

Amartya Sen in town

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen will deliver a talk on economic development and human progress in Dhaka today.



Daily Prothom Alo and Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) jointly organised the public lecture at Krishibid Institute auditorium in the capital's Farmgate at 3:00pm. The lecture, which is open for all, would follow a question-answer session.

The programme is arranged on the occasion of the publication of *Bharat: Unnayan O Banchana*, which is actually the Bengali translation of the book titled *An Uncertain Glory: India and Its Contradictions*, jointly written by Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze.

CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan will preside over the programme.

Ananda Publishers of India published the book while Prothoma Prokashoni, Prothom Alo's books wing, is the sole distributor of the Bengali translation.

Kerry to visit Bangladesh soon: FM

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Secretary of State John Kerry will be visiting Bangladesh soon to strengthen Dhaka-Washington ties, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali said yesterday.

On February 19, Mahmood had a meeting with Kerry on the sidelines of a counter-terrorism summit in Washington DC.

The date of the visit has not been fixed yet, but he [Kerry] is coming, the minister reportedly told a few journalists at his office.

It will be Kerry's first trip to Bangladesh if the visit takes place.

Earlier, a foreign ministry press release said, "When Foreign Minister Mahmood Ali invited his counterpart to visit Bangladesh, John Kerry responded very positively and said that he would love to take the visit at the earliest opportunity."

Asked whether Kerry would visit Bangladesh soon, US Embassy Spokesperson Monica L Shie told The Daily Star yesterday, "Although Secretary Kerry has said that he would like to visit Bangladesh, we know of no plan at this time."

However, there was no mention about Kerry's visit in the readout issued by the State Department Press Office after the meeting between Mahmood and Kerry in Washington DC.

In the readout, the US state department noted Bangladesh's increasing strategic importance in the region and underscored the need to protect its fundamental freedoms.

Militants' training

FROM PAGE 1

The drive at the farm, two kilometres away from any locality, lasted about 13 hours.

Rab-7 Commanding Officer Lt Col Miftah Uddin Ahmed said Mobarak Hossain and his brother Abdullah were looking after the "farm". Both are on the run.

Rab arrested Mobassher Hossain, 17, of Faridpur, Abdul Khalek Huraira, 21, of Mymensingh, Amir Hossain Ishaq, 25, of Gopalganj, Aminul Islam Hamja, 22, and Habibur Rahman Tasim, 19, of Tangail at the training centre.

Commander Mufti Mahmud Khan, director Legal and Media Wing of Rab, while briefing reporters at the farm yesterday afternoon said they have come to know from the arrestees that training was being given in phases.

First, people of poor families were selected and brought in to the madrasa in Hathazari. They were motivated towards Arabic and Islamic education there, he said.

Later, they were sent to the farm and motivated towards militancy and videos and photos were used to make the trainees believe Muslims around the world were being tortured, he claimed.

Commander Mufti said they were also shown speeches of the leaders of different militant organisations, like al-Qaeda and ISIS, and footage of guerrilla warfare of these organisations.

He said they were trained at night. Forkan, a local youth, said they had no idea about the training centre and that all they knew was that it was a farm. People avoided the area fearing wild elephants, he added.

The farm has a thatched-house, six corrugated iron sheet buildings, two toilets and some poultry, cows, sheep, chicken and ducks.



A large crowd gather at Paturia ferry terminal to watch rescuers at work after a launch went down in the Padma following a collision with a cargo vessel yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

41 killed in launch capsizes

FROM PAGE 1

Inland Water Transport Corporation and the river police jointly launched a rescue operation around 12:00noon, and rescued at least 60 people, said officials.

Rescue efforts were on till late last night. Around 150 members of the Navy, Coast Guard, Fire Service, the BIWTA, the BIWTC and district administration took part in the operation.

"We are searching for missing passengers," Mohammad Hossain, a director of the BIWTA, said last night.

Rescue vessel Rustam, which reached the spot from Mawa around 11:00pm, was working to salvage the sunken vessel, he said.

Meanwhile, police seized fertiliser-

| 4 MAJOR LAUNCH DISASTERS SINCE 2009 | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| NAME | DATE | RIVER/DIST | DEATH TOLL |
| MV Pinak-6 | Aug 4, 2014 | Padma Munshiganj | Over 100 |
| MV Miraj-4 | May 15, 2014 | Meghna Munshiganj | 62 |
| MV Shariatpur-1 | Mar 12, 2012 | Meghna Munshiganj | 145 |
| MV Koko-4 | Nov 27, 2009 | Tentulia Bhola | 87 |

laden Nargis-1 on its way to Baghabari river port in Sirajganj and arrested its master Iqbal and his assistant Shahidul.

PLACING WREATH AT SHAHEED MINAR Ershad obstructed by his own men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of leaders of Jatiya Party did not allow party chief HM Ershad place the JP floral wreath at the Central Shaheed Minar on Ekushey February when he went there to pay tribute to the language martyrs.

