

Bank Asia, IEH observe World Sight Day

A daylong school-college eye camp was held at Malkhanagar High School and College in Munshiganj to raise awareness about eye care among the students through a campaign of the theme -- 'Better eye care, better sight', says a press release.

Sponsored by Bank Asia Limited, the eye camp was conducted by the Islamia Eye Hospital (IEH) to mark the World Sight Day observed globally on October 14.

A Rouf Chowdhury, vice chairman of Bank Asia, inaugurated the eye camp at a simple ceremony on October 13. Zahida Ispahani, adviser to the Islamia Eye Hospital and MA Ispahani Institute of Ophthalmology, attended the inaugural ceremony as special guest.

Syed Anisul Huq, managing director, and other senior executives of Bank Asia, manager of Malkhanagar branch of the bank, college Principal Shafiuiddin Hawlader and local dignitaries were also present.

During the daylong eye camp, the students were examined for visual deficiencies and given spectacles and medication.

Established in 1899, Malkhanagar High School and College is situated on a spacious four acre prime location in Malkhanagar, Sirajdikhan, an hour and a half's drive from Dhaka. It has a total of 1313 students.

Bank Asia Limited is at present on the eve of observing its fifth year of foundation and keenly aware of the bank's upcoming anniversary befittingly through participation in socially beneficial programmes to demonstrate its growing commitment towards corporate social responsibility and serving the needs of the community with which it works.

The bank envisages observance of the World Sight Day through sponsoring the theme 'Eradicating Childhood Blindness' and establishing eye camps in schools located in its rural branch locations -- Malkhanagar in Munshiganj and Tarail in Kishoreganj -- with the awareness theme of 'Better eye care, better sight' for schoolchildren.

