



Homes are inundated and it keeps on raining at Tengargaon of Chhatak in Sunamganj yesterday. A river that burst its banks flooded several villages in the area.

PHOTO: STAR

# WHO Southeast Asia meet in Dili Sept 7-11

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health ministers of the 11 countries of WHO's Southeast Asia Region are meeting in Dili, Timor-Leste, on September 7-11 to set health priorities and discuss the health agenda for the region.

Coming close on the heels of the earthquakes in Nepal and the spread of MERS Coronavirus, strengthening response to emergencies and outbreaks and building capacities under the International Health Regulation 2005 will be one of the key areas for discussion at the 68th Session of the Regional Committee Meeting, according to a press release.

Timor-Leste Prime Minister Dr Rui Maria de Araujo will inaugurate the meeting. WHO Southeast Asia Regional Director Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, WHO experts and senior officials from the health ministries and journalists of member countries will also be present.

This is the first time that the WHO has invited the media from outside the host country for the regional committee meeting.

Accelerating efforts to protect people

## Adieu, the doctor

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Hagidok of Kailakuri village.

Another villager Sahera Khatun said, "With the death of Doktor Bhui, I am feeling that I have lost my father."

Yaqub Ali, chairman of Sholakuri Union Parishad, said, "I was introduced to Doktor Bhui just after his arrival in the area. He was not only a good doctor but also a very good man."

"There was a huge relief among the poor people in the area after Dr Baker came here. Before his arrival, people had to travel some 16km to reach the nearest hospitals at Jalchhatra and Madhupur," he added.

Hundreds of people, including civil society representatives and government officials, attended the funeral of Dr Baker yesterday.

Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Zafurullah Chowdhury, poet Al Mujahid, Tangail Deputy Commissioner Mahbub Hossain, District Information Officer Golam Ahad, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mukhtar Aziz, and Joishahi Adivasi Unnayan Parishad President Eugene Nokrek, among others, were present.

"Dr Baker was a wonderful human being and we should be proud of him," told Zafurullah Chowdhury.

Pijon Nongmin, manager of Kailakuri Health Care Centre, said, "We will keep the healthcare centre alive forever in honour of our Doktor Bhui."

Dr Baker, a lifelong bachelor, left New Zealand three decades ago to serve the poor in Tangail's Madhupur reserved forest area.

against tobacco, advocating for health in the post-2015 global Sustainable Development Goals, and expanding effective services with stronger health workforce are among the topics that will be discussed, the release said.

The Regional Committee, the highest policy-making body of WHO in the region, will also deliberate about antimicrobial resistance, an issue which needs urgent attention and action.

The committee meets annually and the meeting is hosted by one of the 11 member countries of Southeast Asia.

The other members are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The previous meeting of the Southeast Asia Region was held in Dhaka.

## HC rejects

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Farah Mahbub and Justice Kazi Md Ejarul Haque Akondy turned down the petition with some observations. The court said the observations would be available in its full order.

The petitioner's lawyer Shishir Manir told The Daily Star that he would appeal the decision once the full verdict is published.

According to the section, if any person deliberately puts up obscene and derogatory information on a website or transmit it in any other electronic form, he or she will be sentenced to seven to 14 years' imprisonment and fined up to Tk one crore.

The petition was filed by Zakir Hossain on August 26. He is accused in a case filed under this section with the cyber tribunal in Dhaka. He had petitioned the HC to declare the section unconstitutional.

The section clearly violates the constitutional provisions regarding equality before law, right to protection of law, protection of life and personal liberty, and freedom of thought, conscience and free speech, he said in the petition.

During the hearing, Attorney General Mahbub Alam opposed the petition, saying Section 57 of the ICT act was consistent with relevant provisions in the constitution.

Yesterday's was the second such petition rejected by the HC.

On August 30, the HC dismissed another petition, terming it premature since, it said, the government was considering taking some steps regarding the law.

A separate HC bench on Tuesday issued a rule after hearing another petition filed by 11 citizens including university professors.

It asked the government to explain why Section 57 of the ICT act should not be declared unconstitutional.

Rights activists have been critical of the provision from the beginning but the debate over it and the demand for its repeal intensified following the arrest of

# BCL activists' suspension is unjust

They were misguided, says Prof Zafar Iqbal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The suspension of Chhatra League activists in connection with Sunday's assault on teachers at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) was unjust, acclaimed writer Prof Zafar Iqbal yesterday said.

