

# Prepare action plan for skill dev suiting overseas jobs: CA

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhrudin Ahmed yesterday directed the authorities concerned to prepare a three-year mid-term action plan for skill-development training to cater overseas employment demand for skilled manpower.

He also asked for proper monitoring of the implementation of the plan, conceived in view of demand of the present-day overseas labour market and the fact that unskilled job-seekers don't get their money's worth from jobs abroad.

He made the directive at a meeting at the CA's office on the overall skill-development training programme and present position of overseas employment and action to attain remarkable success in manpower development and export.

The meeting was held under personal initiative of the chief

adviser.

A power-point presentation was made at the meeting, which showed that 475,896 workers were sent abroad from January to June this year.

For this year, the government has set a target of exporting nine lakh manpower—four lakh of them skilled and semi-skilled.

Various short courses are being conducted in Technical Training Centres under five ministries—Education, Overseas Employment, Labour and Employment, Health, and Youth—for skill development, the meeting was told.

Public-private partnership is being built up for best utilisation of the capacity of the training centres.

Rearing 49,000 people of skilled manpower in 2008 has been targeted through the Technical Training Centres and Institute of Marine Technology of the

Manpower, Employment and Training Bureau.

Other ministries and departments are implementing time-bound action plans for running various courses on "high-demand trades", the meeting was informed.

The CA, who expressed satisfaction over the skill-development programme, advised carrying out training programmes by designating some centres as model ones.

He also directed for taking steps to lease out unused technical training centres under Youth Ministry to private sector to ensure their best use. He asked for following as model the countries which are exporting manpower on larger scale.

The CA said Bangladesh missions abroad would have to carry out special activities for ensuring labour welfare and expanding new markets of recruitment. "Not only

Labour Wing but also the entire Embassy or High Commission will have to take the responsibility."

He also emphasised in-built briefing course apart from skill training and initiative for imparting training on languages of various countries.

It was informed that 6.58 billion dollars worth of foreign currencies were earned in 2007 from overseas employment and it is expected that this income would cross 9-billion mark in 2008 through the fixing of target of exporting manpower on a larger scale.

CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim briefed newsmen about the meeting.

Foreign Adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury, secretaries of the ministries concerned and the DG of the Manpower, Employment and Training Bureau and high officials were present at the meeting.

## Jute mill workers begin indefinite hunger strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Twenty-seven workers of state-owned Crescent, Star and Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills started observing an indefinite hunger strike yesterday to press home their eight-point demand.

The eight-point include payment of all arrears, 25 percent dearness allowance and cancellation of the government decision to privatise Alim Jute Mills.

Security forces were deployed around the administrative building of Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills where the workers are observing the hunger strike.

Two of the workers, who were observing hunger strikers, fell sick at 4:00pm and were rushed to a Khalishpur clinic for treatment.

They were identified as Matiar Munshi of Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills and Molla Zakir Hossain of Star Jute Mills.

Convener of the state-owned Jute Mill Workers' Development Committee Gazi Masum said the hunger strike would continue until their demands are fully met.

Meanwhile, workers of Star Jute Mills continued their work abstention programme that began on Thursday demanding payment of their arrears wages.

## 'Ban politics of Jamaat-Shibir'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Progressive organisations of the students and the youths demanded banning religion-based politics of Jamaat-Shibir who have assaulted a freedom fighter for demanding trial of the war criminals.

They made the demand at a meeting at altar of the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

Former general secretary of Dhaka University Central Student Union (DUCSU) Dr Mushtak Hossain and Bangladesh Chhatra Union President Khan Asaduzzaman Masum spoke at the meeting.

Bangladesh Jubo Union President Kafi Ratan, General Secretary Hasan Hafizur Rahman Sohel, Bangladesh Jubo Maitri General Secretary Sadakat Hossain Bablu, Bangladesh Chhatra Maitri President Rafiqul Islam Sujon were present at the meeting. Later, they brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus.

