



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Two women with their children stand in front of their demolished shanties at a slum at Dhalpur as the Dhaka City Corporation dismantled about 270 shanties during an eviction drive yesterday, throwing the slum dwellers into an uncertain future.

REPORT OF POLIOVIRUS Int'l experts, dev partners assures cooperation

UNB, Dhaka

A delegation of international polio experts and development partners called on Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and discussed the recent report of poliovirus in the country.

During the meeting, WHO South-East Asia Regional office expert Dr Arun Thapa said the virus found here has similarity with that of Uttar Pradesh in India.

The delegation praised the prompt steps taken by the government since reappearance of the poliovirus and promised to cooperate in observing National Vaccination Day again.

The health minister thanked WHO, Unicef, World Bank and other international development partners for their overall cooperation in Bangladesh health sector.

The delegation included Dr Serguei Diorditsa, Dr Arefin Amal Islam, Dr Arun Thapa, Dr Julian Biliows and Dr Linda Muller of WHO, Judith Graf of Unicef, Country Representative of WHO Dr Duangvadee Sungkhobol, Unicef country representative Louis Georges and the representatives of World Bank, DFID and Japan government.

Five AIDS patients die in 15 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five HIV/AIDS patients died in the country in the last 15 days.

Three of them died at Infectious Diseases Hospital at Mohakhali while one person had been under the treatment of Dhaka Ahsania Mission and the other death was reported by Ashar Alo, an NGO that works for HIV-positives.

This was disclosed at an information-sharing meeting organised by the Ahsania Mission at its auditorium in the city yesterday.

According to government estimates, 134 people have been identified as HIV-positive and a total of 74 HIV/AIDS patients died as of December 2005.

At the meeting titled 'Community capacity building for HIV prevention', the speakers called for strong socio-political, socio-religious and socio-cultural commitments as well as strengthening of community capacity for the prevention of the deadly disease.

As a large number of people are illiterate and most of them are living in rural areas, an effective strategy should be developed in order to reach them and make them aware about HIV/AIDS, said Unesco Representative Wolfgang

Vollmann.

"The most important challenge is how to convey the message to the people who are illiterate," he added.

The Ahsania Mission started a project titled 'Creating an enabling environment for HIV prevention' in October last year to prevent the spread of HIV infections and help avert an epidemic of HIV in the country.

The objective of the project, funded by Unesco, is to build local capacity for community initiative through orientation and training of the stakeholders, advocacy, technical support and establishment of links with support providing agencies.

The project is now being implemented at 25 districts under five divisions with the involvement of teachers, journalists, imams, Union Parishad members, NGO representatives and doctors.

Director of Ahsania Mission Prof Nurul Islam, Prof MA Sobhan and Deputy Director (Programme) Gazi Nazrul Islam Faisal were also present at the meeting.

270 shanties demolished in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) yesterday demolished at least 270 shanties of Dhalpur Adarsha Slum at Demra in the city allegedly for political reasons.

As the police started the hour-long drive, the slum dwellers protested their eviction.

Around 10 people including women and children were injured when police clubbed them.

The slum dwellers, mainly sweepers, said the DCC had served a notice of eviction seven days back following which they filed a writ petition with the High Court that gave a stay order of four months on the eviction.

But when the authorities concerned were shown the court order they ignored it.

At one stage the ruling party cadres joined the eviction drive and looted valuables of the slum dwellers, they alleged.

"The slum was considered as the vote bank of the Awami League in the last general elections. The eviction, despite the stay order, is a conspiracy of the government," said a slum dweller.

Demra police said the DCC had earlier assured the slum dwellers of providing them with quarters.

"The issue of eviction is not our concern, but of the DCC," said the duty officer of Demra Police Station.

ATTACK ON PROCESSION 10 SSMC docs, students hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people, including three doctors and seven students of Sir Salimullah Medical College (SSMC), were injured as Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and local BNP cadres attacked a joint procession of pro-Awami League Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad.

The incident occurred when BCL and the members of Chikitsak Parishad, an organisation of pro-opposition doctors, brought out the procession on the college campus at about 12:45pm protesting attacks on general students of Eden Women's University College and marking the 87th birthday of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today.

As soon as the rally entered the campus, more than 100 JCD and BNP cadres with rods and sticks swooped on it injuring 10 students and doctors.

Dr Noor-e-Elahi Meem, 29, Dr Monjur Murshed Himu, 29, Dr Pulak Banik, 26, students Rajib Al Amin were rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, while Pavel, Suman and Rajib were admitted to Al Arafah Clinic near Mitford Hospital in the city.

Jahan Shams Nitol, joint convener of Sir Salimullah Medical College unit of BCL, told The Daily Star that the attack was planned as the police were inactive during the incident.

Kotowali Police expressed ignorance about the incident, saying "None even came to us with any complaint in this regard."

The BCL college unit leaders at a press conference in the afternoon threatened to call a general strike at the Sir Salimullah Medical College if they face any resistance to enter the campus tomorrow.

KIBRIA MURDER BNP leaders masterminds

Alleges Reza Kibria

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Reza Kibria, son of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria, yesterday alleged that top BNP leaders are the masterminds behind the killing of his father.

Even a loathsome terrorist like Bangla Bhai was airlifted to Dhaka while an international figure like SAMS Kibria was denied such facilities after he was fatally wounded in a grenade attack, which proves that the murder was plotted by top ruling party leaders, he said.

Demanding punishment to the masterminds, he said such brutal killings cannot be stopped unless the masterminds are brought to justice.

Reza Kibria was speaking at a human chain programme organised as part of the 'Blue for Peace' programme in front of Bangabandhu Museum at Dhanmondi in the city.

Acting General Secretary of Awami League Obaidul Kader, who took part in the demonstration, demanded an international investigation into all grenade and bomb attacks in the country.

He alleged that the government has patronised militant kingpins Shaekh Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai. Referring to the capture of the two, he said it looks as if pet birds were put in a cage.

Family members of Shah AMS Kibria, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, and leaders of different organisations took part in the peaceful protest.

Kibria, also an Awami League lawmaker, was killed in a grenade attack in his hometown Habiganj on January 27, 2005.

Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Sultana Qureshi, wife of Brigadier General (retd) NA Qureshi, died at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the city yesterday at the age of 56.

Sultana is survived by her husband, two sons and a daughter to mourn her death.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held after Juma prayers today at the new DOHS mosque at Mahakhali in the city.



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

A boy holds a poster with the portrait of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria during the 'Blue for Peace' programme at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.