

# Make budgetary allocation for working children

## Speakers urge govt

Speakers at a press conference yesterday called for allocating necessary fund in the national budget to bring a potential change in the fate of the working children.

They said the proposed fund could be utilised for the development of the working children through education, healthcare, and skill development.

The press conference was organised by 'Together With Working Children' at Dhaka Reporters Unity Auditorium, said a press release.

In a written statement Moslema Bari, executive director of Community Participation and Development, said a large number of families fail to meet up the basic need of their children because of the dire poverty.

In the midst of this reality, a huge number of children are involved in various types of work for maintaining their livelihoods, she added.

The statement said many of these children are deprived of fundamental rights like health service, balanced food and amusement.

This deprivation is functioning as bottlenecks that stop proper human development of children.

Quoting the statistics of national child labour survey 2002-03, the statement said

out of the total children in the country 7.5 percent are working children.

Of them 10.8 percent are boys

while 3.6 percent are the girls working children, it added.

The speakers said most of the working children are engaged in various arduous jobs like agriculture labourer, transport helper, motor garage mechanic and ship breaker.

They said acute poverty compels them to be involved in hazardous activities and their working condition is also not child-friendly.

The press conference was informed that a child labour policy is in the final stage.

The speakers said the opinions of parents and organisations concerned with the working children should be taken into consideration to make the policy more effective and acceptable.

They however praised the budget for its provisions for rural poor, urban slum dwellers, housing for floating population and other welfare schemes.

Shaheen Akter Dolly of Nari Moitree, Ratan Sarkar of INCIDIN Bangladesh, Md Fazlul Haque Choudhury of Social and Economic Enhancement Programme, Gita Chakraborty of Ain O Salish Kendra, Shahida Begum of SCSD, Tipu Sultan of SUF, Nishat Afroj Mirza of SCSD, Ismat Ara Mostafa of Nari Moitree, and Mahfuza Begum of CPD were also present in the press conference.



Potholes at Basila Road in city's Mohammadpur area cause immense suffering to the commuters while the authorities concerned have turned a blind eye to the problem.

# Eviction of illegal occupiers on bank of Chaktai canal begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Eviction of illegal canal occupiers on the bank of Chaktai canal in Chittagong is to start today while the existing rules regarding the protection of hills of Chittagong would be enforced strictly until new rules are formulated, a meeting decided.

The meeting was held at the Chittagong Circuit House yesterday evening with Communication Adviser

MA Matin and local administration and other authorities concerned.

The adviser also directed the authorities concerned to re-excavate 13 canals that form the sewerage system of the port city.

The meeting was held following the advisory council meeting on

Wednesday that discussed nine important issues to save Chittagong from inundation and landslides.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Mokhesur Rahman moderated the meeting.

Earlier, the adviser had a meeting at Chittagong Bander Bhaban where

he said the Dock Workers Management Board would be officially dissolved and a tender would be floated to hand over the New Mooring Container Terminal to private sector based on supply, operate and transfer (SOT).



Visitors at a seasonal fruit fair at Khamarbari at Farmgate in the city yesterday. Agriculture Directorate organised the fair.

# 'Keep vigilance on use of chemical to fruits'

BSS, Dhaka

Adviser for Power and Mineral Resources Tapan Chowdhury yesterday said the government is seriously keeping vigilance on the use of chemicals to fruits and other food items in the country.

"Using chemicals to fruits is a punishable offense as these poisonous substances create numerous health hazards," he said while addressing a seminar at Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC) auditorium.

Agriculture Secretary M Abdul Aziz chaired the seminar organised by BARC on 'Cultivation of fruits for economic development and prosperity' marking the national fruits tree plantation fortnight.

BARC's former research section chief Dr Kamal Uddin and Bangladesh Nursery Association President Giasuddin Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

Bangladesh Agricultural University Professor Dr Abdur Rahim presented the keynote paper on the occasion.

