

PRIMARY EDN DEV PROJECT-II

Dropout rate rises to 47pc

Says study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The dropout rate among students of primary schools under the Primary Education Development Project (PEDP-II) has increased to 47 percent in 2006 from 33 percent in 2002, according to a study conducted by 10 NGOs working at the grassroots level.

Besides, the net enrolment rate declined to 93 percent in 2005 from 97 percent in 2002, it added.

The NGOs presented the study at a press briefing on 'Grassroots Review on PEDP-II' at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

Advancing Public Interest Trust (APIT), The Bangladesh Association for Community Education (BACE), Coastal Association for Social

Transformation Trust (COAST), National Forum of Organisations Working with Disabled (NFOWD), Noakhali Rural Development Society (NRDS), Wave Foundation, Sabalambay Unnayan Samity (SUS) and Other Vision Communication (OVC) jointly organised the press briefing.

Describing the PEDP as the biggest project ever in the education sector, Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, executive director of COAST, said, "PEDP-II is a macro plan of the government in primary education sector for the period of 2003-09 (extended up to 2010) targeting to ensure quality primary education for all by 2009."

PEDP-II, a Tk 4,933 crore project funded by the government (63.9

percent) and development agencies (36.1 percent), involves 80,000 government and registered non-government primary schools across the country, he said.

Ibnon Dey Shaimal of SUS said there is a lack of coordination on the implementation of the project. The only achievement is that the project has contributed to the development of infrastructure, he added.

He pointed out that adequate teachers have been recruited and provided training under the project.

However, he said, teachers and school management committee members do not have any proper idea of PEDP-II, as many of them consider it as 'development activity' -- constructing buildings and

creating new posts.

Khondoker Johurul Alam, president of NFOWD, said most consultants of the projects are from overseas and they do not consider the issues related to the grassroots level while developing programmes. As a result, the project may fail, he added.

Referring to official statistics, he said 96 percent of physically challenged children or 16 lakh still remain out of school.

Sabbir Bin Shams, executive director of APIT, criticised the recruitment of foreign consultants as it involves Tk 16.5 million.

The speakers called for community participation and proper monitoring in order to ensure successful implementation of the project.



APIT Executive Director Sabbir Bin Shams speaks at a press briefing on 'Grassroots Review on PEDP-II' at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right are COAST Executive Director Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, NFOWD President Khondoker Johurul Alam and Sirajul Dara Khan.

Media confce on armed conflict begins today

DU CORRESPONDENT

A regional conference on 'Media Reporting -- Armed Conflict and Violence' will begin at Sheraton Hotel in the city today with the participation of 22 editors and columnists from the SAARC countries.

Editors will make four presentations and conduct panel discussions with diplomats, academics and students of journalism, a press release said.

Information Adviser Mainul Hossain will be present at the inaugural session of the conference as the chief guest, beginning at 9:30am.

On the second day, Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury will be present at the concluding session as the chief guest, beginning at 4:00pm.

The Department of Mass Communication and Journalism of Dhaka University, Press Institute of Bangladesh and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have jointly organised the seminar.

Master of cargo vessel fined in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mobile court yesterday seized an inland cargo vessel on charge of creating risk of collision with a merchant vessel at the Chittagong port channel on Friday.

The court fined the master of the cargo vessel MV Sagar Siraji Tk 40 thousand, in default, to suffer three months imprisonment and seize his certificates.

Sources said MV Sagar Siraji abruptly came on the way of an outgoing Bangladeshi flag carrier merchant vessel MV Bonghiraj on that day.

Neglecting the signal of the pilot of Bonghiraj, vessel Sagar Siraji came so close to the ship that it was about to hit MV Bonghiraj.

But the pilot of the merchant vessel narrowly avoided the accident by controlling his vessel, sources said.

Following an allegation, Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Mohammad Munir Chowdhury seized MV Sagar Siraji

from Patenga estuary yesterday. On interrogation, the court found that a 2nd class master was operating the cargo vessel.

The court ordered the authorities concerned to cancel the certificates of the master and recruit an experienced and skilled master for the sake of security at the port area.

