

NEWS IN *brief*

**Bangladesh to eliminate racial discriminations**

**DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT**  
Bangladesh reaffirmed its unequivocal support to the efforts of the international community towards the total elimination of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance from this planet.  
In a message on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said "This year we observe the day while the world is undergoing profound political, economic and social transformations unleashing new sources of discontent and injustice."

**SCBA polls begin today**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The two-day annual election of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) for its 14 executive posts, including president and secretary, will begin today.  
The polling will take place from 10:00am to 5:00pm with lunch break from 1:00pm to 2:00pm. A total of 3,829 lawyers of the Supreme Court (SC) have registered as voters in the polls where three panels are contesting.  
The panels are ruling Awami League-backed Sammilita Ainjibi Samannaya Parishad (SASP), the opposition BNP-backed Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Oikya Parishad (JAOP) and neutral Niropekho Ainjibi Oikya Parishad (NAOP).

**Accreditation board for universities stressed**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Private universities and their programmes must be accorded recognition by proper authorities to ensure quality higher education at the private institutions, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.  
There should be a national accreditation board for both public and private universities, which will work to reduce gaps in teaching quality between these two types of institutions, said Prof M Anwar Hossain, ex-vice chancellor, Islamic University of Technology (IUT).  
He said, "Bangladesh, however, tremendously lacks quality teachers".  
The 5th WIEF (World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation) roundtable was jointly organised by WIEF and SEACO (South East Asian Co-operation Foundation) at Radisson Water Garden Hotel in the city.  
Prof Tan Sri Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, vice chancellor of Albukhary International University, Malaysia, and Mohamed Moustafa Mahamoud, executive director of Madinah Institute for Leadership and Entrepreneurship, Saudi Arabia, also spoke. Tanri Abeng, founder and chairman of Executive Centre for Global Leadership in Indonesia, and Shafi Sami, chairman of Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh were present. Ian Buchanan, senior executive advisor of Booz and Co, Australia, moderated the programme.

**BNP meet April 8 to talk latest political situation**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The National Executive Committee (NEC) of BNP will hold its long overdue meeting on April 8 in the city to discuss the latest political situation and the party's organisational affairs.  
The NEC members and grassroots leaders of the main opposition party will also evaluate the party's overall performance in the ongoing anti-government movement, party insiders said.  
BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will preside over the meeting in the auditorium of Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh.  
Apart from the 386 members of the committee, presidents and general secretaries of BNP district units and members of the chairperson's advisory council will attend the programme, BNP Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi told The Daily Star.  
Sources at party's central office said Khaleda Zia will address the inaugural session of the meeting and will discuss organisational matters with the committee members and field-level leaders.



**Jal-Jala and Krishijami Rokkha Andolon (movement to protect wetlands and farmland) forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanding that farmers get just prices of their produces and land grabbers be evicted.**

**Four cities at high climate risk**

**WIEF roundtable told**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Dhaka and other large cities of the country face high risks from climate change, warned a leading climate analyst of the country yesterday.  
Prof Ainun Nishat said major cities including Comilla, Chittagong and Rajshahi are also at high risk.  
He was speaking at the fifth World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) roundtable on regional cooperation to combat the impact of climate change organised by the WIEF Foundation of Malaysia and South East Asian Cooperation (SEACO) Foundation at the Radisson Hotel in the city.

*'Climate change will cause too much rainfall over short periods, collapsing the drainage system in cities'*

The warning comes a week after an Asian Development Bank (ADB) report put Bangladesh on top of a list of the world's most vulnerable countries affected by climate change related factors.  
"Climate change will cause too much rainfall over short periods, collapsing the drainage system in cities," the vice chancellor of Brac University said.  
Outside Bangladesh, Bangkok, Karachi and Delhi are also at risk, Prof Nishat said.  
Experts pointed out yesterday that Dhaka city with its huge population is already experiencing water logging issues.  
A rise in sea level is also likely to increase the flood situation in Dhaka. A majority of poor and displaced populations in the city live in slums which do not have proper drainage systems, analysts said.  
Prof Nishat said remedial measures such as improved drainage systems in the cities are necessary to tackle the problem.  
At the roundtable, experts said climate change will also affect the economy of a country. It poses a great development challenge for countries like Bangladesh where one-third of its 16 crore population is poor.  
"It is not a question of ecology alone. It is a question of what we do with the economy," said Chandrashekhar Dasgupta, a fellow of the

