

Concern over HR violations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Institute of Human Rights (BIHR) has expressed grave concern at the human rights violations in the country. The caretaker government has taken various laudable steps to safeguard human rights, but killings and torture by law enforcement agencies have continued in violations of human rights, said BIHR Chairman Justice KM Sobhan and Executive Director Nazmul Haque Shah Chowdhury in a press release. According to a report of the organisation, 30 people were killed and 121 others tortured by the law

enforcers across the country in May. Besides, 7702 people fell victim to mass arrest and six people died in police and jail custody due to illness and old-age complications, the report said. It also said that 22 women and children were raped and eight people fell victim to acid attack during the period. Besides, a journalist was killed while on duty and three others were assaulted. Also, a law enforcer was killed and 24 others were injured while on duty. The report was prepared on the basis of reports published in 12 newspapers.



(From left) Former FBCCI president Abdul Awal Mintoo, owner of Bengal Group Abul Khair Litu and sacked chief conservator of forests Osman Gani are being taken to a court in the city yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

UNIQUE PROJECT LAUNCHED

1.6 lakh out-of-school children to be enrolled in 24 districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a view to imparting quality primary education to 1.6 lakh out-of-school children in 24 districts, Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) yesterday launched a project titled UNIQUE (Upscaling Non-formal Primary Education Through Institutionalising Qualitative Endeavour) with the financial assistance of the European Commission. The 18-month-long project also aims at enhancing capacity of local communities for effective management of non-formal primary educa-

tion, said the organisers. Speaking as chief guest at the launching ceremony, Head of Delegation of European Commission Stefan Frowein said despite Bangladesh made significant progress in primary school enrolment, it is yet to effectively address the drop-out rate from the schools. In this connection, he reiterated their assistance to ensure best possible voluntary education for the dropped-out children. The EC ambassador hoped that the dropped-out children will be

happy to attend the classes under UNIQUE programme as non-governmental organisations of Bangladesh have valuable experience in imparting non-formal education for years. Saying that it was an aim of European Commission to establish linkage between formal and non-formal education, he hoped that UNIQUE will be able to establish that long-cherished relationship. The project will also be beneficial for DAM and its partner organisations, as it will permit joint learning

and common sharing of best practices in the field of non-formal education, he added. President and Chief Executive of DAM Kazi Rafiqul Alam said reaching the dropped-out children in shol, coastal, haor, tribal and hill areas will be one of the major challenges of the programme. He said lessons under UNIQUE programme will be more interesting as it will offer local and popular stories and fables in the curriculum. As the timing of classes will also be adaptable with the local needs, parents will happily send their children to classes, he observed.

Alam said the UNIQUE project is not meant for substituting the formal primary education system, rather its role will be supplementary so that Bangladesh can make a significant progress in the achievement of Millennium Development Goal. DAM along with its partner organisations Plan Bangladesh, CCBD, Dorp, Padakkhep, Manobik Unnayan Kendra and Surovi will implement the project. The launching ceremony was held at DAM auditorium in the city where Director General of Bureau of Non-formal Education Md Rafiquzzaman, Project Director of UNIQUE Shafiqul Islam and Deputy Executive Director of DAM Ehsanur Rahman also spoke.



PHOTO: STAR

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) demolishes illegal structure at Tejgaon-Gulshan Link Road in the city yesterday.

Training course for policemen begins in city

A two-day training course for police personnel of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) aiming to reduce drug related crimes and preventing the spread of HIV started at the Detective Training School (DTS) at Rajarbagh in the city yesterday, says a press release.

The course is organised by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) with the assistance of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Bangladesh Police, USAID and Family Health International (FHI), Bangladesh, under the project titled 'Police, prisons, narcotics and community service: A tripartite project to reduce crime, drug dependence and to prevent the spread of HIV in Dhaka city'. The course is designed for the sub-inspectors (SI), assistant sub-inspector (ASI) and constables of selected police stations of Dhaka.

