

Bangladesh-Myanmar meet today

UNB, Dhaka

The sixth meeting of Bangladesh-Myanmar Joint Commission for economic cooperation will begin today to establish better connectivity and boost bilateral trade between the two next-door neighbours.

Deputy Minister for Commerce Dr Pwint San will lead the Myanmar side while Bangladesh Commerce Secretary Mahub Ahmed the home side to the meeting to be held at Hotel Purbani in the capital, an official at the commerce ministry told the news agency.

He said the meeting, set to start at 10:00am, will focus on enhancing economic cooperation and establishing regional connectivity.

UISCs earn Tk 120cr in 2 years

BSS, Dhaka

The Union Information Service Centres (UISCs) that enter into third year today have earned Tk 120 crore so far providing services to 10.80 crore rural people, officials of Access to Information (A2I) of Prime Minister's Office have said.

They said since launching of 4,501 UISCs on 10 November, 2010 across the country, the centres have been providing services to an average 45 lakh people each month and earning over Tk 5 crore per month. Of the country's total 4,545 unions, the government has set up 4,516 UISCs during the last two years.

"Bangladesh is witnessing a significant change in the public service delivery system due to setting up of various services like district e-service and UISCs that have ensured people's access to public service," National Project Director of A2I Md Nazrul Islan Khan (NI Khan) said this yesterday while making his comments on completion of establishment of two-year of UISCs.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina launched the UISC in the lowest tier of the administration to disseminate information and deliver public services to all citizens.

Sources involved in A2I said the union parishad based information centres, equipped with computers and wireless internet, will offer various online and offline services to people at nominal charge.

Locals block with tree branches and bamboos a portion of the Khandaker Sarak in the capital's Jurain, which is dotted with large puddles and craters, to prevent further damage of the road. The photo was taken on Friday.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

War crimes trial must go on

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procession against the regime of military ruler HM Ershad on November 10, 1987.

Hasina alleged that a vested quarter was out to foil the trial of war criminals. "But by the grace of almighty Allah none will be able to save them as the people have overwhelmingly extended their support to us on this issue," she said.

In this connection, Hasina, who is the Awami League president, recalled that the BNP had called a hartal on the day of the verdict in the Bangabandhu killing case in November 1998 to prevent the judges from attending the court. "But they [BNP] could not save the killers of Bangabandhu."

The prime minister said Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had initiated the trial of war criminals in 1973, and as part of the process, many identified war criminals were

detained at that time.

But, she said, after his assassination, the BNP and its founder Ziaur Rahman had rehabilitated the war criminals. Zia also rewarded the killers of Bangabandhu by giving them jobs at Bangladesh's diplomatic missions abroad.

Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, AL presidium members Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Kazi Zafrullah and Satish Chandra Roy, General Secretary and LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam, Foreign Minister and AL Joint Secretary Dipu Moni, and Organising Secretaries AFM Bahauddin Nasim and Ahmed Hossain were also present on the occasion.

Besides, office bearers of Chandpur District unit, lawmakers of the party, administrator of Chandpur District Council, and leaders and activists of various party units, associates and like-

minded bodies attended the meeting.

Highlighting her government's successes in various fields, including agriculture, education, health, foreign policy, law and order, employment and power generation, the prime minister said her government's biggest achievement had been in containing militancy and terrorism.

She said the BNP-Jamaat alliance government had unleashed a reign of terror by killing and torturing opposition leaders and activists and nurturing terrorists and militants.

The BNP-Jamaat alliance also patronised bribery and corruption massively. "They siphoned off money abroad when at home people were not getting food," she said.

The prime minister called upon the people to work together so that the country did not slip back into darkness.

Poet conference held at JU

BSS, JU

A poet conference was held yesterday on Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus marking the birth anniversary of Md Khalid Hossain, a professor of JU Bangla department.

The Writers Foundation Association of Bangladesh organised the conference at the Zahir Raihan Auditorium of JU.

JU Vice Chancellor Prof Anwar Hossain inaugurated the function as the chief guest while poet Nasir Ahmed addressed as special guest.

Around 50 poets from home and abroad participated in the conference.

Abul Kalam Azad, president of Writers Foundation Association of Bangladesh, presided over the function.

Chevron in sticky stew

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assets in Argentina. All operations in Argentina are conducted by subsidiaries that have nothing to do with the fraudulent judgment in Ecuador," Chevron spokesman Kent Robertson said via email.

An Ecuadorian court last year ordered Chevron to pay \$19 billion for the contamination of watersheds over nearly 30 years that the plaintiffs say sickened indigenous tribes people and farmers in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

Chevron has refused to make any payments and accuses Ecuadorian courts of fraud. Because the company has few assets in the Andean nation, the plaintiffs are seeking enforcement of the ruling in other countries, including Argentina, Brazil and Canada. An Argentine judge ordered the asset embargo on Wednesday.

