

More awareness needed to tackle TB

Says George Soros

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concern over tuberculosis (TB) disease in Bangladesh becoming multi-drug-resistant, global financier and philanthropist George Soros yesterday stressed the need for raising awareness because the disease is "curable".

"Tuberculosis is curable and its eradication is attainable. Drugs are widely available. All we need now is more awareness campaigns with the participation of non-governmental organisations," Soros said during the launching ceremony of a report "TB Policy in Bangladesh - A Civil Society Perspective" at Brac Centre Inn in

Mohakhali yesterday.

The Public Health Watch prepared the report in collaboration with the Open Society Institute.

Expressing his concern over the increase of multi-drug-resistant TB in Bangladesh, Soros, the billionaire founder chairman of Open Society Institute, said the challenge ahead needs to be dealt with intense awareness campaigns.

"The poor man's disease, pulmonary tuberculosis, remains largely neglected globally due to low levels of awareness," Soros observed. The disease kills around 70,000 people annually in Bangladesh.

"Our main effort is to help global civil society build their capacity to support the 'Stop TB' programme," Soros said, who is on a special visit at the invitation of Brac.

Brac's director for advocacy and human rights, Afsan Chowdhury, reiterated Soros' message saying, "TB is silently killing people for long but it has also been invisible because of a lack of attention."

Chowdhury also linked the spread of the disease with the battle against poverty, as 300,000 people each year contract the disease in Bangladesh.

Brac founder and chairman Fazle Hasan Abed also spoke.



(Left) Supporters of BNP candidate Sadeque Hossain Khoka and Awami League candidate Syeed Khokon march in separate processions side by side at Nayabazar in the city yesterday towards the office of the returning officer to submit nomination papers for the forthcoming election. (Right) Agitating political activists vandalise a microbus of a private TV channel near the office of the returning officer at Segunbagicha yesterday during a clash between the supporters of BNP and AL candidates.

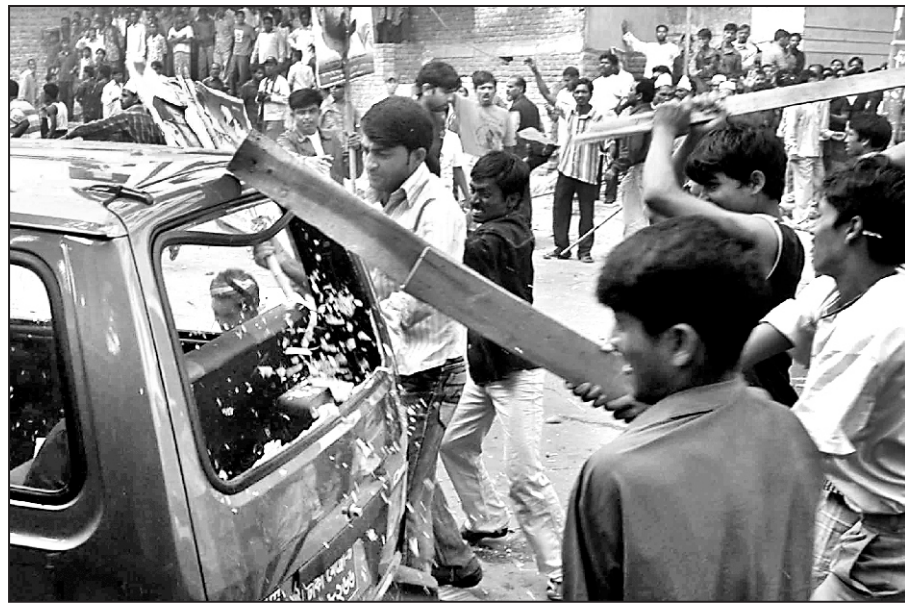


PHOTO: STAR

ATTACK ON PHOTOJOURNO

Arrest of Shibir cadres demanded

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong University Journalists' Association (Cuja) gave a 48-hour ultimatum to the university authorities demanding immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to the Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) cadres involved in the brutal attack on photojournalist Amran Hossain on CU campus on Sunday.

Cuja leaders also demanded a separate probe committee to investigate into the matter.

They gave the ultimatum at a protest rally held in front of Arts Faculty Building yesterday noon.

The association leaders threatened to boycott university news if their demands are not met by the time.

Cuja President Ahsan Jewel presided over the rally while General Secretary Reaz Haider, Uttam Sen Gupta, Nurshadul Haq and Mohiuddin Jewel spoke.

Earlier, Cuja brought out a silent procession that paraded different streets on the campus.

