

WORLD POPULATION DAY TODAY

Call to reduce fertility rate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Population Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere across the globe today.

The website of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare says presently there are 132 million people in the country, which is likely to be 172 million by the year 2020 and around 210 million by the year 2060.

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the occasion.

Terming the growing population a major challenge for Bangladesh, Health and Family Welfare Minister AFM Ruhul Haque yesterday said reducing the fertility rate is imperative to save the future generation.

If the fertility rate cannot be reduced, it will be difficult to meet the basic needs of the citizens, he added.

The minister was speaking at a press briefing at the conference room of the ministry on the eve of World Population Day 2009 today.

The minister said if there is more investment in mother and child healthcare, the mortality rate will greatly be reduced.

The fertility rate, which was 3 percent in 1971, came down to 1.39 percent in 2007.

The rate of using family planning, which was 7.7 percent, rose to 55.8 percent in 2007, but only 5.2 percent among them are men.

The government could not provide 17.6 percent people with family planning materials, but they will do their best to supply the materials this time around, he said.

The health minister said family planning activities have slowed down of late, but it has to be speeded up. He said different measures will be taken in this regard.

Ensuring marriage at proper age is very important to reduce mortality rate of mother and child, he said.

A girl should not get married before she is 18 and should not take a child before turning 20, he added.



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

New Colony Krira Sangha, a sports organisation, uses the Lalmatia New Colony playground every Friday as a market for car sellers and buyers. Despite repeated calls to protect all the playgrounds in the city from the land grabbers' clutches, the authorities appear to be indifferent to this issue. The photo was taken yesterday.

ASIA-PACIFIC ROBOT CONTEST 2009

Students eager to show off robotic skills

ERSHAD KAMOL

The Bangladesh team is set to show off their robotic skills in the upcoming ABU Asia-Pacific Robot Contest 2009 to be held in Tokyo, Japan in August.

The team comprising the students of mechanical engineering department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) has developed three highly technically advanced robots, which are ready for shipment to Japan for participation in the contest.

These autonomous robots can move through steep slopes and sharply winding roads to a certain destination and can take further decisions after reaching the goal. No camera is installed with the robots to reach the target, rather these robots function through pre-programmed control system.

In the competition that will take place at the gymnasium of the Metropolitan Komazawa Olympic Park in Tokyo on August 21 and 22, the Bangladesh team will compete with 21 teams from technically advanced countries of the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, China, India, South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand and Egypt.

The Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) has been organising this competition annually since 2002. The event is widely known as ABU Robocon, which is an international educational event with a fresh and unique concept for university, college, and polytechnic students in the Asia Pacific region.

The four-member Bangladeshi team comprising three students and a teacher will leave Dhaka on August 20. Saiful Islam Mithu is the team leader while Mezbahur Rahman Evan and Omar Bin Yusuf are other members of the team. Their teacher Dr M Zahurul Haq will participate in the game as their instructor.

Cooperation between people and robots is the theme of this year's contest. The technical requirements of this year's contest is more

advanced than the previous years' arrangement, since the organisers have conceived of this year as a step towards the goal of close cooperation between manual (or directly human-controlled) and automatic robots.

The core item of this year's contest is Kago, the traditional Japanese palanquin of the pre-modern era, which was used to carry the traditional Samurai by two men, one in front and the other behind, to distant places. Following the tradition, three robots from each participating team will travel a distance in the competition.

Like the Kago carriers of the ancient time, an Automatic Carrier Robot will lead a Manual Carrier Robot to carry a Traveller Robot, which is also an Automatic Robot, on a replica of a Kago to a distance of about 80 metres through replicas of mountains, steep slopes, and sharply winding roads. At the end the robots will reach a bell and the traveller robot will have to ring the bell.

"That is not an easy challenge," said Dr M Zahurul Haq. "During the three-minute delicate game, everything will have to be done by the robots without any intervention from the participants."

"This year's competition is really challenging because some conditions of the game such as the carrier robots will not be allowed to touch the surface except the zigzag path through slopes and they must adjust the seat of the Traveller Robot so that it does not slide or fall even if the seat is inclined by 20 degrees in either the longitudinal or the transverse direction during the travel," he adds.