LGRD adviser returns home

UNB, Dhaka

LGRD and Cooperatives Adviser M Anwarul Iqbal returned home yesterday after attending the Saarc Home Ministers' meeting in New Delhi.

The Adviser led a nine-member Bangladesh delegation to the meet that adopted a number of decisions to deepen cooperation in addressing regional security challenges, including the rising incidence of criminality and terrorism.

It was the Second Meeting of the Saarc home ministers.

AUG 22 INCIDENT

No CU students appear before probe body

CU CORRESPONDENT

No students of Chittagong University (CU) appeared before the committee formed to probe the August 22 incident on the campus yesterday, the first day for the students to give deposition.

Zakir Hossain, a committee member, said they would continue taking deposition today, the last day.

Sources said a total of 35 people have so far given their statements before the committee.

At least 40 students, teachers and cops were injured in the clash between the police and students during the incident in which some outsiders also allegedly took part.

The other committee members are Arts Faculty Dean Prof Mansur Uddin Ahmed, Prof Dr Mokter Ahmed of botany department and Assistant Proctor Mohammad Shafiqul Islam.

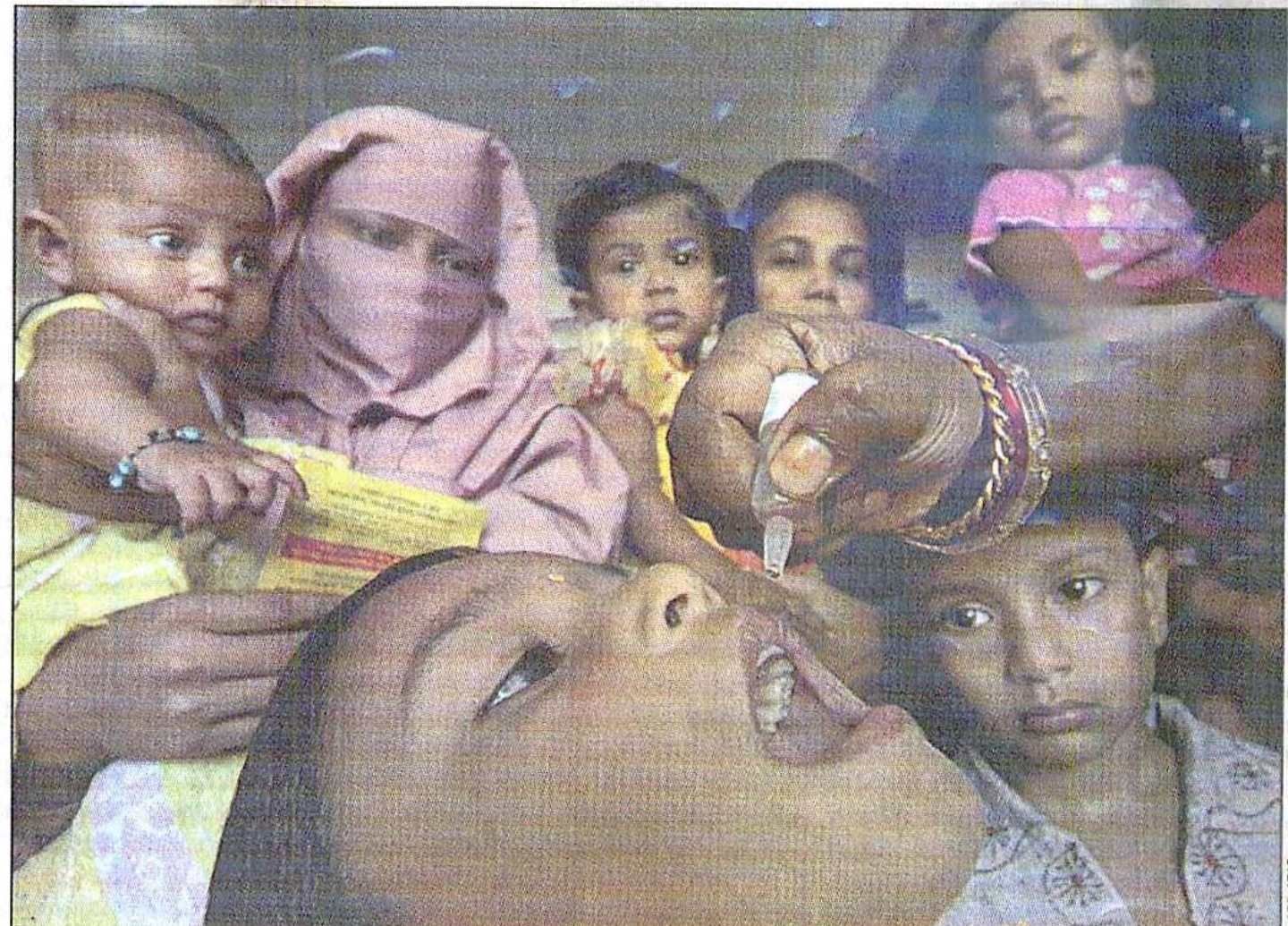
WORKSHOPS ON LITERACY 'Certificate' award ceremony held

