

NEWS IN *brief*

**Proposals called for study on Saarc states' diasporic cultures**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saarc Cultural Centre in Colombo has called for proposals for research on diasporic cultures and identity of Saarc member states during 18th to 20th centuries.

Deadline for submission of the proposals, which was earlier July 30 this year, has been extended to September 30, said a foreign ministry press release.

Each researcher will get US \$3,000 (or an equivalent amount in the local currency) for carrying out the research.

For details, interested persons may contact Saarc Cultural Centre, Colombo or email to saarc-scc@slt.net.lk or visit www.saarculture.org or Saarc

**Info commission settled 52 complaints this year**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Commission this year has settled a total of 52 complaints filed to the commission by information seekers on different issues till yesterday.

Twelve out of 14 complaints has been settled in the last two days in separate hearings at the commission's court while hearing date for the remaining two complaints has been fixed.

Acting Chief Information Commissioner M A Taher chaired the hearing while Information Commissioner

**2 Indian navy ships due in Ctg Sept 29 on goodwill visit**

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian Naval Ships INS Sujata and ICGS Varuna, which form part of the Training Squadron, are scheduled to arrive in Chittagong port on September 29 on a four-day goodwill visit.

The visit of the ships is a part of the ongoing defence cooperation between India and Bangladesh, said a press release yesterday.

During their stay at Chittagong, the Indian Navy cadets will visit Bangladesh Naval Academy and other

**Terms, conditions for mental health professionals sought**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion urged the government to include specific terms and conditions required for the professionals involved in serving the mentally ill people in Mental Health Law 2011.

They also suggested forming an association to ensure transparency, morality and efficiency in providing mental health treatment in the country.

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) and Educational and Counseling Psychology Department (DECP) of Dhaka University jointly organised the discussion styled "Safeguard the Mental Health" at the DU

Bangladeshis bound for the Middle-Eastern countries wait outside Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital yesterday uncertain of their flight timing as Biman Bangladesh, giving priority to Hajj flights, has been repeatedly failing to keep to its regular schedules. *Inset, one passenger's return visa shows that his date of return to the Saudi capital Riyadh expires tomorrow. (Story on Page 1)*

PHOTO: STAR



HOLDING NEXT GENERAL ELECTION

**PM asks secretaries to work impartially**

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the top bureaucrats to work impartially to ensure holding the next parliamentary election in a free, fair and credible manner.

Directing secretaries to help democracy's continuation, she said the election would be arranged in consultation with all stakeholders, so they would have to play sincere role.

The premier was speaking to the secretaries at a meeting at Bangladesh Secretariat.

She sought cooperation from them to prevent repetition of the 1/11 and ensure that no-one could take over state power through the "back door".

Hasina, also president of Awami League, asked the bureaucrats to show zero tolerance to corrupt officials and employees in their respective offices.

All the 59 secretaries, who attended the meeting, assured her of their all-out support to construct Padma bridge.

Cabinet Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan briefed journalists after the four-

hour meeting.

At the meeting, the premier rejected the secretaries' plea for omitting a clause in the Anti-Corruption Commission (Amendment) Act-2012 that prior permission would not be needed for investigating corruption against government officials and employees.

Hasina said if the ACC found no corruption, then what if the provision was there.

She also asked the secretaries to implement her party's election manifesto. "Review the manifesto and implement those [pledges] still undelivered."

The premier directed the officials to digitise land management system and asked them not to show the excuse of legal barriers to people.

During the meeting, the officials noted that the secretariat was suffering from shrinking space following an increase in the number of ministries.

A total of nine senior secretaries also requested the premier for a new pay scale for them. Hasina said she would look into the matter.

**Govt fails to keep civil rights pledges Says NHRC chairman**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite making progress in protecting citizens' economic, social and cultural rights, the government has some failures in defending civil and political rights, said National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Mizanur Rahman at a seminar's end yesterday.

The government is pledge-bound to show zero tolerance towards extra-judicial killings, forced disappearances and custodial tortures but in reality, there is no reflection of the pledges' implementation, he said.

NHRC organised the two-day national seminar, "Universal Periodic Review" (UPR), in a Dhaka hotel to discuss on its draft UPR report, to be submitted before United Nations Human Rights Council by October 9.

"In the report, we called upon the government to implement the promises," he said.

Addressing the seminar, Cabinet Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan said, "In many areas we have good laws. But we have constraints in implementation and enforcement."

NHRC Member Kazi Reazul Hoque summarised the seminar's recommendations, which includes strengthening NHRC and protecting the rights of children, the physically challenged, indigenous people, minority communities, migrant workers, refugees and other vulnerable groups.

It also recommended women empowerment, an end to the culture of impunity and sustainable environmental development.

GAZIPUR-4 POLLS  
**SC stays HC's permission for Bazlul's candidacy**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Independent candidate Bazlul Haque cannot contest the September 30 Gazipur-4 by-election, as the Supreme Court yesterday stayed for eight weeks a High Court order that asked the Election Commission to allow him to run the race.

