

## Introduce food rationing for class three & four govt employees

Says Prof Muzaffer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent educationist Prof Muzaffer Ahmad yesterday called on the government to introduce food rationing for class three and four government employees to tackle the situation resulting from price hike of essentials.

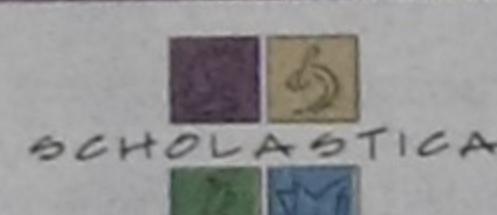
"Hunger could be lessened through food rationing for class three and four employees, which can be introduced by reducing the rations of another section of employees up to 50 percent. Increasing the salary of employees cannot reduce hunger," he said at a seminar.

The seminar on 'Disaster, economy and human development: Roadblocks to achieving MDGs by 2015' was part of two-day long national seminar jointly organised by Advancing Public Interest Trust (APIT) and the Shapthak, a new weekly magazine, at the National Press Club.



Journalists stage a sit-in in front of the sub-jail on Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises in the city yesterday protesting misbehaviour of a policeman with the journalists.

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Prof Muzaffer said, "We did not see any link between natural disasters and the price hike in the past. The real reason behind the price hike of essentials lies somewhere else. If the food ministry could estimate the deficit of food supply several months beforehand, rice can be imported at only 240 US dollars per ton at that time."

About the inclusion of the disaster management issue in school curriculum, he said, "Not everything can be included in the textbooks. The disaster management issue could be taught in the school through rapid readers, which was a part of syllabus few years ago."

"We should develop the social institutions to develop our human resources and we must capitalise on water, land and human resources in order to meet the MDGs and for sustainable development," he added.

Presenting the keynote paper in the seminar, Rayhan Sharif of APIT said the rate of dropouts from schools has gone up due to natural disasters. Disasters had a long-term effect on the economy, he added.

Former vice chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Moniruzzaman Miah, Country Director of ActionAid Farah Kabir, Director of Disaster Management Bureau Abu Sadek, former lawmaker GM Qader and Secretary General of Jatiya Party Sheikh Shahidul Islam also spoke.

**EC's FAILURE TO HOLD POLLS  
Hearing on writ resumes Apr 20**

UNB, Dhaka

The hearing on a writ petition against Election Commission's failure to hold the general election within the constitutionally mandated timeframe resumes on April 20.

A High Court division bench headed by Justice MA Rashid fixed the date yesterday as Barrister Masood R Sobhan, the writ petitioner, mentioned the matter for hearing.

On January 27, the High Court in a rule had ordered the EC to explain why it shall not be directed to hold the general election "within the next 90 days".

It also had asked the commission to show cause why its inability to hold an election within 90 days since dissolution of parliament in October 2006 'shall not be declared unlawful'.

The EC, secretary to the EC Secretariat, the chief adviser and the Law Ministry represented by the law secretary were made respondents to the rule.

**Law and order situation has improved**

*Home adviser tells Jail Week inaugural function*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Adviser Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin yesterday said the law and order situation has improved significantly during the tenure of the caretaker government and people are now getting justice.

He was speaking as chief guest at the launching of 'Jail Week 2008' at the jail directorate in the city.

The adviser said apart from holding an election free from the influence of black money and muscle powers, the government is also trying to build up a society free from corruption.

He said the jail authorities are trying to turn the jails into correction centres from the punishment ones.

The adviser also spoke about various plans and projects for removing the problems in jails and enhancing facilities for jail staffs.

Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Zakir Hassan, Director General of Rapid Action Battalion Hasan Mahmud Khandaker, and DIG Prisons Maj Shamshul Haider Siddique were present on the occasion.

The programme of the Jail Week began through a parade with the participation of 90 jail guards at 10:00am.

On this occasion, a total of 52 jail guards were given IG-Prisons Awards for their good jobs.

The jail authorities have also arranged a fair on the premises of the jail directorate.

Goods made by the prisoners of 67 jails across the country are on display at the fair.

The Jail Week is being observed since 2006.



A student of European Standard School, left, renders song while other students take part in a fashion show at the annual cultural programme of the school at Dhaka Officers' Club in the city yesterday.

## 'Ensure equal rights of women workers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human and labour rights activists at a workshop yesterday called on the trade union leaders to play a strong role in ensuring equal rights of women workers in every sphere of society.

They also called on the workers to come forward unitedly to establish their rights.

At the same time, garment workers should also monitor the safety measures in the factories in order to avert fire incidents, said human rights activist Dr Hameeda Hossain.

The NGOs should also undertake coordinated programmes to this end, she added.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) organised the workshop at Cirdap auditorium in the capital. Trade union and

GMG aircraft finally leaves Dhaka for Dubai

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The GMG aircraft that was stranded at Zia International Airport (ZIA) with around 470 passengers finally left Dhaka for Dubai yesterday evening, 75 hours after its scheduled time.

"The Dubai-bound flight of GMG is about to leave ZIA as boarding is almost complete," a GMG official at ZIA told The Daily Star at 6:00pm yesterday.

The Dubai-bound airbus (flight no Z5-091) was scheduled to take off at 4:30pm on Monday, but it had to return to Zia International Airport (ZIA) an hour after it took off due to technical glitches.

Flight delay for 75 hours caused untold sufferings to its stranded passengers who were accommodated at different hotels in the city.

NGO representatives and workers shared their experiences regarding a BLAST project titled 'Legal services for garment workers'.

Garment workers who earlier took part in trainings under the projects said they are now aware of their rights and received salary arrears and compensation through arbitration conducted under the

project.

BLAST Deputy Director Farida Yasmin said 7535 workers have been trained on rights and legal issues under the legal services project since 2005, which also established a strong network among NGOs, workers and trade unions.

Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra General Secretary Dr

Wazedul Islam Khan and Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies Assistant Executive Director Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed also spoke.

BLAST Executive Director Taslimur Rahman moderated the workshop presided over by its Vice President Justice Naimuddin Ahmed.

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