

SURVEY REPORT LAUNCHED

'Form nat'l body to ensure rights of women with disabilities'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although the country has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the government has no specific programme for women with disabilities (WWD) to ensure their rights, speakers at the launching ceremony of a survey report said yesterday.

They said different government and non-government organisations are working for the development of the people with disabilities, but as these programmes are not focused specifically on women, very few of them get benefits from the programmes.

They also suggested forming a national organisation which will work towards protecting the interest of physically challenged women and ensuring their increased access to education,

health and employment.

The Social Assistance and Rehabilitation for the Physically Vulnerable (SARPV) organised the programme at Biam auditorium in the city to launch its report on 'Women with Disabilities in Bangladesh'.

The survey, conducted on 292 physically challenged women across the country from January to June this year, revealed that less than one percent of the WWD are aware of different programmes and projects of the Department of Social Services and the NGOs.

However, 17.8 percent of women mentioned that they received some benefits from different government programmes that include pension, credit, training and cards under Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) and

Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programmes.

The report revealed that 150 out of 292 women have received some education, but the rest 142 have no education.

It said the number of specialised educational institutions for the physically and mentally challenged persons is limited, and they are mostly located in urban areas, and that is why women with particular type of disability in rural areas have no opportunity to attend those institutions.

While presenting the key findings of the report, Prof Akter Hossain of public administration department of Dhaka University said only 30.8 percent of the WWD are involved in income generating activities while two-thirds of them have no income.

About communication and

transport facilities, 55.1 percent of them mentioned that they face difficulties while boarding on and off the transports.

"The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs does not have any programme for the WWD," said Mahbub Kabir of ActionAid, adding that women with disabilities are often the victims of violence and sexual abuse and it is time to pay heed to them.

They also suggested that the organisations working for the physically challenged people should form a network to develop a common advocacy strategy and programme for establishing their rights.

Dr Nafeesur Rahman of NFOWD, Rina Roy of Manusher Jonno Foundation, Nirjharinee Hasan of Canadian High Commission and David Curtis of Healthlink Worldwide also spoke.

Tk 15cr Rotary plan for welfare of poor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rotary International has announced a Tk 15 crore plan for this fiscal.

The money will be spent in different sectors including health, education and water to help improve the living standard of the poor.

Mid Hafiz Ullah, the newly elected Rotary district governor, announced the plan at a press conference at the National Press Club in the capital on Monday.

Apart from permanent service-providing projects, Rotary will arrange pure and arsenic-free water for the poor spending Tk 3 crore.

Hafiz said they would take a special project worth Tk 2 crore to provide food, healthcare, education and clothes to poor children.

"We will also conduct free operation to 10000 cataract patients," he added.

The club will provide polio vaccines worth Tk 5 crore to the government through Unicef, and a modern ambulance to Narayanganj Diabetic Hospital, he said.

Hafiz said they would take a special project worth Tk 2 crore, to provide food, healthcare, education and clothes to the poor children.

Besides, they will also give micro credit under a project titled 'Khuda Nibaran' to the poor people.

"We will also reconstruct five primary schools at Sidr-affected areas spending Tk 2.25 crore," he added.

Besides, Rotarians will take part in tree plantation programmes from July 12.

Man kills wife in Naogaon

UNB, Naogaon

A man killed his wife at Mirzapur village in Sadar upazila on Monday night following a family feud.

Police said Saidul Hasan Chanchal stabbed and slaughtered his wife Zakia Sultana Moni, 18, at night.

Local people said Chanchal and Moni got married only four months ago, but they used to quarrel very often.

Local people caught Chanchal and confined him to a room. Receiving information, the police rushed to the spot and arrested Chanchal, his father Abdur Razzak, mother Shahida Begum and sister Sarmin Sultana yesterday noon.

