

Dhaka Day by Day

Help In Sight

by Aasha Mehreen Amin



Helen Keller with Rabindranath Tagore.

Few people have not heard or read about Helen Keller, a deaf and blind woman who committed her life to helping other people with disabilities. Her amazing courage and inner vision inspired millions of people including Rabindranath Tagore whom she met during her travels to further the crusade against blindness.

Named after this remarkable woman who was also its trustee, Helen Keller International (HKI) was founded in 1915 by a group of North Americans. The motivation initially had been to rehabilitate Allied soldiers blinded in World War I. After over 70 years this organisation has reached out to more than 90 countries with the cause of preventing blindness and rehabilitating the blind.

HKI came to Bangladesh in 1978 with the overall goal to help the government to reduce and ultimately eliminate blinding malnutrition in this country. HKI also provides technical assistance to the government through the Institute of Public Health Nutrition (IPHN).

In Bangladesh over 30,000 children go blind because of vitamin A deficiency. Dr Martin Bloem, country director of HKI Bangladesh feels this could not be emphasized enough. This is especially important since according to recent findings of studies, there is a direct and crucial link between vitamin A deficiency and infant mortality.

Says the Dutch scientist and nutrition expert, "even a relatively mild deficiency of vitamin A can increase the rate of fatality due to illness since it is essential to combat infection. Of course blindness among children is an important issue but we must first make sure that they live."

The biggest challenge HKI has had to face is reaching the poorest of the poor. One way of doing this is educating the public about proper nutrition through mass communication. Recently HKI has managed a project with the help of IPHN, UNICEF and USAID, to influence people to increase the consumption of beta-carotene rich food (one of the greatest sources of vitamin A) by children and pregnant and nursing mothers.

Another objective of this project was to create a demand by families for increasing the availability of beta-carotene rich food and vitamin A capsules. Target groups included not

just mothers but fathers too. Advertisements on radio and television were constantly aired telling people to make their children eat greens and carotene enriched vegetables to prevent night blindness. Making distribution of posters, leaflets and letters were also part of this project.

Another project HKI has initiated is the Homegardening Education Surveillance. The purpose of this project is to increase the supply and consumption of vitamin A rich foods in Bangladesh. "Poor people," says Bloem, "cannot get vitamin A from animal sources and so must rely on vegetables. At present there is an acute shortage of vegetables in the country. That is why people should be encouraged to cultivate them on their own homestead." He further adds that from recent research it has been found out that in order to increase the intake of vegetables by children it is very important to increase the variety of vegetables since children do not like to eat the same thing every day.

HKI has also been engaged in a three-year project with Voluntary Health Service Society (VHSS) which began in 1989 to mobilize rural village based and urban slum organisations to actively take part in a national vitamin A deficiency control programme. The project provided information, training and support for agencies based in small villages and urban slums in 7 districts.

One of the most important functions of HKI Bangladesh is to act as a bridge between other NGOs and the government. HKI works closely with IPHN and UNICEF and helps with training, maintaining and evaluation of programmes and providing educational materials. Between 1982 and 1983 the organisation collaborated with IPHN to conduct the first nationwide study which brought up front the magnitude of problem of nutritional blindness and included such important data as geographical distribution, risk factors, vitamin A capsule coverage etc.

Says Bloem, "At this point we are trying to control vitamin A deficiency. But for eradication we need to do a lot more. The key word here is collaboration. We must all work together to tackle this problem and it is very important to feel the urgency to act now."

Service to humanity should be main task of educated person : Biswas

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday stressed the need for national unity for expediting the country's development process, reports BSS.

He said, "We all shall have to render dedicated service to the nation to lead it towards the path of progress and prosperity."

The President was addressing a big gathering of local Elite and cross section of people at Ashwini Kumar town hall in Barisal.

President Biswas said service to humanity should be the main task of the educated section of society.

He said the younger generation is the driving force to weed out evils from society and so they should be equipped with education and knowledge to be able to shoulder the country's future responsibilities.

The President said human life is short but the achievements remain for long time. Dedication to the cause of humanity should be the motto of the younger generation to build a happy and prosperous nation, he added.

The President said the present democratic government is implementing various development projects to fulfil its commitments.

In this connection President Biswas recalled the vision of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman for overall upliftment of the country.

The President called upon all to extend cooperation in the implementation of the development activities initiated

by the government. Dwelling on the development of Barisal region, the President said the present government has decided to set up divisional headquarters in Barisal. He also mentioned construction work of Barisal airport and development of road communication in the region.

The gathering, presided over by Ashan Habib Kamal administrator of the Barisal Pourashava, was also addressed by Mujibur Rahman Sarwar MP, BD Habibullah, Debendranth Ghosh, Advocate Abdur Rashid, Jubadal leader Moazzam Hossain Alal.

