

Call to declare Feb 1 Nat'l Book Day

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Book Club, a voluntary organisation, yesterday demanded that February 1 be declared the National Book Day.

The organisation placed the demand at a programme marking the 14th Book Day on the Central Shaheed Minar premises in the city.

Shaikh Akram Ali, president of the club, said they have been observing the February 1 as Book Days since 1997.

"Since then, we have also been demanding that the government declare February 1 the National Book Day and it will be observed across the country," he added.

But no governments paid much attention to their demand in the last 14 years, he added.

State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Md Motahar Hossain formally inaugurated the programme in the morning.

The state minister assured the organisers that he will raise the issue at a cabinet meeting, Akram said.

The organisers said the main objective of the day is to encourage people to buy, read and write books with a view to building an enlightened nation.

Cultural activist M Hamid also spoke at the programme.

Around 100 schoolchildren took part in drawing and hand-writing competitions as part of the programmes, Akram said.



Children draw pictures at a competition at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday. Bangladesh Book Club organised the event to mark the 14th Book Day. PHOTO: STAR

'Finalise health policy after discussion'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday demanded the health and family welfare ministry to work together with the ministries of agriculture, fisheries and environment to finalise a national health policy.

Swasthya Andolon, a platform of doctors, environmentalists, agriculturists and social activists, organised the press conference at National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Farida Akhter, joint convener of Swasthya Andolon, said the health always related with nutritional food and sound environment and they are involved with these ministries, but the health ministry has always ignored their responsibilities and role to formulate the health policy.

She termed the proposed draft health policy a "treatment policy", not a health policy for mass people especially the poor people.

They also said the health policy is a policy to privatise the whole health sector.

Dr Zakir Hossain, a public health expert and member of the platform, criticised the proposed health saying that it did not include the eye diseases though over 7,50,000 people of above 30 years are blind.

Swasthya Andolon members Shima Das Shimu, Rokeya Begum, Nazmul Karim, Asheq Mahmud and Shamsuzzoha were present at the press conference.

They recommended a 25-point proposal to include in the proposed health policy. The recommendations include discussions and evaluation by lawmakers in the parliament before finalising the health policy, specification of the non-communicable diseases, victim of mal-treatment for justice, provision for every doctors to work in remote areas and enhancement of incentives and facilities for the nurses and paramedics.

They said the policy should also include the issues of health hazards due to environmental pollution, mental health problem, contaminated water and sanitation.

Leaders of the network also said the policy identified the physically impaired people as "Bikalanga" which should be withdrawn to show respect to them.

Farida demanded of the government to address the women and children's health problems with priority basis since they are the most vulnerable to any disease.

12 killed in road accidents

METRO DESK

At least 12 people were killed and eight others injured in separate road accidents in Dinajpur, Bogra and Rajbari in two days.

Our correspondent from Dinajpur reports: At least four people were killed and three others injured in a road accident in Panchbibi upazila yesterday.

The dead were identified as Alal 25, son of Mofiz Uddin of village Lakma, Lockman Ali 40, son of Fehu Miah of village Korai, Babu, 26, son of Ayez Uddin of village Lakma and Benazul Islam, 30, son of Ali Abdul of village Lakma under Panchbibi upazila.

Panchbibi police quoting villagers said the accident occurred when the driver of a Karia-bound brick-laden truck lost control over the steering at Keshabpur village and hit a passenger rickshaw van.

Alal and Lokman died on the spot while Babu

succumbed to his injuries on the way to Panchbibi Upazila Health Complex and Benazul on the way to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

The injured were rushed to Panchbibi Health Complex.

Meanwhile, A rickshawpuller was killed in a road accident in Dinajpur town yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Md Belal Hossain, 50, of Bakzuarhat under Biral upazila.

Police sources quoting witnesses said the accident occurred when a Ramsagar-bound speedy passenger bus hit rickshawpuller Belal in front of Dinajpur Zila School, one of the busiest places in the town, leaving him dead on the spot.

Staff correspondent from Bogra says: Two people were killed in a head-on collision between a car and a night coach on Bogra-Rangpur road at Rahbal in Shibganj upazila on Sunday night.

The deceased were identified as car driver Nayan, 26, and passenger Nazmul, 22, son of sub-inspector of police Azizul Haque of Mirpur police station in Kushtia.

Police said the accident occurred when a Kushtia-bound car from Rangpur collided with a Gaibandha-bound night coach on the night, leaving two dead on the spot.

Ejaj Ahmed, who also received injuries in the accident, was sent to Dhaka for treatment.

UNB from Jhenidah adds: Three people were killed and three others injured as a bus hit an autorickshaw at Gobindapur in Shaikakupa upazila yesterday.

The dead were identified as Rabiul Islam, 25, Matiar Rahman, 45, and Akash, 10, of the upazila.

Police and witnesses said the Dhaka-bound bus hit the autorickshaw at about 8:00am, killing its three passengers on the spot and inuring three

others critically.

The injured were rushed to the Sadar Hospital where condition of Rabeya Khatun was stated to be critical.

BSS from Rajbari adds: Two people were killed and another was injured seriously in a road accident at Pangsha college crossing on the Rajbari-Kushtia highway under Pangsha upazila yesterday.