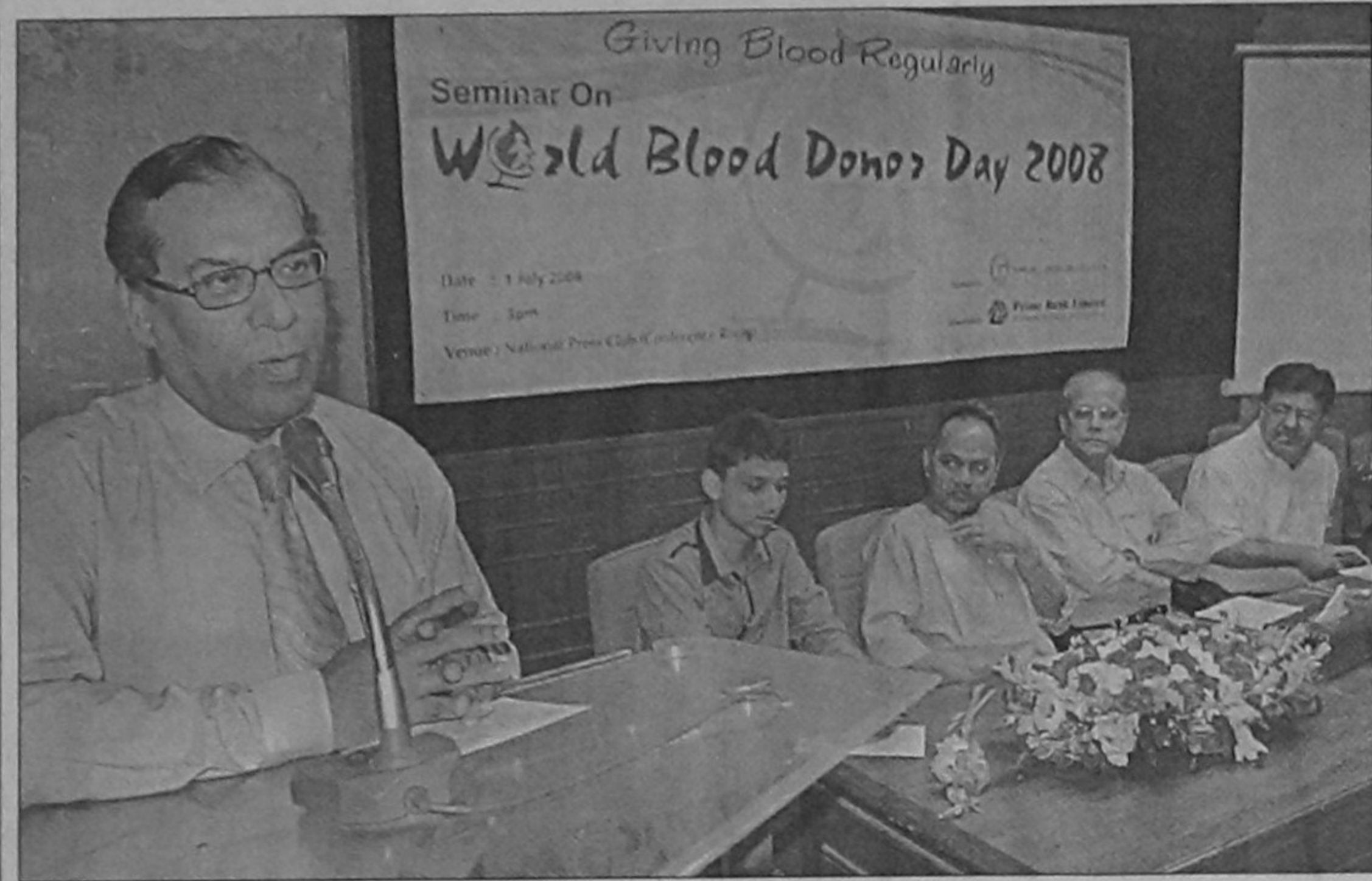


PHOTO: STAR

Nawajish Ali Khan, adviser to the ATN Bangla, speaks at a seminar in observance of the World Blood Donor Day 2008 at the National Press Club yesterday. Sandhani Central Committee organised the programme.

Khoka charged with Tk 10cr

FROM PAGE 1
The IO prayed for discharging Khoka's son Ishrak Hossain and daughter Sarika Sadeque, as the charges brought against them were not proved.

The charge sheet has been made under sections 26 (2) and 27 (1) of the ACC Act, 2004, and section 15 of the Emergency Power Rules, 2007.