The President late exchanged views with local journalists. Earlier, President Biswas laid the foundation stone of a five storey building of Begum Tafazzal Hossain Manik Mia Girls College in the town.

Addressing on the occasion, the President stressed the need for spreading female education to build them as potential partner in development.

He paid tributes to Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq and said his idea of spreading education still inspires the nation.

The President also recalled the role of Tafazzal Hossain Manik Mia for ensuring freedom of the press. He assured all sorts of cooperation for development of the college and institute would help expedite female education in this area.

Earlier President Biswas opened the Amrita Lal Dey College in the town.



Jahanara Imam inaugurating a torch procession yesterday that paraded city streets for making today's Nirmul Committee 'march towards Jatiya Sangsad' a success.

Build national unity based on Sher-e-Bangla's ideals

Speakers at a discussion in Dhaka yesterday called for building a strong national unity based on the ideals of Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq to save the hard-earned independence and democracy from the Indian political and cultural aggression, reports BSS.

They said our national identity was now also at a stake because of the aggressive attitude of India and added that the "push in operation" was the latest demonstration of India's design of hegemony to destroy the existence of Bangladesh.

The speakers were taking part in a discussion arranged to mark the 19th birth anniversary of Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq at the National Book Centre auditorium.

Krishak Sramik Party organised the discussion which was presided over by its Chairman A S M Solaiman and participated, among others, by former Minister and Chairman of National Democratic Party Anwar Zahid, PROGOSH General Secretary Wahiduzzaman, Sher-e-Bangla Parishad Chairman Advocate Noor Mohammad Hawlader, KSP General Secretary Advocate M A Latif Majumder and Jamaat leader Kamuruzaman.

Former Information Minister Anwar Zahid said late Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq had emancipated the deprived section of the society by introducing the 'Profasatta Aine' and 'Rin Salishi Board' which ensured the farmers' right on land and liberty from the wrath of money lenders.

PROGOSH General Secre-

Seminar on Disaster Management

South Asian Disaster Management Centre (SADMC) of International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) has organized a seminar on Disaster Management in observance of IDNDR, on Saturday (October 31) at 5 pm, says a press release.

Md Murshed Ahmed, IUBAT Alumni and Chief Economist, Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO) will present the key note paper. The seminar will take place at the Conference Room of IUBAT, House-135, Road 9A (old-19), Dhanmondi Residential Area.

'Interests of Bangladeshis abroad to be protected'

Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Abdus Salam Talukdar visiting Japan advised the Bangladeshi citizens living there to uphold national interest and promote rich Bangladeshi culture as the country's unofficial envoys abroad, reports BSS.

Talukdar was addressing a gathering of over two thousand Bangladeshi nationals Sunday at an auditorium in Tokyo organised by the Bangladesh society in Japan, according to a message received yesterday from Tokyo.

The Minister said the country achieved democracy after prolonged struggle and it was everyone's responsibility to support its democratically elected government in maintaining the democratic process. He said the present government acknowledged the contributions made by the overseas Bangladeshis through remittances of their hard earned foreign currencies and would do everything possible to protect their interests.



Death anniversary

The first death anniversary of eminent educationist, social worker, and politician Maulavi Abdul Ghani is being observed today, says a press release.

A day-long Qurankhwan followed by a milad mahfil after Asr prayers will mark the occasion at his village home at Joymangal, Shibpur in Narsingdi.

Late Maulavi Abdul Ghani stood seventh at the matriculation examinations under Calcutta University in 1922 and after passing MA from Dhaka University in 1927, he devoted himself to establish educational institutions at his village home where he took up teaching as a profession.

He was the chairman of Raghav Union for about 50 years.

CBS Gramophone releases piano record of Bangladeshi folk music

Bombay CBS Gramophone Record Company has published and distributed all over the world folk music of Bangladesh on piano played by pianist Manzoor Ahmed, reports UNB.

This is for the first time in the sub-continent that piano record of Bangladeshi country music has been introduced. Eastern folk instruments are used as accompaniment, said a press release here yesterday.

Imams to be included in uplift activities : Mannan

State Minister for Religious Affairs Prof M A Mannan yesterday said that a comprehensive programme is being undertaken to include imams of mosques in different development schemes and activities in future, reports BSS.

He was addressing a two-day workshop on "Sanitation and hygiene education for imams" at National Press Club auditorium here. Organised by Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ulema Dal in cooperation with UNICEF, the function was addressed, among others, by the President of Jatiyatabadi Ulema Dal Al-Haj S M Ruhul Amin, General Secretary of the

Ulema Dal and Ex-MP Alhaj Moazzem Hossain and UNICEF Representative Delwar Ali Khan from Pakistan. 30 imams from different districts of the country are participating in the workshop.

