

World economic crisis won't hinder dev in health sector

Minister tells WHO meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Dr AFM Ruhul Haque hoped that the world economic crisis would not hinder development in the health sector of Bangladesh.

He was speaking at a review meeting titled 'Experience of the impact of economic crisis on health sector' at the 124th meeting of the WHO Executive Council in Geneva.

The health minister is representing Bangladesh in the meeting also attended by Prime Minister's Adviser Dr Syed Modasser Ali and Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the UN Mission in

Geneva Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, says a press release.

The health minister sought continued cooperation of all development partners including the UN for implementation of the government pledges in the health sector.

Dr Ruhul Haque also said despite multipronged challenges in the economic sector, the present government is pledge-bound to keep its promises in the health sector and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

He hoped that the WHO and other international organisations would come forward to implement e-health

programme as part of building digital Bangladesh by the year 2021. He stressed the need for cutting maternal death and increasing international and regional cooperation in reproductive health sectors in the developing countries.

The minister proposed formation of a task force under the WHO to regularly collect information and review those on the probable impact of the world economic crisis on the health sector.

The minister expressed deep concern at the disaster at humanitarian and health sector in Gaza.



Ambassadors of European Union call on Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni at her office in the city yesterday. (Story on page 16)

Aussie help for underprivileged working children

METRO DESK

The judges and members of the Australian Bar Association (ABA) were accorded a reception at the Australian High Commissioner's residence in the city yesterday.

During the reception, Queensland Bar Association and the Queensland Judiciary raised a fund of Tk 17 lakh to sponsor underprivileged working children of the UCEP general and technical schools.

Eminent lawyers, judges, and Bangladesh Bar Council members were also present on the occasion, says a press release.

This is the fourth time ABA donated money to the UCEP, totalling a donation of Tk 50 lakh till date.

Australian High Commissioner Douglas Foskett said he was proud of the work of this group, which visits Bangladesh annually.

Brig Gen Ahmed, executive director of UCEP, also spoke.

Book on rights of people with disabilities published

METRO DESK

Action on Disability and Development (ADD) published a book titled 'Disability and Human Rights in Bangladesh' at a publication ceremony at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday, says a press release.

Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury, chairman of National Human Rights Commission, attended the publication ceremony as the chief guest.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, and Monsur Ahmed Choudhury, managing director of Jatiya Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation and member of Monitoring Committee of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, were present as special guests.

The authors of the book - Prof Michael Stein, Harvard Law School in USA, Dr Atiur Rahman, chairman of Unnayan Shamunnay and Dr Naim Ahmed - spoke at the programme. The editor of the book Rev Fr RW Timm, CSC, also spoke at the programme.

Justice Kabir said at the programme that the book would serve interest of persons with disabilities, their organisations and others working in the area.



Garments workers stage a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday under the banner of 'Banchte Shikho Nari' demanding a living wage with dignity.

Stop move to curtail power of UZ parishad

Speakers urge PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting yesterday said effective local government system will fail with curtailing power of the upazila parishads (UZs) if members of the parliament (MPs) are provided with administrative power and authority over UZ councils.

They said this at a meeting organised by Bangladesh Nagorik Samaj at its office in the city with Bangladesh Nagorik

Afzal new DG of Islamic Foundation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Judge of Speedy Trial Tribunal in Sylhet Shamim Mohammad Afzal has been deputed to the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh as its director general.

He will replace Fazlur Rahman, according to an announcement of the Establishment Ministry.

Earlier, the new government made Fazlur Rahman officer on special duty (OSD).

Samaj General Secretary ABM Osman Gani in the chair, said a press release.

The speakers protested the statement of Local Government Minister Syed Ashraf Islam that the MPs' authority over upazilas will be enhanced, saying that his statement goes against the country's constitution and the electoral manifesto of Awami League.

"The role of the MPs has been defined in the constitution. They are meant to promulgate laws and highlight problems of people of their constitu-

encies, not to intervene in the local government system," said the speakers.

The speakers sought intervention of the prime minister to stop the process of curtailing power of the upazila parishads.

Local government system runs independently in all the democratic countries of the world, they said, adding that any decision against independence of the local government will be betraying with the spirit of 11 political changeover and the people will resist it.

19 fall victim to Agyan Party members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 19 people, including teacher, students and traders, fell victim to Agyan Party members, who rob people after drugging them, in the last 24 hours as of 12:00 midnight last night.

All of them were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in an unconscious state.

The Agyan Party members took away valuables, including mobile phones and money, from the victims.

One of the victim is Prof Sirajul Haq, 50, of Sherpur Degree College.

He was travelling in a bus from Gabtoll Bus Terminal to go to Bogra. When the bus reached Hemayetpur in Savar in the afternoon, the passengers noticed that Prof Sirajul Haq has lost his consciousness. They immediately sent him to DMCH with the help of local people.

The criminals took away his mobile phone and money.

Another victim, Mosharrar Hossain, 30, a trader, was found lying on roadside at Gulistan in an unconscious state at around 1:00pm.

He was rushed to DMCH where he regained his consciousness.

He said the criminals took away Tk 60,000 and a mobile phone.

BNP expels 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday expelled two of its leaders - Nazir Hossain, a former lawmaker from Sunamganj and Abdur Rouf, a local BNP leader in Jamalpur, from the party for anti party activities.

