

SECOND ROUND OF 15TH NIDS TODAY

2.20 crore children to be immunised

Bangladesh will immunise over 2.20 crore children under five today as part of the second round of 15th National Immunisation Days (NIDs), says a press release.

In this round, polio vaccines will be given to children aged between 0 and five years.

Besides, lifesaving vitamin A capsules will be given to 1-5 years children and chewable deworming tablets to 2-5 years children through 120,000 sites located in health centres and schools as well as mobile sites like bus, boat and train stations across the country.

The government with the support of UNICEF, WHO, Rotary International and the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, Atlanta) decided to immunise all children under five across the country when the first case of polio was detected early last year.

As the NIDs re-started, the government also decided to integrate National Vitamin A Plus Campaign (NVAC) with NIDs with the support of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Micronutrient Initiative, UNICEF and WHO.

Vitamin A supplementation provides a highly cost-effective way to protect children against serious health and growth hazards as its deficiency poses a major threat to the health and survival of children and mothers.

It also increases the risk of child deaths from diseases such as measles and diarrhoea. These infections contribute to over 25 per cent of deaths among children aged 1-5 years in Bangladesh.

"Beside containing the recurrence of polio, the combining vitamin A supplementation and deworming tablets will reduce a host of other ailments that put the lives of children at risk in Bangladesh," said Louis-Georges Arsenault, UNICEF Bangladesh Representative.

"To mark the World Health Day 2007 let us incorporate the theme of 'International Health Security' with the 2nd round of 15th NID by ensuring high quality coverage to stop transmission of Polio virus," said Dr Duangvadee Sungkhobol, World Health Organisation (WHO) Representative to Bangladesh.

Since the detection of the poliovirus in March, 2006 after an absence of five years, there have been five polio NIDs in 2006 which reached between 95 per cent and 97 per cent of under-5 children.

There will be another two rounds of NIDs in 2007 and two rounds every year from 2008 until bordering India, which has been identified as a polio endemic country, is free from polio.



PHOTO: STAR

A health worker measures blood pressure of a woman at a stall at an exhibition of medical equipment at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the city yesterday. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organised the exhibition marking the World Health Day.

Share expertise to ensure better health services

Health adviser tells discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health and Family Welfare Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Dr ASM Matiur Rahman yesterday called upon international community to exchange technology, information and expertise to ensure better health services for people.

"More investment in health sector will not do, rather exchange of technology, information and expertise among the countries can ensure better health services for people," said the adviser while speaking as chief guest at a discussion.

The discussion was organised jointly by Bureau of Health Education and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city to mark the World Health Day.

This year's theme of the day was 'Invest in health and ensure safer future.'

Admitting that the nation has severe limitation of resources, the adviser stressed on highest utilisation of these resources so that maximum number of people can be benefited from them.

He said the government has already introduced 'clustering system' under which logistics and

equipment of adjacent upazila health complexes will be shared to cope with local demands and providing better health services to people.

Regarding high mortality rate of pregnant mothers, the adviser said, "We have to ensure that no single mother dies of pregnancy related complexities."

Highlighting the menace of population explosion, he stressed on permanent or long-term birth control mechanisms to keep the population within the sustainable level.

Regarding the recent detection of bird flu in different parts of the country, the adviser urged people not to be panicked as there is sufficient stock of medicine and other facilities to combat it.

Stressing the importance of immunisation, he called upon parents and guardians to bring their children to nearby vaccination centres across the country to administer polio vaccine today.

WHO Representative to Bangladesh Dr Duangvadee

Sungkhobol said recent detection of Avian Influenza in the country is a threat to national and international public health.

The World Health Organisation has been working in close collaboration with all stakeholders to make the world more secure, she added.

Health and Family Welfare Secretary Ehsan-UI-Fatah was in the chair while Director General of Health Directorate Dr M Shahjahan Biswas and Director General of Family Planning Directorate Mohammad Addul Mannan also spoke on the occasion.

To mark the day, different government departments set up stalls outside the auditorium.

After the discussion, the health adviser visited the stalls that displayed festoons and banners raising health consciousness.

A group of folk singers also performed at the programme urging people to be more conscious about their health.

WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia and Comilla in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 36.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and Jessore and lowest 19.9 degree Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6.17pm today and rises at 5:43am 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	34.8	25.6	67	61
Chittagong	32.5	23.9	67	75
Rajshahi	36.5	28.2	76	64
Khulna	34.3	25.8	75	65
Barisal	32.0	24.2	76	68
Sylhet	32.0	21.5	73	65
Cox's Bazar	32.6	23.5	65	70

Demand for cancellation of 27th BCS reiterated

DU CORRESPONDENT

Fair BCS Movement, a platform of students and civil society members, yesterday reiterated their demand for immediate cancellation of 27th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examination for the sake of upholding justice, transparency and accountability in the administration.

