

Spend money on sanitation, safe water facilities to protect HR

PM urges rich nations, development partners

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said the rich nations and development partners could better spend their money on expanding safe water and sanitation facilities in the poor countries rather than spending in the name of protecting human rights.

"By doing so human rights could be much better protected," she told her audience from the regional countries and international agencies who are campaigning for ensur-

ing safe water and sanitation for millions of people still deprived of the facilities.

The prime minister was addressing the closing session of the three-day South Asian Conference on Sanitation (Sancosan) at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre (BCFCC) here.

Jointly hosted by Bangladesh government and a number of donor agencies and international organisations, the conference concluded adopting the Dhaka Declaration on Sanitation.

Nine countries--Afghanistan, host Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka--participated in the Sancosan, first of its kind.

The next conference will be held in Pakistan in 2005, to be followed by India in 2007, it was announced at the end of the meet.

On behalf of the participating countries, Indian Minister for Rural Development Kanshi Ram Rana spoke at the function. Bangladesh Health Minister Dr Khandaker

Mosharrif Hossain delivered address of welcome and Pakistan Health Minister Mohamed Nasir Khan gave a vote of thanks.

World Health Organisation (WHO) regional director on Sanitation Dr Utton Mochtar Rafei and Ugandan Minister of State for Water Maria Mutagamba presented two papers in the closing session.

Nepalese Minister for Physical Planning and Works Buddhiman Tamang read out the Dhaka Declaration on Sanitation. LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan presided.

Afghanistan Deputy Minister for Health Dr Azam Mehraban Mir presented Khaleda Zia a crest of the Sancosan.

Quoting a number Unicef statistics of casualties for lack of water and sanitation, Khaleda said 30.4 lakh people die of water-sanitation-hygiene-related diseases every year worldwide. Most of them are children.

She said globally 110 crore people are deprived of safe water while 40 per cent of sanitation facilities. Some 6,000 children die of diarrhoea everyday.

Khaleda said Bangladesh is losing 342 children, on average, everyday owing to diseases caused by lack of facilities for safe water and sanitation and they are all under five. The situation in Bangladesh is no different from the other South Asian countries in this respect.

"What else could be more painful and what else could violate human rights much more?" the Prime Minister posed a question at the function, attended by ministers, high officials heading respective country's delegations, representatives of various donor agencies, development partners and local and foreign

organisations.

The prime minister noted that the number of people enjoying sanitation facilities in all South Asian countries is very low and, as a result, child mortality rates in this region are very high.

It has serious negative impact on the efforts for building happy and healthy nations as well as for reducing poverty.

And this is also a major cause of environmental pollution.

She described her government's various programmes and policies as well as enthusiasm and sincerity among the concerned authorities and hoped that all citizens of Bangladesh would have access to overall sanitation facilities by the year 2010.

Regarding outcome of the conference, she said it is more important to sustain the goal after it is achieved. She called upon all to continue the collective efforts of all and to be careful so that it is not interrupted.

"Let's now make a commitment to extend sanitation facilities to millions of people not yet served to save millions of children from a premature death in order to build South Asia as a habitat of happy and healthy people," Khaleda said.

After the closing session, the Prime Minister had a brief meeting with the heads of delegations at the venue.

During the talks, she hoped that they would work out a common strategy also at international level to ensure safe water and sanitation facilities for all people in the world.



PHOTO: STAR
German Ambassador Dietrich Andreas calls on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi residence in the city yesterday.

UN Day today

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh joins the rest of the world in celebrating the United Nations Day today to mark the founding of the United Nations.

Different organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes to observe the day.

An exhibition on water issues will be held at Hotel Sonargaon at 12.00 noon today under the aegis of UNDP.

The United Nations Information Centre in collaboration with the UN Youth and Student Association of Bangladesh will arrange a day-long programme on October 25 at IDB Bhaban.

The events include a Model World Summit on HIV/AIDS, a heart-to-heart talk, a drama and a cultural function.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar will inaugurate the function at 10.00 am. The function will be presided over by UN Resident Coordinator Jorgen Missner and addressed by Prof. Dr M Asaduzzaman, chairman, University Grants Commission as special guest.

In separate messages on the eve of the UN day, President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia expressed their firm commitment to the principle and purposes of the United Nations.

In a message, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said that UN would continue its efforts to tackle poverty, disease, climate change and the spread of small arms.

"We will also work together to fight terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction," Annan said, adding that "The United Nations must confront all these threats at once."



Qulkhwani of Durre Samad Rahman today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Qulkhwani of Durre Samad Rahman, wife of Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, will be held at Gulshan Azad Mosque in the city after Asr prayers today.

