



A child parliamentarian speaks at the Child Parliamentary Session 2008 organised to discuss the issue of the use of children in political activities at Biam auditorium in the city yesterday. Save the Children-Australia organised the event.

CHILD PARLIAMENT SESSION 2008

'Using children in politics hampers student life'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Child parliamentarians yesterday stressed the need for creating political awareness among the children but discouraged them from taking part in political activities during student life.

They were speaking at the Child Parliament Session 2008 which was facilitated by Save the Children Australia at Biam auditorium in the city.

The Child Parliament is a platform of the children across the country where the children have discussions regarding their rights and demands at the national level and place their recommendations to the authorities concerned.

Some 64 children from across the country took part in the session and talked elaborately on the use of children in political activities by different political parties.

The child parliamentarians said using children in political activities not only hampers their student life but also make them victim of police torture and bad impression from others.

A survey conducted by child parliamentarians on 284 children reveals that 53 percent of children took part in political procession, 29 percent were used for sticking posters on walls,

26 percent attended meetings and rallies while 21 percent took part in picketing during the hartal.

It was also found that most of the children used in political activities come from under-privileged families.

It therefore stresses the need for providing economic security to poor children, increasing budget allocation for vocational training, creating facilities for children's recreation and enacting law for not engaging children in political activities.

While talking to the press at the auditorium, Chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said Child Parliament is a learning process for children where they talk to help them grow up as responsible citizens.

"The political parties in our country are very self-centered and as such they are trying to take more privilege from the unelected government overlooking people's expectation," he said.

No political party should obstruct the holding of parliament election on time, he said, adding that if the election is delayed it would slash the role of the Election Commission which in now way can be helpful for democracy, he added.

Special Eid train tickets from Nov 25

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Railway has made arrangements to operate special trains during the coming Eid-ul-Azha to facilitate the journey of homebound passengers.

According to a handout released yesterday, the sale of advance train tickets will begin on November 25.

It said seven pairs of additional trains will be operated from different railway stations while a number of trains will have 33 extra compartments.

The decision was taken at a meeting of Communications Ministry yesterday with its Joint Secretary Begum Nasrin Akhter in the chair.

The advance tickets will be available at Kamapur, Biman Bandar, Joydevpur, Sylhet, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna railway stations.

It said one will not be able to buy more than four tickets in advance at a time.

Bangladesh Railway Director General M Belayet Hossain and other high officials and representatives from BRTC, BRTA and Rab and police were present.

Shykh Siraj gets Dr Ibrahim Memorial Gold Medal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Ibrahim Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to Shykh Siraj, a media personality, at a function yesterday for his contribution to agriculture through a TV programme.

The function was organised by Dr Ibrahim Memorial Council on the occasion of the 19th death anniversary of Dr Ibrahim, founder of Bangladesh Diabetic Association, at the Birdem auditorium in the city.

Foreign Affairs Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury handed over the award to Siraj as chief guest.

Speaking on the occasion he lauded the pivotal role that Siraj has been playing through his programme 'Hridoye Mati O Manush' on Channel I.

Expressing his gratitude for the award, Siraj called for help for establishing a hospital that will serve only the farmers of the country.

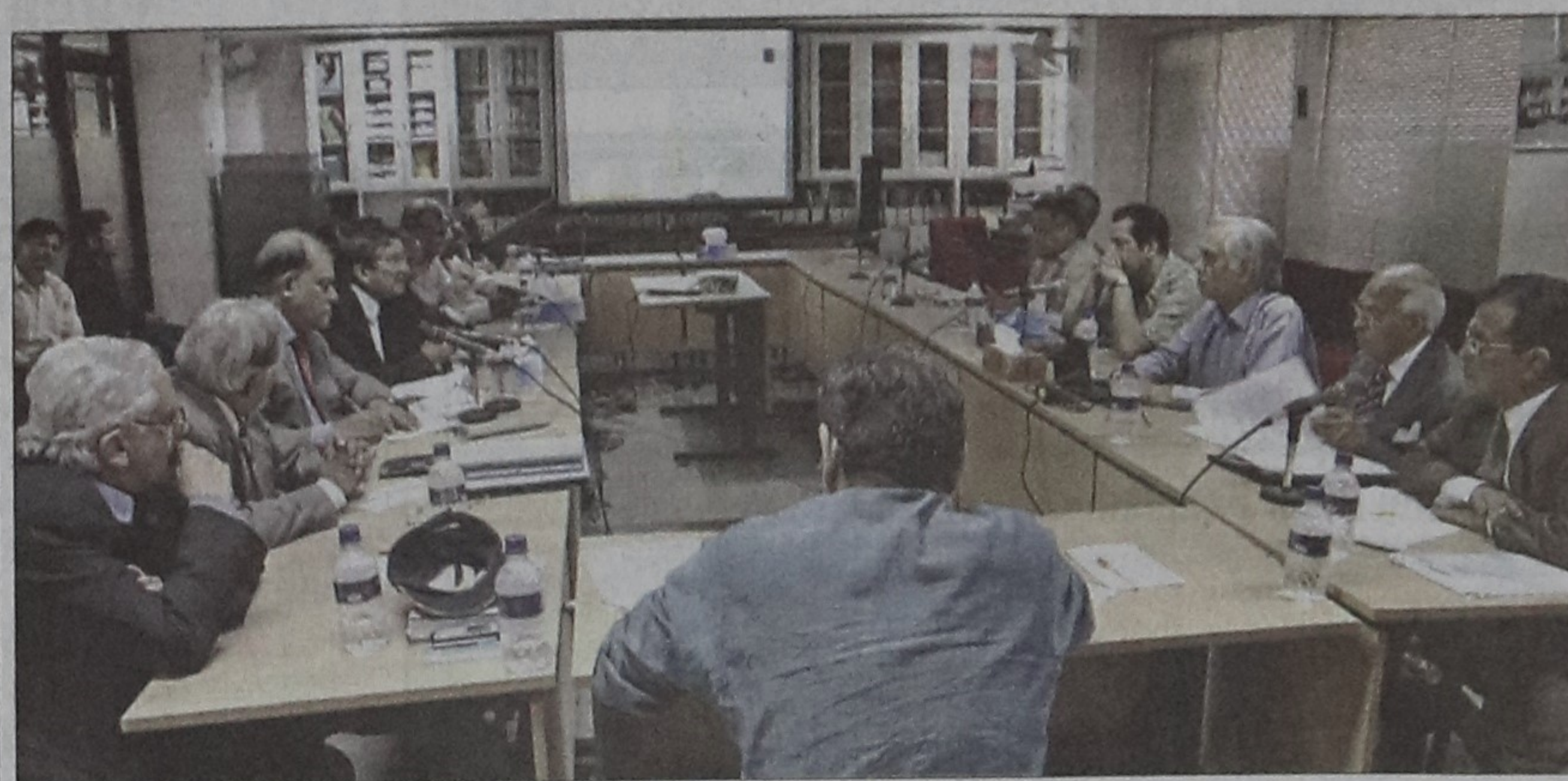
Siraj, who is also the director of Channel I, assured that in future his television channel will give due coverage of the activities of the diabetic association which really deserves appreciation.

