

Poverty alleviation a must to check human trafficking

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday said poverty alleviation through employment generation and life skill development are the key to preventing human trafficking.

It is a popular misconception that human trafficking is only prevalent in the frontier districts, they said, adding that but poverty-hit women and children from across the country are equally vulnerable who are easily lured with the promises of better jobs.

Poverty, natural disasters and conflicts increase the possibility of trafficking, while improved communications and transports have magnified the speed these days, they noted.

The speakers said this at the workshop jointly organised by Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) and Concern Universal at LEGD auditorium in the city.

They pointed out that delinquents, who are involved in trafficking, often go unpunished because of lengthy and complicated legal process. Rescue and repatriation of those who fall victim to trafficking are also difficult for the same

reason, they said.

Women and Children Affairs Secretary Rokeya Sultana said, "Improving ties with the neighbouring countries is a must to check trafficking as we all face similar situation. We also have to learn from their experience."

Stressing the importance of sustainable effects of various projects with an aim to prevent human trafficking, she said, "Even if the projects end, we have to ensure that they have effective sustainable results. Otherwise, all the efforts will go in vain which is often the case in Bangladesh."

According to various reports, around 20,000 women and children are trafficked from Bangladesh to neighbouring India, Pakistan and Middle Eastern countries every year, mainly for sex trade, domestic work, forced labour, camel jockeying, often forced marriage and other forms of exploitative labour.

Director (operations) of DAM Safiqul Islam said providing legal support to the victims of trafficking under the existing law as well as reintegrating them with their families and society is an uphill task.

Community awareness can create local level safety net, he said and also suggested for a legal reform in this connection.

Shankar Paul, head of human rights unit at Concern Universal, pointed out that police authorities frequently face difficulties to find out appropriate witnesses while dealing with trafficking cases. Sometimes even the victims do not provide real information about the traffickers.

He underscored the need for improving coordination and sharing information between members of police and BDR and the local government.

The speakers suggested cross-border cooperation, planning together with the neighbouring countries, developing regional solidarity, capacity building of women and awareness programmes for communities to prevent trafficking.

Concern Universal Country Director Stephan Bonduelle, DAM Executive Director Ehsanur Rahman, Indian human rights activist Alaka Mitra and Executive Director of Socio Legal Aid Research and Training Centre Manabendra Mandal also spoke.

DU female student found dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The body of a female student of Dhaka University was found hanging from a ceiling fan at her home at West Bhasantek in Kafrul in the capital on Friday.

The police, who recovered the body of Ayesha Akhter, 19, around 2:30am yesterday, suspect that she might have committed suicide as her father failed to pay her educational expenses.

Ayesha was a first year student of department of international relations.

Quoting family members, Sub-inspector Emdadul Haque of Kafrul Police Station said her father was facing financial problems as he sent one of his sons to Japan two months ago.

Ayesha, youngest of five brothers and sisters, wanted to get into a medical college and she needed money for coaching classes, family sources said, adding that her family could not manage the amount for the classes.

Police said she had an altercation with her parents over education expenses around 4:30pm and she locked herself in her room.

Family members broke the door open around 7:30pm after she failed to respond to repeated knockings at the door. They found her hanging from the ceiling fan.

Ayesha had secured GPA 5 in her SSC and HSC examinations.

Mozammel elected Lions dist governor

DU CORRESPONDENT



Mozammel Haque Lahu, editor and publisher of the daily Karotoa, has been elected the district governor of the Lions Club International, District 315A2 Bangladesh, for 2009-10.

The election was held at the 14th annual district conference at Hotel Sheraton in Dhaka yesterday, says a press release.

Mozammel was the vice district governor for 2008-09.

DHAKA TODAY Seminar

RDC organises a seminar marking the Global Action Week. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

Discussion

Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with UNESCO Dhaka Office will organise a discussion on 'Education for all'. Venue: NAEM auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Workshop

UNCRD, UNDP and Environment Directorate jointly organise a workshop on environmentally sustainable transport in Bangladesh. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 9:00am.

BNP won't tolerate repression

Says Delwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said his party would not tolerate repression on the opposition political parties by the government 'in the name of change'.

Addressing a meeting, he called upon the party activists to launch a united movement over the issues of acute water and power crises.

The meeting was organised by Khelafat Majlish, a component of BNP-led four-party alliance, at the Diploma Engineers' Institute in the city in memory of its Nayab Ameer Emdadul Haq who died recently.

This was the first appearance of the leaders of the BNP-led four-party alliance at a same meeting after December 29 election debacle.

Presided over by Maolana Muhammad Ishak, the memorial meeting was also

addressed by Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Matur Rahman Nizami and Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Fazlul Haq Amini.

Delwar said it would be a mistake if the government hopes to quell the opposition in the name of change.

"We will never tolerate such repression of the government," he added.

Delwar asked how the present government could be called a democratic one when it says it will not tolerate the movement of the opposition parties.

Earlier, the BNP Secretary General refused to deliver his speech as the anchor of the meeting introduced him as special guest.

