

STRENGTHENING FOOD POLICY CAPACITY Programme to ensure food security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has undertaken a programme to strengthen the national food policy capacity in order to ensure food security for all, including the ultra-poor.

The objectives of the programme, funded by the European Commission and the USAID, are to enhance the government's capacity to conduct research on and review food policy, increase inter-ministerial collaboration and evaluate the food policy implementation process.

An inception seminar on 'National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme' was held at a city hotel yesterday with Food and Disaster Management Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne

Yusuf as the chief guest.

Stefan Frowein, ambassador and head of EC delegation, and Beth Paige, deputy director of USAID, were present as special guest while Abdur Rashid Sarkar, secretary to food ministry, presided over the seminar.

Speaking at the seminar, the food minister called for developing adequate national capacity to break the vicious cycle of malnutrition and eliminate hunger in shortest possible time through a comprehensive approach.

"If a large portion of people continue to remain underfed, social disorder and dissatisfaction will increasingly destabilise our society. The market mechanism may not work in such situation," he said.

On the food prices and imports, the minister said that if the ceiling of domestic price is kept artificially low through import dependence, low real prices of agricultural commodity could ultimately result in slow growth in agriculture and rural economy.

Stefan Frowein said, "Bangladesh is fighting malnutrition and promoting food security, but the absolute number of children suffering from malnutrition is still growing."

Bui Thi Lan, FAO representative in Bangladesh, and Selina Ahsan, director general, Food Policy and Monitoring Unit, also spoke.

FAO would provide strategic support to train the programme officials.

Military rule still prevails in CHT: Shantu Larma

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The jummo people (indigenous) living in greater Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) are ready to sacrifice their lives again if necessary to establish their right to self-determination, said Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma alias Shantu Larma.

He was addressing the inaugural session of third council of Rangamati district unit of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) at Shipakala Academy in the town yesterday.

Shantu, chairman of CHT Regional Council and president of PCJSS, alleged that military rule is prevailing in CHT which is the main reason of unrest in the hill.

Scathing the coalition government activities Shantu said the government is not at all sincere in implementing CHT accord.

He alleged that a vested quarter is hatching conspiracy to annihilate the jummo people by depriving them of their right to land.

The settlers are grabbing the land of indigenous people under the direct help of the army, Santu alleged.

He demanded immediate withdrawal of all camps of Army, Ansars, Armed Police Battalion and VDP (village defence party) from the CHT region as per the provision of CHT deal.

Chaired by President of Rangamati District Unit of PCJSS Genundu Bikash Chakma, the inaugural session was also addressed by PCJSS District Secretary Polish Khisa, Paharee Chhatra Parishad Secretary Binotamoy Dhamai, Upajatiya Samajik Forum Secretary Sukumar Dewan, CHT Mahila Samity Chairperson Madhabi Lata Chakma and social worker Nirmolendu Tripara.

After the inaugural session, a rally was brought out from Shipakala Academy to Municipality auditorium where the council was held.



Sammita Ainjibi Parishad forms a human chain on the High Court premises in the city yesterday protesting the government's failure to supply gas, water and electricity to people.

PHOTO: STAR

Citizens' participation a must for better health facilities Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Citizens' participation is a must to ensure better health facilities in different public hospitals and healthcare centres, said the speakers at a workshop yesterday.

They said as the public hospitals lack accountability, structural changes are needed to ensure citizen's participation.

The workshop titled 'Healthy citizenship: Claiming the right to health' was organised jointly by Steps Towards Development and Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

The speakers said inactive health advisory committee of the people's representatives at local level could not ensure people's health rights.

The health committees are inactive at the union and upazila levels depriving the poor people

of their right to healthcare facilities, they added.

They stressed the need for accountability, mass awareness and co-ordination among the governmental and non-governmental organisations for this purpose.

"We cannot expect accountability in the prevailing health system," said Dr Zafrullah, project co-ordinator of Gana Swasthya Kendra.

The speakers said devolution of power at local level, capacity building for participation and reducing gap between community expectations and government allocation are also essential for structural change.

They said inclusion of 'voiceless' people treating them as equal citizens, a methodical change in citizen's participation could be ensured.

