

All party parliamentary group on extreme poverty soon

Speaker Abdul Hamid tells anti-poverty campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Abdul Hamid Advocate yesterday said an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on extreme poverty would be formed soon to create a new horizon of debates on the issue.

"One of the main tasks of the group would be to publish an informative and suggestive report annually on extreme poverty," he said at a function in the city.

Hamid was speaking as the chief guest at the concluding session of a three-day anti-poverty campaign marking the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

APPG, two NGOs - People's Empowerment Trust (PET) and Shiree - in association with the government and the Department for International Development (DFID), UK organised the event. Yesterday's theme was 'Extreme poverty of Bangladesh'.

Addressing the programme as the chief guest, the speaker said, "APPG on extreme poverty would act like the other APPGs on other issues consistently. As a result, a new horizon of debates on extreme poverty would be introduced."

DFID and Shiree have already expressed their interest in working with APPG on extreme poverty in the long run, said the guardian of the House.

Criticising excess spending in government or non-government activities, Hamid said, "We spend relentlessly despite our limited financial capacity. We must come out of such culture. If we cannot do it, do we have right to talk about the extreme poor?"

Stating that implementing some projects or programmes cannot help eradicate extreme poverty, he said the most important task in this regard is to identify the root causes of poverty, frame policy in that line and implement it.

"For this, the parliament should concentrate on poverty, especially extreme poverty," the speaker said, calling on the lawmakers to play the role of captains together to fight poverty and hunger.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury said the marginal and landless farmers who produce food against dozens of odds actually suffer from such extreme poverty.

Referring to increased salinity in the southern part and drought in the northern part of the country, she said, "Food security of the poor is the issue of

utmost importance, but our government already proved itself to be sincere to feed the poor."

Finance Minister AMA Muhith said though there are many government and non-government programmes to reduce poverty, extreme poor go unnoticed by most of them.

He said 40 percent people of the country still live under poverty line and half of them are extreme poor, adding that climate change has become a major threat to poverty reduction.

Stating that a large number of people are under-employed in the country, Muhith said creating employments through more investments and increasing real income are essential ways to cut extreme poverty.

Noted economist Prof Rehman Sobhan said asset transfer to the extreme poor and providing them with income generating facilities could greatly help reduce poverty as a whole.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, Awami League lawmaker Sabir Hossain Chowdhury and DFID Bangladesh's Head of Office Jim McAlpine also spoke at the programme moderated by Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam.

Ensure quality edn for overall development

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called on the government to ensure quality education across the country, especially in the rural area, for the overall development of education sector.

The quantity of educated people would automatically increase if quality education could be expanded across the country, they said, adding that the government as well as private organisations should put topmost priority on the expansion of quality education.

The speakers made the remark while addressing the seminar on 'National Education Policy 2009: Strategy for Implementation' organised by Institute of Education and Research (IER) at Nabab Nawa Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhawan on the Dhaka University (DU) campus.

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, trustee member of

Transparency International Bangladesh, stressed the need to decentralise education for the development of education sector and take necessary steps to reduce the dropouts.

He also suggested increasing the age limit for retirement of teachers up to 60 to 65 in order to resolve efficient teacher crisis in education institutions.

University Grant Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam viewed that the new education policy is the most updated and time befitting one which would definitely play a vital role in improving the education sector.

He highlighted different positive initiatives taken by the government and UGC for the welfare of teachers and improvement of quality education.

Speaking as the special guest, DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique urged the teachers as well as

guardians of primary-level students to teach their children in the light of honesty, ethical values and patriotism.

He emphasised implementation of such an education policy which would contribute to the betterment of the country as well as its people.

Presenting a keynote paper, Dr Siddiqur Rahman of IER recommended introducing eight-year compulsory primary education along with compulsory vocational education to develop skills of children.

Other recommendations include building of new classrooms in schools, increasing use of information technology in classrooms and introduction of primary education cadre as professional cadre.

Prof Salma Akhtar, director of IER, presided over the seminar while DU Pro-Vice Prof Harun-or-Rashid and Notre Dame College Principal Father Benjamin de Costa also spoke.

Abul Hossain honorary consul of Uganda

METRO DESK



says a press release.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni approved his appointment on October 8.

Hossain was born at Chandipur village of Dagonbhuiyan in Feni district in 1978.

A graduate of National University, he is a successful businessman, entrepreneur and managing director of Fazila Group.

He is also associated with many organisations like OIC, DCC and Rotary Club.

Hossain has travelled many countries in Asia, Europe and Africa.

GRAFT CASE

Gayeswar gets ad-interim bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted ad-interim bail to BNP Joint Secretary General Gayeswar Chandra Roy in a corruption case filed by the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC).