Unruly ICS cadres swooped on photojournalist Amran of the daily Janakantha while he was on duty at university Gate No 1 during a clash on Sunday.

'Infringement on franchise violates human rights'

An executive committee meeting of Human Rights International (HRI), Bangladesh was held at its office in the city yesterday.

It was presided over by Dr Mohammad Salim, says a press release. The meeting expressed deep concern at the infringement of voting right of common people and treated it as violation of human rights.

The HRI feels that the voting right of all citizens is the precondition for a free, fair and neutral election.

The meeting urged the caretaker government and Election Commission (EC) to prepare correct voter lists and publish it through gazette notification in all upazila EC office to ensure a credible election.

It also criticised the court order postponing the provision for knowing about the criminal offence and source of income of the candidates in the coming election.

The meeting was attended by its Secretary General Barrister Moinul Islam Chowdhury, Joint Secretary General Hasan-uz-Zaman Hasan and members GAM Sayed Siddiqi and Advocate Abdul Baki.

BRTC launches 462 buses for Eid-ul-Azha

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) launched 462 buses in 128 routes for smooth passenger movement on the occasion of the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha, says a press release.

The number of buses might be increased to 500 to meet passengers' demand. These buses will have fire-extinguishing facilities.

On the Eid day, special Volvo buses would operate in Mirpur-Motijheel route and that would cost only half of the fare, compared to other days.

BRTC will also launch 377 special buses for the aspirers to attend the Jitema that would be held on February 2 to 4. These buses would operate from January 28 to February 6, 2007. This year some ambulances would also be ready for the Jitema goers.

BRTC's Jitema services would be available from Anicha, Manikganj, Paturighat, Mawa, Tongi, Narsingdi, Bhairab, Kuliarchar, Sayedabad, Gulistan, Victoria Park, Kamalapur, Gabtali and Abdullahpur.

Correction

BNP activists laid siege to an NGO office, not CIDA office, at Kamrangirchar on Monday. But in the report published in The Daily Star yesterday, it was inadvertently mentioned that CIDA office was besieged. We regret the error.

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY

No Senate meet in last 5 years

RU CORRESPONDENT

No Senate meeting was held in Rajshahi University (RU) during the last five years although it is mandatory to convene at least one session a year.

An organisation of university teachers has raised a question over the legality of the administration as the university authorities are carrying out various activities violating the University Act 1973.

According to the act, the university authorities have to call at least one senate session a year where the annual budget will be placed and approved besides approving all other important decisions.

In order to maintain accountability and transparency, all important activities should be approved by the Senate.

Another vital role of the Senate is to finalise a three-member vice-chancellor panel for the approval of chancellor.

The RU Senate has also failed to do the job.

Campus sources said the existing administration during its one and half-year tenure did not call any senate session.

The previous administration led by Prof Faisal Islam Faruqi also did not call the Senate session during its three and a half year tenure.

As a result, all administrative and financial activities of the university were not approved by the Senate in sharp violation of the University Act 1973, alleged the Progressive Teachers' Society (PTS), an Awami League-backed organisation of teachers.

Ignoring the Senate, the university administration has been

recruiting manpower on political consideration and spending university fund without its approval, said the PTS in a White Paper on the university administration where they claimed that the existing administration has no moral right to stay in power.

Prof Abdus Sobhan, a syndicate member as well as convener of the PTS said, both the existing and previous administrative bodies were not approved by the senate, rather they were appointed on

political consideration.

So a politically motivated vice-chancellor cannot run the university as per rules, he added.

Acknowledging the fact that there was no senate session during his tenure, Vice-chancellor Prof Altaf Hossain blamed the previous administration for not calling any senate session.

"However, I took two initiatives to hold the Senate meeting but failed. I will try again to hold it after the national election," he added.

RU urged to observe 'mourning day' Dec 24

RU CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of Rajshahi University (RU) teachers under the banner of Progressive Teachers' Society (PTS) yesterday called upon the authorities to observe December 24 as 'mourning day', the day former Ruta general secretary Prof Mohammed Yunus was assassinated.

The teachers took out a procession on the campus and demanded immediate submission of charge sheet and exemplary punishment to his murderers.

Following the procession they placed wreaths at the spot where he was killed and at the grave of Prof Yunus.

Later in a rally on senate building premises, speakers condemned the law enforcers for not submitting charge sheet even after the caretaker government takes office.

They also expressed their utter

frustration since the university authorities did not organise any programme to observe the death anniversary of one of country's eminent economists.

