



Prof Kholiuzzaman speaks at a roundtable titled 'Tengratila blowout and oil-gas resources of Bangladesh' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday, organised by the Shaptahik 2000 and Action Aid. Among others, Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury, extreme left, and Awami League leader Suranjit Sengupta, extreme right, were present.

3 abductors get 30 yrs' RI

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced three people to 30 years' rigorous imprisonment on charges of kidnaping two children for trafficking in September 1998.

Judge Monowara Begum of the Second Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression handed down the verdict in presence of one of the convicts Moslem Uddin. Two of them, Abdul Latif and Aminul Haq, were tried in absentia.

The punishment of the fugitives will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender, the court said.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 15 prosecution witnesses.

In the case filed with Demra Police Station, Ali Miah alleged that his nephew Roni, 5, and niece Soni, 6, were abducted by a group of abductors from his residence at Dhania in the city's Demra area at about 12:30pm on September 17, 1998. Later, the complainant along with his family members went to the residence of Abdul Latif and came to know that the victims were taken to a hotel at Kamalapur for trafficking them abroad.

Demra police along with complainant Ali Miah and Abdul Latif went to Kamalapur and rescued the victims from the hotel Gangchil and arrested Moslem and Aminul Haq the same day.

The investigation officer (IO) pressed charges against the accused on September 17, 1999 and the court framed charges against them on January 14, 2001.

Special Public Prosecutor Arfan uddin Khan appeared for the state while advocates Abdul Jabbar and Mizanur Rahman defended the accused.

PDB to introduce pre-paid meter in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) is going to introduce pre-paid metering system in Chittagong Metropolitan area to end the harassment of electricity consumers.

Under the system, the customers will be able to use electricity according to their needs by purchasing cards and will be exempted from paying the minimum charge as they have to pay under the present system.

Around 9,500 consumers of Chittagong Metropolitan area will be brought under the system by the year 2007.

An agreement for launching the pre-paid metering system was signed between Bangladesh Power Development Board and M/S Polymeters Response International Limited, UK and KCJ and Associates Limited, Bangladesh at WAPDA Building in the city yesterday.

BPDB Secretary Talebar Rahman, Arun Agarwal from Polymeters Response International Limited, UK and Executive Director of KCJ and Associates limited Kazi Hasan Zaki signed the agreement.

BPDB Chairman ANH Akhtar Hossain, Project Director TK Chakma and other officials were present at the signing ceremony.

"The pre-paid metering system will reduce harassment of the customers as they won't have to go to bank to pay the bill. At the same time it will diminish system loss and misuse of electricity that would help to reduce pressure on electricity management," said Akhtar Hossain.

Kredit Anstalt Fur Wie Derauf Ban (KFW), a German company will fund Tk 22.25 crore to implement the system.

TENGRATILA BLOWOUT

Countrywide protests on July 23, 24

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tel-Gas Sampad and Bidyut-Bandar Rakkha Jatiya Committee will stage countrywide demonstrations on July 23 and 24 demanding compensation from Niko for Tengratila blowout, says a press release.

The committee will also send an expert team to the Tengratila for investigating the causes of the fire on July 18.

It was decided at a meeting at the central office of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Prof Anu Muhammad in the chair on July 9.

The committee also supported the countrywide down-to-dusk hartal on July 16 called by Pat Suta Bashrakal Samik Oikya Foundation protesting closure of different industries, including Jute mills.

The committee will organise mass contract and hold rallies across the country in support of July 23 and 24 programmes, they said.

The committee leaders also urged the people to come forward for launching mass movement against the conspiracy of oil and gas.

'Population density in Bangladesh highest in world'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Population density in Bangladesh is the highest in the world with over 900 people living per square kilometer, and it is continuing to grow.

This was stated by Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain yesterday while briefing journalists at the secretariat on the eve of the World Population Day being observed today.

"With the current pace of growth, the size of total population in Bangladesh in 2020 is expected to stand at 17.20 crore, and 21 crore by 2060 from the current population

size of close to 14 crore," he said.

Reading out a written statement, the minister said if the current growth rate continues, the population size of the World in 2050 would stand at 910 crore.

He said half of the World's population expansion is expected to take place in nine of the 50 developing countries including Bangladesh.

Giving emphasis on women's access to more information about their reproductive health, the minister said, "One of the major reasons for unwanted population growth in Bangladesh is the denial of right information and empowerment to women regarding minimum age for

marriage, decision on the size of the family and birth spacing."

"Half of the population in Bangladesh are young people, and of them half are young girls. We would like to take this opportunity to address this group of young people and educate them about their rights on reproductive health," said Suneeta Mukherjee, Unfpa country representative to Bangladesh.

She said, "Equality benefits everyone. Where girls have equal opportunity to education, societies become more prosperous. Where women have equal access to income, assets and services, families become healthier. When both

men and women are able to participate equally and exercise their full human rights, the world benefits."

Health Secretary A F M Sarwar Kamal, and Director General of Family Planning were present at the press briefing.

With the slogan 'equality empowers', this year's World Population Day focuses on gender equality, and how giving equal opportunities to girls and women can improve lives and societies.

The day also highlights four main areas of action: education, economic opportunity, reproductive health and rights, and participation.



Sacheton Nagorik Samaj organises a candlelight vigil in memory of the victims of London bomb blasts in front of the High Court in the city yesterday.