The claimants' legal team estimates that

Chevron's assets in Argentina are worth around \$2 billion and that they could obtain some \$600 million a year if the embargo were enforced. Chevron is Argentina's fourth-largest oil producer.

The two Chevron subsidiaries filed a motion to revoke the court's embargo order, arguing "it is improper on the basis of the plaintiffs' documented fraud, jurisdiction, and misapplication of law," Robertson said.

Karen Hinton, U.S. spokeswoman for the Ecuadorians, said the asset freeze must remain in place until the Argentine court decides whether it can enforce the Ecuadorian judgment.

"We expect that Chevron's attempt to undo the freeze order in Argentina will fail," she said. US Supreme Court denies Chevron appeal. Earlier on October 9, the BBC reported that the US Supreme Court has declined to block a judgement from an Ecuadorian court that Chevron pay \$19 b in damages for pollution in the Amazon.

The high court did not explain why it decided to reject the appeal from Chevron.

The case claimed that Texaco contaminated land

MoU on research between DU, CSE signed

BSS, Dhaka

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on education and research was signed between Dhaka University (DU) and Chittagong Stock Exchange Ltd (CSE) at DU vice chancellor's office yesterday.

DU Treasurer Prof Kamal Uddin and CSE Chief Executive Officer Syed Sajid Husain signed the MoU on behalf of their respective sides.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, CSE President Al Maruf Khan, University Grants Commission members Prof M Muhibur Rahman and Prof Abul Hashem and Business Studies Faculty Dean Prof Jamal Uddin Ahmed were, among others, present on the occasion.

It's my remark, not Amartya's

FROM PAGE 1

recorded proof that the finance minister on Thursday told reporters: "Prof Amartya said that so many good things are happening in this country but they are not projected anywhere in the world only because of Prof Yunus."

Muith told reporters at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in Dhaka yesterday, "Amartya Sen did not make any such comment about Prof Yunus. It was my comment."

When asked whether he made any comment involving the highly acclaimed Indian economist and the Grameen Bank founder, the minister said: "I did not

make such comments."

After inaugurating the "International Inter-Ministerial Conference on Evidence for Action: South-South Collaboration" yesterday, Muith said: "I had told [reporters] that Amartya said the country is doing so well but it is not being highlighted by the press. He is sad about this."

"I am very sorry that Amartya has been linked with it. How can Amartya speak against Yunus? Is it possible?"

Later, a statement, sent to The Daily Star by his senior information officer Md Shahedur Rahman, said: "In his comments on

November 8, the minister said Prof Yunus's negative stance and campaign is an obstacle to wooing foreign direct investment into Bangladesh, and there is no complete truth in his campaign."

The statement said Prof Yunus has been relentlessly expressing his concerns about the future of Grameen Bank for the last two years and saying that the government wants to destroy the bank.

"The campaign is out of touch with reality and harmful for the country. It is his personal opinion of the finance minister and he has not discussed with any-

body on the issue," said the statement.

However, Muith at the hotel yesterday said, "Yunus is a respected person and my friend."

The statement sent to The Daily Star said Amartya had not made any comment about Prof Yunus, and his comments were focused on speedy development of Bangladesh.

"Some have linked the two things together intentionally or unintentionally and published distorted and baseless news about it. The whole statement has been filmed and was properly aired in electronic media and published in many newspapers."

"Some have unnecessarily added the name of Prof Yunus with the comments about Prof Amartya," claimed the statement.

The statement also said the minister was extremely saddened for the unnecessary inclusion of the name of Prof Yunus in the statement of Amartya admiring Bangladesh's economy.

"He [the minister] apologises to Amartya Sen for the distorted news published in the Bangladesh media. The finance minister thinks Amartya Sen has the highest regards for Bangladesh and has always projected Bangladesh's achievement on the world stage enthusiastically," said the statement.

The comments from Muith surprised Amartya, who teaches economics at Harvard University in the

US.

In a reply to a query from The Daily Star on Thursday, Amartya said, "I am particularly surprised--indeed astonished--to see his [Muith] attributing to me a view that is not mine."

"Indeed, the alleged utterance is not close to anything I told Muith when we met briefly at the VIP lounge at the Bangkok airport last month," the statement added urging Muith to withdraw his comments.

The Nobel laureate added that he was not at all accusing Yunus of preventing the recognition and praise that Bangladesh deserves.

Meanwhile, Dhaka-based Yunus Centre, which promotes microcredit and social business ideas of the Banker to the Poor, said Prof Yunus has strongly protested the minister's comments linking him with Amartya.

"The allegation of negatively campaigning against Bangladesh has been brought against him [Yunus] in the statement without any evidence and proof."

"Prof Yunus thinks this type of untrue, baseless and fabricated statement from an important minister of the country is undesirable and unfortunate. He requests the minister to refrain from making such confusing comments in future," said a Yunus Centre statement.

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