The teachers also urged the university authorities to construct a monument at the spot where Prof Yunus was assassinated.

The rally was addressed by its Convener Prof Abdus Sobhan, PTS members Prof Mukhlesur Rahman, Prof Muzaffer Hossain, Prof Faykuzzaman, Prof Shamsuddin Ilias, Prof Ananda Kumar Shaha and Prof AHM Zihadul Karim.

Prof Yunus, a teacher of Economics department and president of RU unit of Bangabandhu Parishad, was killed by unidentified terrorists on December 24 in 2004 when he was on a morning walk near his university quarter at Bindodhpur.

Sen, Yunus for utilising globalisation potentials

FROM PAGE 16

George Soros, a global financier and philanthropist and founding chairman of Open Society Institute, said in his speech, "Globalisation is a market fundamentalist project" and globalisation is putting the ultimate reliance on market.

Soros said property right is creating business monopoly instead of competition.

Prof Yunus said globalisation is on the wrong direction at present, arguing that the majority people receiving the privileges of globalisation are the strongest while the poorest have no say.

Yunus said only two percent people are possessing 50 percent of the world's total assets. He stressed the need for "free assets free for all" policy both for the strongest and the poorest.

He said globalisation is something which cannot be stopped. So, the relevant question centres on right globalisation versus wrong

globalisation.

Metaphorising globalisation with a highway, Yunus said all vehicles of the big countries are plying this highway while rickshaws have no place here. He stressed the need for an authority, like the traffic police, so that all can get their chances.

Yunus pointed out that 60-70 percent of the world's total population has no access to information technology (IT) and emphasised the need for equal access to IT for all people.

"If the IT is brought to the people at the bottom level, they will at least be able to know whether globalisation is wrong or right," he said.

Yunus said he is trying to introduce an idea of business with businessmen setting up non-profit companies for the well-being of humanity.

Replying to the participants' queries, Soros said the media is not

playing due role in raising sufficient argument on globalisation as many media houses are owned by big companies.

Amartya Sen, however, argued that the media is doing its job properly to some extent.

He also said there is no need to form any authority or organisation to ensure proper utilisation of globalisation since there are the UN, World Bank, World Trade Organisation, and the International Monetary Fund.

Renowned economist Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, former adviser to caretaker government CM Shafi Sami, former foreign secretary Farooq Sobhan, Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad Chairman AQ Ahmed, IUCN Country Director Dr Ainun Nishat, businessmen Sayeeful Islam and Anisul Huq attended the dialogue, among others.

Protests on against AL deal with bigots

FROM PAGE 1

Liberation War and the constitution.

"The agreement will fuel and strengthen the country's conservative and reactionary forces to launch a broader movement for introducing blasphemy laws," Bimol Biswas, convener of the 11-Party alliance, said.

He urged AL to cancel the agreement for the sake of democracy and secularism because this agreement, instead of helping, would harm AL in the next general election. "It will frighten the country's religious minority as well as the progressive and liberal forces," Samajik Pratirodh Committee in a press release said the whole nation is stunned at the news of such a suicidal agreement.

All progressive women organisations and intellectuals had welcomed the High Court's verdict banning fatwas in 2001 after many women were killed and hundreds fell prey to fatwas by Islamic fundamentalists during the last two decades, the press release added.

Hena Das, Ayesha Khanam, Advocate Sultana Kamal, Shirin Akhter, Advocate Salma Ali, Shaheen Anam, Rasheda K Chowdhury Sharif A Kafi, Jakir Hossain, Rokeya Kabir, Khushi

Kabir and other members of the Samajik Pratirodh Committee signed the press release.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil Saturday signed a five-point memorandum of understanding (MoU) with BKM promising to implement it if the grand electoral alliance is voted to power in the upcoming election.

Key points of the 5-point MoU include enacting new laws to allow certain clerics issue fatwas (religious decrees), recognise Qaumi madrasa certificates, bar on enacting any law that contradicts Quranic values and punish blasphemy.

In another press release, Jatiya Mukti Council said the deal intends to destroy the country's democratic and progressive spirit and will encourage fatwas and militancy.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and Bangladesh Chhatra Federation also issued statements protesting and condemning the controversial agreement.

Forty-eight scholars, intellectuals and eminent citizens of Rajshahi in a statement yesterday expressed their dismay over the agreement between AL and BKM and demanded its immediate cancellation, our RU correspondent reports.

The statement said, "We were astounded, saddened and distressed at signing of the five-point charter (between AL and BKM)".

