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First nat'l day for the disabled

No govt programme due to 'fund shortage'

By Staff Correspondent

The government has failed to take up any programme of its own to observe the first "National Day for the Persons with Disability".

In an announcement last year, the government had said that it would observe the first Wednesday of every April as "National Day for the Persons with Disability".

The announcement was made in response to a call from the National Forum of Organisations Working With the Disabled (NFWOD) on the occasion of observance of "International Day of the Disabled Persons" on December 3, 1998.

About 10 per cent of the population of Bangladesh are disabled, according to WHO.

Officials in the Ministry of Social Welfare said they failed to take up any programme to observe the Day due to financial constraints.

However, the Social Welfare Ministry has expressed its solidarity with our programmes, said Monsur Ahmed Chowdhury, chairman of the committee for observance of the Day, formed by NFWOD.

"We could not take up separate programmes due to time constraint and financial problem. This is why we are observing the day jointly with NFWOD," said Mir Shahabuddin, DG of Department of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Welfare.

Talking to The Daily Star over telephone, he said the department is extending all cooperation in observing the Day. "We have printed invitation cards and made arrangements for publication of supplements in newspapers, highlighting the

significance of the Day".

Besides, the divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners have been instructed to observe the Day with due importance, the DG said.

Addressing a press conference yesterday at the Jatiya Press Club, Monsur Chowdhury said that the government allocated Tk six crore in the current budget for the formation of a foundation for the disabled but there was no progress in this regard till now.

But Mir Shahabuddin said the foundation will be formed very soon and is expected to start work from next financial year. Replying to a question, he said there is no scope to return the funds allocated for the foundation.

Speaking at the press conference, NFWOD general secretary of Jawaherul Islam Mamun mentioned that the government had formulated a National Policy for the Disabled in 1995 but necessary laws to protect the rights and interests of the disabled are yet to be formed.

Meanwhile, on the first day of the 3-day programme in observance of the Day, a colourful procession will be brought from the National Museum at 5 pm today and it will terminate near the Shishu Academy. A discussion meeting will be held at the Academy at 6:30 pm.

Tomorrow, a discussion on "Persons with disability in the mainstream of development: Limitations and prospects" will be held at LGED Bhaban at 9 and on Friday, a seminar on "Disaster Management and People with Disability" will be held at the same venue at 9 am.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption has filed 74 cases relating to irregularities, corruption and abuse of power in the disbursement of money from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund during 1991-95, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina disclosed this in Parliament yesterday during the PM's question hour in response to a question from Zeenat Hosain of Jatiya Party.

The Prime Minister said the money allocated at various rates, with a maximum of Tk 30 lakh, was disbursed on the recommendations of then BNP MPs.

Langer, Ambrose share morning honours

ST JOHN'S, Antigua, Apr 6 (Reuters/Internet): Justin Langer completed his third Test century for Australia but had to share the honours with West Indies paceman Curtly Ambrose on the fourth morning of the final test on Tuesday.

Australia, who must win in Antigua to square the series, were 274 for five in their second innings at lunch, a lead of 355.

The veteran Ambrose conceded just nine runs during a 10-over spell with the old ball, troubling all of the batsmen with his reverse swing.

Ambrose took his tally for the match to eight by dismissing the Waugh twins in almost identical fashion.

Mark Waugh had added only five to his overnight score of 60 when he edged to wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs at 223. Brother Steve went for four, also caught by Jacobs, at 241.

Langer, 84 not out overnight, reached his hundred from 252 balls with seven fours and a six. He was eventually bowled by a sharply turning Carl Hooper delivery for 127 a few minutes before lunch.

West Indies kept such a tight rein on the batsmen that only 65 runs were scored from the session's 33 overs. Ricky Ponting scoring just four off 50 balls faced.

BAC filed 74 cases, PM tells JS

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CID arrests

Two DB inspectors — Rezaul Hossain being the other — were called to the CID office for the third time yesterday evening. The rest seven DB personnel were inspector Abdul Kadir, three sub-inspectors, a naik, a havildar and a constable who were summoned to the CID office for questioning yesterday.

Speaking to The Daily Star, CID officials confirmed the arrest of Ziaul Ahsan and said the other eight were being interrogated till late night. CID sources hinted more arrests by last night from among the eight.

Meanwhile, a member of the probe committee headed by a DIG also spoke of similar reasons behind the killing. "We have concluded that Shafi was killed following dispute over distribution of money gained from the recovery incident," the member, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The probe committee interrogated nine assistant commissioners (AC) of DB at the Special Branch office yesterday. This was the first time that officials at AC level came under questioning by investigators after the recovery of Shafi's body.

Earlier, CID and the probe committee had interrogated several DB personnel, ranked between constable and inspector, regarding Shafi's death.

The probe committee in its report would also suggest reforming the detective branch. Investigation by the committee revealed serious irregularities in the activities of the Detective Branch of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police. The report will be submitted to the Inspector General of Police.

When asked whether the committee would recommend for abolishing the Detective Branch, the head of the committee replied in the negative.

The committee would recommend for changing the structure of the DB and formulating rules and regulations so that this short of incidents can be avoided, the committee chief said.

CID sources alleged that a senior CID official was trying to influence the investigation as his brother, a DB official, is suspected to be involved in the incident. Top level officials of CID, however, said they saw no such attempts.

Besides, Anwar, the canteen man at the DB office, is likely to be produced in the CMM's Court today after the completion of a five-day remand in CID custody.

Interestingly a document shows that Sarker has used RCCI funds (grant sector) to present seven sills sarees to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last year.

Rafiqul Hassan Ferjani, an executive committee member of the RCCI, expressed his ignorance about any such gift. "Usually we give some gifts when VIPs visit the RCCI. But the Prime Minister is yet to pay such a visit," he explained.

(With M A Wadood in Rajshahi)

Money can buy

Director, Administration of the Directorate for Primary Education admitted that they 'heard' about the matter but said, "We did not receive any allegation officially". He admitted that this kind of incident might take place in mafassil areas.

Asked whether any candidate obtaining full marks in the oral test will get the job, he said, "There is very little scope. Even if someone gets the full marks (20), he or she still may not get the job."

Haider said, "A candidate will get the job out of his or her total performance in the written test, viva voce and the position in the quota."

We will discuss the matter officially and examine the possibility of issuing an official notification requesting people not to succumb to any allurements though we did not receive any allegation in this regard."

Sattar Bhuiyan said a miserable condition was prevailing in the leather sector. He suggested that the government should form a high-powered committee comprising experts to assess the problems and recommend measures.

After paying the traders against their last year's supplies and buying chemicals, the tanners had hardly any money for buying leather in large quantities' said an owner of a tannery at Hazaribagh.

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They were taken into police custody.

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