

## Transport owners, workers withdraw strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Malik-Sramik Oikya Parishad (BSPMSOP) yesterday withdrew its nationwide transport strike, which was scheduled to begin today.

The transport organisation called off the strike after its 11-point demand was met.

A Press Information Department (PID) handout yesterday said the BSPMSOP withdrew its strike after a successful meeting held at the communications ministry between the government and the transport leaders.

Maj Gen (ret'd) Golam Quader, Communications Secretary Dr Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman, BSPMSOP joint convenors former lawmaker Shahjahan Khan and Rustom Ali Khan, Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation (BRTWF) General Secretary Habibur Rahman Khan and Bus-Truck Owners' Association Executive Member Abdul Hye were present at the meeting.

Talking to The Daily Star, Shahjahan Khan said, "We are grateful to the government as our demands have been met for the welfare of the transport sector."

Their demands include cancellation of the amendment in the Motor Vehicle Act-1983, the amended of Labour Law-2008, putting an end to extortion by police and criminals and the exemption of due taxes.

## Child Rights Week begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country is going to observe the Child Rights Week starting today with a call to prevent all kinds of exploitation and tortures against children.

The theme of the week is 'Creating a protective environment for child development'. It highlights the current challenges the country is facing with the growing threats of climate change, environmental degradation and social insecurity.

Speakers said this at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity jointly organised by women and children affairs ministry and Bangladesh Shishu Academy.

Presenting a keynote paper, Bangladesh Shishu Academy Director Shaoli Sumon said, "Although the government was fully prepared to celebrate the week from September 29, it was deferred due to Eid-ul-Fitr and Durga Puja."

The second day of the week will be observed as National Girl Child Day under the theme 'Punishment for the perpetrators is the freedom for the girl child'.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will inaugurate the Child Rights Week at Osmani Memorial Auditorium at 9:30am.

National Girl Child Advocacy Forum President Dr Badiul Alam Majumder said, "We cannot prosper as a nation if we do not give special attention to and create opportunity for children."

# Ensure transparency to remove uncertainty over JS polls

## Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a dialogue yesterday said the government should ensure transparency at every step to remove the uncertainty prevailing in the minds of people over holding the Jatiya Sangsad elections.

Political parties and the government will have to reach a consensus on the election, as there is no alternative of election for democracy, they added.

The speakers said this at the dialogue titled 'Elections 2008: Issues and challenges' Centre for Governance Studies at a city hotel.

Former adviser to a caretaker government Mahbubur Alam, also editor of The Independent, said a huge time has been spent on making electoral laws and amending Representation of People's Order (RPO) which created the uncertainty in the last stage.

The sticking points of RPO will have to be sorted out immediately and if the political parties and the government remain stick to their respective points, the crisis will intensify, he added.

"Time is running very fast and the sticking points of RPO will have to be addressed immediately for the sake of holding a free and fair election," he said, adding, "Building a political culture of tolerance, accommodation and trust is necessary for democracy."

He also said the government will have to make everything clear to the people to keep away uncertainty created over the election.

M Hafizuddin Khan, also a former adviser, said the government's repeated announcement about election has created a feeling of doubt and uncertainty.

The major political parties are threatening that they will not participate in the election without

their party chiefs, he said, adding, this type of stance is illogical and it would be a big challenge for the election if they stick to such points.

Regarding RPO, he said it is also a big challenge for the Election Commission (EC) to implement it.

Maj Gen (ret'd) Moinul Hossain Chowdhury, former adviser to a caretaker government, said it would be tough for the micro-management of EC to implement the amended RPO.

"In the election, one party will win, but the process of handing over power to the elected government should be peaceful... Otherwise the uncertainty will loom large," he said, urging the government to ensure transparency at every step to keep away uncertainty.

BNP Standing Committee Member Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman said, "We all (the political parties) want election and are ready for it, but we don't know how much

earnest they are who will hold the election."

The post-election situation is more important than holding an election, he said, adding that it is a major issue that how would we sustain democracy after the polls.

Former president of FBCCI Mir Nasir Hossain said it is now a big issue whether the election would be held at all.

"Election is necessary for all... Investment will not be increased and the problems of the country not be solved until election is held," he said, adding, "We want a free, fair and credible election for re-establishing democracy as well as increasing economic progress."

Jatiya Party Presidium Member GM Qader said election is a competition. So, we have to accept the winners as partners if we are defeated.

Presided over by Centre for Governance Studies Chairman Dr Ataur Rahman, the dialogue was also addressed by former CEC Justice Mohammad Abdur Rauf, Awami League leader Prof Abdul Mannan, former member of University Grants Commission Dr Tareq Shamsur Rahman, ASM Abdur Rob and Zillur Rahman of Channel-I.

