

People's Health Assembly from December 4

By Staff Correspondent

People's Health Assembly (PHA) 2000, a global initiative for people's right to healthcare, will be held in Savar from December 4 to 8.

Over 1000 participants including Nobel laureates, researchers, doctors, social workers and health activists from South Asia, Americas, Africa and Europe will take part in the Assembly to draft People's Charter for Health.

Ganoshasthya Kendra will host the assembly while eight other international organisations including Asian Community Health Action, Consumer International, DHF, Health Action International, International Peoples Health Council, Third World Network and Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights will function as worldwide networking organisations.

To make the event a success, the final preparatory meeting for the Assembly was held in the city yesterday.

Vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Prof AK Azad Chowdhury attended the meeting as chief guest while Bangladesh Representative of Save the Children Australia Sultan Mahmud presided.

Dr. Laila Parveen Banu

explained the aims and objectives of the Assembly.

Ensuring primary health care for all, development of health condition for the poor particularly women and children, ensuring reproductive right, adolescents' health care, and eradicating the nutritional disparity were mentioned as the basic goals of the Assembly.

"For years, health service system of developing countries of third world followed the western health service approach. But today the attitudes are changing. In a country like Bangladesh, the problem of health can never be separated from social, economic and ecological problems like river erosion, dowry, slum, drug addiction and unemployment," said Prof AK Azad Chowdhury.

Targeting the PHA Assembly, a number of countries have taken different initiatives. Host Bangladesh has arranged five divisional workshops in Dhaka, Barisal, Khulna, Chittagong and Sylhet and collected a number of case studies from people encompassing various ranges of life including adolescents, drug addicts, indigenous people, acid victims, sex workers and the disabled.

Strengthen local bodies

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policymaking, he said. "The number of MPs capable of running the country or formulating laws will not be more than 30 out of the total 330."

AKM Jahangir said the MPs do not read the bill, and even the revised bill, before passing it as law. They just say "Yes" if they're in the treasury bench or "No" if in opposition.

Jatiya Party lawmaker GM Quader said the MPs cannot help in policymaking or formulation of law as the bills are passed through voice vote. "So, the question of participation does not arise. He said the MPs do not have any role in the parliamentary standing committee because, he alleged, their recommendations or proposals are thrown into the waste paper basket. "No government yet has taken the suggestions or recommendations of the standing committee members," he said.

Supporting Quader's senti-

ment, Nurul Amin Talukder MP said there is no scope for the opposition MPs to take part in the policymaking and formulation of law.

"The MPs are busy looking after problems of the people; so, if we can strengthen the local government, the MPs will be able to contribute to the lawmaking process," he added.

A summary paper on civil society and good governance was placed in the workshop by Prof Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman of Public Administration Department of Dhaka University.

Proposals for media access to the standing committee meeting and ensuring realistic women empowerment in local government bodies also came up for discussion.

UP chairmen and members, students, intellectuals, bureaucrats, journalists and NGO workers took part in the day-long workshop.

Rakibuddin appointed Secy to JS Secretariat

Education Secretary Dr. Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmed was appointed as Secretary to the Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat yesterday.

The post fell vacant on September 30 as the former secretary Monzur-i-Mowla went on retirement. Additional Secretary M A Wadud was since acting as the secretary of the Jatiya Sangsad till the new appointment was made.

Sources at the parliament secretariat said Ahmed joined his new office yesterday.

Remain alert

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fresher army officers and took salute at the impressive march past. She distributed the 'Sword of Honour' and other awards among the gentlemen cadets.

Company Senior Under Officer Mohammad Kamrul Hassan was adjudged best all-rounder gentleman cadet and awarded with the coveted 'Sword of Honour'.

Battalion Senior Under Officer Hafiz-Al-Asad got Osmani Gold Medal for his outstanding performance in academic subjects and was also given the Chief of Army Staff Gold Medal for his proficiency in Military subjects.

Rouf Company was awarded BMA colour for the winter term for its best overall performance in different inter-company competitions.

On arrival at BMA, the Prime Minister was received by Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, Chittagong Area Commander Maj Gen Abu Kaiser Fazlul Kabir and BMA Commander Brigadier General Ilias Iftikhar Rasul.

Housing and Public Works Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Science and Technology Minister M Noor Uddin Khan, Chittagong City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury and Chairman of CHT Regional Council Shantu Larma were also present.

Sharif

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London and the United Arab Emirates.

