

Speakers at Workshop say

Mere rise in budget won't ensure health care to the poor

Healthcare needs of the poorer segment of the society and the vulnerable group should be adequately met through increasing budgetary allocation for the sector, a three-day workshop that concluded in the city yesterday suggested, reports APB.

World Health Organisation (WHO) and Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) jointly organised the workshop at CIRDP auditorium.

However merely increasing budget for health sector or recruitment of more physicians would not alone help improve the country's medicare facilities, the speakers pointed out.

Senior research fellow of BIDS Dr Binayek Sen called for democratisation of health services and more budget for medicare and education.

On the dearth of specialists he said more than 75 per cent is concentrated in Dhaka city. As a result poor people particularly in the rural areas remained deprived of their services, he added. Pointing to the current trend for treatment abroad he said a staggering

amount of Tk 500 crore is being spent in this regard.

Dr Sen also stressed the need for giving due importance to Ayurvedic system of medicine.

He urged that researchers, NGO representatives and public health officials to formulate an inter-sectoral health care approach for the country.

Project Coordinator of Ganoshasthaya Kendra Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury was critical of the existing health care system in the country.

Chairman of Dhaka Community Hospital Dr Q Zaman also pointed out that people are not aware about the healthcare facilities existing in the country.

Only one-24 hour emergency service in Dhaka city for its almost 10 million residents with only two doctors on duty is simply unthinkable in the context of the recent expansion in the medicare system in the neighbouring countries, he said.

Dr Zaman also revealed that about 25,000 people are at risk of cancer due to arsenic contamination.

Speaking as the chief guest Finance Minister Shah A M Kibria agreed that there should be more allocation for healthcare in the budget but hastened to add that "high salary level, more cars or a commodious office will not alone help turn medicare facilities efficient."

Reaching the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable group should be the key factor, he said.

Kibria called for re-directing energy and resources for building a safety-net so that healthcare facilities becomes affordable to the distressed and the really deserving ones.

The closing session was also addressed by John Martin of WHO, Geneva, and B S Lamba of WHO, New Delhi. Dr Zakir Hossain, Daily Star editor Mahfuz Anam, Daily Sangbad editor Bazlur Rahman, Dr Md Khairul Islam of Plan International Bangladesh chapter, Dr Noel O'Brien of British Medical Association and Peter Anyand, an MP from Kenya.



Abdur Razzak, Minister for Water Resources speaking at a press briefing at the conference room of the ministry yesterday. —PID photo

Rob at confce of Small Fishermen Assoc 'Fishing villages' to be set up

Fisheries and Livestock Minister A S M Abdur Rob yesterday emphasised the need for creating a 'silver movement' boosting fish production in the country to help accelerate the pace of economic development, reports BSS.

The minister announced that 'fishing villages' would be set up in the fisherman-dominated areas. He said side by side fishermen would get credits on easy terms.

He was addressing as the chief guest the Third National Conference of Bangladesh Small Fishermen Association at the National Press Club auditorium. Association president Abdur Razzak Talukder presided. Director General of Fisheries Directorate M A Matin, association general secretary Anwar Hossain Sikder, labour leader Maklesur Rahman, Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation Chairman Golam Murtuza also spoke.

Rob said fisheries insurance would be introduced and security of fishermen catching fish in the sea and rivers would be strengthened. The minister described the fisheries sector as one of the most prospective one

to open the widow of opportunities for millions of people and said tens of thousands of jobs could be created if the 'silver movement' could be launched in the country.

He said the government is determined to restore discipline in the fisheries sector and attach priority to this sector for boosting fish production in the country to meet the domestic demand and export target. Rob said all open water bodies would be brought under the jurisdiction of the fisheries ministry and fish landing centres would be set up at the major fishing ghats.

The minister commended the role of the fishing community in raising the gross national income of the country and called upon them to unite and resist the toll collections and violence at different fishing ghats.

Rob said the government would provide small fishermen of all possible support in improving their lot and called upon them to play an effective role in ending catching fish-fry.

He also underscored the need for forging unity of all professional groups in achieving economic emancipation.

Pahela Baishakh

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termed Pahela Baishakh a day of joy and elation for the whole nation.

He urged the people to renew their pledge to work with more dedication and sincerity through the new year.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her message hoped that new year would bring peace, progress and happiness for all and give the nation a new spirit to stand against communalism, terrorism, anarchy and meanness.

Different socio-cultural organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to celebrate the day.

