

Disability Welfare Act to be amended

Says commerce minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan at a reception yesterday said the government is working to amend the Disability Welfare Act 2001, as it was the electoral commitment of the ruling Awami League government.

After the discussions with different stakeholders, the amended law would be passed in the parliament soon, he added.

Speaking at the reception of the councillors of the National Council of Physically Challenged Women, the minister also said the government wants members of parliament (MPs) from the persons with disabilities and would work in this regard.

There would also be a member at the Consumers' Rights National Committee from this council and some three to five councillors would be recruited as dealers at the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh

(TCB), headed.

National Council of the Physically Challenged Women in association with the Action in Development and Disability (ADD) organised the reception programme at the National Press Club in the city.

Some nine executive members and 40 councillors were elected on July 28 from 99 women councils in 23 districts.

At the reception programme of the newly elected councillors the speakers highlighted the problems and discriminations facing by the physically challenged women who are five percent of the country's total population.

Rights of these physically challenged women are violated in the country, society and even in the family.

Though there are women reserve seats in the parliament, not a single seat is reserved for the physically challenged

women, they said, adding that development would not take place if the participation of the physically challenged women is not ensured in politics.

Khushi Kabir, member of the advisory committee of the national council, called on the elected members to build a strong network as well as to create pressure on the political parties to realise their demands.

The issues of the physically and mentally challenged should be paid heed to the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, she further said.

Rokaiya Akhter Asma presided over the ceremony where Akhter Hossain of National Grassroots Disability Organisation, Ferdousi Begum of ADD, Piksi Nazneen of Directorate General of Women Affairs and Yeasmin Ahmed of National Council of the Physically Challenged Women also spoke.

Telemedicine service to munga-hit people soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People of munga-hit char areas (river islands) in five northern districts Jamalpur, Sirajganj, Bogra, Gaibandha and Kurigram will receive telemedicine service soon.

An agreement to this effect was signed between the Char Livelihood Programme (CLP) funded by UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Grameenphone in the city yesterday to provide the service with the technical assistance of EngenderHealth.

Under the agreement Grameenphone will provide 400 cell phones at a reduced rate to CLP char swastha karmis (health workers).

The specially tailored cell phone network will be used for consultation between the health workers, CLP paramedics, doctors and EngenderHealth medical experts for telemedicine purposes.

The phones will also be used for giving health and nutrition-related advice to island dwellers.

Being implemented by Maxwell Stamp Ltd, the main focus of CLP is to improve the livelihood of poor char dwellers in five districts along the river Jamuna and Brahmaputra.

Maxwell Stamp Ltd is implementing the CLP with the assistance of 18 local NGOs.

Speaking at the signing ceremony Deputy Team Leader of CLP Abdul Haque said char dwellers are extremely vulnerable as they lack all basic amenities of life including food security and healthcare facilities.

Under the programme, 400 community health workers are providing primary healthcare services to char dwellers.

The NGOs have been operating 212 satellite health clinics at char areas each month, providing healthcare services to nearly 1,94,000 patients since last one year.

Majority of the patients are women seeking family planning advice, services and essential care for newborns.

Haque said because of poor communication system it becomes difficult to provide health facilities to these people.

Now this problem will be solved to some extent with the help of telemedicine.

Ishtiaque Hossain Chowdhury, general manager of Commercial Division of Grameenphone, said, "We look beyond business. With the help of this programme we are helping to provide health facilities along with increasing connectivity in the remotest areas."

Syed Nuruddin Ahmed, managing director of Maxwell Stamp Ltd, said

one of the primary aim of CLP is to develop sustainable livelihood and secure household income.

CLP also promotes access to education and employment during munga, improvement of infrastructure to cope with natural disasters and provides emergency grants during disasters, he added.

10 injured in BCL-Shibir clash at Duet

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Ten Shibir cadres were injured in a clash between Shibir and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology (Duet) on Tuesday.

Following the incident, Shibir men have left the campus.

The clash ensued when posters of Shibir-run Optimum Coaching Centre were pasted on the posters of Bangabandhu remembering the National Mourning Day.

Agitated BCL men swooped on Shibir cadres at different halls at around 10:00pm, injuring 10.

