

Call to formulate Health Rights Protection Act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The First National Conference on Health Rights ended yesterday with a call for formulating a 'Health Rights Protection and Implementation Act' against the backdrop of present deprivation of health service consumers.

The two-day conference in a declaration known as 'Dhaka Declaration' also called for raising the budget allocation for health sector from present 6.60 percent to 25 percent.

The declaration demanded a modern health service management system removing irregularities and eradicating corruption through medical audit and accountability.

It also called for ensuring medical ethics among the service providers and medical centres so that all

citizens especially the poor and middle class people would have easy access to health services.

At the same time, upazila and district level hospitals should be equipped and provided with more facilities, beds, medicines and manpower, said the declaration.

It also called for a drug policy containing state commitment to provide safe, quality and essential drugs within the people's purchasing capacity.

Speaking as chief guest at the concluding session, Prof Muzaffer Ahmed, chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), said health rights is not the right to get health service only, it is the total rights of people for sound health.

"Health service management should be developed to ensure quality health service," he said,

adding a medical geography is needed as the disease pattern varies in different areas of the country.

Prof Muzaffer said health includes food free from adulteration, food habit and disease prevention mechanisms along with proper health service and awareness among people.

Highlighting the present discriminatory situation in health sector and shabby condition of upazila hospitals and union level medical centres, the speakers said it should be improved to ensure health rights of people.

Besides, medical jurisprudence or forensic medicine is very important to go for legal battles against the violators of people's health rights which is also a part of human rights, they added.

Presided over by Prof Rashid-E-Mahbub, former president of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), the concluding session was also addressed by Dr Nitai Kanti Das and Executive Director of PSTC Milon Bikash Pal.

Mahmud Hasan read out the declaration paper.

The two-day conference was organised by Health Research and Rights Foundation and Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC) along with 52 other organisations working to protect people's health rights with the slogan 'Health is not an opportunity, it is people's rights and should be made available to all on the basis of equity' at Biam auditorium in the city.



Outgoing Vietnamese Ambassador Ngo Van Hoa pays a farewell call on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday. During the meeting, they exchanged views on matters of mutual interest.

Two sisters among six killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed in separate road accidents across the country yesterday.

Our correspondent from Mymensingh reports: At least two minor girls of a family were killed and another four, including parents of the victims, were injured in a road accident at Raghamaara on Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway under Trishal upazila in the early hours of yesterday.

The victims were identified as Smriti, 9, and Sathi, 7, daughters of Raihan and Nilima.

According to police, the accident took place when a microbus bound for Mymensingh from Dhaka hit a truck standing beside the high way as the driver of the microbus lost control over the steering, killing the two sisters on the spot and injuring four others.

The injured including parents of

the victims and the driver of the microbus were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) for treatment.

Police seized the microbus but the truck fled the scene. A case was lodged with Trishal Police Station in this regard.

UNB from Dhaka adds: Four people were killed and 52 others injured in road accidents in Naogaon and Narsingdi districts yesterday.

In Naogaon, two people were killed and 12 injured in separate road accidents in Porsha and Mohadevpur upazilas in the morning.

In the first accident, a Porsha-bound human hauler hit a roadside tree at about 11:00am as its driver Babu Mia, 40, lost control over the steering, killing him on the spot and injuring two passengers.

Yet in another accident, a bus rammed a tempo at Bagachara in

Mohadebpur upazila at about 11:30am killing tempo driver Ainul Haq, 35, on the spot and injuring 10 passengers.

The injured were admitted to Naogaon Sadar Hospital. Condition of two injured was stated to be critical.

In Narsingdi, two people were killed and 40 others injured in a road accident at Ghasatia in Shibpur upazila.

Police said the accident occurred at about 12:30pm when a Sylhet-bound bus from Dhaka ploughed through a rickshaw and then fell into a roadside ditch, leaving the rickshawpuller and its passenger dead on the spot and 40 bus passengers injured.

The identities of the deceased could not be known immediately.

The injured were admitted to local hospitals and clinics.

Police seized the bus, but its driver and helper managed to flee.

'Cancel layoffs at Khulna Jute Mill'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Sramik Nirapatta Forum (SNF), a platform of 17 workers' organisations, demanded that the government cancel layoffs at Khulna Jute Mill and withdraw cases against the workers.

The SNF sent a letter signed by its Convener Dr Hamida Hossain to Jute and Textile Adviser Geetiara Safia Chowdhury yesterday to press the demands, says a press release.

In the letter, SNF leaders mentioned their five-point demand, including withdrawal of termination order on 950 workers and immediate payment of their salaries.

Police filed cases against several thousand labour leaders and workers of the mill as they protested the layoffs, the press release added.

Lightning kills mother, daughter in Jamalpur

UNB, Jamalpur

A woman and her daughter were killed and a man was injured when lightning struck them at Sarishabari yesterday.

Sources said lightning struck Maleka, 40, and her daughter Hanufa, 15, when they were cooking in their kitchen at village Chand Simla at about 6:00pm.

Meanwhile, Chand Mia sustained injuries in lightning strike at village Satpoa at the same time.

