

NATIONAL DISABILITY DAY OBSERVED
'Ratify UN convention to ensure rights of persons with disability'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ninth National Disability Day was observed across the country yesterday with a call for ratification of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in order to establish their rights. Social and human rights organisations held seminars, discussions and rallies in the city to mark the day. Ministry of Social Welfare, Department of Social Welfare, National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD) and Jatiya Protibandhi

Unnayan Foundation jointly organised a discussion at the auditorium of the social welfare department. Secretary of Ministry of Social Welfare MA Hai Haolader addressed the discussion as the chief guest. The speakers stressed the need for signing and ratifying the UN Convention adopted at the UN General Assembly on December 13, 2006 with a view to helping mainstream the issue of the PWDs. A total of 80 countries, including the European Union (EU), signed the convention and one country-Jamaica has already ratified it.

Nineteen more ratifications are required to make the convention come into force. However, Bangladesh is yet to even sign it. Action on Disability and Development (ADD), National Council of Disabled Women (NCDW) and National Grassroots Disabled Federation (NGDF) jointly organised a discussion with the theme "Social security is the right of challenged citizens," at city's Cirdap auditorium. ADD Advocacy Coordinator Mozammel Huq said that as per Bangladesh Economic Survey 2005, 18.5 per cent of the popula-

tion is hardcore poor while the percentage is 43 among the disabled ones. He alleged that the persons with special needs are always being deprived of basic human rights and social services due to mismanagement of administration, especially at grassroots level. Although the National Disability Welfare Act 2001 provided financial allowance and other facilities for PWDs, the act did not provide any directive considering PWDs' social security that is emphasised in the article 28 of the newly adopted UN Convention, he pointed out. NGDF Vice-President Jolly Akhter demanded an increase in government allowance from Tk 200 to Tk 500.

Speaking as a special guest, Dr Atiur Rahman laid emphasis on the survey on the number of the persons with special needs to help determine budget allocation for them. He also demanded steps to find out the cause of disability during census as a good number of persons became disabled after taking part in the liberation war. Referring to the implementation of the provisions in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) regarding PWDs, Dr Atiur said special corners are yet to be set up at the hospitals to ensure their healthcare service. Change of mindset is the precondition for development of the PWDs and the media can play a significant role in this regard, he added. Addressing as the chief guest, former adviser to the caretaker government Rokia Afzal Rahman called for initiatives on priority basis to bring the PWDs to the mainstream education and employment arenas.



Former adviser to the caretaker government Rokia Afzal Rahman speaks at a discussion on 'Social security for physically challenged people' at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On her left is Ajay Das Gupta while on her right are and Mosharraf Hossain and Dr Atiur Rahman.

'Illiteracy main obstacle to curbing violence against women'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Illiteracy is the main obstacle to eliminating violence against women, speakers at a seminar said yesterday. They also called for raising awareness among the people at grassroots level, especially parents, so that they educate their daughters and allow them to attend school. Alokito Manush, a non-government organisation working for women empowerment, organised the seminar at its Jurain office in the city. The speakers said women must be educated and self-reliant in order to ensure gender equality in society. Alokito Manush has been working in five districts -- Dhaka, Gazipur, Tangail, Mymensingh and Naogaon -- to create awareness about repression of women among the hardcore poor and illiterate people.

"Most of our people, especially in the remote areas, are not aware of bad effects of early marriage, dowry and divorce," said Tahidul Bari, programme officer of Alokito Manush while addressing the seminar. Among others, Concerned Women for Family Development Programme Officer Shahriar Kabir, Alokito Manush Consultant Farzana Sultana and several victims of repression took part in the discussion.

'Daylight saving'

FROM PAGE 16 formed in 2005 but it did not hold any meeting during the last two years. The taskforce, however, held a meeting on Tuesday and decided to reschedule the master plan programme. The meeting discussed in details when a tender for work order can be floated and which programme of the master plan can be sent to the purchase committee, the energy adviser said.

The BKMEA representatives led by its President Fazlul Haque urged the adviser to allow traders to continue production with generators on the said power-rationing day. They also urged the government to divide the Narayanganj industrial zone in several zones and ration the power in pick hours instead of a whole day. Fazlul Haque urged the government to take immediate initiative to recover the embezzled Tk 20,000 crore of the power sector and invest it for its development.