Insiders told The Daily Star that two to three leaders including Mohammad Selim Uddin, MP, who are close to Leader of the Opposition Raushan Ershad, had carried the wreath of JP but did not give Ershad room to stand beside Raushan when it was placed.

"The incident happened in front of senior leaders including Raushan, but none of them took any step to that end," said a senior leader who is close to Ershad.

It has been 26 years since former military dictator Ershad could go to the Shaheed Minar due to an embargo by state organisations of Dhaka University. But this time it was his party men who stopped him, eyewitnesses said.

Several student leaders of the anti-Ershad movement told The Daily Star that the former dictator had visited the Shaheed Minar once after he had formed his party, but the student organisations resisted and had even

insulted a senior JP leader.

JP Joint Secretary General Rezaul Islam Bhuiyan said some leaders were disrespectful towards the party chairman on February 21 and that tough action should be taken against them.

The JP leader, however, did not elaborate on the incident during his speech at the discussion on the International Mother Language Day held at Institute of Diploma Engineers.

At the same discussion, Ershad without mentioning the incident just said he was very happy to go to the Shaheed Mina after 26 years. He also lambasted the ruling Awami League and opposition BNP for the ongoing violence.

"The top two political parties will be thrown into the dustbin of history... their place will be in museum if they fail to resolve the ongoing political crisis," he observed.

Meanwhile, former Ducus vice-president Sultan Mohammed Mansur Ahmed lambasted the ruling Awami League for allowing the former dictator to visit the Shaheed Minar.

"By allowing him, the government has insulted the martyrs of the anti-Ershad movement," he observed.

IRAN NUKE NEGOTIATIONS

Kerry, Zarif meet in Geneva for key talks

AFP, Geneva

US Secretary of State John Kerry arrived in Geneva yesterday for fresh talks with his Iranian counterpart on Tehran's nuclear programme, after warning "significant gaps" remain ahead of a key deadline.

World powers are trying to strike a deal with Iran that would prevent Tehran from developing a nuclear bomb in return for an easing of punishing international economic sanctions.

Iran denies its nuclear programme has military objectives.

Kerry had been set to arrive in the Swiss city Sunday morning for two days of talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, but was delayed in London.

US and Iranian diplomats have been meeting in Geneva since Friday, and senior negotiators from the so-called P5+1 group of Britain, China, France, Russia, the United States and Germany were also expected to meet on Sunday to help drive the talks forward.

Speaking before the talks, Wang Qun, director general of the arms control and disarmament department

of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, said: Our resolve is greater than the difficulties."

There is a heightened sense of urgency as the clock ticks down towards a March 31 deadline to agree on a political framework for the deal.

But Kerry warned in London Saturday that "there are still significant gaps, there is still a distance to travel."

"President (Barack) Obama has no inclination whatsoever to extend these talks beyond the period that has been set out," Kerry said.

He said the P5+1 was "unified" in its views of what was needed to reach a deal, adding that the Geneva talks would help show "whether or not Iran is able to match its words about its willingness to show that its program is fully peaceful."

As a sign that efforts were intensifying, US Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz arrived in Geneva Saturday to take part in the talks for the first time. Ali Akbar Salehi, the director of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organisation, was also participating in the negotiations.

Observers said Moniz and Salehi's participation was a promising sign that a deal could be within reach.

Greece readies reforms to keep bailout alive

AFP, Athens

Greece raced Sunday to finalise reform proposals that would keep its loan lifeline open under an EU debt deal that saw its anti-austerity ambitions curtailed.

European finance ministers on Friday gave Athens until Monday to present proposals that would convince its creditors to grant a four-month extension of its debt bailout.

A top government official on Sunday said Athens would submit proposals that will take the struggling Greek economy "out of sedation."

"We are compiling a list of measures to make the Greek civil service more effective and to combat tax evasion," minister of state Nikos Pappas told Mega channel. Greece's hard-left government is

walking a tightrope between its commitments to European creditors and its electoral pledges to end austerity in a country struggling to recover from severe economic crisis.

The four-month extension would allow for a new reform deal to be negotiated during that time period.

Pappas, a close aide of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, said the talks would be "a daily battle...every centimetre of ground must be won with effort."

While many said Athens had capitulated to European demands in the deal on the four-month extension, Tsipras insisted Saturday Greece had achieved an "important negotiating success" which "cancels out austerity."

In a televised address, Tsipras said

ANXIOUS wait, PAIN unbearable

STAR REPORT

With a sense of fear and uncertainty evident in their eyes and faces, several hundred people gathered around the office of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) near the Paturia ferry terminal in Manikganj.

Whenever a body was brought in, they struggled for a close view to know if it was any of their dear ones. If anyone was identified, they burst into tears and made desperate attempt to give it a tight hug.

