

Public-private partnership a must for afforestation

Says Raja Debashish

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A month-long tree fair ended in the city yesterday with a call for countrywide afforestation.

A total of 17 lakh saplings of 582 species were sold for Tk six crore at the fair that began at the National Parade Ground on May 24.

Special Assistant to the Ministry of Environment and Forest Raja Debashish Roy was present at the concluding ceremony of the fair at the Osmani Memorial auditorium as the chief guest.

He also distributed the prizes among the winners of an art com-

petition and an essay-writing contest organised to commemorate the fair.

Underscoring the need for afforestation in the country especially in the coastal areas, Raja Debashish Roy said, "Public-private partnership is important for afforestation and co-management can play a significant role to the success of the afforestation programme."

"Change of view and management of the forest department is essential now otherwise the future of both the country and the forest department is bleak," said Raja Debashish.

The government has already started talking to the stakeholders to reform the Forest Transit Rules, said Raja Debashish and the reform will help increase afforestation in private lands, he added.

He also emphasised on afforestation in the urban areas.

Environment and Forest Secretary AHM Rezaul Kabir presided over the programme while Chief Forest Conservator AKM Shamsuddin delivered the welcome speech.

Deputy Chief Forest Conservator Mohammad Abdul Motalab rounded off the session with vote of thanks.

US ambassador visits Sidr-hit Sharankhola

US Ambassador James F Moriarty visited Sharankhola upazila in Bagerhat district yesterday, says a press release.

The US envoy observed several projects funded by the US government in the area to aid the ongoing rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

Moriarty met with residents and local leaders of the area to discuss the US government's commitment towards rebuilding a more cyclone-resistant Bangladesh in the aftermath of cyclone Sidr.

He also announced a new \$100,000 grant to Helen Keller International to ensure nutritional support for mothers and children in the Sidr-affected area.

In a meeting with people who lost their homes during the cyclone, he explained how the United States plans to assist to help rebuild houses on their land.

The US government, through USAID, is helping to reconstruct 825 houses in Sharankhola. Each house will have a sanitary latrine, access to safe water and is designed to withstand winds of up to 150km per hour.

Later, the ambassador visited a road repair project, a US government initiative to provide employment to Sidr-affected people. He spoke to women beneficiaries and lauded their initiative to fight poverty in the cyclone-hit area.



BATB Corporate and Regulatory Affairs Head Shaiful Bahari Mahpar distributes sapling to a woman at Cantonment Ground in Chittagong port city yesterday.

Call to raise awareness about CNG cylinder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called for raising awareness about the use of substandard gas cylinder in vehicles in order to prevent explosion of cylinders in the CNG-run vehicles.

Some workshops are using substandard CNG cylinders during the conversion of the vehicles into CNG, which is one of the reasons behind the explosions of CNG cylinders, said Shaifquat Alam, general manager, Oil and Gas Division of Getco Trading Limited, at the seminar.

Such accidents have claimed a number of lives recently, he added. Getco organised the seminar titled

'Safety of using CNG cylinder' at the auditorium of the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh. IMW Industries Ltd, Canada, sponsored the event.

As the demand for conversion of vehicles into CNG has gone up because of increasing fuel prices, conversion workshops have been set up in a large number in recent years, Alam said.

In many cases, the workshops are not following the rules properly and are using substandard cylinders to maximise profit, he said.

Brad Miller, president of IMW, said they organised the seminar as part of social responsibility.

Drug addicts responsible for most muggings

Says DMP commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Naim Ahmed yesterday said drug addiction is now the city's biggest problem and the addicts commit most of the muggings to manage the additional money.

The DMP commissioner said this at the monthly crime conference at Rajarbagh Police Telecom auditorium where he also explained the present law and order situation and crime trend in the city.

"It is impossible to stop all kinds of criminal activities, but law and order situation in the city is under

the control of the law enforcement agencies", the DMP commissioner added.

Naim Ahmed said, "Addiction is a social problem which makes our working force inactive and throws it into the world of crimes."

He further said police have decreased the number of arrests from more than 300 to 100 everyday that shows that police have stopped the illegal arrest or the arrest to harass the people.

Deputy commissioners (DCs), additional deputy commissioners (ADCs), assistant commissioners (ACs) and officer-in-charges (OCs) of all the police stations under the DMP took part in the conference.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, top, and Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed, bottom, visit ailing President Iajuddin Ahmed at CMH in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

BATB to distribute 22 lakh saplings in Ctg division

CU CORRESPONDENT

British American Tobacco Ltd (BATB) yesterday launched its annual sapling distribution programme at a ceremony in Chittagong Cantonment area.

BATB will distribute 22 lakh saplings free of cost in Chittagong division under the programme that aims at distributing a total of 42 lakh saplings across the country.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Hussain Jamil formally inaugurated the programme where Department of Environment (DoE) Chittagong Director Nazmul Haque and Botanical Garden and Eco-Park Chittagong Director Zayed Hossain Bhuiyan were present as the special guests.

Divisional Commissioner Hussain Jamil called on the corporate bodies to come forward with programme like afforestation under their corporate social

responsibilities, as it is tough for the government to address social problems alone.

"The government initiative is not enough to face the environmental challenges and overcome problems without involving different departments, ministries and non-government organisations," he added.

He further said the BATB effort would accelerate the government's ongoing programme for tree plantation across the country.

DoE director, Botanical Garden and Eco-Park director, BATB Deputy Managing Director Golam Mainuddin and Corporate and Regulatory Affairs Head Shaiful Bahari Mahpar also spoke.