## Saudi envoy emphasises increased bilateral trade

BSS, Dhaka

Newly appointed Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh Dr Abdullah Bin Naser Al-Bushari yesterday laid stress on enhancing trade and investment between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia.

Dr Abdullah said this when a two-member delegation of Dhaka International Exhibition Company (DIEC) led by its Managing Director Enayet Karim called on him at his Gulshan office, a press release said.

He said his country would extend all out cooperation to speed up economic advancement of the two brotherly nations.

The Saudi ambassador said he would provide all logistics support to the coming Bangladesh single country trade fair in Jeddah and Riyadh.

Dr Abdullah urged Bangladeshi businessmen to come forward for gearing up bilateral trade relationship with Saudi Arabia.

Recalling his 20-year-old memory while he was posted in Bangladesh as an officer, the Saudi ambassador said Bangladesh has achieved a lot of development during this period.

DIEC Director Ali Akbar was present during the meeting.



Indian Army Chief General Deepak Kapoor was received by Quarter Master General Lt General Md Jahangir Alam Choudhury on behalf of Chief of Army Staff, Bangladesh Army at BAF tarmac at Kurmitola in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

## Refrain from privatising public hospitals

Shasthya Odhikar Jote urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged the government to refrain from privatising the public hospitals in the name of making them autonomous hospitals saying in that case poor people would not get health facilities.

They demanded inclusion of local government bodies in running and maintaining the service sectors of the state and ensuring government's monitoring over the private clinics and hospitals.

The roundtable titled 'Privatisation of health service: Problem or panacea' was organised by Shasthya Odhikar Jote, an alliance working to ensure citizen's health rights, at the National Press Club in the city.

Speakers at the roundtable called for allocating more, budget, and

reducing corruption in the health sector by introducing strong monitoring system at the local and the national level.

Former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru said, "We need to find out the problems in the health sector and solve those after adopting effective plans immediately."

"We do not lack intelligence, efficiency and even money, what we lack is proper management. So through proper management problems in health sector could be removed," he said.

Opposing any sort of plans to privatise health sector, Columnist Farhad Mazhar said the statecraft has some constitutional obligations regarding the health sector and they should not violate those following instructions of some multilateral organisations.

"The government cannot priva-

tise the public hospitals. Rather it should monitor the activities of the private hospitals to ensure accountability of those and smooth service to the people," he added.

Dr Salek Ahmed of Shasthya Andolon said the government has reduced the health budget by Tk 1000 crore in the current fiscal.

"The allocation of that Tk 1000 crore to community clinics could help provide necessary health services to village people," he said.

He also urged the government to increase facilities for medical officers at the upazila level.

The roundtable was also addressed by Rabiul Islam, researcher of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Selina Banu, executive director of Nongor, and Tusher Rahman, secretary general of the Citizens' Rights Movement.

## 'One dental surgeon for 80,000 people'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar in the city yesterday said a healthy oral hygiene is essential for a sound health status.

The seminar on Cosmetic and Aesthetic Dentistry was organised by Bangladesh Dental Health Research Foundation (BDHRF) in association with Sanofi-Aventis Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

Speaking as chief guest, Chief Adviser's Special Assistant for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Dr M Tamim said

Bangladesh being one of the densely populated under-developed countries has got least dental facilities.

"To get sound health status we need to get healthy oral hygiene, which can only be ensured by the dental surgeons," he said.

"We have approximately 3000 dental surgeons, and one dental surgeon is available for 80 thousand people in the country," said Dr Tamim.

Till now more than 540 species of oral bacteria have been detected, he added.

BDHRF President Dr Mohammad Mujibur Rahman Howlader

suggested inclusion of oral health in the primary health care programme of the government.

The oral health is very much neglected in this country, he said.

Dr Howlader and Dr Alia Sultana presented two papers in the scientific sessions.

Vice-chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Prof Mohammad Tahir, President of Bangladesh Dental Society Prof Dr Mohammad Ashraf Hussain and Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry at BSMMU Prof Dr Motiur Rahman Molla also spoke at the seminar.