The certificate award ceremony of workshops on five thematic issues on literacy/non-formal education for mid-level government and non-government managers, policymakers and other stakeholders was held at the Ahsania Mission Bhaban Auditorium in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission in association with Unesco, Dhaka, organised the workshops to strengthen the capacity of the stakeholders.

The subjects included planning and management of literacy & non-formal education; post literacy planning and management; material development of literacy & non-formal education; role of teachers/facilitator of literacy & non-formal education; and monitoring and evaluation of literacy & non-formal education.

Md Rafiquzzaman, director general of the Bureau of Non-Formal Education, attended the certificate award ceremony as the chief guest and Abdur Rafique, national programme officer, Unesco, Dhaka as special guest. Kazi Rafiqul Alam, president of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, presided over the session.



A health worker administering polio vaccine to a child at Mugdapara Jheelpara Health Complex in the city yesterday. Urban Primary Healthcare Project organised the programme on the occasion of the first round of the 16th National Immunisation Day (NID).

16TH NID BEGINS 24m children to be immunised

BSS, Dhaka

The first round of the 16th National Immunisation Day (NID) was observed across the country yesterday with a target to immunise more than 24 million under-5 children through vaccination.

Over 60,000 health workers and volunteers in 140 lakh vaccination centres, including mobile centres and outreach sites, were deputed to administer the vaccines to the children.

In the second round on December 8, de-worming tablets will be added to the countrywide programme for the children aged between two and five, official and WHO sources said here yesterday.

Health and Family Welfare Adviser Maj Gen (Retd) Dr ASM Matiuur Rahman inaugurated the 16th National Immunisation Day (NID) in the EPI Bhaban on October 25 with a call for all-out cooperation towards making the programme a total success.

The adviser yesterday visited different places in the city and its outskirts to see for himself the immunisation activities.

In the morning, he visited Dhaka Shishu Hospital and Square Hospital in the city and later he went to Amin Bazar, Savar Bus Stand, Savar Health Complex and Dhamrai.

According to official sources, 30 million doses of oral polio vaccines, 20 million doses of high-potency Vitamin-A capsules and 13 million doses of Albendazole tablets have been procured for this purpose.

Besides, they said a four-day-long house-to-house search programme will follow each round to ensure that no child is dropped out of the immunisation programme.

The government in collaboration with different international agencies, including the UNICEF and the WHO, decided to immunise all the under-five children across the country when the first case of polio was detected after five years in March 2006.

Eighteen polio cases have so far been detected in 12 districts all over the country with the last one reported on November 22, 2006, the sources added.

UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh Louis-Georges Arsenault said the NID would not only help root out polio, but also reduce the chance of other diseases in children of Bangladesh, particularly in the post-flood situation with the combination of Vitamin-A capsules and de-worming tablets.

Two more NIDs will be observed in Bangladesh every year from 2008 until the neighbouring India, already identified as an endemic country, becomes free from polio.

Bhola JCD leader arrested

UNB, Bhola

Navy-led joint forces arrested a local Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader from a market in the district town yesterday.

The joint troops raided Zia Super market at about 11:30am and arrested Al Amin.

Navy sources said Al Amin was wanted in extortion and explosive cases.

As the news of Al Amin's arrest spread over the area, leaders of other political parties went into hiding.