The situation has been prevailing in and around the BRTC office, where the dead were kept in rows, since the passenger vessel MV Mostafa sank into the river Padma being hit by cargo vessel Nargis-1 yesterday morning.

"Three of my nephews and nieces were on the launch. I have found two of them and the other one is still missing," said Majid Miah, a resident of Sametpur under Daulatpur upazila in Manikganj.

Rafiq Miah was looking for his four-year-old niece.

"My brother and his two daughters were traveling on the vessel. Bodies of my brother and one of the girls have been found," he told The Daily Star.

Faruk, a bus driver of Goalanda of Rajbari, went to Dhaka with his family members around a week ago.

"We were returning home. When the launch sank, I jumped into the river and managed to survive. But my wife and daughter are still missing," he told The Daily Star.

India humble Proteas

FROM PAGE 1

World Cup after three previous losses.

Although the match may have little consequences for their respective campaigns, India, roared on by a blue-clad, flag-waving army of fans will have reaped a huge confidence boost from downing the highly fancied South Africans, which followed an emotional opening win over Pakistan.

Melbourne resident Dhawan's sparkling ton anchored century-plus partnerships with Virat Kohli, 46, and Rahane as AB de Villiers' men toiled on a steamy day in the field after losing the toss.

In an uncharacteristically clumsy fielding display, South Africa dropped three catches, including a sharp chance to Hashim Amla at backward point that relieved Dhawan on 53. Adding to their pain was an apparent hamstring injury to the seamer Vernon Philander, who bowled only four overs.

India, by contrast, were positively South African in their fielding, with Mohit Sharma and the captain and

wicketkeeper, MS Dhoni, combining to run out De Villiers for 30, an important breakthrough to end a 68-run partnership with Faf du Plessis.

Du Plessis was unable to dig in after raising his half-century, miscuing a slog straight to Dhawan at mid-off to be out for 55 and leave his team reeling at 133 for four.

JP Duminy, six, and David Miller, 22, followed quickly, the latter run out by an excellent throw from Umesh Yadav at square leg. The South African tail then expired quickly.

Ravichandran Ashwin finished on three for 41 to lead the India bowling, with the fast bowler Mohammed Shami and the medium-pacer Mohit grabbing two wickets each.

South Africa's selectors dropped Farhaan Behardien in favour of Wayne Parnell and the move backfired with the fast-bowling all-rounder conceding 85 runs from his nine overs.

Parnell would eventually dismiss Dhawan in the 44th over after the 29-year-old skied a pull-shot to Amla at

long leg, having raised his seventh ODI century.

The faith in Imran Tahir was better placed, however, with the leg-spinner capturing Kohli's wicket with a full toss. Rahane bashed three sixes in a glittering 60-ball knock before being trapped lbw by Dale Steyn with four overs to spare.

Meanwhile, Thisara Perera and Jeevan Mendis combined for a 58-run partnership to give Sri Lanka a nervous four-wicket victory over Afghanistan in their World Cup Pool A match at the University Oval in Dunedin.

The pair finished off what Mahela Jayawardene (100) and Angelo Mathews (44) had started after Sri Lanka had been reduced to 51 for four by the World Cup debutants as they chased 233 for victory.

Afghanistan had been dismissed for 232 in 49.4 overs, which was not considered enough of a target to defend on the small University Oval ground and good pitch that tends to get easier to bat on as the day progresses.

Khaleda looking to illegal ways

FROM PAGE 1

Fakhruddin and Moeen Uddin in 2007 also saw the consequences as they could no longer live in the country.

"So everybody knows the result. I don't believe anyone will dare step into the fire."

However, the BNP chief was offered some assurance that "foreign masters" would help her assume office, the PM said. But, she added, the hope has been shattered for forging six US congressmen's letter and making false claim of a telephone conversation with the Indian BJP chief.

Khaleda had been awaiting US help, but US Secretary of State John Kerry

rather called for immediate end to violence unleashed by BNP-Jamaat alliance, she said.

The PM added the nation did not get any cooperation in the 1971 Liberation War from the "foreign masters" Khaleda Zia was relying on.

The premier alleged that a foreign quarter tried to oust her by raising corruption allegation over the Padma bridge project.

She also castigated the civil society members, including the 13 "concerned citizens" who recently formed a committee to push for a national dialogue.

They too were waiting to benefit from an unconstitutional changeover,

she alleged.

They might have forgotten that anyone grabbing state power unconstitutionally would get capital punishment as the constitution was amended to this end, she added.

Hasina said one of the 13 members lobbied her for the post of cabinet secretary of the 1996-2001 AL government. "Now they are giving us advice."

Earlier in the morning while visiting the law ministry, the PM said the BNP-Jamaat alliance is now planning to make grenade attacks on innocent people as their petrol bombs have failed to yield anything.