

Change villages into dev hubs: President

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday called for turning the villages into "centres of development" to ensure all sorts of civic amenities to the country's vast population.

The president made the call at the inauguration of the first conference of the newly formed Bangladesh Urban Forum at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city.

Zillur said that as the country's resources are limited but population is vast, all villages should be developed in order to prevent the flow of people towards towns and cities.

"Not only towns, all areas of the country will have to be brought under the balanced development to build the 'Sonar Bangla' as dreamt by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman".

He urged the urban planners and others concerned to ensure all sorts of civic amenities while planning for urbanisation. "I deem that urbanisation will be environment friendly, healthy, safe, and balanced", he said.

Zillur Rahman said it is true urbanisation that could play a strong role in accelerating economic growth, but rapid urbanisation creates social and economic discrimination. "Slums are created here (in the capital)

alongside the high-rises, though it is not expected".

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraful Islam, State Minister for Housing and Public Works advocate Abdul Mannan Khan, and UN resident coordinator and UNDP resident representative Neal Walker also spoke at the function as special guests. State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Jahangir Kabir Nanak presided over the inaugural session.

Describing urbanisation as ongoing process, Syed Ashraf said population in urban areas has annually been increasing at a rate of 3.5 percent, which is 2.5 times higher than the overall population growth in the country.

The LGRD minister said the government is working to formulate an appropriate urbanisation policy, strengthen the local government institutions, and ensure civic rights for all.

The three-day conference, "Bangladesh's Urban Future: Making Cities and Towns Work for All", was organised to facilitate sharing of experience and knowledge among the stakeholders to contribute to the formulation and implementation of policies and improving practices in the urban sector management, primarily aiming to reduce urban poverty.



President Zillur Rahman visits different stalls at a fair of Bangladesh Urban Forum at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Khaleda's press secretary's son arrested for Tahrir link

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's press secretary and another youth were arrested from the city's Mohammadpur yesterday on charge of their involvement with banned outfit Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Rishad Kamal Khan, 20, son of Khaleda Zia's press secretary Maruf Kamal Khan Sohel, passed A-level this year, and another detainee Faisal Ahmed, 20, passed engineering from a polytechnic institute.

Biplab Sarkar, assistant Commissioner of Mohammadpur zone, told The Daily Star that they arrested Rishad and Faisal from Nurjahan Road around 3:00pm when they were putting up posters of the organization banned on October 22 last year.

The law enforcers also recovered 16 posters of Hizb ut-Tahrir from their possession, the AC said and added that a case was filed against the duo under the anti-terrorism act.

The posters contained slogans blaming India for the 2009 Pithkhana carnage and the deaths of army persons deputed to Bangladesh Rifles, now Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday sent both Rishad and Faisal to jail after police produced them before the court seeking a five-day remand for them. The court fixed December 7 for the hearing of the remand and sent them to jail.

BSF returns body of Bangladeshi farmer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Indian Border Security Force yesterday returned the body of a Bangladeshi farmer, nearly a day after he was shot dead allegedly by Indian Khasias along the border in Companyganj, Sylhet.

BSF handed over the body of Kiron Biswas, 40, son of Suresh Biswas of Kalairag village, to police and Border Guard Bangladesh around 2:00pm.

Nandan Dhar, sub-inspector of Companyganj Police Station, said a group of Khasia people opened fire on Kiron when he was working on a paddy field on Kalairag border around 5:00pm on Sunday.

Later, BSF took away the body into their territory.

Police sent the body to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Dhaka keen to import gas, electricity

Hasina tells Myanmar FM

UNB, Nay Pyi Taw (Myanmar)

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday emphasised importing electricity and gas from Myanmar to meet power deficit.

There is also need for direct road and air links between the two countries to boost bilateral trade and investment, she said when Myanmar's Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin met her at Hotel Myat Taw Win in the afternoon.

During the meeting, issues relating to the repatriation of Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh and trade and investment were discussed.

Hasina said gas could be imported from Myanmar's Block No # A-2 and Block No # L. She sought cooperation from Myanmar to stop smuggling of illicit drugs into Bangladesh.

Referring to bilateral trade, the premier said Myanmar can import RMG, knitwear,

pharmaceuticals, ceramics and jute goods from Bangladesh.

She said Myanmar's investors can also make investment in Bangladesh's potential sectors by taking advantage of the incentives offered by her government for foreign investors.

About tourism, Hasina favoured signing of a memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the future to promote tourism between the two close neighbours.

In response, the Myanmar foreign minister said his country is functioning as a bridge among the South Asian countries. He said Myanmar is gradually moving towards market economy.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Ambassador at-Large Mohammad Ziauddin, Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes and PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad were present.

