

Call to adopt policy to ensure people's health rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the need to formulate a policy from health rights perspective where specific goals, directions, strategies and commitment of the government would be vivid for ensuring people's health rights.

Highlighting the current health service situation, they also put forward specific recommendations to improve the country's health system as the constitution accredits it as rights.

Titled 'National health policy and right to health', the seminar was organised by FK (Fred's Korpset) Network,

Bangladesh in coordination with Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) at Brac Centre Inn in the city.

The speakers said public health service should not be privatised or commercialised anyway and the principal approach would be - 'Establishing people's rights, not profit'.

In the rights-based approach of the National Health Policy, the state is supposed to ensure equal opportunity of all irrespective of economic, social and geographical locations.

The health policy should incorporate health issues that are mentioned in the UN Human Rights documents,

Alma Ata declaration, Cedaw document, Women Development Policy, MDG and PRSP and the government's commitment in this regard.

Prof Rashid E Mahbub, former president of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), said the policy should incorporate the health-related chapters of different ministries as 19 ministries are currently working on health issues partially.

The speakers further said that financing in health sector should have to be written clearly in the health policy.

At the same time, people's active participation in health-

related activities should have to be ensured and the management of health sector would have to make vibrant, effective and up-to-date, they added.

Sarder Arif Uddin, team leader, Right to Quality Health of ActionAid Bangladesh presented a keynote paper.

With ASK Executive Director Advocate Sultana Kamal in the chair, the seminar was addressed by Assistant General Secretary of Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) Helen Monisha Sarker, Nitai Kanti Das of PSTC and Dr Pradeep Sengupta of Impact Foundation.



(From left) Artists Qayyum Chowdhury and Rafiqun Nabi, Prof Nazrul Islam and Prof Kabir Chowdhury hold copies of a book titled 'Samokalin Shilpo O Shilpi' at a publication ceremony at the Bengal Gallery in the city yesterday. Prof Nazrul Islam has written the book.

Call for fair probe into deaths of BDR jawans

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) yesterday urged the government to conduct neutral investigations into the suicides committed by six BDR jawans and deaths of six other BDR men in 'sudden cardiac arrests'.

The association called on the government to make the probe reports public, says a press release.

It also expressed profound shock to carnage occurred in BDR headquarters Pithkhan in the city and demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits. "Committing suicides by six BDR soldiers and deaths of six other BDR men by sudden cardiac arrests in the last two months have created doubts and widespread concerns in the minds of common people and BDR family members," the release added.

Under the circumstances, BNWLA urged the government to open investigations into these incidents and make the reports public.

It hoped that the democratic and women and children-friendly government would favourably look into the frustration created in wives, girls and relatives of BDR men over meeting between BDR men and their relatives.

US Congress to hear HR situation in Bangladesh Congresswoman assures opposition chief whip

NEWS WORLD, New York

US Congresswoman Yvette D Clarke assures BNP lawmaker and Opposition Chief Whip Joyanal Abdin Faruque of holding a hearing in the US Congress on human rights situation in Bangladesh.

Clarke, also a member of the House Homeland Security sub-committee, said news of deterioration of human rights situation in Bangladesh after the assumption of power by the new government has been received from various sources. The real picture would emerge if a hearing on Bangladesh situation is held in the Congress.

She said this during a meeting with the BNP lawmaker at her office in New York on Monday.

Joyanal Abdin, who came to New York on Monday on a private visit, apprised the US congresswoman of the massacre of army officers at the BDR headquarters and different activities of the government against the opposition.

Yvette Clarke said tolerance is at the root of democracy, but it is not being practised in Bangladesh.

She stressed the need for tolerance and dialogue

between the government and the opposition.

Prof Dr Shawkat Ali of Long Island University, Abul Hashem, Kazi Shakhawut Hossain Azam, Mostafa Kamal Pasha Babul and other BNP leaders were present at the meeting.

ANA from New York adds: US chapters of BNP, Jubo Dal and Jasas and Tarique Release Movement held protest rallies in front of the UN headquarters and Bangladesh consulate office in New York on April 13.

Later, they also submitted a memorandum to President Zillur Rahman through the consul general, demanding withdrawal of the cabinet decision to cancel the lease of BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia's Cantonment house.