Energy and Resources Institute of New Delhi.  
"Unless we strengthen our capacity to build climate-proof infrastructure we will be affected," he said.  
Dasgupta said rapid development could help south Asian countries face the negative impact of climate change.  
"Higher the rate of development, lower will be the impact of climate change," he said.  
Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies Executive Director Atiq Rahman said climate change threatens water, food, livelihood, health, energy and social security of people.  
"All are interlinked with poverty. Poor people will disproportionately be affected because they have the least capacity to face the impact," he said.  
In Bangladesh, sea level will rise and saline water will inundate coastal land while the frequency and intensity of cyclones and floods may also rise. Climate change will make rainfall erratic and cause droughts affecting our food production, Atiq said.  
"Bangladesh will also lose some territory due to rise in sea level while Maldives will disappear," he said.  
He summed up the major consequence of climate change with its effect on water as 'too much or too little water, wrong type of water and wrong timing of water'.  
He suggested cooperation in SAARC and ASEAN blocs in sharing experience and knowledge, development of technology, food security and development of a green economy for adaptation and mitigation of climatic changes.  
Prof Daniel Murdiyaro, principal scientist of Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Indonesia, said protection of mangrove forests such as the Sundarbans of Bangladesh is essential to reduce the impact of climate change.  
"Wetlands have a huge potential for climate change adaptation and mitigation," he said.

**PLANNED URBANISATION Controlled land use is urgency: Speakers**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The government must enforce stringent control over land use across the country immediately for future urbanisation and durable development, eminent planners and top officials said at a city workshop yesterday.  
A national land use plan is the urgency in all future economic activities, Kondaker Salahuddin, chief engineer, Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk), said in his keynote paper.  
Planned and compact housing facilities must take place on controlled land use across the country while utilisation of railway and waterways and construction of metro rail in the capital without delay are vital to meet transportation demand, he said.  
The Rajuk engineer said poor housing and mass transport facility, air and water pollutions and utter want of civic amenities like open space and playgrounds in major cities massively contributed to low quality of urban life and diseases like pulmonary and respiratory complications.  
Dr Takao Toda, chief representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica), said long-term plan, priority on people, and integrated approach were crucial for future urbanisation in Bangladesh.  
Successful urbanisation is not possible without paying attention to local towns and rural areas, he said. "Think about rural areas, whenever thinking of urbanisation".  
He urged Bangladesh's policy-makers to learn from Japanese mistakes in urbanisation and avoid those in the plan of building future cities.  
Abu Alam Md Shahid Khan, secretary to the local government division, said population control would be one of the foremost preconditions for planned urbanisation during the next 50 years.  
Mubasshar Hussein, president of Institute of Architects Bangladesh, said discussion on planned urbanisation had been going on for past 20 years without implementation, which largely depended on politicians.  
Half of Dhaka city area remains under the control of the armed forces, and regulatory bodies like Rajuk have no authority over it, he said, adding that this area included three golf courses and various commercial set-ups. "Planned Dhaka city is never doable if situation goes on in this fashion".  
Md Nurul Huda, chairman of Rajuk, said his organisation had proposed a project for a new Detailed Area Plan for Dhaka (DAP) for the period of 2016 to 2035.  
Urbanisation rate in Bangladesh is nearly three times higher than that of population growth with 24 million urban people in 1996, 31 millions five years later and an estimated 80 million by the year 2020 in the capital, divisional towns, municipalities and upazila headquarters as presented in the keynote.  
Dr Khondaker Showkat Hossain, secretary to the housing and public works ministry, which organised the workshop at the public works department, chaired the programme while Abdul Mannan Khan, state minister for housing and public works, spoke among others.

**Allow challenged candidates in BCS exam**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The High Court yesterday asked the authorities concerned of the government to allow the candidates with disability having educational qualifications to participate in the 33rd Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examination.  
In response to a writ petition, the court also ordered the authorities to arrange reasonable facilities for the candidates with the disability in the exam halls.  
The HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Farid Ahmed passed the order after holding hearing on the petition jointly filed by human rights organisations Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (Blast) and Ain o Salish Kendra, and Swapan Choudhary, a candidate with sight disability.  
The petitioners submitted the petition on March 15 to the HC, saying that Bangladesh Public Service Commission in its advertisement of 33rd BCS examination has not ensured the rights of the candidates with disability for reasonable facilities in the exams, a Blast press release said.  
Advocate Shahriar Shakir appeared for the petitioners.