A research paper presented at the workshop by BIDS Senior

Research Fellow Simin Mahmud said poor people have to pay for apparently free and low quality health service.

The paper also revealed dilapidated physical infrastructure of different healthcare centres apart from poor personnel, equipment, medical supply and resources.

Besides, irregular attendance of service providers as well as their discriminating behaviour in treating poor service users also add sufferings to them.

The executive director of Steps Towards Development moderated the workshop which was addressed by Co-ordinator of Nijera Kori Khushi Kabir, Convener of Naripakha Mahin Sultana, Chairman of Madhupur Thana Health Watch Committee Prof Joinal Abedin, and Co-ordinator of Dhaka Community Hospital Trustee Board Prof Mahmudur Rahman.



Bangladesh Bookbinding Traders' Association stages a demonstration in front of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board office in the city yesterday demanding that the Board allocate the work of bookbinding to genuine bookbinding firms.

PHOTO: STAR

CTG INCIDENT

Body suggests compensation for 20 hurt journos

UNB, Dhaka

A government committee has recommended Tk 14,36,397 as compensation for 20 journalists who were injured and incurred losses during an unwarranted incident at Chittagong Stadium on April 16.

Committee Chairman and Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Information Mir Mosharraf Hossain submitted the report to Information Minister M Shamsul Islam at his secretariat office yesterday.

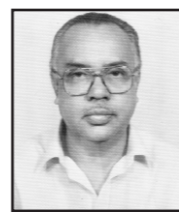
The information minister thanked the committee for submitting its report within a short time.

Terming the Chittagong incident unwarranted, the minister said everybody will have to play a responsible role to avoid recurrence of such incidents in future.

"We should refrain from any acts that may tarnish our image in the outside world... all should work together for the country," he said.

Deputy Minister for Information Abdus Salam Pintu, Information Secretary Muhammad Haider Ali, Committee Member and General Secretary of DUJ Omar Faruk, President of Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA) Manzurul Haque, General Secretary of Bangladesh Photo Journalists Association Mir Ahmed Miru, sports editor of daily Inquilab, and member-secretary of the committee and Deputy Secretary of Sports and Youth Ministry Bhuiyan Shaiful Islam were present.

Prof Nuruddin's anniversary of death today



Today is the third death anniversary of Prof QAIM Nuruddin, the doyen of journalism education in Bangladesh

and teacher of Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at Dhaka University, says a press release.

On the occasion, feeding to the destitute has been arranged at Rajjatus Salehen Orphanage after Zohr prayers and a doa mahfil will be held after Asr prayers.

Mukhlesur Rahman

Today is the eighth death anniversary of educationist and social worker Mohammad Mukhlesur Rahman, says a press release.

All have been requested to pray for salvation of his departed soul.

Chehlum

Chehlum of Sirajul Islam Sikder, a social worker and businessman of Sonagora under Narayanganj, will be held today after Juma prayers at his Sonagora residence, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and Qurankhwani will be held.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the chehlum and pray for salvation of the departed soul.



Fashion models pose for photograph with Judith A Chammas, deputy chief of the US Mission in Dhaka, at an Indonesian fashion show held at the residence of French Trade Commissioner in Dhaka Dominique Simon yesterday on the occasion of 'The Francophone', a gathering of French-speaking women.

PHOTO: STAR

Seminar on physics held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two seminars on physics, organised by the Mathematics and Natural Sciences Department of Brac University, were held in the city recently.

Prof Abdul Latif Choudhury of Elizabeth City State University, North Carolina, USA, presented a paper titled 'Exciting world of physics' while Prof F Bary Malik of University of Southern Illinois spoke on 'Prospects of physicists in global economy'.

Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, vice-chancellor of Brac University, also spoke at the seminar attended by the pro-vice chancellor, faculty members and students.

Books for Ayesha Abed Library

Prof Mainuddin Afza, a teacher and Small Business Consultant, Department of Management, of Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, USA donated 128 books to the Ayesha Abed Library of Brac University (BU) recently, says a press release.

Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed received the books on behalf of the university.

DHAKA TODAY

Conference

A conference of working women will be held to mark the 15th founding anniversary of Kamojibi Nan. Venue: Muktagong. Time: 10.30am.