## Robber beaten to death in Narayanganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A robber was beaten to death by a mob during a robbery at a house at Fatulla in Narayanganj in the early hours of yesterday.

The dead was identified as Deen Islam, 20, of Netrakona district.

Police said some six or seven robbers entered the house of JCD leader Riad Mohammad.

As the night guards raised an alarm, local people rushed to the spot and chased the robbers.

They managed to catch one of the robbers and beat him up, leaving him seriously injured.

Later, police rescued him and sent him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Meanwhile, the detective branch of police arrested a listed criminal from New Court area of the town yesterday.

The arrestee was identified as Faruk Mandal, 52. He is an accused in five cases, including a murder case, police said.

## Ex-BNP lawmaker Nazim Uddin freed on bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former BNP lawmaker Nazim Uddin Alam was released on bail from the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

"We have received the High Court order of bail on Sunday afternoon and he was released at 11:00am today (Monday) after verification," said Deputy Inspector General of Prisons Major Shamsul Haider Siddique.

Nazim Uddin was arrested from the city residence of BNP leader ASM Hannan Shah on July 27 this year after arrest warrants were issued against him in four cases.



US Ambassador to Bangladesh James F Moriarty calls on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her party office at Gulshan in the city yesterday.

# National education survey begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The month-long national education survey-2008 will begin across the country tomorrow with a view to collecting all kinds of information from all post-primary education institutions.

Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (Banbeis) will conduct the survey at over 33,000 high schools, colleges, madrasas, universities, polytechnic and vocational institutions from October 15 to November 15 under the National Education Survey and Training (NEST) programme.

For this purpose, a total of 1600 teachers were trained up who will collect information from the field levels.

Banbeis Director Ahsan Abdullah said, "The survey will be conducted for collecting accurate, complete and updated information from all post-primary education institutions. The data will be disseminated to all stakeholders."

He said this at a press conference at Banbeis auditorium in the city yesterday.

This survey is an important monitoring tool, which will help know the country's position in achieving millennium develop-

ment goals (MDGs) and education for all, he added.

Banbeis director said, "After nine years, we are going to conduct the survey. The government has funded Tk 312 lakh to serve the purpose."

He hoped that all kinds of confusions centring data of post-primary seat capacity and other information would be ended if the survey is conducted properly.

A 12-member programme steering committee headed by education secretary and a 13-member programme implementation committee headed by Banbeis director were formed to monitor the survey.



Police prevent members of Bangladesh Farmers Association from staging a demonstration at Purana Paltan in the city yesterday as they tried to form a human chain demanding that the prices of the agricultural inputs be reduced.

# Discard foreign loan, make dev plans with domestic resources

## Speakers urge govt at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday laid emphasis on bringing the country out of the trend of taking loans from different international financial organisations with hard conditions and prepare development plans utilising the resources of the country.

They said the health policy should be finalised after taking the views of the people instead of bringing market-oriented reforms to this vital service sector.

The discussion titled 'Impact of foreign aid in essential service sector: Context health sector' was organised by Shushashoneer Janney Procharavijan (Supro) (Campaign for Good Governance) at the National Press Club in the city.

BNP standing committee member Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahabubur Rahman said the government should bring itself out of the culture of taking loans from different international financial organisations.

"It should make the health sector more affordable for the poor people if it believes in people's welfare," he added.

The BNP leader said the views of people should be given importance before taking any such loan.

He said the people often do not get any benefit from such loans as the major portion of them is used to meet the conditions of the loans.

Supro executive committee member Ahmed Swapan Mahmud said good governance should be ensured at the local level in health-related services.

He proposed that the government could give health cards to pregnant women ensuring free treatment for them at government hospitals and special facilities at private hospitals.

Supro Coordinator Mohammad Shahid Ullah presented the keynote paper at the discussion.

He said Bangladesh has to spend \$ 1551.3 million to pay the foreign debts every year, which is almost 18 percent of the total expenditures of the government whereas the government spends only 7.4 percent in health sector.

Presided over by Mostafizur Rahman Khan, the discussion was also addressed by Supro Chief Executive Officer Pradip Kumar Roy, its national committee member MA Salam and human rights activist Shawkat Hossain.



Prof Nurul Islam Nazem speaks at a discussion titled 'CCD: Innovative intervention in South Asia study on Dhaka' at Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday. On his left are Prof Brain H Roberts, Prof Muzaffer Ahmed and Prof Nazrul Islam. (Story on Page 16)

## Nat'l Film Award ceremony Oct 23

UNB, Dhaka

The National Film Award for several years from 2002 to 2007 will be distributed on October 23.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will give away the awards to the winners at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

A preparatory meeting for the ceremony was held at the information ministry yesterday.

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