The day's first programme country will begin at dawn at Ramna Batamul, Chhayana, a leading cultural organisation, will organise the programme.

A large number of people, attired in traditional dresses are expected to attend the programme. Bangladesh Television will telecast live the programme from 6 in the morning.

Students and teachers of Fine Arts Institute (FA) of Dhaka University will bring out a colourful procession from the Institute premises at 9:30 am carrying festoons, placards, posters, banners and wearing masks to welcome the Bangla New Year.

To celebrate the day in a befitting manner, a 101-member committee titled "Pahela Baishakh Ujjapan Parishad 1406" has already been formed with IFA Director Prof Mahmudul Haq as its head.

Pahela Baishakh at Sheraton

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel will celebrate Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bengali New Year with a number of colourful programmes, says a press release.

These include:

Baishakhi Mela — A four-day Baishakhi Mela beginning from today at the hotel's main entrance. A wide range of traditional handicrafts, leather goods, handloom products, boutiques, jewellery etc. will be on display and sale from the traditionally designed colourful stalls.

Pitha Festival - A wide variety of traditional Bangladeshi pitha and traditional cakes will be featured at the Lobby Cafe from 8 am. Sheraton hostesses dressed in traditional saris will prepare delicious pitha in front of the guests. Besides other entertainment programmes such as snake charmer and sale of colourful bangles will take place.

Bangalee Food Festival — Today and tomorrow the hotel will feature a traditional Bangladeshi buffet lunch and buffet dinner with a wide variety of authentic Bangladeshi cuisine.

Ekhlasuddin gets Shishu Academy literary award

By DU Correspondent

Veteran juvenile litterateur Ekhlasuddin Ahmed has been awarded the 'Bangladesh Shishu Academy Sahitya Purashkar' for Bengali year 1404 for his outstanding contribution to the literature.

The award comes with Tk 25,000 in cash.

Ekhlasuddin Ahmed was born in 1940 in the district of West Bengal. He starts writing and involved himself with the children organising movement in mid 50s.

More than 50 books of Ekhlasuddin have been published which includes 'Ek Je Chilo Nengti' (1965), 'Tuntu Burir Chara' (1966), 'Math Prer Gaipa' (1970), 'Boitaki Chara' (1975), 'Chotto Rongin Pakhi' (1981) and 'Pratrodher Chara' (1986).

He was the editor of pioneer juvenile magazine 'Tapur Tukur' in the 60s.

Ekhlasuddin also won other awards including Bangla Academy Purashkar (1982), Alaul Sahitya Purashkar (1982), Agrani Bank Shishusahitya Purashkar (1987), Hellsinki Bihwa Jubo Utsav Purashkar (1962).

JH chemicals

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deposited with the clearing houses of both Dhaka and Chittagong bourses.

The company issued a total of 3.30 lakh shares during June-July last year. Of those 1.65 lakh shares were offered for public subscriptions while the rest was subscribed by the sponsors.

There is a three-year lock-in on sponsors' shares, restraining them from selling those before 2001.

Detecting the excess shares, the surveillance team informed the DSE Council. The Council reviewed the situation and decided to immediately suspend trading of the company until the matter was resolved. It also asked its chief executive officer GQ Chowdhury to jointly work with the Chittagong bourse in taking necessary actions.

The DSE councillors are suspecting foul play by the company.

"It's totally a fraud case," a DSE councillor said, "We have been suspecting it for the last couple of days, but we did not have any proof."

He also said that there were evidences that shares were not issued properly against the allotment letters, which resulted in more shares than the allotted numbers.

"We have evidences of the fraudulent acts in which the company issued both the shares and the allotment letters," the councillor said on condition that he not be named.

There are two probable explanations. One could be that the shares were fake and the other that those had been issued by the company itself. But we have collected a number of shares with similar allotment numbers which were not supposed to be in the market," another councillor said.

He also said that the DSE feared that more companies were involved in such fraudulent acts and added that it was working on it.

35,000 being treated with N-medicine every year

About 35,000 patients with thyroid gland problem are being treated every year at the Institute of Nuclear Medicine (INM) in the city, reports UNB.

President of the Society of Nuclear Medicine, Bangladesh, Dr M A Karim said each year INM and 13 nuclear medicine centres are providing service to 5,000 patients suffering from thyroid cancer and hyper-thyroid problem, differentiating Hormone of 22 thousand patients.