At the rallies, the leaders threatened to launch a greater movement abroad if their demand goes unheeded.

US BNP president Abdul Latif Shamrat, acting general secretary Mostafa Kamal Pasha Babul, US Jasas secretary Golam Faruq Shahin, President of the US unit of Tarique Release Movement Akhter Hossain Badal and US Jubo Dal acting president Ashrafuddin Thakur took part in the rallies.

CASE AGAINST ARMY MAN

Court asks DB to submit report by July 21

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed the deputy commissioner (DC) of Detective Branch (DB) to submit a report by July 21 after an investigation into an attempted murder case filed against an army officer and two others.

The accused are Major Sarwar, Abdu Samad and Md Saiful Islam.

After scrutinising the relevant documents placed by the complainant, Metropolitan Magistrate Kanika Bishwas passed the order.

This is the first time a case has been filed against an army officer on charges of torture in custody.

On April 13, Mohammad Shamsuddin Ahmed, proprietor of M/S Shamsuddin Overseas, filed the case against the three on charges of attempting to murder him in their custody during the state of emergency in 2007.

In his complaint, Shamsuddin mentioned that Maj Sarwar, Samad and Saiful picked him up from his Naya Paltan office on July 26 in 2007 and took him to the temporary army camp at Paltan Community Centre where they tortured him without any reason.

Bangladesh Institute of Human Rights moved the case on behalf of the complainant.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the 4th death anniversary of KM Ataul Huq, former general manager of Jiban Bima Corporation, says a press release.

Ataul was the eldest son of late AKM Fazlul Huq Mowla, pioneer of insurance industry in Bangladesh.

Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held on the occasion.

Faisal

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explosives either to train up militants or to supply those arms and explosives for militant attacks.

Investigators have already found Faisal's close links with banned Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh. Faisal had met executed JMB supreme Shaekh Abdul Rahman several times, and kept in contact with Saidur Rahman, now-on-the-run boss of the militant organisation.

"We suspect him as a high-profile militant. He has knowledge about most of the militant attacks in Bangladesh," the investigator said wishing anonymity.

Faisal, founder of the madrasa, and his close associate Hassan Saifuddin Badal, who was also taken on a 10-day remand, were sent to Borhanuddin yesterday as their current remand will expire today.

The investigator said the duo might be produced before a Bholia court today. He said fresh remand would be sought for them for further interrogation.

Faisal, founder of Green Crescent charity and NGO, was picked up along with his close associate Badal from Pubail in Gazipur on April 6 in connection with the arms haul from his madrasa.

On March 24, Rapid Action Battalion unearthed the 'mini-ammunition factory' inside the madrasa-cum-orphanage and seized 10 firearms, 2,500 bullets, 3,000 grenade ball splinters, 200 gram gun powder, different parts of ammunition and 72 books on jihad, Abul Ala Maududi and Osama bin Laden.



Muhibur Rahman speaks at a view exchange meeting at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Advocate Salimullah Bahadur and on his left is Md Ziaul Sarker. (Story on Page 1)

2 youths murdered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered two bodies, one at Pallabi in the city, and the other at Tongi on the outskirts of the capital.

The body, found at Pallabi, has been identified as Mohammad Mintu, 23, while the body of a youth found at Tongi could not be identified.

Pallabi police said they recovered the body of Mintu from a road at Block-D of Section-11 at around 12:30am.

They sent the body to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

According to morgue sources there were stab injuries in his throat.

Mizanur Rahman, younger brother of Mintu, told The Daily Star that Mintu went out from his house at Lalkuthi in Mirpur to enjoy a concert at around 7:00pm.

He said Pallabi police informed them at around 3:00am about the death of his brother as they (police) found the address of Mintu from his wallet at DMCH.

Meanwhile, Tongi police recovered the body with slit throat at Baradewra village at around 5:00am, and sent it to Gazipur Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

ADAB seeks cooperation from finance minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) yesterday sought cooperation from Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith in resolving the problems facing different NGOs, especially ADAB.

