



Eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain, right, discusses a point with Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jaill, left, at the council of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal in the city yesterday while JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu looks on.

ADB to help boost urban health \$40 m loan and grant package approved

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will help improve the health status of Bangladesh's urban population, especially the poor, by providing a package of high-impact health services, through a US\$40 million loan and grant package approved yesterday, according to a news release of the bank.

The project will support the construction of 64 health facilities, upgrading of four and purchase of 12 apartments or buildings for primary healthcare facilities in Dhaka. Community-run latrines and community-based solid-waste disposal will be piloted to improve environmental health, and clinical waste management systems will be upgraded.

The project will lead to health improvements that will boost productivity and learning at school, and make savings on out-of-pocket expenditure on healthcare, says Sekhar Bonu, an ADB health specialist. "With women and children to constitute more than three quarters of those benefiting, child and maternal mortality will be reduced, thus helping Bangladesh achieve the Millennium Development Goals."

'ADR soon to settle criminal dispute'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to bring comprehensive reforms to the criminal procedure code to expedite the criminal dispute resolution and make it up to date, said Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday. "We are going to introduce Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in the criminal dispute settlement addressing the compoundable offences through compromises," he said at the ministry's monthly press briefing, held to highlight the advantages of ADR in civil disputes.

The ADR is an arrangement that eases a conflict resolution procedure with the minimum period of time at the lowest expenses, the minister said. The civil cases that otherwise would have taken four to five years for disposal in the existing 'adversarial system', are now resolved in four to five months with the ADR, he said. A total of 7338 civil cases (except family and Ortha Rin disputes) have been resolved across the country during the period between July 1, 2003 and April 30, 2005 by ADR, said the minister. State Minister for Law Muhammad Shahjahan Omar and Ministry Secretary Md Alauddin Sarder, among senior officials, were present at the briefing.



The Students Against Repression laid a siege to the office of the vice-chancellor of Dhaka University yesterday protesting the attacks by the JCD on students.

Morphine worth Tk 2 cr seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Morphine worth Tk 2 crore was seized from a hotel in the capital in the early hours of yesterday. Tipped off, a team of narcotics control department raided the 2nd floor of the hotel Banvojan at Tophkana Road, and seized 15 bottles of morphine at 1.30am. The paper label on the bottles reads "Health Care Limited, Gujarat-382, India." The morphine was smuggled into the capital by one Abdus Salam of Poikata of Benapole in Jessore, sources said. He avoided arrest when the raid was conducted at room no A-2. The morphine was to be handed over to an unscrupulous trader at Mitford Road. A case was filed with Ramna Police Station, but no one was arrested as of 8.00pm.

JCD attack on students condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More organisations yesterday condemned the attack of BNP-backed JCD cadres on the general students of Dhaka University who were protesting the death of Shammee Akhter Happy by a speeding bus at Shabbagh. In separate statements, leaders of Bangladesh Communist Party, Workers Party, 5 Left Parties, Jatiya Gonofront and Bangladesher Samyobadi Dal castigated the JCD attacks with the help of police on the campus. CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, in a joint statement, said the JCD activists carried out the attacks on the general students in a pre-planned way. Workers' Party General Secretary Bimol Biswas demanded exemplary punishment to the persons responsible for the attack, and urged all to be united against the fascist BNP-Jamaat alliance government. Biplobi Chhatra Moitree, Bangladesh Jubo Moitree, and Progotishil Chhatra Jote also demanded exemplary punishment to the persons involved in the attack after quick investigation.

Tobacco-related diseases kill 40m a year worldwide

Professor Nurul Islam tells discussion on World No-Tobacco Day 2005

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 40 million people across the world die due to tobacco related diseases every year, said National Professor Dr Nurul Islam. "Smoking is similar to suicide, homicide and embryo killing," said Prof Islam, also the founder President of Adhunik, at a discussion marking the World No-Tobacco Day 2005. The discussion was jointly organised by Adhunik, Coalition against Tobacco (CAT), LIFE and World Health Organisation (WHO) at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. Referring to the Tobacco Control Act-2005, he also said that it was easy to formulate laws but the implementation of the law is even more difficult of a job. He emphasised mass awareness against tobacco production and urged all, including the members of civil society, to come forward and raise awareness against the harmful effects of smoking. The theme of this year's World No Tobacco Day is "Health Professionals and Tobacco Control". "Every day, at least 700 kids in the country are dying from malnutrition. But it is possible to save these lives if the smokers give up smoking and use their money for children which they spend for tobacco," said Barrister Muhammad Jamir Uddin Sircar, Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad, while addressing as chief guest. He also said there is no positive ingredient in a cigarette and it destroys our social values. Tobacco is responsible for many diseases, including lung cancer, mouth cancer and breast cancer. He suggested that chapters on negative effects of smoking be included in the secondary level school books. The Independent Editor Mahbubul Alam told the discussion that large-scale awareness against smoking has not yet been developed in the country, as it should have been. Among others, chairman of LIFE,

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Kamrul Islam Sony, member of Adhunik Professor Dr Kaniz Maola and CAT president Amanullah Khan also spoke at the discussion. After the discussion, singer Fakir Alamgir performed a song and several anti-tobacco activists were awarded for their contribution in the anti tobacco campaign. Earlier, a rally was brought out in front of the Press Club that paraded different streets of the city. Meanwhile, Beximco Pharmaceuticals also brought out a rally in front of National Museum to mark the World No Tobacco Day-2005. Health professionals - doctors, nurses, public health personalities and nutritionists started marching towards the National Press Club at 7:00am. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Beximco pharmaceuticals Ltd Nazmul Hassan said tobacco is a serious public health concern today. Beximco pharmaceuticals is also launching other public awareness programmes with two non government and health care organisations to inform people about the injuries and effects of tobacco and the measures people could take to quit smoking.

