

WORLD CANCER DAY OBSERVED

Cancer kills 1.5 lakh a year

Speakers tell rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations observed the World Cancer Day in the country yesterday as elsewhere across the globe to raise awareness of cancer and its preventive measures.

Experts at a rally said as the curative treatment of the disease is very expensive and most of the people of the country cannot afford the cost, it is important to take cautionary measures to prevent cancer.

Globally, one billion people are now suffering from cancer a day which means one in every six people suffer from the disease and it is time to raise awareness in the society, they added.

To observe the day, Bangladesh Cancer Society, Bangladesh Oral Cancer Society, Diganta Memorial Cancer Foundation, Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) and Bangladesh Childhood Cancer Society organised a number of programmes, including rallies, discussions

and cultural programmes.

Bangladesh Cancer Society formed a human chain and also launched a poster with the call 'Avoid obesity in childhood which may increase one's risk of cancer in later life'.

It also called on the government to observe February 4 as the World Cancer Day officially and promote preventive activities against cancer throughout the country.

With the theme 'Today's children tomorrow's world', DAM brought out a colourful procession from in front of the National Press Club that ended at the National Museum in the city.

A discussion was followed by the rally where Health and Family Welfare Minister AFM Ruhul Haque was present as the chief guest.

The experts said there are more than a million cancer patients in the country, while another 1.5 lakh victims die annually. But there is little scope for cancer treatment.

Cancer specialist Dr

Kamruzzaman Chowdhury said very few government and private hospitals have the capacity to treat only 25,000 cancer patients in the country, adding that approximately Tk 6,000 crore goes out of the country annually for the treatment purpose abroad.

The health minister said the government would extend support to DAM in establishing a nursing training institute, as qualified nurses are required along with doctors and other medical professionals.

"Cancer will have to be conquered instead of being afraid of it," the slogan of the day needs to be disseminated among the masses across the country. A mass awareness programme is needed to combat the deadly disease, he added.

DAM President Kazi Rafiqul Alam, Health Secretary Sheikh Altaf Ali, ADG of health directorate Dr Hosne Ara Tahmin, M Fazlur Rahman and Brig Gen (ret'd) Dr Syed Fazle Rahim were also present.

The experts further said

that obesity increases the risk of cancer which should be taken care of. At the same time, smoking -- both active and passive -- increases the risk of cancer.

At a meet the press organised by Bangladesh Childhood Cancer Society, Prof MA Mannan, chairman of Pediatric Haematology and Oncology department at BSMMU and president of Bangladesh Childhood Cancer Society said 44 percent patients, who are admitted to the BSMMU hospital with childhood cancer, leave it without any treatment due to lack of money.

He also lauded the role of the immediate-past caretaker government for setting up child cancer units at eight medical colleges.

Diganta Memorial Cancer Foundation also took out a procession from the National Press Club and organised a meeting, a get-together of cancer survivors and a cultural programme on the foundation premises.



PHOTO: PID

Visiting Danish Minister for Climate and Energy Connie Hedegaard calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday.

Govt to seek UN help to try war criminals

Dipu Moni tells UNHRC

HANA SHAMS AHMED from Geneva

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) reviewed Bangladesh's human rights record for the four-year period ranging between 2004 and 2008.

This is for the first time Bangladesh's record was reviewed as part of the UN's newly established Universal Periodic Review (UPR) wing.

A high-level government delegation, including Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Attorney General Mahbub Alam, attended the hearing session.

The minister made a presentation responding to a list of written questions from other states and took part in an interactive dialogue with them.

Member of National Human Rights Commission Munira Khan also attended the session. A coalition of 17 human rights and development organisations from Bangladesh titled 'UPR Forum' led by advocate Sultana Kamal took part in the session.

The foreign minister said her government was committed to addressing all human rights concerns that plague the country.

In her speech to the nations, she mentioned that Bangladesh has been able to contain the global food crisis and has dealt successfully with the annual flood and cyclone Sidi.

Steps were being taken to update and improve the Police Act of 1961 and a draft ordinance, after consultation with all stakeholders,

in this regard was already under consideration, she added.

She further said that her government would bring to justice all those who committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during the liberation war in 1971.

Dipu said the prime minister had indicated that the government would seek the help of the UN to ensure that the mechanisms adopted for the proposed trial of perpetrators met international standards and the basic principles of justice.

The trial of the killers of Sheikh Mujib that they started during their previous term in office would be brought to a logical conclusion, she added.

The minister also stated that Bangladesh was home to a diverse religious and ethnic minority groups who have been co-existing in harmony for generations.

Although many nations expressed their concerns about human rights violations of religious and ethnic minorities and some specifically commented on the CHT Treaty which the government signed in 1997, she made no mention whether her government would fully implement the accord to resolve land disputes and rehabilitate the repatriated refugees.

