

Fast growing population a big problem for Bangladesh: PM

Khaleda calls for involving young people in health sector programmes

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called for strengthening the health sector programmes by effectively involving the youths in the activities for quick achievement of the desired goals.

"Government, non-government and voluntary organisations engaged in these fields will have to keep their efforts to attain the desired goals in the health sector by making the people, particularly the young generation, aware of family planning," she said.

She made the call while inaugurating a programme marking the World Population Day 2006 at Osmani Memorial auditorium.

The theme of this year's Population Day is "Tarun Projonmo Srestha Sampad (Young People: The Best Resources)."

She said the fast growing population has been a big problem for Bangladesh as over 900 people live in here per square kilometer

although the population growth rate has declined from 2.01 percent in 1991 to 1.43 percent.

"Although the growth rate has come down, it's still exerting a huge pressure on landmass. As a result, people are not getting expected benefits from development programmes," she observed.

The function was told that 50 percent of the world population is young, which is higher than anytime before. In Bangladesh, about 40 percent of its total population is young.

Khaleda said her government has taken initiatives to infuse dynamism into family planning, maternal and child health programmes through proper application of information technology. "And with this view in mind, these programmes are being brought under computer network at the district and upazila levels."

Terming excessive population as a problem, she said her government has strengthened the family plan-

ning programme throughout the country to check the high population growth.

At the same time, opportunities for education and various technical and vocational training are being expanded from primary to university level to turn the present population into human resources, she told the function, attended by ministers, representatives of development partners, family welfare and family planning officials.

Reiterating that her government has been fulfilling the pledges made to people, Khaleda said they brought all officers and employees of Family Planning Department under the revenue.

She mentioned that the jobs of 43,540 officers and employees of the grassroots level have been brought under the revenue from the development sector while posts of 706 more officers and staff in district headquarters have been included into the revenue sector.

She hoped that that the officers

and employees would now perform their duties with fresh zeal and make meaningful contributions towards the welfare of the country and the people.

Listing a number of steps taken by her government for the development of the health sector, she said health and family welfare centres are being operated in the country's 3,575 unions out of 4,470.

Khaleda said the main aim of her government is to ensure welfare of the common people through quick economic growth, human resources development, poverty alleviation and social progress.

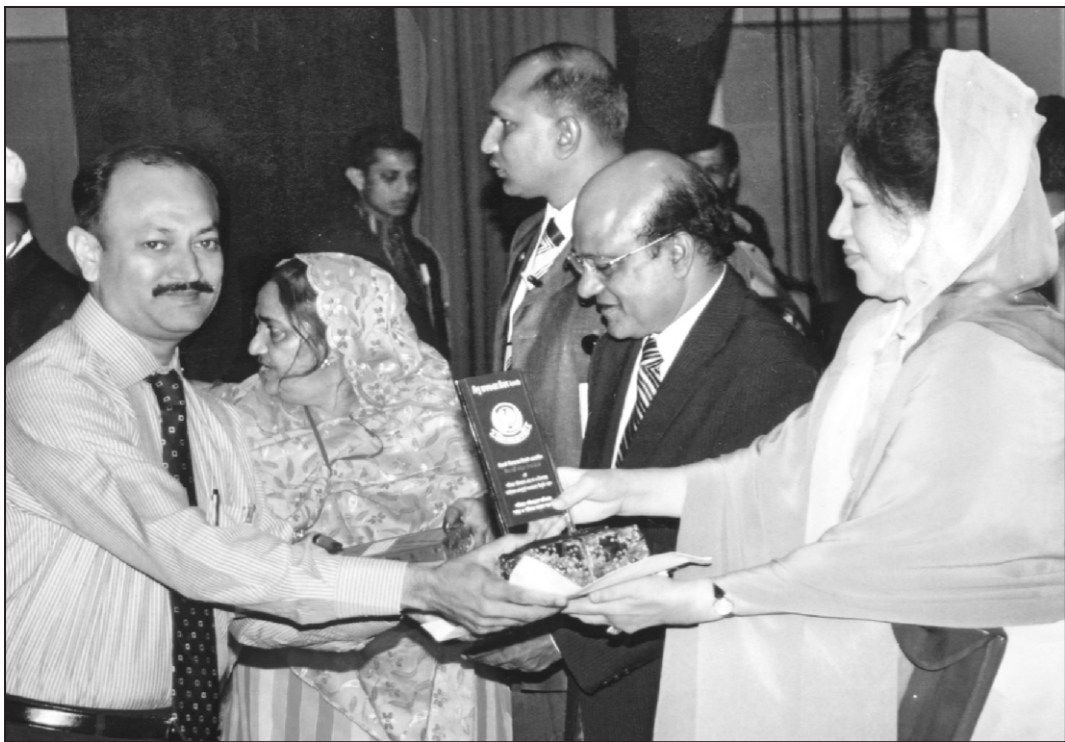
"We're moving ahead with specific plans in line with the millennium development targets for reducing maternal and child mortality rates, ensuring universal primary education, decreasing gender discrimination, empowering women and establishing women's right," she said.