They were misguided, he said, adding that those who had sent students to attack the teachers should be punished instead.

On Sunday, alleged BCL activists swooped on teachers at SUST during the latter's scheduled demonstration to stop Vice-chancellor Prof Aminul Haque Bhuiyan from entering his office. Several teachers, including Prof Yasmeen Haque, wife of Zafar Iqbal, were assaulted at the time.

The next day BCL suspended three of its SUST unit leaders followed by suspension of four BCL activists by the university authorities.

"I literally feel for them [the suspended students]," said the professor of the computer science and engineering department while replying to a query after a protest programme on the campus.

"Who have attacked the teachers? Boys of Chhatra League? No. They are students, our students. They are young boys, and what do they understand? They would understand what you make them understand."

Prof Yasmeen echoed his view. "Chhatra League has no fault of its own in the incident. We don't have any resentment against them. They are our

students and have been used to attack us. The vice-chancellor unleashed them to achieve his own ends," she said.

Earlier in the day, teachers under the banner of Mahan Muktiyuddher Chetonay Udbuddho Shikkhak Parishad abstained from work for three hours as part of their three-day programme protesting the assault on them. They also brought out a silent procession and held a rally in front of the administrative building-2.

A tense situation has been prevailing at the university since the teachers under the platform launched an agitation in April demanding removal of the VC for alleged misbehaviour with some teachers and for "irregularities".

However, the teachers who are on the side of the VC taught classes yesterday.

Meanwhile, 11 publishers, later joined by students from SUST, Brac and World University, at a human chain in front of the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka demanded punishment to those involved in the assault.

The attackers, whatever political links they might have, should be brought to justice, said cartoonist Ahsan Habib, editor and publisher of popular satire magazine Unmad and younger brother of Zafar Iqbal.

At another human chain at Shahabagh, Pahari Chhatra Parishad and Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra demanded exemplary punishment to those responsible for the attack.

# Over 1,000 tractors set to blockade Paris

AFP, Paris

Farmers riding more than 1,000 tractors will try to blockade Paris today as they converge on the French capital in protest at falling prices that they say are endangering their livelihoods.

The protest comes after months of unrest as farmers in the dairy and meat industries become increasingly desperate in the face of plummeting food prices which they blame on foreign competition, as well as supermarkets and distributors.

"We're at our wits' end," said Sebastien Louzaouen, a member of the Young Farmers' Union, which represents agricultural workers aged 35 and under.

# Trouble with

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much lower than the estimated cost.

The textbook board that has been distributing free textbooks since 2010 invited international tenders on April 29. Some 22 local printing firms submitted the lowest bid at Tk 221 crore, prompting the WB to express doubt over the quality of books they would deliver.

One of the conditions was that the WB teams would monitor quality during printing and after the books reach the upazilas and that the bills of the work would be paid only if the work is of satisfactory quality.

The lowest bidders who won the deals rejected the conditions outright and did not receive the notices of award on August 26.

To solve the crisis, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid and Primary and Mass Education Minister Mostafizur Rahman held a meeting with the representatives of the WB and the Asian Development Bank on Monday.

The education minister assured the WB that there would not be any compromise with the quality. He also assured that the government would form a cell to monitor the printing work and inspect the quality of books.

Shahid Serniabat, president of Bangladesh Mudran Shilpa Samity, said, "We want to assure that students would get the books in time. We will not compromise with the quality."

# 83pc had

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encounter situations where they may be taken advantage of by men and pressured into sexual relationships or persuaded to elope, Asadullah told The Daily Star.

However, the studies show that only 14.5 percent of women in the WilCAS survey had "love marriages" and their average age of marriage, 16.9 years, was higher than those whose marriages were arranged.

In the WilCAS survey, only three percent said they were married because their parents were concerned about their physical safety, and 72 percent said they were married off because their parents felt it was a good proposal.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, suggested finding out why early marriage is low in some districts and build policies based on the good practices of those districts.

"Early marriages are often found more in places with higher incidence of foreign migration. So it is not just poverty driven; but religious and cultural norms are involved too," said Prof Abdul Bayes, director of Brac Research and Evaluation Division.

Prof Binayek Sen, research director of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), among others, spoke.

# PM criticises

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She said her government has information that killers Rashed Chowdhury and Moslemuddin Khan have been staying in the USA and Nur Chowdhury has been in Canada.

About the whereabouts of the other killers, she said Col Rashid and Major Dalim are reportedly in Pakistan. "But the Pakistan government never admitted it. And the country is not cooperating with Bangladesh on the matter."

