



French Ambassador Michel Lummaux called on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday.

UNFPA report on State of World Population today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

UNFPA's annual flagship publication, State of World Population, will be launched in Dhaka today as in other world capitals.

UNFPA Bangladesh will launch the report at a press conference at the VIP Lounge of the National Press Club, said a press release yesterday.



Qulkhwani of Hasna Hazari today

Qulkhwani of Begum Hasna Hazari (Jelly Apa), an eminent social worker and pioneer in the handicraft industry, will be held at her Gulshan residence after Maghrib prayers today, says a press release.

She died of kidney-related complications at Birdem Hospital at 6.30pm on September 12.

Begum Hasna was the wife of late Abdul Ghani Hazari, a renowned poet and journalist.



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka City Awami League stages a demonstration yesterday demanding resignation of the four-party alliance government.

Fertility rate declines BDHS survey says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fertility rate has declined to 3.0 in 2004 from 3.3 in 2000 after a decade-long stagnation.

This was revealed at a dissemination seminar on Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) 2004 in the city yesterday.

Lowest fertility has been recorded in Rajshahi and Khulna divisions (2.6 and 2.8) and highest in Sylhet and Chittagong divisions (4.2 and 3.7).

Bangladeshi women, on an average, now have three children, said a preliminary report on the survey.

Contraceptive use continues to increase in the country. Currently 58 percent of married couples are using a contraceptive method compared to 54 percent four years ago.

The gap in the use of contraceptives between the urban and the rural has also been reduced significantly over the years.

According to the report, use of antenatal care has been increased significantly among the pregnant women. Almost half of the pregnant women received at least one antenatal care visit from a trained doctor, nurse or midwife for their last birth.

The mortality rate among 1 to 4-year-old children declined by 20 percent in last 4 years but infant mortality had not changed recently and remained as high as 65 death per 1000 births.

There has been significant increase in vaccination coverage in recent years and three-quarters of the children 12-23 months of age are fully immunised with BCG, three doses of polio, DPT and measles. But many children are malnourished and 40 percent are considered to be short for their age and half are underweight, the report added.

In last four years, knowledge of HIV/AIDS among the women has increased.

But, despite the rise in awareness, only four out of ten women know on any valid way to avoid HIV/AIDS and one-third of men still do not know of any valid way to prevent it, said the report.

About arsenic in drinking water, one in eleven households has unsafe level of arsenic in drinking water.

According to the survey, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions have the highest proportion of households with unsafe level of arsenic in their drinking water.

Speaking as chief guest at the seminar Health and Family Welfare Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said the level of unwanted fertility remains still high and fertility rate would be substantively lower if all unwanted births could be avoided.

He urged all government, non-government and private sectors to extend their assistance and co-operation to ensure the quality of health, nutrition and family planning services and march forward together to attain a healthy and prosperous society.

Health and Family Welfare Secretary AFM Sarwar Kamal presided over the seminar while Director General of the Directorate of Health Services Prof Mizanur Rahman, Director General of Family Planning M Fazlur Rahman, and Charles Llewellyn of the USAID also spoke.

National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT) and Macro International of the United States organised the seminar.

US Agency for International Development (USAID) in Dhaka funded the survey.

JCD, police club BCL procession at RU, 20 students injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists, in collaboration with the police, clubbed a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) procession on the Rajshahi University campus leaving nearly 20 students injured yesterday.

Of the injured, the condition of BCL President Ibrahim Hossain Moon and General Secretary Ayen Uddin is learnt to be critical.

Others included Ayub Hossain, Al Biruni, Mofazzal Haq, Ziaul Haq, Zillur Rahman, Mehdi Hasan, Mustak Ahmed, Rebeka Sultana, Sumon Kanti, Sumon Kumar, Rothi, Khuku, Ashish and Madhabi Mollik.

Sources said JCD cadres along with the police swooped on the BCL procession when it was heading towards university bus stand to foil a JCD bid to run the buses during the strike.

Earlier, the BCL held rallies and brought out processions as part of the daylong strike enforced by six opposition student organisations protesting the JCD attack on Dhaka University campus.

At a press conference on RU campus, the BCL leaders called a daylong strike for today protesting the attack.

They also demanded removal of RU Vice-chancellor Prof Faisal Islam Faruki and Proctor Prof

Shamsul Alam for, what they said, the failure of the administration to provide security on the campus.

They claimed that Proctor Prof Zahid Hasan provoked and led the attack.

Asked, the proctor said police dispersed a BCL procession which was heading for damaging the university vehicles.

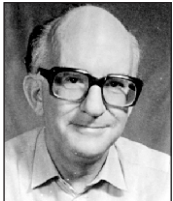
"We (RU teachers) and JCD leaders just barred the procession. We did not make any attack," he added.

JCD General Secretary Aslam Reza said general students drove the BCL workers who tried to create chaos on the campus.

Meanwhile, many resident students have reportedly left their halls due to prevailing situation.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 18th death anniversary of Lindsay Allan Cheyne, founder of the Underprivileged Children's Education

Programmes (UCEP).

UCEP-Bangladesh has taken elaborate programmes to mark the day. The programmes include prayers at a local church, placing wreaths at Narinda cemetery and a discussion on the life and works of Cheyne.