The BKMEA representatives sought the energy adviser's support to extend the effluent treatment plant (ETP) timeframe from eight months to one year. The adviser asked them to place their proposals in writing so that the ministry can consult with other agencies for consideration. The government earlier informed all industrial groups, business leaders and chambers about the whole day power rationing plan.

Eight killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Eight people were killed in separate road accidents in Sylhet, Bogra and Jhenidah in the last two days. Our staff correspondent from Sylhet adds: Three people, including two brothers, were killed and three others injured in a road accident on Sylhet-Beanibazar road yesterday. The two brothers are Hasan, 10, and Zahan, 8, sons of Nuruddin who hails from Baluchar village in Barlekha. Another victim is the driver of a three-wheeler. The accident took place when the CNG-run three-wheeler collided head-on with a minibus at Kakordia at about 2:30pm. Our staff correspondent in Bogra reports: Three people were killed when a speeding truck hit another truck that was stranded on Bogra-Naogaon road at

Kadbaul village in Adamdighi on Tuesday night. The victims were identified as Abdul Quddus, 33, Mohammad Ali, 45, and Anwar Hossain, 38. Police said a brick-laden truck hit a rice-laden truck at about 9:30pm, killing one on the spot and injuring two others who later died at Adamdighi Hospital. UNB adds: Two people were killed and 10 others injured in a head-on collision between two trucks on Jhenidah-Kushtia road in Shailakupa upazila yesterday afternoon. The dead are truck driver Baltu and his helper Bashir. Police said a sand-laden truck bound for Jhenidah collided with another truck at about 2:30pm, killing its driver and the helper on the spot and injuring 10 workers who were on the truck.



Outgoing Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Fakhru Azam pays a farewell call on Chief of the Army Staff Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed at Army Headquarters in the city yesterday.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Sylhet, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today. Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said, predicting that day temperature may remain nearly unchanged. Yesterday's highest temperature of 37.8 degree Celsius was recorded at Rajshahi and the lowest of 19.4 degrees at Dinajpur. The sun sets in the capital at 6:16pm today and rises at 5:46am tomorrow. The 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	35.0	26.8	71	61
Chittagong	31.2	24.3	77	80
Rajshahi	37.8	24.0	71	26
Khulna	34.5	27.0	76	63
Barisal	33.0	26.0	79	72
Sylhet	32.0	20.5	79	66
Cox's Bazar	32.0	23.8	71	80

Motijheel OC suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The officer-in-charge (OC) of the city's Motijheel Police Station was suspended on charge of inefficiency yesterday. Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Nayeem Ahmed said OC Abul Hussain Morol was suspended for his lack of control over the staffs. The suspension order came after one of the assistant sub-inspectors (ASI) of the police station was caught red handed by people and police while mugging on Tuesday. ASI Monir Hasan and four others were caught while snatching Tk 3.4 lakh from an employee of a money exchange at Dainik Bangla Intersection. Joyal Abedin, investigation officer (IO) of the case, told The Daily Star quoting Monir that he along with his three informers hired a microbus from Fakirapal and went to Dainik Bangla Intersection to arrest an "illegal" businessman. The IO prayed for a ten-day remand of the arrestees when they were produced before a Dhaka court on Tuesday.

Mamun's aide

FROM PAGE 16 Road 15 at Gulshan 1. "The team members apprehended Babul at around 11:30pm with a small bag," said Sub-Inspector (SI) Afzal Hossain of Gulshan Police Station (PS). The police personnel searched the bag and found a foreign made revolver, its four bullets, two passports and an ATM card (automated teller machine) from Premier Bank Limited. SI Rowshan Ali of Gulshan PS filed a case against Babul under the Arms Act. Babul was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka at around 4:00pm with a seven-day remand petition. The court granted a three-day remand. Investigation Officer of the case SI Afzal Hossain in the forwarding report said police needed Babul in their custody for seven days so that information about the source of the firearm and ammunition as well as whereabouts of his accomplices could be gathered by quizzing him. Concrete electric pole manufacturing company Khamba Ltd became one of the most talked about business firms in recent times. The organisation was built on around 99 acres of land at Gowlparah of Garinabari union in Panchagarh Sadar upazila and started production in 2003. Giasuddin AL Mamun was also one of the partners of Khamba Ltd. Babul used to look after the business. The cartel led by Mamun and Babul reportedly made thousands of crores of taka by selling concrete electric poles to Rural Electrification Board.



