

INDIAN FM DUE TODAY

# Dhaka, Delhi move for series of initiatives

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian External Affairs Minister SM Krishna, who arrives here today, said India attaches utmost importance to its relations with Bangladesh and both the countries have moved forward purposefully to implement a series of initiatives for the benefit of the two people.

In a statement in New Delhi to media prior to his departure for Bangladesh, he said in the preceding years, the India-Bangladesh relationship has matured and deepened with close cooperation in a wide range of areas.

Krishna said his visit would be preparatory to that of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. He said, "I propose to review progress in the entire gamut of our bilateral relations with my interlocutors [in Dhaka]."

He said that following the visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India in January this year both the sides have taken up a series of initiatives outlined in the Joint Communiqué.

Both sides have identified a number of infrastructure developmental projects to be undertaken under the US\$ 1 billion Line of Credit extended by India, including for Bangladesh Railways and procurement of buses for Dhaka city, he added.

"Progress has been made on issues relating to river waters sharing, land boundary, provision of 250 MW of power from India to Bangladesh, facilitation of 24-hour access to Bangladesh nationals through the Tin Bigha Corridor, electrification of Dahagram and Angorpota enclaves, among others," he said.

He added that the two sides are working on projects for inter-grid connectivity, setting up power plants under joint ventures and continuing our close cooperation in security-related matters and the environment.



The long-awaited capital dredging in the river Karnaphuli begins after Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan inaugurated the project in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

# Risky to exclude state religion

## Minister tells seminar



PHOTO: STAR

Selina Hossain speaks at a national seminar at LGED conference room in the city yesterday. On her right is Social Welfare Minister Enamul Huq Mostafa Shaheed and on her left are Dr Hameeda Hossain and Anisatul Fatema Yousuf. Brotee, a non-government organisation, organised the seminar in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Social Welfare Minister Enamul Huq Mostafa Shaheed yesterday said it would be "risky to take away Islam's status as the state religion since 90 percent people in the country are Muslim".

"We should not forget that Bangladesh was born out of a fraction of Pakistan, which itself came into the world map because of Islam", he said.

Due to the country's long-standing connection to the religion, this is a sensitive subject that needed to be considered with much deliberation, he said.

The minister was addressing a national seminar on "Village based defence of human rights and the emergence of MDG villages" organised by Brotee, a non-government organisation, in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation at LGED auditorium

in the city.

At the seminar, Brotee shared its experience of working in 36 villages in Rajshahi district.

The NGO officials said that while number of girls going to schools in the villages has increased over the years, participation of boys has decreased.

"In 2008, 51 percent of the boys in the villages went to school. In 2010, it reduced to 49 percent", said Sharmeen Murshid, chief executive officer of Brotee. "Concurrently, participation of girls increased from 48 percent to 50 percent during the same period."

Murshid also highlighted other social and economic developments including rise in rural savings, decrease in child marriages, and more income generating opportunities in the villages.

Other speakers at the seminar stressed the need to make these developments sustainable, and migrate

them to other regions.

The minister, however, laid emphasis on collaborative efforts to bring social development in the country and reduce poverty.

He said the government has resources but lacks enough human resources to make a difference.

He called on the private and non-government organisations to gather human resources and approach the government with projects. This way the government can collaborate with non-government organisations to bring social development, he said.

Noted litterateur Selina Hossain chaired the seminar while human rights activist Dr Hameeda Hossain, Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam, and Anisatul Fatema Yousuf of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), among others, spoke.

# Sahara's traffic puzzle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun in parliament yesterday claimed traffic congestion in the city has been reduced "a great deal", but in apparent contradiction she blamed traffic jam for her 25-minute delay in joining the House proceedings.

According to yesterday's parliament business schedule, the home minister was to reply lawmakers' queries during the question hour after the House went into sitting around 5:35pm.

But Speaker Abdul Hamid, who was presiding over the sitting, did not find the home minister to reply question of Awami League lawmaker Nurunnabi Chowdhury.

The Speaker then requested Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad to give proxy for the home minister.

After around 25 minutes, Sahara Khatun entered the House and took part in the question hour and replied lawmakers' queries.

Before starting replying, the home minister told the House that she was delay in joining the House in time due to traffic congestion.

She also regretted to the Speaker for the delay.

But while replying to lawmakers' queries on reducing people's sufferings due to tremendous traffic jam in the city, the home minister in a scripted answer said, "Traffic jam in the city has been reduced to a large extent for ensuring movement of vehicles according to traffic rules".

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- ▶ Must have good command over English language.
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আমিন মোহাম্মদ গ্রুপ-এর গ্রাহক সেবার ১৮ বছর পূর্তিতে

গ্রাহক পূর্ণমিলনী, মেজবান এবং বৃক্ষরোপণ কর্মসূচী ২০১১

তারিখ: ০১ - ১০ জুলাই ২০১১

বৃক্ষরোপণ: প্রতিদিন সকাল ৯.০০টা থেকে

র্যাফেল ড্র: ১০ জুলাই ২০১১

স্থান: আমিন মোহাম্মদ গ্রুপ-এর পুরাতন অফিস, আমিন চেম্বার, ৭৬৪ সাত মসজিদ রোড, ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা।

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আমিন গ্রুপ



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