Police have been deployed on the campus to prevent any untoward incident. However, Duet Vice Chancellor Prof M Sabdar Ali said the campus was returning to normalcy and attempts are on to bring back those who are now staying outside the campus.



(From left) Tofail Ahmed, Prof Alimullah Mian, Dr Kamal Hossain, Muniruzzaman and writer Md Shamsuddoha hold copies of a book titled 'Uthashar Oipokotha' at its launching ceremony at the Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday.

Govt to distribute 26 lakh MT food among munga-hit people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday said the government has decided to distribute 26 lakh metric tons of food grains among the poor and distressed, especially the Munga-hit people, in the fiscal year 2009-2010.

The people of north-western region, who have to fight against all kinds of natural disasters, including flood, drought and cold wave, are at their most vulnerable to face the food insecurity, he said.

The minister said this as the chief guest at the launching ceremony of a project 'Initiative to enhance Munga coping capacity' at the National Press Club in the city.

The government plans to distribute more allocation to the Munga-prone districts from the budgetary allocation of Tk 1,176 crore to implement the programme 'Employment generation for the hard-core poor' in the current fiscal, he added.

Under the four-and-a-half-

month project, international humanitarian and development agency Oxfam will provide short-term income to 12,000 poor and distressed families and ensure food to 60,000 women, men and children.

The project areas are Sadar, Saghat, Fulchhari and Sundarganj of Gaibandha, Sadar, Ulipur and Chilmari of Kurigram and Gangachara of Rangpur.

Four local NGOs -- SKS Foundation, Gono Unnayan Kendra (GUK), ZIBIKA and People Oriented Programme Implementation (POPI) -- will assist to implement the programme.

In absence of any agricultural work available during the months from August to December, hundreds of thousands of families are unable to provide enough food for their families.

Oxfam GB Country Director Heather Blackwell said, "Over reliance on agricultural production, low income of economic development, inadequate investment in infrastructure

and lack of initiatives to protect the communities from recurring floods are some contributing factors to this massive seasonal food insecurity."

Heather added "With united effort by the government and development agencies this seasonal and widespread hunger and suffering can be averted."

Acting Head of the Delegation of European Commission Brain Forey, law-makers Fazle Rabbi, Mahbub Ara Gini, Jafar Ali and HM Shahriar and chairmen of Gangachara Upazila Majibur Rahman, Ulipur Upazila Kafil Uddin and Saghat Upazila Golam Shahed Raja also spoke.

Funded by the European Union, the project will cover these three most Munga-affected districts, aiming to assist small, marginal farmers and agricultural day labourers by creating short-term employment opportunity through cash for work, provide training and start up capitals for alternative income generating option and assisting communities to better prepare for future disaster like flood and river erosion.

Dhaka signs Ordos declaration

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh has signed Ordos declaration joining hands with 17 countries to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation in cultural arena and face adverse effect on cultural promotional activities in the backdrop of global economic recession.

Minister for Information and Cultural Affairs Abul Kalam Azad signed the declaration in the Inner Mongolia China Asian Cultural Ministerial Round Table Meeting at Chinese city of Ordos on Tuesday, says an official handout received here yesterday.

The meeting took the initiative to face adverse impact of global recession on the cultural activities in the member countries and adopted the Ordos declaration for promotion of cultural exchange and cooperation.

Director General of the National Museum M Shafiqul Azam, Director General of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy M Shafiqul Islam and Director of Cox's Bazar Cultural Centre Lila Murlang are other members of the Bangladesh delegation.

Azad made a courtesy call on his Chinese counterpart Cai Wu and discussed various matters relating to mutual interests, including celebration of establishment of 35 years of diplomatic relation between the two countries.

They also discussed the progress of the cultural pact between the two countries and on the matter of establishing a cultural center in Bangladesh.

Six killed, 59 injured in road crashes

METRO DESK

At least six people were killed and 59 others injured in separate road accidents in Dinajpur, Sylhet and Gopalganj yesterday and on Tuesday night.

Our correspondent from Dinajpur reports: At least two people were killed and 29 others injured in a road accident in Dinajpur early yesterday morning, police said.

