

Collective, coordinated efforts a must to fight HIV/AIDS

PM tells second sub-regional parliamentary seminar

UNB, Dhaka Describing HIV/AIDS as a global development crisis, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged all to come up with collective and coordinated efforts at local, national, regional and international levels to get over the health menace.

epidemic or serious and localised epidemic. The Prime Minister said it is feared that Aids epicenter is gradually shifting from Africa to Asia and experiences also indicate that HIV/AIDS has no racial, class or religious bias. "No country can claim immunity from HIV epidemic. Bangladesh has so far been fortunate to remain a low-prevalence country with regard to HIV/AIDS, Khaleda said.

government, UNAIDS, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), UNDP, United Nations development fund for women, UNFPA and WHO. Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain, PGA President Ross Robertson MP, member of PGA international council Zahiruddin Swapan and seminar coordinator and opposition chief whip vice-principal Abdus Shahid also addressed the inaugural session.

ment has been sincere in combating HIV/AIDS from the very beginning and a National Aids policy is now in place. The Prime Minister expressed her happiness seeing that the seminar aims to strengthen the role of policy and lawmakers in the fight against HIV/AIDS. "I can assure you that our government will give the highest importance to the recommendations of this seminar," she told the function amid claps from the audience.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia speaks at the Second Sub-regional Parliamentary seminar on HIV/AIDS at Sonargaon Hotel in the city yesterday.

No election under present CEC

Jalil says at Bogra 14-party meet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday reiterated that the 14-party opposition combine would not allow any election to be held under the present chief election commissioner (CEC).

now feel helpless because of military, terrorism and price hike of essentials. "We will establish a people's government and strengthen democracy through a free and fair election, after ousting the 'BNP-Jamaat regime,'" said the AL leader.

The government is out to snatch the people's voting rights by manipulating the Election Commission, he said at a meeting of the representatives of 14-party from 11 districts at Bogra Vocational Training Institute auditorium.

Jalil said the long march of February 5 is geared towards raising awareness about the conspiracy of the alliance government to manipulate the next general election. AL leaders Motia Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan and Mahmudur Rahman Manna, JSD leader Syed Zafar Sazzad, Gono Forum leader Ranesh Maitra, Workers Party Leader Fazle Hossain Badsha, NAP leader Ismail Hossain and 14-party's central and district level leaders were present at the meeting, presided over by Bogra district AL President Momtaz Uddin.

WEATHER TODAY logo with sun and cloud icons.

Dry weather likely on Friday

UNB, Dhaka Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today. Light to moderate fog may also occur over the country during late night till morning, Met Office said, predicting that mild cold wave sweeping over Khulna division and the regions of Rajshahi, Pabna and Srimongal may continue.

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

Equipment dearth makes claim difficult

FROM PAGE 20 authority over maritime boundary was also informed that some major tasks are still incomplete. The meeting was told that Dhaka ratified the UN Convention on Law of the Sea in 2001. The law was first signed on 10 December 1982. In accordance with the convention, Bangladesh will have to submit all documents pertaining to its claim over the maritime boundary by 10 years after the ratification.

A senior officer of the ministry told the meeting that inadequate equipment has been delaying the survey in the deep-sea areas. Echoing the view, naval officials said they do not have a modern ship needed to launch the survey to make a technical assessment. Members of the parliamentary body suggested the ministries take measures to submit the claim very carefully. They also stressed the importance of strengthening the role of Bangladesh Navy to ensure the country's sovereignty throughout the maritime boundary.

even need to bargain with the neighbouring countries over the claim," the committee chairman said. According to UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the sovereignty of a coastal state extends beyond its land territory and internal waters. This sovereignty extends to the air space over the territorial sea as well as to its bed and subsoil. But it is exercised subject to the UN Convention and other rules of international law. Besides, it says that in the exclusive economic zone, the coastal state has sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources of the waters, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone.

Salma Sobhan fellows complete training

32 receive certificates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT The first batch of 32 Salma Sobhan fellows has successfully completed a one-year fellowship programme in journalism, a joint initiative undertaken by the Brac and Pratchi Trust. The fellows received certificates from eminent economist Prof Rehman Sobhan, chairperson of Pratchi Trust, at a ceremony at the Brac Centre auditorium in the city yesterday.



Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs of the US State Department Christina Rocca held a meeting with Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan at the foreign ministry in the city yesterday.

Under the 'Salma Sobhan Fellowship in Journalism for Women', 200 grassroots women from different districts are to receive training in journalism over a period of three years. The Brac and Pratchi Trust have jointly started the fellowship programme in January 2005 with the assistance of the daily Prothom Alo.

Get united for free, fair polls

Business leaders urge political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT The business leaders yesterday called on the political parties to get united in order to hold the national election in a free and fair manner.

way can be found out to settle the dispute. This year has special significance as the tenure of the present government ends this year and a new government will be elected as well, said the JP chief.

