

PM seeks UN help to improve child, maternal health

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought enhanced assistance from the United Nations (UN) for improving child and maternal health as well as empowering the womenfolk in the country, as she listed some setbacks in the population sector in recent times.

She made the call when Representative of UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) in Bangladesh Arthur Erken paid a courtesy call on her at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on the eve of World Population Day on July 11.

Hasina reiterated her government's commitment to establishing social safety net through creating huge employment opportunities and empowering women, providing quality health services to people

from all walks of life, particularly to mothers and children.

In line with the dream of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of building a healthy nation, the last Awami League (AL) government had taken a project of setting up 18,000 community health clinics across the country and some 4,000 of the clinics were made functional in full swing, she added.

The prime minister said the main purpose of the project was to take quality health facilities to the rural people, mothers and children.

But, Hasina deplored, the last BNP-Jamaat government had stopped the community health clinic project "only for political reason".

People's longevity also increased during the five-year rule of Awami League govern-

ment, but later the longevity reduced in a setback, she told the UN executive.

"The community health clinics could have played a tremendous role in making the country's population healthy and creating employment opportunities in the rural areas," she said.

The present government will reintroduce the community health clinics, as it believes that a country cannot advance towards sustainable development without a healthy population, the premier said.

Hasina also informed the UNFPA representative about the government's strong commitment for empowering the women.

She said AL in the last general election gave direct nomination to a considerable number of women and now the deputy leader of the house, ministers

for agriculture, home and foreign affairs and state minister for labour are all women which reflects the government's stand for women empowerment.

Hasina described early marriage as one of the main obstacles to development of the women community and identified poverty, illiteracy and social insecurity as some of the major reasons behind the early marriage.

She observed that through merely enacting and implementing laws early marriage cannot be stopped. "People will have to be made educated and poverty must be eradicated to empower the women."

The UNFPA official briefed the prime minister about the UN activities in support of the Bangladesh government's population policy.

He highlighted several features of the UNFPA's support, including improving maternal health, promotion of family planning and addressing gender issues.

Arthur gave a brief resumé on the status of maternal and reproductive health in Bangladesh and illustrated some opportunities to enhance greater thrust on the effectiveness of the national family planning programme in Bangladesh.

The UN executive congratulated the PM on the AL-led grand alliance's stunning victory in the last election and her assumption of the office and assured more assistance in the population sector.

Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed newsmen after the meeting. PMO Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman and former ambassador M Ziauddin were present.



UNFPA Representative in Bangladesh Arthur Erken pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Four held for cheating joint secy out of Tk 21 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members arrested four members of a fraud gang at Baridhara in the city yesterday on charges of cheating a joint secretary out of Tk 21 lakh.

The alleged frauds are Zamal Uddin, 50, and Masud Khan, 28, of Babuganj in Barisal, and Yunus Ali, 47, and Kamrul Hasan, 47, of Nabinagar in Brahmanbaria.

Maj Mirza Saifur Rahman of Rab-1 led the drive and arrested the four from a rented flat at Rowshan Ara Sarak at Baridhara under Gulshan Police Station.

Rab sources said the frauds convinced the joint secretary, who is now on LPR, by offering a job and later trapped the official by engaging him in gambling as a blueprint.

The joint secretary, however, rebuked himself for his foolish acts.

Maj Saifur told The Daily Star that there are over 30 gangs of frauds who are used to trap people to misappropriate their money.

A few days ago, the same gang embezzled Tk five lakh from a schoolteacher at Uttara, he added.

Draft national health policy to commercialise health services

Say rights movement leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The draft National Health Policy-2009 tends to privatise and commercialise health services, viewed leaders of the Health Rights Movement National Committee at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

They also said country needs a people-friendly health policy, not a donor-friendly health policy.

Health is people's right and it should be reflected in the national health policy, they said adding that government has put the draft policy on the website for comment, but very few people have the access to Internet.

While presenting the keynote paper Prof Mahmud Hasan, former vice chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), criticised provision of 'user fee' in the draft policy.

He also said that there has no indication in the policy to solve the existing problems.

Member secretary of the movement Nitai Kanti Das said health policy should reflect expectation of the people. That

is why a set of recommendations was prepared following consultation with people of 20 districts.

Prof Rashid E Mahbub said the draft health policy was formulated without discussing with the health professionals.

Rather it should be prepared following discussion with different professional

bodies to ensure people's health rights, he said while delivering his speech as the president.

The 'user fee' given by the patients is not used to improve the health services, the speakers said adding that budgetary allocation should be increased to provide quality health services.



Bangladesh Chhatra Union stages a demonstration on the Dhaka University campus yesterday protesting the Indian move to construct Tipaimukh dam.

PHOTO: STAR



PHOTO: STAR

With the advent of the rainy season, Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) has started digging roads for its different projects, causing immense suffering to pedestrians as well as commuters. The picture was taken at Maghbazar in the city yesterday.

