

CONSTRUCTION WORK

Negligence in maintaining quality unpardonable

PM tells engineers

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked engineers to be honest in their work and forewarned that any negligence in maintaining quality of construction work will be considered unpardonable.

"Government will ensure congenial atmosphere of work and provide all cooperation so that you can smoothly perform your job. But, be careful, we will not allow any corruption, procrastination or any other negligence," she said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the 61st founding anniversary of the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) on its premises yesterday.

She said engineers should have cent percent honesty and integrity as some 85 percent money of the country's total

development activities is spent by the engineers.

"Ensure quality of your works. Your works must be sustainable," she told the engineers.

She sought cooperation from the engineers in implementing her government's plan to turn Bangladesh into a modern and prosperous country by 2021.

Hasina also urged them to give special look into the environmental factors during all types of construction works.

She disclosed a plan of her government to provide rural people with accommodation facilities by building quality and healthy but low-priced houses up to union level.

"Commoners in many areas have to suffer from lack of healthy and sustainable houses. We want to rid people of this basic problem by providing them with

quality but cheap houses," the prime minister said.

Country's engineers will have to come forward to evolve appropriate technology for building such houses, she said.

She said her government has already planned dredging major rivers of the country to increase navigability of the waterways. "If the depth of the rivers can be increased, the rivers' water-containing capacity will be increased. This way we can save our people from becoming homeless."

About the present electricity crisis, the PM said the power situation has started improving as the government is working very hard.

Later, the prime minister unveiled the plaque of a monument to the memory of the engineers martyred in the Liberation War in 1971.



Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanom speaks at a reception to newly elected women vice chairmen of Upazila Parishads at Biam auditorium in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are Advocate Amina Begum, Surayia Salam, Maleka Banu and Rekha Chowdhury. (Story on Page 16)

Police should provide info to ensure transparency Says IGP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad said the police should provide information to the press for the sake of transparency and national interest.

No policemen have been punished so far on charges of providing information to the press, he said at a view exchange meeting on 'Relationship between Police and the Media' organised by DMP at Rajbari Telecom auditorium in the city.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner AKM Shohidul Hoque said mutual respect, mutual understanding and mutual interaction are the three things to be nourished in order to develop relationship between the police and the press.

At the meeting, police personnel and journalists of the print and electronic media placed some recommendations to facilitate communications between them. The recommendations include strengthening the public relations (PR) office at the Detective Branch, setting up PR office in each DMP zone, holding view exchange meetings frequently and providing information about any incidents to reporters immediately.

Showkat Mahmud, president of the National Press Club, said every citizen has the right to know all information except information which fall under 20 categories as per the Right to Information Act.

Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, said if police personnel have to pay several lakh taka for their posting in places of their choice or for appointment, transparency and better service cannot be expected from such police personnel.

Khelaghar Asar honours FF members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kendrio Khelaghar Asar honoured 11 of its members, who took part in the Liberation War, at a ceremony at Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday.

Chief Coordinator of Sector Commanders Forum Lt Gen (ret'd) Harun-Ar-Rashid and Mahfuza Khanam, chairperson of Khelaghar, jointly handed over crests and gifts to the awardees.

The awardees are -- Amal Kanti Nath, Abdul Aziz, Mehedi Hasan, Azad Hossain Jalal, Abdul Hai Khelu, Mujibur Rahman Saud, Ehsan Kabir Ramjan, Shahidul Islam, Sarifullah Saud, Engineer Ali Hossain and Abdul Matin.

Reactivate TCB to check price hike of essentials Speakers say at BBC Sanglap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at BBC Bangladesh Sanglap yesterday said the government should monitor commodity markets regularly and ensure proper supply of products by activating Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) to ensure lower price rates of essentials.

They called on the government to make the investigation report on the February 25-26 Pikhana carnage public.

The speakers at the dialogue on the contemporary issues of the country organised by BBC Bangla Service at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan said according to its poll pledges, the government has brought down the prices of essentials within the purchasing power of the people and wants to keep the prices at the normal level.

"The government has decided to reactivate TCB to ensure proper supply of products to the market by importing goods. The previous governments had stopped TCB activities. It needs a bit more time to reactivate TCB," he said.

Faruk further said that the investigation committee formed by the government to probe into the Pikhana massacre would publish its report within a few days.

"Some questions may arise in the people's minds as they have seen investigations like the August 21 grenade attack and 10 truck arms haul, but this time the probe would not be like that. For that, it needs some time," he said while commenting on giving much time to the probe body to

submit its report.

