

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY OBSERVED

# Pledge to eradicate poverty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty was observed in the country as elsewhere across the world yesterday with a call for concerted efforts for eradicating poverty from the society.

Different organisations chalked out various programmes, including rally, open-air concert and gathering, highlighting this year's theme 'Stand up against poverty and inequality'.

Employees and officers of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) brought out a procession and held a rally on its premises where participants urged all to take proper measures to root out poverty.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka inaugurated the programme.

He said unplanned population growth is the main cause behind sustainable poverty.

"It is very difficult to remove poverty from our densely-populated country because three-

fourth people are still now under the poverty line. Concerted efforts are needed for eliminating poverty from our society," he said while addressing the rally.

The Hunger Project, Karmajibi Nari (KN) and Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) also participated at the programme.

People's Forum on MDGs (PFM), an alliance of 200 private organisations and trade union centres, organised different programmes simultaneously in 30 districts, including Dhaka, to mark

the day.

The People's Forum, a broad-based coalition of civil society groups, along with other partner organisations held a mass gathering at Rabindra Sarobar at Dhanmondi in the city where renowned artists also performed.

The People's Forum in association with CAMPE and Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) also organised rally and concert at educational institutions across the country.

## ATTACK ON UDICHI PROGRAMME Arrest of culprits demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Gosthi Central Committee yesterday demanded immediate arrest and punishment of the people who set off an attack at the cultural programme of Udichi at Habiganj on the Eid day.

A 'communal' group under the banner of 'Shariat Birodhi Karjokolap Protirodh Committee' (Committee to resist the activities that goes against Shariah) attacked the programme on the local Shaheed Minar premises at Baniachang in Habiganj and injured 10 to 12 artists and activists.

At a press conference at the Udichi office at city's Topkhana road yesterday, central committee members also demanded to ban the Shariat Birodhi Karjokolap Protirodh Committee and to ensure security while staging cultural programmes across the country.

Memorandums were sent to the chief adviser through the deputy commissioners and upazila nirbahi officers in all the districts. The central committee also sent a memorandum to the Chief Adviser's Office in this regard.

While reading out the written statement, General Secretary of Udichi Shilpi Gosthi Mahmud Selim said that Udichi Baniachang branch filed a First Information Report (FIR) with the police station.

But police did not register the complaint as a regular case and the invaders, who have been threatening the Udichi activists, are at large.

## Electronic goods gutted in fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire gutted different electronic goods at a shop at Bangabandhu Stadium Market in the city yesterday.

Fire brigade sources said the fire originated from electrical short circuit at Hitachi Electronics at around 8:00am.

A total of five units of fire brigade managed to douse the fire at around 9:35am.

The gutted electronic goods included refrigerator, television, music players, air cooler and electric fan.

Fire fighters could manage to save goods worth Tk 50 lakh.



Sewer water overflows a manhole on a road at Karwan Bazar in the city yesterday, causing suffering to pedestrians.

PHOTO: STAR

## 14,136 audit objections involving Tk 2,350 crore against BTTB

BSS, Dhaka

The Ministry of Telecommunication has expedited the activities to dispose of its accumulated 21,630 audit objections against Tk 9,234.13 crore.

Of the total objections, 14,136 involving Tk 2,350.63 crore are against BTTB and 7,494 involving Tk 6,883.5 crore against Postal Department, ministry sources told BSS.

The ministry has constituted five committees to dispose of the objections and formed another six-member body headed by a joint secretary to monitor the activities of the five committees.

The ministry took the initiative to dispose of the objections after assumption of power by the present caretaker government for ensuring accountability and transparency, the source said.

## Obaidul Huq's death condoled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political and social organisations have expressed deep shock at the death of eminent journalist Obaidul Huq.

Obaidul Huq, former editor of The Bangladesh Observer, passed away at his Banani residence on October 13 at the age of 96.

