

HIV/AIDS impact on labour force severe

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The impact of HIV/AIDS on the labour force is severe as it reduces the supply of workers, slashes their incomes and raises labour costs for employers, said the speakers at a workshop yesterday.

Nearly 13 million workers died of AIDS worldwide as of 2000 and some countries are likely to lose more than 30 percent of their workforce, said Ronald Bergheus, officer-in-charge of International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Dhaka, adding that the ILO is paying heed to the issue as it also reduces the production and profitability.

"As illness forces workers to leave the jobs, valuable skills and experiences are lost. Along with lower productivity and profitability, tax contributions also decline while the need for public services

increases," he said.

It is the appropriate time to intervene in HIV/AIDS issue as the rate of HIV-infection in Bangladesh is still low, said Ronald at the inaugural session of a two-day capacity building workshop for trade unions on HIV/AIDS.

The workshop, organised by the ILO at a city hotel, is meant for training of the trainers of labour federations so that they can act as peer educators for their fellow trade union members.

In a multimedia presentation on 'The National HIV/AIDS Scenario in Bangladesh and the Country Response', Dr Mozammel Hoque, deputy programme manager of National AIDS and STD Programme, placed some recommendations for the business sector to combat HIV/AIDS.

Since there is potential impact of

HIV/AIDS on the business, the owners and managers need to understand the impact on their industries and the benefits of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, he said.

He also mentioned that HIV/AIDS programmes for the workforce are one of the most important approaches to involving the business sector in HIV/AIDS prevention and care.

Representatives from 13 labour federations are taking part in the workshop.

Shahabuddin Khan, programme officer of ILO in Dhaka, Md. Matir Rahman, chairman of National Coordination Committee for Workers Education, Dr Zeenat Sultan and Dr Mohammad Hanifuddin were present on the occasion.

EC delegates visit Sylhet

UNB, Dhaka

As part of its election 'roadshow', the European Commission delegation visited Sylhet yesterday to explain the role and background of the forthcoming EU Election Observation Mission to Bangladesh.

The delegation comprised Dr Stefan Frowein, Head of the delegation of the European Commission in Bangladesh, and Charles Whiteley, Head of the Political and Trade Section.

Referring to the current political situation in the country, Dr Frowein said the European Commission is following events in the run-up to the parliamentary elections very closely.

He said: "It is clear that Bangladesh is passing through turbulent political times with significant changes to the caretaker government, the deployment of the armed forces and the continuing stalemate between the parties," he said.

Dr Frowein added: "It is vital that every drop of political will is put to good use by the caretaker government and the political parties to ensure that a way forward is found which ensures that the people of Bangladesh's expectations for a free, fair and peaceful election are fulfilled."

The 'roadshow' is designed to explain to media and civil society in different cities across Bangladesh why the EU dispatches Election Observation Missions across the world and the values and international commitments that underpin election missions, said a press release.

Railway to sell advance tickets

Bangladesh Railway has taken special measures for selling advance tickets for home-bound inter-city train passengers at Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet station counters ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, says a press release.

The five-day special sale will start on December 22. Tickets of all classes will be sold everyday from 8:00am to 4:00pm under the supervision of specially assigned officials.

Tickets for December 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31 will be sold on December 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 respectively.

"There will be no refund for tickets sold on the above dates," the press release added.

Apart from advance tickets, regular tickets will also be sold during the period.

Victory Day Charity Run

Gulshan Youth Club (GYC) will organise 'Victory Day Charity Run and Walk 2006' at GYC playground on December 16, says a press release.

Apart from GYC, participants from Hash Club, Bangladesh Mountaineering Club, Bangladesh Tourist Expansion Forum, Dacca bazaar camp, Keekaradong.com and Bangladesh Adventure Club will take part in the event.

The fund raised from this event will be dedicated to support a 'Free Friday Clinic' operating from GYC playground and distribute winter clothes among the indigenous people of Bandarban Hill Tracts.

Consulting with the two major political alliances, the council of advisers headed by Iajuddin in last week finalised a package of proposals including sending of Election Commissioners Zakaria and Modabir on leaves of absence and appointing new election commissioners to reconstruct the EC. But the president in a



PHOTO: PID

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Patricia A Butenis calls on President/Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Prof Muzaffer Ahmed speaks at a roundtable on 'Ways to overcome the present political crisis' at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. Shushashoner Janney Nagorik organised the seminar.

Woman UP member killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Unknown criminals slaughtered a female union parishad (UP) member allegedly after raping her in Meherpur.

The victim, Ismat Ara, 36, wife of local BNP activist Anwarul, was an elected member of Amjhupi union parishad of sadar upazila in Meherpur.

Family sources said, Ismat had been missing after she left for the upazila headquarters on Sunday, December 10 and a General Diary (GD) was filed with sadar police station later.

Police recovered the body near her house at Beltala field. She might have been killed after rape, suspect police.

According to sources, Ismat Ara infuriated the outlawed Purbo Bangla Communist Party (PBCP) several years back when she helped the police arrest Rustom, a regional leader of the outfit. The outlaws later threatened Ismat Ara with dire consequences.

WEATHER TODAY

Temperature may fall

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country in the early morning, Met Office said in a forecast.

It also said that night temperature may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 28.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and the lowest of 10.8 degrees at Ishwardi.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:14pm today and rises at 6:33am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature	Humidity in in celsius
percentage	Max	Min
Dhaka	25.3	16.2
Chittagong	28.3	16.3
Rajshahi	25.0	10.9
Khulna	26.0	17.0
Barisal	25.6	16.0
Sylhet	26.3	14.5
	60	52
	93	67
	78	54
	57	64
	84	85
	87	76

The Daily Star exposes lies by Falu's media

FROM PAGE 1
Farmgate saying that its process of purchase was without tender, it was bought far below the market price and that the management of the Oriental Bank Ltd was blackmailed into selling it cheap under threat of negative media reports. The whole process of purchase was non-transparent. It may be pointed out that minimum journalistic ethics were not followed before telecasting and publishing such malicious news items and no effort was made to take our comments or version on the story, a practice that Prothom Alo followed.