"For the sake of national interest and prosperity, the political parties should resolve all disagreements among themselves over national issues through discussion," said FBCCI President Mir Nasir Hossain. The call came at a view exchange meeting between the Jatiya Party leaders and the business leaders at the conference room of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) in the city.

"But there has not been a consensus between the two major political parties, even on a smaller issue. They do not want to maintain any social relation. They even do not bother with the existing problems and people's suffering. Their main goal is to capture power," he added.

Speaking at the certificate award ceremony, Prof Rehman Sobhan said a very few women have taken up journalism in the country. How the world appears through women's eyes would be reflected in their writing, he hoped. Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and chairperson of Brac, said the memory of Barrister Salma Sobhan would remain alive in the writing of the fellows. Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), called on the fellows to write news about social injustice, women empowerment and other women-related issues brushing aside personal animosities. Matiur Rahman, editor of the Prothom Alo, called on the fellows to continue their writing for the welfare of women and grassroots people. He also urged them to establish themselves in any media on their own. Md Golam Samdani Fakir, director of Brac Training Division, also spoke.

investment-friendly environment through tolerance and consensus between the ruling and the opposition parties," he added. JP Chairman Ershad said the economy is suffering mainly due to bureaucratic complexity, lack of good governance, corruption, unavailability of capital, high interest rates and unfriendly investment environment. He also placed a 17-point recommendation to accelerate the industrialisation process in the country. The recommendations include an end to political conflict, reduction of VAT, setting up of an export processing zone in northern region, modernisation of sea ports, relocating the Kamalapur Railway Station and depot outside Dhaka, introducing e-governance and ensuring good governance. FBCCI directors MA Rouf Chowdhury, MA Awal, Aftab-Ul Islam, Abul Kashem Haider, Abu Motaheb and Khurshid Ali also spoke at the function.

Foreign interference in nat'l polls won't be allowed: Saifur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman has said foreign interference in the national polls will not be allowed. "There is no need of advice from EU troika team as our Election Commission and other agencies are competent enough to hold free and fair election," he added. Saifur was addressing a rally organised by Sylhet district and city units of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, student wing of the ruling party, at the city point yesterday. Pointing at the main opposition Awami League, the finance minister said, a party had been hindering the ongoing process of development. He said wide bodied aircraft would start landing in Sylhet directly from London and other places in February. State Minister for Labour and Manpower Aman Ullah Aman, Jatiya Sangsad Whip Fazul Haque Aspia, Privatisation Commission Chairman Enam Ahmed Chowdhury and Sylhet City BNP President Ariful Haque Chowdhury also addressed the rally.

Bangladesh model for Muslim world

FROM PAGE 20 female condoms and adolescent awareness building. "You know what you must do to raise the curtain of silence and denial. You must advocate for universal condom provision through health services and commercial outlets," said Dr Nafis, one of the highest ranking women in the UN system. Dr Nafis, also the first woman in the United Nations' history to lead its major voluntarily-funded programme, asserted that if Bangladesh could do well with its HIV/AIDS prevention activities, there would be no fund constraints to support the country in its AIDS programmes. The UN secretary general's Special Adviser put emphasis on focusing on the AIDS issues from the highest level of leadership as she was citing the examples of Thailand and Cambodia. These two southeast Asian nations were able to face the challenge of HIV epidemic because of active highest-level leaderships.

"Cambodian prime minister speaks out on HIV/AIDS at every occasion, while in Thailand, moves on AIDS prevention came directly from the prime minister's office," Dr Nafis said adding, "Use of condom in commercial sex is a law in Thailand." Despite a low prevalence of AIDS in Bangladesh, Dr Nafis is for taking extra cautions as there are many sex workers and drug peddlers across the borders of Bangladesh with high incidences of HIV in India and Myanmar. "Bangladesh Ministry of Health Affairs, however, is quite concerned about increase in HIV positive cases among intravenous drug users (IDUs)," she added. According to Dr Nafis, drug use is associated with casual and commercial sex, which further spreads infection. "In central Bangladesh, comprising mainly of Dhaka city, overall HIV prevalence among IDUs has increased from 1.4% to 4.3% between 2001 and 2005 with one small pocket showing an even higher rate of 8.9% in 2005."

Dr Nafis emphasises the fact that in terms of infection rate, South Asia at present stands where southern Africa stood a decade ago. "All the conditions are in place for a general outbreak in South Asia in the next decade." Dr Nafis, herself a South Asian national from Pakistan, specially stressed the need for protecting young girls who are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. "In India, for example, more than 90 percent of HIV-positive women are married and monogamous. Many of these married women are young, some of them very young." Lauding the parliamentarians' role in Bangladesh, irrespective of party affiliations, in addressing the issues of HIV/AIDS, Dr Nafis also pinned high hope on Bangladesh's faring well in achieving some of the crucial MDG (millennium development goals) targets like women education and reduction in child and maternal mortality.