## 'Take steps to reduce dropouts in disaster-hit areas'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop with the media personnel yesterday underscored the need for taking proper steps to reduce the dropouts from primary schools after natural calamities like flood and cyclone in the country.

The workshop was organised by ActionAid and Disaster Forum on Information Education Communication.

Among the flood and cyclone-hit people, a big number of them are students, many of which cannot return to their education after natural calamities, said ZI Farooq, consultant of Adam Smith, who is involved in preparing a book to reduce the primary school dropouts after natural calamities.

The draft of the book, which is being prepared by Disaster Forum and ActionAid, has suggested forming a voluntary team just after getting the flood forecast, sapling trees in a certain distance along the boundaries to protect the schools, filling ditches on the school premises if any, taking proper steps to repair schools before flood, rescheduling school timing, beginning two shifts for the students of flood-hit schools, taking effective steps to repair connecting roads to the schools and arranging temporary schools for students.

The draft also suggested packing books and other study materials with thick polythene along with other goods before any natural disaster, taking effective steps for the employment of the parents of the students so that they allow their sons and daughters to continue their education.

"We are still taking suggestions before finalising the books which also have a plan to be included in the curriculum of teachers' training so that they can aware the people of the vulnerable areas," said Farooq.

Sultana Afroz, consultant of disaster forum, and Khaled Hossain, coordinator of the forum, addressed the workshop.

## TWO-DAY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE BEGINS TODAY

# One-sixth of people suffer from NTDs worldwide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a view to eliminating the neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) that result in suffering of the world's one-sixth people, a two-day international conference will begin in the city today.

The conference will be held at Biam auditorium in participation with the resource persons from World Health Organisation (WHO) head office in Geneva, Switzerland and WHO regional offices in India, Nepal, Thailand, Japan and Bangladesh.

It aims at disseminating and coordinating knowledge, skills, attitude and activities pertaining to the control and elimination of targeted endemic NTDs, developing a set of recommendations for the public and private sectors to achieve the goal of controlling the targeted NTDs within a timeframe and also assisting in fostering partnership for elimination of NTDs.

Prior to the conference, the experts at a press conference yesterday said NTDs like Filariasis, Kala azar and soil transmitted helminthiasis that spread in the country in an endemic form should be eliminated through a concerted effort

among different countries.

The conference will be organised by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), ministry of health and family welfare and the government of Bangladesh.

At the press conference at NIPSOM auditorium the speakers said that the affected people are generally of the poorest group and these diseases often affect individuals throughout their lives, causing a high degree of morbidity and physical disability.

Whereas, using simple drugs and increasing health awareness the diseases could be controlled easily, they said, adding that policy support, priority and resource allocation is important in this regard.

Filariasis caused by Culex mosquito is endemic in 34 districts of the country and around 20 million people are already infected. The outbreak of the diseases is seen mainly in the country's northern region. However, steps have been taken by the government since 2001 and a Filariasis Hospital has been established in Nilphamari for surgical operation.

Similarly, the prevalence of

Kala azar is about 45,000 while on an average some 10,000 people are infected with the disease. Kala azar, which is mostly seen in Mymensingh, Tangail, Sirajganj, Pabna, Rajshahi and other 29 districts, is born by sand flies. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has signed among the government of Bangladesh, Nepal and India to eliminate the disease from the region.

Soil Transmitted Helminthiasis (STH) that causes anaemia and restrains physical growth is present in all the districts of the country. However, STH control activity has been undertaken with a target of de worming 75 percent to 100 percent school students by 2010.

Presided over by Prof Moazzem Hossain, director, disease control of the DGHS, and chairman of the organising committee of the conference, the press conference was attended by Dr AM Zakir Hussain, chairman of the scientific committee, Prof Zafarullah Chowdhury, director of NIPSOM, Dr Ishrat Jahan, WHO consultant, Dr Shahnewaz, chief of Filariasis unit of DGHS and Prof Dr Mariam Khatun of NIPSOM.