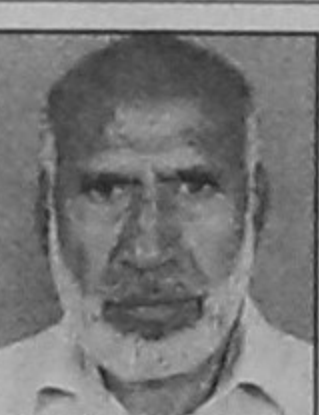
The ADAB leaders also apprised the minister of various activities of the NGOs at a meeting at the conference room of the finance ministry at the Secretariat, says a press release.

The finance minister gave a patient hearing to their statements and assured them of providing all possible assistance in resolving their problems.

ADAB Chairperson Abdul Matin led a delegation of the association at the meeting. The delegation members included ADAB Vice Chairperson Lokman Hakim and executive committee members Kazi Baby, Abdu Sobahan Mia, KMAK Azad, Rafiqul Islam Molla, SM Nazer Hossain, Rafiqul Islam and ADAB Director Md Aminul Islam.

Obituary

METRO DESK



Abu Yusuf Dhali, son of Shamsuddin Dhali and a freedom fighter of Bhalwal Monoharia

in Keraniganj, passed away due to a cardiac arrest on the way to Holy Family Hospital in the city on April 13 night at the age of 52.

Yusuf Dhali, also a Keraniganj Awami League leader, fell sick while he was speaking at a view exchange meeting with State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam at the minister's house in the city. He was rushed to the Holy Family Hospital where the on-duty doctors declared him dead.

He left behind his mother, father, wife, three daughters and host of relatives, friends and party colleagues to mourn his death.

He was laid to rest at the Bhalwal Monoharia graveyard after a namaz-e-janaza at the Bhalwal Monoharia Eidgah ground on April 14.

State Minister Quamrul Islam, Awami League leader Mostafa Mohsin Mantu, Haji Md Selim and the UNO attended the janaza.

Meanwhile, Saroj Sangskriti Brito, a local cultural organisation, postponed its Pahela Baishakh programmes to pay respect to the late freedom fighter and placed wreaths at his grave.

Taranagar Muktijoddha Kalyan Parishad will hold a condolence meeting on Ati Bhalwal High School premises at 4:00pm on Friday.

Saida Khanam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saida Khanam, mother of Power Development Board Chairman ASM Alamgir Kabir, passed away yesterday at a city hospital at the age of 82, says a press release.

She left behind three sons, four daughters, a host of grand children, relatives and well-wishers to mourn her death.

She was buried at Alipur graveyard in Faridpur town. Her Quilkhani will be held at her Purba Khabashpur residence in the town tomorrow.

First-ever bus route franchise

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government wants to ensure safe and affordable transport system for commuters. The BRF will improve service through an organised and faster journey.

In her speech, Home Minister Sahara Khatun said extortion would be eliminated from the transport sector.

Under the franchise system, all existing bus companies operating on this route with valid permit will run under one company.

The route covers around 30 kilometres from Uttara sector 12 (Khalpar) to Plassey (Azampur) via Sobhanbag, Manik Mia Avenue, Bijoy Sarani, Mohakhali, Khilkhet, Airport and Azampur. A total of 27 up and down stoppages have been selected on the route.

Digital ticketing system replacing manual paper tickets would be introduced. A prepaid card system will soon follow.

At the initial stage, 30 air conditioned (AC) and 70 non-AC buses will operate on the route. The state-run Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) has also taken part in the scheme providing 20 buses from its fleet.

The buses ply from 6:00am and the trips end at 12:00 mid-night or 1:00am. All the buses have similar colours and the fare is Tk 1.45 per kilometre for non-AC buses.

ASM Ali Kabir, Secretary to the Roads and Railway Division, Md Abdul Karim of Bridge Division, Abu Bakkar Md Shahjahan, executive director of Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB), and Khandaker Rafiqul Hossain Kajal, president of Association of Bus Companies (ABC), also spoke at the inauguration programme.

Meanwhile, 'Silk City', the first direct train service from Kamalapur railway station to Rajshahi, was also launched on Tuesday.

Communications minister also inaugurated the new train service. Rashed Khan Menon MP, Director General of Bangladesh Railway (BR) Md Belayet Hossain and general manager of BR western zone Musfiqur Rahman spoke at the function.



Country's first-ever Bus Route Franchise (BRF) makes its debut on the city's Uttara-Azampur route on Tuesday.

