



A father brings his daughter to Ekushey Book Fair at Bangla Academy in the city yesterday, the weekly holiday, as the fair was open for the children in the morning.

40,000 die of kidney failure a year

BSS, Dhaka Experts at a seminar yesterday termed chronic kidney disease as a major public health concern in the country as its 90 percent people are unable to bear treatment cost.

About two crore people are somehow suffering from the disease, while 40,000 die of longtime kidney failure a year in the country, they told a seminar in the city. They said there is only one nephrologist for 25 lakh people in the country, but the ratio should be one for 50,000 people.

the experts said. If the present rate of the disease continues it will be stood at 28 to 30 percent in the next 10 years which is very alarming, they said. Bangladesh Association for the Advancement of

Enamul Kabir was present as the special guest. With BAAS President Dr SM Imamul Haque in the chair, the function was addressed by Chairman of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission Dr Mosharraf

high blood pressure and genetic reasons. Fifty-one percent people are not aware of diabetes, 65 percent are not aware of high blood pressure, while 65 percent do not know that whether any albumin is passing with their urine, they said.

kidney went out of order," he said. At that time, Prof Harun said, regular dialysis or transplantation is needed to keep the kidney functional. "But, 90 percent people cannot afford the treatment cost as the dialysis or transplantation is very expensive. As a result, they slowly move towards death," he said.

One nephrologist for 25 lakh people

Science (BAAS) arranged the seminar on 'Chronic kidney diseases: Bangladesh perspective' at the Assembly Hall of BCSIR. Vice-Chancellor of Daffodil International University Prof Dr Aminul Islam attended the seminar as the chief guest while Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Dr Shariff

Hossain and BAAS General Secretary Harun-Or-Rashid. Eminent kidney specialist Prof Harun-Ur-Rashid presented the keynote paper at the seminar also attended by 400 lecturers and scientists from different institutions. The experts said people have been suffering from kidney disease for various reasons including diabetes,

In his keynote paper, Prof Harun said the rate of chronic kidney disease is increasing alarmingly across the world, including Bangladesh, and it is being considered as one of the major health concerns. "The big problem in the chronic kidney disease is that it has no symptom and people with the disease do not visit doctors. When the symptom is appeared, their

Against the backdrop of increasing number of chronic kidney patients, he suggested regular checking up diabetes, blood pressure and albumin by the people above 40. Prof Harun also suggested walking for at least 30 minutes every day, avoiding salt and smoking as well as controlling fat.

Scope for secular education created

Says law minister about 5th amendment verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court verdict regarding the fifth amendment to the constitution cleared the way for reintroducing the education system based on secularism, equality, and the spirit of the Liberation War, said Law Minister Shafiqe Ahmed yesterday.

The SC judgment nullifying the fifth amendment to the country's constitution has not hurt the religion, he said.

He said this while speaking as chief guest at the inauguration of seventh conference of Bangladesh College-University Teachers Association at Teachers Students Centre (TSC) auditorium on Dhaka University campus in the morning. Bangladesh College-University Teachers Association

President M Akhteruzzaman presided over the inaugural function. DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof MM Akash, Prof Rangalal Sen, and General Secretary of World Teachers Association Federation Bala Bijoy Kumar also spoke on the occasion.

The law minister said the government has given priority to education for building the country with the spirit of the country's Liberation War.

He said a vested quarter has been trying to mislead the people by misinterpreting the SC judgment on the fifth amendment.

He urged the teachers to properly give lessons on the history of the Liberation War and its spirit and also assured them that the government would accept their recommendations for enhancing their salaries, etc.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Comrade Paresch Chandra Saha, former central committee member of Workers Party of Bangladesh and former news editor of the weekly 'Natum Katha', passed away at the Renaissance Hospital at the city yesterday at the age of 62 years, says a press release.

He was suffering from diabetes and other complicated diseases.

He left behind his wife, two daughters, friends and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was cremated at Postogola crematorium.

Leaders of different political parties and organisations expressed deep shock at his death and paid their last respect to him.

Workers Party Politburo member Comrade Nurul Hasan and other activists placed wreaths at his coffin at his residence at Jatrabari in the city. Workers Party (reorganised) Hayder Akbar Khan Rano, Habibur Rahman Habib, Mozammel Hossain also paid their last respect. Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon and General Secretary Anisur Rahman Mallik in a statement condoled the death and conveyed sympathy to members of the bereaved family. Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh expressed deep shock at its central committee meeting yesterday with politburo member Raja Mia in the chair.

General Secretary of the Bangladesh Shamajtantrik Dal (BSD) Khalekuzzaman also condoled the death.

Paresch Saha also worked for the daily Gonokantha and Banglar Bani.

Khairul Kabir's 13th anniversary of death today

METRO DESK



Today is the 13th death anniversary of eminent journalist Khairul Kabir, founder-

editor of the daily Sangbad, says a press release.

Kabir, who was also a renowned banker, died in Singapore on February 7, 1997 due to old-age complications.

He was also the founder and first life member of the National Press Club.

Kabir, a close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was one of the authors of the historic six-point programme, which was the basis of the demand for autonomy for the then East Pakistan.

He hailed from the illustrious Kabir family of Ghorasal.

On the occasion of his death anniversary, a milad mahfil will be held at his ancestral home in Ghorasal to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Ruby Rahman

METRO DESK



Today is the 45th death anniversary of eminent artist Ruby Rahman, says a press release.

