

Destitute yet delighted

HASAN LAJUD TOSHER
Several groups of underprivileged, yet jovial children from different areas of the city attended a function on their rights at the Metropolitan Natya Mancha yesterday.

The Theatre Centre for Social Development (TUSD) in cooperation with Save the Children Denmark. "We are much happier today because we have gathered to dance, perform and sing songs... we have never performed as we are street children," said eight-year-old Sumon, who squats at the Victoria Park.

"We have rights to be part of the society because we have merits to serve the country," said a school-age child named Imran now living in a slum in Wari.

"We have dreams to be established, to live well, to eat well, to wear nice clothes and to be educated, after all. We can be street children but we are humans. Rich people hate us because we live in the street... it hurts," he continued.

Ashraf-ud-Doula new envoy to Laos

UNB, Dhaka
The government has decided to appoint Ashraf-ud-Doula, Ambassador of Bangladesh in Vietnam, to concurrently serve as the country's Ambassador to the Lao People's Democratic Republic with residence in Hanoi.

Ashraf-ud-Doula, who joined Bangladesh Foreign Service in 1977, served in various capacities in the Bangladesh missions in Berlin, Rome, London, Singapore and Canberra.

He had been the High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka from August 1998 to July 2002 before he became the Ambassador in Vietnam, said a Foreign Office press release.

Six-year-old Wasim who attends the Jakhon Tabkan Shikha said on an emotive note, "We have no money, neither clothes nor food to live well. We are going to school to be educated so that someday we can play an important role especially for the underprivileged children. We want to know about our rights."

Shah Alam, Babu, Majid, Hiron and Kamal, among others of the same age, aired almost the same desire.

Prior to the main function yesterday, the children took part in an art competition titled "Our Dreams".

The TUSD also organised a discussion meeting presided over by Shahidul Alam Sachchu, TUSD chairperson.

CPA court fines five industrial units

BSS, Ctg
A magistrate court of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) yesterday fined Tk 1.15 lakh to five industrial units and commercial enterprises for polluting environment and illegal encroachment on the Karnaphuli River.

The court fined Tk 40 to Evergreen Agency, Tk 20,000 each to Karnaphuli Salt Industries and Moon Salt Industries, Tk 25,000 to Hakkani Paper and Board Mills and Tk 10,000 to another commercial firm for illegally occupying the river bank and polluting the Karnaphuli river by dumping waste, a press release said.

CPA magistrate Mohammad Munir Chowdhury yesterday ordered those firms to pay the fine. Separate cases were lodged earlier.

The court also asked the firms to take steps to remove the dumped waste from the river.



Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) Muhammad Ahsan Ali Sarkar submits six special and annual audit reports to President Iajuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban yesterday.

PHOTO PID

Proper maintenance of genetic resources underscored

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Proper maintenance of genetic resources will lead the country towards prosperity, said the speakers at a planning meeting in the city yesterday.

They mentioned Bangladesh as a country rich in genetic resources that needs conservation.

The meeting titled 'National Strategy for Genetic Resource Conservation, Regeneration and Enhancement' was organised by the Unnayan Bikolper Niti Nirdharoni Gobeshona (UBINIG) and the Nayakrishni Andolon.

Most of the speakers stressed the need of better seeds for the farmers. Seeds and genetic resources should never get out of the hands of the farmers, they said, adding that it is the common resources of the community and must be conserved at the household and community level.

The speakers also called for establishing a gene bank to conserve the genetic resources. It will increase the productivity of the unique biodiversity-based farming in the country, they added.

Scientists and the farmers should work in collaboration for the conservation and reproduction of genetic resources in the country, the speakers said.

They also decided to hold a national seminar on the issue as soon as possible.

Fahrad Mazhar, managing director of UBINIG, chaired the session.

Dr. A Hamid, professor of Bangabandhu Krishi Bishwabidyalaya (Agriculture) of BARD, Dr. Shahidul Islam, director general of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute, Shahnaz Begum, deputy director of Agriculture Extension Department, Dr. Enayef Bhuiyan, director general of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute and Dr. Amirul Islam, former director of Bangladesh Jute Research Institute, spoke on the occasion.

Nationwide survey on arsenic begins

UNB, Dhaka
A nationwide survey on arsenic detection in groundwater has begun under Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation and Water Supply Project (BAMWSP).

Under the three-month project, water samples of 30 lakh tubewells in 147 upazilas of the country will be tested. Besides, arsenic-affected people will also be identified.

The survey has already been conducted in 42 upazilas and it is expected to be completed by February next, an official handout said yesterday.

On completion of the survey, the government will ensure supply of arsenic-free water in the affected areas.

JPC election today

BSS, Dhaka
The 14th biennial general meeting of the Jatiya Press Club (JPC) was held at its auditorium yesterday with acting president of the Club Mohammad Nurul Huda in the chair.

JPC General Secretary Swapnan Kumar Saha and Treasurer Abdul Baten presented their reports in the meeting, a club press release said.

