

PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIALS 2m children suffer from acute malnutrition Survey reveals

BSS, Dhaka

Two million children aged between six months and five years are suffering from acute malnutrition in the country due to the last year's price hike of essentials.

This was revealed by a recent nationwide survey jointly conducted by World Food Programme (WFP), UN Children Fund (UNICEF) and Institute of Public Health Nutrition (IPHN).

According to the survey, the malnutrition level might be even higher during the periods of food scarcity as the survey was carried out during the harvesting season.

The survey was undertaken throughout the country from November 2008 to January 2009 to assess the impact of the food price increase in 2008.

During the survey, 58 percent of the households claimed that they had insufficient food during the 12 months in 2008, while their real household income dropped by 12 percent between 2005 and 2008, a time span prices soared in phases.

At the end of 2008, food expenditure represented 62 percent of total household expenditure and 10 percentage point higher than the national average of 2005.

"To cope with higher food prices, people have got themselves in a deeper spiral of debt from which it will take months to recover," read the survey.

Almost half of the surveyed children under five years of age are stunted, too short for their ages which depicts a very high prevalence of chronic malnutrition. It found that 37.4 percent of the same age group is also underweight.

Among the causes of

malnutrition, the survey identified that the diet diversity was a key problem. Almost half of the children aged two months to six months did not receive the minimum meal frequency and two thirds of the children of the same age group did not meet the minimum dietary intake and diversity, it said.

Unless the current level of malnutrition is urgently addressed, Bangladesh is unlikely to achieve and sustain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on child survival, it said.

The survey underlined the need for improving childcare practices by parents, promoting exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of child life and educating families on optimum infant and young child feeding practices.

The survey recommends that routine food security and nutrition surveillance need to be strengthened to allow early detection of changes in nutrition, health, and food security status. Such surveillance systems should be integrated into government structures, it observed.

Food assistance interventions, food security and nutritional programmes should emphasise on micronutrient-enriched foods and improved diet diversity.

The survey also proposed for expanding therapeutic and supplementary food interventions for management of acute malnutrition in both facility and community levels as means of taking care of a large number of acutely malnourished children.

A total of 10,378 households were surveyed and 4,175 children under five years were assessed for their health and nutrition status.

AWAMI LEAGUE COUNCIL



(Clockwise from top left) Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam hoist the national and party flags at the inaugural ceremony of the party's national council at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday. Immediate past general secretary Abdul Jalil talks to Hasina. Ashrafur Islam addresses the council session. Hasina delivers her speech. The AC chief releases a pigeon at the inaugural ceremony.

PHOTO: STAR



Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Citizens' Rights Movement form a human chain at Shahbagh intersection yesterday demanding steps to free the city's footpaths from the clutches of grabbers and hawkers.

PHOTO: STAR

One drowns in Jamuna at Bogra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Bogra

A labourer drowned in a boat capsized in Jamuna river during a renovation work of Jamuna bridge at Dhunat in Bogra yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Abu Taher, son of late Islam Mandal.

Eye witnesses said 200-block-laden engine-run boat with three boatmen and five labourers were caught in a whirlpool before being capsized at 9:00am.

The boat was engaged in throwing the blocks at the foot of Bell Mouth near Shahrabari spar.

Sources said local people rescued boatmen and four labourers but Taher went missing.

"He went missing due to his carelessness while felling the blocks and effort is going on to recover his body," said project engineer.

Divers were searching for the body of Taher as of filing this report, police sources said.

Tk 3 lakh looted in Bogra night coach robbery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed robbers looted cash and gold ornaments worth around Tk three lakh from a passenger bus on Dhaka-Bogra highway in Food Village area under Sherpur upazila early yesterday.

Sources said an air-conditioned coach of TR Travels started for Rangpur with 35 passengers on board. The bus took a break at Highway Villa in Sirajganj around 3:30am.

As the bus reached Sherpur upazila at around 4:00am, a gang of six robbers, who were also travelling as passengers, held the driver and supervisor hostage, they said.

The robbers took away eight mobile phone sets, cash around Tk one lakh and gold ornaments from the passengers and got down from the bus in Dashmail area, they added.

Nazmul Hussain Bappi, supervisor of the coach, filed a case with Sherpur Police Station in this regard.

Officer-in-Charge Amirul Islam said such robberies took place in the coach earlier, add-

ing that they are looking into the matter seriously.