Hussain and several other leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League have dismissed Sharif as their leader, while Sharif's wife Kulsoom is trying to rally those still loyal to her husband.

From his jail cell, Sharif has urged his party to accept his wife as a temporary leader.

Meanwhile, the military government is forging ahead with its accountability process, which has resulted in the disqualification from politics of several politicians.

When the army took power, its chief Gen. Pervez Musharraf, promised to weed out the corrupt from politics and business in Pakistan.

Musharraf also has promised to hold general elections to return democracy to Pakistan by the end of 2002, in keeping with an order from Pakistan's Supreme Court.

Petition against Jugantor editor rejected

By Court Correspondent

A Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka yesterday rejected a petition against five people including the editor and publisher of the Daily Jugantor on charge of sedition for publishing the text of a parody of the national anthem in its magazine on April 23 as there was no sanction from the government.

Mohammad Khalid Hasan of Khilgaon in the city alleged in the complaint that on April 23 accused Golam Sarwar, the editor, Salma Islam, the publisher, and three others Rabi Chowdhury, Giasuddin Riman and Ripon committed sedition under 124A of the Bangladesh Penal Code.

The complaint also said that by publishing the parody the paper wanted to create hatred and public anger against the government which is an offence under Section 124 (A) and 34.

After hearing, the court rejected the petition without taking it cognizance as there was no sanction from the government.

Depression

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port, 1350 km south of Cox's Bazar and 1430 km south of Khulna city at 6 pm yesterday, the centre said.

But it could not precisely said the next status of the depression immediately.

It was moving at a speed of 10 to 15 km per hour with a core speed of 40 kmph rising up to 50 kmph in gust/squalls. The Bay will remain moderate.

All fishing boats in the north Bay and deep sea have been advised to come close to the coast and proceed with caution, the centre added.

Death toll 48

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factory. Meanwhile, a five-member inquiry committee headed by additional district magistrate Nazrul Islam was formed yesterday to probe the incident.

A regular case was filed with Shippur thana in connection with the incident yesterday.

Barak

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Also, Israeli cabinet minister Amnon Lipkin-Shahak held a secret meeting Saturday night in the Gaza Strip with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani described the meeting as "very important" but would not give any further details.

Barak today dispatched his security adviser Danny Yatom to meet Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo in a bid to halt a deterioration in relations. Egypt recalled its ambassador to Israel last week, part of an Egyptian protest against Israel's role in the violence with the Palestinians.

Also, Barak warned that any move toward new elections would be an act of "national irresponsibility."



Battalion Ansars who were sacked in 1994 marching towards the PM's Office yesterday to submit a memorandum to the Prime Minister. In the memorandum, they demanded their reinstatement. —Star photo

Bangabandhu murder SPP submits evidences to prove authenticity of videotapes

The prosecution in Bangabandhu murder case yesterday submitted evidences to prove the authenticity of three videocassettes taping Farooq and Rashid's loud confession as the killers of the leader, reports UNB.

Making submission in the death reference hearings of the case the government side said the cassettes contain the two colonel's statement in an interview with Granada television in London after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The prosecution lawyers collected three copies of the cassette from different sources and yesterday special PP Advocate Serajul Huq submitted the relevant evidences to prove the authenticity of the taped confessions.

"Dialogue in the cassette also proved that they were very much involved in the killing of Bangabandhu," Advocate Serajul Huq pleaded before the court.

He said all the army officers who were convicted by the lower court certainly had complicity in Bangabandhu killing under section 34 of Bangladesh Penal Code.

The section 34 of BPC states: "When an act is done by several persons in furtherance of the common intention of all, each of such persons is liable for that act in the same manner as if it were done by him."

According to aforesaid law, all the fifteen persons had common intent to kill Bangabandhu "so each one was equally guilty."

As the court pointed out that all 15 were not on the killing spot, Advocate Serajul Huq referred to two cases. One is on the sensational Nidarabad killings where the court convicted somebody who did not kill Biroja Bala and her children but were around the victims' house.

The Chief Prosecution Counsel, Serajul Huq, was assisted by DAG Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik, AAG Anisul Huq, AAG Mosharraf Hossain Kajol, AAG Haider Ali, AAG Tofiga Karim and AAG Nurul Islam Sujon.

The death-reference bench comprising Justice Ruhul Amin and Justice ABM Khairul Huq will continue hearing today on the question of confirming the death sentences against 15 former army officers.