Cheyne, a social worker of New Zealand, established the UCEP in 1972 to provide cost-effective non-formal education and skill training to the underprivileged urban working children.

He served as the chief executive of UCEP-Bangladesh until his death in 1986.

DHAKA

T O D A Y

Memorial lecture

Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies organises a memorial lecture on Hiralal Sen, the pioneer filmmaker of the subcontinent. Two films will be screened on this occasion. The films are 'Z: Anatomy of a Political Assassination' (1969) directed by Costa-Gavras and 'Fahrenheit 9/11' (2004) directed by Michael Moore. Venue: German Cultural Centre, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.30pm.

Academy film show

Academy Film Society will screen a British documentary titled 'Touching the Void' (2004). Venue: Society Auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Scholarship awarding ceremony

Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation will award scholarships to the underprivileged rural students through a scholarship awarding ceremony. Venue: Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited Training Centre, Dilkusha. Time: 10.30am.

Moon sighting meet

A meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee will be held with State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan in the chair. Venue: Conference room of the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Baitul Mukarram. Time: 6.30pm.

Seminar

Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers Association organises a seminar on the 'Role of home-based women and children workers and their rights in the context of Bangladesh'. Venue: Women's Voluntary Association Auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 10.00am.

Course

A training course on 'Road safety and good driving practices' will be held with Communications Minister Nazmul Huda as chief guest. Venue: Buet conference room. Time: 9.00am.

DHAKA

T O M O R R O W

Academy film show

Academy Film Society will screen an Indian film titled 'Chalte Chalte' (2003) and an American film titled 'Starsky & Hutch' (2004). Venue: Society Auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 3.30pm and 6.30pm.

Indian film show

The High Commission of India will screen a film titled 'Kaho Naa Pyar Hai'. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, House-25, Road-96, Gulshan-2.

Seminar

A seminar on 'Earthquake engineering research in the University of Asia Pacific' will be held with Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan as chief guest. Venue: University Auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.00pm.



PHOTO: STAR

RCC Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu speaks at a roundtable on 'Good governance for development at the local level and the implications of national budget allocations on pourasavas' at the Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left are Tongi Pourasava Chairman Advocate Azmat Ullah Khan, economist Debapriya Bhattacharya and economist Atiur Rahman and on his right is Badiul Alam Majumder, executive director of Hunger Project.

Strengthening local govt a must for good governance

Speakers tell MAB roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Strengthening local government is a must for decentralisation of power, equal distribution of resources, good governance and overall economic development, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

They also called for more budgetary allocation for the local government and planned development projects in the locality.

The Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB) organised the roundtable on 'Good governance for development at the local level and the implications of national budget allocations on pourasavas'.

Presenting the keynote paper, MAB President and Tongi Pourasava Chairman Advocate Azmat Ullah Khan said the development of local bodies were being hampered because of poor budgetary allocation, non-availability of funds and curtailment of power.

Although over one crore people live in urban areas, the allocation in the budget was too inadequate, he said.

The pourasavas hardly can take up any development programmes without the approval by the government, he added.

Renowned economist Debapriya Bhattacharya said the local government should ensure transparency and accountability in development activities.

He also called for capacity building of the local government for the

development of infrastructure and more budgetary allocation.

Debapriya suggested introduction of a mechanism through which budgetary allocation would be given on the basis of performance. The local government bodies who will perform better will get more allocation, he explained.

Speaking as special guest, Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu called on the pourasava chairmen to take up project-based development programmes in their areas.

The local government should take initiatives to implement projects in various sectors with the money allocated by the government under the annual development programmes (ADP), he said.

Minu suggested that the responsibilities for land management, holding tax collection and revenue collection from local markets should be given to the local government.

He also said the first class municipalities such as Narayanganj, Savar, Tongi and Comilla should get the status of city corporation.

Economist Atiur Rahman underscored the need for promoting a participatory democracy in the country.

He also suggested forming a permanent finance commission to assess the requirements of the local government.

The desired goal for development of human resources is not

possible without a strong base of the local government, he said.

Referring to the poor performance of the local bodies, Atiur said some of them often get higher allocation from the government just on the basis of recommendations by influential political high-ups.

He also said policy-makers should consider the changed livelihood pattern in the country while taking up development programmes.

Prof Nazrul Islam called on the local government bodies to take up planned development projects that do not harm the environment.

Badiul Alam Majumder said the constitution gave full autonomy to the local government bodies but they could not enjoy it.

Rather, their power has gradually been curtailed, he said.

Selina Hayat Ivy, chairman of Narayanganj municipality, alleged that the local body leaders aligned with opposition political parties often fell victim to political harassment.

Such political interference also hampers the development process, she said.

Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, moderated the roundtable held at the Cirdap auditorium in the city.

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WEATHER

T O D A Y

Heavy falls likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over the country till 6.00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said.

Day temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country during the period.

Highest temperature 28.9 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangpur and lowest 21.5 degree Celsius at Rajshahi.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:02pm today and rises at 5:45am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	25.0	22.7	97	96
Chittagong	27.4	23.5	82	93
Rajshahi	24.6	21.5	94	94
Khulna	28.5	24.5	89	94
Barisal	26.2	24.6	100	93
Sylhet	27.8	23.4	88	89
Cox's Bazar	27.2	25.0	100	95