

Bring all autistic children under edn, treatment

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a view to creating awareness about autism and its management among the parents, a two-day workshop began in the city yesterday.

Some 50 parents from in and outside Dhaka are taking part in the workshop organised by the Autism Welfare Foundation in association with the Dutch Bangla Bank Limited.

The workshop will help

participants understand the difference between autism and mental retardation, how to diagnose autism, the ways to help autistic children at home and the necessity of special education for them.

At the inaugural session of the workshop at the Autism Welfare Foundation, National Prof MR Khan said there are only a few schools for autistic children in the country and these are mostly based in Dhaka.

People should think about spreading these centres outside the capital so that not a single autistic child is left out from education and treatment.

"Autism is a neurological and behavioural problem and if the autistic children get proper training and cooperation, their conditions can improve much," said Foundation Chairman Dr Rownak Hafiz.

Early diagnosis and intensive behavioural intervention

can have a significant and lasting positive impact on autistic children, she said, adding that as the people are now becoming aware of autism gradually, and taking their children to doctors and specialists, the rate of autism diagnosis has increased considerably.

She said the preconditions for good autism programme are teachers having good knowledge of autism, autism-friendly environment, provision for enough teaching material and good parent-teacher partnership.

"As the home is the first school for every child, the parents also should know how to manage the autistic children properly. It is important for the parents to find child's strength and weakness, form a support group within the family, make list of problems and solve them step by step," she added.

Consultant of Dutch Bangla Bank Limited Dr Mozammel Hossain Khan also spoke at the inaugural session.

Some 140 students are now studying at Autism Welfare Foundation, but as the authorities cannot arrange seat for more students, its service is being provided through a package programme.



Food Minister Abdur Razzak speaks at a roundtable at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is Kiron Crowley and on his right are Kamal Ibne Yusuf and Moinul Ahsan Saber.

CHT PEACE ACCORD HR bodies concerned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human Rights Forum on Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Bangladesh yesterday expressed frustration as the government did not make any clear pledge to implement the CHT Treaty and ensure rights of women as well as the minorities in the UN Human Rights Council.

However, the forum welcomed the government pledge on holding the trial of war criminals and removing the culture of injustice, says a press release.

Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni gave a written speech and replied to different questions at the UPR hearing session in Geneva on Tuesday.

A seven-member team of the forum consisting 17 non-government human rights organisations led by its Convener Sultana Kamal participated in the review of the country's human rights situation.

Quoting the foreign minister's speech, it said Dipu Moni ignored compulsion regarding refugees and termed the international convention on refugee as not time befitting.

She also said that the country was being compelled to take refugees.

The forum said her statement showed lack of the government's respect to different international laws regarding the refugees, adding that it is very sad, because historically the country was born through taking shelter in neighbouring India by huge number of refugees.

Nizami demands restoration of SSF cover for Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Matiur Rahman Nizami yesterday expressed deep concern over the withdrawal of Special Security Force (SSF) cover for BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

He also demanded restoration of SSF protection for Khaleda, also the leader of the opposition in parliament.

In a statement, Nizami said a total of 77 uniformed and plain-clothes policemen were engaged in providing security cover to Awami League President Sheikh Hasina when she was the leader of the opposition in parliament.

But only seven uniformed policemen and two plain-clothes policemen are now engaged in providing security cover to Khaleda, he added.

The existing security arrangement is not sufficient, he said, adding that all responsible and conscious citizens are shocked at such inconsiderate decision of the government.

Students demand reopening of JNU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of Jagannath University (JNU) yesterday placed an eight-point demand, including reopening of the university and recovery of university dormitories from illegal occupants.

The students under the banner of 'Movement to recover Jagannath University halls and protect the rights of students' placed the demands at a press conference at Madhu's canteen on Dhaka University campus in the morning.

The demands included immediate restoration of congenial academic atmosphere, resumption of classes, recovery of halls occupied by local people and construction of new dormitories.

The students also demanded withdrawal of cases against them, more transport facilities for teachers and students, and complaint cell against sexual harassments.

The press conference was addressed by Bakul Munsif, convener, and Masud Rana, member-secretary, of the movement.