Dipu also said that the media enjoys complete freedom in the country without mentioning the death threats and losses of lives of journalists over the years.

War criminals should be tried under due process of law

Says EC envoy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Ambassador and Head of the delegation of European Commission in Bangladesh Stefan Frowein has said the war criminals should be tried under due process of law.

"I think what is important is that due process is followed during the trial," he said.

"As far as I am informed, the prime minister has asked the United Nations to see to the matter and may get some support in selecting the right way of doing it," he added.

The EC ambassador told this to the Daily Star during his visit to Kumudini Hospital and Bharateshwari Homes at Mirzapur in Tangail on Tuesday.

He also hoped that the country would find out the right way of holding the trial with due process.

Managing Director of Kumudini Welfare Trust Rajib Prasad Saha and Director (education) Protibha Mutsuddi, Director of Kumudini Hospital Dr Dulal Poddar, Principal of Bharateshwari Homes Ulfatun Nesa and assistant adminis-

trator of Kumudini Medical College and Hospital Syed Haider Ali accompanied the ambassador during his visit.

Later, the ambassador

attended a cultural function organised by Bharateshwari Homes at Ananda Niketan. The students of the institute performed at the function.

Discuss transit issue in JS: Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should make public the provisions of agreement on transit before any such agreement is reached, as the issue involves national interest, former law minister Moudud Ahmed said yesterday.

The government should discuss the issue of transit in

the Jatiya Sangsad and let the people know under which agreement it is going to give transit, he told reporters after a discussion on the transit issue organised by Nagorik Forum at the National Press Club.

Moudud, also a member of the standing committee of BNP, said the government should explain everything about the transit issue and make them public for public opinion.

The government should take any decisions on the issue on the basis of public opinion, as it would not be right to take the decisions unilaterally, he said, adding that the issue is very important for the country.

The BNP leader further said the government should take the opposition parties into confidence and discuss the issue.

He also said the people who are saying that giving transit would go against national interest must spell out the logic of their arguments. At the same time, the government must also outline the pros and cons of the transit, he added.

On efforts to reduce trade gap with neighbours through road connectivity, Moudud said such steps may help facilitate more trade, but independence and national sovereignty must be given the first priority.

Asked about the stance his party will take in the event of the government taking any decisions unilaterally, he said his party would protest if the decision goes against national interest.

"We would mobilise public opinion and wage a movement, if needed," he added.

Free treatment by American surgeons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A team of renowned surgeons and gynecologists from the United States will see patients and perform operations on them free of cost at Gonoshasthaya Hospital near the National Memorial in Savar from February 24 to 29, says a press release.

The team will perform operations on patients with urinary incontinence, Rife Valley Fever (RVF) and Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF). Besides, they will also perform all types of abdominal surgical operations.

Interested patients are requested to register with Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital, House# 14E, Road# 6, Dhanmondi, immediately on payment of a fee of Tk 50.

PM invited to attend World Water Forum in Turkey

UNB, Dhaka

Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan is likely to visit Bangladesh in April on a bilateral tour, said Turkey's Ambassador in the city yesterday.

During a meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Hasan Mahmud at the Foreign Ministry, Sakir Ozkan Torunlar also invited Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to attend the 5th World Water Forum meeting to be attended by 27 countries, including Bangladesh.

Mahmud told reporters that there would be a "mini-summit" at that time in Turkey and Hasina was invited to attend the summit meet.

He said the Turkish government would increase the number of Bangladesh student scholarships from 36 to 50 this year, with a longer plan to increase to 100 in the future.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 10th death anniversary of Sultan Ahmed Sarker, a social worker and

father of Ahmed Motiur Rahman, assistant news editor of the daily Naya Diganta, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his village home in Chandpur and his son's residence in the city.

Chehlum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chehlum of Khalilur Rahman Majumdar, father of Md Mofizur Rahman, advertising executive of the daily Jugantar, will be held tomorrow at his residence in Chandpur, says a press release.

On the occasion, Quran-khwan, milad mahfil will be held at his residence. Relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the programme and pray for eternal peace of the departed soul.

US keen to help try war criminals: Boucher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard A Boucher said the US would not hesitate to provide assistance, if necessary, in trying the war criminals in Bangladesh.

Boucher, however, said the matter is an internal affair of Bangladesh, adding that the trial must be open and neutral.

If there is any tendency to affect the political opponent, the trial would not be acceptable to the international community, he said.

Richard Boucher explained the US stance on this issue when Bangladesh Ambassador to Washington DC M Humayun Kabir met him at the State Department on Tuesday, reports News World, a US-based news agency.

