



PHOTO: STAR

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addresses a rally at Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday. AL organised the meeting on the occasion of Women Repression Resistance Day.

PM assures steps for govt-NGO partnership

GCE delegation calls on Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday assured that more steps would be taken to consolidate the government-NGO partnership in various areas of national activity, including spread of education.

Assistance of all is required as the government alone cannot achieve the desired success, she said while talking to a delegation of Global Campaign for Education (GCE), an apex body of more than 1000 NGOs working for expansion of education around the world.

She told the delegation that her government provided highest budgetary allocation for the education sector as it thinks education is the key to development.

Listing various programmes of her government in the sector, Khaleda said pragmatic measures

had been taken to contain mass copying at public examinations.

The government has taken up a six-year project involving Tk 5000 crore under which nearly 35,000 teachers would be recruited.

The 14-member delegation included Executive Director of Gono Swakkhorota Obhijan Rasheda K Chowdhury, Sayeedul Alam Kajal of CAMPE, ED of BRAC Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, Shishir Sheel of PET, ED of UCEP Brig (Retd) Aftabuddin Ahmed, ED of RDRS Kamaluddin Akbor, ED of Ahsania Mission Kazi Rafiqul Alam, Country Director of Action Aid Nasreen Huq, Taleha Rahman of Democracy Watch, Coordinator of Survi Jamin Akhtar and Eram Marium of BRAC.

Global Campaign for Education (GCE) will observe Global Action Week on April 19-25.

The delegation lauded various steps taken by the government for expansion of education. They said that the programmes created mass enthusiasm and many of those, including free education and stipend for girls, were appreciated world over.

Appreciating the stress laid on English, the delegation also stressed the need of proper training for improving the skill of teachers and setting up of a yardstick for the standard of education.

They lauded the government for timely supply of books free of cost to the primary schools students.

They requested her to provide free books in similar manner for the schools run by the NGOs which the prime minister assured of giving due consideration.

President calls for eliminating digital divide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday called for a concerted effort by all concerned including the government, non-government and donor agencies to eliminate digital divide.

"I feel that a close partnership among the government, NGOs and donor organisations in the field of the Internet will help eliminate the digital divide that still exists in our country," said the president while inaugurating the web site 'bangladeshngo.com' as chief guest.

Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moeen Khan MP and Chief Operating Officer of the web portal Ahmed Ali Midha also spoke at the function at Sonargaon hotel in the city.

Appreciating the launching of the web portal, President Iajuddin said

Bangladesh is a developing country where NGOs and donors work together along with the government in different sectors. Each of them helps each other, uses their respective skills and manpower to achieve the goal, he added.

The president underscored the need for co-ordination among the different bodies for building a development infrastructure for the benefit of the common men.

Dr Moeen said the government is working for the growth of modern technology like Internet for fostering the development of the country.

He said the people could get access to the world of information and knowledge irrespective of his location if he has modern communication tools like computer and Internet.



A group of Bangladeshi artists perform at a cultural programme at the end of a reception organised by the Bangladesh embassy in Stockholm, Sweden, on the occasion of the Independence Day on March 26.

2 die, 3 hurt in city road crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A truck helper was killed and three others injured as an inter-city train rammmed a rail line-stuck truck at Kurmitola, a passenger bus ran over a rickshaw-puller at Sabujbagh while a construction worker slipped and died at Motijheel yesterday.

The sand-laden truck (Kustia Ta 05-0085) jolted to a halt near Navy Headquarters when it was crossing the rail line at 1:05am, sources said.

On its way to Kamlapur Railway Station, inter-city train 736 Agnibehna pierced through the truck, which was thrown about hundred yards away in six crushed pieces.

The unidentified truck helper of 35, clad in check lungi and full-sleeved printed shirt, died on the spot and three labourers on board were badly injured. The driver, however,

managed his way out and fled the scene, sources added.