Khaleda asks city leaders Form polling centre-based party unit in each ward

Opposition leader Khaleda Zia has directed city BNP leaders to form polling centre-based party unit committees in each ward during Ramadan to check irregularities in the next general elections, reports UNB.

Party sources said the city BNP would announce Ramadan as the "organisational month" to gear up its organisational activities by forming committees in every ward of the city.

When contacted city BNP President and General Secretary Sadek Hossain Khoka and Abdus Salam said they would concentrate on the party's organisational activities during the holy month.

Salam said they would hold workers meeting-cum-liftar party in each ward during the month.

"We also have plans to hold conferences in wards where necessary."

He said ward committees would be given the responsibility to constitute polling centre-based unit committees during the period.

There are 100 wards in the city and according to BNP there are 6 to 12 polling centers in every ward.

"Formation of polling centre-based unit committees is the first attempt made by BNP," Salam said adding, "Such step has been taken to check vote rigging by the ruling party in the next elections."

He said BNP central leaders will attend workers meeting in each ward during Ramadan and a list in this regard has already been finalised.

Mummy murder case

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that stage. The prosecution alleged that Ripon, his mother and sister had often tortured Mummy, as evident from her personal diary. She came from a wealthy family. But Ripon, who holds a master's degree, is from a lower middle class family and did a minor job. His mother and sister often tortured his wife and finally forced him to strangle her with a scarf, after beating her severely. Her body bore marks of injury that negated the claim that she had committed suicide.

In his judgement, the Judge dismissed the defendants' claim of innocence and observed that the body was found on the bed, not hanging from a ceiling with the scarf seen near the body. The only eye witness, eight-year-old domestic help Reshma, said it was a case of killing. She is innocent and above all sorts of degree because she is too young girl, so her testimony was clear, the judge noted.

The autopsy report also said that the housewife was murdered and the husband also confessed killing her. Although he wanted to withdraw it very late, that was inadmissible, the judge pointed out.

Judging all the depositions of the witnesses, the on-the-spot investigation report, autopsy report and other circumstantial evidence, it is proved beyond doubt that the mother-in-law and the sister-in-law instigated husband Ripon to kill Mummy by suffocating her. They not only killed her but also murdered the baby in her womb for six months, the judge said.

They should be hanged till

death, the judge pronounced at 10:25 am after more than an hour of reading out the judgement.

Monowara Begum broke down in tears but the two others remained silent, appearing cool.

Ripon later told reporters, "I have faith in Allah and hope to get justice. The plaintiffs have purchased them all."

His sister Runa was angry with journalists and shouted at them, "Write whatever you can write, I have nothing to say."

Abdul Aziz Shukder said they would appeal against the death sentence and hoped that they would get justice.

Mummy's father Sultanuddin Bhuiya expressed satisfaction at the judgement. "But would we get back our daughter?"

After the verdict was pronounced, Ripon's younger brother was assaulted by Mummy's brother on the court premises. But police did not intervene, saying that the matter was amicably settled later.

Public Prosecutor Asaduzzaman and advocates Suruj Ali and Mahbubur Rahman appeared for the plaintiff. Advocates Monayem Milki, Khokan Saha and Sultan Mahmud defended the accused.

Bodo militants kill 8 in Assam

GUWAHATI, Nov 26: Eight woodcutters belonging to the Bodo and Santhal communities have been shot dead by the banned National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) militants in lower Assam's Kokrajhar district, police said today, reports PTI.

Assault on DC

Employees of Ctg district admin to observe token strike today
From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 26: The employees of Chittagong district administration will observe two-hour work abstention from 9 am tomorrow protesting the assault on the Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong allegedly by SSF.

They will also wear black band during their protest programme. The decision was taken at a meeting of the employees of Chittagong district administration, held at Chittagong Circuit House at 1 pm today, meeting sources said.

The programmes will also be observed in the 14 upazilla offices, sources added.

The meeting has threatened to launch greater movement if no action is taken against SSF members responsible for the incident.

Germany to intensify dev cooperation with Bangladesh

Germany will enhance and intensify its development cooperation with Bangladesh under its new development policy concept, said a press release of the German Embassy here yesterday.

It said Bangladesh has been placed among a group of around 38 "focal partner nations" and German government is keen to further strengthen bilateral development cooperation with the group.

The cooperation will be extended by concentrating future projects possibly on three priority areas and by making use of the entire instruments of cooperation.