Durre Samad Rahman died on October 20. She is survived by her husband, three sons, one daughter and grandchildren.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the qulkhwani.

Meanwhile, her first qulkhwani was held at their village home at Baharmardan in Moulvibazar yesterday. A large number of people and leaders of BNP, Awami League and other political parties attended the programme.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, his son Naser Rahman MP, Ilias Ali MP and MM Shaheen MP were also present.

German envoy meets Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

German Ambassador Dietrich Andreas made a courtesy call on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi residence yesterday.

They discussed matters of mutual interest, particularly enhanced cooperation in various fields between Dhaka and Berlin.

Awami League presidium member Kazi Zafarullah MP, International Affairs Secretary Syed Abul Hossain MP and Sheikh Hasina's Press Advisor Jawadul Karim were present.

Obituary

UNB, Dhaka

Dr Gousuddin, eminent dentist and former general secretary of Bangladesh Dental Association, died of liver cirrhosis at his Dhanmondi residence on Wednesday at the age of 54.

He left behind his wife, two sons, one daughter and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at Azimpur graveyard after namaj-e-zanaja at Jigatola School Colony mosque after Johr prayers yesterday.

Dr Gousuddin was involved with various social welfare organisations, including Dhaka Paradise Lions Club.

AL to cancel illegal appointments at BSMMU if voted to power

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) would cancel all illegal appointments of doctors and officials at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) made by the present government, if voted to power.

This was stated by Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, former health and family welfare minister and AL presidium member, at a press briefing at the party central office in the city yesterday.

He said there is one doctor for 4,312 people in the country, but there are over 800 doctors for 700 patients at the BSMMU.

"These additional doctors, all of whom are pro-government, have been appointed without required qualifications and experience," said

Sheikh Selim.

"Medical education is now on the verge of ruin," he said, adding that the ruling-party doctors have occupied about 80 per cent seats of post graduation course depriving their meritorious colleagues.

He said there is no major success of the present government in the health sector except the construction of a hospital in Bogra after the name of late president Ziaur Rahman.

Sheikh Selim also spoke about various projects that the AL government took in the health sector during its regime including development of infrastructure and increase of doctors and hospital beds.

He said the AL government had increased the number of beds to

32,139 from 26,734 and bought a total of 112 ambulances and 139 X-ray machines for hospitals.

"After taking the office, the present government had either cancelled or halted the projects of AL government for their political vengeance," he said demanding immediate resumption of those projects considering the greater interest of the common people.

Criticising the government for suspending the community health project, Sheikh Selim said about 6,000 clinics were set up to provide health facilities in rural areas and another 9,500 clinics were under the process of being set up.

AL leaders Obaidul Kader, Abdur Rahman and Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin were present at the briefing.

46 vessels fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Forty-six vessels were fined for illegal movement in the Bay of Bengal during a two-day special drive ending yesterday at the Chittagong port channel by the magistracy of shipping department.

The vessels were fined Tk 4.22 lakh, sources said.

Magistrate Munir Chowdhury conducted the drive from 10.30am to 1.30pm on Tuesday and from 7.30am to 12.30pm yesterday at the request of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

He said 32 vessels were fined for crossing the Bay of Bengal illegally while 14 others for their movement without valid survey certificates.

"The illegal entry of ships poses threat at the port channels and the

drive was conducted to stop this tendency," he added.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police, Mercantile Marine Department and CPA assisted the drive, sources said.

Munshiganj lawyers' team meets president

UNB, Dhaka

A delegation of Munshiganj-Bikrampur Lawyers Welfare Association called on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

The delegation informed the president that apart from their profession its members worked for the development of their area. They apprised the president of their various demands including construction of Muktarpur Bridge, Padma Bridge at Mawa point, protection of Munshiganj from erosion and upgradation of Haraganga College to a full-fledged University.

Secretary to President Anisul Haque Chowdhury and Association's President, Shahjahan Khan, Secretary General Mohsin Mia were present on the occasion.

Musical evening at Fantasy Kingdom

A musical evening by Mehreen will be held at the Fantasy Kingdom in Ashulia today, says a press release.

Film star Amit Hasan and Shimla will also perform at the programme.

One arrested with spurious drugs in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

One person was arrested here yesterday as he tried to sell seven boxes of spurious injections used during caesarean operations.

Zafar, 40, was caught when he came to a medicine store, New Medical Hall, to sell the drugs. The owner of the shop then informed the leaders of the local Chemist and Druggist Association who handed over him to the police.

Zafar runs a canteen at a launch on Barisal-Dhaka route.

A case was lodged with Kotowali police.



PHOTO: STAR
The Water Aid Bangladesh took out a colourful procession in the city yesterday to mark the Sanitation Month.