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US to raise contributions to UNFP

Director of the Health and Development Policy in the United States Jodil Jacobson yesterday stressed the need for reducing population growth rate through various measures including improvement in basic healthcare and educational programmes, reports BSS.

Addressing a worldnet satellite symposium on "Population Problems", sponsored by United States Information Service (USIS) here in the afternoon, Ms Jodil said family planning and development could not be separated from one another.

She replied in the affirmative when asked if the Clinton administration would increase its share of contribution to the international population fund like United Nations Fund for Population (UNFP) activities.

Ms Jodil, a reputed population expert said family planning was a matter to be decided at individual level so religious obstacles could not stand in the successful and wide acceptability of contraceptive devices. In this context, she cited example of her own country, where use of contraceptive was widely prevalent though majority of its population were Catholics.

Replying to a comment of Ms Tahera Ahmed, she said areas having utter poverty, were having greater density of population.

Justice Ibrahim's death anniversary today

The 27th death anniversary of Justice Mohammad Ibrahim will be observed today (Wednesday). The day's programme includes visit to the graveyard, laying of floral wreaths, holding of milad mahfil seeking divine blessing for salvation of the departed soul, says a press release.

Course on small farmers' group marketing begins

Field officers of different agricultural departments and agencies are being trained to organise small farmers into groups for profitable disposal of their surplus crops, reports BSS.

A two-day training course on small farmers' group marketing began in the city yesterday to train the field officers so that they can organise the farmers into groups specially for marketing of those crops grown under CDP (Crop Diversification Programme) to improve their (farmers) socio-economic condition.

Organised by the Department of Agricultural Marketing, the training course is being attended by field officers from agriculture extension, agriculture marketing and BRDB official of greater Dhaka, Jhenidah, Chuadanga and Thakurgaon.

Discussion on Jihad held

By DU Correspondent
The Ganatantrik Chhatra Otkya (GCO) yesterday alleged that the ruling BNP had established autocracy by betraying the dreams of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in anti-autocratic movement.

The GCO held a meeting at the road island near the Teachers' Students Centre (TSC) of the Dhaka University in observance of the third death anniversary of Naziruddin Jihad.

Jihad was killed in a police firing on an anti-autocratic demonstration near the Jatiya Press Club on October 10 in 1990.

The GCO leader Ruhul Quddus Babu criticised the government for not implementing the 10-point demands of the student community.

The discussion was addressed, among others, by Ahad Ahmed, Razequzzaman Ratan, Ziaul Huq with Ruhul Quddus Babu in the chair.



Wednesday

- 5:00 Opening announcement
- 5:10 News in Bangla
- 5:20 Recitation from the Geeta
- 5:25 Sports programme: Olympic World Sports
- 5:55 Unmesh
- 6:40 A special programme on poet Osman Masud
- 7:20 Tagore songs
- 8:00 News in Bangla
- 8:30 A special programme on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's recent visit: Bangladesh at United Nations
- 9:05 Film: The A-Team
- 10:30 Kathamala
- 11:30 Khabar/The News
- 11:40 Tomorrow's programme summary
- 11:45 Closing

Dhaka Day by Day

Mind-set Obstacle to Self-reliance

by S Y Bakht

People in Bangladesh do not seem to show any natural expression of commitment and the motivational factor for volunteers is somewhat missing, observes Dr. John Coonrod, one of the directors of The Hunger Project, echoing the findings of the Bangladeshi volunteers at the local chapter of the US-based organisation.

Poverty of the mind is worse than any dearth of resource endowment in a country, he says. "People here seem to have a mind-set that says Bangladesh will always be a beggar in the world."

This type of a 'mind-set' is the principle obstacle to achieving any degree of self-reliance, he explains.

The Hunger Project Bangladesh, fully manned by local volunteers, has taken a stand to transform this mentality in order to remove poverty and hunger from the country, he says.

The local chapter will act as a catalyst to bring together people of diverse background, who will envision such a future, create strategies and commit themselves to achieve it.

The Hunger Project Bangladesh will launch a campaign for self-reliance starting with a workshop entitled: "Self-reliant Bangladesh: Need to Transform the Mind-set?", in the capital on October 14.

The kick-off action of this campaign, Dr Coonrod notes, will be a nationwide tree plantation drive, as a first step towards empowering the poor and protecting the environment.

Although there were a small group of volunteers involved in the local chapter of The Hunger Project since 1987, it was officially chartered in 1990 and now has 33 district units manned by volunteers known as 'Youth Ending Hunger'.

"The local chapter is the most dynamic and innovative one anywhere in the world," Dr Coonrod, a physicist-turned-full-time activist, says. "It sprang up among the educated unemployed youth of the country — a group which passionately wants to do something about their country."

Headquartered in New York, The Hunger Project has local chapters in 17 countries, including India, and liaison offices in another 90.

"We intend to work very closely in partnership with the government as ultimately it plays the strongest role for improving the condition of the people," he points out. "But the movement to empower the poorest of the poor will succeed only when all sections of people are working together."

In India the partnership with the government has worked very well, he relates, and in 1990 the Project's volunteers were even invited by the Indian Planning Commission to help improve the delivery system of social service.

"The Indian chapter devised a strategic planning in action (SPIA) in which you turn the

planning process on its head and try to analyse where the logjam or barrier is and then take short-term action."