The inaugural session of the workshop was held that UNICEF would hold a grand conference of imams in December next on the above subject.

The State Minister said that the imams of the country could effectively motivate the people and the mothers of the children about sanitation and hygiene education on the light of the Holy Quran and Hadith.

950 kms canal dug: JS told

A total of about 950 kms of (585 miles) canal have so far been dug after the present government came to power, Minister in-charge of the Prime Minister's Secretariat Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed informed the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, reports BSS.

Replying to a question from Awami League member Mirza Azam, he said an amount of Taka 63 lakh and a total of 16,677.59 metric tons of wheat were spent to dig those canals.

The Minister said an amount of Taka 10 crore and 40 thousand metric tons of wheat have been sanctioned for canal digging during fiscal 1992-93.

Dhaka WASA Tender Notice

ওয়াসা
অবেধ পানি সংযোগ আজই বিচ্ছিন্ন করুন

Tenders are invited from Dhaka WASA enlisted 1st, 2nd and 3rd class civil contractors for the undermentioned works.

Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Date & Time of Receiving Tender
1. Installation of 100 mm dia water line in Dania Road bylane Jatrabari area.	Tk 1,48,289/-	2-11-92 up to 12-00 Noon
2. Construction of boundary wall for tubewell at Rayerbazar PWD Staff Quarters compound.	Tk 89,449/-	-do-

Tenders will be opened on the same date of receiving tenders at 12:30 hours in presence (if any) of the tenderers or their representatives.

Schedule will be available at the Office of the Chief Accountant of Dhaka WASA, WASA Bhaban, 98 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka and all MODS Zone offices of Dhaka WASA. Other detailed descriptions will be available at the office of the undersigned.

Address:
WASA Bhaban
98, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka.

WASA-P.I. - 359/92
DFP(G) 18462-21/10
G-1341

Executive Engineer
Water (E&D) Division
Dhaka WASA

Weather

Dry weather likely

By Staff Correspondent

Dry weather is likely to prevail all over the country with occasional partly cloudy sky during the next 24 hours commencing 6 am today (Tuesday).

The Met office forecasts, day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The Met office adds night temperature is likely to fall after the week.

The maximum temperature of 32.5 degree Celsius was reported from Satkhira and the minimum of 16.2 degree was reported from Iswardi and Srimangal yesterday (Monday).

The sun sets today Tuesday at 5.22 pm and rises tomorrow Wednesday at 6.02 am.

The maximum and the minimum temperature and humidity of some of the major cities and towns of the country yesterday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	30.9	19.6	70	65
Chittagong	30.4	20.2	80	69
Rajshahi	31.0	16.7	83	-
Khulna	30.6	19.6	73	71
Cox's Bazar	30.5	21.0	67	73
Dinajpur	29.6	18.5	85	82
Sylhet	30.2	19.4	77	79
Barisal	30.6	18.6	87	94

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BUET mass literacy programme

By BUET Correspondent
A one-day briefing session as a part of Mass Literacy programme for the students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) was held yesterday at the university auditorium.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, who is personally looking after the newly created Primary and Mass Education Department granted Taka 2,18,400 from her special fund to finance the initial phase of the programme.

Under the programme, 550 new entrants of the BUET will conduct a six month course for 5,500 illiterate persons.

Presided over by Dr Nazrul Islam, former students welfare director of BUET, the session was addressed, among others, by renowned educationist Ferdous Khan.

3rd Congress of World Blind begins Nov 1 in Cairo

Bangladesh will participate in the Third Congress of World Blind beginning in the Egyptian capital of Cairo November 1, officials said yesterday, reports UNB.

Susan Mubarak, the wife of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, will inaugurate the six-day conference, which will draw some 400 delegates from 108 countries.

President of the National Federation of the Blind Sk Hashmi will lead the Bangladesh delegation.

The theme of the conference is "Challenge Towards Rehabilitation of the Blind in 21st Century."

The first congress of the world blind was held in Riyadh in 1984.

ALMOST READY LUXURY APARTMENTS FOR SALE

Two 1625 sft almost ready 3-bedroom luxury apartments for re-allotment in Olympia Tower on Old Airport (VIP) Road. Thai Aluminium Tinted Glass Windows, White Mosaic Floor in all Rooms, Fully Tiled Baths with Bath-Tub, Teak Wardrobes in Bedrooms and other excellent features. Building has modern amenities like Security, Visitors Lobby, Lift, Generator, Intercom, Party-hall etc.

For details contact BTL's Office at 52 New Eskaton Rd, Dhaka (Telephones: 404243, 404872, 41311C & 419758) during working hours, on all days except Fridays.

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