In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that Khoka submitted his wealth statement showing wealth worth Tk 9.97 crore on December 6 last year, but the ACC found illegal wealth worth Tk 9.76 crore in his ownership, which is beyond his known sources of income.

The ACC also found wealth worth Tk 9,65,03,609 that was concealed in his wealth information submitted earlier to the commission.

BACKGROUND OF CASE
On April 2 this year, ACC filed the case against Khoka, his wife Ishmat Ara, son Ishrak and daughter Sarika for accumulating wealth worth over Tk 17.57 crore, which does not match his actual income and concealing information about his wealth.

The complainant accused Khoka, also president of BNP's city

unit, of concealing wealth worth about Tk 10 crore in the wealth statement submitted to ACC.

Khoka's wife, son and daughter were accused of assisting him for committing the offences.

The case statement further said Khoka submitted his income tax return first in 1990-91 period where he had shown his annual income as Tk 30,000. Now he owns wealth worth over Tk 17.5 crore, which is beyond his known sources of income.

The statement shows immovable property worth about Tk 8 crore and movable property worth about Tk 1.22 crore in the names of Khoka, his wife, and their children.

The complainant said Khoka's ill-gotten wealth includes a 87-katha plot of land in Bashundhara in the capital city, a picnic spot at Mawana in Gazipur, houses and flats in Gulshan and Gopibagh in the capital and two shops in Bashundhara City Shopping Mall.

Khoka topped the list of 11

high-profile graft suspects who were served with ACC notices on October 18 for submitting wealth statements within a week.

The 11 are among 35 graft suspects on the ACC's fourth list published on October 4.

DECLARED WEALTH
According to Khoka's wealth statement, his immovable property includes five houses, six flats and eight plots of land in and outside the capital, and 2,838 decimals (28.38 acres) of land.

Their movable property includes two cars -- a Lexus and a Toyota -- worth about Tk 53.26 lakh, and bank balance in DPS and Protirakkha Sanchay Patra.

Khoka also showed 40 bank accounts in the names of himself, his wife and daughter and fixed deposit (FDR) and savings scheme worth Tk 25 lakh and Tk 15 lakh in his son's name. The mayor also said that he owns two firearms.

Khoka has two houses in Gopibagh, one three-storey building on RK Mission Road and a six-storey building in Gulshan in the capital city and one in Munshiganj.

Of the six flats in the capital, two each were shown in the names of his wife, daughter and son, while eight plots of land were shown in his wife's name.

The wealth statement showed 32 decimals of land in Munshiganj and 1,142 decimals in Gazipur in Khoka's name and 1,674 decimals in Gazipur in his wife's name.

Khoka also mentioned that he has 27 bank accounts, including joint accounts, in different banks. His wife has 11 bank accounts and his daughter two.

He also said he and his wife own shares worth Tk 25 lakh, have business investment worth Tk 1.57 lakh and gold ornaments worth Tk 2.5 lakh, while there is a shop at Bashundhara City in his son's name.

HIS INCOME SOURCES
Khoka's sources of income mentioned in the wealth statement include salaries he received as a minister, lawmaker and DCC mayor during 1991-2007 and money from selling one of his cars.

Other income sources include honorarium he received as a member of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) for two terms, from 1975 to 1990 and from 1996 to 2001, commission he received as a businessman, business profits and house rent.

His businesses mentioned in the wealth statement include importing salt through Brothers United since 1975, installation of deep tube well under a project of Bangladesh Krishi Unnayan Corporation, and businesses with different organisations including T&T and ICDDR,B.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Leaders of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal held a meeting with Awami League leaders at the residence of AL acting President Zillur Rahman in the city yesterday.

Food still most urgent priority for many in Sidr-hit areas

WFP, SDC help Sidr victims

UNB, Dhaka

World Food Programme (WFP) continues to make progress in serving victims and has dispatched required food to feed over 2.3 million people in the affected areas since cyclone Sidr hit the coastal areas of Bangladesh late last year.

WFP's field monitor's report shows that food still remains the most urgent priority for many families in cyclone-affected areas who are expecting their aman harvest in November or December 2008.

Households are lacking food reserves or sufficient income to pay for food in the aftermath of Sidr.