They urged the caretaker government to form a supreme judicial council to investigate into the allegation of question leak in the preliminary examination. They said there are also allegations of mark tampering in evaluating answer sheets and in viva voce, and of illegal financial exchange.

The organisation placed their demands at a news conference at Modhu's Canteen of Dhaka University.

President of the Movement Abu Tareq delivered a written speech at the conference.

Prof Dr Syed Anwar Hossain, Prof Atiqur Rahman and Hafizur Rahman Curzon were present on the occasion.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), the media and civil society members have long been urging the government for reconstitution of the Public Service Commission (PSC), but no step has been taken yet, leaders of the organisation lamented.

They said there are sets of corruption allegations against the current Chairperson of PSC Prof ZN Tahmida Begum and its members.

People will accept fair polls even if it is delayed: JP

Jatiya Party (JP) (Manju) General Secretary Sheikh Shahidul Islam in a statement yesterday said people would prefer an impartial and acceptable election to a controversial and unacceptable polls.

In his reaction to Chief Election Commissioner's recent statement that preparation of voter list and voter ID card would require at least 18 months, Shahidul said the period seems a bit longer, but people would accept a fair election even if it is delayed.

He however urged the authorities concerned to ensure that the election is not unduly belated.

Shahidul also called for withdrawal of ban on political activities to involve common people in total electoral process.

3 hotels fined in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A mobile court fined three residential hotels Tk one lakh during an anti-adulteration drive in Khulna city yesterday.

The court led by Metropolitan Magistrate Atiqul Haque raided Hotel Royal International, Hotel Castle Salam and Hotel Western only to find that they were selling stale frozen foods and using spices that were not approved by the BSTI. Kitchens were very dirty and bottles of date-expired sauce were also found.

Hotel Royal was fined Tk 50,000 while Hotel Castle and Hotel Western were fined Tk 25,000 each.

Remainder of fund for Shuchi's treatment donated to cancer hospital

Hosne Ara Begum, mother of Shamim Sharmin Shuchi, a meritorious student of Class XII of Kurmitola BAF Shaheen College who died of cancer, donated Tk 4.50 lakh to Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH), says a press release.

This was the remaining part of the fund raised for her treatment from her well-wishes.

She handed over the cheque for the amount to Kazi Rafiqul Alam, president of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, at the Mission Bhaban in the city yesterday.

For this donation, a bed of the hospital will be named after Shamim Sharmin Shuchi.

Parvin Ara Khanom and Nurun Nahar Khanom, both colleagues of Hosne Ara in Kurmitola BAF Shaheen College, were also present on the occasion.

Shuchi got blood cancer in 2001. At that time a fund raising drive was conducted with support from the print and electronic media, which received a good response. But unfortunately Shuchi succumbed to the deadly disease. The above amount remained unspent after meeting all costs of her treatment. The amount has now been donated to AMCH.

Hosne Ara hopped that the departed soul of Shuchi will be happy at this move.

Mission President Rafiqul Alam thanked Hosne Ara for her noble gesture.

He also requested all to extend their helping hand for the 500-bed Cancer Hospital now under construction at Uttara in the city.