Chief Adviser to the caretaker government Fakhruddin Ahmed holds a meeting with Afghan President Hamid Karzai in New Delhi on Tuesday.

37TH FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY OF MAHILA PARISHAD
40 women honoured for their contribution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) at a function yesterday honoured 40 women for their outstanding performance and contribution to society. The function was organised to mark the 37th founding anniversary of the BMP at the auditorium of the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) in the city. The recipients were given certificates and crests for their outstanding contribution to 20 sectors including law, journalism, dance, drama, painting, sports, rights movement, documentary and fashion designing. Mita Huq and Ifat ara Dewan were awarded for music, Subarna Mustafa and Shimul Yusuf for acting, Barrister Sara Hossain and Tania Amir for law, Shahin Akhter and Nasreen Jahan for literature and Rokeya Sultana and Kanak Chapa Chakma for art. Munni Shaha and Shahnaj Munni of ATN Bangla, Mansura Hossain and Sumana Sharmin of the Prothom Alo, Aasha Mehreen Amin of The Daily Star and Parvin Sultana Jhuma received the award

for journalism while Shamim Ara Nipa, Tamanna Rahman, Afsana Mimi and Tarana Halim for performing arts. Kamrun Nahar Dana and Jobaira Rahman Linu were honoured for sports, Progga Laboni, Naila Tarannum, Ishrat Nishat, Shabnam Ferdousi and Fowzia Khan for culture, Selima Ahmed in business, Nazma Ahmed for labour rights movement, Mahin Khan and Anila Huq for fashion designing, Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana, Munira Morshed Munni in photography, Robeta Mrong and Chaitali Tripura for human rights movement, Dr Parvin Fatema and Dr Fazilatunnessa Malik in medical science. Posthumous honour was conferred on Nasreen Huq, country director of ActionAid, Yeasvanu Banu and Simi Banu. Speaking on the occasion BMP General Secretary Ayesha Khanam said, "We dream for a democratic and non-communal Bangladesh where the women will enjoy equal rights and opportunities." Today's Bangladesh is a rolling stone and it is moving towards a

positive direction, she said, adding, "We are standing on a crucial point from where we are hoping to eliminate all evils and moving forward to a better Bangladesh." Noted academic Prof Anisuzzaman and Norwegian Ambassador to Bangladesh Ingebjorg Stofring attended the function as special guests and conveyed their best wishes to the organisation working for the empowerment of women in the country. BMP Vice-president Selina Khalek presided over the programme while Assistant General Secretary Dr Maleka Banu read out a declaration urging the government to restore 1972 Constitution of the country, trial of the war criminals and establishing rule of law by restraining the rise of militancy. The declaration also included restoration of the National Women Development Policy 1997 and ensuring women's representation at decision-making level.



Bangladesh Mahila Parishad accorded a reception to 40 outstanding women on the occasion of its 37th founding anniversary at the auditorium of Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) in the city yesterday.

Politicians' failure

FROM PAGE 16 nature and thinking process are different," he said at a seminar at Dhaka University (DU). Bangladesh Philosophy Association organised the seminar titled "Our Education System: A joint problem of the teachers and students." "The current process of reforms and changes was not expected but there was no alternative because educated persons including teachers, politicians and lawyers made a lot of mistakes in the last 36 years." University Grants Commission Chairman MASaduzzaman, DU Vice-chancellor SMA Faiz, former adviser to caretaker government ASM Shahjahan, DU Philosophy Department Chairman Azizunnahar Islam and teacher Aminul Islam spoke among others on the occasion.