As per party constitution BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia expelled them from the party and cancelled their primary membership for violating party discipline and anti party activities, says a press release.

'Gas exploration a must for sustainable energy security'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh should immediately go for exploring and using gas and coal resources to ensure long-term as well as sustainable energy security of the country, said Prof M Tamim at a programme in the city yesterday.

The former special assistant for power, energy, and mineral resources said, "Since Bangladesh is an energy-starved country, it is imperative to find new gas fields, explore and enhance existing production of gas and coal resources immediately to avert energy crisis that may affect its economic growth."

Tamim said this while delivering a lecture on 'Energy security of Bangladesh: Challenges and options' organised by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) as part of its 'Eminent Person's Lecture Series (EPLS)' at its auditorium.

Presenting a keynote paper, he said energy is an important global product and the country may face huge energy shortfall in future if the energy prices are not adjusted immediately.

"We have to be practical on energy pricing and go into partnership with international oil companies (IOCs) for exploration," he added.

Underscoring the need for strengthening Bapex, he said the government has to change its mindset about the exploration company.

"We have to strengthen Bapex and develop its expertise and also give proper authority and pricing capability," said Tamim, also the head of the department of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Engineering at Buet.

Regarding the limitation of Petrobangla, he said lack of funding and latitude under the present mode of operation does not allow the company to react and rectify market imbalance like a true energy company on an emergency basis.

Petrobangla will never be able to supply gas reliably if

the commercial framework of gas business is corrected, he said, adding that as the coal policy is in ready form, the process of coal extraction should be determined on geo-hydrological and socio-economic structure.

Tamim called for resolving the debate over the methods of mining and focusing more on renewable energy sources in the country.

He suggested releasing maximum gas from power production and using coal fired generation, prioritising gas use for industry, compressed natural gas (CNG) and fertiliser and promoting renewable gas, especially biogas and solar, in the rural areas.

BISS Director General Maj Gen Abu Belal Md Shaful Huq also spoke at the programme.

UAE Energy Prize for Bangladeshi

UNB, Dhaka

Dipal Chandra Barua of 'Grameen Shakti' has received the UAE's 1.5 million US dollar Zayed Future Energy Prize for promoting clean energy.

Barua received the award from the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces General Sheikh Muhammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre on Monday, according to a message received here yesterday.

Barua, who set up 'Grameen Shakti', in 1996, has provided two lakh solar units in the country at an affordable cost with easy loan system.

Barua said he would use the money to fund a scholarship programme for women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh.

Over 200 individuals and companies were in the race to win this prestigious award. Stunning the jam-packed crowd at the award giving ceremony, Dipal Chandra Barua was declared winner of the prize.

Abu Dhabi is hosting the high-profile World Future Energy Summit for the second time as it is playing a leadership role in the clean energy movement.

sexual harassment at JU

Hearing on HC rule likely today

The High Court (HC) may hold a hearing on its rule asking the Jahangirnagar University authorities today to explain why their decision to exonerate Sanowar Hossain Sunny from all charges of sexual harassment should not be declared illegal.

Upon a writ petition, an HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui on December 1 issued the rule and also stayed for three months the university syndicate's order suspending seven students who staged demonstrations for around eight months to fulfil their demand for removal of Sunny, a teacher of drama and dramatics department.

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), Nijera Kori, Karmojibi Nari, Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury and journalist Kamal Lohani jointly filed the writ petition.

Petitioners' counsel barrister Sara Hossain yesterday told The Daily Star that the HC recently fixed January 22 for a hearing on the rule.



Christy Turlington Burns, Care ambassador for maternal health, visited Safe Motherhood Promotion Project (SMPP) in Narsingdi recently.

Delwar for building country thru' work, not by words

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday called upon the politicians to build the country through works and not by words.

Delwar said his party leaders and activists are ready to work for the people braving all adverse situations.

"We should not say anything that we cannot perform and we will have to move our country forward through our works," said the BNP secretary general while addressing a discussion meeting at the National Press Club in the city.

The meeting was organised by Jatiyatabadi Mahila Dal, an associate body of BNP, to mark the 73rd birth anniversary of late president Ziaur Rahman.

"Our society cannot move forward keeping back the women who constitute half of our population. We will have to go forward with hands in hands with women," Delwar said.

He urged party leaders and activists to work for the country being imbued with the ideals of late president Zia.

Presided over by BNP Vice-president Sarwari Rahman, the meeting was also addressed by Tazmeri SA Islam, dean of science faculty at Dhaka University, and BNP leader Shirin Sultana.

BURHANUDDIN COLLEGE ACC asked to probe charges of embezzlement

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to investigate into the charges on embezzlement of Tk 13.15 crore from the Sheikh Burhanuddin College fund.

The accused in the case are its acting principal Kamrun Nahar Ahmed, vice-principal Jane Alam Shikder and former inspector general of police and chairman of college governing board Mohammad Ashraf Huda.

On January 6 this year, Mohammad Farid Hossain, an assistant professor and chairman of management department of the college, filed the case with the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court.

After the yesterday's hearing, Judge ANM Bashir Ullah recorded statement of the complainant, took the charges into cognizance and directed the ACC to investigate the matter and submit its probe report by March 22.

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