Asked about the meeting, a spokesperson for Boucher said the Bangladesh envoy had talked on different issues with the US official. The issue of the trial of the war criminals came up prominently during the talks.

On US stance on the issue, he said questions will arise if there is any political motive behind initiative to try the war criminals and the process of trial.

The trial process and its neutrality have to be of international standard, the official said, adding that if there is any tendency to reap personal or political advantage it would not be acceptable to international community.

He further said that the US would closely observe the initiative, its process and neutrality.

Asked about his meeting with Boucher, the envoy said it was a routine meeting. The issue of the trial of war criminals came up among other topics at the meeting.

He said the US stressed the need to ensure neutrality and transparency of the trial process.

During the meeting, the Bangladesh side also formally requested the US not to cancel Biman's slot at New York JFK Airport.

Sources said the matter of leasing Boeing 777 was also discussed in the meeting. The US officials said leasing of the Boeing would not be possible if bureaucratic red tapism in decision-making does not end in this regard.

Earlier, Bangladesh lost several opportunities of leasing Boeing 777 due to delay in making decision.

Hearing on charge framing against Hashem March 3

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A court in Dhaka yesterday fixed March 3 for hearing on charge framing against former BNP lawmaker and Partex Group Chairman MA Hashem in a case filed for amassing wealth worth Tk 17.11 crore illegally and hiding wealth information from the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Judge Firoz Alam of the Special Judge's Court-1 fixed the date after Hashem's lawyers submitted a petition seeking discharge from the charges.

On October 5 of last year, ACC Deputy Director Monzur Ahmed, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court showing 47 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO could not press any charges against Hashem's wife Sultana Hashem as the High Court (HC) had earlier stayed the case proceedings against her.

In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that Hashem amassed wealth worth Tk 171,126,096 illegally and concealed information about wealth worth Tk 32,422,187 from the commission.

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Papia's body exhumed for autopsy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Remains of the body of Parvin Akter Papia, wife of a police officer, was exhumed yesterday from the city's Agargaon New Colony graveyard five months after she was buried.

The remains were taken to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Her husband Syed Mominullah Ahsan, a police inspector, now posted at Rajarbagh police line allegedly killed her on August 30 last year.

As per a court order, Tejaon police in the presence of Magistrate Farzana Siddika exhumed the remains at around 1:00pm.

Victim's family members said Mominullah used to torture her for transferring all her properties to him.

They said Mominullah gathered a vast property by taking bribes as a police officer and deposited the money to Parvin's account.

Victim's mother Maksudah said on August 30 she received a telephone call from Mominullah that her daughter fell sick and immediately rushed to her daughter's house at Indira road in the city.

Maksudah said Mominullah did not allow her to go to the local hospital where Parvin was taken. Mominullah buried the body without any autopsy and threatened them with dire consequences, she added.

She said after the death of her daughter, she went to the police station to file a murder case but Tejaon Police denied

to record the case for reasons unknown.

Later, as per a court order Tejaon police recorded the case on January 30, but could not arrest the killer yet, she alleged.

Sub-Inspector of Tejaon Police Station Motiur Rahman, also investigation officer of the case, said he could not interrogate the accused as he (Mominullah) is now on leave.

Buet alumni reunion Feb 13

METRO DESK

Buet Alumni Association (BUETAA) will organise a reunion of the graduates of the university, including those from Ahsanullah Engineering College, on February 13, says a press release.

Nobel laureate Prof Mohammad Yunus will inaugurate the day-long programme.

All the members of association willing to participate in the reunion and other graduates desirous of becoming its members have been requested to contact the following persons -- engineer Serajul Majid Mamoon (01912204466), Dr Sadiqul Islam Bhuiyan (0191322057), Prof Aminul Haque (8611594, 01199082231, 01552338617), engineer Munir Uddin Ahmed (01711549505), Qazi M Anif (8151763, 01711533667), engineer MA Rouf (01713006996), Jahangir Hossain (8624665, 01726444557) or Shahidul Islam (01712527035).

Registration for participating in the get-together must be completed by February 8 at the latest.

DEATH OF JUI

Arrest of responsible docs demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of Razia Sultana Jui, who died due to the alleged faulty surgery on her at a city hospital, yesterday formed a human chain in front of the Central Shaheed Minar demanding arrest of the responsible doctors.

Several socio-cultural organisations and a number of local people participated in the programme.

The deceased's brother Asaduzzaman Swapna alleged that his sister, who was a fashion designer of Red Point Garments at DEPZ, died on January 24 due to faulty surgery by the doctors of Galaxy Hospital Pvt Ltd at Mirpur.

Bangladesh's medical aid for Palestinians

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday dispatched emergency medicines and medical equipment worth 20,000 US dollars for war-wounded Palestinians. The director general (West Asia) of the foreign ministry handed over the aid to the Palestine ambassador at noon.

