



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attends a photo session with ambassadors and high commissioners working abroad at the inaugural session of a three-day Envoy's Conference at a hotel in the capital yesterday. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is organising the consultation meeting with all the Bangladesh envoys currently posted in 58 countries. This conference is being organised for the first time since independence. The theme of the Envoy's Conference is "Diplomacy for People and Peace". (Story on Page 11)

PHOTO:
BSS

Defamation case filed against Prof Asif Nazrul over FB post
STAR REPORT

A defamation case was filed against Dhaka University Professor Asif Nazrul with a Madaripur court on Thursday for an alleged Facebook post, which the teacher vehemently denied.

Faruk Khan, a cousin of Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan and also a member of Madaripur Zila Parishad, filed the case alleging that the law teacher willingly tarnished the image of the minister socially and politically with the Facebook post.

Chief Judicial Magistrate Jakir Hossain of the district asked Prof Asif Nazrul to appear before the court in the next hearing scheduled on December 14, reports our Madaripur correspondent.

In another move on Thursday, the minister's

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Work unitedly to protect country's democracy

Inu urges journalists at DRU best reporting award ceremony, five Star journos among 29 get the award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Democracy cannot flourish without freedom of media, said Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu, urging journalists to work in unison to protect democracy of the country.

"Media and democracy are two sides of a coin. If media, the fourth pillar of the state, is affected, other pillars are also affected," he said at the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) Best Reporting Award 2017 ceremony yesterday.

DRU awarded 29 journalists at its auditorium yesterday. Each awardee received Tk 50,000 and a crest.

Of them, five journalists from The Daily Star won the award. Inam Ahmed and Sakhawat Badsha jointly won it for their report on diplomacy while Porimol Palma for his report on health, Helemul Alam on urban problems and potentials, and Mohammad Al-Masum Molla for his report on the liberation war.

Addressing the ceremony as the chief guest, Inu said it was unfortunate that some professional journalists' organisations have been heavily divided, hampering professionalism as well as democratic values.

He called upon journalists to stay united and take a strong stance against militancy and those responsible for it.

The minister said the prime minister is

sympathetic about the journalists' demand for the ninth wage board.

The owners of the newspapers, who had been rigid to the demand, have also recently relaxed their stance. The government will form the wage board as soon as the owners nominate their representatives, he said.

"The ninth wage board will be finalised by early September next year," Inu said.

DRU President Sakhawat Hossain Badsha demanded swift formation of the wage board for all journalists from print and electronic media.

DRU Best Reporting Award 2017 Jury Board Chairman journalist Shajahan Sardar and DRU General Secretary Morsalin Nomani also spoke at the event.

The other journalists who received the award in print category include Mehedi Hasan of Naya Diganta in education; Ibrahim Hossain of Dhaka Tribune in objective economy; Rozina Islam of Prothom Alo in crime and law and order; Kazi Hafiz of Kaler Kantha in parliament and election; Azizur Rahman Ripon of The Financial Express in power and energy; Masud Alam of Prothom Alo in sports; Abu Saleh Roni of Samakal in politics, administration and judiciary; Kawser Rahman of Janakantha in agriculture and water

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Join hands to ensure constitutional rights

Dr Kamal urges all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said people irrespective of their political affiliations will have to get united to ensure their basic and constitutional rights.

"We as the owner of the country are not getting all basic and other rights mentioned in the constitution. We may have political differences among us," he said.

But nobody will deny the fact that there has to be the rule of law and people's security of life in the country, he said.

The noted jurist was speaking at a discussion in the Supreme Court Bar Association auditorium.

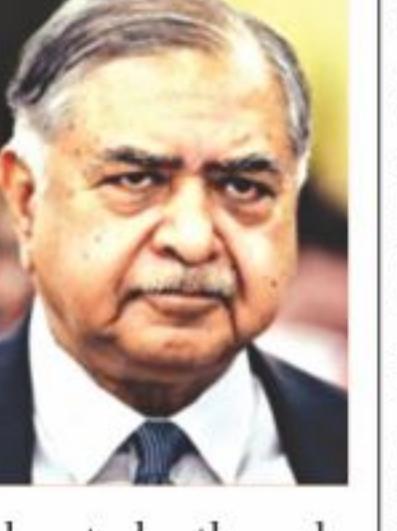
Democratic Lawyers Association of Bangladesh organised the discussion titled, "Freedom of the judiciary and present context", marking constitution day, November 4, 1972, the day of adoption of Bangladesh constitution, is considered as the constitution day.

