



Visitors at a fruit festival organised by Drishti at the Teacher-Student Centre on Dhaka University campus yesterday.

Drishti fruit festival held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Drishti, a cultural organisation, organised a fruit festival at the cafeteria of Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) on Dhaka University campus yesterday with a view to upholding the culture and heritage of the Bangalees.

Cultural personality Atiqul Haque Chowdhury inaugurated the festival where a total of 42 indigenous fruits, including mango, litchi, jackfruit, watermelon, banana and pineapple were put on display.

Bilkis Rahman Dolon, a member of Drishti, said, "We have to encourage commercial fruit cultivation in the country as the indigenous fruits are now at the brink of extinction."

Applying formalin to fruits has become a regular practice in our country which causes serious health hazards to people, she said, urging the authorities concerned to take stern action against the unscrupulous people who use toxic chemicals to ripe fruits.

She also called on the government to take measures to plant fruit trees in different places and beside the roads in the city.

Sammilita Nagork Jote General Secretary Golam Kuddus, Drishti President Mosharrif Hossain, Shadhin Bangla Betar artist Bulbul Mahalanabis, folk singer Fakir Alamgir and singer Ifat Ara Nargis also spoke.



Labourers travel in a goods-laden truck, risking their lives, although such practices have claimed the lives of 31 people recently. The picture was taken at Konapara in the city yesterday.

Dhaka Strategic Transport Plan needs amendment

Experts tell meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a view exchange meeting yesterday called for amending the proposed Dhaka Strategic Transport Plan (STP).

They said if the STP is implemented, it will increase cost, travel time, expenditure on infrastructure, pollution and accident.

The meeting titled 'Dhaka Strategic Transport Plan: Role of Media' was organised by Save Environment Movement at the National Press Club in the city.

The STP recommended three elevated expressways, which would cost a huge amount of \$614 million, and would have adverse effect on transport system and environment, said Dr Mahbubul Bari, senior assistant manager of transport for London, while presenting the keynote paper.

He said STP findings and recommendations are inconsistent, and these

are also not pro-poor and cost-effective.

"Though STP stresses the need to prepare strategic plan prioritising the pedestrians, the allocation for this sector is only 0.22 percent which is very negligible in comparison to total allocation.

Besides, for circular waterway the allocation is only 1.11 percent and although 34 percent of people use non-motorised vehicle, it gets only 0.22 percent allocation," he said, adding that whereas the proposed allocation in STP for underground rail is 63 percent that could carry only eight percent people.

Dr Mahbubul said the pedestrians and non-motorised vehicles are environment friendly and they neither create congestion nor increase travel time.

So they need much attention while designing the traffic system, and the resource allocation should follow it, he added.

"It is the private cars that increase our travel time and cost," Dr Mahbubul said, drawing an example of city's

Mirpur area where the speed of motorised vehicles has decreased 26 percent after banning the rickshaws.

Private cars on that route have increased three times creating traffic congestion and causing financial loss of Tk70 crore, he added.

Convenor of Save Environment Movement Abu Naser Khan said an integrated management system is needed for Bus Rapid Transits (BRT), non-motorised vehicles and pedestrians.

At the same time the existing rail transport system should be improved, he added.

The speakers said the flaws of the STP could be removed in the light of the findings of a research that await approval of the authorities concerned.

Prof Rokhsana Hafiz of Buet moderated the programme where Prof AQM Mahbub and Engineer Shahidullah also spoke.

Both Monwar and his son succumbed to their injuries on way to the hospital, police said.



Dr Mahbubul Bari, senior assistant manager of transport for London, speaks at a meeting on 'Dhaka Strategic Transport Plan: Role of Media' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Convener of Save the Environment Movement Abu Naser Khan and on his left are Engineer Shahidullah and Prof Rokhsana Hafiz.

PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh needs substantial improvement in providing quality education in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and its Education for All targets, said Xian Zhu, World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh.