The dead were identified as Shamsul Alam, 25, son of Abdul Aziz of village Hossainpur under Khansama upazila and Md Shamsur Ali, 26, helper of a passenger bus of Ramnagar in Dinajpur town.

Police said the accident occurred when the driver of a Joypurhat-bound crowded bus from Khansama of Dinajpur lost his control over the steering and fell into a roadside ditch in front of Dinajpur Govt College at 4:30am killing two people on the spot and at least 29 others injured, sources at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital.

Police said the injured were rushed to DJMCH. Of them, condition of 12 people was stated to be critical.

UNB from Sylhet reports: Two children were killed and 20 people injured as a bus plunged into a roadside ditch at Chiknagul in Jaintapur upazila yesterday.

The dead were identified as Abdullah, 6, son of Kabir Ahmed, and Nabia Begum, 5, daughter of Mukhlesur Rahman, of Panichhara village of the upazila.

Witnesses said the city-bound bus skidded off the road and fell into the ditch at 12:00 noon, killing the two kids on the spot and injuring 20 others.

Police sent the bodies to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital (SOMCH) morgue for autopsy.

The injured were admitted to the SOMCH and local clinics.

Angered by the accident, local people put barricade on the road, disrupting vehicular movement for an hour.

A correspondent from Gopalganj adds: Two people were killed and 10 others injured in a road accident in Gopalganj on Tuesday evening.

The accident occurred when a bus hit a Nazipur-bound rickshaw from Bedgram while crossing the town bypass on Dhaka-Khulna highway as the driver lost his control over the steering.

Rickshawpuller Rabbi, 22, died on the spot. Two rickshaw passengers and at least nine bus passengers were injured. Rickshaw passenger Salahuddin, 22, was rushed to Gopalganj Sadar Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at night.

Both the dead hailed from Bedgram of Sadar upazila.



Members of the National Committee for Health Rights Movement submit a memorandum to Director of the Directorate of Drug Administration Brig Gen Mohammad Ismail in front of his office in the city yesterday demanding immediate withdrawal of toxic paracetamol syrup from the market.

Overseas jobseekers should have information about workplace

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The overseas jobseekers should have detailed information about their workplace, employer and other terms and conditions before they go abroad in order to ensure safe migration, said speakers at a workshop yesterday.

Although the migrant workers had sent around \$9.6 billion remittance from the last year till now instead of the global recession, they are still being harassed and humiliated since they had gone there without knowing details about the jobs, country and condition, they added.

Brac organised the workshop titled 'Safe migration and social participation' at the National Press Club in the city.

Elias Ahmed, secretary to the ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, said, "We can ensure safe migration only when the potential migrants will take a decision carefully by evaluating necessary information."

Whenever a jobseeker sees a chance to go abroad, he becomes so crazy that he leaves the country without having any clear idea about the job or the conditions, said Elias.

The migration cost is now fixed at Tk 84,000 but the cost will significantly decrease if the migrants are made aware of the process, he said.

While presenting a keynote paper, Sheela Hafiza, director of Training Division, Gender, Justice and Diversity and Advocacy of Brac, said the migrant workers are not only

Senior journo Saroj passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Rezaul Haq Saroj, senior staff reporter of the Dainik Janakantha and a permanent member of the National Press Club, passed away due to cancer at his residence in the city yesterday at the age of 64.

He left behind his wife, one son, one daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

National Press Club President Shawkat Mahmud and General Secretary Kamal Uddin Sabuj expressed profound shock at his death.

In a condolence message, they also prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to members of the bereaved family.



Moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at most places over all the six divisions in the country during the next 12 hours as of

6:00pm today.

Heavy to very heavy falls are also likely at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions while moderately heavy to heavy falls at places elsewhere the country, Met Office said.

It said day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:28pm today and rises at 6:36am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 23.7 degrees Celsius at Satkhira.

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	32.6	26.2	85	96
Chittagong	29.5	24.0	95	94
Rajshahi	30.4	25.5	93	97
Khulna	32.5	25.0	92	87
Barisal	30.5	26.2	96	83
Sylhet	30.5	24.5	94	94
Cox's Bazar	31.0	25.0	96	83