BNP Joint Secretary General Abdullah Al Noman, also former food minister, said the commerce minister has been actively holding meetings with the business people in tackling the prices of edible oil, but these are not working to live up to the commoners' expectations.

The BNP leaders said the government should maintain focus on increasing the income of the common people.

Expressing doubts over fair probe into the massacre at BDR headquarters, he said, "Some questions have arisen in the people's minds whether the probe would be fair as the government is delaying in publishing the report, though they had said they would publish it quickly."

Former ambassador Wali-ur Rahman said the government should reactivate the TCB for smooth supply of commodities in the local markets.

About the report that said around 35 percent of the newly recruited Army men are from Quami madrasas, he said, "The figure might be less than that, but it is a warning for us to look into the matter."

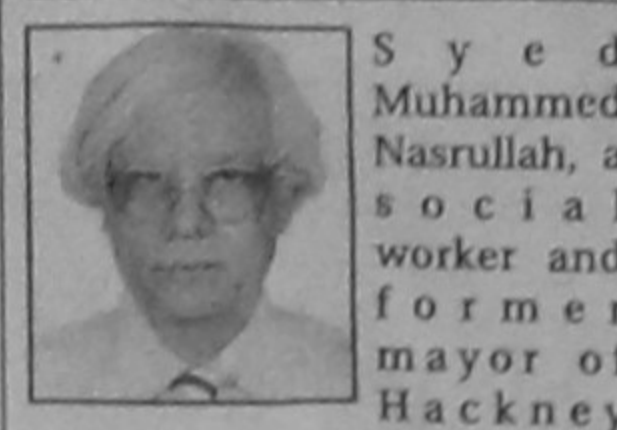
Prof Dilara Chowdhury of Jahangirnagar University said there are some questions prevailing in the mind of people regarding BDR incident's probe as different stories are found in different times in the newspapers regarding the incident.

She said the government should try to increase the income of the people alongside trying to control the prices of essentials.

The dialogue was moderated by senior BBC journalist Kamal Ahmed.

Obituary

METRO DESK



Syed Muhammed Nasrullah, a social worker and former mayor of Hackney Borough, London passed away due to lung cancer at a London hospital on April 29 at the age of 76, says a press release.

His body will be flown to Zia International Airport from London by an Emirates flight at 8:45am today.

He hailed from Gokarna Nawabbari of Nasiragar in Brahmanbaria and was the son of late Syed Mohd Mahmud.

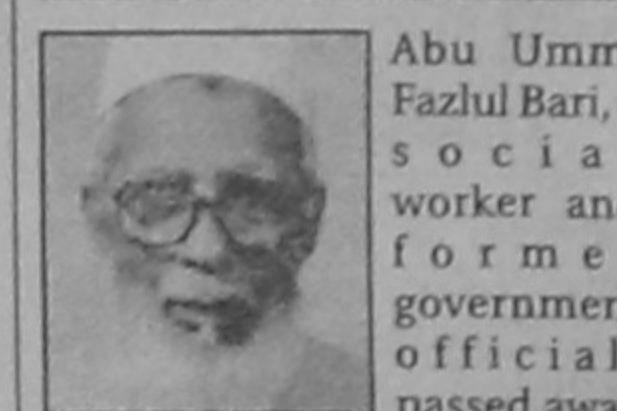
He will be buried at the family graveyard of his maternal grandfather at Baniachang in Habiganj after namaz-e-janaza at Dutabash Road Mosque of Baridhara at 12:00 noon.

Nasrullah left behind his wife, elder sister and other relatives, friends and admirers to mourn his death.

His qulhwani will be held at the residence of his elder sister at Dutabash Road, Baridhara in the city after Asr prayers on May 8.

Abu Ummei Fazlul Bari

DU CORRESPONDENT



Abu Ummei Fazlul Bari, a social worker and former government official, passed away at a city hospital on Friday at the age of 89, says a press release.

He left behind his three sons, relatives and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

His qulhwani will be held after Maghrib prayers tomorrow at his own residence (Apartment B/2, House-16, Road-140, Gulshan 1) in the city.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the 5th death anniversary of Amberin Azam, wife of S M Shahed Al Azam, says a press release.

On the occasion, various programmes have been arranged at Shazadi Latifa Khatun Orphanage Forkhanja Madrasah at Azam Bari, Chittagong. The programmes include recitation from the holy Quran, special prayer session and feeding of the destitute.

Dr Mohammad Shaheed Ullah

DU CORRESPONDENT



Today is the first death anniversary of Dr Mohammad Shaheed Ullah, a physician and social worker, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and doa mahfil will be held at his residence at Agrabad and his village home under Seetakunda upazila in Chittagong.