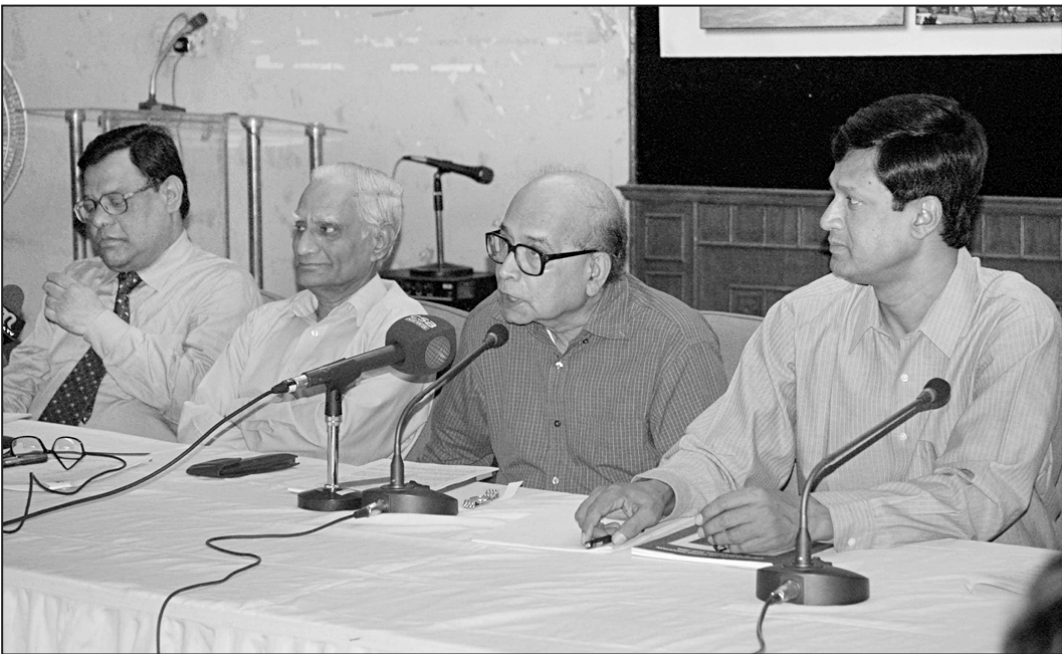


PHOTO: STAR

Prof Muzaffer Ahmed speaks at an open discussion titled "UGC's 20-year plan on higher education" organised by Nagorik Sanghati at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Prof M Moniruzzaman Miah and Prof M Asaduzzaman and on his left is Dr Atiqur Rahman. (Story on Page 1)

BBC BANGLADESH SANG LAP

AL, BNP leaders for check & balance on powers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Leaders of both the Awami League and BNP yesterday said they want a balance between the presidential and parliamentary powers so that the president or the prime minister could not exercise their power like a dictator.

"We have failed to establish a proper parliamentary system in the country in the last 15 years. So we want a check and balance on the state powers," said AL leader AKM Jahangir Hossain at the BBC Bangladesh Sanglap held in Barisal.

BNP leader Mosharrar Hossain Shahajan said they do not want the president or the prime minister to become a dictator.

"We will have to carry out research into whether we can run the state by combining aspects of both presidential and parliamentary systems," Shahjahan, former state minister for religious affairs, said, adding that such a decision must be taken in parliament.

Both the AL and BNP leaders made the remarks in reply to a question regarding the army chief's recent statement that Bangladesh

will have to construct its own brand of democracy.

BBC Bangla Service and the BBC World Service Trust organised the Sanglap programme moderated by Kamal Ahmed of BBC Bangla Service.

Anannya Editor Taslima Hossain, a member of the panel of discussants, said it would not be right to impose any other system. Only the people will decide on this issue, she added.

Prof Mohammad Hanif, former principal of Barisal BM College,

termed the army chief's remarks rational.

Replying to a question, Jahangir, former state minister for textile, said the Election Commission can prepare the voter list and cards with photograph and hold the election in less than 18 month's time.

BNP leader Shahjahan said the election should take place after the ongoing reforms are implemented.

Both the leaders also said they want a country free from corruption.

Listed criminal, 4 others held in Ctg

BSS, Chittagong

Members of the law enforcement agencies in separate drives arrested five miscreants, including a listed criminal, during the last 24 hours ending at 4:00pm yesterday.

One revolver and 11 stolen mobile phones were also recovered during the drives, said separate press releases of Rab and CMP.

Kotwali police arrested a listed criminal from Shah Amanat Mazar area in the city.

Abu Bakkar alias Selim, 32, son of Abul Kashem, had been absconding for a long time.

Khulshi police picked up four members of an organised gang of thieves along with 11 stolen cell phones from Ambagan area.

They were identified as Absar, 24, Nazrul Islam, 27, Didar, 25, and Selim, 26.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab team seized a foreign-made revolver in an abandoned state at Noapara under Teknaf upazila in Cox's Bazar.



PHOTO: ISPR

Air Commodore Shah Md Ziaur Rahman shakes hand with outgoing Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Fakhruil Azam after taking over as new Chief of the Air Staff at a ceremony at Air Headquarters in the city yesterday.

Two muggers arrested, 2 motorbikes seized in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two muggers were arrested and two motorbikes were seized in three separate mugging incidents in the city yesterday.

Rony, a mugger, was injured when a bullet hit his neck as a gang of three muggers was escaping an angry mob after snatching a gold chain from one Liton, a resident of Gandaria in front of Shadhona Oushodhaloy at Gandaria at 3:15pm. Other two members of the gang fired the bullet to make a way through the mob.

Police arrested injured Rony.