The HC bench of Justice MA Wahhab Miah and Justice Md Abdur Razzaque also issued a rule upon the government and the ACC to explain why he should not be granted regular bail in the case.

The HC came up with the order upon a bail petition filed by the BNP leader.

His lawyer Nitai Roy Chowdhury told reporters that there is no bar to his client's release from jail following the HC order.

The bail order will continue until disposal of the rule, he said.

Earlier on January 5, the ACC filed the case against him on charges of extorting Tk 2.61 crore and concealing information of his wealth worth Tk 25.95 lakh in his wealth statement submitted to the commission on August 20 last year.

The trial court in Dhaka sent him to jail on October 12 after he surrendered before it in connection with the case.

NUB founding anniversary programmes begin

METRO DESK

The five-day founding anniversary programmes of Northern University Bangladesh (NUB) began on its campus on Saturday, says a press release.

State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Advocate Md Qamrul Islam attended the inaugural ceremony as the chief guest.

Teachers, students, guardians and admirers of the university attended the inaugural ceremony.

Vice chancellor of the university Prof M Shamsul Haque welcomed the guests and said the university is trying to maintain qualitative education to cope up its students with the global competition.



Youth Ending Hunger Bangladesh forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday on the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. (Story on Page 3)

Spurious drugs major threat to public health

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said easy availability and consumption of spurious, sub-standard and unregistered drugs pose a major threat to the public health in the country, which have flooded the entire drug market.

The government needs to protect the countrymen from this threat by strengthening Directorate of Drug Administration (DDA), establishing Drug Quality Control Laboratory, making a new essential drugs list and improving Essential Drugs Company Ltd (EDCL), they added.

They were speaking at a roundtable on 'Standard of country's local pharmaceutical industries and present

situation' organised by the Dainik Destiny at the National Press Club in the city.

Editor of the daily Muhammad Rafiqul Amin presided over the programme which was moderated by Associate Editor Dr Anu Hossain, while pharmacists and health rights activists were present.

Selim Azad Chowdhury, general secretary of Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Society, at his keynote paper narrated the sorry state of the government-owned drug monitoring organisations, including DDA and EDCL.

He called on the government to take action immediately against those companies responsible for manufacturing spurious drugs that kill hundreds of identified

and unidentified people, including children.

Selim said the Drug Policy should be updated based on modern technology and new dimension of the disease patterns and it should focus on drug exports as well as fulfilling the local demands.

Prof Shah Monir Hossain, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), called on the physicians to be careful about sub-standard as well as spurious drugs, because many doctors prescribe such medicines by taking bribe from the drug manufacturing companies.

Former health secretary Khandakar Fazlur Rahman, noted virologist Prof Nazrul Islam, ex-president of Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries

(BAPI) SM Shafiuzzaman, Chairman of University of Development Alternative Mujib Khan and ex-president of Bangladesh Medical Association Rashid-e-Mahbub spoke.

Majibur made envoy to Bhutan

UNB, Dhaka

AKM Majibur Rahman Bhuiyan, Minister, Bangladesh Embassy in Tokyo, has been appointed Ambassador to Bhutan.

A career diplomat, Majibur joined the BCS (Foreign Affairs) cadre in 1989.

He served in Bangladesh missions in New Delhi, Tehran and Tokyo during his distinguished diplomatic career.

25 injured as sand lifters attack villagers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

At least 25 villagers were injured in a series of clashes between the miscreants lifting sand illegally from the river Meghna and the villagers at Sonargaon upazila here yesterday.

Police seized three dredgers and two dredger owners on charges of lifting sand illegally.

Sources said miscreants claiming to be leaders and workers of Awami League had long been cutting earth at night on the bank of the river adjacent to Char Bakl under Shambhupura union of the upazila.

The miscreants attacked the villagers as they protested their illegal earth cutting from croplands in the afternoon.

At least 25 villagers, including Miah Chan, Alam Chan, Azhar, Sabuj, Rasul, Nabir, Nuru Miah, Abdul Ali and Amjad, were injured in the attacks.

The injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Sonargaon Upazila Health Complex.

Assistant Commissioner (Land) of Sonargaon Abul Amin said a quarter had long been lifting sand from the croplands and riverbed illegally in the dead of night.

On information, they have seized three dredgers used for sand lifting -- Al Ababil, Inshallah-1 and Khan Paribahan. They also arrested two owners of the dredgers -- Robin and Mintu.

'17,691 tax-related cases pending with HC'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said some 17,691 tax-related cases involving Tk 7,229 crore have been pending with the High Court (HC) for disposal for a long time.

The government will soon request the chief justice to constitute two separate benches in the HC for disposal of these cases, he said, adding that the government can realise the tax money if the cases are disposed of quickly.

He said this while talking to reporters after a meeting with NBR Chairman Dr Nasiruddin Ahmed at his office in the afternoon.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam was present at the meeting.

