

Combat arsenic with holistic approach

Experts tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a roundtable yesterday called for holistic approach to combat arsenic contamination of soil in the country.

They also underscored the need for proper scientific data to address the long-term effect of this silent national disaster.

The roundtable titled 'Long-term water shade management for Bangladesh' was organised by Dhaka Community Hospital at its Resource Centre in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Mahmudur Rahman, coordinator of

Dhaka Community Hospital Trust, said, "It's not just a matter of providing a glass of safe water, so many issues including long-term sustainability, affordability and acceptability by the community will have to be considered before taking any measures."

Prof Rahman, also member of the National Arsenic Expert Committee, emphasised the need for review of the government's Arsenic Mitigation Action Plan with a broader understanding of the management of all major water sources in the country.

Prof Ainun Nishat, country representative of The World Conservation

Union (IUCN) and member of the National Arsenic Expert Committee, urged the donor agencies to help implement government's Arsenic Mitigation Action Plan.

Prof Dipankar Chakrabarti, director of School of Environmental Studies at Jadavpur University in West Bengal, called for mass awareness to address the arsenic problem.

The discussants also emphasised the role of media in raising awareness among people in this regard.

Prof SKM Abdullah, chairman of National Arsenic Expert Committee, also spoke on the occasion.

Concern over growing police torture on women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) yesterday condemned the death of a sexagenarian woman due to police torture at Savar, near Dhaka.

In a statement, BNWLA leaders also demanded immediate arrest and stern punishment to the police responsible for the killing.

Executive Director of BNWLA Salma Ali said it is very disappointing that incidents of repression on women by police are increasing sharply while it is the duty of law enforcers to protect women from all kinds of repression.

Such types of incidents take place repeatedly as culprits do not receive exemplary punishment, she said.

Salma Ali also urged the government to take effective measures to stop all forms of tortures against women.

'Small states face challenge in upholding nat'l interest'

Upholding national interest is becoming a serious challenge for smaller states in the energy-starved world where globalisation has witnessed the emergence of corporate power and the corporate-political nexus, said Bangladesh High Commissioner in London Sabihuddin Ahmed.

"Smaller states are facing an increasing challenge to preserve their national interests as they come under enhanced pressure to sacrifice their future for the present needs of others."

Sabihuddin was speaking on 'Globalisation and the challenges facing Bangladesh' at the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) in London on June 30, according to a message received in Dhaka.

He said, "Overcoming certain misperceptions about my country and bringing it out of the ugly shadows generated by misinformation sometimes seem the biggest challenge."

Referring to Bangladesh's achievement with regard to women empowerment, he said, "If one wants to see how a traditional Muslim society empowers its women politically, economically and socio-culturally, one must study the Bangladesh case."

The high commissioner also pointed out, "As the current chair of Saarc and Bimstec, Bangladesh is actively pursuing implementation of the Saarc Free Trade Agreement and Bimstec FTA."

"Energy requirement remains one of the top challenges for achieving a sustained economic growth of 6 to 7 percent, a pre-requisite for realising the MDGs," he said.

"The soaring rise in oil prices on the international markets is already placing a tremendous burden on the economy and import bills on account of fuel."

About the demand for gas export by some oil and gas exploration companies, the high commissioner said, "The issue is of vital national interest and all decisions (in this regard) are being taken in the light of a growing national energy need as against the comparative benefits of exports."

Representatives from different business and investment organisations and think-tanks attended the exclusive session on Bangladesh, chaired by IISS Director Patrick Cronin.

Qulkhwani of Mohiuddin held

Qulkhwani of veteran freedom fighter and journalist Sheikh Mohiuddin was held yesterday at the National Press Club auditorium in the city after Asr prayers.

Former minister and Awami League Presidium Member Amir Hossain Amu, The New Nation Editor Mostafa Kamal Majumder, former New Nation editor Golam Tahbbur, prominent journalists Attab Mahmud, Elahi Newaz Khan Sazu, Azizul Haque Banna, Abdur Rahman Khan, Akter Ahmed Khan, Enayet Hossain Khan, Dhaka Reporter's Unity Secretary Shahed Chowdhury, former organizing secretary Mannan Maruf, Advocate Abdur Rab Munsir, freedom fighter Alamgir Hossain and many senior journalists, relatives, friends, colleagues and a number of well wishers of the deceased attended the qulkhwani to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Sheikh Mohiuddin passed away due to a cardiac arrest at the National Heart Foundation Hospital on June 27 at the age of 60.

Meanwhile, DUJ New Nation Unit and Workers and Employees Union of the newspaper will also hold a milad mahfil and condolence meeting after Asr prayer at The New Nation office today.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Restaurant Owners' Association organises a roundtable titled "Our responsibilities to prevent food adulteration" at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

'No legal bar to conduct DNA test of ex-DIG in Dhaka'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no legal bar in conducting the DNA test of former DIG, his wife and their septuplets in Dhaka, opined the country's legal experts at a press conference yesterday.