One of the objectives of The Hunger Project is to find ways to overcome the mistrust amongst the people, the government and the NGOs, Dr Coonrod, a self-proclaimed "Berkeley Radical", adds.

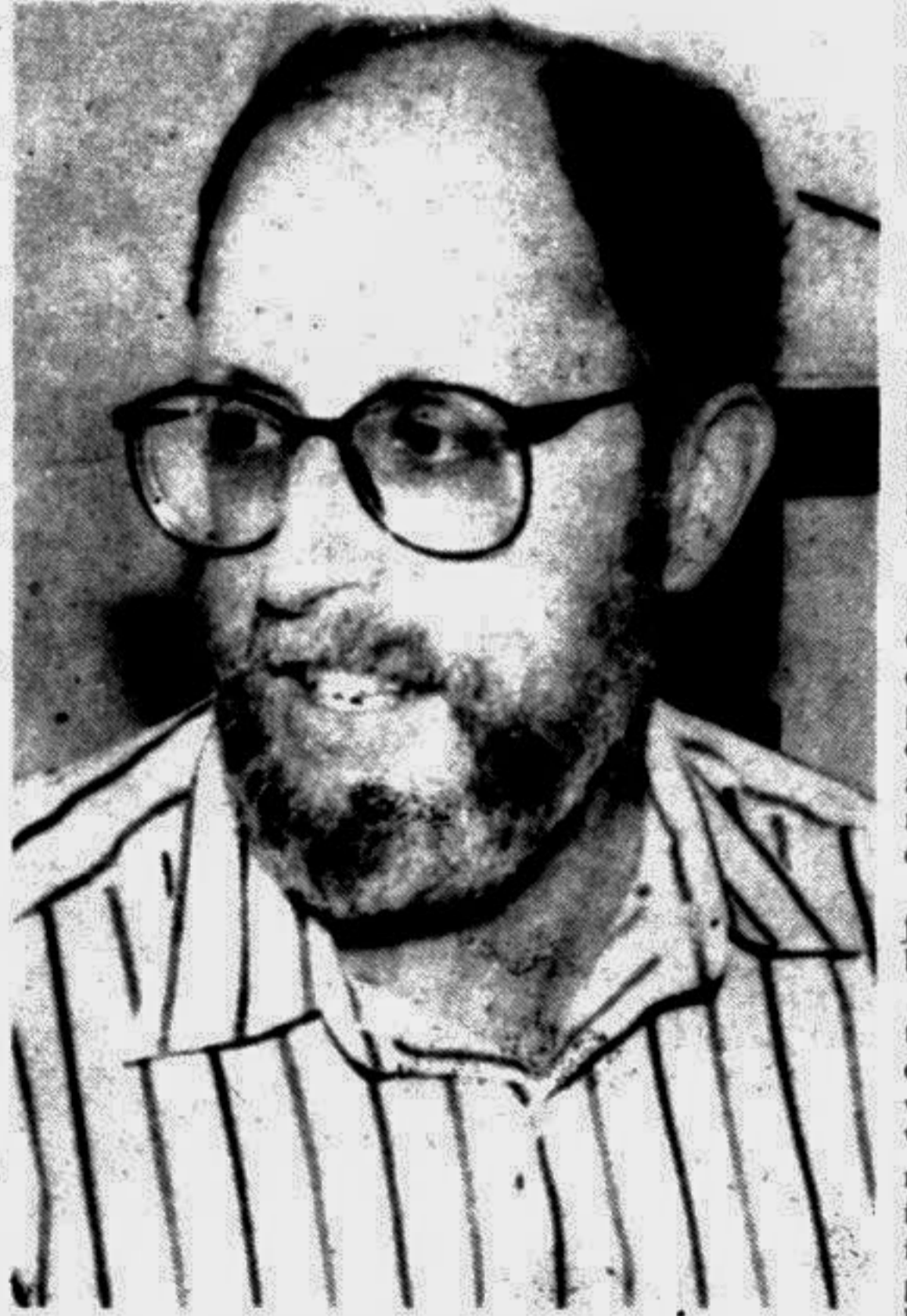
As a student of the University of California in the early 70s, he actively participated in the civil rights and the anti-Vietnam war movements in America.

The Hunger Project concept was born in Berkeley in 1974, he says, when the possibility of ending global hunger was realised after the World Food Conference had been held in Rome, and it was inspired by the philosophy of Buckminster Fuller, the inventor of the Geodesic Dome.

The organisation was set up in 1977 with a kick-off meeting in 12 US cities and involved 25,000 volunteers. It started as an advocacy group calling for policy changes in the developed countries in their relations with Third World countries.

Initially, Dr Coonrod was a volunteer with The Hunger Project as he continued with his vocation as a physicist, but the 1984 famine in Africa made him to change his mind.

"I was a research physicist at Princeton University at that time," he recalls, "and when I realised that all famines occur because of political reasons, I decided to become a full-time activist."



John Coonrod, Director, The Hunger Project.

Ziaur Rahman Hall team meets Biswas

A delegation of Muktiyoddah Ziaur Rahman Hall Students' Union of Dhaka University led by its Provost Professor Monturil Hoque called on President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports BSS.

Talking to the student leaders, President Biswas advised them to pursue their studies with utmost sincerity and devotion to become worthy citizens of the country for undertaking the future leadership in different fields of national life.

President Biswas urged the students to maintain peace and proper academic atmosphere on campus and curb terrorism and other harmful activities in the educational institutions.

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