

Allocate more money to raise health awareness

Roundtable in city told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said the health sector of the country should be allocated more money for raising health awareness including health education and disease preventive training as the sector suffers from inappropriate investment.

Health Reporters Forum (HRF) organised the roundtable on "Invest in health, build a safer future" at the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) auditorium on the eve of World Health Day.

The speakers said the trend of investing more in infrastructure should be changed and private investment in health sector should be monitored. They said there should be indications in the national budget how private sector investment in health should be used.

Changing the mindset of health administration as well as professionals is mandatory to eliminate all sorts of disparity in health sector, they added.

Director General of Health Services Dr Shahjahan Biswas was present at the roundtable as chief guest while National Professor Nurul Islam and World Health Organisation (WHO) representative to Bangladesh Dr Duangvadee Sungkhol were also present as special guests.

Prof Abul Barkat, general secretary of Bangladesh Economic Association, presented the keynote speech on "Impact of Globalisation on Health" while Farid Hossain, bureau chief of the Associated Press, conducted the discussion. Ivy Zaman, director administration of Fortune Hospital, presented a paper on "Invest in health, build a safer future".

Prof Barkat in his presentation emphasised the health risks posed

Huda

FROM PAGE 1
amount of local and foreign currencies from his house on February 3.

The seized currencies include Tk 18,68,470 and Singapore \$1,796, £1,350, 300 euros and 18 dinars.

Huda was arrested by the joint forces at his residence on February 3 night and a day later was sent on detention on charges of anti-state activities, sabotage and corruption.

SA challenge

FROM PAGE 1
days' rest before facing the current top-ranked side of the world.

The match, which starts at 7:30pm Bangladesh Time, will be telecast live by state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) and SET Max from the Providence Stadium in Georgetown.

South Africa have four points after wins against Sri Lanka and Ireland while the Tigers are at the base of the table after two defeats in the Super Eights.

Although coach Dav Whatmore's desire to get the India job could be in the back of their minds, captain Habibul Bashar said that his boys are only focusing on the game.

"We are not thinking anything rather than our performance in the coming games. We didn't get any official version on the issue. We lost our first two Super Eights matches badly and the boys' confidence is little bit dented. Our only objective is to play good cricket against the top ranked side (South Africa)," Bashar told a TV channel yesterday.

She said WHO has taken initiatives to minimise threats to international health security.

National Professor Nurul Islam underscored the need for rationalising drug use and maintaining adequate drug supply at reasonable prices to all health centres.

Dr Halida Hanum Akther, director general of Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB), Dr Aj Faisal of Engender Health, Prof M Abul Faiz, principal of Dhaka Medical College, Dr Ishtiaque A Zaman of ICDDR, B, Dr Abdul Bais, vice-president, Bangladesh Private Medical and Diagnostic Owners Association, Alfa Arzu, convenor of HRF and Kabir Ahmed Khan, co-convenor of HRF, also spoke on the occasion.

Old scripts

FROM PAGE 1
contains a good number of old and invaluable books including 'Dissertation on the Languages', 'Literature and Manners of Eastern Nations', and over 100 years old edition of 'The Encyclopedia Britannica', he added.

There are a good number of 200 to 300 years old manuscripts and thousands of over 150 years old books in the library, said library committee member Shyamal Bhattacharya, who is a former teacher of Bogra Zila School.

Old manuscripts that are in bad conditions can be preserved with the help of modern technology, he added.

The library's 18 thousand books including the ancient manuscripts should be immediately shifted to the adjacent building that was constructed four years ago for preservation of the valuable books of the library, said the library committee secretary.

Sylhet mayor

FROM PAGE 1
Kamran, Ward Commissioners Syed Ahmed Hossain, Abdul Quayum Jalali, Santanu Dutta, Abdul Wadud Khaled, Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury, Sazzadur Rahman, Syed Misbahuddin, Faruque Ahmed, Mohammad Shahjahan, and former ward commissioners Humayun Kabir Shahin, Pradip Bhattacharya, Azharuddin Jahangir, Oliur Rahman Chowdhury, Maksud Bakht, Bidhan Chandra Kapali and former executive engineer of the then Sylhet Municipality Padma Sen Sinha, and SCC storekeeper Saiful Alam. Also among them is Ward Commissioner and city Jubo League General Secretary Azadur Rahman Azad who is already behind bars on different other charges.

He however said reforms should get priority over the timeframe as the reforms are most necessary to ensure democracy.

He also said election disputes should be settled soon after elections and campaign spending should be controlled.