This programme supports reforms aimed at tackling governance problems in secondary education, enhancing quality of secondary school teachers and tying government support to the performance of the institutions.

Zhu said, "We hope this will also lead to greater access to secondary education for all children, specially the poor and marginalised who cannot afford the expenses of secondary schooling."

In secondary and higher secondary education, Bangladesh has a unique system of public-private partnership which combines public financing with private provision of education. The system has a tremendous potential if properly managed.

However, it was subject to many undue influences in the past, which led to a lack of transparency in the recognition of schools for subvention,

recruitment of teachers and production of textbooks. Most importantly, once an institution started getting subvention, there was no incentive for better performance as the support from the government was more or less guaranteed.

To improve governance and address these issues, the government has started implementing a substantive policy reform agenda in secondary education supported by this series of credits.

The programme particularly focuses on increasing accountability and transparency in the use and allocation of resources with greater stakeholder participation and greater resource allocation for poorer and disadvantaged children; streamlining the teacher recruitment process to ensure the selection of best candidates as teachers free from all kinds of influences; and enhancing quality of textbooks through competitive production.

Despite impressive progress,

WB approves \$100m credit to improve quality of education

UNB, Dhaka

The World Bank on Thursday approved a US\$100 million credit from the International Development Association (IDA) to support the government's efforts to deepen and sustain reforms in the education sector.

The Third Programmatic Education Sector Development Support Credit is designed to address systemic governance issues in order to make the best use of the resources in improving quality and enhancing access to secondary education, said a press release.

Gross primary enrolment rates in Bangladesh are around 90 percent, and the secondary enrolment rate has more than doubled to 57 percent over the past two decades.

The country has already met the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on gender parity in primary and secondary schooling. However, while access to secondary education has increased considerably, lack of systemic improvement to deal with the rapid expansion has caused quality to suffer.

Despite impressive progress,

'Govt working for social change'

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury has said the caretaker government is working to make a tolerant and clean society by taking various reform measures.

"The government is working to restore discipline at every sector of the state with taking various steps and those are spontaneously being supported by the people, including the expatriates," he said.

The adviser was speaking at a discussion meeting and award giving ceremony of Atish Dipankar Research Parishad at the LGED Auditorium in the city yesterday.

He said various initiatives like strengthening the Anti-Corruption Commission and the move for constituting Human Rights Commission, introducing citizens' charters and preparing voter list with photographs would help the government achieve its objectives.

Dr Iftekhar called upon all concerned to spread the teachings of Atish Dipankar to every tier of society for building a welfare-oriented state.

Chaired by Parishad President

Poet Golam Kader, the function was also addressed by former adviser to caretaker government CM Shafi Sami, former chairman of Press Council Justice Habibur Rahman Khan, former chairman of University Grants Commission Prof Dr M Asaduzzaman and Jamuna Bank Chairman Nur Mohammad.

Two held with arms in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday recovered arms and ammunition and arrested two criminals in this connection.

Tipped off, a special team of Rab-10 raided a house of one Malek at Jatrabari and arrested Din Islam alias Raju, 22, and Masud, 26.

The arms included one revolver, five bombs and two sharp weapons, Rab said.

HSC examinee dies in rooftop fall in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

An HSC examinee died after falling from a rooftop water tank in the port city yesterday.

The victim, identified as

Probal Dutta, 18, son of Bikash Dutta, a resident of Dewan Bazar Masua Jharna Lane under Kotwali Police Station, was an HSC candidate from Islamia Degree College.

Sources said Probal fell down from the rooftop of his four-storied residence at around 12:00 noon. Probal was cleaning the water tank standing on the railing and all on a sudden slipped down.

Seriously injured Probal was rushed to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where the on duty doctor declared him dead.



Prof Fakrul Alam inaugurates the Prime Bank-JDC Debate Festival 2007 on the St Joseph High School premises in the city yesterday. Josephite Debating Club (JDC) organised the four-day festival.

PHOTO: STAR