In a low voice, he argued that he has been addressed as invited guest in the invitation card.

He, however, delivered his speech when the announcer introduced him as an invited guest.

BDR chief visits ailing jawans at hospital

5 jawans placed on fresh remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Rifles Director General Maj Gen Mainul Islam yesterday visited three BDR jawans who were undergoing treatment at National Institute of Cardio-Vascular Diseases (NICVD) in the city.

The three BDR jawans -- Habildar Badrul Alam of 19 Rifles Battalion, Naeb Subedar Nazrul Islam of 23 Rifles Battalion and Habildar Ali Amzad of 36 Rifles Battalion -- have been suffering from cardiac problems.

Besides, around 10 other jawans are now undergoing treatment at different hospitals in the city, says a BDR press release.

It said Badrul Alam fell ill on April 22 in Mahipal area when he was coming to report to BDR headquarters from Feni. He was rushed to the Feni Hospital. Later, he was shifted to the NICVD in Dhaka.

REMAND

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday placed five suspected BDR mutineers on a three-day fresh remand in connection with the mutiny case.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced the five boarder guards before the CMM's Court on completion of their five-day remand and sought for another five-day remand for each. The court granted three days' remand.

The court also sent 10 other suspected BDR mutineers to jail after they were also produced before it on completion of their five-day remand.

Meanwhile, senior journalists from the electronic media yesterday placed an eight-point recommendation to the national committee probing the Pilkhana carnage so that they can cover any such incident more responsibly.

The journalists submitted the recommendations to the head of the committee Anisuzzaman Khan at a meeting held at Pilkhana where heads of news from six private satellite televisions were present.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Stanley Tenu Gomez, former director and treasurer of Christian Co-operative Credit Union Ltd and owner of Greenview Super Market at Farmgate, passed away due to a cardiac arrest yesterday at the age of 70, says a press release.

He was also a former councillor of Holy Rosary Church. He left behind a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Christian Co-operative Credit Union Ltd President Nirmal Rozario and Secretary Babu Markuz Gomez in a statement expressed deep shock at the death of Tenu Gomez.



(From left) Prof Sultana Sarwat Ara Zaman, Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique and Prof Salma Akhtar hold copies of a book titled 'Visual Impairment and Education' by Associate Professor Diba Hossain and Shahrier Haider at its publication ceremony at Dhaka University yesterday.

Heatwave, power outage make life miserable in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The scorching heat coupled with erratic power supply has crippled the life in Rajshahi and its surrounding districts.

Besides, acute water scarcity and mosquito menace have added to the suffering of the common people.

The heatwave has also been hampering the harvest of Irr paddy as farmers as well as labourers are unable to stay in the paddy fields for longer time under the blazing sun.

The farmers are complaining of huge load-shedding against the power authorities'

claim for rationing power in urban areas for smooth power supply to irrigation sector.

The northern districts are facing average 300 megawatt (MW) of load shedding against the daily demand for 750 MW now.

PDB officials said with a local generation of around 266 MW, the PDB is to manage the demand with only 466 MW supply in the last few days.

Acute water crisis in many areas compounded sufferings. Out of the demand for 226 lakh gallons of water, Rajshahi City Corporation supplies only 106 lakh gallons which are less than 50 per cent demand.

Among 6,500 tube wells in city areas, most of the wells are not functioning as the underground water level went down. Moreover, water pumps are not also working following power cut at regular intervals.

The heat has been so intense that the city roads wore almost a deserted look in the afternoons. It also forced businessmen to keep down their shutters.

However, the adverse weather conditions also worked in favour of a few traders, as there was a brisk business of green coconuts, watermelons and ice creams.

World IP Day today

UNB, Dhaka

The World Intellectual Property Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere across the globe today to applaud the brains that create.

This year's theme for the day is: Green innovation is the key to a secure future.

The event was established by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in 2001 to "raise awareness of the role of intellectual property in our daily lives, and to celebrate the contribution made by innovators and artists to the development of societies across the globe".

In separate messages on the occasion, President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina greeted the country's scientists, researchers and artists and litterateurs involved in creative works.

ANZAC Day commemoration service held

UNB, Dhaka

The Australian High Commission here yesterday commemorated the 94th anniversary of ANZAC Day remembering Australian and New Zealand servicemen and women who died in wars and conflicts, including 29 buried in Commonwealth War Cemeteries in Bangladesh.

Australian High Commissioner Justin Lee along with representatives from Bangladesh government Maj Gen Mollah Fazle Akbar, Turkish

Ambassador Sakir Ozkan Torunlar, and Honorary Consul of New Zealand Neaz Ahmed placed wreaths at the service in their remembrance.

Dr Lee in his address recognised and thanked the many ordinary men and women who lost their lives serving Australia and New Zealand in wars, conflicts and peace operations, alongside their compatriots from allied and Commonwealth nations. The Turkish Ambassador read the words of remembrance first made by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

The Commemorative Service highlighted the sacrifice of young servicemen from the Royal Australian Air Force and the Royal New Zealand Air Force who served with British Royal Air Force Squadrons in both the Burma and India/Ceylon theatres, including in and around Chittagong during the World War II. A number of these airmen lost their lives while supporting the jungle fighters and now lie buried in the Chittagong and Comilla war cemeteries.