Workshop on 'HIV/AIDS'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The three-day workshop on 'HIV/AIDS' organised by Bondhu Social Welfare Society ended yesterday, says a press release.

A total of 30 participants from Narayanganj took part in the workshop that started on February 3 at Jamtala Field Office in the district.

Executive Director of the organisation Saleh Ahmed conducted the workshop.

Poverty alleviation a must to reduce disaster impacts

Food minister tells Shaptahik 2000 roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzak yesterday said poverty alleviation should be the main focus, because if the people have good houses and income, disasters cannot adversely affect them.

But he doubted if the shelter centres being built in the coastal districts following the cyclone Sidr are really of good quality.

"Questions have been raised that the cyclone shelter centres are being built hastily with inadequate money," he said yesterday at a roundtable on 'Disaster management: Problems and the way forward'.

Shaptahik 2000 and Concern Worldwide organised it in association with European Commission and Center for Natural Resources Studies

(CNRS) at the National Press Club.

The minister said there are doubts if the shelter centres being built will sustain until the next cyclone.

Following the Sidr, the then government and NGOs jointly initiated building a good number of shelter centres in the coastal belt, most vulnerable to natural disasters.

Noting that lack of coordination is a major setback after disasters, Razzak said many NGOs have attitudes to work in parallel with the government. Such attitudes must change, he added.

He asked the NGOs and civil society members to think how they could create more employment opportunities and help people increase their income levels.

Former food and disaster management minister Kamal

Ibne Yusuf emphasised the need to strengthen coordination both in the activities of the NGOs and the government to fight disasters.

The government should take necessary steps to tackle earthquake which is considered a serious disaster in the coming years, he added.

Concern Worldwide Bangladesh Country Director Kiron Crowley said huge population in Bangladesh increases the vulnerability of the people affected by calamities.

Mobilising people and creating mass awareness among them could effectively help meet the challenges caused by disasters, he added.

Editor of Shaptahik 2000 Moinul Ahsan Saber moderated the roundtable where CNRS Executive Director Mokhesur Rahman presented a keynote paper.

6 kg heroin, 301 Yaba tablets seized: Nine held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of DB Police, Department of Narcotics Control, Rab and Bangladesh Rifles in separate drives arrested nine criminals from different parts of the city and Cox's Bazar yesterday and on Wednesday night.

The law enforcers also seized six kilograms of heroin, 301 Yaba tablets, six kg of cannabis and 1,710 contraband sedatives from their possession.

DNC members seized five kg of heroin from the city's Pallabi yesterday morning and arrested Mohammad Alim of Chapainawabganj and Azadur Rahman Mustakin, 30, of Motihar in Rajshahi.

Talking to reporters at DNC office, Mustakin admitted that the heroin was smuggled in from India.

Besides, DB police seized six kg of cannabis and arrested Yusuf Ali, 20, Md Nurul Islam, 25, and Masuda, 30, from Karwan Bazar in Tejgaon area on charges of possessing cannabis.

In another drive, DB Police

conducted a raid at Medicine Corner in the city's College Gate area on Wednesday night and seized 1710 pieces of contraband sedatives 'Atven' manufactured in Pakistan.

They arrested the owner of the medicine store Aminul Islam Khan, 59, and his employee Liakat who admitted that dope gang members are used to collect the sedatives from the store.

Besides, Rab-10 members seized 301 pieces of Yaba tablets and arrested Md Habibur Rahman alias Biplob, 35, and Md Nasir Uddin alias Nayan, 40, at Shyampur in the city at around 12:00am.

Our Correspondent from Cox's Bazar adds: The BDR men seized 980 grams of heroin and arrested three peddlers -- Basra Miah, 56, Amiron Barua, 45, and Priyotosh Barua, 50, -- at Damdamia under Teknaf upazila.

BDR and police in a joint search at Damdamia BDR check post seized the heroin from inside a bus and arrested its driver and two helpers.

'Only 40pc households get adequate iodised salt'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A day-long workshop on 'Communication activities for women and children development' was held at the PIB auditorium at Segun Bagicha in the city yesterday.