Railway police recovered the helper's body yesterday morning and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

A passenger bus knocked down Abbas Ali, 50, at 9:00am when he was passing Bishwa Road on his rickshaw near Sabujbagh Buddhist temple.

Badly injured Abbas was rushed to the DMCH where doctors declared him dead.

In another incident at Motijheel, a construction worker died after he slipped off a rope while painting a building.

Hanging from a rope, Siddique, 18, was painting the wall of a house at Motijheel AGB Colony at about 9:00am when he slipped down from third floor height.

SEXUAL ABUSE SUST syndicate expels JCD man

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The syndicate of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) has expelled a JCD cadre on charge of sexual abuse of a girl student.

The decision was taken at a syndicate meeting on Monday night after considering a preliminary inquiry report on the incident.

The syndicate also formed a four-member committee to inquire into the involvement of other JCD men who had allegedly helped the main accused.

Prof Muhammad Jafar Iqbal will head the committee comprising Dean of Physical Science Prof Habibul Ahsan, Student Affairs Advisor Dr Sajedul Karim and Proctor Dr Abdul Hai as members.

The body will submit its report by April 28.

Earlier, a report of the disciplinary committee suggested the involvement of other JCD men with the incident, sources said.

'Ensure rights of the elderly'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the nuclear family fast replacing the joint family, the elderly aged over 60 years are getting isolated from the mainstream of the society gradually, speakers said at a press conference yesterday.

There are about 90 lakh elderly people in the country but they have been excluded from different activities of the society because of rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, they said.

The speakers also called for ensuring the rights of the elderly who were once the most important part of the society.

The Probin Odhikar Forum, a platform for the NGOs that work for the elderly, organised the press conference at the National Press Club in the city.

The forum members are Resource Integration Centre (RIC), Probin Hitoysa Sangha, Brac, Bangladesh Women Health Coalition, Boyosko Kalayan Samity, Probin Kalyan Parishad, Boyosko O Shishu P un a r b a s a n K e n d r a,

Bangladesh Geronto-logy Association, Ageing Resource Centre-Bangladesh and Ghasful.

The government has not taken any step for the welfare of the elderly except the old-age allowance, forum President Dr KM Rashid said, adding that there is no national policy for them.

He urged the government to implement the international plan of actions for the elderly adopted at the Second World Elderly Conference in Madrid in 1999.

Dr Rashid also called on all, specially the NGOs, to come forward to help protect the rights of the elderly.

Prof AK Azad Khan, secretary general of Bangladesh Diabetic Samity, said the samity will arrange preferential treatment facilities for the elderly.

Abul Hasib Khan, secretary general of the forum, Prof Keramat Ali of Dhaka University and Dr M Kabir of Jahangirnagar University were also present at the press conference.

New UNDP programme in CHT

STAFF COESPONDENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the first time took an initiative to build confidence and promote coherence among the divergent ethnic groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

It launched a five-year-long programme, involving 45.2 million dollars, to this end on April 14.

This was disclosed at a meeting between UNDP Resident Representatives Jorgen Lissner and Chairman of parliamentary standing committee on the CHT affairs Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain MP yesterday.

UNDP Director on CHT Development Facility Michael Heyn and secretary of the ministry of CHT affairs were also present.

The UNDP officials said the project is aimed at capacity building by strengthening the roles of the institutions and promoting interactive programmes between the Bangalees and the hill people.

Mosharraf Hossain lauded the UNDP for launching such programme and said that equitable development of the Bangalees and the hill people can ensure sustainable growth in the area.



PHOTO: STAR

Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman speaks at a rally at Muktangan in the city yesterday. Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, labour front of the ruling party, organised the event.

CTG ARMS HAUL Judicial probe demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Alternative Political Stream yesterday demanded judicial inquiry into the recent huge arms haul in Chittagong and punishment to those involved in the gunrunning.

In a statement, its leaders said the government has failed to provide any specific information on the arms haul to the public.

