

Form river commission to protect rivers

Demand environmentalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists yesterday urged the government to establish a river commission to save the country's dying rivers.

In the name of river training, the government is also

constructing embankments and culverts, which is also preventing the water flow in the rivers, they said at a seminar at the National Press Club.

Save the Environment Movement organised the seminar titled 'River protection: Management and laws',

with former pro-vice chancellor of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University Dr Rashid-e-Mahbub.

M Enamul Haque presented the keynote paper at the seminar.

The speakers said the laws for the protection of rivers is

not being implemented properly. As a result, the land grabbers are taking the advantage of such a situation and grabbing even the river beds across the country.

The media as well as the environmentalists have raised their voice against such land grabbers, but the situation remains the same as a section of government employees in the land department have turned a blind eye to the activities of the land grabbers, they said.

They called for implementing the laws properly and taking effective steps to save the rivers.

Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) Prof AMM Shafiqullah, Prof Ajoy Roy, Abu Naser Khan, Shaktipad Tripura, Rokeya Kabir, Kamal Pasha Chowdhury, Tapan Kumar Nath, Kuddus Bayati, Rakibul Hasan and researcher Dr Hamidul Haque spoke at the seminar.



Dr Rashid-e-Mahbub speaks at a seminar at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is Prof Ajoy Roy and on his right are Prof AMM Shafiqullah and M Enamul Haque.

INT'L DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE OBSERVED United efforts a must to eradicate drug abuse Says home minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday urged private entrepreneurs to come forward in providing medical treatment to drug addicts, as it requires huge amount of money which the government alone cannot afford.

"The present government has focused on ensuring medical treatment to drug addicts. But it is very expensive and tough for the government to carry out the job, therefore urge private entrepreneurs to come forward to do the job," said Sahara.

"Let us be united and pledge-bound to get rid of this curse and eradicate drug abuse from the society," she added.

The minister made the call from a meeting arranged in observance of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking at Shilpakala Academy in the city.

Sahara laid emphasis on creating awareness among the

youths about bad effects of drugs and sought assistance from all including parents, siblings and teachers to fight the menace.

"It is a must to make united and coordinated efforts in resisting drug abuse. Mass media can play the most important role in this regard," said Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Shikder.

"Drug abuse and smuggling of drugs cannot be stopped only by conducting drives and filing cases. What requires in this regard is a strong government machinery against drugs," said Humayun Kabir, director general of the Directorate of Narcotics Control (DNC).

He mentioned that around 2000 committees have already been formed at different educational institutions across the country while the process of forming more committees is going on.

On this occasion, seven teams were awarded for their courageous drives against drug smuggling while five individuals were awarded for their personal contri-

bution to resisting drug abuse.

Earlier, a colorful rally was brought out in observance of the day.

A debate titled 'Role of the family in resisting drug abuse among the youths' was held at Basundhara City.

Students of six prominent colleges in the capital took part in the debate organised by AIN Bangla and Debate for Democracy in association with National AIDS/STD Programme and Save the Children USA.

Conducted by Hasrat Ahmed, the debate was also addressed by Principal of Notre Dame College Father Benjamin D Costa, eminent writer Anisul Haque, and HIV and AIDS expert Prof Dr ASM Amanullah Ferdous.

Dhaka Cycling Club also organised a cycle rally in observance of the day.

Starting from Shahbagh, the rally ended at the Central Shaheed Minar. A total of 70 cyclists from different sports organisations took part in it.



Directorate of Narcotics Control forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday marking the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Launch social movement against drug abuse Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called on all to come forward to launch a social movement against drug abuse.

Mass social awareness should be created starting from the family level. Tobacco use is the first step that leads youngsters to using drugs and other harmful substances along with unsocial and criminal activities, they added.

The Life Sciences Department of North South University (NSU), the NSU Earth Club and Manash jointly organised the seminar on the NSU campus to mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Speaking as the chief guest, Law Minister Shaifque Ahmed said urban areas lack playgrounds or such useful devices that may help youths use their times more constructively.

Many tend to resort to drug abuse and other unsocial activities due to the lack of any productive entertainment facilities, he added.

"Although there are laws, problem lies in their implementation," the minister said, adding that the educational institutions and other authorities should come forward and promote these laws within their institutions.

Presenting the keynote paper, Dr Arup Ratan Chowdhury, president of Manash, an anti-smoking organisation, said the death toll from tobacco is higher than the toll from natural disasters, HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

Tobacco products stimulates the same areas of the brain that are affected by drugs like cocaine and amphetamines, he said, quoting a report of the World Health Organisation.

Quoting a Manash study, he said 98 percent of drug addicts are avid smokers and 44 percent have been involved in criminal activities.