Court records statement of hijack hoaxer

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday recorded judicial statement of a mentally disturbed man arrested for disclosing techniques to hijacking an aircraft. As per provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), no court can record statement if any accused seems to be mentally disturbed during the time of recording confessional statement. Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shafiqul Islam recorded the statement of the accused Ruhul Aziz Mukul when Hasan Hafizur Rahman, the investigation officer (IO) produced him before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on completion of his one-day remand. After recording Mukul's statement, the magistrate said in his order that he seems to be mentally disturbed and did not give his statement willingly. When the magistrate asked Mukul at his chamber whether he was tortured during the remand, he replied that he was tortured. After recording his statement, Mukul was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail.

Increase budget to promote culture

Cultural activists tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cultural activists, at a roundtable yesterday, demanded of the government to increase budgetary allocation for the promotion of cultural activities in the country. They said existing allocation is not adequate as most of it is spent for the remuneration of employees, infra-structural development and maintenance purpose. The roundtable on 'Enhancement of budget for cultural development' was organised by Bangladesh Sangskritikami Sangha, an organisation of cultural activists, at the National Press Club. Poet Sumadra Gupta moderated it. Taking part in the roundtable, Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, a noted literary personality, said there is huge budget for defence or even for sports sector, but not so much for culture. Of the total Tk 48 crore annual budget of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Tk 18 crore is not enough for patronisation of cultural activities in a

country like Bangladesh which has rich cultural heritage, he added. Prof Sayeed demanded that the budget for cultural sector should be gradually raised to Tk 1000 crore. "Bureaucratic tangle and the presence of people having little knowledge about our culture in the top position of the cultural ministry are the main problems we face," said Syed Lutful Haque, an eminent artist. "Filmmaking has been declared as an industry, but like other industries we don't get bank loan facilities. I believe the lack of interest by the government in this sector is partly responsible for substandard condition of the film industry," said filmmaker Shilpree Sadik. Khandaker Shah Alam, a theatre activist, placed a 15-point demand at the roundtable that included establishment of the branches of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy at the grass-roots level, and a research centre for preservation and development of indigenous culture.

Obituary

BSS, Kushtia

Advocate Abdur Rahim, a former BNP lawmaker from Kushtia-3 constituency, died of cancer at his residence on Monday at the age of 84. Rahim, also a former president of Kushtia District Bar Council, left behind his three sons and four daughters.

Advocate Sheikh Ali Afzal

UNB, Dhaka

Advocate Sheikh Ali Afzal, former vice-president of Brahmanbaria District Bar Association, died of a cardiac arrest at his East Paikpara residence in the district town on Monday at the age of 65. He left behind four sons and one daughter. He was laid to rest at his family graveyard.

JS WOMEN'S RESERVED SEATS 30 rights organisations reject HC verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Samajik Protirodh Committee (Committee for Social Resistance), an alliance of 30 rights organisations, yesterday rejected the High Court verdict on direct election to reserved seats for women in the Jatiya Sangsad (JS). The committee, in a statement, said it will now move for further legal steps as the court discharged its two writ petitions in this regard. The statement said public opinion has already been formed in favour of the direct election which was also the electoral pledge of the ruling BNP. But avoiding the pledge, the party has passed the 14th amendment only to serve its political purposes, it added. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad has also rejected the high court verdict. In a separate statement, the parishad said it will take legal steps as well as build up strong agitation against the verdict.

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WORKSHOP ON HEALTH SYSTEMS

'Bridge financing gap between the rich and disadvantaged'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at an international workshop yesterday called for bridging the financing gap in the health system between the disadvantaged people and the rich. They pointed out that policy-makers in developing countries tend to allocate funds for infrastructure and equipment more than considering the real needs for the disadvantaged people. But a large numbers of infra-structures in many South Asian countries remain idle whereas similar infrastructures run by NGOs are put to their maximum utilisation, they said, adding that the challenges of policy-makers are to put ideas into practical use. The Centre for Health,

Population and Development of the Independent University, Bangladesh in collaboration with the Global Equity Gauge Alliance (GEGA) organised the workshop on 'Health systems and equity'. The CIDA sponsored the event. The three-day workshop, that ended yesterday, was aimed at promoting equity within and between societies and achieving equity in health systems in South Asian countries. The issue of equity in the health system is a major concern for the policy planners and it is a challenge for members of the civil society, academicians, health professionals, researchers, non-government organisations and policy-makers to foster dialogue with the aim of

developing a training module on the issue with South Asian perspective, the speakers said. "South Asia's real wealth is its people. We can completely change the economic and political destiny of South Asian countries by investing more on these people," said a speaker. Prof Omar Rahman, executive director of the Centre for Health, Population & Development, IUB, Prof Jafrullah Choudhury of Gonoshasthya Kendra, ASM Amanullah of IUB, Lilliana Jadue of GEGA, Kawsar Afsana of Brac and Saiful Bari of ATIN Bangla spoke at the closing ceremony of the workshop. A total of 20 participants from South Asian, South American and European countries attended the workshop.



Health and Family Welfare Ministry took out a procession in the city yesterday to mark the World No-Tobacco Day.

DHAKA TODAY and DHAKA TOMORROW sections listing various events like Workshop, Seminar, Inauguration, Discussion, and Cultural evening with dates, times, and venues.

WEATHER TODAY section with a weather forecast table for Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, and Cox's Bazar, including temperature and humidity data.