



PHOTO: STAR

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain speaks at a seminar titled 'Politicisation of administration -- crisis and its solution' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud and former finance minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhit and on his right is Dr Quamrul Hasan Khan.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE Rural information centres to be set up in 4 dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday said the information technology can play an important role in developing human resources and alleviating poverty.

This technology can also help protect human rights through dissemination of information, they said, adding that the rural people who do not have access to information are deprived of their rights and justice as they are not aware of their rights.

D.Net, a development research network, organised the workshop on 'Information and Communication Technology and Access to Justice' at the WVA auditorium in the city.

The organisation has initiated a project titled 'Abolombon' that provides information about human rights and child rights and offers guidelines on where the rural people will seek help in case of violations of their rights.

It is going to set up Pali Tathya Kendra (rural information centre) in four districts to provide information about human rights to the rural people.

Presenting a keynote paper, Ananya Raihan, executive director of D.Net, identified several factors responsible for the lack of access to justice and explained how the information technology can play a vital role in ensuring access to justice.

Project Coordinator Ferdousi Akhter demonstrated the website of Abolombon.

Advocate Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain o Salish Kendra, urged all, including the NGOs, to work together to set up a common access point for the poor people.

35pc of govt aid does not reach Monga-hit people

Survey report says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 30 to 35 percent of government assistance for the people affected by Monga, a near-famine situation in northwestern region of the country, is misused due to weakness of the local government, said a field-based survey report yesterday.

"Government safety net programmes including VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) and VGD (Vulnerable Group Development) also do not reach the targeted group due to corruption of local government and local political influence," said Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), while presenting the report at a press briefing.

The briefing was organised to reveal the findings of the survey titled 'Monga forecast 2005: Field assessment and action plan' at the PPRC office in the city.

Zillur said around 65.2 percent of the affected people rely on government assistance to cope with Monga, but over 30 percent of the assistance does not reach the targeted group.

"Monga is a perennial problem which could be solved by creating scope for employment, diversifying non-farm jobs, utilising government

safety net programmes more effectively, and creating awareness among the people," he added.

He suggested utilisation of army-prepared list to coordinate the distribution of VGF cards. Besides, old-age and widow allowances should be distributed on monthly basis during the Monga period, he added.

Zillur also urged the government to take necessary measures so that the affected families do not take help from Mahajons (local money-lenders).

According to the report some 43 percent of the Monga-hit people take mahajoni credit with high interest while 6.6 and 4.7 percent people face the situation by eating low-quality food and selling advanced labour respectively.

Other speakers said thousands of people at southern districts and their offshore lands including Bhola also face similar famine in September-October period due to river erosion.

They urged the government to take different development policy and programmes with view to assisting those people.

Dipal Barua of Grammen Bank, and Hafiz Uddin of Social Development Foundation were present on the occasion.

HURRICANE KATRINA US accepts Bangladesh's offer for \$1m donation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US said it has accepted Bangladesh's offer for \$1 million donation for the Hurricane Katrina victims and the Chairman of the Bangladesh Caucus termed the contribution "humbling" as the Asian country was itself faced with several natural disasters.

Harry K Thomas, executive secretary of the State Department, said Bangladesh's ambassador had called officials in Alabama on September 4 and offered \$1 million.

"We are awaiting the transfer of that \$1 million. It may have happened this morning, so don't say that it didn't happen while it was there ten hours ahead of us, but that's what we're waiting for," he added.

At a briefing on coordination of international offers in Washington, DC yesterday, Thomas, the immediate past US Ambassador in Bangladesh, asked if Washington was accepting disaster management expertise from Bangladesh.

"Well, to the best of my knowledge, that hasn't been offered."

Earlier, Representative Joseph Crowley, chief deputy whip of the Democratic Party in Congress, and chairman of the Bangladesh Caucus, thanked Bangladesh for its generous donation.

Meanwhile, a Foreign Ministry official told the Daily Star that authorities took necessary steps to disburse the \$1 million donation.

On providing of disaster management expertise from Bangladesh, he said consultation is now going on with the US officials in this regard.

Reform EC to make it free autonomous body

Mahila Parishad urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday urged the government to reform the Election Commission (EC) to make it a free and autonomous body.

At a press conference at Cirdap auditorium in the city, parishad leaders also placed a charter of 15-point demand.