OCT 28 CARNAGE

Take action against Jamaat-Shibir: AL

UNB, Dhaka

Acting AL President Zillur Rahman yesterday urged the government to take action against Jamaat-Shibir and its patrons who were responsible for the carnage on October 28 last year.

Recalling the incidents of October 28 in a statement Zillur said Awami League led 14-party combine had organised blockade on that day marking the end of misrule of the 4-party alliance.

He said Jamaat-Shibir had launched violent attack on the activists of 14-party alliance and rained bullets on the demonstrators killing an activist of Workers

Party at Paltan.

He said Jamaat-Shibir was responsible for the murder of Monir Hossain of Juba League in Dhaka, Hannan at Bancharampur and three other AL activists in Noakhali.

He alleged that BNP-Jamaat had, as part of a blueprint of election engineering, appointed President Tajuddin Ahmed as Chief Adviser of the caretaker government, which was opposed by the people.

Zillur termed the cases against AL President Sheikh Hasina and her followers as false and fabricated. He demanded withdrawal of the cases and immediate release of Hasina.

Unique Power to sell 3MW captive power to govt

UNB, Narayanganj

Unique Power Plant Ltd, a subsidiary of Menghna Group, yesterday signed a deal with Rural

Electricification Board (REB) to sell its 3MW captive power to the government.

As per the agreement, the Unique Plant will sell 3MW of electricity to the government for the REB grid system at Tk 2.23 per unit.

General Manager of the Unique Power Saiful Alam and REB Secretary Md Belayet Hossain signed the deal on behalf of their respective sides.

REB Chairman Habib Ullah Majumder and Menghna Group Chairman Mostafa Kamal were present at the agreement-signing ceremony.



Masuda Islam, a resident of Tejgunipara, speaks at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the city yesterday.

BIJOY SARANI-TEJGAON LINK ROAD Rajuk changes plan to serve vested quarter

Local residents tell journalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Residents of Tejgunipara in the city yesterday urged the government to give them enough time to shift their belongings from their households.

Speaking at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity Auditorium, they said they were given notice to evacuate their houses by this morning as part of a plan to construct Bijoy Sarani-Tejgaon Link Road.

The residents also demanded that proper procedure should be followed in acquiring the land and paying compensation to them.

Rashedul Islam Mollah, a resident of Tejgunipara, said they were given only seven days to evacuate the places where they have been living for so many years.

It would be an uphill task for them to evacuate their houses within such a short time, he added.

Rashedul alleged that in most cases, Rajdhan Unnayan Kartipakha (Rajuk) issued the notices to present residents of the houses instead of their owners.

When the tenants informed the Rajuk authorities that notices should be sent to the actual owners, they did not take their reply into due consideration, he said, adding that as a result there are large number of owners who are yet to get the notice.

Rashedul said they also did not get any land acquisition notice for their land.

He alleged that the link road was supposed to be straight, but after the demolition of Rangas Bhaban, Rajuk's original master plan has been altered by some corrupt officials to construct a jag-jag road.

Kabir Anwar, another resident of the area, said Rajuk authorities are changing its master plan for serving a vested quarter.

He proposed that the government should form an impartial committee consisting of Buet teachers to determine whether a straight road or a jag-jag road would be cost-effective.

Abdul Mannan Khan, Md Abdul Hye and Matiuur Rahman were present at the press conference.

BUET celebrates its 60 years in engineering edn

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) held a daylong programme titled 'Celebrating 60 years of engineering education in Bangladesh' on its campus yesterday.

On the occasion, the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering arranged a seminar, discussion and video presentation.

Engineers and professors from different government and private organisations and universities attended the programmes.

Vice Chancellor of BUET Prof Dr AMM Saifullah inaugurated the ceremony.

In the seminar, three articles on the present status and future directions of electrical engineering education system were presented.

In the video presentation, teaching staff of the department, laboratory facilities, faculty introduction, achievement of some under graduate students were vividly presented.

Reputed engineers highlighted the importance of collaboration of the industries with the university.



Guardians wait in queues for hours to collect admission forms for their children for English medium section on the Vigarunnessa Noon School campus in the city yesterday.