The objective of the training is to educate the police personnel about the dangers of drug dependency, related risk of HIV/AIDS, their own risks and well-being of their families and society. The ultimate desire of the initiative is to develop progressive and empathetic behavior of the police personnel towards drug dependents, facilitating referral to treatment and rehabilitation and thereby reduction of HIV infection related with injecting drug users.

Additional DIG and Commandant of the Detective Training School Dr Md Abdur Rahim chaired the inaugural session of the training course. Mohammad Hadis Uddin, former inspector general of Police and coordinator of South-South Centre, Bangladesh attended the session as the chief guest.

Dr Amzad Ali, national programme officer of IOM, delivered the welcome speech while Program Officer of Family Health International, Bangladesh Sk Jahangir Hossain also attended.

The speakers hoped that the police personnel who attended the course would utilise their knowledge to create awareness among the police personnel and play a positive role to prevent drug dependency and reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS.

'Provide vocational training for street children'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of street children in the country continues to rise, but the government has no comprehensive policy for their welfare, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

Although there is no official figure for the total number of such children, it is generally assumed that the number is approaching 20 lakh, they said.

They also suggested providing vocational training for the street children and setting up a fund for them.

Plan Bangladesh and Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC) in corporation with Media Aid Bangladesh organised the discussion on 'Duties of guardians in helping street children' and an annual cultural and prize giving ceremony at Basabo in the city. Some 1300 street children took part in the programme.

The speakers at the discussion said the street children could contribute to the national development if they get opportunities, but the measures taken for their welfare are totally inadequate.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Executive Officer Nazmul Hai said combined efforts of the government and NGOs are needed to rehabilitate the street children.

In urban areas, many street children work as domestic help, porters and street vendors, and are vulnerable to sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation, said Prof Milan Bikash Pal, executive director of PSTC.

Plan Bangladesh Dhaka South Programme Manager FM Shamsul Alam and DCC Ward Commissioner Mosharaf Hossain Manju also spoke.

Death anniversary



Today is the 33rd death anniversary of noted parliamentarian and journalist Mahbubul Huq, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his elder daughter's residence at Dhanmondi in the city. Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the programme.

Mahbubul Huq Girls High School and Mahbubul Huq Memorial Library will also organise a discussion and milad mahfil at Farhadnagar in Feni.

Atiqur Rahman



(JSD), says a press release.

Today is the 19th death anniversary of Atiqur Rahman, an organiser of the War of Liberation and former central leader of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal

On the occasion, relatives, friends, colleagues and admirers have been requested to pray for salvation of his departed soul.

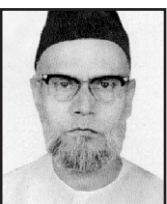
Lutfunnessa Ibrahim



Today is the 7th death anniversary of Begum Lutfunnessa Ibrahim, wife of Justice late Mohammed Ibrahim, says a press release.

On this occasion, a milad mahfil will be held in the morning at her residence. Foods will be distributed among the destitute and wreaths will be placed at her grave at Banani graveyard.

Alhaj Mvi Md Turab Ali



Today is the 28th death anniversary of Alhaj Mvi Md Turab Ali, father of two martyred sons Shaheed Engineer Fazlur Rahman and Md Rafiqul Islam

Baset, who were killed by Pakistani army on April 1, 1971, says a press release.

Turab Ali was a senior office assistant of Dhaka High Court.

On the occasion, a milad and doa Mahfil will be held at his village residence at Kazir Kandi in Narsingdi after Zohr prayers today.

CA thanks physicians, nurses

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed thanked physicians, nurses and the staff of Tangail General Hospital for providing proper treatment and care to him after he fell sick on Sunday.

The chief adviser, who attended his office yesterday, expressed the gratitude through a letter to the hospital authorities, according to a competent source.

He fell sick owing to exhaustion while delivering speech at the inaugural function of the National Tree Planting Movement and Tree Fair 2007 on Tangail District Sadar ground on Sunday morning.

He was rushed to the Tangail General Hospital and recovered quickly from the indisposition.

