

## Life on wheelchair

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without wheelchair.

Those who have sustained spine injury are definitely going to become totally disabled over the years. Bullet wounds in spine never heals. Even the apparently healthy freedom fighters you are watching here might also become completely disabled in time, as some of them have sustained injury in spines," said Mostafa.

He also expressed his anguish over the words "Zindabad" engraved on the medal of Bir Bikram he received in 1992 for his gallantry in the war. He said he fought against "Zindabad" with the slogan, "Joy Bangla."

Golam Nabi is another wheelchair-confined freedom fighter from Jessor under Sector No 9. He was captured by Pakistan Army in the end of November in the Gopikishan region of Narail. His spine broke down during torture by the occupation forces and Rajakars (collaborators). He has taken recourse to wheelchair since 1990.

Shamsur Ali Mandal was a 24-year old young man in 1971, who used to earn his livelihood as a professional kabaddi player. One day in April 1971, he saw piles of dead bodies at Bag Achra Bazar of Jessor and came to know about the genocide inflicted on the Bengalees.

A spirited Mandal immediately left for training in Hakimpur Youth Camp in India and became a guerrilla after the training. In the Battle of Ballalanda, he sustained serious bullet injuries and since then he had undergone 11 operations.

He had a cerebral stroke in 1998, prompting him to take recourse to wheelchair. The stroke was a result of long-term effect of injuries sustained during

the war.

Muktijoddha Kalyan Trust grants a monthly allowance of Tk 2004 to each of these wheelchairs freedom fighters. The total welfare grant provided by the Trust stands at Tk. 6,516 and includes hospital diet, medicine, and attendant costs.

The rest home started its journey in 1973 in three houses abandoned by the Biharees. At the beginning, the Trust allotted Taka 75 per month for the wheelchairs freedom fighters. General Abdur Rab and his successor Major C R Dutta were doing an excellent job as Chairman of the Trust," informed Madhu.

They were turning the Trust into a profitable organisation. But repeated military interventions coupled with recruitment of corrupt and anti-liberation officials in the Trust have worsened the situation," he continued.

The Trust acquired 22 factories, cinema halls and other property abandoned by the Biharees for the welfare of the freedom fighters. Some of these abandoned estates include Coca-Cola plant at Tejgaon, Mimi Chocolate Company, Tabani Beverage, Gulistan Cinema Hall, Naji Cinema Hall, Hamida Oil Company and Durbar Advertisement.

But a number of corrupt officials have illegally leased out or even sold out many of the assets of the trust saying that it was not making profit, said the injured freedom fighters.

The injured freedom fighters have also been terminated from jobs due to their disability, they alleged.

They said they need an ambulance, an oxygen cylinder and a telephone.

## German entrepreneurs invited

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the first time achieved self-sufficiency in food. "We are maintaining a growth rate of over 5.5 per cent due to better management of the affairs of the state."

The Prime Minister said her government is providing micro credit and has taken up other welfare schemes for the extreme poor and the deprived. These are yielding very good results and have a good impact on the economy.

Recalling the brutal killing of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Hasina said: "I have lost my father, mother and brothers, but my people lost hope, democracy and voting rights."

"I had to work for the people for establishing their rights; now, I am working for economic emancipation of the people through eradication of poverty," she added.

Hasina said she has fond memories of Karlsruhe, where she had spent some time. "Heidelberg for us carries a special meaning because this year we have established a Chair in the University of Heidelberg, which is named after our great leader Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

She concluded her speech saying, "I am hopeful that the

internationally acclaimed rich culture of Baden-Wurttemberg and also the State itself which is an important media centre and domicile of German publishing companies, would find comparable partners in Bangladesh. She thanked the Minister-President of the State for his hospitality and cordiality.

The Minister-President of Baden-Wurttemberg, Erwin Teufel, said he is very happy to welcome the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in his State and recalled his memories of visiting Dhaka and staying for some days in a village in Bangladesh.

He highly praised Sheikh Hasina for her leadership and farsightedness that, he said, placed the country to a position of respect. "You are doing very well in politics and administration," he added.

The Minister-President mentioned the Bangladesh Prime Minister's effort for ensuring a better future for the poor by taking a number of welfare programmes, including micro credit, help for the elderly people and housing for the homeless.

Mentioning Hasina's success in foreign policy and establishing internal and regional peace, he hoped that the country would make economic achievement and continue to march forward.

**Applications invited for "You have Got the Look" contest**

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Pantene pro-V and Head & Shoulders are going to hold a beauty pageant "You have Got the Look 2001," says a press release.

Applications have been invited from all over the country for the event. Males as well as females are eligible for the contest.

The criteria for eligibility is an age range of 18-24 years and a minimum height of 5 feet 4 inches for females and an age range of 18-28 years and minimum height of 5 feet 10 inches for males. Educational qualifications are minimum SSC/O Level and HSC/A Level respectively for both categories.

Judges will short-list the primary candidates from applications before a personal interview for the finalists on December 23.

Interested persons can send an application with a resume and 3 photographs (one close up and two with full profile) to the following address: "You have Got the Look" contest, PO Box No 6116, Dhaka 1212.