RECONSTRUCTION OF RAJSHAHI RAILWAY
Evicted footpath traders leading miserable life

RU CORRESPONDENT

More than one hundred footpath traders of Rajshahi Railway Station have been leading an inhuman life with their dependents as the authorities evicted them on February 5. During reconstruction and remodelling of the Rajshahi station, the railway authorities requested them to shift their shops to the rail gate premises and assured that after the end of construction they would be allowed to sit in the same places. Ayub Ali, convener of Rajshahi Footpath Traders Association, told reporters yesterday that the government should settle the issue immediately otherwise 100 small traders will go unemployed permanently. Many traders have taken loan from banks and NGOs such as Brac, Asa, TMSS and Grameen

Bank in high interest but their business has stopped, the traders alleged. Hawkers' leader Mahmud alleged that they had been doing business with old cloths, warm cloths, shoes, fruits and other commodities on old railway station premises during the past 30 years. Abbas, a footpath trader, said a portion of railway land have remained unused behind the station where a cloth market can be built for the rehabilitation of the small traders. Earlier, the footpath vendors appealed to the Rajshahi deputy commissioner, Rajshahi Development Authority, Rajshahi City Corporation and Railway authority to rehabilitate them, but no step has been taken yet.

DHAKA TODAY

CTIT 2007

The inaugural ceremony of BCS Computer City's annual computer fair CTIT 2007 will be held. Venue: BCS Computer City. Time: 9:30am.

Convocation

The 3rd Convocation of International Islamic University Chittagong will be held. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 10:00am.

Photography exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of a dual photography exhibition by Chief Photojournalist of the Jajaidin Firoz Chowdhury and her daughter Afifa Faiza Chowdhury Adrita will be held. Venue: Zainul Gallery, Fine Arts Institute. Time: 4:00pm.



Zonta Club of Dhaka III celebrated International Women's Day and Zonta International Yellow Rose Day at a city hotel recently. Advocate Fahima Nasreen was the guest speaker on the occasion while Zonta International Director Dilruba Ahmed and Area 02 Director Nahid Moyeen also spoke.

Hasina pledges free education up to degree level

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, who is now on a private visit to USA, has said education will be made free up to degree level if her party is voted to power again. She was speaking at a function at the Middle Bird High School at Kelley County in Jacksonville, Florida, yesterday. Hasina addressed over 1,000 students between 15 and 18 ages in four sessions and replied to questions from the students, who were split into groups, said a party press release. The AL president highlighted poverty alleviation, development in the education sector, establishment of a secular society by maintaining religious fraternity and uprooting terrorism in Bangladesh. Responding to a query, she narrated the history of the long and arduous freedom struggle of the Bangalees and how they emerged as an independent and sovereign nation under the leadership of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The function was attended by, among others, Charles Nelson, chairman of the Republican executive committee on discipline and policy planning affairs, Danzel New, Kelley County chairman of the Republican Party and commissioner Chares Stewart.

Police rescue abducted girl, arrest three

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Police rescued a girl student of a madrasa, who was kidnapped from Narayanganj on Tuesday, and arrested three people in this connection from city's Kafrul area early hours yesterday. The arrestees have been identified as Anki Begum, 24, Kaosar, 25 and Halim, 28. Rajia Sultana Rinki, 8, a student of class one at Nabiganj Madrasa and daughter of one Najir Uddin of Noada area in Nabiganj, was abducted at gunpoint while she was returning home from madrasa at 1:00 pm on Tuesday, said Kanti Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Bandar Police Station. The miscreants then called her father over cell phone and demanded Tk one lakh as ransom. Police were able to trace the call that subsequently resulted in arresting the culprits from Kafrul Bus Stand.

Buet teacher dies in Kazakhstan

UNB, Dhaka

Professor Dr Mohiuddin Ahmed of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) passed away due to a cardiac arrest in Kazakhstan on yesterday at the age of 53. Dr Ahmed, former head of the Department of Industrial and Production Engineering, suffered the cardiac arrest at about 11:00am during a seminar at KIMEP University in Kazakhstan. He left behind his wife, two sons and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Mostafa Kamal

Mostafa Kamal, assistant post-master general, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at his village home at Shariatpur district on April 1, says a press release. He left behind his mother, wife, two sons, four daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death. He was buried on the premises of his residence that night following a namaj-e-janaza at Shariatpur Government High School playground.

Death anniversary

Today is the 36th death anniversary of Abdul Latif Hawlader, a martyr in the War of Liberation and a former engineer at the Public Works Department (PWD), says a press release. He was brutally killed in front of his house on this day in 1971. On the occasion, a milad and doa mahfil will be held on Taherbagh Lane School premises. His friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the milad mahfil to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.