Human chain

Save Environment Movement will form a human chain demanding demarcation of country's maritime boundary and protection of natural resources. Venue: Mazar Gate of High Court. Time: 10.30am.

Installation ceremony

The installation ceremony of newly elected executive committee of IBA Alumni Association will be held. Venue: Hotel Sheraton.

Art competition

Notun Kuri Sangeetalyo organises an art competition for the children. Venue: 36/1 Rankin Street. Time: 9.00am.

Memorial meeting

A meeting will be held in memory of Prof M Afzar Uddin who died recently. Venue: Surdhuhi premises, Dhanmondi. Time: 8.00am.

AGM

The annual general meeting of Old

Remians Welfare Association will be held. Venue: Biam auditorium. Time: 4.00pm.

Khelaghar

Khelaghar organises a programme to mark its 54th founding anniversary. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 3.00pm.

Hajj discussion

Spectra Convention Centre organises a discussion on holy Hajj through audio-visual presentation. Venue: House-19, Road-07, Gulshan-1. Time: 4.30pm.

Workshop

A two-day workshop on 'Safety driving and occupational safety, health and environment' will be inaugurated. Venue: House-11, Road-9, Block-A, Section-12, Mirpur.

Procession

Healthy Lifestyle will take out a procession to create public awareness about healthy environment. Venue: Suchana Community Centre, Mohammadpur. Time: 8.30am.

Two killed, 30 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least two people, including a girl, were killed and 30 others injured in two districts yesterday.

UNB from Kurigram adds: A teenage girl was killed and at least 30 others were injured in a road accident at Durgapur by-pass road on Kurigram-Chilmari route yesterday.

Police said the mishap took place when a Kurigram-bound minibus coming from Chilmari overturned at roadside as its driver tried to give side to a truck at about 11:00am.

The accident left Nasima, 12, daughter of Khalilur Rahman of Handepur village in Rangpur, killed on the spot. Several others were injured in the accident.

Angry local people put up barricades on the road disrupting vehicular movement for about three hours.

Our Manikganj Correspondent adds: One motorcyclist was killed in a road accident on the Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday.

The dead was identified as Atikur Rahman Sohel, 36, Superintendent of Basundhar Company at Gazipur area office.

Police said the accident occurred at around 9:00am when a Paturia-bound coach ran over the speeding motorcycle coming from the opposite direction of Joypura at Dhamrai Police Station killing the motorcyclist on the spot.

'Imams can contribute a lot to development'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islamic leaders can contribute immensely to the development of Bangladesh by disseminating development-related issues to the local communities, said Bridget Kustin, an American Fulbright Fellow, yesterday.

The imams, who have close connections with the communities, can successfully accomplish the job for the local communities who can change their lives by developing modern concepts, she said at a programme organised by the American Centre in the city.

Kustin, a graduate of English in Whitman College in the USA, has completed a one-year study on relationship between Islam and development in the country. She did her research on 'Politics of Partnerships: Allying Islam and Development in Bangladesh'.

At the programme, a total of six Fulbright American scholars, out of seven, presented their research findings on different issues, including traditional medicine in healthcare, natural resources management in Chittagong Hill Tracts, impact of Multi-Fibre Agreements expiration, effectiveness of rote memorisation as a teaching method and functional

fundraising in Bangladesh.

Judith A Chammas, deputy chief of the US Mission in Dhaka, and American Centre's Deputy Director Dr Michelle Jones also spoke.

Bridget Kustin said her idea about Islam has also changed after working with the Islamic leaders in the country.

"Before coming here, I only saw the Muslims on television and had a kind of negative image, but once I mixed with them here, my idea has changed. They are very welcoming and accepted me like their daughters," she said.

Another Fulbright scholar, Erin Tanner, who conducted her research on the effectiveness of rote learning, said the main shortcoming of the traditional method widely practiced in the country is that it does not help students develop their analytical and comprehensive qualities.

"This teaching technique is obsolete in most American schools, as the country moves toward interactive activity-based approaches to learning," she said.

Other Fulbright scholars who presented their research findings are Candace Coleman, Yacoub Raheem, Nausheen Akhter and Tia Koonse.