AL leader Sheikh Selim said, "For fair, fair and credible elections, we can wait for 18 months but the CEC should say specifically when the commission will start the project of preparing the voter list."

He said the EC should finalise the election schedule after consulting the political parties.

Selim said, "18 months is a long time for preparing a voter list. If 18 months are required for the voter list, then when will the elections be held?"

He also urged the caretaker government to take initiatives to make the Election Commission truly independent, which he said, is a demand of Awami League-led 14 party coalition.

Communist Party of Bangladesh President Manzurul Ahsan Khan said if the present caretaker government fails, the entire nation will fail. He said it would be wise to hold the election as soon as possible.

Benazir's support

FROM PAGE 1
fair elections and level playing fields for all political parties and a caretaker set up to conduct the elections. That demand has not been accepted by the government."

Musharraf is due to seek re-election as president by national and provincial assemblies before holding general elections, the second during his tenure, late this year or early 2008.

He is under western pressure to ensure free and fair elections involving mainstream liberal parties, to counter radical groups who gained influential positions in the last polls in 2002 polls due to a political vacuum.

As well as Benazir, Musharraf has also exiled Nawaz Sharif, her rival, successor and the only other major rallying figure for Pakistani opposition.

Benazir Bhutto and Sharif recently held talks in London.

EC's reform proposals

FROM PAGE 1
the voter roll and to bring the necessary reforms but it should not waste any time at all.

"The Election Commission can complete the tasks quickly if it wants to but it must follow the law," he said adding that the EC is an independent and constitutional body.

Former adviser to a caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan told The Daily Star, "All reform proposals should be approved and implemented strictly within the minimum required time and the task of preparing the voter roll should go on simultaneously."

"Why such a long time will be needed to prepare a voter list with photographs?" he asked commenting on the 18 month timeframe for election given by the EC.

He urged quick implementation of the proposed reforms for holding a free, fair and credible election.

ASM Shahjahan, former adviser to a caretaker government, said the EC should have an action plan with a timeframe to prepare the voter roll as well as for holding the election.

"The timeframe should be fixed in line with the speech of the chief adviser which he gave after assuming the office as he said the election will be held within the shortest possible time," Shahjahan said.

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Biotechnology

FROM PAGE 1
emerging technology and it is the technology of 21st century. This technology is going to have tremendous impact on the resource management."

The seminar is jointly organised by the Science and ICT Ministry, Dhaka University, Brac University, Bangladesh Academy of Sciences, ICDDR, B, Incepta and Square Pharmaceuticals.

High migration cost

FROM PAGE 16
could not go outside freely in fear of arrest."

Thus he spent about six years there and on November 25 last year, police arrested him and put him in a deportation cell for 12 days before sending him back to Bangladesh on December 6.

"I did not return home earlier as I had to spend a substantial amount of money for going to Saudi Arabia. I managed to send only Tk 2 lakh to my family."

Uzzal, 31, of Gazipur, who worked in Bahrain as an assistant to a cook from 1999 to July 2006, used to get wages of Tk 6,000 to Tk 8,000 a month. Most of this money was used for repaying his loans from relatives for financing his migration.

"A good job there is a matter of luck... and only a very few can manage to get those," he said.

AK Sarwar, 41, who was in Saudi Arabia for about a decade since 1987, said carpenters and cooks get comparatively better wages there. Around 90 percent of over 25 lakh Bangladeshis in the Middle East are unskilled construction workers or work in municipalities with monthly wages of Tk 4,000 to Tk 6,000.

Sarwar, now president of Mirpur branch of Olibashi Karmi Kallyan Association of Bangladesh, said in the 1980s employers used to bear all expenses, including airfares and fees for resident permits and visas for Bangladeshi workers.

But wages and other facilities have come down sharply because of stiff competition for visas among the growing number of recruiting agencies and other middlemen.

Besides, the recruiting agencies use a chain of middlemen to lure rural workers for going abroad for jobs. And these middlemen exploit them in various ways.

"As a result, migration cost for a Middle East bound worker went up ranging from Tk 2 lakh to Tk 4 lakh," said Sarwar, who also worked for a recruiting agency in Bangladesh.

A study on temporary labour migration from Bangladesh also reflected their views.

The study by Mizanur Rahman of Asia Research Unit of the National University of Singapore said a worker now gets wages of

Three held

FROM PAGE 16
village in Manirampur upazila, reports BSS.

A team of Rab-6, Jessor, raided Tapoban village and rounded up listed criminal Kartik Hira, 27, of Shardanga village under Avoyagnar upazila of the district.

