

## 'Rural women deprived of health care services'

Speakers at a meeting said health care system in the country lacks uniformity in access and rural poor women are deprived of health care services.

Poor knowledge on maternal and reproductive health has limited their demand for services, they added.

They were speaking at a consultative meeting with partners organised by Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB) at the Spectra Convention Centre in the city recently, says a press release.

FPAB President Principal Md Abdul Quasem chaired the meeting while First Counsellor of Delegation of the European Commission Anthony Goodwin and Director General of

Directorate of Women Affairs Masuda Benthe Quadir were present as guests of honour. FPAB Director General Dr Halida Hanum Akther presented keynote paper. Representatives of partner organisations participated in the meeting.

In the meeting, participating partner representatives and FPAB officials shared their views in an interactive session. Both the groups strongly felt the need for close cooperation and effective partnership between the partners and FPAB for promotion of reproductive health and rights.



PHOTO: STAR

Students who came out successful in the SSC examinations with flying colours celebrate at their schools yesterday. From left are Holy Cross Girls' High School, Motijheel Ideal School and College and Rajuk Uttara Model School and College.

## Lack of monitoring obstacle to eliminating child labour

### Speakers say at seminar

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Absence of hard data and effective monitoring system is a major obstacle to eliminating child labour from the country, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

Absence of hard data on working children, lack of awareness about the problem, virtually non-existent institutional mechanism to monitor the situation and inadequate provisions for protection against accidents, diseases and death hinder the fight against child labour in the agriculture sector, said Gopal Bhattacharya, director of ILO, Bangladesh.

ILO, FAO and labour & employment and agriculture ministries organised the seminar at a city hotel to mark the World Day against Child Labour.

This year the theme of the day is 'Harvest for the future: Agriculture without child labour'.

Globally over 132 million children aged between 5 and 14 years work on farms and plantations, sowing and harvesting crops, spraying pesticides, and tending livestock worldwide. Agriculture is one of the three most hazardous works along with mining and construction.

According to the National Child Labour Survey 2002-03, the number of economically active children (working children) aged 5-17 years is 7.4 million and 65 percent of rural working children are in the agriculture sector.

Illiteracy and inter-generational poverty are major consequences of child labour in the agricultural sector, FAO Representative Ad Spijkers said and stressed the need to mainstream the child labour issue into the national agriculture development policy.

Ashfaque Hamid, secretary at the ministry of labour and employment, said the issue of child labour in the

agriculture sector poses dilemma as this sector is fully dependent on family-based labour and the demand for food is increasing day by day.

He stressed the need to provide scholarship to working children and support to their parents in order to eliminate child labour.

He also said that the child labour policy is under consideration and the government is expected to finalise it soon.

CK Hyder, secretary general of Bangladesh Employers' Association, suggested creating employment opportunities in rural areas, developing agro-based industries and launching advocacy programmes in order to stop child labour.



Ashfaque Hamid, secretary at the ministry of labour and employment, speaks at a seminar at Hotel Purbani in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are Abdul Kader Howlader, CK Hyder, Dr. Syed Naqib Muslim, Gopal Bhattacharya and Ad Spijkers.

Nurul Kabir were the keynote speakers. Todd Sorenson, director, Office of Democracy, Governance and Education, USAID spoke on the occasion.

Representatives of the Election Commission, political parties, civil society and donor community, including Deborah Healy, senior program

manager, NDI, Dr Owen Lippert, resident director, NDI, and MA Sattar Dulu of NADPO, also attended the function.

The roundtable, which was held in collaboration with the National Alliance of Disabled Persons Organisations (NADPO), focused on the difficulties experienced by people with disability both in the registration and the election process.

There are approximately 7.5 million disabled voters in the country and areas for discussion on people with disability included assistance in registration to vote; identification on the voters list; accessibility to polling centres; raising awareness of political parties, candidates and election observers on the rights of voters with disability; and assistance in casting votes in elections. The role of the media was also discussed.

Recommendations from the roundtable will be presented to the Election Commission.

#### SABERA-SHAMPA MURDERS

### Commissioner Ariful, bodyguard Auto on 5-day remand

#### COURT CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation Ward Commissioner Ariful Islam and his bodyguard Auto Bokhori were placed on a five-day remand for each yesterday in connection with the killings of headmistress of Siddheshwari Girls High School and her daughter.

Metropolitan Magistrate Quamrunnahan passed the order after Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Inspector Akbar Hossain, who is also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, produced them before the court with a prayer for seven-day remand for interrogation.

Headmistress Sabera Begum and her daughter Sharmin Shampa were brutally killed by a group of assailants in their house at Baridhara on December 16, 2004.

Arif, DCC Commissioner of Ward No 53 and his bodyguard Auto were arrested from their residences on Monday for their alleged involvement with the killings.

### Hasina goes to Chittagong tomorrow

#### UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will go to Chittagong tomorrow to see the victims of Monday's landslides.

Her Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said she will return to Dhaka from Tungipara today and visit Chittagong Thursday.

Hasina is likely to fly to USA on June 15.

## HIV prevalence rises among drug users

### Speakers tell workshop

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

HIV prevalence have increased from 4 percent to 7.1 percent among the Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) in the country in recent years with increased risk behaviour like sharing of needles, speakers at a workshop in the city said yesterday.

IDU population is well integrated into the surrounding urban community, society and sexually, they said adding that adult prevalence of HIV/AIDS may increase by two percent by 2012 and may reach 8 percent by 2025 if no interventions are taken among IDUs and sex workers.

