



Sammilito Sangskritik Jote organises a rally for bauls (mystic devotees) on Central Shaheed Minar premises protesting the attack on bauls at Char Ramnagar under Pangsha upazila of Rajbari on April 5.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Provision to stop unconstitutional amendment of constitution soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said the special committee on constitutional amendment is mulling to propose a provision in the constitution to stop unconstitutional amendment of the constitution.

The committee is working to prepare recommendation for the constitution's amendment after consultations with justices, lawyers and political parties, he said.

He was speaking as the chief guest at an annual conference of Sunlife Insurance Company Ltd at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city.

Shafique said Supreme Court declared the Fifth Amendment illegal and cancelled the illegal changes in the constitution as the amendment unconstitutionally legitimised the constitution's amendment.

The constitution being printed does not contain the cancelled parts in light with the verdict, Shafique said.

Regarding the war crimes trial, he said the trial has no political motive. It rather initiates the establishment of the rule of law by ensuring justice to the affected, removing the culture of impunity and ridding the nation of its 40 year long stigma, he said.

International standard of the trial would be ensured, he said, adding that no loophole would be kept so that questions do not arise on the trial, says a press release.

Managing Director of Sunlife Insurance Company Ltd M Mahfuzul Bari Chowdhury presided over the programme while company's Chairman Zahid Malek and Asiatic Society of Bangladesh General Secretary Dr Mahfuza Khanam also spoke.

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Wednesday's The Daily Star report headlined "Trial for vitamin A-rich rice soon".

Nasirullah Mridha, USA

This new vitamin A-rice ingenuity by one of our indigenous scientist adds a new medal to our dignity. As a Bangladeshi, I take my hat off to all the scientists and fund provider institutions whose unremitting help made this possible. We hope blindness in our children will be greatly reduced once this rice reaches the local market.

Abu Zubair

Very encouraging result after a long time from IRRI and BRRI. But we need to know the production cost and yield of the expected rice variety. As for Bangladesh, we have no scope to sacrifice yield due to expanding population and the alarming decline of cultivable land. We also have to carefully think about the long-term health safety for any kind of genetically modified crop.

Sanwar Moni

Erasing Vitamin A deficiency through genetically engineered variety rice is a good news but before commercialisation, we should specially focus and seriously consider whether it is favourable towards environment and human health.

Sromobazar

It is a great news for us. Rice is our staple diet and this rice can solve our deficiency of vitamin A.

Md Abdullahil Baki Bhuiyan

Technology in agriculture always sustains if farmers are cautious in adopting them. Before launching into the fields, trials must be held to ensure that no negative impact falls on the environment. Alien technology had fearful effects on the native ecology in the past and we should calculate the cost benefit ratio. Since the major stakeholders are marginal farmers, the technology should be provided at low cost.

Anonymous in USA

An excellent innovation for rice production. We hope this variety will grow in abundance to guarantee food security as well as nutrition.

Fair trial of war crimes demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Teachers Association yesterday called upon all teachers to unite against the propagandas by the anti-liberation groups and help the government to hold a prompt and fair trial of war criminals.

The call came at a human chain programme held in front of BSMMU at Shahbagh in the city, says a press release.

BSMMU Teachers Association President Dr M Moazzem Hossain presided over the human chain participated by members and leaders of the association.

They also demanded of the government to bring back the convicted killers of Bangabandhu from abroad.

ALTERNATIVE BILATERAL TRADE FORUM

US mulling Dhaka's proposal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United States is analysing Bangladesh's proposal for an alternative bilateral forum to boost trade and investment between the two countries, said a visiting US official yesterday.

"The Bangladesh government has proposed a trade and investment forum arrangement. We are considering the feasibility of the idea," said Michael J Delaney, assistant US trade representative for South Asia.

He, however, declined to give any possible timeframe for the implementation of the US-Bangladesh Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum.

Delaney was speaking to newsmen after a meeting with Commerce Minister Faruk Khan at the latter's secretariat office in Dhaka.

The US official said their talks focused on the trade and investment and improvement of bilateral relations.

The issue of stalled Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) also came up in the discussion.

"We have discussed a range of issues including strengthening further the bilateral economic relations and increasing trade and investment between the two countries," he said, adding that the proposed TIFA could be one of the ways to boost trade and investment.

The US official said his country has no immediate plan to bring any change to the tariff rates levied on Bangladesh.

Bangladesh pays \$ 50 crore as duty against its exports of \$ 400 crore to the US, while France pays much lesser amount despite exporting goods and services worth \$ 3,000 crore to the world's biggest economy.

Delaney said the discussion on the slow-progressing Doha Development Round of World Trade Organisation will

not complete before 2012, when the duty structure issue could be finally settled.

"The deadline is approaching, but we remain committed towards a successful, ambitious and balanced outcome in the Doha Round," he said.

In 2002, The USA showed interest to sign the much-talked TIFA with Bangladesh in efforts to boost up bilateral trade and investment relations. A year later, the two sides started dialogues.

Officials of the two countries sat for the second time in 2004, when Washington had said agreement could be signed within three months.

But nothing happened although the draft had been prepared twice, officials said, partly due to slow process on Bangladesh's part, which paved the way for the concept of alternative economic arrangement.

Saber elected IPU standing committee president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League (AL) lawmaker Saber Hossain Chowdhury has been elected president of Inter Parliamentary Union's (IPU) First Standing Committee (Peace & International Security).

Established in 1889 with its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, IPU is an international organisation of parliaments of sovereign States, currently with 155 members.

Saber, chair of Bangladesh Parliament's All Party Parliamentary Group on Climate Change and Environment and global council member of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non Proliferation and Disarmament, is the first Bangladeshi parliamentarian to be elected for the post.