Ratify UN convention on migrant workers' rights

Seminar speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called on the government to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Family without delay to safeguard the rights of about 65 lakh Bangladeshi workers.

They also stressed the need to prepare an action plan in line with the Overseas Employment Policy that was adopted in 2006.

At the same time, the Bangladesh Immigration Ordinance of 1983 should also be updated in line with the UN convention on the rights of migrants, they added.

Manusher Jonno Foundation organised the seminar titled 'Problems of the migrant workers and our duties' at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city to mark the historic May Day.

"Eleven percent of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from the remittance of the migrant workers. So, it is important to protect their rights," said Secretary of the expatriate welfare ministry Ilias Ahmed.

"In 1929, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) identified the migrant workers as the most vulnerable group in the world. Seventy years have elapsed since then, but they still belong to that group," Prof Dr Tasneem Siddiqui said, adding that many migrant workers still fall victim to unscrupulous brokers, lose their jobs and

return home empty-handed.

However, it is good that during this global recession, the market of women workers abroad has not affected at all, he said and stressed the need to remove the obstacles to migration of women workers and set up quality training centres in both public and private sectors to increase their skills.

Apart from raising awareness in society, it is important to provide aspirant women migrant workers with extensive training and allocate adequate budget in this regard, the speakers said.

They also recommended forming an inter-ministerial and inter-agency task force

immediately to minimise the impacts of global recession.

Speaking as the chief guest, Labour, Manpower and Expatriate Welfare Minister Mosharraf Hossain said that he would approach other migrant-sending countries such as India, Nepal and the Philippines to take steps together to protect the rights of migrant workers.

Presided over by Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation Shaheen Anam, the seminar was also addressed by Director General of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training Masud Ahmed, Shipa Hafiza of Brac and Saiful Islam of Warbe.

BCL ATTACK

Benapole port workers begin strike

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Port Handling Workers' Union yesterday began a strike for an indefinite period at Benapole port protesting attack on its leaders and ransacking of its office by the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists.

The BCL men ransacked the office of the port workers union and injured several workers. In protest the workers stopped unloading of all types of goods in the port.

The workers threatened tougher movement if the BCL activists responsible for the attack were not arrested. They

also demanded compensation for the injured.

Handling Workers' Union General Secretary Rashed Miah said the BCL men entered a May Day cultural function and began an altercation with him, Joint General Secretary Hafizur Rahman, Jabbar and some other workers. He said at one stage of altercation they attacked the workers and ransacked their office.

He said the workers informed the matter to the Port Police Station. But the officer-in-charge expressed his inability to send police, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

University Grants Commission Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam inaugurates an exhibition of terracotta, ceramics and wood engraving works "Space and Décor" by artists Ratan Sarkar and Biswajit Pal at Gallery Kaya on Friday. Special guest artist Hamiduzzaman Khan, centre, was also present on the occasion. The show will continue till May 12.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar
Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation organises a seminar on 'The right of the workers to a safe workplace: The way forward'. Venue: Osmani Memorial Auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar
Campaign on Citizen's Right to Information organises a seminar on right to information act and free media. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:30.

Book launching
The launching ceremony of the book 'Proshnotore Tathya Adhikar Ain' will be held. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 9:30am.

Discussion
Citizens Solidarity organises a discussion on situation in electricity and water sectors and ADB's guidance. Venue: Moni Singh-Farhad Memorial Trust. Time: 2:30pm.

Seminar
BLS organises a seminar on economic recession and social safety net for workers. Venue: Osmani Memorial Auditorium seminar room. Time: 2:30pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally is likely to occur at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna

Barisal and Chittagong divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:28pm today and rises at 5:22am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 37.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 19.8 degrees Celsius at Comilla.

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	31.4	23.7	68	84
Chittagong	32.7	25.0	63	61
Rajshahi	32.2	24.0	86	70
Khulna	36.2	28.0	73	68
Barisal	33.0	27.6	71	77
Sylhet	27.2	20.3	84	84
Cox's Bazar	34.0	25.6	63	71

MAY DAY OBSERVED 'Ensure rights of labourers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar on Friday said the concerned authorities should strengthen the existing monitoring system whether the industry owners follow the labour law to ensure rights of the labourers as they are exploited due to lack of proper monitoring.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) organised the seminar on 'Bangladesh Labour Law 2006 and recommendations related to develop the relations between labourers and owners' at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city to mark the May Day.