They said they will hold country-wide rallies including one at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city on September 15 to press home their demands.

The speakers said the National Women's Development Policy (NWDP) has been changed only to make the women dependent upon the will of the ruling political party.

They said the government has nominated the women MPs in reserved seats only to meet the interest of the party.

"The mandatory payment of Tk 3 lakh to party fund proves how much money was involved and how the election was controlled by black money holders," said Rekha Chowdhury, a parishad leader, while reading out a written statement.

Termining the country's political condition miserable, the parishad also demanded direct election to women's reserved seats for at least two consecutive terms and increase of the seats to one hundred.

Mahila Parishad President Hena Das, General Secretary Ayesha Khanam, Dr Maleka Banu, and Makhuma Nargis Ratna were present.

Death anniversary

Today is the 33rd death anniversary of Fazlul Kabir Chowdhury, Leader of the Opposition in the then East Pakistan Assembly, says a press release.

Mezba had been suffering from cancer for years and was hospitalised recently.

He left behind his wife and two daughters to mourn his death.

He was buried at the army graveyard at Banani in the city.

His qulkhwan will be held at House-1/3, Block-D, Lalmatia in the city tomorrow.

Friends and admirers are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at the Begum Rokeya Khandker Paura High School premises at Masdar Bazar in Narayanganj at 10:00am today.

He died due to old age complications at the Birdem Hospital in the city on September 3 at the age of 85.

Economic independence crucial for acid survivors

Photo exhibition opens to raise fund for them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asma Akhtar of Kishoreganj fell victim to acid violence for her refusal to accept a marriage proposal in August 1999 when she was only an eighth-grader.

"My dream of becoming a teacher was shattered in a flash," she said.

Asma was admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) after 15 days of the incident and underwent a couple of operations.

At one stage of her treatment, the Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) came to help her.

The ASF sent her to Spain for reconstructive surgery and on her return she was admitted to Open University to continue her study.

Asma passed her SSC examination last year and she is the first girl in her village to acquire the degree.

She is now pursuing her higher secondary education.

"I am still on the track of life and struggling to make my dream come true despite untold ordeals and trauma inflicted by a heinous perpetrator, who has been doomed to 33 years of imprisonment," Asma said while narrating her nightmare at a charity photo exhibition to raise fund for acid survivors organised by the ASF.

"We must support the acid victims not by marginalising them but

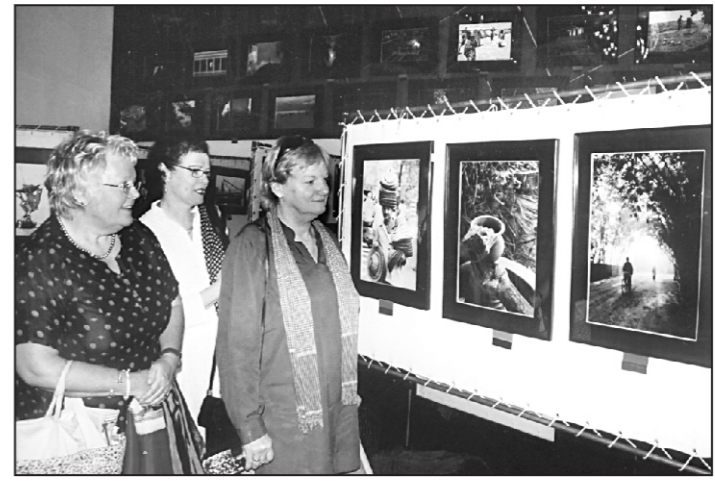


PHOTO: STAR

Visitors at the photo exhibition at the Spectra Convention Centre in Gulshan in the city yesterday.

by including them in the society," said the Deputy British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Stephen Bridges while inaugurating the exhibition at the Spectra Convention Centre in Gulshan.

"We must launch a campaign against marginalisation of the acid victims promoting respect and dignity for the survivors who have courage to struggle for life," Stephen added.

Termining the acid throwing a heinous crime, he stressed on stern punishment to the criminals.

Economic independence is crucial to protect the acid victims from social trauma and ostracism and ensure a normal and dignified life, said ASF Executive Director Monira Rahman.

A group of acid survivors performed a drama titled 'Aina' (mirror) at the exhibition depicting horrendous experience of an acid victim.

