

Umbrella body to be set up to monitor NGO activities

Minister says at consultation meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An umbrella body would be set up and new law would be enacted to regulate, monitor and supervise the activities of non-government organisations (NGOs) including their fund sources and utilisation, said Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haq Mostafa Shahid yesterday.

To form the body, he sought suggestions from NGOs and other stakeholders to make them accountable and transparent.

The minister was addressing as chief guest at the inaugural session of a consultation meeting titled 'Supervision and evaluation of NGO activities' at Biam auditorium in the city.

The consultation meeting was organised by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) with its trustee board Chairman M Hafizuddin Khan in the chair.

The minister said, "There is no way to disregard the role of NGOs in the development of the country since our independence, but recently we found some NGOs, in the name of social service, are doing businesses and engaging themselves in unethical activities including patronising the militancy."

"So now is the time to mainstream their activities by enacting new law and forming a separate body," he added.

Social Welfare Secretary Quomaran Nessa Khanam said the ministry has formulated a number of recommendations to mainstream the NGO activities by forming a unified regulatory body to be named 'Authority to Preserve



TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman speaks at a consultation meeting on supervision and evaluation of NGO activities at Biam auditorium in the city yesterday. TIB Trustee Board Chairman M Hafizuddin Khan, third from left, presides over the programme.

Social Safety Net.

She said the NGOs are at present running with the registration from different bodies under different rules and laws, which create problem to monitor their activities.

Citing an example, she said the London-based Green Crescent ran their activities in Bhola while it took registration from a upazila and operated its militancy activities at another upazila.

She said another NGO named Freedom took thousands of taka from local people in Natore and fled the place last year.

"Freedom took registration from social welfare department, then it took another licence from a different

authority to run micro-credit and they cheated hundreds of local people," she added.

The secretary said the government will make compulsory for all NGOs to submit audit and performance report annually and each NGO will have to renew its registration in every three years.

TIB trustee member Prof Muzaffer Ahmad criticised the activities of those NGOs who are getting regular funds both from government and foreign organisations.

He said some NGOs are running university while some others are carrying out activities not linked to volunteerism.

He however said there are some organisations that are running different social activi-

ties informally and they are doing very well in local development.

"But if the government tries to restrict their activities, then the informal volunteerism might be destroyed and masses would suffer," he added.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman, NGO Affairs Bureau Director General Mustaq Hossain MD Iftekhar, Director of NGO Federation Tajul Islam, Finance Director of Brac SN Kairy, Executive Director of Dhaka Ahsania Mission Ehsanur Rahman, chief operating officer of ASA International Anamul Haque and Prof Md Samad of social welfare department at Dhaka University also addressed the meeting.

Medical college admission test today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The admission test for 17 public medical colleges will be held at 18 centres today.

The one-hour exam will begin at 10:00am.

A total of 36,170 candidates will vie for 2,310 seats in the exam.

The results will be published in a week, said Prof Khondakar Md Shefayetullah, director of medical education of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

A four-member vigilance team of two joint secretaries of health ministry Sayed Umar Khaiyam, Anowar Hossain Munshi, Assistant Director of DGHS Nurun Nahar and Senior Assistant Secretary (medical education) Saidur Rahman will be on duty at three centres in Dhaka.

The candidates who had bought forms from Dhaka Medical College will sit for the admission test at the Arts Building of Dhaka University, Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College at Tejgaon College, Sir Salimullah Medical College at Eden Women's College, Rajshahi Medical College on its own campus and Rajshahi Model School and College and the remaining 13 on their own campuses in Mymensingh, Chittagong, Comilla, Sylhet, Barisal, Rangpur, Khulna, Bogra, Faridpur, Dinajpur, Pabna, Noakhali and Cox's Bazar.

Shefayetullah said, "Activities of the medical coaching centres are suspended for ten days from October 1 to October 10 to prevent question leakage. Intelligence agencies have been keeping an eye on the coaching centres since October 1."

Forty seats are reserved for the children of freedom fighters, 20 for indigenous students and 84 for foreign students, including 54 for students of the Saarc countries.



Under-Secretary General for UN Peacekeeping Operations Le Roy calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday.

Informational programme on DV-2011

METRO DESK

The US embassy will host an informational programme on the US Diversity Visa (DV)-2011 at Biam Auditorium in the city at 3:00pm tomorrow, says an US embassy release.