Each of the "focal partner nation" will have a country concept and a development strategy paper which are intended to serve as a basis for promoting the dialogue with the cooperation partners and for coordinating with other donor nations.

The new development policy concept also provides for a list of around 32 "partner nations" which will have possibly one priority area of cooperation and selected use of various cooperation instruments such as the financial assistance, technical assistance, scholarship programmes and the stationing of German development experts.

Around 14 of those nations, which include Myanmar, Iran, Syria, the Sudan, Angola and Haiti have been listed as "potential partner nations."

JP vice chairmen to deposit Tk 31 lakh to Ershad Release Fund

Vice chairmen of Jatiya Party (Ershad) will deposit Tk 31 lakh to Ershad Release Fund, reports UNB.

This was decided at a meeting of the party at its central office yesterday evening with JP senior presidium member Rowshan Ershad in the chair.

Meanwhile, an extended meeting of JP MPs, which was scheduled for today, tomorrow has been shifted. The meeting will now be held on Dec. 1 at 3 pm at the party central office.

Mine blast kills another Bangladeshi on Myanmar border

From Our Correspondent

COXS BAZAR, Nov 26: One Bangladeshi woodcutter was killed in mine explosion near Myanmar border, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources said here today.

The mine was planted by Myanmar Border Forces (NSAK) near the 42nd pillar at Naikhangchari on Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

BDR 23rd battalion lodged a strong protest with their Myanmar counterpart and urged the local people not to go to the "zero point."

BDR personnel recovered the body of the victim, Abdul Halim.

Office timing during Ramadan

The government has rescheduled the office timing for all government, semi-government, autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies for the month of Ramadan, reports UNB.

The new office timing, from 9 am to 3:30 pm with a 15-minute break for Zohr prayers from 1.15 pm, will come into effect from tomorrow.

But organisations like banks, post offices and telecommunications, railway, hospitals, nationalised industries and factories and other emergency services will follow their own timetables as per their respective rules, said a PID handout.

The office timing of the Bangladesh Supreme Court and its Appellate Division will be from 9 am to 2 pm during the Ramadan.

According to a Bangladesh Bank press release the banks will remain open from 9 am to 3:30 pm. The transaction hour will be from 9 am to 2 pm with a 15 minute break from 1:15 pm for Zohr prayers.

However, transaction will be continued during Zohr prayers through internal coordination as it was performed before Ramadan, the press added.

WHO regional confce begins in city today

A three-day Regional Conference of Parliamentarians on impact of Tuberculosis and Malaria on poverty begins in the city today, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the conference organised by the Southeast Asia Regional Office of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

About 50 parliamentarians from 10 member countries of the WHO Southeast Asia region will participate in the conference, said a press release.

WHO Regional Director Dr Udon Muchtar Rafel will lead WHO's technical support in the conference which will strengthen partnerships among WHO, Ministries of Health and Parliamentarians.

As MPs play a key role in formulating national policy and legislation, the conference will help inform them about burning health issues for the region.

The conference seeks to inform parliamentarians on the impact of TB and Malaria on the health of the poor as well as about the massive effort against diseases of poverty.

The parliamentarians will also be apprised about WHO's strategy on health and poverty reduction. The participants will adopt a "Call for Action" at the end of the conference.

PM orders safety measures for industrial workers

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the Industries Ministry and authorities concerned to properly supervise safety measures for industrial workers-employees at work, reports UNB.

She also instructed punitive action as per rules against those responsible for negligence of ensuring workers' safety.

The Prime Minister's directive came following one of the country's worst fire accidents that took 41 lives in a garment factory at Shippur in Narsingdi district Saturday night.

In a condolence message, the Prime Minister expressed her profound shock at the loss of lives in the fire and urged all industrial entrepreneurs to ensure the safety of life of their staff and provide proper compensation to the victims.

Sheikh Hasina prayed for salvation of the departed souls and early recovery of the injured. She also conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved families.

The fatal fire incident took place at Chowdhury Knitwear and Garments in Kararchar BSCIC area of Shippur in Narsingdi district following an electric short-circuit Saturday night.

BCL activist murder: 3 remanded

By Staff Correspondent

The CMM's court yesterday remanded the three arrested in connection with the killing of BCL activist Azaharul Islam Tapan.

The three, identified as Ashraf, Selim and Nurul Islam, were arrested from Mohakhali area following the killing of Tapan on Friday night.