The EC had cancelled his candidacy on grounds that he did not submit attested copies of his educational certificates and the paper showing support of one percent of voters of the constituency.

Bazlul however denied the allegation and filed a writ petition with the HC, which asked the EC on September 18 to allow him to contest the election.

Yesterday the EC filed a petition with the SC seeking a stay on the HC order.

After hearing the EC petition, Chamber Judge of SC's Appellate Division Justice MA Wahhab Miah stayed the HC order.

Additional Attorney General MK Rahman, who appeared for the EC, said Bazlul's nomination paper was invalid, as he "had not submitted" the required documents.

**Bangladeshis held in Tanzanian jail return tomorrow**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty Bangladeshis, who were held in different Tanzanian jails for several months, will return to Bangladesh tomorrow with financial assistance of MGH Group.

They will reach Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport by Turkish Airlines at 5:00am.

Tanzanian police arrested them when they were en route to South Africa by road via Uganda.

Following media reports, MGH Group communicated to the government to bring them home and offered their assistance, said Abdur Rahim, director of MGH Group.

According to a report published in The Daily Star on July 30, 19 Bangladeshis were held in two jails in Tanzania, said Bangladesh high commission in Kenya that oversees consular affairs in Tanzania.

**The association of unemployed nurses with diplomas stage a sit-in outside Bangladesh Secretariat, where the health ministry is situated, demanding implementation of the prime minister's June 19, 2009 assurance of filling vacant posts and appoint another 5,000 nurses to government-run healthcare institutions.**

PHOTO: STAR



CYLINDER, PIPELINE GAS

**JS body suggests reducing price gap**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on power, energy and mineral resources ministry yesterday recommended reducing the huge price gap between cylinder gas and pipeline gas.

"It's totally illogical that the price of cylinder gas is much higher than that of pipeline gas. This is also discriminatory against the users of cylinder gas," Maj Gen (ret'd) Shubid Ali Bhuiyan, chief of the committee, told The Daily Star after its meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The price of a gas-filled cylinder is over TK 1,600, while monthly cost for consumption of gas supplied through pipelines for a single household stands at around Tk 400, he said. "It is totally discriminatory and

illogical."

Shubid Ali, also an Awami League lawmaker, said the committee asked the ministry to find some mechanism to bring a balance between the prices of pipeline gas and cylinder gas.

The committee did not give any direction to the ministry whether to increase the price of pipeline gas or to decrease the price of cylinder gas, he said.

"We have asked the officials concerned to sit with experts and stakeholders to find out how to bring the balance between the two prices."

The parliamentary watchdog also recommended that the government goes for open-pit mining method whenever it takes the decision to extract coal.

VANDALISM FOR EXTORTION

**Sylhet BCL men on 4-day remand**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Sylhet court yesterday sent to four-day remand two Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) men in connection with a CNG station vandalism case.

They are Sylhet district unit BCL Vice-President Salim Ahmed Chowdhury and activist Saad Ullah. They were arrested from a hotel in the capital on September 16.

The court also ordered police to quiz four others--Kabul, Sayem, Shamim and Zainul who were also earlier arrested in the case, at the jail gate.

Managing director of Surma Autocare CNG Filling Station in the city's Shibganj area, Abdul Hasib Bhuiyan, filed the case on September 5.

In the case statement, the complainant said Salim and 14 others attacked his staff and vandalised his station that night after he denied paying Tk 5 lakh as extortion.

Later, Sylhet CNG station and tank lorry owners and petroleum dealers had said they would start an indefinite strike from September 23 if the main accused of the case were not arrested within that time.

**DHAKA TODAY**

**Roundtable**  
The Bangla daily Prothom Alo will organise a roundtable; Venue: its premises; Time: 3:00pm.

**Seminar**  
Channel i will organise a seminar; Venue: its premises; Time: 4:00pm.

**Convocation**  
Independent University, Bangladesh will hold its convocation; Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre; Time: 11:00am.

**Views exchange meeting**  
Bangladesh Jatiya Mahila Ainjibi

Samity will organise a views exchange meeting; Venue: Ruposhi Bangla Hotel; Time: 1:00pm.

**Discussion**  
Coalition of Local NGOs, Bangladesh will organise a discussion; Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity; Time: 11:00am.

**National workshop**  
Rajuk will hold a national workshop; Venue: Ruposhi Bangla Hotel; Time: 9:00am.

**Annual general meeting**  
Dhaka Reporters Unity Bahumukhi

**WEATHER TODAY**

**Rain likely**

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Sylhet and Khulna divisions and at a few places over Dhaka, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

**The sun sets in the capital today at 5:57pm and rises tomorrow at 5:47am.**

Country's highest temperature 35.1 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Ishwardi and lowest 25.0 degrees at Dinajpur and Srimongal.

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	33.0	26.9	74	73
Chittagong	31.2	25.9	76	80
Rajshahi	34.5	26.3	85	77
Rangpur	30.0	26.5	96	89
Khulna	33.0	26.5	88	90
Barisal	33.0	26.0	82	83
Sylhet	33.6	26.6	81	88