Saying that excepting the government officials, every labourer must be brought under the labour law, the speakers underscored the need for introducing mobile court to deal with labour cases promptly as these cases take much time for solution.

Speaking as the chief guest, Justice Awlad Ali said some terms, including definition of labour, their wages, working hours and workplaces, should be more specified in the law.

He stressed the need for arranging training system for labour leaders to make them understand the rights written in the law to increase their bargaining power with the employers, saying that only bargaining power can protect labourers from exploitation.

Laying emphasis on reorganising the labour courts, advocate SA Haque of Labour Council said the existing labour courts should be reorganised with one chairman and two or three advisers to ensure speedy disposal of the long-stalled cases.

He also suggested withdrawing the time limit for appeal and changing the name of the labour court with a view to showing some respect to the labourers.

Speaking as the special guest, advocate Sultana Kamal said, "Political commitment and accountability is needed to establish human rights."

"Right to form trade union is a must to ensure labour rights," said Shirin Akter, labour leader.

Human rights activist Dr Hameeda Hossain focused on developing tripartite monitoring system for the proper application of the law which will ensure rights of the labourers.

"It is also needed to increase the representation of the labour class in parliament to uphold as well as resolve their problems," she added.

BLAST Executive Director Mohosin Ali Khan, who moderated the seminar, said the concerned ministry should consult with those organisations working with the labour issues before reviewing the law.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Zabeed Hossain, the only bread earner of his family, has been suffering from kidney

ailment, says a press release.

His both kidneys have been damaged.

According to doctors, Zabeed, 22, needs immediate kidney transplant which will cost him about Tk 12 lakh.

But it is not possible for him to afford such an expensive treatment.

So he has appealed to generous people for financial assistance to save his life.

Contributions can be sent to Alhaj Yousuf Bhuiyan, Savings Account No 13583/8, Janata Bank, Mirpur-10 Branch, Dhaka.

Interested people can also contact 01716-218266.

Schools use magic as tool for enrolment, learning

BSS, Dhaka

Several hundred children were bubbling with excitement and joy as a celebrated magician performed his jugglery, a technique that appeared very fruitful in delivering messages to kids at rural schools.

The performance of Magician Ulfat Kabir nicknamed Gili Gili at Chhoigharia Government Primary School of Kochashahar, a remote village of Govindaganj of Gaibandha, was part of an innovative teaching campaign for school children.

The kids screamed in joy and responded enthusiastically as Kabir, attired in a red robe, delivered health tips alongside infuse into themselves confidence and social skills among the kids through his performance.

The presence of another celebrity, pop singer Mehrin, gave the joy of the children to a super height, turning occasion to a red letter day of their boyhood.

UN World Food Programme (WFP) is taking the celebrity magicians and pop singers to schools also to promote school enrolment and attendance in rural seminaries.

The magician interacted with his audience to get to know their perspective, the magicians uses his magic to deliver messages that promote healthy behaviour and sway the opinion of adults in favour of school feeding and personal hygiene.

"This is a lifetime show for my students. I think it is a unique process to teach the children through entertainment. They are learning about hygiene from the messages of magician which is much better than only listening to someone through lecture and remembering them by heart."

WFP's head of external relations Emamul Huque said, bringing celebrities amidst the children certainly would work as an inspiration for them. "This will encourage them to attend school and instill into them an inspiration to become

one of their idols."

Besides, he said, promoting health messages and developing skills in a practical active environment was better than sitting and listening in the classroom.

"Magic fascinates everyone and explanations from a magician during his or her presentation make deeper impact in the minds of people of all ages to think about how they can apply the knowledge of health and hygiene," Huque added.

WFP officials said under a pilot project they were employing "resident magicians" for their different regions of operations including the major school feeding activities, to stage magic shows at school premises throughout the year.

The resident magician will deliver messages in an entertaining way in accordance with the essential package, health and nutritional information of the school feeding programme, they said.

The experience of the Chhoigharia Government

Primary School performance also enthralled the magician himself.

"I feel so good in performing in front of the children especially who have hardly any chance to enjoy live magic shows and above all it is my greatest pleasure that I could give them very strong messages that would protect them from health hazards," Kabir said.

The presence of a celebrity singer Mehrin at the function made the programmes more lively and vibrant.

"I feel so linked with these tiny tots fans of mine at this remote village... I will treat it a great achievement even if one of these children is inspired to become a great artist because of my presence here today" Mehrin said.

WFP Bangladesh currently assists 600,000 primary school children in over 4000 schools under the food for education programme and magic for learning is being planned to be covered under the programme.