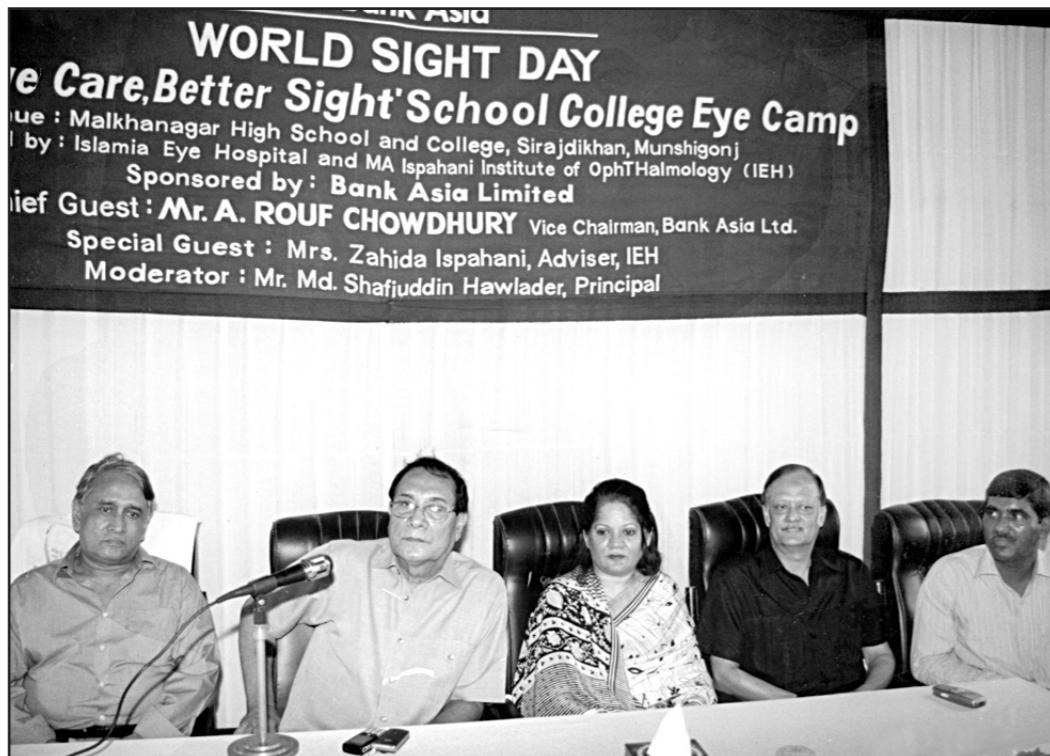
JU vacation from Oct 19

JU CORRESPONDENT

The Jahangirnagar University (JU) will remain closed from October 19 to November 20 on the occasion of Durga Puja, Laxmi Puja, Shab-e-Qadr, Eid-ul-Fitr and National Revolution and Solidarity Day.

No classes and examinations will be held during the vacation.

Classes will resume on November 21.



A Rouf Chowdhury, vice chairman, Bank Asia Ltd., delivers his speech at the inaugural ceremony of a daylong eye camp on the Malkhanagar High School and College premises at Sirajdikhan, Munshiganj, recently. Zahida Ispahani, adviser to the Islamia Eye Hospital, Syed Anisul Huq, managing director, Bank Asia Ltd., and Shafiuiddin Hawlader, principal of the college, were also present.

'Conservation of biodiversity a must for food security'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environment-friendly cultivation practices and conservation of ecological balance are a must for achieving food security for all, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

The number of hungry people in the world is 84 crore and 300 crore people, out of 500 crore in the developing world, are deprived of fundamental rights to food, water, shelter and health care, said Agriculture Minister MK Anwar.

The agriculture ministry organised the discussion in the city on the occasion of World Food Day-2004. The slogan of the day is 'Biodiversity in Food Security'.

To attain food security, there must be a consistency between the demand and supply in keeping with the people's purchasing capacity, the minister said.

He underscored the diversified cultivation of crops to ensure food security.

Prof AKM Nazrul Islam of Dhaka University presented the keynote paper.

Conservation of biodiversity is a prerequisite for food security, said

Syed Ataur Rahman, additional secretary of the agriculture ministry.

Prof Lutfur Rahman of Bangladesh Agricultural University identified population explosion, unplanned development, silt deposition in rivers, unusual floods and absence of protective measures as some of the factors contributing to the loss of biodiversity.

"A total of 162 plant species and 200 forest species are used for food and other purposes," he said.

The government must take into account nutrition quality, water supply, market opportunity, land reform and investment to harvest handling and IT system to ensure sustainable food security by 2020, he added.

Producing food items of livestock origin is an important means of ensuring food security, said Prof Fazlul Haque Bhuiyan. "The government must protect all the indigenous sources of food generation."

"Instead of imported genetically modified (GM) technology and hybrid crop species, we have to make use of local and environment-friendly species through our own research work," said State Minister

for Agriculture Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir.

"By resorting to indiscriminate and excessive extraction of natural resources, we are virtually destroying the biodiversity and ecological balance," said Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman.

"Unplanned and indiscriminate cultivation of some exotic species has led to the extinction of a number of indigenous crops," he said.

Deputy Minister for Food and Disaster Management Asadul Habib Dulu, Agriculture Secretary ASM Abdul Halim, and Representative of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Bui Thi Lan also spoke.

Labourer falls from ship, dies

CU CORRESPONDENT

A labourer was killed when he slipped and fell down from a ship at Ship Breaking Yard in Sitakunda upazila in the district yesterday.

The victim was identified as Badil Alam, 54, a foreman of S Trading Corporation.

Sources said, Badil lost his balance and fell to the ground while he was collecting scrap metals from the ship. He died on the spot.

Badil hails from Jahanabad area of Sitakunda upazila, sources said.

'Ban use of toxicants in food'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a rally yesterday urged the government to take immediate steps to ban the use of toxic substances in food items.

They said a section of unscrupulous businessmen mix the poisonous ingredients in foods for extra profit.

The rally was organised by Bishmukta Khabar Andolon (BKA), a movement for poison-free food, with the cooperation of Janauddog at Shahbagh in the city.