The contribution of fruits and wood trees to national economy is unlimited, Tapan Chowdhury said, urging all to plant huge numbers of indigenous fruit trees with a view to reducing imports of fruits and thereby save the country's hard earned foreign currency.

We have sufficient production in the field of rice and potato but lacking other sectors, the adviser said. He said varieties of fruits and other items are necessary for balanced food.

Other speakers at the seminar said geographically Bangladesh is in a position to export fruits, spe-

cially mangoes, to other neighbouring countries if proper steps are taken.

Mango was first cultivated and developed in Bangladesh, then in India and lastly in Pakistan, he said, adding if we can produce surplus

mangoes, we can export those to earn foreign currencies.

Later, the adviser inaugurated the national fruits fair on the premises of Krishibid Institution.

## OVERSTAYING ABROAD 25 DU teachers asked to return within three months

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) authorities yesterday issued letters to 25 teachers who have been staying abroad even after the expiry of the stipulated period.

Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz said, "Authorities have asked those teachers to return to the country within three months, otherwise further steps would be taken according to rules."

He said these teachers have been staying abroad on different scholarships and other purposes, but did not return even after the expiry of the stipulated period.

Sources said after getting the letter, the teachers either will return to university or extend their leave or quit the job.

In case of non-response, the authorities would take necessary steps according to rules.

## CTG LANDSLIDE DU teachers concerned for not allowing Hasina to visit victims

DU CORRESPONDENT

Some 51 pro-Awami League (AL) teachers of Dhaka University (DU) in a statement yesterday expressed concern and disappointment with the government's decision not to allow AL President Sheikh Hasina to visit the landslide victims in Chittagong and to visit her daughter in the USA, who is going to be mother soon.

At least 106 people were killed in a landslide in the port city on June 11.

The caretaker government on June 14 imposed restrictions on Hasina's leaving Dhaka, which was scheduled for next day, for USA for "the sake of investigation" into the graft cases filed against her.

"We feel that she should have been allowed to visit the places considering humanitarian ground," the teachers said in a joint statement.

"We urge the government to allow her to stay by the side of her pregnant daughter considering minimum citizen and human rights," the statement reads.

The signatories, among others, included Prof Md Hossain Monsur, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof Dr Harun-Or-Rashid, Prof Md Rafique Islam and Prof Anwar Hossain.



Students of International Turkish Hope School render a song at the year-end function of the school at the Biam auditorium in the city on Saturday. Prof Dr M Shamsher Ali, president of Bangladesh Academy of Sciences, was present as the chief guest while Ferit Ergin, Ambassador of Turkey to Bangladesh, attended the function as the special guest. Honorary Consul General of Turkey Salahuddin Kasem Khan, Prof Maimul Ahsan, dean of Department of Law of Millennium University, former BTRC chairman Syed Marghub Murshed were the guests. Bayram Saatci, principal of the school, gave the address of welcome at the programme.

# Withdraw proposed VAT, tax on private varsities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh yesterday urged the caretaker government (CG) to withdraw the 4.5 percent value added tax (VAT) on tuition fees and tax on private universities which were newly imposed at the proposed budget for 2007-08.

At a general meeting of the association at its office, chairmen, founders and vice chancellors of different private universities discussed the newly proposed VAT and tax on private universities and called upon the government to review the decision for the greater interest of education.

They also said it will have negative impact on education as around one lakh students are now studying at the private universities.

"As the universities are non-profit organisation, no South Asian country is yet to impose VAT or tax

on private universities. Therefore the government should review its decision," said MA Kashem, chairman of the association, who presided over the meeting.

## Polish team meets army chief

UNB, Dhaka

A six-member delegation of Poland called on army chief General Moeen U Ahmed at the Army Headquarters yesterday morning.

The delegation, led by Polish President's special envoy Dr Krzesstof Majka, discussed various "bilateral issues" with the army chief, according to an ISPR release.