They were produced in the CMM's court at about 4.30 pm. Gulshan police prayed for seven days remand, but the court after hearing both sides granted three-day.

Tapan, a Chhatra League activist, was gunned down and another seriously injured near a Jubo League office at TB Gate in the city's Mohakhali area late Friday night.

A gang of about 11 led by Moli stormed into the office and fired at Mamun and his accomplices indiscriminately. When Mamun was hit by bullet in his chest, Tapan made an attempt to escape the scene.

The killers fired at him. He was shot in his head and chest on the road adjacent to the office.

20 hurt in clashes 2000 expelled during NU Bengali exam

By Staff Correspondent

Over 2,000 examinees were expelled and at least 20 people were injured in violent clashes during the Bengali compulsory paper exam of the degree pass and subsidiary examinations 2000 under the National University yesterday.

Sirajganj district had the highest number of expelled where unruly mobs attacked at least two examination centres and ransacked offices of the principal.

Our correspondent from Sirajganj district adds that 661 out of 11,465 examinees were expelled from 15 centres of the district.

Ninety-six candidates were expelled in Haji Wahid Marium Degree College centre under Royganj upazila alone. A section of miscreants stormed into Principal Shamsul Huq's room and tried to snatch the answer paper protesting against tight vigilance during the examination.

On-duty magistrate with the help of police managed to leave the centre following the violent incident. Police however could not arrest any one in this connection.

Paramilitary BDR was deployed at the centre to avoid any more untoward incident. Meanwhile, Outsiders attacked Kazipur RIM Degree

College centre protesting expulsion of 30 candidates.

At least 15 persons were injured when outsiders attacked the centre to protest against the tight vigilance.

Vigilance teams were not allowed to enter in a number of examination centres in the district, team members alleged.

Meanwhile, Redwan Ahmed Degree College centre at Chandina under Comilla district was cancelled due to excessive cheating by examinees, an official with the National University said.

Agitating mob, who gathered to supply copies of answers to their near and dear ones threw bricks at the on-duty police at different examination centres all over the country.

National University (NU) officials said a total of 240 examinees were expelled at different centres in Thakurgaon, 108 in Kurigram, 106 in Chapal Nawabganj, 78 in Barisal, 54 in Panchagarh, 45 in Netrokona, 21 in Jhenaidah, 11 in Lalmonirhat, 13 in Jessore, 32 in Laxmipur and 3 were expelled in Manikganj.

A total of 3.21 lakh examinees including 81,903 females are appearing at the examinations in 602 centres in six divisions of the country that began last Saturday.

Ershad's politics

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since his jail term is over.

Section 4(C) of Chapter-VI of the Jatiya Party constitution also provides that a person will be disqualified as member of the party if he or she is convicted for social and moral turpitude.

Nevertheless, insiders indicate, the JP is unlikely to go by the party constitution in the case of Ershad's membership. Instead, the party is planning to challenge any move to cancel his membership of parliament.

Asked about the matter, JP lawmaker GM Quader told the Daily Star last night that whether the offence for which Ershad has been sentenced to imprisonment was an act of moral turpitude was yet to be proved in the court. "Let the court decide on the matter first," he said, declining to be drawn into details at the moment.

But he quickly added that Ershad was a leader of the people and it is the people who will decide what will be his fate.

The Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat canceled Ershad's membership soon after the High Court revised the trial court's verdict in late August, reducing the seven-year jail term to a five-year one. But, the JS Secretariat put its decision on hold after Ershad appealed against the High Court judgement.

The parliament secretariat is soon expected to revive its decision on cancellation of Ershad's membership as the appeal court had confirmed his conviction in

the Janata Tower Corruption Case, parliament sources said.

Apart from Ershad, the Jatiya Party is also facing similar crises with a number of its top leaders including Secretary General Nazim Rahman Manzur, senior presidium members Roushan Ershad, Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Shah Moazzem Hossain.

Now acting as the JP chief, Roushan was also awarded a three-year jail term in a corruption case against which she appealed to the High Court. Convicted in a corruption case, Kazi Zafar Ahmed is now in self-exile in Australia while Shah Moazzem, accused in the Jail Killing Case, is in jail. Similar cases are also there against many other top leaders of the JP and those cases are likely to be expedited ahead of the next general elections.

Ershad was also sentenced in two other corruption cases, which are now pending with the higher court. The deposed president is facing trial in 14 other corruption cases, too.