Representatives from Green Force, Mukti Joddha Sangsad, and Grambanga Unnayan Committee also attended the rally.

BKA Convenor Abu Naser Khan said various chemicals and toxicants are being used for ripening the fruits artificially.

As a result, common people are suffering from various diseases like cancer, liver cirrhosis, high blood pressure and heart diseases, he

added.

Abu Naser said excessive use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers in growing foods and vegetables also poses serious threat to public health.

"Consequently we, as a nation, are going down in terms of our intellects and physical health," he asserted.

Executive Director of Grambanga Unnayan Committee AKM Maksud protested the introduction of genetically modified (GM) food in the country.

He said Europe has not accepted the GM food as its impact on health

is yet to be ascertained.

Maksud warned that if the government remains unaware, the multinational companies will slowly patent our indigenous crops, and in that case we shall have to buy seeds from them at higher price.

Bishwasahitya Kendra Coordinator Golam Kibria expressed his concern at the failure of Bangladesh Standard Testing Institute (BSTI) and other government bodies concerned to ensure the food security of the people.

"We shall launch a greater movement if the government does not take immediate action against the

unscrupulous businessmen and protect the people's rights," he added.

An evil circle, comprising politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen, is running the country for their greed and selfishness, said engineer Shahidullah of Oil, Gas and Port Protection Movement.

BKA Secretary Khandaker Reaz Hossain, Shahjahan Mirza Benu, Sharifuzzaman, and Abdul Mannan also spoke at the rally.

Earlier, a human chain was formed protesting the mixture of poisonous chemicals in food items.

Price spiral of essentials protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition parties and social organisations yesterday protested the price hike of essentials in the holy month of Ramadan.

They also condemned the government for its failure to contain the price spiral.

The parties included Awami League (AL), left 11-party alliance, and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD).

Expressing grave concern at the skyrocketing of essentials the opposition parties decided to stage demonstrations in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country in protest at the government's indifference to the acute problem.

The party leaders urged the people to join the demonstrations against the current steep

rise of prices.

They said the government is also indifferent to the problems of thousands of people in northern districts who are passing their days in Monga (famine like situation).

The AL will stage demonstrations in Dhaka and other parts of the country to protest the price hike of essentials on October 20.

In a statement yesterday, Obaidul Quader, acting general secretary of the AL

said "Public life has become a misery. The government has no control over the market."

He said the wrong economic policy of the government, unabated corruption and extortion by the alliance men and business syndicates are mainly responsible for price spiral.

A meeting of the left 11-party

DHAKA TODAY

Art competition

Institute of Fine Arts unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League organises an art competition for children to mark the 40th birth anniversary of Sheikh Russel, youngest son of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It will be followed by a discussion and prize giving ceremony. Venue: Institute of Fine Arts premises. Time: 3:00pm.

Memorial discussion

A meeting will be held in memory of Advocate Atsar Ahmed Siddiqui, a former vice-president of Bangladesh Nationalist Party, with City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka as chief guest. Venue: VIP Lounge of the National Press Club, Topkhana Road. Time: 3:00pm.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Bangladesh Krishak League will hold a discussion to mark the 40th birth anniversary of Sheikh Russel, youngest son of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Venue: 23, Bangabandhu Avenue. Time: 4:00pm.

One gets life for keeping illegal arms

CU CORRESPONDENT

A court in Chittagong yesterday sentenced one person to life term for possessing illegal arms and ammunition.

Judge Abdur Rahman Pathway of Chittagong District and Sessions Judge's Court sentenced Emdadul Emdaiddya to life term imprisonment.

The prosecution story in brief that police after gunfight with robbers arrested Emdaiddya on October 1, 2003 from East Kadurkhil under Boalkhali police station in the district.

Later, police recovered huge arms and ammunition following his confessional statement. Emdaiddya is wanted in 10 cases, sources said.