The drama called upon all to join them in demolishing those social mirrors that reflect not only their defaced image of body but also disfigured form of life.

Forge nat'l consensus to stop Indian river-link project

Bapa urges political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) yesterday said India is going ahead with its Inter-River Linking Project with an uncompromising attitude as the political parties in Bangladesh remain divided and silent over the issue.

They said India has already completed feasibility studies on 14 rivers and Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on August 25 for linking the Ken and Betwa rivers, keeping Bangladesh in the dark.

On the other hand, the Indian High Commission in Dhaka is saying that the project is still at a conceptual level, said the Bapa leaders at a press conference in the city.

"India is making false promises that it will take final decision on the project only after discussions with Bangladesh and will not implement any project that will harm our interest. But it is going ahead with the project taking advantage of the division between our political parties," said renowned economist Prof Muzaffer Ahmad.

The Indian river-linking project aims to divert water from the downstream of the Ganges and Brahmaputra to the upstream, which will have a long-term negative impact on the environment and livelihood of the people of Bangladesh.

Prof Muzaffer called on all the political parties to forge a national consensus to stop the project.

Obituary

AM Mezbahuddin Ahmed, a retired official of the Australia High Commission in Bangladesh, passed away due to cardiac arrest at the Millennium Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 68, says a press release.

Mezba had been suffering from cancer for years and was hospitalised recently.

He left behind his wife and two daughters to mourn his death.

He was buried at the army graveyard at Banani in the city.

His qulkhwan will be held at House-1/3, Block-D, Lalmatia in the city tomorrow.

Friends and admirers are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwan of Shah Alam Khandker, former Country Manager of Grinlays Bank, will be held today, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held on the Begum Rokeya Khandker Paura High School premises at Masdar Bazar in Narayanganj at 10:00am today.

He died due to old age complications at the Birdem Hospital in the city on September 3 at the age of 85.

Established in 1999, the ASF provides medical treatment, legal aid and social rehabilitation support to the survivors.

Though the ASF had sent a few acid victims abroad for reconstructive medical surgery, it has by now got its own well-equipped 40-bed hospital exclusively for acid victims at Banani.

If notified within 24 hours of the incident, the ASF makes arrangement for hospitalisation of acid victims within 48 hours and accommodation of those without any shelter at its shelter home Thikana.

Around 70 renowned photographers and photojournalists have made generous contribution to the exhibition donating 350 exquisite photographs on life and nature of Bangladesh.

The charity price of each photograph is Tk 6,000.

The two-day show at the Spectra is the last of a three-phase exhibition. The show remains open to all from 10:00am to 5:00pm and comes to an end today.

ASF Treasurer SAM Showkat Hossain and President of JCI Bangladesh Safina Rahman also spoke at the exhibition co-sponsored by Bangla Link, Nascom, Tack Training, Intelab, Kodak, Express One, North South University and Linkers.

5 die in boat capsized

UNB, Sirajganj

Five people died after a boat capsized in Chalan Beel under Shahjapur upazila of the district yesterday morning.

Three of the victims were identified as Surja Begum, 29, Baby Khatun, 26 and Jesmin of Shahjapur upazila. Identity of the remaining two could not be known.

Locals said the incident occurred at about 9:00am when a Nakalia-bound boat with 15 people aboard, mostly women, sank in turbulent water of the beel. The rest were rescued.

Girl raped by neighbour in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A seven-year-old girl was raped allegedly by her neighbour at Jafraabad at Mohammadpur in the city yesterday.

The incident occurred when the girl, a student of class-1, was playing in her house.

Sajib Chandra Das, an apprentice motor mechanic, entered the house and raped the girl, victim's mother said.

"I rushed to the room hearing her cry and saw Sajib running out of the room," she said, adding "And I found my daughter was terribly bleeding."

"I was cooking in an outer kitchen of the house during the incident at around 1:00pm," she said.

The victim is now undergoing treatment at the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Mohammadpur police could not say anything about the incident.

EWU orientation programmes held

The East West University (EWU) held orientation programmes for newly admitted students under graduate and undergraduate programmes at its auditorium in the city on Wednesday and yesterday, says a press release.

Education Minister Dr M Osman Farruk attended the graduate-level orientation programme as the chief guest on Wednesday while HN Ashequr Rahman, member, Board of Directors, EWU, was present as special guest.