The election to the club's managing committee will be held today at the JPC premises.

The voting will begin at 9.30 am and continue till 5 pm with one hour break from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm, the release added.

IEB confce from January 5

BSS, Ctg
A 3-day conference of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) will begin here January 5.

The theme of the 47th conference is "Engineering Management in National Development". It will be held at IEB, Chittagong Centre.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is expected to inaugurate the conference as chief guest.

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will be the chief guest at the concluding session on January 7.

A total of 3000 engineers, architects, technologists and delegates from home and abroad representing different organisations will participate in the conference.

The programmes of the conference include holding of a national seminar, presentation of six memorial lectures on different national issues and technical articles on the discipline of engineering and technology, the press release added.

Memorial plaque for Sony unveiled on BUET campus

BSS, Dhaka
A memorial plaque for Sabubdharma Sony was unveiled yesterday on the BUET campus.

A second year BUET student, Sony was killed on the campus in a crossfire between the two rival students group on June 8, 2002.

BUET Vice-chancellor Prof Dr. Alec Murtuza unveiled the memorial plaque while Sony's parents, BUET teachers, Sony's friends and students of the university were present.

Muktijoddha Kalyan trust to be reorganised

BSS, Dhaka
State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Redwan Ahmed said the government would take all steps to mobilise the resources of Bangladesh Muktijoddha Kalyan Trust for ensuring the overall welfare of freedom fighters of the country.

Redwan said this at the second meeting of the executive committee of the Trust at its office here yesterday.

The State Minister asked the concerned officials to complete work on all projects and programmes of the Trust quickly.

Redwan said the government has taken effective steps for reorganising the Kalyan Trust to turn it into a profit concern.

He said appropriate measures would be taken to increase the Fund's fixed income.

President's Parade in Ctg tomorrow

BSS, Ctg
The President's Parade marking the commissioning of the gentlemen cadets of the 47 BMA Long Course will be held at the Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) at Bhatiyar in Chittagong tomorrow.

In view of foggy weather in the morning both in Dhaka and Chittagong, the parade will now be held at 10:00 am instead of 9:25 am.

PUST gets govt approval

UNB, Dhaka
Bogra-based Pundra University of Science and Technology (PUST) has got government permission.

This will be the first private university in the country's northern region. The university campus is situated at Gokul in Bogra while it has a liaison office in Dhaka.

The Ministry of Education gave permission to PUST for five years from December 23, 2002.

PUST will initially introduce courses in five departments -- Computer Science and Engineering, Information Technology and Networking, Electronics and Communication Engineering, BBA major in Management and BBA major in Accounting.



PHOTO STAR

An Italian plastic surgeon examines a child at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. A team of plastic surgeons from Italy is now in the city to operate upon patients at the hospital.

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1. Sealed tender in foreign currency is invited from bonafide Manufacturer/Dealer/Suppliers (Enlisted firms in DGDP) for supply of the following items for Bangladesh Navy:

S No	Name of Item & Qty	Date of Selling		Tender No & schedule Value	Remarks
		From	To		
1.	Closed circuit diving set Qty: 05 set	04-01-2003	01-02-2003	7476/NP-4 Tk 200.00	Single Envelope 1 st Time
2.	Under water explosive detector Qty: 02	04-01-2003	01-02-2003	7477/NP-4 Tk 200.00	Single Envelope 1 st Time
3.	Out board engine (for Inflammable boat). Qty: 02 Nos	04-01-2003	25-1-2003	7437/NP-4 Tk 50.00	Single Envelope 2 nd Time

2. Tender schedule with detailed specification/condition will be available on payment as per International Tender selling rate (non-refundable) during office hours between 0800 hours to 1300 hours. The tender can be dropped latest by 1000 hours and opened at 1005 hours on the specified date of opening in the presence of the tenderers (if present).

ISPR/Misc/957
DFP-31392-24/12/02
G-2344

Lt Commander BN
For Director General

Inclusion of disabled children in mainstream education programme suggested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Experts from different NGOs including the National Disabled Forum (NDF) and the National Disabled Development Foundation (NDDF) and government officials took part at the workshop.

They also suggested compulsory primary education for disabled children and allocating of more government funds for their education.

The workshop on 'Inclusion of Disabled People in Education Programme and Rights of Disabled Children' was organised by the National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled (NFWOD) in cooperation with the Action Aid and Save the Children, Sweden. It was held at auditorium of the Social Services Department.

Experts from different NGOs including the National Disabled Forum (NDF) and the National Disabled Development Foundation (NDDF) and government officials took part at the workshop.

They also called for reducing prices of education materials for the blind; creating employment opportunity for the educated disabled; financial help, separate transport and housing facility for disabled students and better training of their teachers.

They said resource centres should be set up at divisional headquarters from where all kinds of assistance would be given to the disabled.

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Dr. Syed Shahadat Hossain
Director

GD-1127