

WAR CRIMES

'Plot in army is to foil trial'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The communal and anti-liberation force hatched the recent plot in army to topple the government for foiling war crimes trial and hindering the country's democratic progress, said Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday.

"There is no way to stop war crimes trial legally. That is why the evil force is hatching conspiracy to assume power illegally by using armed forces to protect the war criminals," said Inu, the president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD).

Inu was presiding over a roundtable styled 'Politics of unconstitutional and undemocratic conspiracy to topple elected government: Role of democratic forces' organised by JSD, a partner of ruling Awami League-led grand alliance, at Jatiya Press Club.

The unity of the grand alliance would be stronger, if Awami League does not maintain "go alone" policy. So, Awami League should give up the "go alone" policy to form a greater and stronger unity of progressive forces, he said.

About the role of army, he said, "The army is now very much respectful to rule of law. If the situation continues, the future of democracy and rule of law will be bright in the country."

JSD General Secretary Sharif Nurul Ambia, JSD Executive President Moinuddin Khan Badal, Workers Party of Bangladesh politburo member Bimol Biswas, Jatiya Party (JP-Manju) Chairman and Ittefaq Editor Anwar Hossain Manju and former army officer Maj Gen (ret'd) Abdur Rashid also addressed the function.



Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba) forms a human chain in front of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Dhaka University yesterday demanding exemplary punishment for those involved in food adulteration, silently killing consumers.

PHOTO: STAR

Ferry service in Meghna for heavy vehicles from Feb 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Concerned with the vulnerable condition of Meghna Bridge on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway, the government decided to introduce ferry service on the Meghna river for passing the heavy vehicles from February 1, Communications Minister Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

He said all kinds of heavy vehicles including loaded trucks and cargoes will have to cross the river using the ferry service while light vehicles, passenger buses and empty vehicles will pass the river over the bridge.

Inaugurating a loading control machine near the Meghna Bridge yesterday, the minister said, "The construction work of a ferry ghat near the bridge will be completed within three days and five ferries are ready for use at the moment while another one will join from next week."

He said the Meghna Bridge linking road communication between Dhaka and Chittagong is now under threat.

Quader also inaugurated 27 speed-controlling machines to keep a check on the speed of vehicles and 24 alcohol-detective machines. These machines would be used by Highway Police to take action against the rule violators.

He urged all to work sincerely to carry out the development works smoothly and to repair the bridges and roads to curtail traffic congestion on the highway.

He added that all sorts of development works in the country should be kept aloof from party politics. "We may have difference in thinking, but we need to act unitedly in the question of development works."

ZIA TRUST CASE Two get bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted ad-interim bail to two accused on their surrender in connection with the Zia Charitable Trust graft case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The accused are Ziaul Islam Munna, assistant personal secretary (APS) of BNP leader Abul Harris Chowdhury and Monirul Islam Khan, APS to former Dhaka City Corporation mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

Judge Mohammad Zohurul Haque of the Senior Special Judge's Court granted the bail after Munna and Monirul surrendered to it seeking bail in the case.

Declining farmland, rising population major concerns, not climate: Dr Hasan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Declining farmland and rising population are the two areas of major concern for Bangladesh, not climate change impact, said Environment and Forest Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud at a workshop yesterday.

"If the population continues to rise and the agricultural land reduces in the current rate, ensuring food security after ten years will be very difficult," he said, adding that these issues are not highlighted in the national or international climate change discussions.

The country's population growth rate at current is 1.42 percent, with 15.05 crore total population, while the agricultural land decreases by 1 percent annually, with a current cultivable land of 60 lakh hectares that has reduced from 90 lakh hectares in 1980,

according to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

The workshop on "Carbon footprints of Bangladesh agriculture: An exploratory analysis," was organised by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) in the city's Cirdap auditorium.

Downplaying the issue of carbon emission from the country's agricultural sector, the minister said the per capita carbon emission in Bangladesh is only 0.3 tonne, which is 2 tonnes in the developing countries and 20 tonnes in the developed countries.

"There is nothing to be worry about it. Also, we have no obligation to reduce it," he noted.

Presenting a study, BIDS Research Director Dr M Asaduzzaman said total carbon emission from the country's crop sector

is 10.64 million tonnes, which is around 14 percent of the total greenhouse gas produced in the country.

BCAS Senior Fellow Dr Moinul Islam Sharif said greenhouse gas emission from the non-crop sector is annually 1,115 gigagrams.

Asaduzzaman said, though this emission is small compared to that of the developed countries, Bangladesh can reduce it further by increasing efficiency in the cultivation system.

The excessive use of water and urea fertiliser to grow rice can be cut down while maintaining productivity through using the available technologies, he noted.

The government has been expanding these technologies aimed at reducing production cost and saving inputs, said Agriculture Secretary CQK Mustak.

Environment Secretary Mesbah ul Alam

said Bangladesh is a victim of global climate change, but it has little need to go for mitigation.

"We must be careful that we don't do anything that we are compelled to go for mitigation," he said.

Monowarul Islam, director general of Department of Environment, said some businessmen are out to sell their technologies to the least developed countries in the name of reducing carbon emission.

"We should be aware that we are not slaves of their technologies. Rather, let us invent technologies for ourselves," he said.

BCAS Executive Director Dr Atiq Rahman and BIDS Director General Dr Mustafa K Mujeri also spoke at the programme chaired by Planning Commission Member Prof MA Sattar Mandal.



Newly appointed Nepalese Ambassador to Bangladesh Hari Kumar Shrestha calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

RAPE INCIDENT HC summons OC of Araihaazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summoned the officer-in-charge (OC) of Araihaazar Police Station of Narayanganj to explain his role against the incident of the violation of a 14-year-old girl.

The court directed OC Syed Nazrul Islam to appear before it by 10:30am today for the explanation, said Deputy Attorney General ABM Altaf Hossain.

The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain came up with the order on a suomoto move following a report published in the daily Prothom Alo over the incident of violating the girl.

According to the report, four to five culprits led by Shahjahan, son of Abdur Rahim, from Aguandi village of Mahmudpur union of Araihaazar upazila, kidnapped and raped the girl after tying her mother's hands and legs at night on January 19.

OC Syed Nazrul Islam said that he heard the incident but did not file any case and take any action in this regard in four days after the incident took place, the report said, adding that the victim was admitted to Narayanganj Victoria Hospital.

Khandaker Md Khurshid Alam, a Supreme Court lawyer, yesterday placed the report to the notice of judges for necessary orders.

PM for joint tourism packages with Nepal

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday proposed joint tourism packages by Bangladesh and Nepal for the promotion of tourism sector in the two countries as well as in the region.

The proposal came when the newly appointed Nepalese Ambassador to Bangladesh Hari Kumar Shrestha called on the prime minister at her office.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said the premier told the ambassador that Bangladesh attaches maximum importance on cordial relations with all its neighbours, including Nepal.

Laying emphasis on regional connectivity for the overall development of the region, Hasina said Bangladesh is ready to offer transit facilities to Nepalese goods through Chittagong and Mongla ports.

She mentioned the signing of a Standard Operating Procedure with India to allow Nepalese vehicles to enter up to 200 metres from zero point at Banglabandha inside Bangladesh territory.

Hasina also put emphasis on more cooperation in hydro-electricity sector, including joint implementation of Sapt-Koshi dam, which is expected to generate 3,500MW of electricity.

The Nepalese envoy praised the leadership of Hasina in various regional and international forums.

He also conveyed to the premier the invitation of Nepalese prime minister to visit the country at her convenience.

Ambassador at-large M Ziauddin was present during the meeting.

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