Delegation of UK Muslims arrives May 21

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A five-member delegation of senior British Muslims will arrive in Dhaka on May 21 on a five-day visit to share views with Bangladeshis on the position of Muslims in modern Britain's multicultural and ethnically diverse democracy.

Director of Islamic Relief Waseem Yaquub will lead the delegation.

During their stay, the delegation members will meet lawmakers, political and religious leaders and members of the civil society.

They will also meet the education and religious affairs ministers, said the British High Commission sources.

Their visit to Bangladesh is part of a series of high profile visits the Foreign and Commonwealth Office arranges for prominent British Muslims to facilitate cross-fertilisation of ideas with Muslims around the world.

The delegation members will also visit Sylhet and address a press conference in Dhaka on May 25.

WEATHER TODAY logo with sun and cloud icons.

Mild heatwave likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country with chances of rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Mild heatwave may sweep over Rajshahi and Khulna divisions, Met Office said in a forecast. It said that day temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country.

Highest temperature 37.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 22.5 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:36pm today and rises at 5:14am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

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.

No scope for rigging in next polls: Bhuiyan

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said there is no guarantee that fake voters will be able to cast their votes on the day of elections.

He also said there will be no scope for rigging in the next elections.

"Awami League made 60 lakh fake voters during their rule and prior to handing over power to a caretaker government they placed people of their own choice in the administration, but they could not return to power," he told the journalists at his office in the Secretariat.

Bhuiyan said whatever mechanism takes place there is no scope for election rigging, as people are the deciding factor of the elections.

He said that Fair Election Monitoring Agency (FEMA) conducted survey in six areas about the errors of the draft voters' list and in four areas they found no unfamiliarity from the list that was prepared by the Election Commission.

Bhuiyan said the government does not prepare the voters' list, rather EC prepares the voter list with the help of the government and non-government teachers.

On the claim that EC officials ordered to include fake voters in the draft voters' list, he said EC officials cannot issue such order. EC officials themselves do not prepare the voter list, rather the EC gets the voter list done by school teachers, who are supporters of BNP, AL and other political parties, he added.

He, however, said there is always scope for amending the draft voters' list.

Asked about proposed government-opposition dialogue, he said if the opposition changes its present position, discussion can be held tomorrow. "I hope they will change their position."

Bhuiyan said the reply to AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil's letter would be sent soon, but it could be delayed.

Attack on Kushtia, Sylhet journalists condemned

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and its affiliated unions yesterday condemned attack on journalists in Sylhet and Kushtia.

BFUJ leaders in a statement expressed deep concern and protested the brutal attacks on reporters by BNP lawmaker in Kushtia and by Jatiyatabad Chhatra Dal and Chhatra Shibi cadres in Sylhet Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST).

Urging the government to create a congenial environment for journalists, the BFUJ leaders warned that the journalist community would be compelled to forge a movement if the lawmakers and cadres of four-party alliance continue repression on newsmen. Signatories to the statement are Outgoing president of BFUJ Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, newly elected President Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, Secretary General Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) President Altaf Mahmud and General Secretary Omar Faruq, Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) President Shahidul Alam and General Secretary Riaz Haidar, and presidents and secretaries of all affiliated unions.

Obituary



Brigadier General (Retd) Mohammad Atikur Rahman passed away on May 15 at National Naval Medical Centre in Bethesda,

Maryland, USA at the age of 81, says an ISPR release.

Brigadier Atiq left behind his one son and one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers.

He was commissioned in 1948 in Pakistan Army Corps of Signals. He was the first director of Signals Corps of Bangladesh Army (1973-1976). He also served as defence adviser in New Delhi and president of Inter Service Selection Board (ISSB).

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Banani DOHS Mosque in the city after Juma prayers today.

Hafiza Rashed

Hafiza Rashed, wife of Alhaj Abdur Rashed, vice-president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturing and Exporters Association (BKMEA), passed away at a city hospital yesterday at the age of 48, says a press release.

She left behind her three sons and a host of admirers to mourn her death.

President and members of Board of Directors of BKMEA expressed deep shock at her death and also conveyed sympathy to members of the bereaved family.