

Free Shitalakhya from pollution, encroachment

People in Narayanganj raise voice

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Cross-sections of people in Narayanganj yesterday congregated in the streets with the demand of saving the Shitalakhya from pollution and encroachment.

They raised demands of freeing the river from pollution and encroachment and for continuation of the ongoing eviction drive until all the illegal structures are demolished. Rallies, human chains, processions, walkathons and boat-rallies were organised to symbolise people's urgency for saving the environment.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (Bapa) and environmental organisation Nirvik jointly organised the programmes.

The programmes started with rally and human chain in front of Narayanganj Press Club followed by walkathons from Press Club to Barakal ghat. The procession ended through a boat rally from Barakal ghat to Bandar Kheyaghat on the Shitalakhya.

Speakers at the rally said the river has become poisonous. They demanded demarcation of river boundaries and walkways by the banks.

Chief guest ASM Shahjahan, former adviser to a caretaker government, said evicting illegal establishments upon the riverbanks is not enough, walkways and afforestation programmes also need to be initiated.

He also said punitive actions must be taken against

the encroachers.

The speakers maintained that a huge number of industries—stretching from Ghorashal to Munshiganj—had been built on the riverbanks, which dump effluents and other waste in the river.

The biodiversity and ecology of the river are at stake due to the rampant pollution, they said.

The speakers alleged that debris of illegal structures is also being dumped into rivers, which would reduce navigability.

A fresh scope for encroaching might arise, as the boundary of the river has not been demarcated after the eviction drive, they added.

Convener of Nirvik ATM Kamal said the eviction drive

against the Shitalakhya encroachers was mysteriously suspended but the drive must go on till all the illegal structures are knocked down. "We want immediate implementation of the High Court verdicts because we will not survive if the river is dead," he said.

The speakers demanded strong guidelines to save the rivers and other water bodies.

Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bapa, Mihir Biswas, convener of Bapa's Save Buriganga River movement, AB Siddique, president of Narayanganj Nagorik Committee, Rafiqul Rabbi, vice president of the committee, women rights activist Shahana Khanam Chowdhury and advocate Jakir Hossain also addressed the rally.



Dhaka University (DU) Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique inaugurates a mass signature collection campaign against drug abuse and illegal trafficking by signing on a banner at Teacher-Student Centre on the campus yesterday.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Only 5pc get scope to work

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called on the government and non-government organisations to come forward to employ more people with disabilities as only five percent of them get chance to work.

They also urged the government to conduct a survey to know the actual number of people with disabilities in the country so that more budgetary allocation can be made to meet their needs.

The speakers said according to government estimate the number of people with disabilities in the country is six lakh, but this number by any means will exceed 1.5 crore.

So keeping this vast number of people outside the development process it is not possible to expedite the development of the country, they added.

The roundtable titled 'Increasing employment and

social respect for the people with disabilities' was organised by Bangladesh Organisation for Disabled Advancement (BODA) in association with the AB Bank Ltd at the National Press Club in the city.

Speaking as chief guest, Prof Modasser Ali, health and family welfare adviser to prime minister, said the government is very much sincere to mainstreaming the persons with disabilities and it is also committed to implement its pledges mentioned in the election manifesto.

On different demands of the persons with disabilities including the allotment of land he said, "It would be better for the organisations working with the people with disabilities to place their demands in writing through the ministry concerned to draw the government attention regarding the issues."

The adviser stressed the need for changing social atti-

tude to physically or mentally challenged people to solve their problem and urged the non-government organisations to come forward to create employment for them considering it as part of their duty.

President of Jatiya Protibandhi Forum Khandaker Zahurul Alam said it is needed to change the mindset of bureaucrats towards the people with disabilities as many of them think that people with disabilities cannot work efficiently which is not correct.

"In order to ensure employment of people with disabilities it is urgent to change the government policy regarding the issue," he added.

With the help of AB Bank, BODA is providing training to people with disabilities on ICT.

This year 20 people with disabilities completed their training on ICT, said BODA Executive Director Khalilur Rahman.

'Wage social movement against drug abuse'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique yesterday called on all to wage a social movement against drug abuse and illegal trafficking.

He also emphasised the importance of creating mass awareness to safeguard the young generation from being drug addicts.

The VC made the remark while addressing a mass signature collection campaign at the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) organised by Confidence, an anti-drug awareness movement section, to mark the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Teacher held for beating 50 students

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

The police arrested a teacher of GR Institution School and College in Sonargaon, Narayanganj, on charges of beating and injuring more than 50 students of class nine.

Of the injured students, 40 were admitted to local hospital and clinics.

Local people said Assistant Headmaster Kamrul Islam beat 52 students with wooden rulers as they did not bring books to the class.

In protest, other students and guardians kept the teacher confined for three hours and vandalised the school.

Later, police and members of the school managing committee rushed to the school.

The agitating students and guardians calmed down after the managing committee suspended the teacher and the police arrested him.