In a statement yesterday, Acting president of Awami League Zillur Rahman and acting general secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam said the death of Obaidul Huq is an irreparable loss to the nation.

They prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

In another statement, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said veteran journalist Obaidul Huq dedicated his life to promoting democracy and press freedom.

The BNP leader also prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Huq Inu and General Secretary Syed Zafar Sazzad, Nazrul Institute and Bangladesh Private Medical Practitioners Association also condoled the death of the eminent journalist.

## Acting Indian HC meets LGRD adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Acting Indian High Commissioner Mukta Dutta Tomar yesterday met LGRD and Cooperatives Adviser M Anwarul Iqbal at his office and discussed different aspects of the forthcoming Second Saarc Conference of Home Ministers in New Delhi.

During the meeting, they also discussed matters of mutual interest.

Apart from participation in the conference, the adviser also expressed his desire to visit the milk collection centre and processing system of Ananda Milk Union Ltd (AMUL), which brought about a revolution in India's milk sector.

The acting high commissioner assured him of taking necessary steps in this regard.

The LGRD adviser will lead a nine-member team to the Second Saarc Conference of Home Ministers to be held in the Indian capital October 23-25.

## Bangladesh a bright example of communal harmony

President tells Puja Parishad team

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed has called upon all to extend all-out cooperation in carrying activities for holding the next general election as the Election Commission is working to hold the polls as per its roadmap.

The president made the call when a 15-member delegation of Munshiganj Puja Uddjapan Parishad, led by its convenor Adv Ajay Chakrabarty, met him at Bangabhaban yesterday.

He said Bangladesh is a bright example of communal harmony as people belonging to different communities have been practising their own religious activities freely and peacefully.

Iajuddin urged all to come forward in building the nation maintaining communal harmony and fraternity.

The delegation apprised the president of celebrating puja in Munshiganj and said they were getting government cooperation in

this regard. Parishad Adviser Prof Anil Chakrabarty and other members were present.

President's Press Secretary Abdul Awal Hawlader was also present.

## Tapan leaves for London to visit ailing wife

UNB, Dhaka

Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury yesterday left for the United Kingdom on an urgent trip to attend his wife admitted to a London hospital.

Receiving the news from London about emergency admission of his wife to the hospital, he left the city at 10:30am by a flight of the Emirates Airlines.

Sources said Tapan is expected to return home on October 22.

## Potato price soars to Tk 28 per kg in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Price of potato in Chittagong has shot up by Tk 8 per kilogram to Tk 28 in a span of four days.

Traders in the city's major kitchen markets -- Reazuddin Bazar, Kazir Dewri, Chawk Bazar, Bohaddarhat Bazar, Karnaphuli Market, Boxirhat Bazar and Sholoshahar Gate No-2 Bazar -- were selling potato at Tk 20 per kg on the day before the Eid day.

The next morning the price soared to Tk 22 to Tk 24 and it reached Tk 28 yesterday.

Traders attributed the sudden price hike to poor supply due to Eid holiday and torrential rains in the last few days.

The supply of this perishable item slumped to a low level because of Eid holiday and the shower, they said.

Mohammad Jamal, a vendor at Chawk Bazar, said the rain has come as a blow to us, hampering the supply of potato to city markets from nearby upazilas.

"Because of scanty stocks, we have been forced to sell potato at a higher price," he said, adding that the price might go down in the next few days if the supply becomes normal.

## More safe shelters needed for women victims

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A large number of victims of trafficking and violence, especially women and children, are put into jails and treated as convicts instead of being taken to safe shelters, speakers at the inaugural session of a workshop said yesterday.

Due to lack of adequate safe shelters, women and child victims suffer a lot in jails and remain deprived of their rights, the speakers said and called for adopting alternative strategies to address the problem.

German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and DFID organised the two-day workshop on 'Alternative strategies for women and children in safe custody' at a city hotel to devise a collective action plan in this regard.