"A more precautionous approach is required and family members, teachers or friends should come forward and identify whether a youngster is being exposed to drug substances. This way he can be brought back from the darkness before he sinks too deep in," he said.

Referring to an estimate of the World Bank, Dr Arup pointed out that around Tk 347 crore worth of drugs, including Phensidyl worth around Tk 220 crore, come from India every year.

The people in Bangladesh spend around Tk 800 crore on drugs and related products, he added.

NSU Vice Chancellor Dr Hafiz GA Siddiqi, Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr SAM Khairul Bashar, Chairman of NSU Board of Governors MA Awal, and former chairman Benajir Ahmed also spoke.



Singers, performers and cultural activists raise their hands to express their solidarity with the campaign titled 'Say no to drugs, hate drugs' during an anti-drug concert at the Fantasy Kingdom at Ashulia yesterday. The Prothom Alo and Banglalink organised the concert on the occasion of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

PHOTO: STAR

NGOs for proper budgetary measures for development

UNB, Dhaka

Several leading non-government organisations yesterday submitted a set of recommendations to the Finance Minister AMA Muhith and urged him to address their demands in the budget for smooth development of the country.

They also urged the finance minister to pay more attention to the people with disabilities in the country who are being neglected in different ways.

Representatives of six leading NGOs -- Together with Working Children, Gender and Development Alliance, Governance Advocacy Forum, Solidarity for Marginal People, National Disabled Forum and Campaign for Good Governance (SUPRO) -- met the Finance Minister at his office and placed their recommendations on behalf of the working NGOs.

The NGO leaders urged him to keep education and health sectors out of the PPP (Public-Private Partnership) and to shorten the timeframe for whitening black money.

Shishir Shil, representative

of 'All-party Parliamentary Group', said they do not favour whitening black money and sought the finance minister's initiative to keep the opportunity only for one year instead of three years.

Mohsin Ali, coordinator of 'Governance Advocacy Forum' demanded more allocation for the institutions under local government for democratic decentralisation and to establish a truly strong local government.

The allocation for local government institutions in the proposed budget is only 1.43 percent of total budget.

Chairman of 'National Disabled Forum' Khondker Jahurul Alam said the government should take budgetary measures for introducing special bus for the persons with disabilities and also ensuring their healthcare and participation in sports and cultural activities.

Ratan Sarker of 'Together with Working Children' said a balanced and effective allocation is needed in the budget for the children to ensure their rights.

He also demanded ade-

quate allocation for child labour so that they could be provided with education, alternative livelihood skills and protection, and also participation in development activities.

Muhith assured the NGOs of addressing their demands and sought their cooperation for implementation of the budget.

Rab, Malek JSD president, gen secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ASM Abdur Rab and Abdul Malek Ratan were elected president and general secretary of the central executive committee of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) for the term 2009-10, says a press release.

The committee of the party was formed at the second phase of election on Thursday.

Besides, an advisory council was also formed at the council of the party.

RTV associate producer dies in road crash

UNB, Dhaka

Tanvir J Ehsan, 25, associate producer (Programme) of private television channel RTV, was killed in a road accident at Ashulia in Savar upazila yesterday.

Witnesses said Ehsan fell down from his motorcycle and hit hard a roadside pillar near Rustampur Brick Field as he lost control over the steering at about 12:45pm, leaving him critically injured.

Local people rushed him to a local hospital from where he was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Arrest of CPB leader protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday protested the arrest of Gaibandha district committee General Secretary Mihir Ghosh, says a press release.

In a statement, CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim demanded steps to withdraw the false cases filed against Mihir and set him free.

The statement said a number of criminals attacked the CPB office at Dariapur in the district, but police did not take action against the attackers, rather they arrested the victim.

The leaders said police filed a case accusing 17 CPB activists, including Mihir, who is also a central committee member.

Central Committee President of Bangladesh Khetmajur Samity Shamsuzzaman Selim, Executive President Sohel Ahmed and General Secretary Anwar Hossain Reza in a statement also protested the incident.



Prof Muzaffer Ahmad addresses a press conference on the proposed budget at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Dr Md Abdul Matin and on his left is Arifur Rahman. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: STAR

The Daily Star

Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

Linking Young Minds Together

The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views. Star Campus is an endeavour to bring into the center stage the visionary aspects of our college and university students, alongside their lifestyle, cultural trends and their multidimensional talents. Star Campus is a magazine broadly based on campus life! It contains articles, academic news, achievements, travelogues, interviews, book reviews, quiz, milestones, academic tips, profiles of educational institutes, cultural and extra-curricular activities in campus, jokes, cartoons, photographs and much more. This is a magazine Of the Students, By the Students and For the Students. Star Campus helps link young minds together.



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