



CHILDREN'S SIGHT RESTORATION PROGRAMME

## UK actress Joanna arrives today

British actress Joanna Lumley arrives in the city today on a five-day visit to support a groundbreaking crash programme of the Sight Savers International to bring sight to 10,000 Bangladeshi children born blind, says a press release.

The campaign will completely remove the backlog of cataract blind children who could benefit from sight restoring surgery.

Across the world, nothing has ever been attempted on this scale before and the agency hopes that the programme in Bangladesh will provide a model for other countries to follow.

Every cataract blind child in every village across the country will be offered the chance of sight restoring surgery.

Sight Savers International, also known as the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, is one of the leading agencies in the world preventing and curing blindness. Joanna Lumley has been supporting Sight Savers for many years but this visit to Bangladesh is her first opportunity to see their work at first-hand.

To meet the ambitious target of 10,000 child sight restorations, Sight Savers, together with its partners in Bangladesh, will develop the capacity of local hospitals and eye care professionals so that they are better able to identify and treat children with cataract.

## 49 killed by Rab, police in May

### Odhikar report says

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 49 people were killed by the law enforcers across the country in the last one month, including 39 of them in crossfire, a human rights organisation report said.

The report of Odhikar said police killed 35 while Rapid Action Battalions (Rab) killed the rest 14 during the month of May.

Police shot down 25 while Rab members killed 14 in crossfire, the report added.

The report, revealed yesterday, was prepared based on the reports published on 14 different national dailies.

A total of 25 were killed, 59 injured and 133 arrested violating human rights during the last month, according to the report.

A total of 94 women and girl children were abused, of them 25 were killed after rape while another 15 women became victims to acid violence, the report added.

A total of 22 women became victim to dowry while 15 of them were killed after torture and one committed suicide during the time. A total of nine were injured, 14 abducted and 18 others captured during the last month in Chittagong, the report pointed out.

One journalist was killed, two injured, two arrested, one abducted, two beaten and 12 received threats during May, the report also said.

A total of 116 children were abused in different ways, of them 31 were killed, 10 injured, 36 raped, 16 abducted, 4 missing, 12 trafficked and one arrested during the period, the report also added.

## Rajuk approves AMCH plan

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) has approved the plan for Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH) to be built in Sector 10 of Uttara Model Town in the city, says a press release.

Rajuk Chairman Engr Md Shahid Alam handed over the Plan Approval Letter to Kazi Rafiqul Alam, President and Chief Executive of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), yesterday at a function at the Rajuk Bhaban.

Tarek Alam AIA, managing director of Design Alliance, USA, AKM Delwar Hossain, project director, AMCH, Prof Nurul Islam, director, PRD, Engr Kazi Mohammad Momen, Xen Engineering Cell and MA Razzaque, assistant director of DAM were present at the function.

The approval of the plan has put new momentum to the activities of establishing the proposed 500-bed world class Cancer Hospital in the country with public donations on private initiative.

Kazi Rafiqul Alam said DAM has taken all the preparations for starting the construction of the hospital very soon and it will be completed in three years.

He reiterated his appeal to the benevolent persons to come forward and make contributions for construction of the hospital as per plan.

He requested all to make the AMCH lottery a great success.

## Resist enemies of trees: PM

#### UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called for invigorating the afforestation campaign and preventing "enemies of trees" from carrying on their onslaughts on forests.

She said people themselves are the enemies of the trees despite the fact that trees are so vital for human existence. "Some of these enemies are also present in the forest department," she said and asked the authorities concerned to identify and take proper action against them.

"Devourers cannot be kept in the roles of protectors," she said this at a function marking Tree Fair at the National Parade Square.

Calling for intensifying the national tree-planting campaign into a dynamic social movement, the PM suggested people to plant at least two trees each this year. "The habit of planting trees has to be cultivated by all ... the country has to be abounded with greenery".

Presided over by Forest and Environment Minister Tariqul Islam, the function was also addressed by Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, Agriculture Minister MK Anwar, Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Huq, State Minister for Forest and Environment Zafrul Islam.

Chowdhury, Forest and Environment Secretary Zafar Ahmed Chowdhury and Chief Conservator of Forests M Anwarul Islam.

Khaleda planted a "Mahua (Bassia Latifolia)" sapling on the premises to mark the formal inauguration of the National Tree Planting Movement-2005.

She also released two commemorative stamps of Tk 6 denomination brought out by the Postal Department.

