

Ensure access to land for poor to reduce poverty

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Poverty reduction programmes must ensure access of the poor to land and housing, infrastructure and services and to income and assets, said the speakers at a seminar yesterday.

The seminar titled 'Alleviation of urban poverty through good governance' was held at Buet Council Bhaban in the city.

Buet's Department of Urban and Regional Planning and UNDP jointly organised the seminar.

Speaking as chief guest at the seminar, Adviser Mohammad Anwarul Iqbal said the government is trying to make sure that the poor get land for housing and are not evicted from the slums without any rehabilitation plan for them.

He said at least 40 percent of the city dwellers, which is no less than 3.5 million people, are living in the

slums.

The government is now encouraging the private real estate developers to provide housing facilities for the poor, he added.

The adviser said eradication of corruption would be a first step towards establishing the rights of the poor on urban land, housing and economic opportunities.

Prof Nazrul Islam, chairman of University Grants Commission, stressed the need for "decentralisation" of power for smooth running of the government.

He said the local government should be empowered right now to ensure good governance.

To reduce the pressure on city, Prof Nazrul said the UGC is not going to allow any private university to have their campus inside the city and will encourage them to move to suburbs.

Prof Roxana Hafiz of urban and

regional planning department of Buet, in her keynote speech discussed the issue of urban poverty and good governance and recommended participatory budget, annual development report, public feedback mechanism and ombudsman to strengthen the local government.

Terminology urban poverty 'identical in all the least developed countries', UNDP Country Director Manoj Basnyat laid emphasis on the community-based approach of municipalities.

This arrangement would allow Bangladesh achieving the millennium development goal, he added.

Prof AMM Safiullah, vice-chancellor of Buet, and Prof Sarwar Jahangir, dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Planning, also spoke on the occasion.

Murder case filed against Barisal mayor, 20 others

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A murder case was filed against 21 people, including Barisal City Corporation Mayor Majibor Rahman Sarwar and Ward Commissioner Advocate Atiqur Rahman, yesterday.

Shahana Parvin alias Renu Begum, wife of Md Shahjahan Howladar, a notorious terrorist and close aide to the mayor, lodged the case with Kotwali Police Station in the city.

The other accused are BNP activists Sultan Sharif, Abdus Sobhan Khan, Giasuddin, Kalu Howladar, Shahid Howladar, Rahim Khan, Berek Howladar, Rob Howladar, Kawsar Hossain, Chandu, Monir, Nasir Howladar, Masum Howladar, Alauddin Howladar, Latif Howladar, Sekandar Ali, Zakir Howladar, Kalam Howladar and Zafar Matubbar. Some of them are also accused in August 17 serial bomb blast cases.

In the case, Renu Begum alleged that her husband was killed by the accused in Ruir Pool area of the city on September 16, 2003.

Although two cases had been filed after the murder, they are yet to be disposed of.

Govt urged to set up 'Char Development Fund'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Char Alliance, a platform of the NGOs, yesterday requested the government to create a fund to improve the living condition of 'char' (shoal) dwellers in the next budget.

Chairman of the alliance Atiur Rahman at a press conference in Dhaka said if the government does not have any special financial supports for the 'char' people, the millennium development goals (MDGs) will not be achieved as more than 5 million people live in 'char' areas in riverine Bangladesh.

Requesting the government to set up 'Char Development Fund', Atiur also said most of the 'char' areas across the country are affected by 'mongra' or near famine situation, as people there do not have any work for most of the time of a year.

Earlier, the Char Alliance placed a set of proposals to Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam for the upcoming budget.

HC validates govt notification promoting judicial officer

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday validated a government notification promoting a judicial officer, Ali Ashraf Khan Lode, to additional secretary at the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

Discharging its rule issued earlier upon the government following a Public Interest Litigation writ petition, a division bench of Justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice Syed M Ziaul Karim delivered the judgment.

Justifying the government action, the court observed that there is "no basis of declaring illegal" the appointment of Lode, a judicial officer, to the post of additional secretary.

As Lode was appointed before the promulgation of the Judicial Service Rules in compliance with the Supreme Court verdict given in the Masder Hossain case for separating the judiciary from the executive, "the question of amalgamation between the members of the judicial and executive officers does not arise".

Dr Shaheen Malik, an advocate, filed the writ petition.

BOU HSC results published

UNB, Dhaka

Results of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) programme under the Bangladesh Open University (BOU) were published yesterday, registering the pass percentage of 40.85 percent.