As Dr Ibrahim Memorial Council is giving recognition to the contribution of distinguished personalities, the association must get appropriate media coverage, he added.

The programme 'Hridoye Mati O Manush' has been telecast since February 21, 2004.

Prof AK Azad Khan, chairman of Bangladesh Diabetic Association was present at the programme as special guest.

Dowlotunnesa, vice-chairman of the council, delivered the welcome speech at the programme which was addressed by Major General (ret'd) Prof Ziauddin Ahmed, Director General of Birdem Major General (ret'd) Prof AR Khan, and Chairman of the preparatory committee and General Secretary Md Shamsul Haq.



Participants at a roundtable on 'Bangladesh's delimitation issues with India and Myanmar' organised by The Daily Star at its office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

WORKPLACE DEATHS

Construction workers make up 50pc of victims: Survey

UNB, Dhaka

About 50 percent of the total workplace deaths in the country in 2007 took place in the construction sector, which is having a boom-time through a rather random growth.

The finding was disclosed

yesterday in Bangladesh Worker Safety Programme (BWSP) survey report titled 'Workplace Deaths in the Industrial and Service Sectors of Bangladesh 2007'.

BWSP, Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment

Foundation (OSHE) and Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) jointly conducted the survey through monitoring 17 national newspapers and separate investigations on the incidents.

This is first of its kind in the country as it sets out the circumstances of all 222 deaths - who, when and how the workers died.

It shows that a total of 164 separate incidents resulted in 222 deaths in the country. Of the worker deaths, 103 were in the construction sector. In addition, there were 63 deaths in manufacturing sector while 42 in the service sector.

Almost half of the reported deaths (84) took place in Dhaka district though there were sizeable numbers reported in Chittagong (34), Narayanganj (18) and Gazipur (11) district.

It says only 14 of the 222 workers who died were women, which means 6 percent. Sixty-four percent (115) of the 188 deceased workers (whose ages could be identified) were 30 years or younger and almost one-fifth of all the workers who died were under the age of 20.

It observes that the most common causes of all deaths were 'electrocution' (54) and 'falls from heights' (38).

Commenting at the launch of the report, BWSP director David Bergman said most workplace deaths are not reported in national newspapers. "The deaths set out in the survey report simply represent a small tip of a large iceberg," he said.

However, he said the report provides useful information for those concerned to improve workplace conditions and should in particular act as a 'wake up call' for developers and contractors in the construction sector.

He mentioned that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that in the industrial and service sectors in the country there are likely to be 1700 worker deaths each year.

This report concerns deaths of workers at the workplace arising out of issues relating to occupational health and safety and concerned with the management of the work.

Navy Ships open for visitors on Armed Forces Day

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Navy Ships will remain open for visitors at Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Barisal from 2:00pm to 4:30pm tomorrow on the occasion of Armed Forces Day.

The ships will be opened for visitors at Dhaka Sadarghat, BIWTA Jetty Matia Ghat in Narayanganj, Naval Jetty, Newmooring in Chittagong, BIWTA Rocket Ghat in Khulna and BIWTA Jetty in Barisal, says an ISPR press release.

Ensure participatory polls: Fema

METRO DESK

Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (Fema) in a statement urged the government to ensure participation of all major political parties to facilitate the two-year's stalled transition to democracy smoothly, says a press release.

The domestic election watchdog also called on the political parties to participate in the next general elections and would offer broad and adequate choice to the electorate.

Fema President Feroz Hassan said, "A fundamental principle of democratic election is that it ought to be participatory."

"The absence of major political parties from the electoral race will deprive and limit the citizens' choice," he added.

Fema said the past history of non-participatory elections in the country did not bode well for strengthening the democratic process in the country as witnessed in 1986, 1988 and February 1996.

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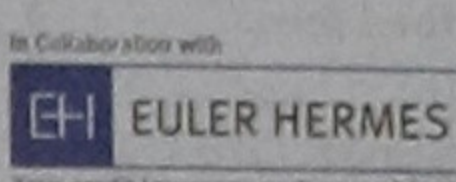
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