The election took place at IPU's 124th Assembly at Panama City, concluding yesterday, where Deputy Speaker of Parliament Col (retd) Shawkat Ali led the Bangladesh delegation.

IPU is the focal point for worldwide parliamentary democracy and a centre for dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy among legislators representing every political system and all major political leanings in the globe.

IPU constitutes a unique platform for observing and shaping political opinions and trends around the world and supports and works in close cooperation with the efforts of United Nations. It also cooperates with international intergovernmental organisations.



(From left) Prof Dr Gowher Rizvi, prime minister's (PM) adviser for International Affairs; Health Adviser to the PM Prof Dr Syed Modasser Ali; RTM International President Ahmed Al Kabir; and Abdur Rauf at a discussion titled "Problems and Prospects of Nursing Education and Care in Bangladesh" at city's Brac Centre Inn, organised by International Medical College and Kean University of New Jersey, USA.

PHOTO: STAR

2 murdered at Keraniganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people were murdered in separate incidents early yesterday on the city's outskirts South Keraniganj.

Police recovered the slaughtered body of an unidentified youth on Buriganga Bridge-1 in Keraniganj at about 8:00am, said Sub-Inspector Abu Bakar Siddique of South Keraniganj Police Station.

The bodies were sent to Mitford Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Besides, the floating body of Mohammad Kawsar, 50, a caretaker of an under-construction building, was recovered from a wetland at Pangaon under South Keraniganj at about 1:00am.

One Nazrul Islam, a resident of Shyampur, owns the under-construction building.

Police said Kawsar's body bore several stab marks.

Three masons of the building were detained in the morning for interrogation in this connection.

Police said they were yet to unearth the causes behind the murders and arrest the killers.

Meanwhile, an alleged criminal reportedly committed suicide at Mohakhali in the city.

Police recovered the body of Kamrul Islam, 60, whom police identified as a criminal, from the second floor of Nihah Residential Hotel at Mohakhali in the city at about 3:00am.

Five muggers arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested five members of an organised gang of muggers from Chittagong and Dhaka on Tuesday and yesterday.

The arrestees are Alamgir Hossain, Babul Hossain, Tarek Hossain, Mazharul Alam Bulbul, and Ratan Mia.

DB sources said the arrestees in the guise of DB police snatched a private car, money and mobile phones at Mehadiabagh here on March 30.

DB police conducted a drive at the Alankar intersection on Tuesday and arrested four persons. According to their information DB arrested Ratan, from Ashulia in Dhaka.

Proper training of nurses stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Quality health service has been compromised to a great extent for lack of proper training of the nurses, said Health Adviser to the Prime Minister Prof Dr Syed Modasser Ali at a roundtable yesterday.

"Ultimately we all are responsible for the low quality of nursing services," he said, adding that steps should be taken to ensure quality training that include modern curriculum emphasising English, formulation of a service structure and change in our attitude towards the profession.

International Medical College (IMC) and Kean University of New Jersey, USA jointly organised the roundtable titled 'Problems and Prospects of Nursing Education and Care in Bangladesh' at city's Brac Inn Centre.

To ensure quality education in nursing IMC recently has signed a contract

with Kean University under which they would share expertise.

Congratulating Kean University, Prof Dr Gowher Rizvi, Prime Minister's Adviser for International Affairs said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is committed to provide universal healthcare to the countrymen.

"At the same time, she has upgraded the status of the nurses to second class. Hope in course of time our nurses will earn first class status through better training and quality service," he said while speaking as the special guest.

Nurses from different private and public institutions highlighted their problems that include lack of quality trainers, absence of evidence-based learning, career path and sluggish promotion and shortage of nurses.

The standard doctor-nurse ratio is 1:3 across the globe while in Bangladesh it is 3:1 that creates extra burden on the nurses and hinder quality services, they said.

Speakers at the roundtable said still here lie prospects in this profession as nurses have great demand abroad. They said different private organisations now are offering diploma and BSc courses on nursing to produce more nurses. The government should monitor these bodies as well as facilitating them, they added.

RTM International President Ahmed Al Kabir moderated the roundtable while Bangladesh Nursing Council Registrar Suraiya Begum presented the keynote paper.

Dr Minnie Campbell, executive director of School of Learning of Kean University, Prof Timothy Torre, director of Centre for International Studies, Faruque Ahmed Chowdhury, director of Human Resources of Kean University, M A Mubin Khan, deputy managing director of International Medicare Limited also spoke at the roundtable.

SETTING UP INFO DELIVERY UNIT Zamir unhappy over NGOs' noncompliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Chief Information Commissioner Muhammad Zamir expressed disappointment at non-government organisations (NGO) for remaining unresponsive despite repeated reminders to open Information Delivery Units.

It is just shameful and clear that they are not cooperating in this regard. "We have not taken any action against them but they should keep in mind that there is a possibility that their licences can be cancelled because of their negative attitude," Zamir said.

He was addressing an inaugural session of Sylhet divisional training workshop of designated officers under RTI law 2009 at Sylhet Zila Parishad hall yesterday.

Information Commissioner Sadaka Halim, Sylhet Deputy Commissioner Abu

Syed Muhammad Hashim, Sylhet Metropolitan Police Commissioner AB Barua and Deputy Inspector General of Police Moqbul Hossain Bhuiyan also spoke at the programme, chaired by Divisional Commissioner NM Ziaul Alam.

Zamir said there is a hunch that these 1,000 or so NGOs, mostly receiving funds from abroad and some getting assistance from the government, did not open the units because they lack transparency.

He said almost all the government offices already set up the units but so far names of only 7,000 of at least 20,000 designated officials reached the commission.

Zamir said all Bangladesh citizens should be made aware mainly on Article 7 in Chapter 2 of RTI Act, which specifies 20 grounds for an authority not to provide information.