A total of 49,242 candidates took part in the final examination and 20,117 of them came out successfully. Of the successful students, 14 obtained grade A while 216 got A-, 1508 received B, 10,769 obtained C and 7,610 got D.

The BOU authorities also published the results of the 1st year final examination. A total of 32,464 students appeared in the first year final examination.

The examinees have been advised to contact only their respective HSC tutorial centres (TC) to get their results.



Outgoing Bhutanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Dasho Jigme Tshultim pays a farewell call on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY OBSERVED

'Involve women in policy making for sustainable dev'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the need to incorporate women in all development issues to ensure sustainable development in the country.

They said though women play an important role during the disaster using their indigenous knowledge, they are ignored in the environment laws and disaster management policies.

Environmental risk and disaster can be reduced through incorporating women in the environment and disaster management policies, they said.

The seminar styled 'Women, environment and disaster: our society and gender identification' was jointly organised by the Department of Sociology of Dhaka University (DU) and Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (Bapa) at TSC auditorium in the city marking the World Environment Day.

In her keynote paper, Dr Mahbuba Nasrin, a professor of the sociology department, said a village woman utilises her indigenous knowledge in combating disaster.

Women engage in perpetual struggle to manage and distribute food to their families to survive during the natural disasters like flood, draught, famine or mongra (a famine like situation), she said, adding they also toil over rearing up children, collecting drinking water and looking after the domestic animals.

Despite their contribution, women are constantly becoming victims of patriarchy and gender discrimination, she said.

Mahbuba also said women's participation is vital in formulation and implementation of a gender sensitive policy.

Speaking on the occasion as the chief guest, Prof Nazrul Islam, chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC), said though women are helpless in the disaster, they are the most courageous.

When a man engages himself busy in saving his own life, a woman tries to save her child along with the most necessary households with her, he said.

Though there are environmental

laws in the country, it is rarely implemented due to lack of good governance, he said, adding lack of good governance is responsible for the sufferings of the nation.

Prof Harun-Ar-Rashid, dean of the Social Science Faculty, said the relationship between human being and environment is inseparable and if any environmental changes take place, it affects the human being too.

Women are the worst affected of natural disaster as they are very close to the environment, he said.

He also said good governance and social movement on environment is essential for environmental development.

"Women as a stakeholder should be incorporated in all the development issues to ensure sustainable development of the country", he said.

Bapa Vice President Quazi Madina said the natural disaster is the major obstacles for the country's development and the women are the worst affected, as they do not have the chance to enjoy socio-economic and cultural facilities like the man.

Presided over by Dr M Aminul Islam, the seminar was also addressed by Prof Dr Rangal Sen, of the sociology department.

Meanwhile, Jica Alumni Association of Bangladesh organised a seminar titled 'Growing Environmental Pollution in Bangladesh' at Centre for Excellence auditorium on Dhaka University campus yesterday on the occasion of World Environment Day.

Resident Representative of Jica in

Bangladesh Nobuko Suzuki Kayashima said Jica has started collaboration with different government agencies of Bangladesh through a number of projects on environmental management since 1992. The results of those joint projects were found satisfactory, she added.

She also urged all to work sincerely so that the future generation can inherit a safe and healthy environment from their ancestors.

Speaking as the chief guest, Vice Chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agriculture University Prof Lutfor Rahman Khan spoke about adverse effects of the degraded environment on the agriculture.

Jica Alumni Association President Azmal Hossain chaired the seminar while General Secretary Ijar Uda, Vice Chairman of Institute of Engineers Bangladesh Syed Mahfuz Ahmed and Dr Abul Hossain spoke there.

Besides, a seminar on 'Melting Ice: Risks for Bangladesh' was also held at the Department of Geography and Environment of Dhaka University (DU) to mark the World Environment Day.

It was organised by the geography department, DU Disaster Research Training and Management Centre (DRTMC) and Christian Aid Bangladesh in association with Heed Bangladesh and Practical Action.

Chaired by Prof AQM Mahubb, chair of the department, the seminar was also addressed by DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz, also chair of the DRTMC, Prof Tazmeri SA Islam, dean of Faculty of Sciences, Tanja Haque, country representative of Christian Aid Bangladesh and Prof Abdul Baqi, director of DRTMC.

Before the seminar, a colourful procession was brought out that paraded different roads of the campus.

Bangladesh keen to work with Bhutan on hydroelectric project

President tells envoy

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday said that Bangladesh is eager to work with Bhutan on hydroelectricity project under the Saarc energy ring concept.

