

Keep population growth under control to avert social disasters

CA tells World Population Day programme

UNB, Dhaka

Projecting the adverse impacts of overpopulation, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said the country's population growth must be kept under control to avert social disasters.

He called upon government, non-government and voluntary organisations as well as the people of all walks of life to help attain net reproductive rate (NRR) of 1 by 2010.

He made the call while he was inaugurating a programme jointly organised by the Department of Family Planning and UNFPA at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium, marking the World Population Day 2007.

The theme of this year's World Population Day is "Men as Partners in Maternal Health".

Fakhruddin said Bangladesh is one of the densely-populated countries in the world with over 14 crore people. Over 900 people are now living in every one sqkm area.

He said the population growth in Bangladesh is still very high and if it is not controlled sustainable development and social stability of the country will be at stake.

"If the population boom cannot be controlled, there will be huge pressure

on this small country having limited resources. The standard of life will fall, employment opportunities will get reduced and arable and forest lands will decrease rapidly," he told the function.

The chief adviser further said meeting the demand of food, housing, education and health services would become harder while the environment and ecology would be endangered if the current population growth cannot be checked.

He said many countries have reached the pinnacle of progress by keeping their population under control and utilising it properly. "We also want to march towards the same goal by turning our population into human resources," he added.

The chief adviser said prevention of the high maternal and child mortality rate is another big challenge in population control. Still, 3-4 mothers in 1,000 childbirth die in Bangladesh. "The rate of it in countries like China, Thailand and Sri Lanka is four to seven times lower," he said.

Referring to high child mortality rate, he said bringing all children under the expanded programme of immunisation is very important. The rate of full-fledged immunised children has been increased to 71 per-

cent in 2006 from 51 percent in 1997.

Fakhruddin called upon the NGOs to supplement the government efforts to achieve the target of increasing the immunisation coverage to 90 percent by 2010.

Referring to this year's theme of the World Population Day, he said the matter is very important in a male-dominated society like ours where negligence, repression, violence and deprivation of women are too common.

"Husband's decision is very important in the case of reproductive health, pregnancy and family planning. The role of the father and the brother gets priority in childhood marriage, selecting a bridegroom, health services and other matters," he said.

The chief adviser said the rate of contraceptive acceptance by male is declining every year as it has come down to 10 percent or below from nearly 44 percent during 1985-86.

He said the government is pledged-bound to reach the family planning and health services to the doorstep of the people and for that well coordination and combined efforts of NGOs and voluntary organisations along side the government ones are necessary.

He called for giving highest priority

in implementing the Health Nutrition and Population sector programmes involving Tk 32,450 crore by 2010 for ensuring safe-motherhood, nursing adolescence reproductive health, and reduction of mother and child mortality rate.

The CA also urged all to carry out efforts to attain the target of increasing contraceptive prevalence to 72 percent by 2010 from the present 58 percent.

He also distributed prizes among the top recipients of seven categories for their contributions to family planning and nursing mother and child health in last one year in the country.

Health and Family Welfare Adviser Maj Gen (Retd) Dr ASM Matiur Rahman, DG of Family Planning Department Md Abdul Mannan and UNFPA country representative Arthur Erken also spoke at the function presided over by Health Secretary AKM Zafarullah Khan.

Advisers to the caretaker government, representatives from development partners, field-level family planning employees and NGO representatives were present at the function.

CNG-run shallow pumps to reduce cost of irrigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) has invented CNG-run shallow pump, first of its kind in the country, with a view to reducing the irrigation cost of the farmers.

Four engineers of BCSIR invented the new technology after nine-month-long efforts keeping in mind the energy crisis.

Raihan, the team leader, said they converted the existing diesel-run shallow pump into CNG-run one which can also be run by both gas and diesel.

In that case, 70 percent CNG and 30 percent diesel will be needed to run the pump, he added.

Raihan said about 70 percent of the cost can be saved by using a CNG-run shallow pump.

Around Tk 12000 to Tk 15000 is needed to make a CNG-run pump which can run at least 30 hours with gas worth only Tk 100, he added.

Three other engineers of the team are Rupesh Chnadra Roy, Mobashhar Hossain Khan and Ataur Rahman.

Rupesh said if a farmer wants to convert his diesel-run pump into CNG one, it would cost Tk 7000.

The CNG-run shallow pump is easy to carry as it contains a cylinder of 40 litres, he said, adding that there is no hassle while filling the cylinder with gas as the cylinder can easily be

separated from the machine.

Inaugrating the pump, BCSIR Chairman Dr Chowdhury Mahmud Hasan said it is an important invention reducing the irrigation cost significantly.