**WIEF team meets PM**

**UNB, Dhaka**  
A delegation of the World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation (WIEF), led by former deputy prime minister of Malaysia Musa Hitam, met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after office yesterday.  
Hasina told the delegation that her government had been implementing various programmes for ensuring women empowerment in the country.  
Press Secretary to the prime minister Abul Kalam Azad briefed reporters after the meeting.  
The premier said there were 19 directly elected female members in Parliament, including leader of the Opposition and deputy leader of the House.  
She said her government had given top priority on spreading education, especially women education.  
The prime minister also mentioned the establishment of the Asian University for Women in Bangladesh.  
In this context, Hasina proposed establishing a South East Asia Cooperation Foundation University in Bangladesh for spreading higher education.  
The delegation highly praised the leadership of Hasina in running a democratic government as well as ensuring the country's overall development.

**WEATHER TODAY**

**No change in temperature**

**UNB, Dhaka**  
Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Dhaka, Faridpur, Noakhali and Comilla in next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.  
Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country, Met office said.  
Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.  
**The sun sets in the capital at 6:10pm today and rises at 6:01am tomorrow.**  
Country's highest temperature 34.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 19.5 degrees Celsius at Cox's Bazar and Sayedpur.  
Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.3	24.8	75	62
Chittagong	30.5	22.4	74	77
Rajshahi	33.7	20.0	81	56
Rangpur	32.2	20.3	65	56
Khulna	33.5	23.5	92	70
Barisal	32.0	24.5	92	71
Sylhet	31.5	22.0	78	53
Cox's Bazar	31.2	19.5	73	83

**WAR CRIMES TRIAL Ruling on charge framing against SQ Chy deferred till March 27**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday deferred until March 27 its ruling on whether to frame charges against BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury for war crimes.  
Salauddin is facing 77 charges on 25 accounts of crimes against humanity committed during the country's Liberation War in 1971.  
The court was scheduled to deliver its order on the issue yesterday. One judge of the three-member panel Justice AKM Zaheer Ahmed was absent from the proceedings due to his illness and Chairman of the tribunal Justice Nizamul Haq said the court would give its order on charge framing against the opposition leader in presence of all the three judges.  
He, however, said there was no legal bar for the two judges in passing the order.  
Earlier in the day, the court com-

**Judges for new tribunal within 3 days**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam yesterday said judges for the second International Crimes Tribunal would be appointed within two to three days.  
The new tribunal will start its work from this month, said the state minister after visiting the courtroom for the new tribunal at the Old High Court building.  
"The logistical and infrastructural work of the new tribunal has been finished," he said while replying to the journalist's questions. "The names of the judges would be disclosed within three to four days."  
Replying to another query, Qamrul Islam admitted that the courtroom for the new tribunal is small with a limited sitting capacity.  
"Let's begin with this [courtroom], and let's see what can be done later," he said.  
The first International Crimes Tribunal was formed on March 25, 2010 with Justice Md Nizamul Haq as its chairman. Its two other members are HC Judge ATM Fazle Kabir and a retired district judge AKM Zaheer Ahmed.  
Qamrul said some of the cases being handled by the present tribunal could be transferred to the second tribunal.

prised of its chairman and another member Justice ATM Fazle Kabir refused to hear a review petition by the MP from Chittagong against its February 13 order that rejected his prayer for discharging him from the charges.  
Fakhrul Islam, a counsel for Salauddin, prayed to the court for hearing the review petition filed on March 18 before passing the order on charge framing.  
The court said it would hear the review petition later.  
Salauddin yesterday morning was taken to the tribunal custody from Kashimpur Jail-2 in Gazipur.  
But he was not produced before the court as it set the new date for the ruling.  
When the judges went for lunch yesterday, State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam visited the old High Court building, where the tribunal sits, in order to have a look at the courtroom where a second tribunal will also be held.  
As the state minister was passing through the prison cell beside the staircase, detained BNP lawmaker Salauddin called him.  
"Assalamu Alaikum, the state minister for law!" said Salauddin, who was in the tribunal custody.  
"Now that you put me into prison, do send some good food to eat," he added.  
Qamrul Islam, who seemed to be in a hurry, took the stairs up without saying anything.  
The BNP leader was being attended by his family members at the prison cell of the International Crimes Tribunal.  
Jamaat-e-Islami leaders Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and Delawar Hossain Sayedee were also there at the prison cell.  
Salauddin is among the two BNP and six Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, who are facing war crimes charges now.