'Bangladesh committed to more funding on gender equality'

Bangladesh is committed to more funding on gender equality, Women and Children Affairs Adviser Geetiara Safiya Choudhury said at the 8th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers' Meeting held at Kampala in Uganda from June 11 to 14.

Currently, direct and indirect gender equality expenditure taken together accounts for 22 percent of the total budget of Bangladesh, she said, adding that "In the next fiscal year, we have proposed to increase this share to 24 percent."

Some 38 of Commonwealth's 53 member countries attended the meeting in Uganda, under the theme "Financing Gender Equality for Development and Democracy", according to an official handout.

Bangladesh has been putting in efforts and laying emphasis on empowering the women of the country, Geetiara said. As the government has given high priority to girls' education, literacy level of women has increased significantly, she added.

The government and non-government organisations are implementing different types of allowances and micro-credit programmes. As a result, near about 68 percent of women became self-reliant which leads to improve the status of women within the country, the adviser further added.

Geetiara said with the rise in female literacy rate and with growing economic empowerment, women are not only taking decisions at the family levels, they are now moving into other broader areas.

She also said that women have become more aware of their political rights. Entry to all Bangladesh civil service cadres has opened up the avenues for women to get into decision-making levels of the government.

Women have also ventured into armed forces and law enforcing agencies, she added.



Law enforcers search the bags of a girl at Dhanmondi Road No 5 in the city yesterday as security has been beefed up in the areas adjacent to Sudha Sadan.

Mobile court to launch drive against hill cutting soon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Acting Secretary of Environment and Forest Department AHM Rezaul Karim yesterday said the government is going to take stern action against the people involved in cutting hills in Chittagong.

In this regard, he said legal actions would be taken against the culprits through mobile court drives soon.

GOVT PRY SCHOOLS

7695 selected as asstt teachers

A total of 7695 candidates have been selected finally as assistant teachers of government primary schools against the 7995 vacant posts, says a press release.

The Directorate of Primary Education published the result yesterday.

A total of 37,384 candidates passed the written test held on December 1, 2006.

The candidates were selected on the basis of their written and viva voce marks.

The result will be sent to all district primary education offices soon for proper display on the notice boards.

Besides the result will be available at the website (www.dpe.gov.bd), said the press release signed by acting director general Ratan Kumar Roy.

Husband held on charges of killing wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A housewife was tortured and strangled allegedly by her husband and two other in-laws at Banani in the city on Thursday night.

Gulshan police arrested Zulfiker Ahmed, husband of the victim, Marzan Begum, late on Thursday night after her brother Noor Mohammad filed a murder case accusing Zulfiker, his brother Faruquddin and his wife Munni Begum of killing his sister Marzan.

Police said the two other accused are absconding.

Police quoting the case statement said Zulfiker and other members of the family used to torture Marzan over silly matters. Earlier, the victim's brother filed a general diary on Thursday when Marzan was undergoing treatment at a city hospital following torture.

Investigation Officer (IO) of the case Sub-Inspector Rezaul Karim said Zulfiker denied killing his wife and claimed that Marzan committed suicide.

Police produced Zulfiker before a Dhaka court and prayed for a seven-day remand but the court granted three days of remand.

Death anniversary

Today is the 29th death anniversary of Khawja Ahsanullah, the youngest son of Nawab Sir Salimullah, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his family graveyard at Begum Bazar in the city at 10:00am.

Mahmudul Haque Chowdhury

Today is the ninth death anniversary of Mahmudul Haque Chowdhury, former senior sub-editor of The Bangladesh Observer, says a press release.

He also actively took part in the liberation war.

On the occasion of his death anniversary, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his village home at Matigodha in



A hotel at the DIT Market at Karwan Bazar in the city pilfers water from a Wassa line through a pothole. The picture was taken yesterday.

WEATHER TODAY

Temperature may fall

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet, Chittagong and Barisal divisions and at a few places over Khulna division as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may fall slightly over the country, Met office said. Yesterday's highest temperature of 34.4 degree Celsius was recorded at Ishwardi and the lowest of 24.4 degrees at Rangamati.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:48pm and rises at 5:11am 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	32.2	27.0	76	86
Chittagong	26.1	24.8	96	91
Rajshahi	33.3	25.7	78	71
Khulna	32.2	26.2	88	89
Barisal	30.0	25.9	83	100
Sylhet	28.6	25.7	87	97
Cox's Bazar	30.5	25.0	80	92

DU prepares Tk 144.85cr budget for 2007-08

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University has prepared a Tk 144.85 crore budget for financial year 2007-08.

The budget envisages a deficit of Tk 2.4 crore.

The major portion of the budget will come from government allocation.

Besides, an amount of Tk 15 crore will be mobilised from internal resources which is Tk 3 crore higher than that of previous year.

There is an added allocation in the proposed budget for salary, pension and some other general heads.

Around Tk 95 crore has been proposed for teachers' salary and other allowances while Tk 21.65 crore for pension.

Tk 13.7 crore has been earmarked for education.