Meanwhile, nearly 300 people led by Anwar Hossain Anu, a BNP

leader, and Sarwar Hossain, a Jubo Dal leader of Khilgaon thana, and about 50 businessmen of Gausia market led by Liton and Mamun joined the alternative stream at a function at its office yesterday.

Speaking at the function, former president and convenor of the party AQM Badruddoza Chowdhry said his party would unite people of all faiths to build up a better Bangladesh.

He also called on the people living in hilly areas to join the march towards a better future in unity.

Major (ret.) Abdul Mannan, member secretary of the alternative stream, Mahi B Chowdhury, national committee member, and Maj. Gen. (ret.) MA Halim, city convenor, also spoke.

HC rejects UNB petition

BSS, Dhaka

The High Court Division has rejected a writ petition filed by United News of Bangladesh (UNB) against the judgement and order of the Chairman of the First Labour Court and Authority under the Payment of Wages Act on the payment of dues to a former news editor of the news agency.

A High Court Division Bench comprising Justice Shah Abu Nayem Mominur Rahman and Justice Abdus Salam Mamun passed the order on April 13.

Earlier, the High Court issued a rule nisi and stayed the operation of the judgement and order of the labour court authority upon the writ petition.

News Editor Bakhtiar Rana resigned on July 1, 2002 after serving the agency since 1988. But on repeated requests, UNB did not pay him the dues. Later, he filed a case with the Authority in Dhaka under the Payment of Wages Act.

After hearing both the sides, the labour court by its judgement on June 26, 2003, ordered UNB to pay the dues of the petitioner. But the UNB authorities filed a writ petition with the High Court against the judgement.

Sheraton Hotel changes entry and exit gates

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel has changed its entry and exit gates and the basement parking to ease traffic situation, says a press release.

Guests and visitors will now gain entry into the hotel through the 'IN' gate at the west beside the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue and leave the hotel through the 'OUT' gate at Minto Road (beside the tennis court).

The new traffic arrangement, effective from April 18, will enable the guests to arrive at and leave the hotel in a more convenient way.

Obituary

BSS, Chittagong

Alhaj Azim Sharif, a renowned businessman and former senior vice-president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, died of a heart attack at a local hospital yesterday evening at the age of 71.

Sharif left behind his seven sons and seven daughters.

Death anniversary

Today is the third death anniversary of Minalini Saha, mother of Bires Chandra Saha, vice-president of Mahanagar Sarbajanin Puja Committee, says a press release.

Religious rituals will be held at her home at Jagannath Saha Road in the city.



Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology took out a colourful procession from its Uttara campus in the city on April 14 to celebrate the Pahela Boishakh, the first day of the Bangla year.

DHAKA TODAY

Handicraft fair
The inaugural ceremony of a weeklong handicraft fair, organised by the Jatiya Mohila Sangstha, will be held with Women and Children Affairs Minister Khurshid Jahan Haq as chief guest. Venue: 145, New Bailey Road. Time: 11.00am. The fair will remain open from 10.00am to 6.00pm daily.

JICA seminar
Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), in association with the Economic Relations Division, organises a seminar on 'Japanese ODA to Bangladesh'. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 10.00am.

AGM
The annual general meeting and the installation ceremony of the Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh will be held. Venue: BIAM auditorium, New Eskaton. Time: 3.30pm.

Meeting
A meeting of the executive committee of Chattagram Samity-Dhaka will be held. Venue: 32, Tophkana Road. Time: 6.00pm.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Film show
Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'The Usual Suspects' (1999). Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Discussion
Eastern University organises a discussion on 'The role of civil society in improving quality of education'. Venue: University auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 4.00pm.

Seminar
To mark the 66th death anniversary of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, a seminar on 'Ideology of Iqbal's Literature' will be held. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4.00pm.

DU reception
Marketing department of Dhaka University organises a reception for its first year BBA students (10th batch). Venue: Conference room of the business studies faculty. Time: 10.00am.

Indian film show
The High Commission of India in Dhaka will screen a film titled 'Hungame'. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, Gulshan.