Padakhep Consortium organised the workshop titled "Advocacy experiences and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming" as part of its package "Advocacy and Sensitisation of the Religious Leaders, Community Leaders, Parents and Policy Makers on HIV/AIDS".

Health Adviser Major General (retd) ASM Matir Rahman as the chief guest stressed the need for strong religious principle, family values, increased awareness and knowledge on HIV/AIDS and government-non-government (GO-NGO) collaboration to prevent the deadly disease.

At the same time support to the victims, removal of stigma and proper treatment should be provided, he said adding that "As the treatment is costlier, we should pay more attention to its prevention".

He also said women are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and 85 percent cases of HIV transmission takes place in the country through unsafe sex.

"It will not be possible to control HIV/AIDS until we start to talk on the issue freely," he added.

The speakers said focal points in 16 ministries emphasised mainstreaming HIV/AIDS prevent-

tion activities, integration of HIV/AIDS into the curriculum of secondary and higher secondary school education and formation of Religious Leader's Forum to enhance the support of the religious leaders.

Additional Secretary of health ministry Jamil Osman, Save the Children Country Director Kelland Stevenson, UNAIDS Country Representative Dan Odallo,

Secretary of religious affairs ministry Ataur Rahman, Secretary of science and ICT ministry Wahid uz Zaman, Secretary in Charge of Chittagong hill tracts affairs ministry Abdus Sabur, Secretary in charge of youth and sports ministry Golam Mostafa Talukder, and Secretary in charge of women and children affairs ministry Rokeya Sultana spoke at the workshop as special guests.

Among others Programme Manager of National AIDS/STD Programme Hanif Uddin, HIV/AIDS Programme Director Dr Nizam Uddin Ahmed and Executive Director of Padakhep Manabik Unnayan Kendra Iqbal Ahmed presented papers on HIV/AIDS issues.



PHOTO: STAR

Tahmima Anam, author of 'A Golden Age', a novel which is set during the War of Liberation, exchanges views with young readers in the city yesterday. The Liberation War Museum organised the programme at its auditorium.

## '107 killed by law enforcers since emergency'

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 107 people were killed during operations by law enforcement agencies since the declaration of the state of emergency in the country on January 11, said a report of Odhikar, a human rights organisation.

Of them, 60 were killed by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), 26 by police, seven by joint forces, six by army, three by navy, three by Rab and police and one by jail police.

One person was killed by the officials of narcotics control department.

Of the total death, 68 people were killed in 'crossfire,' 19 tortured to death, 10 shot dead and 10 others in various ways.

Of the dead, eight belong to BNP, four Awami League, seven Purbo Banglar Communist Party, six Purbo Banglar Communist Party, five Purbo Banglar Communist Party (Red Flag), two Biplobi Communist Party, one New Biplobi Communist Party, four Gono Mukti Fouz, one Jatiyo Samajtantrik

### Youth run over by train in city

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth was killed as he was run over by a train at the Cantonment Railway Station in the city yesterday.

The youth was identified as Manjurul Hossain Moni, 17.

Sources said the accident occurred around 9:30am when Moni was crossing the railway track at the Cantonment Railway Station and was hit by a passenger train.

Family sources added that Moni left his house at Purana Paltan saying he was going to visit a relative's house at Dakhin Khan.

Meanwhile, a 40-year old unidentified man was also killed as he was run over by a train in the same place on Sunday night.

## Electoral assistance for people with disability stressed

A roundtable on "Electoral Assistance for the people with disability" organised by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) was held at the Spectra Convention Centre in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Noted economist Dr Atiur Rahman, also an advocate of rights of the people with disability, and New Age Editor

## GP launches children's painting competition

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Grameenphone Zainul-Quamrul International Children's Painting Competition 2007 was launched at the Grameenphone (GP) head office in the city yesterday.

The biennial competition is organised by Gandaria Kishalaya Kachi-Kanchar Mela. This is the sixth episode of the competition. Grameenphone has been sponsoring this competition since 2003.

Shafir Rahman Dul, director of Gandaria Kachi-Kanchar Mela, inaugurated the competition at a press conference.

The competition is open to children aged between 3 to 16. Entries should be sent to Gandaria Kishalaya Kachi-Kanchar Mela, 15 Denbath Sen Road, Gandaria, Dhaka-1204 on or before September 30.

This year 84 participants will receive special awards from Grameenphone while four will be awarded gold medals.

The competition is divided into four categories according to age level, 3 to 6 year, above 6 years to 9, above 9 years to 12 and above 12 years to 16.

Subject matter and medium of the painting would remain open.

The prize giving ceremony, which will be followed by a three-day exhibition of the paintings, will be held at Bangladesh National Museum in the first week of December.

The paintings will also be put on display at Kachi-Kanchar Mela at Gandaria from March 26 to 31, 2008.

More than 4000 children including 1860 foreign participants from 30 countries participated in the last episode of the competition held in 2005.

Stein Naevald, chief marketing officer of GP, Syed Yamin Bakht, head of information, GP and Prof Abu Sayeed, chairman of the organising committee, Gandaria Kishalaya Kachi-Kanchar Mela, were also present at the press conference.



Stein Naevald, chief marketing officer of GP, addresses a press conference at the Grameenphone (GP) head office in the city yesterday. On his left is Syed Yamin Bakht and on his right are Prof Abu Sayeed and Shafir Rahman Dul.

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2x3

3x3