If the former DIG insists on conducting the test in any diagnostic centre outside the country on any ground, he can do it by sending a 'second' sample there, rather than sending the defendants physically abroad, they added.

The press conference was organised by Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) at Advocate Dr M Zahir's Dhanmondi residence following the Supreme Court's (SC) order issued on Sunday.

The SC order came upon a civil miscellaneous petition for leave appeal filed by BSEHR against the High Court's (HC) order that permitted the DIG, his wife and their septuplets to go to Singapore to

conduct the DNA test.

Explaining the SC order at the press conference, Dr Zahir said due to this order they are to comply with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court order to conduct the test in Dhaka Medical College and ensure BSEHR's participation in the whole process of the test.

The CMM's court issued the order responding to BSEHR's filing of a case with Badda Police Station as public suspicion arouse regarding the former DIG's fourteen children including septuplets.

Addressing the press briefing BSEHR President Advocate Alena Khan said to ensure transparency in the whole process of the test BSEHR would take all necessary steps including formation of a medical board prior to the test.

Notably, the BSEHR would bear the expenses of conducting the DNA test of former DIG, her wife and their alleged children.

No garment worker killed in Savar: BGMEA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) has contradicted a BDNEWS report published in The Daily Star on page 2 yesterday under the headline 'Garments worker killed in clash with hired cadres of owners'.

In a rejoinder yesterday, the BGMEA dismissed the news of death of a worker of Irish Fashion Limited as a rumour.

"The death of a garment worker, Abu Bakkar, is not true at all. Even no other worker was killed in the Damgora event," it added.

The BDNEWS reported that a garment worker was killed and 20 others were injured in clashes between hired cadres of owners and agitating employees at Damgora in Savar on Monday night.

Networking of mental health care support providers stressed

Speakers at a meeting yesterday stressed need for building a strong network of organisations offering mental health care support to survivors of trafficking and other forms of violence to ensure standardised quality service in a sustained manner, says a press release.

The network would provide a forum for exchange of experiences, learning from each other and for undertaking research and joint initiatives to address the emerging needs with passage of time and for setting standards, they added.

The speakers said this in the opening session of a two-day consultation meeting organised by Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) with assistance from South Asia Regional Initiative/Equity Support Programme (SARIQ) in the Mission Bhaban Auditorium in the city.

Senior executives of 18

Government and non-government organisations of Bangladesh and West Bengal are attending the meeting.

The speakers also underscored the necessity of developing a national resource group/centre for mental health care and also said the network can be extended across the boarder of Bangladesh and West Bengal and Tripura at the first instance and gradually to sub-regional and regional levels.

Deputy Executive Director of DAM, M Ehsanur Rahman, presided over the session while Chairman, Department of Clinical Psychology, Dhaka University Prof Dr Mahmudur Rahman presented the background and purposes of the meeting.

Advocate Shirin Nahar, Programme Manager, DAM SARIQ project, Topon Kumar and Pinaki De, Programme Manager and

Coordinator respectively of Don Bosco Ashalayam and Smita Sen, Assistant Coordinator of Prajak of West Bengal were present in the session.

Shafiqul Islam, Director of the Programmes Division of the organisation acted as the facilitator.

DAM has developed a training guide book for mental health care support providers based on the findings of a research work conducted in a number of shelter homes and drop-in centres of Bangladesh and West Bengal and also provided training to 35 counsellors using the said guide book.

The consultation meeting will come up with a framework of the network and guidelines for establishment of the resource group, it is expected.



M Ehsanur Rahman, deputy executive director of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, speaks at the opening session of a two-day consultation meeting at the Mission Bhaban auditorium in the city yesterday.

Russia, China to hold 2nd jt maneuvers

AP, Moscow

Russia and China will stage joint military exercises for the second time following last year's first-ever Russo-Chinese war games, the chief of the Russian General Staff was quoted as saying yesterday.

Gen. Yuri Baluyevsky said he had agreed with his Chinese counterpart Gen Liang Guanglie that the next round of maneuvers would be held in Russia, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported.

Baluyevsky declined to disclose the date of the exercises.

In August last year, some 10,000 troops, mostly Chinese and about 1,800 Russians, took part in major drills in the Shandong peninsula in the Yellow Sea.

China and Russia sought to reassure the region that the exercises weren't directed against any country but the two giant neighbours have strengthened ties over shared concerns about US dominance of world affairs.

