

Special education for autistic children under consideration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday call for raising awareness of autism among the masses in the country as they facing the problem for lack of ignorance.

Autism is neuro-developmental disorder which is characterised by impaired social interaction, difficulty with verbal and non-verbal communication and repetitive or severely limited activities and interests.

The discussion was organised by National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled (NFWOD) in association with ActionAid and Bangladesh Shishu Academy at the Shishu Academy conference room.

Speaking as the chief guest, Nasima Begum, joint secretary of Social Welfare Ministry, said the government is initiating a process to establish an institute of special education for autistic children in 64 districts.

Mirpur National Special Education Institute will incorporate programmes for autistic children, she said, adding that a special education policy to be adopted by the government will include the issue of autism with special consideration.

Presenting a keynote paper, Raunak Hafiz, chairperson of Autism Welfare Foundation, said the notion of autism is almost new in the country and the government and non-government organisations are yet to make it familiar to the people.

Such invisible disability, autism, is making autistic person deprived of their basic rights, said Raunak, also convenor of Autism Thematic Group, Jatiya Protibandhi Unnayan Forum (JPUF).

The term 'autism' was coined back in 1943, she said, adding that the world has faced a number of developments in dealing with such human diversity since then.

The JPWF convenor placed a set of recommendations to treat autism with significance and cope with the existing

state of the country regarding autism.

The recommendations include drawing attention of the government to the development of the lives and livelihoods of the autistic persons, a proper mechanism to diagnosis the problem at early stage of growth among children, training for parents on appropriate task on how to deal with the problem if they have autistic kids, training for therapists, doctors and teachers, a comprehensive programme of education, rehabilitation and employment of the autistic persons.

Raunak called on the government to ensure friendly atmosphere for persons with disabilities (PWDs).

NFWOD President Khandaker Zahirul Alam presided over the meeting where parents of autistic children and representatives from special educational institutes for autistic persons took part and shared their experiences.

The programme was followed by a colourful cultural programme performed by autistic children.



(From left) Carel de Rooy, Khaleda, Sazon, Rokeya Sultana, Zahida Sultana Mukti and Murad hold copies of Unicef report titled 'The State of the World Children' at its launching ceremony at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

DUJ election on Jan 31

BSS, Dhaka

The biennial conference and election of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) will be held on January 30 and 31.

The election schedule was finalised at a meeting of the executive committee of DUJ with its President Shah Alamgir in the chair at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The meeting also condoled the deaths of former secretary general of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFU) Akhter Ahmed Khan and former Jatiya Press Club president M Mozammel Huq.

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COCO-4 CAPSIZE

Time to submit probe report extended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has extended the deadline to submit the probe report on launch disaster in Bhola by three days, said Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan yesterday.

The committee will now submit the report, which was due today, on Thursday while the government will make it public next Sunday, the minister said while talking to newsmen at his office.

He said the government extended the deadline as per the request of the probe committee.

Steps will be taken following the recommendations of the committee, he added.

"Although the probe reports on the accidents that had taken place earlier were not disclosed, we will make the report public on Sunday," said the minister.

The probe committee was formed just after the launch accident at Bhola on November 27 making a joint secretary of shipping ministry as convenor.

Shahjahan Khan said they would cancel the registration of the unfit launches if they do not upgrade their services.

The launch MV Coco-4, capsized on November 27, the night before Eid-ul-Azha, at Nazirpur river station in Lalmohar, some 40 km from Bhola district town, killing 87 people and leaving many missing. The rescue operation of the accident ended on Thursday.

The government has already filed a case against Tarique Rahman, Arifat Rahman Koko, and their associate Giasuddin Al Mamun of Rahman Shippers Bangladesh Ltd and 13 others in marine court in connection with the launch accident.

The company's managing director Tarique Rahman and its director Arifat Rahman Koko are sons of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia while another Director Giasuddin Al Mamun is a close associate of Tarique.

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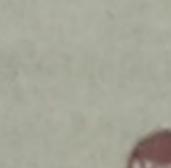
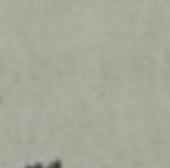
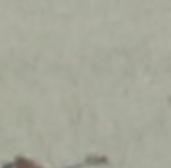
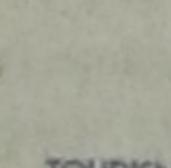
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