The injured students who were admitted to local hospital and clinics include Sumona, Suchona, Moni, Rumpa, Rita, Nasrin, Asaduzzaman, Zakir and Sajib.

President of the School Managing committee and Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Waid Hossain said the teacher has been taken into police custody. Necessary action would be taken after investigation.

BSF kills another cattle trader

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) early yesterday beat a cattle trader to death at Bara Achra border in Benapole.

The deceased was identified as Rubel, 25.

Sources in Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and police said BSF personnel of Haridaspur chased Rubel while he was returning home after making a payment for the cattle he bought from an Indian trader.

They said Rubel died from beating and electric shock.

Locals informed BDR when they found his body inside Bangladesh territory in the morning.

On Friday, another

Bangladeshi cattle trader Ali Hossain was beaten to death at Ghiba border.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rafiqunnesa Huda, a former head of Bangla department at Siddhewari Girls' College, passed away at his New DOHS residence on Friday at the age of 71.

Rafiqunnesa, wife of late Sirajul Huda, a correspondent of Voice of America, had long been suffering from cancer.

She left behind two sons and two daughters.

Her kulkhwani will be held at House # 281/A, Road # 19/C, New DOHS, Mohakhali after Maghrib prayers on Monday.

Arifa Khairat

METRO DESK

Arifa Khairat, wife of former Jukto Front minister late Khairat Hossen, passed away due to old age complications at her Natun Bazar residence yesterday at the age of 92, says a press release.

She left behind her two sons, five daughters and a number of grandchildren and admirers to mourn her death.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held on the court masjid premises this morning and she will be buried at her family graveyard at Bera Kuti village.

DRAFT NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY BY JULY 10

Primary edn up to class eight on the cards

Says Dr Kholiquzzaman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the recommendations of extending the primary education level up to class VIII and a public examination at its end, the Education Policy Formulation Committee is going to complete its primary draft within July 10.

The committee will hold discussions with 42 concerned organisations for necessary opinions and suggestions on the draft after the deadline and the draft policy will be placed before the government on completion of the discussions.

Co-chairman of the committee Dr Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad disclosed the information at a symposium on 'Learning from neighbours: The trajectory of educational progress' at a city hotel yesterday.

He said students of all mediums—general, madrasa and English, regardless of types of education system and education institutes—will have to study several subjects in the primary level to have better understanding about certain things of the country.

"We are trying to integrate all types of education," he said, adding that the students of all mediums will have to study these subjects apart from other subjects of their respective mediums.

"There are various types of education system and education institutions in the country

and we are trying to bring them together at least up to a level so that everybody knows certain things similarly," he added.

The subjects are Bangla, Mathematics, Basic Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Environment and Bangladesh Studies, he informed.

Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) in association with Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and Institute of Educational Development, Brac University organised the symposium.

The two-day symposium will be focused on pre-university education in Thailand.

Dr Kholiquzzaman, also a noted economist, said there were many commissions formed to frame education policies since the independence and the commissions prepared their reports but policy was not formulated until 2000.

"We have taken our basic documents from the policy paper of 2000 and have reviewed all the reports of previous commissions," he said, adding that they took experiences from other countries.

He further said inclusive education, emphasis on values and capability building will be the fundamental things that they have gone through in the policy.

On the primary education, the co-chairman said there are

about 11 types of primary education in the country that perpetuates disparity in society.

"The policy will have some clauses suggesting how to change that and the goal is to bring them all at the same level," he said, adding that there will be some strong content on reducing social disparity and integrating the disabled and disadvantaged.

Emphasising the need for vocational education, Dr Kholiquzzaman mentioned that basic ICT and pre-vocational training will be introduced in class VI. English would be made mandatory from class III, he added.

The co-chairman also said the policy will have some special clauses for those areas where education is lagging behind.

Regarding the problems of the teachers, he said salary is one of the aspects of teachers' problems, but it is not the only aspect. "Apart from salary, we will make other recommendations for them."

He said there will be some clauses for teachers' training and managing committees of education institutions.

Regarding the university education, he said universities are supposed to not only impart education but also create knowledge, but in our country the latter one is missing. Therefore, there will be a lot of recommendations to encourage research at the

university level, he added.

Mentioning that there is no mechanism of quality assessment of education at tertiary levels, he said they would include some suggestions in the education policy in this regard.

Dr Kholiquzzaman also said they might put some recommendations about the private universities after discussing with University Grants Commission (UGC).

He said the committee would suggest formation of a permanent education commission which would supervise whether the policies are being implemented properly and will suggest the government.

He said, education policy is not one and fixed, it's a continuous process and it can be changed with the demand of time, adding that it might take a month or two more to prepare the draft that would be placed before the government.

Dr Kasama Varavarn, secretary general, ministry of education of Thailand, gave an overview of the pre-university educational development of her country.

