

Children drawing pictures at the Institute of Fine Arts on the Dhaka University campus yesterday at a painting competition titled 'Bosey Anki'. Nitya Upahar organised the competition.

WORLD AIDS DAY TODAY

'Increase awareness about deadly disease'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

World AIDS Day will be observed in the country today as elsewhere in the world through different programmes to increase awareness in the society to combat the deadly disease.

The theme of Day is 'Take the Lead' and the slogan 'Stop AIDS, Keep the Promise.'

The day's event will start at 8:30am with a rally from Manik Mia Avenue in front of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban to Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

Health Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) ASM Matur Rahman and Health Secretary AKM Jafar Ullah Khan will participate in the rally.

The inaugural ceremony of the Day will be held at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre at 10:00am.

An exhibition will be held at the same venue for all and it will continue till 5:00pm.

To mark the Day, Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco and the Ministry of Education have arranged a seminar-cum-open discussion on the 'Role of the Civil Society in Preventing HIV/AIDS' at the National Academy for

Educational Management (Naem) auditorium at 10:30am.

Civil society members, religious leaders, government officials, Unesco representatives and students of different colleges and universities will take part in the discussion.

Another discussion will be held at the TSC auditorium of Dhaka University at 4:00pm.

North South University will hold a rally at 12:00 noon and organise a seminar at 2:00pm on its campus.

In a message on the occasion, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said, "We have the means to prevent young adults from becoming infected. We have the means to treat those who are infected. We have the means to provide care and support."

"We have made tangible and remarkable progress in all these fronts. But we must do more. Although new data shows that global HIV prevalence has levelled off, the numbers are still staggering. It is our crucial mission to ensure that everyone has an access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, wherever they live, whatever they do. These include those who live on the margins of society- migrants, sex workers, injecting drug users, and men who have sex with men. And it

includes those who function in the mainstream- in government offices, banks, schools and international organisations," he said.

Ban Ki-moon called for renewed leadership in eradicating stigma associated with HIV.

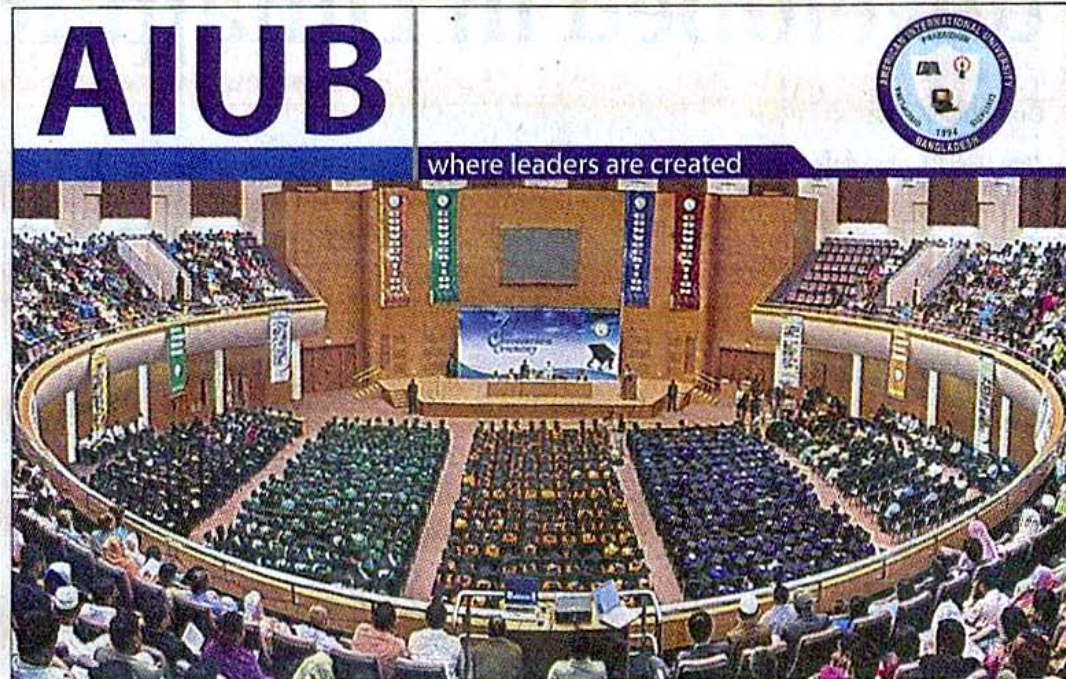
He also expressed his determination to lead the UN family in this

endeavour to ensure that "We prioritise action on AIDS, encourage member states to keep the issue high on national and international agendas and work to make the UN a model of how the workplace should respond to AIDS."

President Iazuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser to Caretaker

Government Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, in separate messages, said Bangladesh is vulnerable to HIV/AIDS for geographical reasons.

So people should be well informed about how to prevent its infection and coordinate efforts in this regard, they stated.



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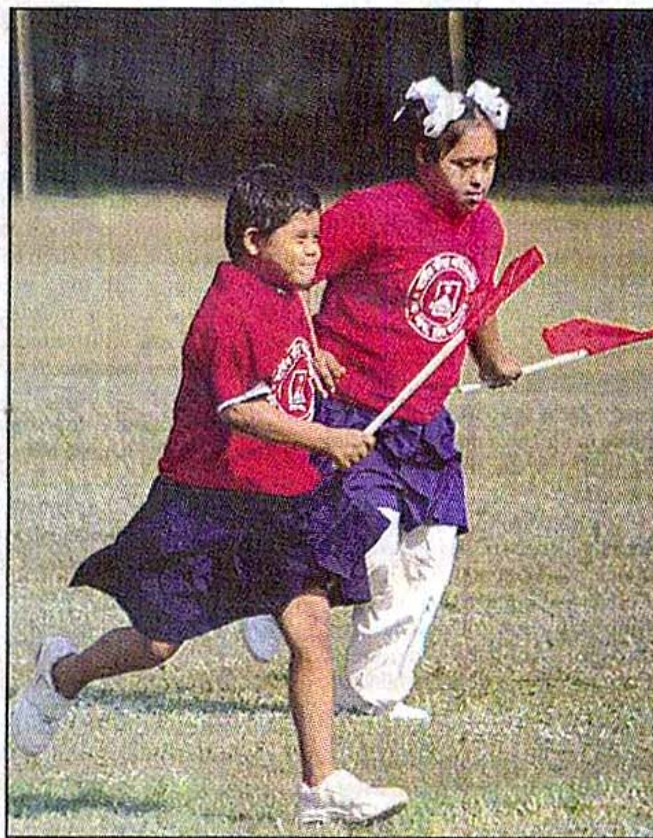
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Physically-challenged children participate in a sports competition at Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex in the city yesterday. SWID Bangladesh organised the competition.

CHT Cultural Festival begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day CHT Cultural Festival 2007 titled 'Experience and celebrate the indigenous culture of the CHT' began at Bangladesh-China friendship conference centre in the city yesterday.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in association with the European Union organised the festival to familiarise the people with the lifestyle and culture of indigenous communities living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Members of ten ethnic communities, including Chakma, Marma, Khumi, Bom and Mro, are taking part in the festival featuring an exhibition of indigenous handicrafts, including handloom weaving, jewellery and various other artefacts, and another exhibition of artworks and photographs by indigenous artists.

Agriculture products and ethnic clothes and foods are also available at the stalls.

Artists from indigenous communities living in Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban presented a colourful cultural programme featuring traditional song and dance.

A film titled 'The Pulsating Hills' was also screened.

"The objective of the festival is to expose our people to the culture of CHT, so that they can have a basic understanding of the lifestyle and culture of the indigenous communities," said Nasheeba Selim, programme officer of CHT Development Facility (CHTDF). The festival will end today.

APTN to provide assistance to Sidr victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asia Pacific Telecommunication Network (APTN) yesterday decided to provide assistance to Bangladesh Sidr victims.

The network took the decision at its annual management committee meeting in Seoul, South Korea.

APTN with its 34 members is the most powerful telecommunication organisation in the region.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission Chairman Maj Gen (ret'd) Manzurul Alam and member SM Munir took part in the meeting.

The meeting also conduced the death of people in the severe cyclone.

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