According to Dr M Zahurul Haq, Bangladeshi robots will be able to maintain all the requirements of the game, since the robots are more intelligent and well controlled.

"The automatic robots developed for the competition will be controlled through high-speed sensor-based communication system. The control system receives 1000 commands per second for taking the corrective

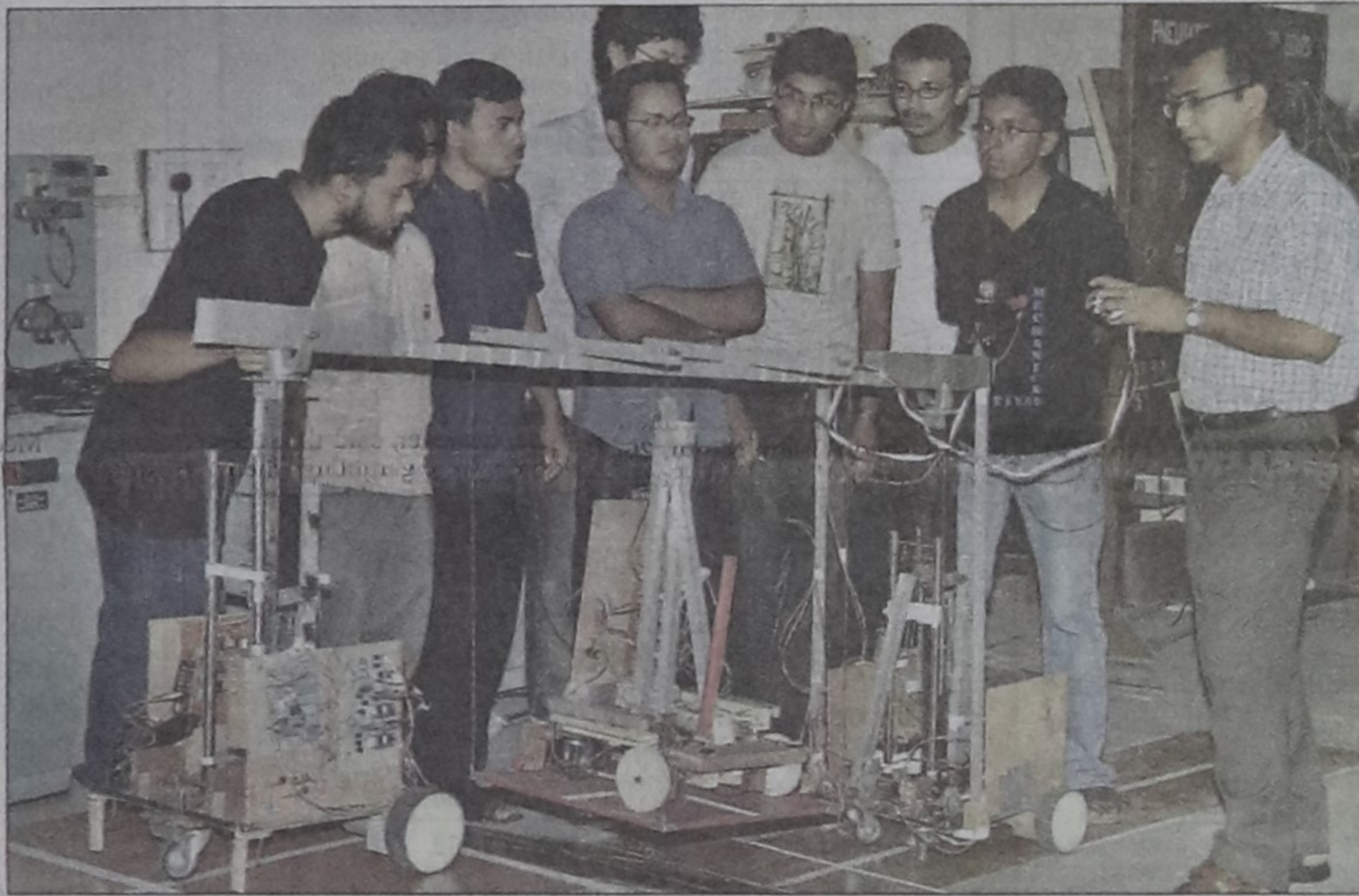


PHOTO: STAR

Buet students and their teacher test robots at the laboratory of mechanical engineering department.

measures during the game, earlier the movement of the robots was movement dependent," he said.