Addressing a press conference, Dr Karim said alongside complicated testing in medical science, Ultrasonogram of 70 thousand patients, scanning of different organs including heart, Vitamin B-12 absorption and life span of red blood cell are also identified in the institute.

The press conference was organised here at the library of INM on the eve of 4th national conference of the Society of Nuclear Medicine, Bangladesh, on April 16.

Science and Technology Minister Mohammad Nooruddin Khan will inaugurate the conference.

The theme of the conference is to bring people under the treatment of nuclear medicine.

About 200 nuclear experts and associates from home and abroad will take part in the conference.

Women's dormitory at RTTC opens

State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir inaugurated the newly constructed academic building and a women's dormitory of Rangpur Teachers Training College (RTTC) at Rangpur on Saturday, reports APB.

These were built at a cost of Tk 2.72 crore, provided by the Asian Development Bank.

Dr Alamgir also inaugurated the administrative and academic buildings of Rangpur Government Commercial College, built at a cost of Tk 71 lakh.

Local MP Anisul Haque Chowdhury and Awami League central leader Fulu Sarkar were also present on the occasions.

Earlier the state minister opened a day-long seminar on 'Employment in Formal Sector at the Circuit House auditorium, jointly organised by the Planning Commission and UNDP.

What's on tomorrow...

National convention: A three-day national convention '99 and 22nd council session of the Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh will begin. Venue: IDEB premises. Time: 9:00 am. Chief guest: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will open the conference.

Food exhibition and cultural programme: An exhibition of Bangladeshi and Russian food followed by a cultural programme will be held to celebrate Bengali New Year. Organisers: Volga Club and Rudramanjal. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre auditorium, House No 510, Rd No 7, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 3:00-5:00 pm and 6:30-8:00 pm respectively.

Condolence meeting: A meeting to condole the death of noted banker and public relations officer Mohammad Ali will be held. Venue: VIP Lounge of Jatiya Press Club. Time: 4:30 pm.

The meeting has been organised by the Bangladesh Public Relations Association.

Meeting: A meeting of the Interact Club of Dhaka will be held. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 5 pm.

Art exhibition: An art exhibition of the artists of Bangladesh and India selected from a workshop on the Contemporary Works of Bangalee Artist (February 4-10) will be inaugurated. The exhibition organised by Bengal Foundation will continue from April 16-21 from 11 am to 7 pm everyday. The exhibition will be inaugurated at 5 pm. Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Prof M Anisuzzaman will preside over the inaugural ceremony while a noted artist Shahidul Ahmed and National Professor Kabir Chowdhury will be special guests on the occasion. Poet Shamsur Rahman will open the exhibition as chief guest.

Weather

No change in temp likely

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Dhaka and Barisal divisions and the regions of Noakhali, Comilla, Pabna, Bogra and Sylhet in next 12 hours, reports APB.

Met office says weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country.

No appreciable change in day temperature is expected during the period across the country.

Country's highest temperature recorded yesterday at 37.2 degree Celsius was at Rajshahi and the lowest 23.2 degrees at Sirimangal.

The sun sets today at 6:20 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:38 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in celsius	Humidity percentage		
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	36.3	26.2	66	51
Chittagong	34.0	25.5	75	75
Rajshahi	37.2	25.7	74	60
Khulna	35.3	25.0	73	52
Barisal	36.2	24.3	75	60
Sylhet	35.7	24.8	71	60

UP chairman shot dead in Meherpur

MEHERPUR, Apr 13: Chairman of Kazipur Union Parishad under Gangni thana of the district was killed and his son was seriously injured at Terail on his ways to thana headquarters this morning, police said, reports BSS.

The victim identified as Abdul Baqi, 45, a local Awami League leader, was riding a motor-cycle accompanied by his son Faruq Abdullah Bashir when two masked assailants sprayed bullets on them. Chairman Baki was killed on the spot and his son admitted to Gangni hospital with bullet wounds.

A case was recorded with Gangni police.



US President Bill Clinton (C), First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton (L) and Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel (R) talk about the 'Perils of Indifference' at the 7th Millennium Evening at the White House Monday in Washington. Clinton, the First Lady and Professor Elie Wiesel lead the reflective discussion of the darker impulses which have given rise in the twentieth century to unimaginable injustices, and on the phenomenon of human indifference which characterises such tragedies. —AFP photo

International Organisation for Migration says Economic despair causing a boom to 'human-smuggling'

SYDNEY, Apr 13: In China, they're known as Snake Heads. They're a new breed of organised criminals who lure victims with promises of wealth and opportunity in foreign lands, reports AP.