Shaheen School certificate award ceremony held

The annual cultural function and certificate awarding ceremony 2008 of BAF Shaheen English Medium School (SEMS) was held at Shaheen Hall at Tejgaon in the city yesterday, says an ISPR press release.

Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman attended the ceremony as the chief guest and distributed certificates among the outgoing students.

He also distributed the 'Chief of Air Staff Crests' among the high achievers in the O' level examination from SEMS.

The certificate distribution ceremony was followed by a cultural function.

High officials of the Bangladesh Air Force, teachers, parents and students of the school attended the programme.

Tk 5 lakh more donation for cancer hospital

Begum Dilras Banu, a housewife, donated Tk 5 lakh to Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH) yesterday, says a press release.

She handed over the cheque for the amount to Kazi Rafiqul Alam, president of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, at his office in the city.

For this donation one of the beds of the general ward of the hospital will be named after her maternal grandparents Mian Mohammad Abdul Aziz and Begum Forman Nessa.



Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman distributes certificates among the outgoing students of BAF Shaheen English Medium School at Shaheen Hall at Tejgaon in the city yesterday.

Domestic help commits suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 13-year-old domestic help committed suicide by hanging herself from a ceiling fan, as the security guard of the house did not allow her to flee the place at Shewrapara in the city yesterday morning.

Identified as Nodi Akter of Birampur village at Jessore Sadar upazila, the victim had been working at Railway employee Israfil Hossain's house at East Shewrapara for about two months.

The housemaster's nephew Wahidur Rahman said Nodi tried to escape from the house at 10:30am with her two bags but security guard Sohan barred her and returned her to the house on the second floor of the six-storied building.

"When I went out to inform my uncle and his wife about the fleeing attempt of Nodi after locking the door keeping her inside, she hanged herself from the ceiling fan with her scarf", Wahid told The Daily Star.

One held for filing false kidnap case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police personnel yesterday arrested a person from Bohaddarhat area in the port city on charge of filing a 'false' abduction case in order to harass a small trader.

The arrestee was identified as Hannan Sohel who hails from Gaibadna district.

Sources said Rokeya Begum, Sohel's mother, filed the case with the Kotwali Police Station on June 8 against trader Abbas Ali.

In the case, the complainant mentioned that Abbas and his three accomplices had kidnapped her son on June 4 from in front of KMC Market at Anderkilla and kept him at Abbas's house at Kuaish Nagar under Karnaphuli Police Station.

Exempt tax for church hospitals

NCFB appeals to CA

UNB, Dhaka

The National Christian Fellowship of Bangladesh (NCFB) yesterday appealed to the chief adviser for exemption of Value Added Tax (VAT) and income-related tax for church hospitals and healthcare institutes.

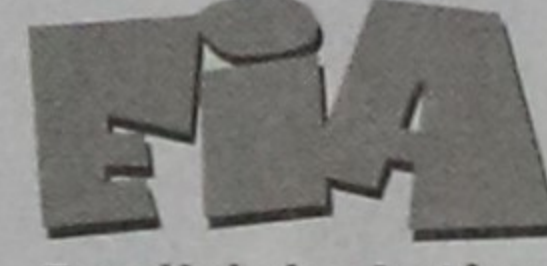
A six-member delegation of NCFB made the appeal when they called on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin

Ahmed at his office.

The chief adviser said he will ask the finance adviser and National Board of Revenue (NBR) to look into the matter.

Samson H Chowdhury, Bishop Michel Baroi and Prof Benjamin Costa were among others on the delegation.

Chief Adviser's press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim was also present.



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Enlistment of Services

A DFID supported education sector project in Bangladesh would like to invite agencies to register their profiles in order to create a resource pool for possible future engagement in 4 specific areas - Research and Impact Evaluation (including surveys), Training & Workshop Facilitation, Materials Development (including script writing, music composition and IEC materials) and Translation & Interpretation Services.

If your organization/ company is interested to be included in the EIA Resource Database please send us your organizational profile and proof of experience of working in the Bangladesh education sector. Please also attach a list of 5 major assignments carried out between 2002 till date with names of the contractors. Profiles should be provided separately for each intervention area mentioned above.

For Materials Development Services, please give hard and soft copies of relevant IEC materials as samples.

Please specify your area of interest on the envelope and send it to
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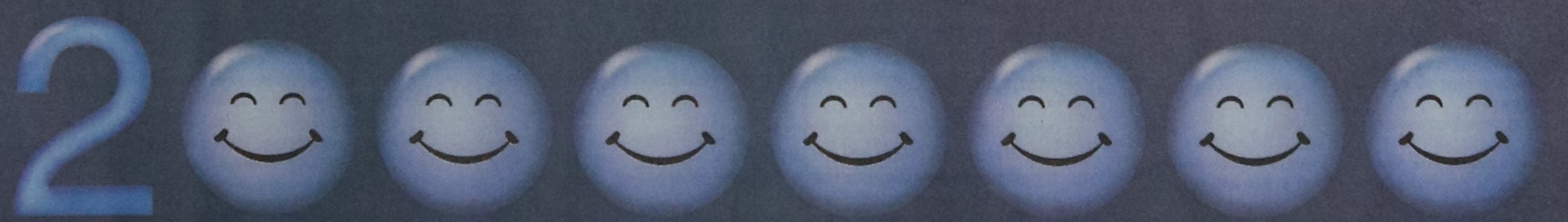
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