They said, while AL under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had played a pioneering role to build a progressive and secular nation, they now signed a contract joining hands with the evil forces that were against the War of Independence.

This will inspire religious fanatics to abuse religion for gains as well as violate freedom of speech and civil rights with fatwas and thus establish a theocratic state, the statement added.

The statement further said, "We look forward to seeing AL cancel the suicidal contract immediately and make it public.... We find no stronger way to condemn the act as it was a surrender of AL to the fanatic forces."

The signatories of the statement were Hasan Azizul Haque, Sanat Kumar Saha, Jufiquar Matin, Moloy Bhuiumik, SM Abu Baker, AKM Abdul Majid, Ananda Kumar Saha, Goolam Kabir, Mohammad Naser, Mahendranath Adhikari, Khandaker Serajul Haque, Amritlal Bala, Shamsuddin Ilias, Mizanur Rahman Khan, Harunor Rashid and others.

Bangladeshi killed by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi near Naodapara border under Raumari upazila yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Abdul Berek alias Chinu Mia, 45, son of Mozammel Haque of Naodapara border village.

According to BDR and local sources, the Indian border guards of Kochinpara outpost opened fire on Chinu when he reached near border pillar no 1063 at around 6:30am in response to the call of nature. Chinu died instantly.

Immediately after the incident, the BSF personnel entered Bangladesh territory and took away the body.

BDR strongly protested the killing and sent a letter asking its Indian counterpart to return the body. The BSF authorities did not respond as of 5:00pm yesterday.

Book in memory of poet Shamsur Rahman published

Bangla Prakashani yesterday launched a memorial book in memory of poet Shamsur Rahman titled 'Shamsur Rahman -- Jibon Mongolur Kobi', edited by Mohammad Shahjahan, says a press release.

This 256-page-book contains features and writings of about 80 academics, journalists, columnists, educationists and cultural writers.

Apart from these editorials from national dailies and weeklies there are some rare photos in this publication.

Chehlum



Chehlum of Advocate Md Khalilur Rahman, an eminent lawyer, will be held at his Banani residence after Maghrib prayers today, says a press release.

He passed away on November 16 at Apollo Hospitals in the city at the age of 76.

LDP gets 31 seats

FROM PAGE 16

Ahmed each will contest for two constituencies while party General Secretary Major (ret'd) Abdul Mannan got three seats to compete in the polls.

The LDP leaders demanded 30 seats from the grand alliance in the beginning, but following the discussions with the AL leaders on Monday night, both sides reached a consensus and the LDP seats were finalised.

According to the decision, AL lawmaker Dr Alauddin Ahmed, who won from his Kishoreganj-1 constituency in 2001 elections, sacrificed his seat for LDP candidate ABM Zahidul Haque. Besides, the LDP candidates will fight in 27 seats of BNP and another seat of Jamaat.

However, 10 former lawmakers of BNP including Oli Ahmed and Mahi B Chowdhury who won in the last election will contest polls this time as LDP candidates. Another former lawmaker MA Jinnah did not get the ticket from grand alliance for contesting the election.

The LDP candidates are -- Munshiganj-2 and 3 - AQM Badruddza Chowdhury, Chittagong-13 and 14- Oli Ahmed, Dhaka-10, Noakhali-4 and Laxmipur-4- Abdul Mannan, Munshiganj-1- Mahi B Chowdhury, Joypurhat-1- Golam Rabbani, Thakurgaon-1- Firoz M Hasan, Bogra-5- Mahbub Ali, Chapainawabganj-2- Syed Monzur Hossain, Naogaon-6- Alamgir Kabir, Natore-3- Md Mostafizur Rahman Khokon, Jessore-1- Ali Kadar, Khulna-6- Shaikh Razzaz Ali, Jamalpur-4- Anwarul Kabir Talukder, Netrokona-1- Abdul Karim Abbasi, Kishoreganj-1- ABM Zahidul Haq, Dhaka-13- Ziaur Rahman Khan, Narsingdi-4- Sanaul Haq Niru, Comilla-6- Redwan Ahmed, Chandpur-4- M Abdullah, Feni-1- Shahid Ullah Patwari, Laxmipur-2- Nazmul Alam Siddiqi, Laxmipur-3- Khairul Enam, Chittagong-7- Md Nurul Alam, Chittagong-8- Md Akramul Karim, Chittagong 11- M Eyakub Ali, Moni Swapan Dewan for Rangamati, and Dhaka-2 Nurul Islam Babul.