The arrestee was handed over to Manirampur police for quizzing.

The match in Guyana will be Bangladesh's only game at this venue before they switch to Barbados for the last three matches.

Sylhet housing

FROM PAGE 16
under mixed ownership, said sources close to the inquiry.

Of the accused ones, the Royal City Abashik Prokopalpa has encroached on a maximum 83 acres of public land in South Surma area. Some BNP and Jamaat leaders own the company. In the same area, the Sonargaon Abashik Prokopalpa of Jamaat leaders has illegally occupied 30 acres.

Asia at risk of floods

FROM PAGE 1
the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which determines the rise in global temperature.

But under any scenario, the world's most populous region will be badly hit.

Here are the major findings:

— 120 million to 1.2 billion people in Asia will experience increased water stress by 2020, and 185 to 981 million by 2050.

— Cereal yields in South Asia could drop in some areas by up to 30 percent by 2050.

— Even modest rises in sea levels will cause flooding and economic disruption in densely-populated mega-deltas, such as the mouths of the Yangtze in China, the Red River in China and Vietnam, and the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta in low-lying Bangladesh.

— Cholera and malaria could increase, thanks flooding and a wider habitat range for mosquitoes.

— In the Himalayas, glaciers less than four kilometres (2.5 miles) long will disappear entirely if average global temperatures rise by 3 degrees Celsius (5.4 Fahrenheit). This will initially cause increased flooding and mudslides followed by an eventual decrease in flow in rivers that are glacier-fed.

— Per capita water availability in India will drop from around 1,900 cubic metre (66,500 cubic feet) currently to 1,000 cu. metres (35,000 cu. ft.) by 2025.

Expat poisoned

FROM PAGE 16

"The man asked for Muktar and told me that Muktar came to Dhaka in early hours of Thursday as he was forced to return from Saudi Arabia," she said.

And after that they started searching for Muktar and finally got him dead at DMCH, she added.

Police suspect that criminals might have made him unconscious somewhere between the airport and Karwan Bazar and left him near the underpass after taking his luggage.

Benazir Bhutto and Sharif recently held talks in London.

Saarc car rally reaches Mumbai

BSS, Mumbai

The Saarc Car Rally-2007 on Thursday reached Mumbai, the commercial capital to India, after covering over 8,050 kilometres roadway in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and India.

But in 1975, a worker used to get \$300-400 (Tk 21,000-28,000) for 40 hours of work a week while he did not have to pay anything for his migration to the Middle East.

"All these recent changes in Asia have exposed the migrant workers to economic misery. Now, more migrants and their families are worried about the economic outcome of labour migration than ever before," says the study.

According to the study, a survey in Singapore also found that 67 percent of Bangladeshi migrant workers in Singapore could not recover their financial cost of migration while 55 percent of them expected to remit only the cost of migration or less.

Besides, 72 percent of the returnee migrant workers borrowed money from loan sharks with 5 and 10 percent interest rates per month, while 80 percent of their families could not recover their investments, the study found.

"...Migration involved a hidden cost, which often damaged the economic base of families of the migrants," said the study.

A Thai worker usually pays an amount equivalent to Tk 90,000 for migrating to Singapore while a Bangladeshi worker pays around Tk 3,15,000, the study pointed out.

A prospective Bangladeshi migrant worker pays roughly \$6,000-8,000 (Tk 42,000) for going to Korea and \$2,000-3,000 (Tk 1.4 to Tk 2.1 lakh) for Malaysia, whereas a prospective migrant from the Philippines pays roughly \$2,500 (Tk 1.75 lakh) for going to Korea and \$1,500 for Malaysia and the Middle East.

The main objective of the rally is to focus on the regional connectivity among the Saarc countries, highlight the need for improving regional trade, development of infrastructure, enhance people-to-people contact, explore the vast potential of business and investment, promote goodwill, familiarise the places of major tourist attractions and explore possibilities of trade by road.

Today the participants will make a bus journey to Pune, 200 kilometres from Mumbai. They will return to Mumbai today from where they will start for Colombo by air on April 8.

After visiting Sri Lanka till April 12, the rally will go to Male, the capital of the Maldives, where it will conclude its month-long journey on April 13, covering 9,000-km roadway in Saarc countries.

India, Pakistan

FROM PAGE 16

framework for the Siachen talks. He was later quoted as saying he was "hopeful" of a positive outcome.

Experts say India has around 5,000 troops on the glacier while Pakistan has less than half the number in the fr