Rasheda K Chowdhury, executive director of CAMPE, chaired the inaugural session, while Malama Meleisea, director and representative of Unesco, Mustafa K Mujeri, director general of BIDS, and Dr Manzoor Ahmed, senior advisor, IED, Brac University also spoke.

DIPU MONI-YANG JIECHI MEET IN NEW YORK

Chinese investors keen to invest in Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

Beijing on Thursday advised Dhaka to undertake some promotional activities by its exporters in China which is offering assistance in boosting Bangladesh's export trade to bridge a wide gap, as the two countries made a comprehensive review of bilateral relations.

Chinese Foreign Minister (FM) Yang Jiechi during a meeting with Foreign Minister Dipu Moni in New York also said that Chinese investors were ready to invest in Bangladesh. He invited exporters and investors from Bangladesh to explore the vast Chinese market.

The long bilateral meeting covered all the aspects of bilateral relations between the two countries, according to a message received here yesterday.

At the very outset, the Chinese foreign minister congratulated Dipu Moni on her being the first female foreign minister of Bangladesh.

He also recollected his recent visit to Dhaka last year and observed that the Sino-Bangla relations continued to be strengthened in spite of various changes in the international landscape elsewhere and business, cultural and people-to-people contacts developed ceaselessly between the two countries.

The Chinese minister further observed that devel-

oped and developing countries had to put their effort jointly to overcome the current financial crisis and also to achieve Millennium Development Goals.

He opined: "The voices of the developing countries should be increased in the international financial institutions to avert the repetition of the present calamity."

He mentioned the ongoing Bangladesh-China friendship projects and assured further assistance of the Chinese government.

Dipu gave him a brief description of the recent political developments after the election and reaffirmed the one-China government policy.

She invited the Chinese investors to invest in the sectors of textiles, agro-processing, power and leather.

The Bangladesh FM raised the issue of building the 7th and 8th friendship bridges and both of them discussed the progress of the other ongoing Chinese projects in Bangladesh.

The Chinese minister thanked for the support of Bangladesh on the issues of Taiwan, Tibet and human rights and proposed to further intensify the exchanges between the foreign ministries and financial institutions of the two countries.

Meanwhile, Dipu addressed another programme organised by the UN University and the Office

of the Special Adviser of Secretary General on Africa and the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

She delivered the keynote address on the theme 'Recovering from the global crisis: Towards an action plan for Africa and the least developed countries'.

She mentioned that the present crisis originated in the developed world but it was the developing and the LDCs which were affected most.

"It pushed millions of people below the poverty line and into hunger through loss of employment both at home and abroad, exports, incomes, savings remittances and social

welfare," the FM told the function.

Dipu Moni had yet another meeting with UN Under Secretary General of Department of Peacekeeping Alain Le Roy and discussed modalities of further enhancing the participation of peacekeepers from Bangladesh.

She also mentioned that there was an under-representation at the command level from Bangladesh and requested the under secretary general to take necessary action.

Roy praised the service and commitment of the peacekeepers from Bangladesh and assured continued help of the UN in this regard.

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable

Media Initiative for Public Policy organises a roundtable on the international long distance telecommunication services. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 2:30pm.

Debate

The final round of the national debate championship 2009 will be held. Venue: Hotel Sarina, Banani. Time: 7:00pm. Islamic University of Technology organised the event.

Seminar

North South University (NSU), OPPIA and American Alumni Association jointly organise a seminar on 'Bangladesh population projections for 100 years (2001-2101)'. Venue: Bashundhara campus of the NSU. Time: 3:00pm.

Award giving

The award giving ceremony of Gemon Literary Award 2009 will be held. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 5:30pm.

Workshop

Bangladesh Truck Chalk Sramik Federation organises a workshop on role of trade union in eliminating child labour. Venue: Hotel Purbani, Motijheel. Time: 10:00am.

Appeal for help

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur



has been suffering from deadly disease cancer.

She had been undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital in Dhaka for seven months but returned to Dinajpur recently due to lack of money, said family members.

According to doctors at BSMMU, around Tk 10,00,000 (Ten lakh taka) is needed for her treatment.

But it is not possible for her father Nehal Uddin, a physically challenged person, and mother Piyari Begum who maintains her family working at a handicraft shop, to afford such a huge expensive treatment.

So they have appealed to well-to-do people of the society for financial assistance to save their only daughter.

Contributions can be sent to Savings Account No 3239, Uttara Bank, Station Road, Brach, Dinajpur.

Interested persons can also contact at cellphone number 01716449928.



No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong, Sylhet, Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said in a forecast.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:50pm today and rises at 6:14am.

Country's highest temperature 36.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 25.0 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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	34.2	28.0	71	73
Chittagong	31.7	26.3	73	83
Rajshahi	36.5	27.5	72	61
Khulna	34.0	27.5	73	87
Barisal	34.0	27.5	74	89
Sylhet	34.0	25.9	75	82
Cox's Bazar	31.0	25.5	95	95