Buet students have been participating in this annual competition since 2005 and won the prestigious Panasonic Award in the Robocon contest in 2005.

All these robots have been developed under a regular project for the undergraduate students of the department of Mechanical Engineering at Buet.

This year, about 12 students under the supervision of Dr Haq have developed these robots with used motor parts, aluminum sheet, nylon fibre, steel sheet and other materials collected from the city's Dholakhal and Patuati areas. Importing the micro-controller chips and hardware from the US, Dr Haq developed the control system.

On the limitations of developing robots here, Dr Haq said that they have to use reverse engineering due to lack of raw materials in the country.

"We collect the used motor parts and sensors from old Dhaka and design the robots based on the shape and capacity of these components. High-speed communication system and other chips have to be collected from the US," he added.

He said there is a huge scope for the industrial applications of robots in delicate and repetitive works in Bangladesh. Moreover, robots can be used to develop the defence system of the country such as mine detection purpose.

For sustainable development of robotics in the country, Dr Haq suggested that the industry be developed gradually in different phases.

Move to build Tipaimukh dam protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) yesterday demanded that the construction work of Tipaimukh dam be stopped.

They also demanded that smooth flow of different rivers in the country be ensured.

The dam will cause severe environmental and human disaster in Bangladesh, said Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, founder of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra and vice president of Bapa, at a human chain at Shahbagh in the city.

"Construction of a dam on a river does not bring any good result, something we have experienced with Farakka Barrage and the dam on the river Karnaphuli," he said.

He urged the Indian government to cancel their plan of constructing the dam and focus more on solar and wind

energy to meet the need for electricity.

Speakers at the human chain said 31 percent water of the river Borak would have to be preserved continuously at the upstream of the dam, which is harmful for Bangladesh.

They said the Tipaimukh dam would destroy the normal flow of the Bangladesh rivers. They demanded immediate steps to resolve the issue through negotiations, publishing detailed design and its impact assessment, making the joint river commission more active and creating national unity against the construction of the dam.

General Secretary of Bapa Dr Md Abdul Matin, Joint Secretary Taksim A Khan, Ruhin Hossain Prince of Communist Party of Bangladesh, Prof Khondokar Mokaddem Hossain and Bhaskar Rasa also spoke.



আমিন মোহাম্মদ গ্রুপ

● প্রতিশ্রুতি পূরণে পেশাগত ভাবে সদা সচেষ্ট আমিন মোহাম্মদ গ্রুপ এর আছে দীর্ঘ দুই দশকের অভিজ্ঞতা এবং বিশাল দক্ষ ও চৌকস কর্মীদল। যাদের একতা আন্তরিকতা আর নিরলস প্রচেষ্টায় বাস্তবায়িত হয় আপনার স্বপ্ন...

● রাজধানী ঢাকার গুলশান, বারিধারা, নিকেতন, বনানী, নিউ ডিওএইচএস, ওল্ড ডিওএইচএস, উত্তরা, মণিলালার, ইকান্টন, শান্তিনগর, সেগুনবাগিচা, সিদ্ধেশ্বরী, রামপুরা, ধানমন্ডি ও মিরপুর সহ বিভিন্ন এলাকায় নির্মাণ করেছে প্রায় একশত দুইতিনতিন বহুতল ভবন।

● নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের মধ্যেই গ্রাহকদের কাছে হস্তান্তর করা হয় কয়েক হাজার সু-সজ্জিত ফ্ল্যাট। উচ্চবিত্ত ও মধ্যবিত্তের আবাসনের কথা চিন্তা করে রাজধানীর বিভিন্ন স্থানে নির্মাণ করা হচ্ছে আরও কয়েক হাজার ফ্ল্যাট। নিম্নবিত্তের আবাসনের লক্ষ্যে কয়েক হাজার ফ্ল্যাট নির্মাণের পরিকল্পনা হাতে নেয়া হয়েছে।