The US Ambassador, Canadian High Commissioner, UK Charge d'Affaires, Defence Attachés, Manager of Commonwealth War Graves in Bangladesh, and Australian and New Zealand community members in Dhaka also attended the service.

Four Wasa pumps get mobile generators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Wasa distributed mobile generators to four Wasa pumps at Gulshan Shooting Club, Uttara Sector-12, Mohammadpur Bang Housing and Mohi Road in the city yesterday to ease water crisis.

Meanwhile, a Wasa team led by its chairman visited three pumps in Gulshan, Mohakhali and Baridhara DOHS areas yesterday to monitor the situation.

The visit was part of a decision at an emergency meeting to reduce the acute water shortage facing the city dwellers.

Sources said the team asked the concerned officials to increase the time of providing water to the people

through mobile water lorries four hours from 8:00pm to 12:00 midnight.

Currently, Wasa has 514 pumps, while it has only 233 fixed generators and 40 mobile generators.

Tk 1cr Indian sarees seized

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Members of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) yesterday seized Indian sarees worth about Tk 1.15 crore from Sadar Dakkhin upazila in Comilla.

Sources said a BDR team raided the area at about 5:30am and seized 2300 pieces of sarees.



Dairy farm traders pour milk onto the Dhaka-Cox's Bazar highway at Shikabaha in Chittagong yesterday protesting the low price of milk. (Story on Star Business Page B3)

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

There are also chances of rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind at one or two places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Tangail and Mymensingh, Met office said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, it added.

Prevailing moderate to severe heatwave over Khulna division and the regions of Dhaka, Faridpur, Rajshahi and Ishwardi and mild to moderate heat wave over the regions of Tangail, Madaripur, Bogra, Rangmat, Sitakundu, Comilla, Feni, Barisal and Patuakhali may also continue.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:25pm today and rises at 5:27am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 41.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 21.0 degree at Rajshahi.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

Book on edn of visually impaired students launched

DU CORRESPONDENT

With a view to facilitating the education of visually impaired students, a book titled 'Visual Impairment and Education' was launched at Dhaka University (DU) yesterday.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique unveiled the cover of the book at a ceremony at the Institute of Education and Research (IER).

Authors of the book Associate Professor Diba Hossain and Shahrier Haider at the publication ceremony said this book would help teachers and guides of visually impaired students a lot to teach students in an applied and theoretical way.

This is the first book in Bangla for teachers and guides to teach visually impaired students, said the publishers.

They expressed hope that the book would be handy for university students, teachers and people involved in education of visually impaired students.

IER Director Prof Salma Akhter presided over the programme that was also addressed by Professor Emeritus Sultana Sarwat Ara Zaman and Monsur Ahmed Choudhury.

Two snatchers caught red-handed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two snatchers were caught red-handed by local people at Lalbagh in the city yesterday as their private car went out of order on the spot while fleeing the scene.

The arrestees were identified as Md Zabbar, 28, and Rafiq Miah, 27. They were residents of the same area.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Golam Rahman of Lalbagh Police Station said the snatchers in the car intercepted a rickshaw at Lalbagh Polashi.

They snatched the vanity bag of rickshaw passenger Rekha Begum at knife-point, the OC said, adding that as the woman started screaming, the locals rushed to the scene and chased the car.

Later, they handed the muggers over to the police after giving them a good thrashing, police said.

Injured Zabbar told reporters that they used to hire a private car and commit snatching at Lalbagh, Polashi, Newmarket, Azimpur, Nilkhet and Shahbagh areas over the last one month and a half.

Nat'l security at stake under present govt

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National security is at stake in the hands of the incumbent government, said the speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

The roundtable titled 'Bangladesh's security issue and recent events' was organised by Bangladesh Policy Forum at the Cirdap auditorium in the city.

Certain elements in the present government are threats to the country's security, said Wing Commander (ret'd) Hamidullah Khan.

Reckless and sweeping comments on militancy and terrorism by some intellectuals will jeopardise the national security, said Major (ret'd) Ashrafuzzaman, senior assistant editor of Bangladesh Defence Journal, in his keynote paper.

Major General (ret'd) Abdul Halim, former director general of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), said propaganda is on to portray Bangladesh as a militant country.

The Police, BDR and army are enough to tackle whatever militancy is there in the country, said Wing Commander (ret'd) Hamidullah Khan.

He also said investigation into BDR carnage is being engineered citing unnatural deaths of 12 BDR jawans so far after the carnage.

Brigadier General (ret'd) ASM Hannan Shah, adviser to BNP chairperson, Major Gen (ret'd) Fazlur Rahman, former director general of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), and Brig Gen (ret'd) Noor Ul Haq also spoke.