Obituary

Abdur Razzaque, a prominent teacher and educationist, passed away at a city hospital on January 21 at the age of 94, says a press release.

During his long and illustrious career, Razzaque left his mark on the establishment and development of educational institutions across the country. He left behind his wife, one son, one daughter and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death.

Death anniversary

Today is the 26th death anniversary of Shamsunahar Begum, mother of late Sheikh Faizullah, a retired divisional engineer of BTTB, says a press release. On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at her village home at Gokulnagar Purbapara Shaheb Bari under Raipura Upazila.

DHAKA TODAY logo and Seminar announcement: A seminar titled 'Status of the globally threatened Spoon-billed Sandpiper' will be held to present the findings of a survey on the bird. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10.30am.

Conference announcement: Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh organises a conference on 'Water, climate change and environment' with LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan as chief guest. Venue: Cirdap auditorium, Tophkhana Road. Time: 9.30am.

Meeting announcement: A meeting of the Vested (Enemy) Property Act Resistance Movement will be held. Venue: 31/F, Tophkhana Road. Time: 4.30pm.

AGM announcement: The annual general meeting of the 18th Bangladesh Civil Service forum will be held. Venue: Institute of Engineers Bangladesh, Ramna.

Kibria's death anniversary today

FROM PAGE 1 On the eve of Kibria's first death anniversary, the slain leader's family, the leader of the opposition, civil society members and different organisations asked the government to bring the real culprits to justice. They held rallies, processions and human chains yesterday in protest against "incomplete" investigation in the murder case.

Asma also demanded a probe into the assassination by the United Nations. "The United Nations should come forward to investigate the killing of Kibria like it did after the assassination of Lebanon's former prime minister Rafik Hariri," she said. She announced to continue with the peaceful protest programmes regularly until the real killers of Kibria are arrested.

published by Anupam Prakashani. Former chief justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman unveiled another book titled 'Nirontor Prerona' edited by Monam Sarkar and published by the BFDR. He said, "It's our failure that we could not provide Kibria with necessary treatment when he was wounded and let him die, though he had the efficiency of receiving the best treatment anywhere in the world."

The UN has a moral responsibility to carry out an investigation as he served under the UN with the status of under-secretary-general and played an important role for world peace, Sharifa Mosabbir, Kibria's sister, said. Kibria's son Reza Kibria, two other sisters Safia Rahman and Fozia Shahed, Reza Kibria's wife Rina Sultana Kibria and many intellectuals and commoners in blue dress spontaneously attended the rally. Besides, a photo exhibition on the life of Kibria was arranged in front of Malancha marking the first death anniversary.

"I don't believe anymore that I'll get justice under the current government. One year has passed and still the masterminds of my husband's killing are kept out of trial," Asma Kibria said. She was addressing a rally organised as part of the family's continuous movement titled "Blue for Peace" in front of Malancha in the city. "The government has conducted a 'fully biased' investigation aiming to cover those, who gave the direction to kill Kibria, she said, adding, "The government has even awarded the police officer, who conducted such incomplete investigation."

Dr Anisuzzaman, Prof Muntasir Mamun, Prof Shamsul Huda Harun, AAMS Arefin Siddiqui of Dhaka University, Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud, Atiur Rahman, Rezaul Haque Khondoker, Prof Salahuddin, Advocate Sultana Kamal, among others, were present. In a statement yesterday, Sheikh Hasina strongly condemned the government for its failure to try the killers of Kibria. Hasina alleged the grisly grenade attack that killed Kibria and four others was part of a conspiracy to kill the popular AL leaders and activists after the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition came to power.

RED FLAG DEMONSTRATIONS Sylhet Division Development Action Council yesterday staged a red flag demonstration in the city demanding trial of the killers of Kibria. Prior to taking out a procession with red flags, speakers at a brief rally at the Shaheed Minar said the defeated forces of the Liberation War are killing progressive leaders one after another as part of a blueprint. Advocate Abed Reja, president of council, presided over the rally. Meanwhile, hundreds of people took part in another 'Blue for Peace' programme organised by Bangabandhu Bayashko Purnabon Kendra (a rehabilitation centre for old people) on Tophkhana Road in the capital demanding fair trial in Kibria killing case.

Huda-led BJAf holds special meeting

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda-led Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum (BJAF) held a special meeting on the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) premises to strengthen its organisational activities. The meeting congratulated Huda for withdrawing his resignation from the post of BJAf president. Presided over by Advocate Luthfy Alam, the meeting was addressed by its acting secretary general Advocate Khorsheed Alam, Advocate Abdul Wahab, Advocate Taimur Alam Khondker, Advocate Golam Mohammad Chowdhury Alal, Advocate Golam Kibria, Advocate Helaluddin Mollah, Advocate Zaman Akhter Bulbul, Barrister Badruddin, Barrister Akbar Amin Babul and Advocate Fazlatunnesa.