Speaking as the chief guest, Women and Children Affairs Adviser Geetia Saffiya Choudhury said that although there are legal

provisions for safe custody for women and children that focus on the protection of their rights, practical use of these provisions is quite insignificant.

"As the prison authorities are not provided with a separate budget for the upkeep of women and children in safe custody, women are forced to carry out menial chores for convicted prisoners in return for food. They are also subject to abuse and harassment in prison," she said, adding that it is important to amend legal system in this regard.

There are only six safe homes in six divisions under the Ministry of Social Welfare. Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has only one safe custody and six shelter homes in six divisions. But these institutions are too few to meet the needs of rising numbers of victims, she said.

"If we can build safe custody at district levels with the help of

NGOs and development partners, the welfare and rights of women and child prisoners will be more ensured," she added.

Highlighting the situation of the prisons, IG (Prisons) Brig Gen Zakir Hassan stressed the need for more shelter homes for those women and children who are victims, not convicts.

There are 86,000 prisoners in jails across the country, with the capacity of 27,294, he said.

Executive Director of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) Advocate Salma Ali stressed the need to change the jail code in order to ensure proper management and develop women- and children-friendly support system.

German Ambassador Frank Meyke, DIG (Prisons) Shamsul Haider Siddiqui, Barrister Sara Hossain, Hamida Hossain and Faustina Pereira of Ain O Shalish Kendra (ASK) also spoke.



PHOTO: STAR

A vendor sits idle at his clothes shop at Gulistan Hawkers' Market in the city yesterday as shoppers take a respite after busy Eid shopping.



PHOTO: PID

A delegation of Munshiganj Puja Uddjapan Parishad calls on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

## TRAIN DERAILMENT Investigation begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of the three-member probe body formed by the Communication Ministry arrived in Chittagong from Dhaka yesterday to investigate into derailment of Mohanagar Prabhaton Saturday.

The probe body headed by Shafizuddin Ahmed, joint secretary of the ministry, directly went to the spot at Baro Takiya under Mirsarai upazila at around 10:00am and took statements from concerned persons including local chairman, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Mirsarai Police Station, villagers and witnesses, sources said.

Later, the committee also talked to railway staffs including guards, TTEs (Travellers' Ticket Examiners), attendants, stationmaster and other official concerned at hilltop Officer's Club of Railway in the city in the afternoon.

The interrogation that started at around 2:30pm continued till filing

of this report at 6:53pm.

Other members of the committee, Superintendent Engineer (Mechanical) of Roads and Highways Mostofa Yusuf Uddin and Deputy Secretary (Transportation-1) of Communication Ministry Md Mafizul Hoque, were also present during the investigation.

The derailment of five compartments of Mohanagar Prabhat near Baro Takiya Railway Station left three people killed and over 30 injured on the day before Eid on Saturday.

BSS adds: Government Inspector of the Bangladesh Railway (GIBR) Imdadul Huq will conduct an investigation into the incident on October 22.

Interested people who want to give their accounts have been requested to be present before the probe body on that day, a press release of the Bangladesh Railway said yesterday.

## Reception to 5 personalities

UNB, Chittagong

Mirsarai Students' Association of Chittagong University has accorded a reception to five personalities of the upazila in recognition of their contributions to their respective fields.

They are Prof Dr Nurul Anwar, founder Chairman of CU's Microbiology Department, Dr MM Emran Chowdhury, DMD of Modhumati Model Town, Dhaka, Maulana Badiul Alam, former secretary and founder of IUUC, Anis Alamgir, head of news of Boishakhi Television, and Abu Saleh M Shahabuddin, Assistant Director of Bangladesh Bank and guest lecturer of IUUC and USTC.

The programme was held at TTDC Hall in Mirsarai on Monday.

Former secretary AFM Sarwar Kamal attended the programme as the chief guest while former DG of Health Department Prof Dr M Nurun Nabi presented a paper on development of Mirsarai.