Now the government will have to take initiative to set up CNG stations at field level keeping the farmers' interest in mind, he added.

M Abu Raihan, Ahmed Fazlur Rashid, Dr M Akram Hossain, Quazi Aktaruzzaman and Dr Farmazul Haq were present on the occasion.

Drama serial to promote girls' education

DU CORRESPONDENT

As part of government campaign for creating educational environment for girl children of poor families in rural areas, Bangladesh Television (BTV) is going to telecast a weekly drama serial from July 18.

The 26-episode serial titled 'Alo Amaar Alo' will be telecast every Wednesday after the 8 O' Clock news.

The serial, written by Anisul Hoque and directed by Abul Hayat, depicts the struggles and conflicts in the life of a young girl named Alo.

It also dramatises various issues and characters associated with her life, the school environment, female health-related matters and friendly behaviours of teachers.

The drama serial is one of the joint initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and Unicef to create awareness about women empowerment.

An inaugural function and premier show of the drama was held at a city hotel yesterday.

Speaking at the function Education and Cultural Adviser Ayub Quadri said the government is giving special incentives for promoting primary and secondary education in the country.

Only eight percent of girls pursue higher education after completing the higher secondary level in the country.

More than 90 percents are obliged to get married and start raising family with its consequent complications.

Secretary in-charge of Primary and Mass Education Ministry M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, Officer-in-charge of Unicef Rosella Morelli, Charmin and Managing Director of Expression Ltd Ramendu Majumder, playwright Anisul Hoque and Director and actor Abul Hayat also spoke on the occasion.



PHOTO: STAR

Education and Cultural Adviser Ayub Quadri speaks at the inaugural function and premiere show of a serial titled 'Alo Amaar Alo' at a city hotel yesterday. Sitting from left are Rosella Morelli, Ramendu Majumder and Abul Hayat.

Biman Corp (amend) Ordn promulgated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday promulgated the Bangladesh Biman Corporation (Amendment) Ordinance to pave the way for turning the national flag carrier into a public limited company, sources said.

"It's a major development towards making the Biman Bangladesh Airlines a public limited company," said its Managing Director Dr MA Momen.

"Now the approval of the revised Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association of Biman by the council of advisers is required," he said, adding that "We hope they

would give the nod shortly."

The approval would enable the Biman to apply to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies & Firms for registration to become a public limited company.

Meanwhile, all the preparations for making the Biman a public limited company by the end of this month are almost complete, sources said. "The values of the liabilities and assets of Biman have already been determined," they added.

On May 19, the council of advisers approved the proposal to make

the Biman a public limited company by June.

Later, the council asked the authorities to bring some changes to the Memorandum of Association (rules and regulations of Biman) and Articles of Association (terms and conditions) and set the July deadline.

Biman is being made a public limited company in order to make it a profitable commercial venture.

The workforce of Biman has already come down to 2,937 from 3,800 under the voluntary retirement scheme.



PHOTO: STAR

National Professor Kabir Chowdhury addresses the launching ceremony of his eight books at Bishwa Sahitya Kendra in the city yesterday. On his right is Selina Hossain and on his left is Mafidul Huq.

8 books by Prof Kabir Chy launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight books by National Professor Kabir Chowdhury were launched in the city yesterday.

Six of the books are Bangla translations of 'The Art of Living' by Andre Maurois (Jibon Japoner Shilpakola), 'Waiting for the Barbarians' by JM Coetzee (Borborder Opekkhai), 'Life and Times of Michael K' by JM Coetzee (Obishoroniyoy Michael K), 'Mad Dog and Other Stories' by Heinrich Boll (Pagla Kutta O Onnanno Golpa), and 'Akhenaten' by Naguib Mahfouz (Akhenaten: Sattyer Sandhane).

Two other books are 'Golpo Upannashe Protikriti Chitra', which is based on 'Portraits in Fiction' by AS Byatt, and 'Probandho Sangraha' (Vol-4).

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Kabir Chowdhury called upon all to protest against all sorts of injustices.

"We should not compromise on

any type of injustices, but the language of protests could be different in the changed situation," he said.

Bangladesh Writers' Foundation organised the book launching ceremony at Bishwa Sahitya Kendra auditorium in the city.

About his new books, Prof Kabir Chowdhury said, "Through my translations, I wanted to introduce the literary works depicting the people's struggle against oppression to Bangla-speaking people."

He also said all these books were completed before the last Amar Ekushey Book Fair. And nine more books would be published in the next book fair, he added.

Writers' Foundation President Prottoy Jahsim, eminent litterateur Selina Hossain, Trustee of Liberation War Museum Mafidul Huq and poet Aslam Sunny also spoke at the programme moderated by Sazzad Rahman.