Iajuddin said this when outgoing Bhutanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Dasho Jigme Tshultim paid a farewell call on him at Bangabhaban.

During the meeting, Iajuddin also said that Bangladesh is keen to further expand and deepen bilateral trade and economic relations with Bhutan as there is a great scope of widening the trade volume between the countries.

He underscored the need for enhancing educational exchange programme for the benefit of the two countries. "Bangladesh imparts quality education on medicine, engineering, agriculture, general education and the students of Bhutan may take education on those subjects for achieving excellence", he added.

The president told the envoy that Bangladesh is ready to hand over a piece of land to the government of Bhutan for constructing its diplomatic mission in Dhaka. He hoped that Bhutan would provide a piece of land for building Bangladesh Embassy in Thimphu.

He mentioned that Bangladesh attaches great importance to its relations with Bhutan. The president also recalled with gratitude the contributions of Bhutan which recognised Bangladesh on December 7, 1971 during the War of Liberation.

In reply, Ambassador Dasho Jigme said that the existing bilateral relations between Bhutan and Bangladesh are excellent and it would be further strengthened in the days ahead.

The envoy mentioned that some Bhutanese students are pursuing their studies in Bangladesh, particularly in medicine.

He added that the trade volume between the two countries is growing day by day and it would be further enhanced in the coming days.

Military Secretary to the President Maj Gen M Aminul Karim, Secretary to the President's office M Sirajul Islam and concerned officials of both sides were also present on the occasion.

BRIBERY

Rab arrests 4 at N'ganj UNO office

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday nabbed four people from the office of Narayangang Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) for their involvement in bribery.

They were identified as Certificate Assistant Mujibur Rahman and Duplicate Machine Operator Jihadul Haque of UNO office, and Assistant Administrative Officer Abu Sayem Russel and Assistant Store Officer Humayun Kabir of Hossain Chemical Industries.

Rab also seized a private car by which the two employees of Hossain Chemical Industries went to UNO Office.

The driver was also arrested for interrogation.

Sources said Russel and Kabir went to UNO Office to deliver an amount of Tk 25000 as bribe for obtaining a permission for using Sulphuric Acid in the factory.

Being tipped-off earlier, Rab members in plainclothes surrounded the office and caught them red handed while they were engaged in illegal transaction.

Assistant Director of Anti-Corruption Commission of Narayangang Rafiqul Islam was present during the drive.

A case is going to be lodged by the Rab against them.

Oil refinery company fined Tk 1 lakh in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A mobile court here yesterday fined an oil refinery company Tk 1 lakh for polluting the river Karnaphuli through disposing toxic waste and held one in this connection.

Sources said the court led by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Md Munir Chowdhury in a drive titled 'Operation Save Chittagong from Pollution' unearthed the incident at Van Omeron Tank Terminal (VOTT) Oil Refiner's in North Patenga area on the north bank of Karnaphuli.

During the drive the court found that a kind of yellow coloured liquid was flowing down directly to the river Karnaphuli from a waste tank of the factory, where crude palm oil was being refined.

The court held Javed Hossain, manager of the factory, and fined the establishment Tk 1 lakh for having no eco-friendly disposal system.



Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital and Research Institute launched a 'Cardiac Ambulance Service' for patients yesterday. Adviser to the Caretaker Government Geeteara Safiya Chowdhury inaugurated the service in the city yesterday.

Maritime ports asked to hoist cautionary signal No. 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to hoist local cautionary signal number three as squally weather under the influence of deep convection over the north Bay may affect them.

All fishing boats and trawlers over north Bay have also been advised to come close to the coast and proceed with caution till further notice, according to a warning message of the Met office yesterday.

In the last 24 hours as of 6:00pm yesterday, the rainfall recorded in Dhaka was 34 millimetres, while Rajshahi received 59 millimetres of rainfall, the highest in the country, Met office said.

The weatherman said that apart from rain or thundershowers, accompanied by gusty or squally wind, moderately heavy rainfall may occur at some places across the country.

The west monsoon has reached up to Chittagong coast, he added.

RDA officer sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi Development Authority (RDA) officer accused of receiving bribes was sent to jail after he surrendered before a court on Monday.

The officer, Abul Kalam Azad, had been at large since May 16 when the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) lodged a bribery case against him and three other people.

Magistrate of the Speedy Trial Court SM Fazlul Karim sent Azad to jail after he appeared before the court and sought bail.

On May 16, the Rab arrested RDA clerk Sajeda Khatun and broker Shafiqul Islam and seized Tk 4000 from them. The two received the money in bribes.