Of the total cases, 13,198 are related to customs and value added tax (VAT) and the rest are related to income tax, the minister said.

Shafique said claims of around Tk 6,000 crore income tax remained pending.

He stressed the need for introducing alternative dispute resolution (ADR) system to settle the cases outside the

court. He also suggested the finance ministry and NBR to include ADR in the income tax-related cases.

Implement nat'l edn policy in phases

Non-govt teachers suggest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The teachers and employees of different non-government schools and colleges at a view exchange meeting yesterday said the draft National Education Policy should be implemented gradually as it would be difficult to implement at a time.

They said the draft education policy is a positive and progressive one and it was formed in line with the spirit of the Liberation War.

Speakers said these at a view exchange meeting on the draft National Education Policy at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. National Front of Teachers and Employees (NTE) organised the programme.



A Hindu woman worships Kali, the symbol of strength, at a puja mandap at Kalicharan Shaha Road in the city yesterday on the occasion of Kali Puja. Agradut Puja Committee organised the puja.

Hard-to-reach areas still out of WatSan services

METRO DESK

Speakers at a consultation workshop said WatSan services are yet to reach vast areas of Bangladesh due to its geological and geographical location, communication system, technological, socio-economic condition and risk of natural disasters.

The consultation workshop on identification of effective ways to provide watans services in hard-to-reach (HtR) areas was held at Jamuna conference hall of World Bank at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) in collaboration with the World Bank (WB) organised the workshop.

According to primary identification, hard to reach unions in the country have been divided into 11 classes --

271 unions are char (shoals) areas, 145 haors and 80 beels (water bodies), 78 coastal areas, 171 hilly areas, 160 Barind area (Modhupur), 37 saline areas, Sundarbans, Chhitmahal (enclaves), Mohazer and 29 extreme hard to reach areas, they said.

The list has been prepared based on watery geological and geographical location, communication system and risk of natural calamities, they added.

World Bank regional water and sanitation expert Mark Ellery, WB water and sanitation expert Rokeya Ahmed, DAM watans sub-sector project manager Umme Farwa Daisy, WatSan expert Abdul Motaleb and Imam Mahmud Riad of DAM spoke, among others, at the workshop.

Sector professionals and field level representatives of various development organisations were also present.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Maj (retd) Hafizur Rahman Khan, father of Mostafa Kamal, additional secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Brigadier General Ibrahim Jamal, military adviser at the permanent mission to the United Nations, passed away at Combined Military Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 85.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held after Asr prayer today at the Dhaka Cantonment Jame Mosque, said a press release.

Begum Zabenur Haque

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Begum Zabenur Haque, mother of Fazlul Bari, business editor of the Daily Inquilab and permanent member of Narayanganj Press Club, passed away at her residence in Narayanganj on Saturday night at the age of 84.

She was buried at Bandar graveyard in Narayanganj.

Narayanganj Press Club president and general secretary expressed deep shock at her death and prayed for salvation of her departed soul.

KDA chief engr among 5 killed in road crashes

METRO DESK

Five people were killed and two others were injured in separate road accidents in Faridpur and Gazipur yesterday.

Our correspondent in Faridpur reports: Four people, including chief engineer of Khulna Development Authority (KDA) and an assistant professor of Khulna Medical College, were killed and two others injured in a road accident at Kharakanda under Bhanga upazila in Faridpur yesterday.

Police said the accident occurred when a Khulna-bound private car plunged into a roadside ditch as its driver lost control over the steering while trying to save a minor girl at about 8:30am.

Car passenger Md Abdul Halim, chief engineer of KDA, and driver Golam Kibria died on the spot. Before the car skidded

off the road it ran over the minor girl Sabjan, 9.

Injured passenger of the car Dr Mizanur Rahman Babu, assistant organising secretary of Doctors Association of Bangladesh and an assistant professor of Khulna Medical College, succumbed to his injuries at Bhanga Upazila Health Complex. Two other injured were sent to Faridpur Medical College Hospital.

A correspondent in Gazipur adds: One person was killed when a sand laden truck ran over him on the east side of Kea Bazar on Sreepur-Mauna Road in Gazipur yesterday.

The dead was identified as Hamidur Rahman, 35, a worker of Mark P Scott Spinning Mills.

Witnesses and workers of the factory said the accident occurred when he was crossing the road, the speeding truck ran over him.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna.

Barisal, Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:29pm today and rises at 6:58am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 23.5 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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	32.3	26.0	87	76
Chittagong	32.0	25.1	75	83
Rajshahi	33.5	24.0	75	64
Khulna	33.2	24.5	88	76
Barisal	33.0	25.6	87	83
Sylhet	29.5	24.4	93	87
Cox's Bazar	33.2	25.0	81	82