A total of 250 students enrolled in different graduate programmes -- Executive MBA, MBA, MA in English and Masters in Development Studies in the Fall semester.

The orientation programme for the undergraduate students was held yesterday, with Muslehuddin Ahmad, founder-vice-chancellor of North South University, as chief guest.

A total of 250 students enrolled in different undergraduate programmes -- Business Administration, Pharmacy, Economics, Computer Science, Computer Science and Engineering, Information and Communications Engineering and English.

Dr Mohammed Farashuddin, president of East West University, HN Ashequr Rahman, member, Prof Mohammad Musa, pro-vice-chancellor, Prof Abdul Mannan, Prof Fakrul Alam and Prof Mozammel Huq Azad Khan spoke at the ceremony.

Effigy of SQ Chy burnt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad (BMS), at a rally in the city yesterday, burnt an effigy of Salauddin Qader Chowdhury, advisor to prime minister on parliamentary affairs, for making derogatory remark about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Dhaka Mahanagar Command of the BMS organised the rally attended by Awami League lawmaker Mohammad Nasim as chief guest.

Govt hospitals open on Saturdays

BSS, Dhaka

All government hospitals will work on Saturdays and will follow the existing work schedule.

Indoor and outdoor of all government hospitals will remain opened on Saturdays.

WEATHER TODAY

Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over the country till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also expected at places during the period, Met Office said. It predicted nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 35.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 23.8 degree Celsius at Rangamati.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:08pm today and rises at 5:43am 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	34.0	24.0	81	74
Chittagong	34.0	26.3	70	68
Rajshahi	34.5	24.4	75	92
Khulna	33.2	25.0	—	72
Barisal	33.2	24.5	92	80
Sylhet	34.7	25.7	73	—
Cox's Bazar	33.3	25.5	75	78



PHOTO: STAR

Today is the first death anniversary of Quazi Anwarul Huq Tariq, son of Late Quazi Nazmul Huq, and former director of Abahani Club Ltd, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his Dhanmondi residence after Asr prayers.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the doa and milad mahfil.



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On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held on the Begum Rokeya Khandker Paura High School premises at Masdar Bazar in Narayanganj at 10:00am today.

He died due to old age complications at the Birdem Hospital in the city on September 3 at the age of 85.

DHAKA TODAY

Memorial discussion

Kishoreganj Zila Samity, Dhaka organises a memorial discussion to mark the 16th death anniversary of Dr M Osman Gani, a renowned scientist of international repute, with Speaker Mohammad Jamir Uddin Sircar as chief guest. Venue: Tajul Auditorium, Nilkhet. Time: 6:00pm.

Prize giving ceremony

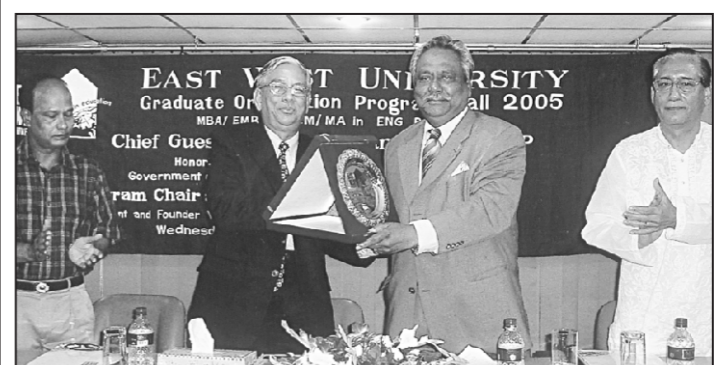
The prize giving ceremony of indoor games and cultural competition organised by Old Rajshahi Cadet Association will be held. Venue: Planning and Development Academy Auditorium, Nilkhet. Time: 6:00pm.

Discussion

Gonosanghati Andolon organises a discussion to mark its third founding anniversary. Venue: Tajul Auditorium, 21/1 Purana Palatan. Time: 4:30pm.

Cultural function

Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts will hold a discussion and cultural function in memory of noted folk singers.



Dr Mohammed Farashuddin, president of East West University, presents a crest to Education Minister Dr M Osman Farruk at an orientation ceremony for newly admitted students at the university auditorium in the city on Wednesday.