The dead were identified as Kamrul Hassan, 25, son of Harunur Rashed of Klukhali village and Mofizul Islam, 65, son of Abdul Awal Patwary of the same village.

Police said the accident occurred when a Rajbari-bound passenger bus from Kushtia hit a motorcycle at Pangsha College Crossing at 1.45pm, leaving three motorcycle riders severely injured.

Local people rushed to the spot and sent them to the Rajbari Sadar and Faridpur Medical College Hospitals for treatment.



Farida Akhter speaks at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On her left is Shima Das Shimu. PHOTO: STAR

ANTI-STATE ACTIVITIES Maulana Salam shown arrested

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Islamic Democratic Party (IDP) convener Maulana Sheikh Abdus Salam was shown arrested yesterday in a case filed in December last year against a Huji operative on charge of anti-state activities.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Inspector Fazlul Haq, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, prayed for a ten-day remand to interrogate him about the activities subversive to the state.

The court however fixed today for hearing on the remand prayer in his (Salam) presence.

Salam was earlier shown arrested on November 2 last year in the August 21 grenade attack case and later he had given confessional statement admitting his links to the attacks on an Awami League (AL) rally.

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested Harkatul Jihad (Huji) member Abu Motaleb of Bogra from Motijheel on December 13 last year for his alleged involvement with anti-state activities.

Later, DB Inspector Abul Khair Matubbar filed a case against Motaleb with Motijheel Police Station the same day.

Motaleb had earlier given confessional statement before a magistrate saying that Salam was involved with militant activities across the country. Following a lead from him, DB police appealed to the court to show Salam arrested in the case and prayed for a ten-day remand for interrogation.

Dhaka Int'l Education Fair from Feb 21

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An eight-day Dhaka International Education Fair will kick off on February 21 on the Public Library premises in the city, says a press release.

More than one hundred universities and their agents from home and abroad will take part in the fair.

The fair will remain open for all from 2:00pm to 9:00pm daily.

Seminar and cultural functions will also be held during the fair.



A delegation of Commonwealth Society of Bangladesh poses for photograph with visiting Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat Massire Mwamba at Sonargaon Hotel in the city on Sunday. On her right is Society President M Mokammel Haque and on her left is Society Vice-president Enam Ahmed Chowdhury. PHOTO: COURTESY

UK VISA FOR STUDENTS

'Pending applications to be scrutinised'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) would not take any responsibility for the loss suffered by students due to sudden suspension of the student visa applications from Bangladesh, its official said yesterday.

The agency, however, would scrutinise the pending student visa applications, UKBA Operations Manager Stuart Percival at the British High Commission said at a press conference at a hotel in Sylhet.

He said the British authority gave licences to some selected institutions to enroll students from Bangladesh and other regions under the "Tier Four"

of the Points Based system. But the licences of 146 institutions were cancelled while the decision to suspend the student visa applications was taken on January 28, he said.

"These institutions along with others fulfilled all the requirements at the time of taking licences, but they either got engaged with wrongdoings or for some other reasons they had to lose the licences later," he said, adding that the wrongdoings were found during investigations.

"An unexpected surge in the number of student visa applications was the main reason for suspension of the visa applications. It was just beyond our ability to scrutinise those," Stuart Percival said.

He also said that all the submitted applications would be scrutinised very soon.

"We want to ensure that genuine students continue to go to the UK colleges and other institutions for higher education."

The students who have already reached the UK are allowed to change their institutions, if needed, said the UKBA official.

This is a temporary suspension and the UK Border Agency will begin accepting Tier 4 visa applications again as soon as possible, he hinted.

About 75 percent of the student visa applications were from the greater Sylhet region, the official said.

The tier 4 of the Points Based System was introduced in March 2009.

Canadian MP Maria Minna arrives today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Maria Minna MP, a member of the House of Commons of Canada, will arrive in Dhaka today on a nine-day visit to discuss bilateral issues with high government leaders and political parties.

She is coming here at the invitation of Bangladesh-Canada Parliamentary Friendship Group. She has been a very strong voice in Canadian parliament in support of Bangladesh and has always been very much supporting to Bangladesh community in Toronto, said a press release.

Maria Minna, who is also the current chair of Canada-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship Group, is expected to meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, leaders of other political parties, business and civil society.

To learn about Bangladesh and its people, she will also visit schools and madrassas.

She will also meet the leaders of business, academic and social welfare organisations to hear how Canada can play a positive role in the development of Bangladesh.

Concern over recent clashes in Khagrachhari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) yesterday expressed concern over the recent clashes between the indigenous people and Bangalees in the hill district of Khagrachhari over trivial issues, says a press release.

ASK called on the government to take timely and impartial measures to ease the tense situation. They also urged both the communities to show maximum tolerance in order to restore peace in the hill districts.

ASK said a vested quarter is instigating a section of hill people as well as the Bangalees to create mistrust between the two communities to foil the implementation of Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Agreement.

It said recent attacks on Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council Chairman Jyotirindra Budhipriya Larma alias Santu Larma and Chakma Circle Chief Raja Devasish Roy would further complicate the situation.

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