On Ziaur Rahman's role during and after the killing of Bangabandhu, she said it was "Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed and his agent Zia" who had carried out the August 15 bloodbath.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with most of his family members was brutally killed on August 15, 1975.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DHAKA  
The PM informed the House that Rajuk is drawing up a 20-year strategic plan to give the capital a new look. The plan would be finalised by November.

The plan, she added, will have guidelines on the issues of traffic jam, waterlogging and housing problems, setting up of new economic zones, improved land management, and environment and disaster management.

DHK-CTG RAIL LINK  
Replying to a query from a lawmaker, Hasina said her government has taken measures to implement a project titled "Construction of Double Track Standard Gauge Railway Line from Dhaka to Chittagong via Comilla/Laksham."

"A memorandum of understanding has been inked between the Bangladesh government and a Chinese company in this regard. Once the project is completed, passengers would be able to travel from Dhaka to Chittagong in three hours," she added.

The PM also elaborated on her government's various steps to prevent violence against women and children, human trafficking, child marriage and road accidents.

# 3 held

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under at least 10 police stations including Chawkbazar, Paltan, Bangshal. Bhatara in last couple of years and the officer-in-charge of the police stations used to fix their deployment."

"As we work with polices, we believed in what the fraudsters promised us," said a victim preferring anonymity.

When asked about the allegations against police, the DC Mofiz said they were not aware of their misdeed.

Police also seized over 50 identity cards, stamp papers, biodatas of their members, admission forms, different seals, rank badges of community police and many other related documents of their organisations.

The DC said the fraudsters have so far recruited over 15,000 people luring them with handsome salary, job regularisation, and accommodation facilities in future like police and Ansar members.

They used to take at least Tk 15,000 from each of them, sometimes more for their recruitment, he said adding they also took additional Tk 3,000 for uniform of community police.

"As soon as we came to know about their trick, police captured three of them and are trying to arrest others," he said.

The two organisations started journey in 2000 under one banner but got divided several years ago over the conflict of power.

# Anger as India's growth fails to provide employment

AFP, New Delhi

India's economy expanded by seven percent in the last quarter, making it one of the world's fastest-growing, but experts say violent protests over jobs in the prime minister's own state last week are a sign many are still not feeling the benefits.

They say that could spell trouble for Narendra Modi, who swept to power last year promising jobs, investment and a revival of India's flagging economy after 13 years in charge of the prosperous western state of Gujarat.

Many hoped the prime minister could replicate his success in Gujarat across India, where nearly one in four people lives on less than \$1.25 a day.

But the huge turnout last week for a mass rally in the state to demand better access to government jobs and university places for the Patidar caste has raised questions over the success of the so-called Gujarat model on which Modi built his reputation.

With the Patidar movement threatening to spread to other caste groups in India, economist Sunil Kumar Sinha said a lack of employment prospects for young people appeared to be driving social unrest.

"There has been a lot of trumpeting of the Gujarat growth model. But if this model was as successful as people thought, then agitation like we have seen by the Patels (Patidars) shouldn't have happened," said Sinha, a senior economist at India Ratings and Research.

"The government might rightly say that it's boosted the GDP number, or built roads, or provided power 24/7, but the bottom line is, can your model

produce enough jobs? If not, protests will happen."

Last week's protests centred on the demands of the Patidars, a relatively well-off caste of farmers and traders, for caste-based reservations -- long a sensitive issue in India.

The country sets aside a proportion of jobs and university places for Dalits, known as "untouchables", and for other so-called "backward castes", under measures intended to remedy centuries of discrimination.

"Either everyone should get reservation or no one should," said Hardik Patel, the movement's young firebrand leader, who has vowed to hold similar protests in other major Indian cities.

Some observers say Patel's own motives are more political than economic, and accuse him of manipulating local grievances over caste reservations to win popular support.

But there is no doubting the authenticity of those grievances, which analysts say stem from a failure to translate economic growth into job creation.

Figures out on Monday showed India's economy grew by seven percent year-on-year in the first quarter of the current financial year, matching China and outpacing most major economies.

Modi's government has relaxed rules for foreign investors and has promised to slash red tape which has long frustrated overseas companies, eager to create jobs for the millions of Indians who enter the employment market each year.

But Edward Rodrigues, an expert in social systems at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University, argues that India has failed to adapt its workforce since liberalising its economy in 1990.