Usually the dream turns into a nightmare.

In receiving countries such as the United States and Australia, most illegal immigrants are caught and sent straight back to where they came from.

Independent organisations say many of those who get through face a worse fate and are forced into prostitution and virtual slavery by the crime rings that promised them prosperity.

The Geneva-based International Organisation for Migration says the people-smuggling trade is booming. Economic despair and fear of violence in eastern Europe since the breakup of the former Soviet Union have caused many people to leave. There are similar concerns about Southeast Asia.

Authorities say the most established trade routes are through Amman, Jordan, and Bangkok, Thailand. People pay up to tens of thousands of dollars each and follow a complex and dangerous route.

Recent arrivals in Australia have been crammed aboard leaky, rusting hulks to make long sea journeys in appalling conditions. When New York state police pulled over a van

to protect its huge coastline against all kinds of smugglers: Last year, authorities seized 900 pounds (400 kilos) of heroin shortly after it was brought ashore in speed boats at an east-coast beach the largest single shipment of the drug ever captured.

Australian Federal Police say drug traffickers are often also involved in people-moving rackets.

"In some cases, the money's just as attractive at Australian dollars, 40,000 (US \$rs 25,000) a head," said Mick Keely, general manager of national operations.

The only island continent, Australia's coastline stretches some 23,000 miles (37,000 kilometers). Although the majority of the nation's 19 million people live along the coast, most pack the southeastern shores. The northwest is virtually unpopulated, and makes an easy landing site.

The coast is guarded by just a handful of Navy and Customs ships and planes.

The government says that since July 1, 21 boats have arrived in Australia carrying 279 people, 170 of whom were Chinese. In the past decade, 3,380 people have arrived by boat. Last year, most of those caught came from Bangladesh, Turkey and Sri Lanka.

Government figures show more and more illegal arrivals are entering Australia by air, using forged travel papers.

The incursions has called into question Australia's abil-

Discourage polythene production DOE proposes high tariff on import of raw materials

The Department of Environment will propose imposition of high tariff on import of polythene raw materials to discourage production of polythene goods and its uses in the country, reports BSS.

It was decided at an inter-ministerial meeting on "Production and uses of polythene materials and quality of mineral waters in local markets" held with Environment and Forest Secretary Syed M Murtuza in the chair.

The meeting decided that the Department of Environment would submit specific proposals to the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for imposition of high tariffs on polythene raw materials.

The meeting requested Bangladesh Jute Research Institute and ADAB to find out possible alternatives to polythene materials.

It was decided in the meeting

that a vigilance team comprising members from Ministry of Health, Bangladesh Standard Testing Institute (BSTI) and Department of Environment, would be formed to ensure the quality of mineral waters as well as take legal actions against unauthorised marketing.

The meeting also decided that it is mandatory to mention the date of manufacture and ingredients of the mineral waters and soft drinks on stickers labeled on the bottles.

The meeting also requested Bangladesh Television, Betar and other mass media to take necessary steps to create mass awareness about adverse environmental effects of polythene uses in the country.

High officials and representatives from concerned ministries and other government and non-government organisations attended the meeting.



Rabeya Khatun wins Anannya literary award

By DU Correspondent

Noted litterateur Rabeya Khatun has been named for 'Anannya Sahitya Puraskar' (Anannya literary award) for her outstanding contribution in the field of Bengali literature.

Anannya, a fortnightly magazine for women, yesterday announced the award which comprises a crest and a cheque for Tk 50,000. The award will be handed over in October when the magazine will observe its founding anniversary.

Earlier, Selina Hossain, Rizia Rahman, Dr Neelima Ibrahim and Dilara Hashem have been honoured with this award.

Rabeya Khatun has 60 books to her credit. Her books have been published in other languages also. She has also written plays for radio and TV.

She is the first woman writer who was awarded prestigious Bangla Academy Award in 1973 and Ekushey Padak in 1993. She also got many other awards including Nasiruddin Gold Medal, Humayun Smriti Puraskar, Qamar Mushtary Sahitya Puraskar, Bangladesh Lekhika Sangha and Kabi Jashimuddin Puraskar.

Mathematics study group formed at DU

By Staff Correspondent

A study group for Mathematics teachers has been recently formed in Dhaka University with a view to resolving various practical problems of teachers in teaching Mathematics in classroom.