Treasurer Syed Abul Kalam Azad will place the budget at the senate session on June 26.

In the last financial year, a Tk 126 crore budget was announced, but the revised budget reached at Tk 133.70 crore.

The government provided Tk 119.20 crore although it was supposed to provide Tk 114 crore.

A Tk 14.50 crore was collected from internal resources although the original target was Tk 12 crore.

Cinema burns down in Sherpur

UNB, Sherpur

A cinema burned down in a devastating fire in Kakoli market area of the district town yesterday morning.

Witnesses said an electrical short-circuit sparked off the fire at Padma Cinema at about 7:00am, destroying machine room, films, furniture and other instruments.

However, no-one was injured in the incident.

Receiving information, fire fighters rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze after two hours of struggle with the help of local people.

Cinema hall authorities estimated the loss at Tk 25 lakh.

Police Super Krishnapada Roy visited the spot and additional police forces have been deployed there.

Domestic help commits suicide

UNB, Dhaka

A domestic help allegedly committed suicide at a house in the city's Mirpur area early yesterday.

Nilufa Akhter, 18, who worked at the house of businessman Hafizur Rahman at South Bisil in Mirpur-1, committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling of a room sometime between 12:00 midnight and 3:00am, police said.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue in the morning.

Body formed to survey sanitation coverage

BSS, Dhaka

National Sanitation Task Force constituted an independent monitoring and evaluation committee to survey the national sanitation coverage and report back within three months.

The task force at its last meeting chaired by Secretary of the Local Government Division Safar Raj Hossain formed the committee headed by Professor Dr Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) to review the real field level progress of the national sanitation coverage.

The committee is formed with representations from the World Bank, UNICEF, DFID, DANIDA and civil society bodies, NGOs and the media, officials told BSS here on Thursday.

The national target of achieving 100 percent sanitation coverage by the year 2010 was declared in 2003 when a UNICEF baseline survey found a very low coverage of sanitation with only 33 percent while 45 percent were open or hanging latrines.

UNICEF officials informed the task force meeting held on June 6 that a BBS-UNICEF joint sample had found Bangladesh was able to cut down the number of open or hanging latrines to only 7 percent of total sanitation coverage throughout the country.

The Task Force members described it as a success of the people of Bangladesh and suggested formation of an independent committee to rigorously monitor and evaluate the progress in the sanitation sector.

Bangladesh embassy in Bahrain opens its website

BSS, Bahrain

The Bangladesh Embassy in Bahrain has launched its website recently, a foreign ministry press release said on Thursday.

The website, launched by Ambassador M Ruhul Amin, gives essential information on Bangladesh history, geography, government, economy and trade.

There is an extensive set of pages or links on tourism (tourist attractions, packages ...) and Bangladesh culture (fairs and festivals, music, dance, drama, arts and crafts etc.).

The website www.banglaembassy.com.bh includes extensive information and documentation on trade and investment opportunities.

The website is designed to serve employers as well as workers. All application forms, notices on procedures and requirements, and chart of fees are posted on the website. Henceforth, passport application forms (for new/duplicate passport renewal, endorsement ...) can be downloaded from the website.

Employers will find embassy prescribed employment contract form and NOC attestation procedures and requirements flir in the website in downloadable and printable form.

Tourists, businessmen and other visitors will also find visa application forms in the website.

DHAKA TODAY

DCCI Roundtable

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) and Media Foundation of Trade and Development will jointly organise a roundtable on 'Corporisation of NCBs: Can it deliver the goods?' Venue: DCCI auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

Workshop

Young Consultants (YC) organises a workshop on 'Sound feasibility study-benefits for banks and financial institutions'. Venue: Brac Centre Inn. Time: 2:00pm.

Award giving ceremony

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) will give away Chand Sultana Literacy Award 2006 to M Habibur Rahman. Venue: DAM auditorium. Time: 11:30am.

Reunion

The reunion of the ex-students of geology department of Dhaka University will be held. Venue: Department premises. Time: 10:00am.

Story writing contest

The prize giving ceremony of Otiyhya-Gollachut Prothom Alo story writing contest 2006 will be held. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre. Time: 4:00pm.

Post-budget

roundtable

Islamic Economics Research Bureau organises a post-budget roundtable. Venue: Hotel Purbani. Time: 10:00am.

Seminar

Bangladesh Institute of Social Research (BISR) organises a seminar on 'Governance and organisational management of NGOs in Bangladesh'. Venue: BISR conference room. Time: 5:30pm.

Orientation

The orientation programme of the first year students of 2006-07 sessions of Sheikh Borhanuddin Post Graduate College will be held. Venue: College auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

View exchange meeting

Dhaka Development Forum and Steps towards Development will jointly organise a view exchange meeting titled 'Ensuring voting rights of slum-dwellers'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 2:30pm.

Roundtable on TB

Saptahik2000 and Brac will jointly organise a roundtable titled 'Present context in containing tuberculosis: The role of mass media'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Photographic exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of a solo photographic exhibition by Shamsunnahar Lovely will be held. Venue: Zainul Gallery-1. Time: 5:00pm. The