PHOTO: STAR

Gono Forum leader Mostafa Mohsin Montu speaks at a rally organised by Gono Forum at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting filing of case against eminent lawyers, including party President Dr Kamal Hossain.

'Sixth wage board soon'

CU CORRESPONDENT

Adviser to Information, Water resources and Religion ministries Mahbubul Alam emphasised the need for professional trainings for the journalists to develop their skills in their field.

Terming journalism a risky profession, the adviser said the news-men must be equipped enough to present objective news to the public.

"Journalists can play a role in addressing corruption in different sectors through their investigative reporting," Mahbub observed.

He was addressing as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of biannual general meeting and conference of Chittagong Press Club (CPC) held at the CPC auditorium yesterday.

Mahbub assured the journalists of taking initiatives to implement the sixth wage board soon.

Leaders of the CPC and Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) demanded an end to all kinds of repressions on journalists and proper investigations into the previous attacks on the journalists across the country.

CPC President Abu Sufian presided over the ceremony while General Secretary Kalim Sarwar, CUJ President Shahid Ul Alam and local daily Azadi Editor MA Malek spoke.

Switzerland to provide support for free, fair polls

Bss, Dhaka

Switzerland Ambassador to Bangladesh Dora Rapold yesterday said that their government would give all out support to the Bangladesh caretaker government for holding a free and fair election.

She was holding a meeting with Dr Shobeb Ahmed, commerce, finance and planning, post and telecommunications adviser to the caretaker government, at the finance ministry here.

Praising all the advisers of the caretaker government for taking timely measures to ensure participation of all political parties in the election, Rapold hoped that the next poll would be free, neutral and fair.

She invited Bangladesh on behalf of their government to join the upcoming conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to be held in Switzerland in January next for representing the least developing countries (LDCs).

Ministerial level representatives from commerce and finance ministries of various countries will participate in the conference for discussing the world trade disputes.

Welcoming the ambassador for their support, Dr Shobeb hoped that the bilateral cooperation between the two countries would be further increased in future.

Jubo League leader among 4 killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least four people, including a Jubo League leader, were killed in separate road accidents in Pabna and Jhenidah yesterday.

Our Correspondent from Pabna reports: At least two people, including a Jubo League leader, were killed in a road accident at Shanthia upazila in Pabna yesterday.

The dead were identified as Monirul Islam Moni, 22, son of Moim member of the village Sharupgram in Shanthia upazila and Saikat, 25, son of Shajahan Ali of the village Madhupur of the same upazila.

The accident took place on Shanthia-Pabna highway at Chaknondonpur village when a speedy truck hit a Shanthia upazila-bound motorcycle at Chaknondonpur area at about 9:00am, leaving Moni and Saikat dead on the spot. Saikat was the treasurer of Shanthia upazila Jubo League, sources said.

Local people put up barricade on the road following the accident and seized the truck. Police arrested driver Absar.

Our Correspondent from Jhenidah adds: Two people were killed and six others injured in a road accident near Ahsan Nagar on Jhenidah-Kushia Road yesterday.

The dead were identified as Feroz Ahmed, 28, of Rani Nagar

village under Shaikupa upazila, and Sazedha Khatun, 32, of Borda village under the same upazila.

Police said the accident occurred when a Jhenidah-bound tempo from Garaganj collided head-on with a BRTC bus which was coming from opposite direction at around 12:30pm.

Two were killed on the spot. Of the six injured, two were rushed to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital in a critical condition while the others admitted to Shaikupa hospital.

Godown gutted in fire in Rangpur

Bss, Rangpur

A godown was gutted in a fire in Chamrapotti area in the town on Sunday evening.

Fire Service and Civil Defence sources said the fire in the godown, owned by one Abul Hossain, a skin trader, gutted huge goods. On information, firefighters from the nearby station rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control.

The reason of the fire, however, could not be ascertained immediately. The damage caused by the blaze is yet to be calculated, the sources said.

WEATHER TODAY					
UNB, Dhaka					
Dry weather will prevail over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.					
Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said in a forecast.					
Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.					
Highest temperature 28.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 09.7 degree Celsius at Ishwardi.					
The sun sets in the capital at 5:19pm today and rises at 6:40am tomorrow.					
Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:					
City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in		
percentage	Max	Min	Morning	Evening	
Dhaka	25.9	16.2	66	63	
Chittagong	26.5	15.0	85	69	
Rajshahi	24.7	10.9	93	75	
Khulna	26.0	12.5	78	75	
Barisal	26.5	11.4	89	79	
Sylhet	26.9	13.7	89	75	
Cox's Bazar	28.0	16.0	75	62	