We totally and completely reject all the above allegations which is motivated by a desire to pressure and intimidate us in not doing our journalistic duties of exposing the corrupt elements in our society and those who abuse power for personal gain. The campaign against us is an attempt to protect the ill-gotten wealth of Al-Haj Mussadeq Ali Falu, Chairman and shareholder of ntv, Rtv and daily Amar Desh who exposed in daily Prothom Alo triggered the campaign in the first place. This is nothing but the worst form of yellow journalism. It may be noted that The Daily Star did not report anything yet on Mr. Falu, though we were subjected to a malicious campaign.

Below is our response to the false allegations:

1) The Oriental Bank Ltd advertised in the national newspapers including in the highest circulated English and Bangla dailies of the country, namely The Daily Star and Prothom Alo on 31st August 2003 inviting offers for the sale of 18.75 katra at 64 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue Road, Dhaka.

2) The Daily Star sent in its offer after verifying from Civil Aviation Authority about the height restrictions on that land. The land was identified to be in the flight path of the figure of Tk 20 crore as the price of

the 18.75 katra of land, which comes to more than Tk 1 crore per katra.

The above details make it crystal clear the transparent and legal process through which the land was purchased. Between the time of advertisement of the Oriental Bank Ltd (31st August 2003) and the completion of the sale (12th May 2005) nearly two years passed, which can hardly stand out as an example of the deal being pushed through under pressure.

As we had stated earlier, it is not The Daily Star, or Latifur Rahman or the Prothom Alo that has indulged in any wrongdoing. It is Mr. Mussadeq Ali Falu, who abused power during the tenure of the BNP rule, who took full advantage of his proximity and closeness to former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to amass huge amount of personal wealth, property and personal power. Any investigation by the Anti-corruption Commission will reveal the extent of his wealth.

Today, The Daily Star has become the most trusted and credible newspaper both at home and abroad. It is the highest circulated English language newspaper of the country and achieved credibility by completely staying away from yellow journalism.

We reiterate our commitment to serve our readers and our country by fighting against corruption, abuse of power, reputation and cronyism. We will continue to expose corrupt individuals in our society. No amount of intimidation through false and malicious propaganda will deter us from our commitment to our readers and the people at large.

We do not know how the daily Amar Desh, ntv and Rtv arrived at the figure of Tk 20 crore as the price of

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Blue for peace

Family members of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria and civil society members will stage a demonstration as part of their 'Blue for Peace' programme demanding proper investigation into the killings. Venue: In front of High Court. Time: 4:00pm.

Workshop

Bangladesh Press Institute (BPI) and Marie Stopes' Clinic jointly organise a workshop titled 'More participation of men in reproductive health'. Venue: BPI seminar room. Time: 10:00am.

Book launch

Nympha Publication will launch five books by former secretary and Ambassador Muhammad Zamir. Venue: Radius Centre, Bay's Galleria, 57 Gulshan Avenue. Time: 5:00pm.

Launching ceremony

Centre for Governance Studies of Brac University will launch its first publication 'The state of governance in Bangladesh 2006: Knowledge, perceptions, reality'. Venue: hotel Golden Deer auditorium. Time: 3:30pm.



Criminals slaughter youth in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of criminals stabbed and slaughtered a youth at Muradpur in Shyampur in the city last night.

The criminals numbering about 15 first looped a wire around his neck and then stabbed and slaughtered him in a lane at around 7:00pm, the police said.

The identity of the youth aged around 25 could not be known immediately.

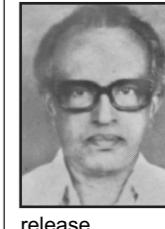
Receiving information, the police rushed to the spot and recovered the body.

The body was sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College Morgue for autopsy.

Meanwhile, a gang of extortionists stormed into the house of the victim at around 9:00am to look for his brother Khurshed.

But failing to find Khurshed, the criminals ransacked a room and opened fire on Aslam, the police said. Aslam is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Death anniversary



Today is the 22nd death anniversary of Dhr Ali Mia, an eminent musician and music director of the subcontinent, says a press release.

On the occasion, different programmes have been chalked out including offering Fataha at his grave at Mohammadpur and daylong Qurankhwani, milad mahfil and destute feeding at his 20, Bashbari, Mohammadpur residence in the city after Maghrib prayers.

FF AM Ferdous passes away

UNB, Khulna

Freedom fighter and language movement veteran Abu Mohammad Ferdous passed away at his Amtala residence in Khulna yesterday at the age of 83.

Mohammad Ferdous, also the president of Khulna Unnayan Sangram Samannay Committee, left behind his wife, four daughters, three sons and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Leaders of different political parties and organisations placed wreaths on his coffin to pay their last respect.

Khitish Talukdar

Khitish Talukdar, a retired school-teacher, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at his village home at Khalia in Rajbari, Madaripur, yesterday at the age of 63.

He left behind his wife, four sons and a daughter and a host of relatives, students and well-wishers.

In a condolence message, Court Reporters' Association expressed deep shock at the death of Khitish Talukdar, father-in-law of Chaitanya Chandra Halder, court correspondent of The Daily Star.

"No significant changes in the country was brought by the elections," Musa said, adding that the election system of pre