The chief adviser also enquired about the condition of Tangail Deputy Commissioner Akhter Ali Sarker who also fell sick on Sunday and was brought to Dhaka for treatment. The CA also talked to the DC.

World Environment Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Environment Day will be observed across the country today as elsewhere in the world with a view to creating mass awareness about climate change and its impact.

This year the theme is 'Melting Ice: A Hot Topic?' as declared by the United Nations.

Ministry of Environment and Forests, Department of Environment and various non-government organisations working on environment have chalked out elaborate programmes, including rallies, processions, environment fair, discussion, children's essay and poster competitions, musical soirees, tree plantation and recycling and clean-up campaigns to mark the day.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on this occasion emphasising the need for sensitising people about the hazards of global warming.

Prof Iajuddin said the impact of environment not only falls on a certain country or region, rather it affects the whole world.

The president said temperature of earth surface and water level of sea will rise due to climate change. "Low-lying areas will go under water, flow of river water will be reduced and salinity in water and land increased for climate change," he mentioned.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in his message said plants and animals of the world are facing risk due to change in weather and climate and environment degradation.

"Deforestation, filling of water bodies, hindrance in flow of rivers, industrial waste, noise pollution and various contexts are destroying ecological balance," he said.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in his message said greenhouse gas emissions are making the world warmer. "Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are higher than at any time for the past 600,000 year and rate of increase is accelerating," he said.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina called upon the people to raise awareness about climate change and wage a movement for preventing environmental pollution.

She said Bangladesh is an agro-based country where livelihood of most of the countrymen depends on agriculture but deforestation, lack of rainwater and navigability of the rivers and irrigation of croplands from the saline river waters are making Bangladesh's fertile lands infertile.

Environment and Forest Adviser Dr CS Karim will inaugurate the programmes organised on the occasion and an environment fair at Osmani Memorial Hall at 12:30pm today. Department of Environment will also organise a rally and walkathon at 7:30am.

Meanwhile, Acting Secretary to the Ministry of Environment and Forests AHM Rezaul Karim at a press briefing at the Secretariat yesterday said they have already taken action against 215 corrupt officials and filed cases against 459 officials on charge of alleged corruption and irregularities.

KASHMIR ISSUE DROPPED FROM SHIMLA DECLARATION

Saarc countries urged not to give shelter to terrorists

PALLAB BHATTACHARIYA, Shimla

A conference of Saarc parliamentarians and journalists yesterday urged the member countries not to give shelter to or train terrorists.

They also suggested a slew of measures for energy cooperation, increased investment and efficient connectivity.

After two-days of deliberations on how relations among eight Saarc countries could be strengthened overcoming differences, the conference of 87 MPs organised by South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA) welcomed the ongoing peace process between India and Pakistan.

An attempt was made to recommend that people of Jammu and Kashmir be involved as a third party in Indo-Pak talks over the state, triggering a verbal duel between parliamentarians of the two countries yesterday.

The Indian MPs strongly opposed this recommendation, saying Kashmir was a bilateral issue and at their insistence the reference was dropped from the Declaration.

A "consensus" was reached that the additional proposal on involvement of people of Jammu and Kashmir be dropped and the issue be treated as a bilateral one between India and Pakistan, said SAFMA Secretary General Imliaz Alam at a joint press conference with its president K K Katyal.

The "Shimla Declaration" appreciated the "two-fold objectives" of the peace process, which comprises "exploration of all options for a final settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir question in an atmosphere free of violence and terrorism and normalisation of bilateral relations."

The conference urged all countries in the region to put in place a comprehensive sustainable dialogue mecha-

nism for resolving all inter and intra state conflicts.

Asking the Saarc countries to implement the current protocol on cooperation against terrorism and bring it in line with international norm, it said member nations "should not offer shelter, arms and training to terrorists."

The declaration condemned terrorist attacks against innocent people "wherever they occur, whoever sponsor and on whatever pretext" and rejected "violence as a means by the parties to the conflict".