Pahela Baishakh celebrated

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In the course of time, it evolved into a day of celebration and an integral part of the Bangalee culture and tradition and has been considered as the spirit of a non-communal festival as people irrespective of religion, sect and creed celebrate the day.

The biggest cultural festival of the Bangladesh began with Rabin Dranath Tagore's song "Esho hey Baishakh, Esho, Esho" sung by the artists of Chhayanaut at Ramna Batamul in the capital at sunrise.

A festive spirit gripped the capital and other parts of the country. Women in soothing white sarees with red border and men in panjabees - the dresses decorated with Baishakhi motifs - greeted the New Year.

Youths had their cheeks painted with the country's map and other emblems that added more colours to the celebrations.

They thronged the main

venue in Ramna, the festivities of which stretched over to Suhrawardy Udyan, Dhaka University and Dhanmondi Lake areas paralysing the city traffic system.

Braving scorching heat people who came out of home early in the morning to celebrate the biggest carnival of the Bangladesh were seen returning home even late at night. Many foreigners clad in traditional dresses were also seen in and around the main venue.

The carnival-goers also thronged Baishakhi melas (fairs) showcasing various handicrafts and artefacts of the Bangalee culture.

Colourful rallies, musical programmes, fairs and cake festivals attached extra joys to the celebrations. The crowd turned into a human sea in the afternoon when the mercury came down slightly.

Chhayanaut, a cultural organisation, has been organising the event for over the last three decades. It set up a huge

stage for its trademark cultural programme that was witnessed by thousands as the artists sang songs, and recited poems and essays.

Another main attraction was the decorated procession called Mongol Shovajatra brought out by the students of the Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University.

The Shovajatra featuring giant replicas of tiger, cat, owl, tortoise, elephant and huge colourful masks seeks the wellbeing of all. Tens of thousands of people joined the Shovajatra dancing along the beats of traditional musical instruments.

There were scores of cultural shows organised by different organisations keeping the university area alive with heavy rush of people. Besides, there were many other celebration programmes held in different parts of the city.

Many had traditional panta bhat with fried Hilsa, lentil,

Price control

FROM PAGE 1

days in power. The survey touched issues like economic performance, inflation, administration and judiciary, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), law and order, corruption, and best performing ministers.

On the last point, it was found that a large section of the respondents could not exactly recall which minister heads which ministry, and mostly refrained from answering. But those who could answer the question, 28 percent of them rated Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, and Food Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque each as the best performing ministers. However, because of the low number of respondents, The Daily Star refrained from publishing the graph for this question.

The survey found that 71 percent of the respondents feel that the country has been moving in the right direction while 17 percent said it has been going in the wrong direction since the new government took over. Rural and female respondents voted more favourably.

When asked to rate the government's performance at the completion of its 100 days, 62 percent said they are satisfied, 19 percent very much satisfied, while only 15 percent said they are not satisfied. Such expression of high satisfaction cut across the political divide, the poll shows.

About the economy, 59 percent feel the government is doing well while 13 percent feel negatively, and 24 percent think the economy is not doing so good.

A large number of respondents were highly critical of BCL, and equated the organisation with activities like violence, capturing institutions, and extortion. They feel Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina should take stern actions to control BCL.



Nizam, Bipu elected ORWA president, general secy

METRO DESK

Prof Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed and lawmaker Nasrul Hamid Bipu have been elected president and general secretary of Old Remians Welfare Association (ORWA), says a press release.

ORWA is an association of former students of Dhaka Residential Model College.

AKM Zaman, Mahmudul Haque Bhuiyan, Moshir Rahman and Sarafat Chowdhury were elected vice presidents and FH Arif, Abdul Noor Tusher and Shahed Kamal Shad joint secretaries.

They were elected for 2009-10 at a meeting of the association on April 4.

A 23-member executive committee was also appointed.

An advisory board was also nominated at the meeting. Members of the board are Ahsanul Kabir, Dr Khaliduzzaman and Touhid Samad (all 1964 batch), past presidents Md Habibul Alam, Bir Pratik and Feroze M Hasan, and Major (Retd) Qamrul Islam.

The committee will organise the golden jubilee of the college in 2010. All Remians have been requested to contact the ORWA office for details.