TIB Chairman Prof Muzafer Ahmad addresses a roundtable at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right is Primary and Mass Education Adviser Rasheda K Choudhury and on his left are former adviser Hafizuddin Khan and TIB Executive Director Dr Iftakharuzaman. (Story on Page 16)

## Unite to resist fundamentalists in national elections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a citizens' dialogue yesterday called on all progressive, non-communal and pro-liberation war forces to get united in a bid to resist anti-liberation war and communal forces in the next election.

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain said, "We will implement the dreams of the freedom fighters and build a country where there will be no repression and discrimination."

The citizens' dialogue styled 'National unity to meet the national challenge' was organised by Gono Forum at the National Press Club in the city.

Expressing high hope to win the 2008 elections, the noted jurist called

on all pro-liberation forces to get united and to work together in the next election.

"We will once again prove that this country is not the country of extremism and fundamentalists," Dr Kamal said, adding "We do politics without depending on anyone. We do politics on the basis of people's power."

He further said people would give a good lesson if they are misled again. Dr Kamal, however, did not explain in this regard.

Bangladesh Economic Society General Secretary Prof Abul Barkat said Jamaat-e-Islami wants to capture power by using Islam.

He called for all democratic and progressive forces to get united and to resist the anti-liberation forces.

Abul Barkat called on the caretaker government to start the process in order to try the war criminals, saying it is a fundamental issue.

Criticising late president Ziaur Rahman, Abul Barkat said, "Zia was a freedom fighter by chance and he killed many freedom fighters."

Communist Party leader Ruhin Hossain Prince called for uprooting all fundamentalists and militant forces.

Bikalpadhara Bangladesh president member Brig Gen (ret) Giasuddin A Chowdhury, Shamyabadi Dal General Secretary Dilip Barua, Forward Party Convener ABM Mostafa Amin and Adabisi Forum General Secretary Sanjib Drong addressed the citizens' dialogue.

## Preserve old court bldg for judicial activities

BSS, Chittagong

Leaders of the Chittagong District Bar Association (CDBA) at a press conference yesterday urged the government to take proper steps to preserve the renovated court building for running judicial activities there as it was used for the purpose in the past.

They alleged that the local district administration has occupied the ground floor and 1st floor of the recently renovated court building without any discussion with CDBA and other concerned authorities.

They also said that a number of courts were housed in a portion of the historic building for a long time before it was vacated for renovation work.

But the district administration has taken the space under its control

for administrative activities after the completion of renovation work last month, he added.

The lawyer leaders said such attempt and unilateral decision of the administration would hamper the judicial activities seriously.

They called upon the government to take proper steps by next 15 days, otherwise they will launch greater action programme to materialise their demand.

The CDBA in a written statement alleged that all offices of local district administration were earlier shifted at old Bangladesh Bank Bhaban from the dilapidated court building when all offices of the court building were vacated for renovation work.

Soon after the repair work, the district administration took possession

of a big portion of the building announcing it as "DC Block" by erecting a boundary wall.

CDBA General Secretary Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury read out the statement at the press conference held at its office this afternoon.

CDBA President AKM Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, former president Ibrahim Hossain Chowdhury Babul, Abdul Kuddus, former general secretary Sheikh Iftaker Saimul Chowdhury and other senior lawyers were present at the press conference.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Md Ashraf Shamim told BSS that they had vacated the old Bangladesh Bank Bhaban on June 23 as per their notice and shifted all the offices of the district administration to the renovated court building as the

establishment had always been under the control of the administration as DC Building.

As per the earlier decision, the Public Works Department handed over the renovated building to us on June 29 and after that we have been using the facilities for administrative purposes.

He said as per the demand of the lawyers, a big room at the ground floor of the building, which was earlier used as Bar Library Room No. 1 has already been handed over to the CDBA.

Besides, he said, a new building with huge spaces is being constructed at a cost of Tk 25 crore adjacent to the renovated building which will be an exclusive entity for the judicial officials and the lawyers will also have more accommodation there.