"Our success in these areas have already been acclaimed by regional and international forums," she informed the function adding that despite various adversities and limitations, the country is making better progress in family planning compared to many countries of the region. "But there is no scope to be complacent."

She said millions of people in the developing world are deprived of their basic necessities because of excessive population density. Cultivable land and space for housing are dwindling rapidly due to fast population growth making it difficult to meet the food requirement.

The PM distributed awards among best performers in seven categories - family welfare assistant, family welfare inspector, union health and family welfare centre, union parishad, upazila, mother and child welfare centre and NGOs - for their contributions towards family welfare during June 2005 to May 2006.

Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, State Minister for Health Mizanur Rahman Sinha and outgoing UNFPA country representative Suneeta Mukherjee also spoke on the occasion.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia distributes prizes among the individuals and different institutions for their contribution to family planning activities at a function at the Osmani Memorial auditorium in the city yesterday.

KMP makes fresh list of criminals, special operation on cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) has made a fresh list of hardened criminals and operatives of underground parties.

The list divided into five categories contains 1519 names who are wanted by police in connection with different crimes and cases.

KMP sources said the new list, made after thorough checking and rechecking, contains the name of 340 extremists, 294 convicted criminals still at large, 620 criminals against whom warrants of arrest have been issued, 161 accused against whom investigation is going on and 104 anti-social elements.

According to a senior officer of KMP, a special operation will be launched soon to arrest the listed criminals and extremists.

There is also a plan to resume the special operation with renewed tactics in an atmosphere free from political influence during the tenure of next caretaker government, he added.

This is for the first time that KMP has made a separate list of 104 anti-social elements.

These included drug peddlers, muggers, burglars and whores. They will be routed out from the city to help return a healthy civic life, said AC Zahur Chowdhury of the Detective Branch.

KMP Commissioner Khan Saeed Hasan told The Daily Star that this time separate lists of terrorists, bombers and extortionists have been amalgamated into one list.

If anybody interferes in the implementation of the new list will not be spared, he asserted.

2 bodies recovered from Buriganga

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered two bodies floating in the river Buriganga yesterday afternoon.

The deceased are a thirty-year-old woman and a young girl of nine, both unidentified.

The locals informed the Police after seeing the bodies floating in the water near Wise Ghat.

The bodies have been sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

A boat capsized in Buriganga on Monday night while crossing the river. Police suspects the recovered bodies to be the passengers of the same boat.

GROWING SECURITY CONCERNS

India to withdraw special passports

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Because of growing security concerns, India has decided to withdraw the 34-year-old special passport scheme, under which the people of northeastern Indian states could use the document to travel only to Bangladesh.

Official sources said the scheme, which had existed for nearly 34 years since its introduction in 1972 soon after the independence of Bangladesh, is no longer serving the purpose of promoting people-to-people contact and is being misused by militants and illegal immigrants.

The governments in India's seven northeastern states have already been informed of New

Delhi's decision to scrap the special passport for Bangladesh, said the sources.

One of the major worries for India now over the scheme is that the passport issued under it is 'not machine-readable' and it is difficult to ascertain whether it is genuine or forged.

As a result, it has come to the notice of the government that many insurgents are misusing the passport for cross-border movement, said the sources.

While all other six northeastern states have agreed to withdrawal of the scheme, Tripura has voiced reservations, saying it had been beneficial to its residents for undertaking visits to Bangladesh, the sources added.

KILLING OF UPDF ACTIVISTS Road barricade programme observed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) yesterday observed a daylong road barricade programme on Rangamati-Khagrachhari Road to protest Monday's killing of its three activists at Natun Karetchhari under Kutukchhari union.

The UPDF activists put up barricade on the road in the morning disrupting communication between Rangamati and Khagrachhari throughout the day.

They also brought out several processions and held protest rally at Kutukchhari Bazar during the programme.

The UPDF blamed Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) for the killing but the PCJSS denied the allegation terming the killing as intra-party clash within the UPDF which opposes Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Treaty.

"The UPDF has been divided into two groups, one is led by Ananda Prakash Chakma and the other by Milton Chakma for a year," a top leader of PCJSS told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

After the incident, tension is prevailing in the area.

Additional members of police and army are guarding the area to avert any further untoward incident.

Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of former secretary Syed Amir Khosru, will be held at his 8, Ispahani Colony residence at Magbazar after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

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

Khasru passed away on July 9 at the age of 76 at his residence. He left behind his wife, two sons and a host of relatives to mourn his death.



Food and Disaster Management Minister Choudhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf speaks at a roundtable titled 'Flood 2006: Our preparation' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Awami League lawmaker Col. (Retd.) Faruk Khan.

'Take up risk reduction plan ahead of flood season'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a roundtable yesterday called for taking up a flood risk reduction programme through institutional preparedness ahead of the flood season.

They also underscored the need for better coordination between the government and the NGOs in disaster management to effectively tackle the flood disaster.

The Shaptahik 2000 and ActionAid Bangladesh jointly organised the roundtable entitled 'Flood 2006: Our preparation' at the National Press Club in the city. Speaking as the chief guest, Food and Disaster Management Minister Choudhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf called for giving highest priority to the preparation of flood management plans.

Khurshid Alam, a disaster reduction, livelihoods and governance specialist, presented the keynote paper entitled, 'Moderate flooding hazard can cause severe destruction on lives and livelihoods in 2006 because of high level of vulnerability: Assumptions, evi-

dences and policy implications'.

Impact of any moderate or normal flood in 2006 will be very high due to higher level of vulnerability of the population living in the northern region, he said, adding that this vulnerability is characterised by fragile livelihood, limited access to life saving services and lower level of institutional preparedness.

A survey conducted in Jamalpur, Sirajganj, Gaibandha and Kurigram districts on 425 people shows that a significant proportion of the population was not able to undertake regular preparedness activities at the family level despite their knowledge on preparedness measures, he added.

Awami League lawmaker Col. (Retd.) Faruk Khan suggested incorporating the issue of flood management and preparedness into textbooks in order to raise awareness among the young generation.

He also called for taking up short- and long-term plans to tackle flood disaster.

Under the short-term plan, initiatives can be taken to ensure supply of food and medicine to the flood victims while setting up shelter centres and using different materials to erect houses can be considered under long-term plan, he added.

Abdul Kaiyum, joint editor of the Prothom Alo, called for regional cooperation in preserving flood water, which can be used during dry season.

The speakers also suggested making the local government institutions more efficient and active to improve disaster management capacity.

Kazi Golam Mostafa, additional director general of Water Development Board, Nayeem Wahra of Save the Children-UK, Golam Mertoza, acting editor of Shaptahik 2000, Muniruzzaman, assistant editor of the Sangbad, and lawmakers GM Kader and Talukdar Abdul Khalek also spoke at the roundtable moderated by Shihabuddin of ActionAid Bangladesh.

Two killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Narayanganj and Sathkhira yesterday.

BSS from Narayanganj adds: One person was killed and two others were injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway under Siddhirganj police station in the early hours of yesterday.

The accident occurred at 5:00am when a Dhaka-bound covered van from Noakhali rammed a standing truck at Simral bus stand.

Abdul Halim, 40, supervisor of SA Paribahan Parcel Ltd, died on the spot when the van turned turtle.

The driver and helper of the covered van, whose identity could not be known immediately, were also injured in the crash.

Police seized the covered van. The body was sent to General Hospital for autopsy.

Our correspondent from Sathkhira adds: A teenage boy was killed in a road accident yesterday on Shyamnagar-Munshiganj road at Shyamnagar upazila.

The deceased was identified as Firoz Ahmed, 14, son of Mominuddin of village Khanpur in Shyamnagar upazila.

Quoting local people police said the bus ran him over near Khanpur Eidgan when he was crossing the road, leaving him dead on the spot.

Medical equipment donated to cancer centre

Badrul Amin, an expatriate businessman of Bianbazar in Sylhet and now living in London, donated medical equipment worth Tk 7 lakh to Ahsania Mission Cancer Detection Centre and Hospital, Mirpur yesterday at a simple function at the hospital conference room, says a press release.

Dr MA Momin, acting director of the hospital, received the equipment. The equipment include Critikon Vital Signs Patient Monitor, Nebulizer, Laryngoscope, Oxygen Gauge, Vaporizer (Halothane) and Peak Flow Meter.

Dr Momin thanked him for the generous donation and said these equipment will be helpful for the hospital. Prof Nurul Islam, director of DAM and Kazi Farhad Alvi, Assistant Director (Marketing) of the hospital, were present on this occasion.

Mother cries for justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mother yesterday demanded punishment to officer-in-charge (OC) of Chakaria Police Station in Cox's Bazar as he allegedly gunned down her son on January 11 of last year for refusing to do illegal jobs for the police officer.

Almus Khatun of Maizbona village made the allegation at a press conference at the office of the Crime Reporters' Association in the capital against OC Ohidur Rahman for killing her son Belal Uddin.

