

Enforce Alternative Child Food Act: PM

Daycare centre plus breastfeeding corner to be set up at every govt office

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed the authorities concerned to enforce the Alternative Child Food Marketing Act at all levels and stressed immediate need for separate management of the entire spectrum of nutrition programmes.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gives away a crest to a woman at a function at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

She also instructed the Ministry of Health and the Breastfeeding Foundation to work jointly to ensure children's breastfeeding and their comprehensive food as well as necessary nutrition of the mothers.

Addressing the inaugural function of the World Breastfeeding Week (2009) at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday, Hasina also declared that from now on August 1-7 will be observed as the National Breastfeeding Week.

The prime minister announced that the government will take immediate steps to set up daycare centre along with a breastfeeding corner at every government office.

She also urged the private banks, insurance companies, shopping malls and hospitals to set up breastfeeding corners.

"Without making necessary arrangement for the working mothers at their offices, we cannot expect cent percent breastfeeding of the children. There is no alterna-

tive to breastfeeding for rearing children as both physically and mentally healthy grown-ups," she told the function.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), Bangladesh Breastfeeding Foundation (BBF) and Save the Children jointly arranged the function.

The World Breastfeeding

ity have increased, Hasina said breastfeeding can be most effective way for survival of the children during the disastrous situation.

"Through breastfeeding, it is not that the children only get safe and healthy life rather their mothers also can save themselves from cardiac diseases, diabetes, cancers and many other complicated diseases.

"So I request the mothers not to deprive their children of the breastfeeding, the most valuable gift of the nature," she said.

Hasina quoted from the verses of the holy Quran where Allah orders breastfeeding of children up to two years since the birth.

She said the government has set up a target of reducing child death rate from 54 to 15 per thousand and maternal death from 3.8 percent to 1.5 percent by 2021.

About the maternity leave, she said the previous AL government had a plan to introduce four months leave with full pay and another two months' leave without pay.

"A working mother takes one child or two in her life. So in 25-30 years of her job tenure, 12 months' leave is not a big thing," she said.

She said today's child is the prospect of the future.

"If we cannot arrange every facility for a child to grow up properly, we cannot expect anything from it. It must be ensured that the children are grown up in a healthy environment with all facilities," she told her audience.

Health Minister Dr AFM Ruhul Haque, Adviser to the PM for Health and Family Welfare and Social Welfare Affairs Prof Dr Syed Mudasser Ali and Breastfeeding Foundation Chairperson Dr SK Roy also addressed the function.

The PM gave away crest to a number of individuals and institutions at the function for their outstanding role in ensuring proper maternal and child healthcare services.



PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Rayer Bazar area in the city reels under water following rain yesterday morning. The area goes under water even after a little rain due to lack of proper maintenance of drainage system.

DU English dept students bring allegations against teachers

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students of the English department at Dhaka University yesterday alleged that their teachers have been creating mental pressure on them, as they protested the department's move to introduce evening master's course.

In the wake of protests by students, the department postponed the proposed course on July 7.

But the teachers are now creating mental pressure on them and not cooperating with them, the students said at a press conference at the Madhu's Centre.

They also said that the department is not issuing various certificates to them.

The department has formed a fact-finding committee on the issue and many students were asked to appear before the committee, they said.

Students also claimed that the authorities are sending letters to their parents in this regard.

The extra-curriculum activities of the department have also come to halt after the protests, they said.

"We did not demonstrate against our teachers. We staged protests against the introduction of such courses in a democratic way and most students took part in it," said a student.

The students also sought intervention of university authorities in cancelling the proposed course and stopping the activities of the fact-finding committees.

When contacted, Chairman of the department Prof Khondaker Ashraf Hossain said the department is not planning to take any punitive action against the students.

"We just want to know whether the students participated in the movement on their own or there was any kind of provocations," he added.

He also refuted the allegations that the teachers are not cooperating with the students.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof Arefin said they have suggested that the department discuss the issue of the proposed course with students before taking any steps regarding it.

However, students should not be deprived of cooperation, he added.

TOXIC PARACETAMOL Call to cancel drug licence of manufacturing company

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Progressive Doctors' Forum and Samajtantrik Mohila Forum formed a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding cancellation of drug licence of the pharmaceutical company that produced toxic paracetamol syrup and exemplary punishment to those responsible, says a press release.

Some 25 children died after taking the syrup recently.

The demonstrators urged the authorities to pay compensation to the victims' families and take effective steps to ensure quality control of drugs.

They also criticised the government for not taking any action against the persons responsible for the death of children.

Effective law a must to ensure rights of persons with disabilities

Speakers tell programme

METRO DESK

Speakers at a programme on Saturday said an effective law is necessary for ensuring rights of the persons with disabilities, says a press release.

They demanded a law based on their rights, not based on their welfare.

The speakers said this at a 'Get-together for NGOs working with disabilities' as part of the monthly programme of CRP's 30-year celebration at its headquarters in Savar. The top officials of NGOs working with disability attended the programme.

CRP has been commemorating its 30th year of services providing, especially to the physically challenged people, throughout this year, marking each month with a special event. CRP began its 30th years of service on December 11, 2008.

CRP's Founder and Coordinator Valerie A Taylor started the programme with her welcome speech. She remembered those who were involved in CRP and they are now working in their own organisation to help the persons with disabilities.

Two documentary films

were shown at the programme after the speech.