Indian President Patil's ride in battle tank

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, *New Delhi*

Two years after flying in a fighter aircraft, Indian President Pratibha Patil yesterday once again donned military fatigues to ride a main battle tank, becoming the first head of state to do so.

Dressed in black overalls worn by the personnel of the tank regiments, the 76-year-old president entered the tank during a military exercise now in the deserts of Rajasthan state tank with Army Chief Gen VK Singh.

This is Patil's second ride in a military vehicle as she had flown in a Sukhoi-30MKI fighter aircraft at an air base in Pune in western state of Maharashtra in 2009.

Photo exhibition on birds at RU

RU CORRESPONDENT

A two-day photo exhibition titled 'Birds of Campus' ended in Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday.

A total 50 photos of different species of birds inhabitant on the campus were displayed at the exhibition held at the science building gallery on the campus.

RU Zoology Department and University Grants Commission jointly organised the event that was inaugurated by RU Life and Earth Faculty Dean Prof Jahidul Hasan.

Legal action against Moudud demanded

BSS, Dhaka

Woman leaders have blasted opposition BNP for taking the side of the war criminals and demanding stop of the ongoing proceedings of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT).

They said BNP leaders are hatching conspiracy and making a ploy to protect the war criminals, who were involved in genocide, looting, rape, and arson in 1971.

The reactions followed BNP leader Moudud Ahmed's demand at a press conference Saturday that the government should close all proceedings of the ICT constituted on March 25, 2011.

The government should take punitive measure immediately against those who are trying to protect the perpetrators of the crimes against humanity, they said.

Ayesha Khanam, president, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said BNP is demanding stop of the ICT proceedings at a time when the people are eagerly waiting to see the trial of the washe added.

Rokeya Kabir, executive director, Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha, said, "Raising such demand, BNP has shown a sheer disrespect to the martyred freedom fighters, the country's independence, and the mothers-sisters who were inhumanly tortured by Pakistani army and their local collaborators such as razakars and al-badars".

Ferdousi Priyobhashini, a war veteran, demanded the government take legal action against BNP leader Moudud Ahmed as, she said, he is (Moudud) going against the entire nation.

'Deporting killer of Bangabandhu from Canada in progress'

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The foreign ministry yesterday said the government is in touch with Canada regarding deportation of Noor Chowdhury, a convicted killer of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, from that country and the process is in progress.

"The government of Bangladesh has been in constant and deep engagement with Canada on the issue of deportation of Noor Chowdhury from Canada," said a press release of the ministry responding to a media report.

"Cognizant of the legal considerations involved in Canada's part regarding any individual convicted with death sentence, Bangladesh believes that this is an ongoing process which is in progress," it said.

It is understood that certain legal procedures are underway regarding Noor who, following a Canadian court verdict, is under order of deportation from Canada, it said.

The Canadian High Commissioner in Dhaka Heather Cruden told reporters emerging from a meeting with the foreign minister on Sunday afternoon that, "She (Foreign Minister Dipu Moni) did indeed raise the issue. I have committed to raise it again with my government. Of course my government has clear policy that we cannot extradite people to countries that have death penalty."

Factory fined for noise pollution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined a garment factory Tk 4 lakh for creating noise pollution with electric generator at Sanarparin Narayanganj.

DoE Director (Enforcement) Mohammad Munir Chowdhury also summoned the officials of the factory, Sikotex Fabrics, to the department and ordered stopping operation of the generator, said a press release.

It also mentioned, locals complaint to the department regarding the 550kv generator which was being operated defying DoE rule.

A DoE team visited the spot on December 1 and found the defective generator producing sound measuring at 83.8 and 104 decibel which is harmful to public health.

Hearing on DU Ga unit results tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday fixed December 7 for hearing a petition filed by the Dhaka University (DU) authorities challenging a High Court verdict that had directed to re-evaluate the answer sheets of this year's 'Ga' unit admission tests of the university.

The DU authorities filed the petition on Sunday afternoon with the SC seeking stay on the HC's December 1 verdict. The DU syndicate decided to appeal against the HC on December 3.

Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain held the hearing on the petition and sent it to the full bench of the division for its next hearing on December 7.

The HC delivered the verdict on December 1 following a writ petition filed by 12 successful admission seekers on November 22.

Moving the petition, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam prayed to the chamber judge to stay the HC verdict so that the DU authorities could hold a fresh admission test of the unit.

Counsel for the writ petitioners advocate Manzil Murshid opposed the submission of petition by the DU authorities saying that the HC had lawfully delivered the verdict canceling the DU authorities petition to hold a fresh admission test.

The HC verdict should not be stayed, he added.

The admission test for the 2011-12 academic session was held on November 11. But the publication of the results sparked protests by hundreds of students over what they alleged was a wrong counting of marks.

In the wake of the allegations, the university authorities decided to cancel the results and hold a fresh test on December 9.

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