The mother said Belal used to work as an informer of the OC who forced him to do many illegal jobs like collecting tolls and bribes for him.

"As I forbade my son not to be involved in any illegal job he refrained from working for the police officer," Almus told the press.

The OC fearing that Belal might disclose his illegal activities went to his house on February 4, 2004 and threatened to kill him if he did not resume work for him within three days.

As Belal did not turn up, Ohidur filed three false cases against Belal and his wife on December 14, and sent his wife to jail after arresting her, said the mother.

The OC again raided her house

on January 11, 05 along with his forces and hit Belal in the head when he was working in a vegetable field.

Ohidur also hit Almus in the mouth with a gun breaking two of her teeth and arrested her with her eight-year-old granddaughter Marina Begum.

Later the OC again beat Belal severely and took him to a sluice gate where he shot Belal dead in front of many people.

Almus filed a murder case with a Chakaria court almost a year after the killing but the OC ousted her along with her family after that, said the mother in tears.

When contacted over telephone, the OC denied the allegation and said Belal was an accused in robbery and murder cases for which he was jailed for five years.

"After he came out of the jail, he was regrouping his gang for robbery and police found his body lying near the sluice gate," he told The Daily Star, adding that his mother or wife did not file any case after the killing.

Police later filed a case and submitted the final report as the investigation officer did not find any clue to the killing, he added.

DHAKA TODAY advertisement for seminars, dissemination sessions, and book launches.

Intern doctors go for indefinite strike again

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Intern doctors of Rangpur Medical College Hospital have gone for indefinite strike from yesterday once again as their demands were not realised by the authorities within the stipulated time.

None of the intern doctors of the hospital joined his duty yesterday to observe the strike causing immense suffering to the patients admitted in different wards.

The intern doctors joined their duties on Thursday after four days of strike when the hospital authorities assured that their demands would be realised by Monday.

Ali Reza, a leader of the Intern Doctors Association said, "The authorities of RMCH promised us to demolish illegal shops inside hospital campus and take actions

against the miscreants who beat up our leaders. Consequently we withdrew our strike on Thursday." They have vowed to continue the strike till the authorities realise their demands, he added.

RMCH sources disclosed that third and fourth-class employees of the hospital threatened to go for indefinite strike if the later demolish the shops inside the hospital campus.

As a result, the authority could not demolish the shops at the campus within the stipulated time.

DU observes World Population Day

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) yesterday observed World Population Day with a daylong programme that included rally, debate competitions and open discussion on the campus with an objective to raise awareness regarding population-related issues.

This year the theme of the day was 'Young People'.

The day began with a rally in the morning, organised by the Department of Population Sciences in collaboration with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Dean of Social Science Faculty Prof Harun-or-Rashid, Chairman of Department of Population Sciences Tehmina Ghafur, Prof AKM Nurun Nabi, some other teachers and students of various departments and institutes took part in the rally led by Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz.

An open discussion titled 'Young population in Bangladesh: not only the future but also the present' was also held at RC Majumdar auditorium in the afternoon with Tehmina Ghafur in the chair.

Prof SMA Faiz, Prof Harun-or-Rashid and Panchai Sutchitta, Bangladesh Country Representative for UNFPA, took part in the discussion.

Prof Zakir gets Meher Kabir Science Literature Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Naturalist and bird expert Prof Kazi Zakir Hossain was awarded 'Meher Kabir Science Literature Award 2005' by Bangla Academy for his contributions to science literature at a formal function at the seminar room of the Academy yesterday.

Prof Kazi Abdul Fattah presided over the occasion while Director General of Bangla Academy Dr Abul Kalam Monzur Morshed delivered the welcome speech.

"Kabir Chowdhury Children Literature Award" and 'Meher Kabir Science Literature Award' are the special contributions of Kabir Chowdhury family. Prof Kabir has set up an example by initiating the awards, which reflects the family's patronisation for children and science related literature, said Abul Kalam Monzur Morshed.

Congratulations the awardee, Prof Kabir Chowdhury said the expert committee of Bangla Academy has selected a competent writer and handed over the prize with due responsibility and accountability.

Prof Zakir conducted diversified research on birds as well as the nature and the award is just a recognition of his contributions, said Kazi Abdul Fattah, adding that the award will promote writings on scientific literature in mother tongue.

Obituary

Shakera Khanam, daughter of eminent politician and journalist Maulana Mohammad Akram Khan and wife of Shamsul Anam Khan, passed away at the Central Hospital in the city early yesterday at the age of 85, says a press release.

She left behind her four sons, three daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

She was buried at the Azimpur graveyard in the city yesterday. Her qulkhwani will be held at her youngest son Saidul Anam Tutul's residence on July 14 after Asr prayers.