament to make amendments so that the bill meets the international standards set out in Convention against Torture.



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