"Food insecurity coupled with rising food prices, and high and increasing malnutrition rates all point to the need for continuing relief assistance in worst affected areas until the fresh aman harvest in November-December," said Edward Kalion, WFP Bangladesh country director.

"With the generous support of various donors, WFP delivered over

63,300 tons of emergency food assistance to the hungry, homeless and vulnerable people during the emergency operations," he said.

WFP recently completed its seventh rounds of general food distribution that started on May 31.

Under the programme, 1,502,000 beneficiaries received 12,000 tons of food assistance to meet their immediate food needs.

WFP, in collaboration with the government and a number of pre-qualified NGO partners, is providing food rations consisting of rice, pulses, edible oil, blended food, salt and high energy biscuits.

Swiss Agency for Development Meanwhile, some 2,962 Sidr-affected families in the country are now rebuilding their livelihood and striving to stand back on their feet with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

With the Tk 15,000 cash grant received from SDC, each household has bought cows, fishing nets, boats or invested in small businesses, agricultural farming or in

other income generating activities, said a press release.

Momin, a person with disability of Chal Rayenda village, has bought a milking cow and hopes that he will be able to support his family by selling the milk.

Ripia Begum of village Jilbunia has resumed her door-to-door cloth selling business she had before cyclonic Sidr struck in November 2007.

Under SDC's 'Cash for Livelihood' (CFL) project, Tk 15,000 was paid unconditionally in one installment during May in the most affected Rayenda and Southkhali unions at Sharankhola in Bagerhat.

The selection of beneficiaries as well as disbursement of the cash was completed in close collaboration with the local administration, Union Parishad elected representatives and local NGO partners.

The total SDC assistance for the Sidr-affected region amounts to \$7 million.

Danish help to build capacity of women entrepreneurs

UNB, Dhaka

An agreement was signed between Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI) and Danish Embassy yesterday to build the capacity of 300 selected women entrepreneurs from 10 different geographical locations in Bangladesh.

As per the agreement, Danida under its 'Business-to-Business Programme' will provide Tk 71.4 lakh to BWCCI to implement the two-year project as part of the Danish development assistance to Bangladesh, said a press release yesterday.

During the two-year period training sessions in disciplines such as financial management, accounting and bookkeeping as well as one-to-one business counselling will be conducted in Gazipur, Jamalpur, Faridpur, Khulna, Narsingdi, Comilla, Kishoreganj, Tangail, Dinajpur and Jessore.

BWCCI has developed the project considering the rural women, who have a need for upgrading their micro business and develop their skills to run their business, and if done so not only will they improve their living conditions, but also will contribute to the overall business and export growth, employment generation and skills development of Bangladesh.

While addressing the ceremony, Jan Møller Hansen, Chargé d'Affaires of Danish Embassy, said, "The Embassy has had a long term focus on private sector development in Bangladesh through our B2B programme, but this is the first time we reach the rural women entrepreneurs with hands on assistance and we look very much forward to our co-operation with BWCCI on this."

US embassy closed tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

US Embassy offices, including The American Centre, Archer K Blood American Centre Library, the student counselling service and the Consular Section will remain closed tomorrow on the occasion of the American Independence day.

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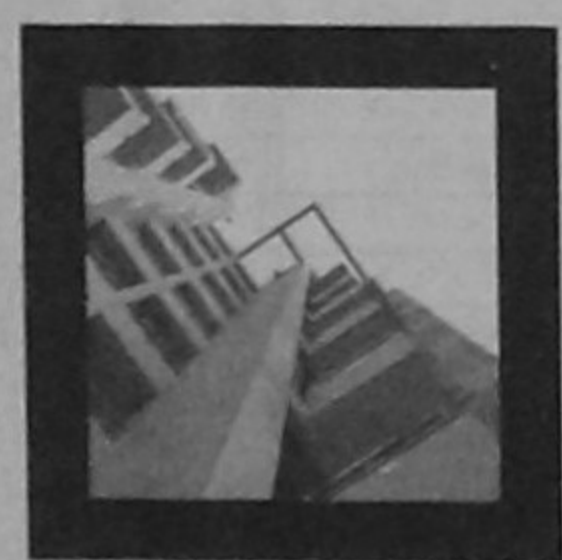
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