The war games sparked debate in Russia over how closely the nation should cooperate with China, which many Russians see as a potential threat because of its size, economic might and proximity to sparsely populated, resource-rich Siberia.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Chittagong, Barisal, Khulna, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi division in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places over Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions, Met Office said in a forecast, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 33.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sayedpur and Rangpur and lowest 23.0 degree Celsius at Sandwip.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:16am 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	32.6	26.5	89	86
Chittagong	30.3	25.2	96	98
Rajshahi	33.3	26.6	89	81
Khulna	31.9	26.5	81	89
Barisal	32.0	26.0	96	84
Sylhet	33.3	26.5	76	--
Cox's Bazar	30.0	25.2	100	90



PHOTO: STAR

Malaysian High Commissioner Abd Malek Bin Abdul Aziz speaks at a briefing on Mega Familiarisation Programme 2006 at his residence yesterday. Nur Shaffik Haris, area manager of MAS, is also seen in the picture.



Students and teachers of Ideal Commerce College take out a colourful procession in the city on Monday as part of the inaugural ceremony of the 'Education Week 2006' organised by the college.

Stray violence marks hartal

FROM PAGE 1

Pickets damaged a number of vehicles in the capital while the law enforcers charged batons on processions and policewomen at about 10:40am.

The police severely beat up activist Sonali Malik and picked up two other female activists—Lovely and Nasrin—from the spot. Later, the angry opposition workers damaged three vehicles including two minibuses passing through the Russell Square.

The opposition leaders and workers staged demonstrations in the morning at Mohakhali where opposition leader Milon was killed on Sunday.

Led by AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed, the opposition men brought out a procession at about 9:30am on Mohakhali-Gulshan road and chanted slogans blaming the BNP-led four-party alliance government and the police for the killing.

The police intercepted and chased the activists to disperse the procession. This prompted the opposition men to throw stones at the law enforcers.

They held a rally in front of Titumeer College around 11:40am where Tofail vowed to continue the agitation against the four-party alliance government until the opposition's demands are met.

"Through street agitation we will compel the government to implement the reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission," he said.

Meanwhile, the police prevented senior 14-party leaders ASHK Sadek, Mainuddin Khan Badal and

Diip Barua from joining the opposition programmes in the area.

They also picked up a hartal supporter who allegedly damaged a minibus on the Mohakhali-Gulshan road.

An AL procession led by party legislator Asaduzzaman Noor from Motijheel was intercepted by the police at Noor Hossain Square at 11:40am. The law enforcers picked up two activists from the scene.

Asaduzzaman Noor argued with the police for release of the activists. At one stage, the police charged batons on the opposition men, leaving 10 injured.

At about 10:30am, opposition activists led by AL leader Dr Mostafa Jalal Mahiuddin brought out a procession in Lalbagh area. Some hartal supporters damaged a taxicab in the English Road area.

The police chased to disperse another group of pickets near Tantibazar at noon when the demonstrators started to throw stones at the law enforcers.

Hartal elsewhere

Our correspondent in Rajshahi reports: At least five AL leaders and workers were injured in the city while pickets ransacked Bangladesh Railway offices and assaulted railway officials in the morning.

The police intercepted and picked up one when pickets were pelting stones at the railway office. Other pickets, however, snatched the activist from the law enforcers.

They also damaged six motor-cycles at different points in the city. A correspondent from Pabna

Strike goes on for four days at RMCH

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Strike of intern doctors in Rangpur Medical College and Hospital (RMCH) has been continuing for four days aggravating sufferings of the hospitalised patients.

Hospital sources said as the intern doctors remained off from their duty, the patients are not getting treatment at different wards.

RMCH Director Shajahan Bishwas said he engaged some government doctors at different wards and at the emergency department round the clock to reduce the problem. "The patients have not faced so much trouble as the media showed," he defended.

Meanwhile, the intern doctors and the leaders of the RMC student council sat in a meeting with Bangladesh Medical Association and Doctors Association of Bangladesh to resolve the ongoing crisis.

A medical officer of RMCH said the authority agreed with the demand of the intern doctors regarding demolition of the shops inside the campus but it is not enough.

Ershad leaves for China

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad left Dhaka yesterday for China on a seven-day visit at the invitation of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

During his stay in China, Ershad will meet top CPC leaders and ministers in Beijing and discuss bilateral issues.

JP presidium member Kazi Jafar Ahmed, former ministers Barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud and Ziauddin Ahmed and vice chairman Golam Masih and HM Golam Reza are accompanying the party chief.

Ershad is expected to return home on July 12.

Baluch Assembly Speaker in city

UNB, Dhaka

Haji Jamal Shah Kakar, Speaker of Baluchistan provincial assembly of Pakistan, arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a three-day official visit to Bangladesh.

Whips Rezaul Bari Dina, Md Jahed Ali Chowdhury, Syed Shahidul Haq Jamal and secretary of the Parliament Secretariat Ehasanul Fatah received him at the airport, said a handout.

He will place wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar and the mazar of late President Ziaur Rahman at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar today.

He is also scheduled to visit Parliament and meet the acting Speaker.

Death anniversary



Today is the 6th death anniversary of Dr AKM Shamsul Huda, a language veteran and former Vice President (VP) of Sir Salim-

ullah Medical College, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at the Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard Mosque and special food will be served at an orphanage.