Contempt rule on Prothom Alo editor, columnist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a contempt of court rule on the Editor and Publisher of the Prothom Alo, Matir Rahman, and its Associate Editor and columnist Mizanur Rahman Khan for publishing an article on the high court proceedings.

Upon hearing a contempt petition, a HC bench of justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice M Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed ordered them to explain by July 13 why contempt proceedings should not be drawn against them for publishing the article headlined "Appeal Bivager Raay: Dabodha Proshanti (Verdict of the Appellate Division: Relief from Scorching Heat) in the newspaper on April 30.

The court also asked Majur Rahman and Mizanur Rahman Khan to appear before the court on July 14 in connection with the contempt petition against them.

Mamun Chowdhury, a Supreme Court lawyer, filed the contempt petition.

Barrister Ajmalul Hossain appeared for the petitioner.

Experts for clinical trial of new imported drugs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Clinical trial is a must before using new drugs imported from abroad to ensure safety of patients as people of the country are genetically diversified, said the experts at a seminar yesterday.

"A drug, appropriate for Europe, may not be appropriate for Bangladesh as people of this country have mixed blood. So clinical trial is a must to check the side effect, level of toxicity and other qualities of the imported drugs which may harm the patients," they added.

The seminar titled 'Modulation of Insulin Secretion and Insulin Sensitivity in Bangladesh Type-2 Diabetic Subjects by an Insulin Sensitiser Pioglitazone and its Pharmacokinetics Study' was organised by clinical pharmacy and pharmacology department of Dhaka University (DU) in association with Birdem research division and the science and information and communication technology (ICT) ministry at Mokarram Bhawan on the campus.

Speaking as chief guest State Minister for Science and ICT Yeafesh Osman said the government is ready to allocate more fund for research which can help find out the real picture of any situation as well as suggest the solutions.

"The vision of the government to make a digital Bangladesh by 2021 cannot be

implemented without the access to information," he added.

Speaking as special guest DU Vice Chancellor Prof Arefin Siddique called on the government to utilise its teachers and students in the field of research and other development work as they have huge potentials in this regard.

He also stressed the need for more budgetary allocation for research and technology to move the country forward.

"Scientists in our country do not get proper recognition

apart from adequate fund for their work independently," said Prof AK Azad Khan, president of Bangladesh Diabetic Association, while speaking as guest of honour.

He urged the government to allocate more fund for research to help expedite the development of the country.

Masuma Parvin, assistant secretary of establishment ministry, presented the keynote paper at the seminar presided over by Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, former vice chancellor of DU.

Be enlightened persons VC tells DU students

VC tells DU students

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique has called upon the students to acquire moral education to become enlightened persons saying that only achieving certificate should not be their aim.

He was speaking as chief guest at the freshers' reception for first year honours students of social science and business studies faculties of the university at Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) auditorium yesterday.

Prof Arefin said former DU students are now giving leadership in all sectors of the country.

They also gave leadership in all social and political move-

ments including language movement of 1952 and liberation war of 1971, he added.

The VC said students of this university also stood beside the Sidra and Aila-affected people.

He called upon the freshers to build up themselves as future leaders of the country.

Presided over by Prof Shaheen Islam, the function was also addressed by acting dean of social science faculty Prof Shaikh Abdus Salam, Students' Adviser of marketing department Prof Md Anwarul Islam, Students' Adviser of International Relations Dr Delwar Hossain, Students' Adviser of women and gender studies Tania Haque and TSC Director Md Alamgir Hossain.

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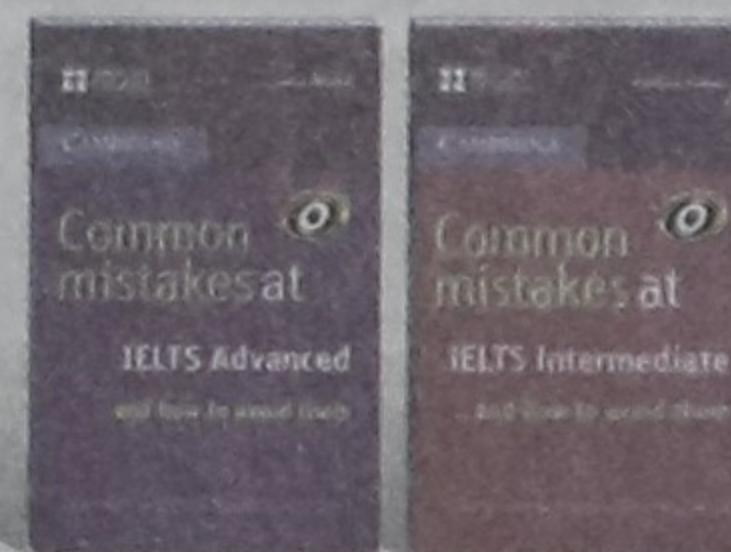
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