● ২০০০ সালে আমিন মোহাম্মদ গ্রুপ এর কর্মকাণ্ডে যোগ হয় নতুন মাত্রা অর্থাৎ উত্তরা মডেল টাউন সংলগ্ন "আতলিয়া মডেল টাউন" এবং ঢাকার বাণিজ্যিক কেন্দ্র মতিঝিলের সবচেয়ে কাছে "প্রীন মডেল টাউন" নামে দুটি বৃহৎ আবাসিক প্রকল্প। যাহা ডিএমজিপি মাস্টার প্লান ২০১৫ এর পরিকল্পনাভুক্ত এবং রাজউক এর বিধিমালা অনুসারে আধুনিক নগর জীবনের সকল সুযোগ সুবিধা সমৃদ্ধ।

● সম্প্রতি যোগ হয়েছে আরো একগুচ্ছ আবাসিক প্রকল্প। প্রকল্প গুলো হলো আতলিয়া অবকাশ, আতলিয়া কিল্ডেম, আতলিয়া বর্ণালী, আতলিয়া স্বর্ণালী, আতলিয়া লাবনী, আতলিয়া প্রভাতী ও সিলেটের মনোরম লোকেশনে শ্যামল ছায়া সিলেট প্রকল্প।

● ঢাকার বাইরে বাণিজ্যিক রাজধানী চট্রগ্রামে আমিন মোহাম্মদ গ্রুপ তৈরী করতে যাচ্ছে সুদৃশ্য বহুতল বাণিজ্যিক ও আবাসিক ভবন এবং পর্যটন নগরী কক্সবাজারে ফাইভ স্টার স্ট্যান্ডার্ড লাক্সারী হোটেল ও রিসোর্ট।

● সর্বাধুনিক উপায়ে স্বল্পতম সময়ে বাড়ি, অফিস, কলকারখানা ভবন নির্মাণে আছে সুপার কনক্রিট প্রান্ট।

● সামাজিক দায়বদ্ধতার অংশ হিসাবে আমিন মোহাম্মদ গ্রুপ গরীব, অসহায়দের মাঝে আর্থিক সহায়তা প্রদান, দেশের যে কোন দুর্যোগকালীন সময়ে ত্রান বিতরণ, শীতবস্ত্র বিতরণ, সকল ধরনের চিকিৎসা সেবা, গরীব মেধাবী ও এতিম শিক্ষার্থীদের ভরন-পোষণ ও পড়া-লেখার জন্য আর্থিক সহায়তা প্রদান এবং খেলাধুলার মানোন্নয়নে পৃষ্ঠপোষকতা করে থাকে।

● সর্বোপরি বাংলাদেশের পরিবেশের ভারসাম্য রক্ষায় নিয়মিত বৃক্ষ রোপন কর্মসূচী পালন করে থাকে। ইতিমধ্যে আতলিয়া মডেল টাউন এবং প্রীন মডেল টাউন এ হাজার হাজার ফলজ ও বনজ বৃক্ষ রোপন করা হয়।

উপরের বৈশিষ্ট্য গুলো মনে রাখুন আর অপেক্ষায় থাকুন...

The Daily Star

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Forge nat'l unity to build digital Bangladesh

Dr Akbar Ali urges all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Regulatory Reform Commission Chairman Dr Akbar Ali Khan yesterday called on all political leaders and professional bodies to forge a national unity to help build a digital Bangladesh, a key election pledge of the ruling government.

"Digitalisation does not mean computerisation only, rather it is all about reforming the entire sectors," he said.

Dr Khan, also a former adviser to a caretaker government, said this as the chief guest at a discussion on 'Role of professionals in establishing digital Bangladesh' organised by Bangabandhu Peshajibi Shamannay Parishad at the National Press Club in the city.

He put emphasis on developing the private sectors to implement the digital Bangladesh concept and opined for creating mass awareness of the potential to make the concept acceptable to the people.

About setting the clock one hour ahead under the daylight saving concept, he said, "The government has implemented this concept without amendment to the existing laws. That the government may fall embarrassing situation, if anyone challenges this through the High Court."

Dr Khan also stressed for decentralisation of power for betterment of every sector of the country.

Dr Sadrul Amin of University of Haji Md Danesh Science and Technology presented a keynote paper at the discussion with President of the organisation Md Zahir Uddin Babu in the chair.

Former president of Supreme Court Bar Association barrister Amir-Ul Islam and acting general secretary of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Shirin Akhtar also spoke, among others.