She also distributed Prime Minister's National Award for Tree Planting-2004 to different individuals and organisations and NGOs on the occasion and hoped that it would encourage others to plant more trees. She also distributed cheques among the beneficiaries

of the social afforestation programme.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Prof Shahidul Islam MP and Khurram Khan Chowdhury MP were among the recipients of the Prime Minister's National award for outstanding tree-planting initiatives.

Describing trees as man's best friend, Khaleda urged the people to motivate at least two acquaintances for planting trees and start the practice of giving tree-plants as gift.

She asked the people to utilise all possible space to plant trees for prosperity.

Khaleda regretted that the balance of proportion and harmony between the population and trees no longer existed. The increase in population and decrease of trees endangered ecological balance.

The imbalance is a major cause of natural disaster and catastrophes, she said. She called for increasing the number of trees rapidly to prevent calamity.

She said resources will improve with the increase of trees on the one hand and on the other it will help

check natural disaster.

She asked the Ministry of Forests and Environment to take necessary measures for encouraging this year's SSC and HSC examinees to plant trees during their free time before their results are published.

Pointing out the benefits of trees, she said they provide food and drinks to humans, supply oxygen for breathing and shade from the sun. The trees are used for building houses and furniture and also a major source of fuel.

Khaleda said mere planting trees will not be enough and called for taking care and protecting the saplings.

She called for utilising the advantage of fertility of the soil to raise the numbers of trees and increase the forest resources to reduce the needs and save the country from poverty and natural disaster.



PHOTO: STAR  
Dr Kamal Hossain speaks at the Jubo Gono Forum council at Mahanagar Natya Mancha auditorium in the city yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR  
Bangladeshi fortune seekers upon returning home empty-handed from Jordan yesterday sit in front of the National Press Club as there was none to welcome them back home.

## Eliminate corruption from education sector

### Speakers tell roundtable

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called for eliminating corruption from the education sector.

They also blamed the four-party alliance government for the anarchy and mismanagement prevailing in the education sector.

Discrimination between rural and urban education system and different streams of education has reached its peak under this government, they said, adding that the alliance government has been patronising religious fundamentalism by providing higher allocation for madrasa education and politicising appointment of teachers.

The Awami League organised the roundtable on 'Problems and solutions of primary and secondary education' at the National Press Club.

Noted educationists, economists, lawyers and members of the civil society took part in the discussion, with former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Prof AK Azad Chowdhury in the chair.

Dr Kazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, president of Bangladesh Economic Association, said the budgetary allocation in the education sector is too inadequate to raise the standard of education.

Moreover, corruption, mismanagement and nepotism have been eating up most of the education budget, he added.

Dr AAMS Arefin Siddiqui, president of Dhaka University Teachers' Association, underscored the need for moral education at primary level to build a better society.

Noted lawyer Barrister Amir-Ul Islam called for introducing a uniform education system to eliminate discrimination from society.

Educationist Prof Ajoy Kumar Roy urged the government to increase allocation for the education sector in the budget.

He said the country's education spending is as low as less than 2 percent of the GDP (gross domestic product) while Unesco recommends that the figure should be at least 6 percent.

Presenting a keynote paper,

educationist Shaymoli Nasreen Chowdhury put forward a 32-point recommendation to bail the education sector out of discrimination, gender disparity and poor standard of education.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said his party would prepare a working paper on the basis of the outcome of a series of roundtables on education, which will reflect the real spirit and aspirations of the party.

He said, "We want to get to the root of the problems and resolve those."

Expressing concern over the prevailing situation at Dhaka University, the AL leader accused the four-party alliance government of resorting to violence in different educational institutions.

He also criticised the government for appointing the ruling party cadres in public universities without taking the merit of the candidates into consideration.

"Only cadres of BNP and Jamaat are now eligible for the post of university teachers," he alleged.

He said Manik Mia played a significant role in inspiring the people to join the struggle for freedom under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Manik Mia Parishad organised the discussion to mark the death anniversary of Manik Mia in the city.

The speakers also criticised the BNP-Jamaat alliance government for patronising the communal forces and destroying democracy.

They also condemned the attack on the students of Dhaka University and price hike of essentials.

Columnist and freedom fighter AH Alangir, former additional secretary Siraj Uddin Ahmed, General Secretary of Manik Mia Parishad Muhammad Abdul Jalil, Vice-President of Desh Bachao Forum Sardar Mohammad Ali Barisal and President of Nari Mukti Andolan Fatema Khatun took part in the discussion.

Speakers at a discussion yesterday paid tributes to the memory of Tofazzal Hossain Manik Mia, founder editor of the daily Ittefaq and a politician.

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