Information and Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad inaugurated the planning workshop as the chief guest, while Joint Secretary Md Hanif and Unicef Representative Carrel D Roy were present as the special guests.

Meera Mitra in her presentation on health and nutrition said the height of the people in the country is being stunted due to chronic malnutrition.

From a survey done by the government in 1984, it was found that nine-year-old male children in the country were two centimetres less in height than their counterparts in 1944 when the British government carried out a similar survey, she added.

Meera said only 40 percent household is getting adequate iodised salt which is quite alarming, adding that district information officers can raise the issue at the district salt committee.

Presenting a keynote paper on early marriage, Unicef Project Officer Shayla Parveen Luna suggested empowering adolescents to participate in the decision-making process.

Information officers said they are organising mobile film shows to inculcate the message into the minds of people.

RLY HQS BREAK-IN One more arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective police on Wednesday arrested one more person at Kotbari in Comilla in connection with the Railway Headquarters break-in on January 19.

The arrestee was identified as Milon. Earlier, four people, including a woman, were arrested in this connection.

Sources in the Detective Branch (DB) of police said a team of DB police led by Assistant Commissioner (AC) Alimuzzaman conducted the raid at Kotbari at around 3:00am and arrested Milon.

DB sources said Milon was arrested according to the confessional statement of other arrestees.

A gang of criminals broke into Railway Bhaban in the city and ransacked 56 rooms while another gang took documents from the Eastern Zone Office of Bangladesh Railway in Chittagong.

Railway officials have detected that Tk 86,219, a laptop and three cellphones have been missing after the incident.



Visitors admire flower at a flower show at Nilkhet in the city yesterday. National Association of Unesco Clubs in Bangladesh organised the flower show.

FLOWER SHOW HELD

Flower cultivation now a profitable venture

Says commerce minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commerce Minister Lt Col (ret'd) Faruk Khan yesterday said commercial flower production is now a profitable venture and that unemployed youths can build their career in this field.

"Now, flower is a symbol of not only purity and beauty but also profitable business. Many unemployed youths can enter the job market through commercial flower cultivation, as flower has huge demand both at home and abroad," the minister said while inaugurating the Unesco Club Flower Show and Competition-2009 in the capital.

National Association of Unesco Clubs in Bangladesh organised the flower show at Banbeis Bhaban at Nilkhet in the city where a total of 75 participants exhibited flowers in small bunches into hand-made basket in Japanese Ikebana style and also displayed rare species of flowers.

Appreciating the participants for their interest in gardening, the minister said such initiatives could lead to some economic benefits for both flower growers and sellers.

Referring to the huge demand for flowers at home and abroad, he said every corner of a homestead and rooftops of buildings can be used to grow flowers.

Prof Dr Aminul Islam, Cambrian College Chairman MK Bashar and Unesco Clubs Secretary General Mahbubuddin Chowdhury also spoke at the programme presided over by Adviser to the Unesco Clubs Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron.

The flower growers identified a number of obstacles such as non-availability of

seeds and lack of technical knowledge, marketing facilities and preservation facilities.

Flower cultivation can be developed into an industry in the country like in India and Thailand if adequate facilities can be provided for farmers, they added.

Sadia Priyanka won the first prize while Nasreen Chowdhury and Sonia Razaque obtained the second and the third positions respectively in the competition. Education Secretary Syed Ataur Rahman gave away prizes among the winners.

Kidnapped boy rescued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) early Wednesday rescued a minor boy at Nayabazar under Kotwali Police Station in the city and arrested one person in this connection.

The boy was identified as Anik, a student of KKS School at Daulatdia of Rajbari, and the arrestee is Faruk. Anik was kidnapped from Daulatdia of

Rajbari on February 2.

Rab sources said Faruk kept Anik in a house at Nayabazar and demanded ransom.

Rab rescued Anik and arrested Faruk according to information from victim's family members. They also recovered Tk 43,000 from Faruk's possession, Rab sources said.

Rab sources said Faruk confessed to his involvement in the kidnapping during interrogation.



Bangladesh Readymade Garment Workers' Federation stages a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding the government do not pass the Ordinance No. 14, promulgated during the tenure of the caretaker government, in parliament.