Admission to this programme is free and open to anyone interested in applying for a DV. US embassy consular officers will provide potential DV applicants with information on how to avoid dishonest agents and brokers when applying for a Diversity Visa.

'Potential of autistic children remains unexplored'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said autistic children of the country always remain underdeveloped as well as underrated and they are not seen as a source of untapped potential and creativity.

These children are subjected to immense harassment and are excluded from all sorts of social activities hampering their growth and depriving them of their right to be full-fledged children, they said.

In other countries, autistic children enjoy additional facilities in every step of their lives, whereas in Bangladesh they are teased by peers, mocked by the society and, in the end, left alone and unheard.

"Especially in the rural areas, the [autistic] children

and their families are treated like they are cursed species. The children themselves are mocked upon. Their peers throw pebbles at them," said a father of an autistic child at the seminar.

The families are also humiliated by the society in almost every step of their lives, he added.

The inaugural ceremony of the three-day seminar on 'Autism and mental retardation' was organised by Beautiful Mind in association with International University Bangladesh (IUB) at Brac Centre in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haque Mostafa Shahid said despite the fact that so much is invested in building streets, structures and physical infrastructures, not half attention or resources

are used to develop the citizens of the country who are its true lifeblood.

The autistic children are a good example of how the humans as resources are being underdeveloped and underrated, he said.

He lamented the fact that little has been done to assist the autistic children in the country and called on the organisations working with such children to put their efforts for a better change and a better future.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mujibur Rahman Fakir, IUB Vice Chancellor Prof Bazlul Mobin Chowdhury, Pro-VC Prof Omar Rahman, psychiatrist and psychotherapist Dr Avinash Francis Alan Desouza and child psychiatrist Dr Jai Shastri also spoke.

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Plan to distribute 2.8cr free energy saving bulbs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has planned to distribute 2.80 crore energy saving bulbs free of cost in the current financial year in a bid to save 862 megawatt power, State Minister for Power and Energy Enamul Haque told the House yesterday.

A project called "Efficient Lighting Initiative for Bangladesh" of \$38 million is awaiting approval and the World Bank is going to fund the project, he said during question hour session.

In first phase of the project, 10.50 million energy saving bulbs will be distributed and in second phase 17.50 million in the areas under Rural Electrification Board, Power Development Board, Dhaka Electricity Supply Company and Dhaka Power Distribution Company, he added.

Besides, he mentioned that a plan to set up coal-based

power plants at Chittagong, Khulna, Meghnaghat and Maowa with a capacity of generating 500 MW each has already been taken. The power plants will be set up under Private Public Partnership by 2014.

Enamul said the government is taking measures to generate one to four megawatts of electricity using solar power at different parts of the country. In addition to that, government is considering power generation of 13 to 22 MW using solar energy at Sorishabari of Jamalpur, Godagari of Rajshahi, Chapainawabganaj and Kaptaipower centre.

Replying to lawmakers' queries, the state minister said the government has taken short-term, mid-term and long-term measures to explore and develop gas fields in an attempt to increase production of gas.

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নাটক পাড়ায় আসছে নতুন নাটক

বিনোদন প্রতিবেদক

নাটক পাড়াকে নতুন আমেজে জাগিয়ে তুলতে জমজমাট গল্প নিয়ে আসছে নতুন নাটক ১০ নাটক সরণিতে। এই নাটকে প্রধান ভূমিকায় আছে প্রভাবশালী দু'টি চরিত্র, যাদের ব্যক্তিত্বের ধ্বংস জমিয়ে তুলে নাটকের কাহিনীকে। প্রধান এই দু'টি চরিত্রের একজন অভিজাত, আড্ডাবাজ,

কুচিশীল এবং অন্যজন আধুনিক, চটপটে, ষপুচারা ও দুরন্ত। আর এরই ফলে তাদের মধ্যে তৈরি হয় সংঘাত, যার ফলে তারা আলাদা হয়ে যায় একে অন্যকে ছেড়ে। কিন্তু আলাদা অবস্থানে থেকেও তারা মানুষকে ভিনিয়ে যাবে ভালোবাসার গল্প, নতুন প্রজন্মকে দেখাবে আগামীর স্বপ্ন।

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