Bappi said three of the robbers had sharp knives. Driver Swapangot injured.



PHOTO: SARA INTL. SCHOOL & COLLEGE

As part of monthly health service of Sara International School & College at Dhanmondi, a team of physicians examined students and gave them prescriptions on Thursday. The team of physicians included Dr Abul Kashem, Md Khalequzzaman and Dr Md Royes Uddin. Chairman of the School Managing Committee Lion Md Nazrul Islam Sikder, Principal Group Captain (ret'd) M Shahjahan and Director (education & public relations) Md Mosharaf Hossain were present on the occasion.

Acid attack on two women in Gazipur

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A housewife and her elderly mother sustained burn injuries as local hoodlums hurled acid on them in their house at Nayapara village in Kaliakoir in the early hours of yesterday.

The victims -- Sakhina Begum, 45, and her mother Bachhatunnesa, 65, -- were rushed to Gazipur Sadar Hospital.

Sakhina told reporters that the criminals made the acid attack as she refused a marriage proposal for her daughter Nasrin, 14, a student of class ten, from Badal, a neighbour.

Her family also had a feud

with Badal's uncle Alaluddin over landed property, she said.

Sakhina said that at about 2:30am yesterday, a youth identifying himself as her nephew, Moti, asked her to open the door after knocking on the door.

As soon as she opened the door, three youths -- Jahangir, Khairul, Sahabul -- entered her room and started looking for Nasrin. They also hurled acid with a syringe-like object on Sakhina and her mother before leaving the room, as they tried to resist the gang.

At that time, Alal and one Abbas were waiting outside the room, Sakhina added.

Initiatives to dispose of cases to realise Tk 6,500cr revenue

BSS, Dhaka

The government has taken initiatives to realise about Tk 6,500 crore revenue, which remains unpaid by various organisations, from income tax, value addition tax (VAT) and import duty due to cases at the higher court.

Additional Attorney General MK Rahman told BSS that a request was made to the chief

justice for forming necessary benches for speedy disposal of these cases on the basis of the recommendations of the government.

Earlier, the law ministry advised the office of the Attorney General for taking necessary measures for speedy disposal of these cases and based on this, the attorney general office took the necessary initiatives.

He said hearing of these cases are being held at three benches at present and some other benches have also the jurisdiction of disposal of the cases. Lawyers and law officers experienced with revenue issues have been given the responsibilities for handling these cases.

The resolutions of these cases are essential for realising the huge amount of government money, he said, adding that 16,000 cases are under trial.

Of the cases, Tk 1,700 crore revenue remains unpaid against 1,500 income tax related cases, Tk 3,000 crore against 2,000 VAT related cases and Tk 1,700 crore against 12,000 import duty related cases, he said.

National Board of Revenue (NBR) is providing assistance to the attorney general office in conducting the cases, he said. The NBR has already prepared a list of tax and VAT default companies.

Asset DEVELOPMENTS

LAND WANTED at DHAKA

Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Banani, Old DOHS, Cantonment R/A, New DOHS Baridhara, Lalmatia, Wari, Uttara, Eskaton Garden & Other Prime Areas

For joint venture apartment development with the most trusted developers in the country.



Asset Developments & Holdings Ltd
91 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka, Bangladesh

(Office Of Corporate & Management Services)

Tel: 8857230, 9882245, 8829437, 8851791, 8851795, 8861225, 8854553, 8859578

Mobile: 01711-594855, 01713-000204, 01730-015830

Fax: 880 2 8828272 Email: assetplan@agni.com; asset@agni.com

Comprehensive holdings

Always Aesthetical and Functional

BonKapashi

Exclusive Apartments
at Sector 07, Uttara Model Town

40% space is open according to FAR Rules.
Two apartments cover per floor on 7.50 Katha land.
Three Beds, Living, Family Living, Kitchen, Dining
and other necessary rooms and spaces. This very residential
location is close to Park, Mosque,
Schools and Social establishments.

COMPREHENSIVE HOLDINGS LIMITED

Office: House 15 (New), Road 13A (New), Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205

Phone: 9128498, 9133478, 9125269, 8119239, 8142910, 8142863

Mobile: 01713 367167, 01713 367177, 01713 367188, 01713 367189

01713 367190, 01713 367191, 01713 367193, Fax: 028124811

E-mail: comprehensive@accessnet.net