Iqbal Hossain, another mugger, was injured in mob beating at Bangla Motor at 1:00pm. Iqbal along with other four of the gang was fleeing riding on two motorbikes after snatching Tk 5000 from one Tofazzal Hossain.

Being chased by police, Iqbal got caught at Bangla Motor along with the motorbike and an angry mob beat him. Other members of the gang fled leaving another motorbike abandoned at Bangla Motor. Police arrested injured Iqbal, captured the

two motorbikes and recovered the mugged money from Iqbal.

In another incident at Haricharan Roy road in Sutrapur, a 5/6-member group of muggers stormed into Talha Enterprise, a phone-fax shop, in the early hours of yesterday and took away Tk 30,000 in cash, seven cell-phone sets and pre-paid mobile cards worth about Tk 50,000.

Three separate cases were filed in these connections.

DU opens centre to research Hinduism, Buddhism

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) yesterday launched a new research centre to conduct research on Hinduism and Buddhism.

The research centre named Professor Dilip Kumar Bhattacharya Research Centre will also research on the life and philosophy of Prof Dilip.

Late Dilip Kumer Bhattacharya was a professor of Pali and Sanskrit department of DU. He donated all his property to the university.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz formally inaugurated the centre yesterday morning.

Chaired by Prof Madhabi Rani Chandra, the inaugural ceremony was also addressed by Pro-vice Chancellor Prof AFM Yusuf Haider, Dean of Arts Faculty Prof Sadrul Amin, Prof Paresh Chandra Mandal and Deputy High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Sarbojit Chakravarti.

Prof Anisuzzaman of Bangla department delivered Bhattacharya memorial lecture.

Easter Sunday today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Today is the Easter Sunday, the day of glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Members of the Christian community will celebrate the Day with due religious fervour amid thanksgiving prayers and other programmes.

The Christian faith is grounded on the redemptive death and glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ through which the humanity is guaranteed eternal life in heaven.

On the occasion, Bangladesh Christian Association's Central Executive Committee President Arnold C Gomes and Secretary General Albert P Costa greeted people of Bangladesh on behalf of the Christian Community.

In a joint statement, they thanked the chief adviser to the caretaker government and other concerned on the occasion.

They urged the government to declare the Easter Sunday a government holiday.

Dhaka Pastors' Fellowship organises a thanksgiving prayer gathering (known as Easter Sunrise Service), on the Jatia Sangsad Bhaban premises at 5:45am today.

BSF opens fire on Jessore BDR camp

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) opened fire on a camp of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) at Sharsha upazila in Jessore district last night.

The BSF of Piply camp at Swarupnagar under North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal opposite to Goga border of Bangladesh fired four shots targeting the BDR personnel at about 4:00am.

No casualty was reported.

When contacted, Commanding Officer (CO) of 41 Rifles Battalion Lt Col Asif Abdur Rouf confirmed the incident and said BSF men fired four shots without any provocation, but BDR did not retaliate it.

N'ganj shop employee shot, robbed of Tk 80,000

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A gang of muggers snatched Tk 80,000 from a wholesale shop employee after shooting and injuring him at Nitaiganj in Narayanganj on Friday night.

The muggers riding in a motorcycle attacked Shankar Chandra Saha, employee of Babul Traders, and Sushanta Roy, son of the owner of the shop, at B Das Road at around 10:00pm when they were returning after collecting outstanding bills from shops in Bandar areas, said Sushil Kumar Roy, the owner of the shop.

The gang fired shots at them before snatching the bag containing the money. Shankar, who was carrying the bag, received bullet wound in his leg. He is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Knitwear factory workers demand arrears

UNB, Narsingdi

Workers of a knitwear factory staged a demonstration in the town yesterday demanding their arrears.

Around 3,500 workers of Chowdhury Knitwear Factory brought out a procession from the BSCIC industrial estate at about 10:00am and ended at district press club.

They submitted memorandums to the army camp, police super and DC's offices, demanding realisation of their arrears of three months.

The law enforcers stopped them when the workers try to hold a rally in front of the press club.

They said one factory official assaulted seven of their colleagues last week when they demanded their arrears. The injured were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Death anniversary



Today is the 14th death anniversary of Humayun Zahir, former chief legal adviser of Janata Insurance Company Ltd, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at the head office of the company at Motijheel C/A in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow.

Humayun Zahir, also vice-chairman of United Commercial Bank Ltd, District Governor of Lions' Clubs International and founder of Dhaka Mahila College, was murdered in front of his Dhanmondi residence on this day in 1993.