The first one was 'Wheelchair', a Bangla documentary based on two disabled persons' success. The second one 'Steps, No! Ramps, Yes!' was also a Bangla documentary based on accessibility for the disabled persons. In the 23-minute documentary, the director wanted to express the deep feelings and sufferings of a wheelchair user and other disabled persons' regarding accessibility problem. They face accessibility problem in offices, markets,

shops, restaurants and everywhere.

There was an open discussion after the show. During the discussion, the speakers said it is compulsory to make ramp in every building according to building code-2008. They said there is a ramp at Rajuk Bhaban but the disabled persons cannot use that due to some of its peculiar reasons. They demanded that an active law for the person with disabilities be made so that they can establish their rights. They demanded a right-based law, not a welfare-based one like

2001. The speakers said though disabled persons are eligible to attend the BCS exams according to the policy in 1995, but recruitment policy does not approve it. They also emphasised the need for a dialogue and sharing with the builders regarding the accessibility issue.

A total of 43 guests from different organisations working with disabilities also attended the programme.

CRP Executive Director Md Emdad Moslem also spoke at the programme.



PHOTO: COURTESY

CRP's Founder and Coordinator Valerie A Taylor speaks at a 'Get-together for NGOs working with persons with disabilities' at its headquarters in Savar.

Top BCL leaders manipulate list of DU hall units

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League president and general secretary have manipulated the list of names of newly formed Dhaka University (DU) hall BCL committee members, some leaders alleged.

After forming the committees, DU president and general secretary had submitted the list to the BCL central committee for approval, but

BCL President Mahmud Hasan Ripon and General Secretary Mahfuzul Haider Chowdhury Roton have deleted and changed several names on the list without any discussion with DU BCL leaders, sources said.

Such practice is tantamount to violation of the constitution of the organisation, they added.

In the original list, Riazuddin Chowdhury Sumon

was the general secretary of the Sergeant Zahurul Haque Hall committee, but the BCL leaders made him president deleting the name of Ashraf Ali. Also, the BCL leaders included the name of Shamsul Kabir Rahat as the general secretary.

As per the original list, Sayeed Mojumder was the general secretary of the Surya Sen Hall unit and Ziaul Haque Tuhin was its president, but

their posts were interchanged through manipulation.

According to the constitution of BCL, the central committee can bring such changes only after consultation with the leaders concerned.

DU BCL General Secretary Sajjad Sakib Badshah told The Daily Star, "The names have been changed, but we were not informed."

Sources said the name of Rahat was included in the Zahurul Haque hall committee as he is loyal to BCL president and that the general secretary made Sayeed the president of Surya Sen hall unit.

"Such interference is unfortunate," Badshah said.

DU BCL President Sohel Rana Tipu, however, declined to make any comments.

The Dhaka University hall unit committees were formed on Wednesday last after seven years. Feud between DU BCL leaders and the central leaders over selection of DU unit leaders was the main reason behind such delay in forming the committees, sources said.

When contacted, BCL President Ripon said the committee was formed with acceptable and clean student leaders.

But he declined to make any comment on the changes in the committees.

Roton could not be reached despite repeated attempts.



PHOTO: STAR

Employees of Proshika stage a sit-in in front of its headquarters in the city yesterday to avoid further untoward incident. (Story on Page 1)

Ensure healthcare services of int'l standards

President urges physicians

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday emphasised upgrading the country's healthcare services into international standard to stop the patients from going abroad and also to attract the foreign patients to come here for quality treatment.

"It's my firm belief that patients of the country will feel discouraged to go abroad for treatment if they get international standard healthcare here," he said this while a 15-member delegation of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) called on him at Bangabhaban.

The president said international standard healthcare services would have to be ensured in the country so patients from abroad rush here to get treatment. "I know it's not impossible for the country's physicians as our boys have already set highest examples in various professions abroad."

The BSMMU delegation, led by its Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Pran Gopal Dutta, included

treasurer Prof M Moazzem Hossain, Pro-VCs Prof AKM Anisul Huq and Prof Muhammad Shahidullah.

During the meeting, Zillur called upon the physicians to be more sincere in providing modern and standard healthcare to the patients with the skill and experience they acquired.

Referring to the 'Vision-2021' declared by the prime minister, he said the physicians of the country should come forward with sincerity for ensuring modern healthcare to the people for building a happy and prosperous Bangladesh.

"You'll have to work sincerely to ensure that standard healthcare is provided to the people in the light of the declared roadmap."

The president agreed with the BSMMU authority's master plan to modernise the medical university and assured the delegation of his all-out cooperation in this regard.

Appreciating the BSMMU's move, he hoped that after successful implementation of the

initiatives, the university would soon be turned into a modern one befitting the needs of the time.

Prof Pran Gopal told the president, who is also the chancellor of the university, that they would be able to turn the university into international standard if they get necessary modern medical equipment and others support.

He also informed the president that they are going to open outdoor facilities in some departments, particularly dental, ENT and skin, where professors or senior consultants would sit regularly to provide better treatments to the out-door patients.

He also sought the consent of the president to hold the first convocation of the university early next year.

Secretary of the President's Office Mohammad Shafiqul Alam, Military Secretary to the President Major General Md Ehtesham Ul Haque and President's Press Secretary Abdul Awal Howlader were present during the meeting.



PHOTO: STAR

Samajtantrik Mahila Forum stages a demonstration in the city yesterday demanding punishment to the owners of the pharmaceutical companies that produce toxic paracetamol syrup.