"We got the constitution through sacrifice of millions of people. We have glorious past since the British rule that we got victory when we got united," said Kamal Hossain.

"People's united force is the strongest power. None can deprive Bangalees of their rights," he said.

The Gonoforum chief said, "We don't want pity. We want our rights that our constitution has guaranteed."

SCBA President Joynul Abedin, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal General Secretary Khalequzzaman, United National Awami Party President Pankaj Bhattacharya, former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hassan Chowdhury, senior advocates Subrata Chowdhury and Jogul Haidar spoke among others.



A passion for home-grown science

Khulna farmer hopes to create a beneficial new paddy variety

DIPANKAR ROY with ANDREW EAGLE

his modest landholdings he has been experimenting, drawing on ten plants each of two local varieties, namely the Shaheb Kochi and Kanchra strains of Aman paddy, as 'mother' and 'father' donors for his hybrid. He believes these varieties have a lot to offer the Khulna region due to their tolerance for saline soils. He also hopes his hybrid will be fast growing. "To create a new variety takes at a minimum eight years," he says.

To ask Aruni to describe the process is to open the floodgates of a broad passion. "What about pollination?" he poses. "It has to be done with care. At the time of flowering pollen samples from the father variety might optimally be taken in the afternoon, but the prime time for pollinating the mother variety might be in the morning hours." He also needs to emasculate the chosen mother flower by removing its stamens such that it cannot self-pollinate.

"My father used to send me to plough the fields," says Aruni, who in addition to being a farmer works as a day labourer. "He grew different rice varieties. My curiosity for paddy stems from my boyhood." Aruni dropped out of high school to tend the farm full-time. Friends and neighbours knew of his interest to cross-breed rice strains. They shared what knowledge they had.

"Then in 2010, local non-government organisation LOCOS, which has as one of its goals the preservation of native seeds," Aruni recalls, "chose me to attend a three-day workshop in Pirojpur led by a Filipino expert, on rice hybridisation. With some practical knowledge in hand I decided to dedicate my life to this activity."

Aruni's dream is to create a high-yield climate-adaptable paddy for farmers like him that can reduce poverty. Since 2010, on

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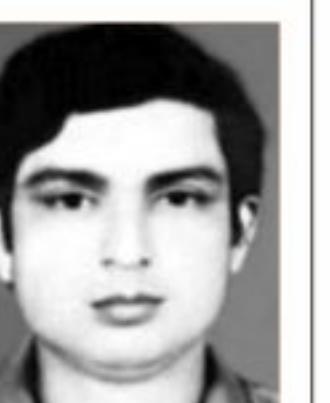


Winners of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) Best Reporting Award 2017 with guests at a ceremony in DRU auditorium yesterday. DRU awarded 29 journalists, including five from The Daily Star, in different categories. Each awardee received Tk 50,000 and a crest. Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu graced the occasion as the chief guest. DRU President Sakhawat Hossain Badsha, Jury Board Chairman journalist Shajahan Sardar and DRU General Secretary Morsalin Nomani also spoke.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Dr Milon Day today

BSS, Dhaka



Dr Milon Day will be observed across the country today commemorating the 27th martyrdom anniversary of Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon.

On this day in 1990, Dr Milon was killed by the goons of military junta near Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University at the height of anti-autocracy movement.

The supreme sacrifice of Dr Milon transformed the anti-autocracy movement into a mass upsurge that prompted the fall of the autocratic regime paving the way for restoration of democratic process in the country.

On the eve of the day, President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages recalling the supreme sacrifice of Dr Milon.

Numerous democracy-loving people, including Juba League leader Nur Hossain, Nurul Huda, Babul and Fattha, embraced martyrdom in the movement for restoring democracy.

President Hamid and Prime Minister Hasina prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul of Dr Milon.

Different political parties, and socio-cultural and professional bodies have chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the death anniversary of Dr Milon.

The programmes include placing wreaths and offering special prayers at his grave on Dhaka Medical College campus and at Milon Smriti Chattar (Square) near TSC.



Aruni Mondal in his paddy field. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

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