An executive committee has been formed with chairman of Mathematics Department in Dhaka University Prof Nurul Islam and Shikhabarta editor AN Rasheda as its secretary and organising secretary respectively to arrange discussions at the DU Mathematics Department on the second Friday of every month.

PDB chief

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clear that the real situation is worse than what PDB is trying to tell you," one official said speaking on condition of anonymity.

The sources said that PDB might be able to overcome the load-flow problem by installing a by-pass line and divert the load flow from the Siddhirganj-Dhaka transmission line to Haripur-Dhaka transmission line.

By tomorrow evening (Wednesday), we hope the power supply situation would improve to a satisfactory level if PDB can complete installation of the by-pass by then," the sources said.

Meanwhile, the government is trying to improve the situation by appointing a new PDB chief. Kamal's renewed six-month tenure is about to run out but sources said Kamal had wanted to resign earlier but had been asked by the prime minister to continue.

The latest extension of Kamal's service began in January. He was appointed chairman of PDB back in late 1996.

The sources said the PM, also the energy minister, was angry that Chairman Kamal failed to improve the power situation and that he allegedly did not go to the spot when the Siddhirganj circuit breakers went out of order on Thursday causing the trouble.

The PM herself took charge of the energy ministry firing former general Nooruddin Khan amidst an acute power crisis in March last year. There is however a state minister, Rafiqul Islam, who runs the day to day affairs of the ministry.

But, according to observers, bureaucratic inefficiency, indecisiveness in the policy making circles and alleged intervention at various stages of implementation of projects had caused a lot of problems.

The Siddhirganj 'breaker', installed back in the early 60s, failed to control the load flow from Siddhirganj to Dhaka, needed to be replaced long ago but PDB reportedly took no step till the crisis erupted.

The sources further said that while the power supply problems remained unsolved, the chairman went to Shaldah to attend the inauguration of a gasfield. This was also severely criticised by the higher authorities.

Following a news item published in a vernacular daily yesterday, it was widely speculated among the people who would replace Kamal. There were widespread rumours that LGED chief engineer Quamrul Islam Siddique would be made PDB chairman. However, sources said that the LGED chief engineer himself was reluctant to take over the PDB job.

But speculations in this regard prompted a press release issued by additional chief engineer Mohammad Shahadat Hossain of LGED which said: "The officers and staff of the LGED expressed their deep concern on the published news in some dailies about the proposed replacement of services of Mr Siddique."

"It was strongly felt in the meeting (of officers and staff) that the continuity of the development process of rural and urban infrastructure of Bangladesh will severely be marred in absence of Mr Siddique's dynamic leadership. Mr Siddique has gained long 33 years of experience in local government system and this experience could contribute more to this sector, rather than in recovering from the present power crisis. The meeting urged the government to reconsider the proposal about Mr Siddique's transfer to PDB", the press release said.

Beating on JU campus: Probe body formed

By JU Correspondent

Jahangirnagar University (JU) authorities yesterday formed a three-member probe body to investigate into the beating incident of an outsider at the residence of a female employee of the university on April 8.

The committee headed by Deputy Controller of Internal Audit Fazlul Haq has been asked to submit report within ten days.

The probe body will investigate into the beating of the outsider and the alleged involvement of the female employee in "anti-social activities" for a long time on the campus.

One Saiful Islam, 30, son of Abul Hossain of Banani was severely beaten up by the local people after he passed several hours in the residence of Sina Akhter Lucky, laboratory attendant of the Zoology Department.

The outsider Saiful who introduced himself as a rent-a-car businessman of Banani went to the university residence of Lucky at Bishmail area on the campus at around noon on April 8. Local people who kept Lucky under observation, suspected some "anti-social activities" as the man passed more than four hours in the house. Instigated by some previous incidents of this kind, local people broke the door of the house and dragged the outsider out of the quarter and severely beat him up.

Saiful said he had come to recover Tk 35,000 which he had lent Lucky few months back.

Fareea Lara Foundation to observe her birthday Apr 16

Fareea Lara Foundation formed in memory of the young pilot who died in an aircraft last year, has taken up elaborate programme to mark her birthday on April 16, says a press release.

The programme includes unveiling of the plaque of the foundation at the residence of Sina Akhter Lucky at National Museum at 4 pm which will be followed by publication ceremony of a memorial book on Fareea Lara.