Last date for receiving entries is December 17.

**Business leaders**

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Those who spoke at the rally.

The president of Chittagong chamber said a staggering amount of Tk 288 crores is lost in industrial production and business a day in Chittagong due to hartial.

Giving a breakdown, the CCCI president said a day's hartial means loss of Tk 60 crore in industrial production. The Tk 60 crores in export, Tk 100 crores in import, Tk 30 crore in the garments sector, Tk 3 crore in frozen food and Tk 35 crores in revenue.

The operation cost at Chittagong port is very high due to hartial and work stoppage, Chowdhury said. He added that handling charge of a 20 feet container at Chittagong port is \$40 US dollar while in the regional ports of Colombo, Bangkok and Singapore it is \$20, 360 and \$216 US dollar, respectively.

He called for concerted efforts to resist hartial and terrorism in the port city.

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Shamsur Rahman, chairman of the standing committee, said that the government should take immediate steps to face the challenge in the textile sector to compete in the global market. He suggested that the government remove limitations, which hindered implementations, on an emergency basis to make the textiles and RMG sector dynamic.

Textile Secretary Mohammed Helaiuddin Khan presented a report on development of the textile sector that detailed the prospects and the problems.

The meeting also asked the committee secretary of Parliament to submit a report on their limitations regarding coverage of the standing committee meetings. The next meeting of the committee would focus on the issues, sources said.

Presided over by Shamsur Rahman the meeting was attended by Ali Reza, Mohammad Moslem Uddin Advocate and Mohammad Mozammel Haq. High officials of the Ministry of Textiles were also present.

Admitting his Pakistani nationality, Shakil told police that he came to Bangladesh last March on a 3 months tourist visa. On expiry of the visa, he procured a Bangladeshi passport under the name Qamruzzaman.

Police recovered \$3,600 and a Pakistani passport from him.

He married 14-year-old Beauty, daughter of Abdul Motaleb living in Shababala area in the town.



Ms Heidemairic Wieczorek Zeul, the German Federal Minister for Development Assistance called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her hotel suite in Berlin yesterday.

-- PID photo

## WB health policy

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I think you should also hold the bank accountable for actions including making health, nutrition and population (HNP) central to its macroeconomic work, making sure financing of health is not a subsidy from the poor to the better-off.

"Let us also not forget that the bank is the largest financier of malnutrition programmes, particularly in South Asia."

Antonio Tujan, social activist from the Philippines, said the World Bank policies in the Philippines are aimed not at poverty reduction but at commercialisation and privatisation of the healthcare system. The poor have been marginalised into poverty."

Less than 3 per cent of the 1.8 billion US dollars given in loans by the World Bank to the Philippines were being spent on public health, Tujan said and called for rejection of the bank's policy prescriptions.

Another speaker said, "The so-called solutions proposed by many UN agencies, governments and multinational companies

have been donations or price reductions of patented drugs, private-public partnerships to support these initiatives and corporate community programmes."

He asked, "Are these responsibilities lie with the governments or the corporations. Are public private-partnership viable solutions to the long-term responsibility of states to protect, promote and ensure right to access to healthcare? Where is the state in meeting these responsibilities?"

David Legg from Australia denounced the anti-poor regime and said, "The current global trading regime is against poor countries. Is it power or rationality?"

Charles Mutasa from Zimbabwe counteracting Skolnik's remarks said, "We don't need charity but justice. No matter how much the bank spends on TB, leprosy or water and sanitation, we demand fare share of wealth with poor."

He blamed the World Bank for a global a global economic system in which Africa was now caught in

a debt trap. The money spent by African countries on debt servicing is now four times the amount they spend on health and education.

The delegates later demanded of the World Bank that it spend more money on health-related social welfare projects. They also called for more South-South cooperation to shake off dependence on loans from institutions like World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Thelma Narayan from India strongly criticised the bank for helping the transfer of resources from the poor to the rich. Narayan called the bank an 'undemocratic' institution that functions with no transparency and is controlled by the United States as it dominates most of the decision-making.

More than 10 international organisations, including Gonoshasthaya Kendra have held discussions over the last three years to hold this conference and drafted the Charter for the people's health.

### Narsingdi fire

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urers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) and Bangladesh Terri Towel and Linen Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BTMLMEA) at a meeting on Tuesday decided to pay compensation to the victims and their families and to take steps to avoid such accidents in garment factories.

The decisions will be finalised at another meeting of the associations on Saturday, the press release said.

Tuesday's meeting was presided over by over by BGMEA President Anisur Rahman Sinha.

### ISPR

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the news of the rape incident.

The army headquarters formed a high-powered body comprising a group of officers from the army headquarters and Mymensingh Cantonment to probe the reported incident, and they are now engaged in the investigation, the release added.

The press release said the attention of the army headquarters was drawn to the reports of the rape by army personnel published in different newspapers on December 3.

A group of 21 newly recruited army personnel led by a sergeant and a lance corporal left Rajshahi Cantonment for Mymensingh by a train from Rajshahi railway station on December 2, the release said.

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