The medicines will be distributed through Egyptian Red Crescent to the Palestinian people wounded in the recent Israeli invasion in Gaza Strip.

High officials of health ministry were present on the occasion.

85th birthday of Father Rigon today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 85th birthday of Father Marino Rigon, an Italian priest, freedom fighter and litterateur, says a press release.

Father Rigon, who migrated to Bangladesh in the fifties, has dedicated his life to caring for others through constructive and creative activities.

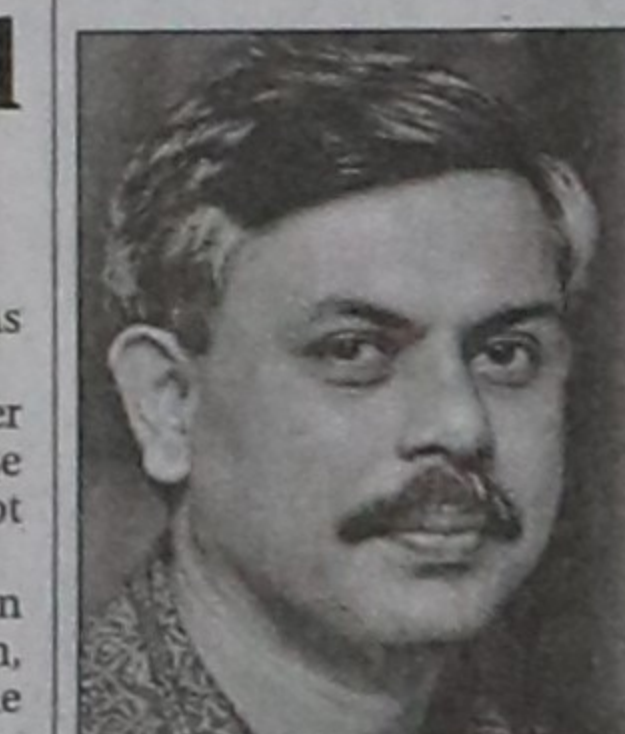
During the Liberation War in 1971, he arranged treatment and food for the valiant freedom fighters.

Father Rigon has translated a number of publications of Tagore, Nazrul, Jasimuddin and Lalou into Italian.

Father Rigon, who helped establish 17 educational institutions in the southern region of the country, has been living in Shelabunia village in Mongla permanently.

The government has recently conferred honorary citizenship on Father Rigon in recognition of his contribution to society. Bagerhat district administration will formally hand over Bangladeshi passport to him today.

A three-day Rigon Fair will also begin at Haludubunia village today on the occasion.



Anisul Haque wins Khalekddad Literary Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Popular novelist and playwright Anisul Haque has won Khalekddad Chowdhury Literary Award 1415.

He will be handed over the award at the 13th Spring Literary Festival organised by Netrakona Sahitya Samaj on February 13, says a press release.

Poet Mohadev Saha, Rafiq Azad, Nirmalendu Goon, Helal Hafiz, Abu Hasan Shahriar, novelist Humayun Ahmed, Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Rabeya Khatun, Kabir Chowdhury, Jateen Sarkar, Bulbon Osman and playwright Selim Al Deen had previously won the award.

Over 200 poets and litterateurs are expected to participate in the largest literary festival of Mymensingh area.

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable

The weekly magazine Shaptahik 2000 and Concern Worldwide jointly organise a roundtable on disaster management. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Seminar

Sandhani organises a seminar marking its 32nd founding anniversary. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

Flower show

The National Association of UNESCO Clubs in Bangladesh will hold a daylong flower show competition. BANBEIS Bhahan. Time: 10:30am.

Chinese Festival

The Chinese Spring Festival 2009 and the grand final of North South University Agro-Business Plan Competition 2008 will be held. Venue: NSU Barani campus. Time: 5:00pm.

Spring semester

The spring semester orientation programme of Darul Ahsan University will be held. Venue: Darul Ahsan University, Motijheel campus. Time: 3:00pm.

WEATHER TODAY					
No change in temperature likely					
UNB, Dhaka					
Dry weather is likely to continue over the country in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.					
Light to moderate fog may occur over the country during late night till morning, Met Office said.					
Night temperature may remain unchanged over the country.					
Highest temperature 29.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 9.2 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.					
The sun sets in the capital at 5:48pm today and rises at 6:37am tomorrow.					
Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:					
City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage		
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening	
Dhaka	26.3	13.4	52	55	
Chittagong	27.0	14.7	65	47	
Rajshahi	26.0	09.5	95	60	
Khulna	27.6	14.0	79	55	
Barisal	27.9	13.0	75	62	
Sylhet	27.9	13.8	65	56	
Cox's Bazar	29.0	14.2	52	58	