The arrestees later informed the Rab that the RDA authorised officer Abul Kalam Azad, building inspector Abul Kashem and others do not approve designs of new buildings without taking bribes, the Rab said in the case.

The arrestees also said that Azad kept the money with Sajeda to take it back later outside the office. A person gave the bribe to have a building design approved, they added.

The Rab filed the case against Azad, Kashem, Sajeda and Shafiq with Shah Makhudum Police Station.

HOUSEWIFE MURDER

Domestic help on 5-day remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A domestic help, who was arrested in the city on Monday while dumping the body of a housewife, was taken on a 5-day remand for interrogation yesterday.

Hasnat Reza, husband of the victim Shashi, filed a murder case with Kafil Police Station accusing Majnu Miah aged 18.

Investigation Officer Alamgir Kabir told The Daily Star that Majnu had reversed his initial statement where he claimed that he and the victim's boyfriend Shajib had raped and killed her.

Majnu changed his statement after a meeting with Reza at the police station on Monday night.

In his latest statement, Majnu said neither he nor Shajib had raped Shashi. Besides, Shajib was not present in the house at the time of the incident.

Majnu added that he killed Shashi by himself as Shashi slapped him for playing computer game on Reza's computer.

He also claimed that he put Shashi's mutilated body in the sack and polythene bag and took the body to Dhaka Udayan Housing at Mohammadpur all by himself.

Police said they are doubtful about Majnu's latest statement as it is not possible for one person to commit such crime.

Shahidul Islam, maternal uncle of Shashi, received her body from Dhaka Medical College morgue after the autopsy.

Morgue sources said they had collected specimens of Shashi's body to do a viscera test.

Obituary

Prof AIM Mofakkarul Islam, former principal of Mymensingh Medical College, passed away at Apollo Hospitals in the city yesterday at the age of 72, says a press release.

He has left behind his wife, two sons, two daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Prof Islam was also the founder principal of Community Based Medical College, Bangladesh.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna and Barisal divisions with moderately heavy falls at places in the next 24 hours as of 6:00pm today.

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

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. Yesterday's highest temperature of 33.4 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and the lowest of 20.8 degree at Rajshahi.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:44pm today and rises at 5:10am 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	26.5	22.5	96	85
Chittagong	33.0	24.4	75	85
Rajshahi	31.4	20.8	100	61
Khulna	30.5	23.5	77	65
Barisal	31.2	27.3	82	78
Sylhet	29.7	24.5	93	77
Cox's Bazar	33.4	25.8	74	91



Abul Hasib Khan speaks at a discussion on 'Aspirations of the elderly people and the national budget' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Dr Atiqur Rahman and on his left are Hafizul Islam Mia, KM Rashid and Aminul Islam. Resource Integration Centre organised the pre-budget discussion.

PHOTO: STAR

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

Nadir International organises a seminar on 'The basics of lightning and its status in Bangladesh'. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Nagorik Uddog will hold a seminar on 'Climate change: Our preparation'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Discussion

Environment Department along with other organisations will hold a discussion on 'Addressing climate change: enhancing skill at institutional and individual level'. Venue: Osmani Memorial auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Fruit festival

Dhakabashi organises a seasonal fruit festival and a children art contest on fruits. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy. Time: 3:00pm.

Dhaka offers to host Asian Institute for Poverty Alleviation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has offered to host an Asian Institute for Poverty Alleviation (AIPA) at the 6th Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), a foreign minister-level conference that concluded in Seoul yesterday.

Foreign Adviser Iftekar A Chowdhury, who led a Bangladesh delegation at the event, acted as the co-prime mover and placed the proposal, said a foreign ministry press release.

The ACD also adopted the Seoul Declaration on Information Technology and set up a high-level study group to provide guidelines for future action, and agreed to reconvene in Kazakhstan next year. Foreign ministers from 30 Asian countries took part in the event.

At the meet, Iftekar Chowdhury presented Bangladesh's high credentials in poverty alleviation by outlining its achievements in home-grown pioneering initiatives such as micro-credit, non-formal education and government-NGO partnerships.

These experiences can be shared with other countries for Asia's benefit, he added.

South Korean Foreign Minister Song Min-soon, also the ACD chairman, welcomed the proposal of AIPA as an "excellent idea" that deserves consideration.

"The potentials of Asia are immense, and if we can cooperate with one another effectively, the future will belong to us," Iftekar remarked while talking to the media later.