"We call upon both the people and governments of South Asian countries to join hands against the scourge of terrorism and violence on any pretext while addressing the genuine aspirations of the people and the causes giving birth to the dissatisfaction of the masses," it said.

Preserve green space for proper growth of children

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting yesterday demanded preservation of green spaces in the city for balanced development of future generation.

The meeting was organised jointly by Paribesh Bachao Andolon (Save the Environment Movement) and fortnightly Anannya at the National Press Club demanding preservation of a green space at Block H of Mirpur Section 2 where more than one thousand trees were chopped down in April.

The speakers comprising environmentalists, lawyers, economists and residents of the area called for resolving the issue immediately and planting new saplings in the park.

They also demanded exemplary punishment to those involved in the felling of trees and measures to save the park for the sake of the children.

Tasmima Hossain, editor of Anannya, said residents of the area are still in fear as the issue is not resolved yet and the people involved in the destruction of trees are powerful.

She said this type of irresponsible act must be stopped for proper grooming up of children.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, director of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), said it is really unbelievable that the govern-

ment and the policymakers are not aware of the need of parks and open spaces in the city.

There is a competition for converting the parks and open spaces into market or public toilet, she said, adding 35 out of 61 open spaces have already been grabbed.

She said parks are not maintained properly although Dhaka City Corporation allocates money every year for their maintenance.

Comparing the destruction of park with genocide, former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank Khandokar Ibrahim Khaled said we must wage movement whenever there is any evil attempt to destroy the greenery of the city.

The children should be given proper space for playing and breathing if we want to make them worthy citizens, he added.

"All of us should stage peaceful sit-in for at least one hour everyday if any incident like this takes place in or outside the city to stop it," he added.

Expressing solidarity with the initiatives taken by Paribesh Bachao Andolon and Anannya, noted economist Dr Atiur Rahman said unlimited lust and tendency to become rich overnight are pushing the nation back.

He urged all citizens to be united to save not only the Mirpur park but

also all other parks and open spaces in the city.

Presiding over the meeting, noted writer Selina Hossain said those who do not work for saving the environment are not eligible for becoming the citizens.

Demanding stern punishment to those responsible for tree felling, she said it is the high time to stand against all ill-doers who bag lots of money and damage country's asset.

Poet and sculptor Rabiul Hossain, freedom fighter Ferdousi Priyabhashini, Paribesh Bachao Andolon Convener Abu Naser Khan and children and residents of the area also spoke on the occasion.

'Form new board of CRP trustees'

Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Manobadhikar Samannaya Parishad (BMSP) yesterday demanded forming of a new board of trustees of the Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) after dissolving the present one.

Condemning the present activities of CRP trustee board, BMSP said "They (influential quarter of trustee board) are doing 'fowl play' with Valerie Taylor, the main promoter and founder of CRP."

BMSP also demanded that the corrupt officials of CRP are identified and brought to book.

BMSP also expressed solidarity with the demand of Nagorik Committee to reinstate Valerie in her position at the CRP.

The organisation also expressed gratitude to Valerie for her efforts and hard work that brought CRP in the present situation.




Obituary

Rebecca (Monjon Ara Begum), the first woman film director of Bangladesh, passed away due to kidney failure on Sunday at Dhaka Community Hospital at the age of 73, says a press release.

She was rushed to hospital on May 22 as she fell ill seriously.

Rebecca, director of Bindu Thekey Britto, left behind her one son, one daughter and a host of relatives, friends and admirers to mourn her death.

She was buried at Shahjahanpur graveyard yesterday.



WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Khulna and Dhaka divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Southwest monsoon may advance up to Chittagong during the period, Met Office said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. Highest temperature 35.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 21.2 degree Celsius at Tangail and Bogra.

The sun sets in the capital at 6.43pm today and rises at 5:11am 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	32.8	22.0	98	63
Chittagong	32.0	26.8	73	76
Rajshahi	35.5	22.0	82	56
Khulna	33.0	22.5	92	63
Barisal	31.5	23.0	96	76
Sylhet	31.2	23.3	96	69
Cox's Bazar	32.0	26.8	66	80