Litterateur and classical Chinese paintings expert Ruby Rahman was killed in a road accident on this day in 1965 on the border of Lebanon and Syria when she had been living with her late diplomat husband M Rahman in Damascus.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and doa mahfil will be held at the High Court Mazar in the city today for the salvation of the departed soul.

Future Park demolition suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Though Rajuk authorities were scheduled to carry on with the demolition of illegally-built top four floors of Jamuna Future Park Shopping Complex, they have stopped it following an appeal petition scheduled for hearing today.

Jamuna Future Park authorities, Jamuna Group, filed the petition with the chamber judge of the Appellate Division on Thursday, the day Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha embarked on the eviction drive. The drive was scheduled to continue Friday and Saturday.

Meanwhile, Barrister Rafiq Ul Haque, legal counsel of the building owner, on Friday wrote a letter to Rajuk Executive Magistrate Rokon-Ud-Dowla and authorized officer Shafiqul Islam saying that the officials would be charged with the contempt of court if they continue the demolition work before hearing on the appeal petition on Sunday, said a Rajuk official.

Rokon-Ud-Dowla said they will wait till completion of the hearing but he declined to make any comment on the letter.

Rajuk launched the demolition of the upper four floors of the shopping complex at city's Joya Sahara (Bashundhara), one day after the High Court summarily rejected a writ petition challenging Rajuk's eviction notice.

'State policy should not be based on any religion'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State policy should not be dictated on the basis of any particular religion, human rights activists and religious scholars said at a discussion yesterday.

They said Bangladesh is a land of religious harmony and peaceful coexistence of different faiths. So, everybody should have the right to practise their own religions freely.

The state should ensure equal rights of all, irrespective of religions, they added. Prof Syed Anwar Hossain, Prof Asif Nazrul, freedom fighter Ziauddin Tareq Ali, President of Sarbajinin Puja Committee Kazal Devnath, and Mujibur Rahman, a Pakistani lawyer and human rights activist, spoke at the discussion.

Sohel Taj seeks implementation of road safety project

Reiterates that he is no longer state minister

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Awami League lawmaker Tanjim Ahmad Sohel Taj has reiterated that he is no longer a state minister for home, but as a lawmaker he wants the government to implement the road safety project he had initiated when he was in office.

"The road accidents claim about 30,000 lives a year. If the project is fully implemented, the number of road accidents would come down to a great extent," he told The Daily Star on Thursday.

Sohel Taj also said that he would discharge his duties as a lawmaker for the betterment of the people of his constituency. He will also continue to make efforts to implement the road safety project.

"My prime goal is to save lives, since road accidents have wider socio-economic impacts. Road accidents cause a loss of hundreds of crores of taka a year," said the AL lawmaker, who returned home from the USA on January 27 about seven months after his resignation.

Expressing deep shock at the death of KG student Hamim Sheikh of Willes Little Flower School, he said the accident could have been avoided if the project had been implemented.

Sohel Taj had initiated a project titled 'Guardian Angel Road Safety Project' having short-, mid- and long-term plans to ensure

road safety. He also held two meetings with the authorities to implement the project.

However, the home ministry did not hold any meeting in this regard later, sources said.

When contacted, Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder said the former state minister had taken a very important initiative for road safety. "We have given utmost importance to it and will continue to carry out the project," he said.

The secretary also said a documentary film was made to make people, especially the drivers, aware of road safety. It was screened at many bus stations to bring a change in the mindset of drivers, he added.

Sohel Taj resigned as the state minister for home on May 31 last year, six months after the present government assumed the office, and left for the USA.

But on Wednesday, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury described Sohel Taj as a state minister having no portfolio.

When asked about it, Sohel Taj said he submitted his resignation on May 31 last year and he still sticks to his statement he gave from the US on July 19 last year. In the statement, he said that after submitting resignation letter to the prime minister, it automatically comes into effect as per the constitution.

Police urged to help ease traffic jam

'One cop for every 594 people in Dhaka'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday called on the police to play an effective role in easing traffic congestions in Dhaka.

She also said that the number of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) personnel is very small compared to over 1.5 crore city dwellers.

The minister said this at the 35th founding anniversary of DMP at its headquarters in the city.

DMP Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haque said there is one police for every 594 people in Dhaka. So, it is difficult to maintain law and order properly.

He also said the policemen in most cases have to use worn-out vehicles, which also remain out of order very often.

Sahara Khatun said the DMP was formed in 1976 with 12 police stations and 6,208 police personnel and the population of the city was only 40 lakh at that time. The population of the city is now over 1.5 crore. The number of police stations has now increased to 41 and the number of police personnel to about 24,000, but the number of police did not increase in proportion to the population, she said.

She also said the government has decided to recruit 3200 policemen in phases in three years. State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad and high police officials attended the programme.

Development issues discussed with US official

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Visiting US Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Judith McHale met with Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday to discuss development issues including climate change, women's empowerment, education and health.

Judith McHale arrived in Dhaka yesterday for a three day official visit.

During the meeting at the foreign ministry, the under secretary of state said that the numbers of Bangladeshi students studying at educational institutions in the US has increased.

Dipu Moni highlighted Bangladesh's positive measures towards the employment of women and the promotion of their leadership and participation in the national legislature and local government.

She also mentioned that the current political leadership is testimony to the way in which women in Bangladesh have advanced in society more generally.

The foreign minister stressed the importance of an international collective response to the threats posed by climate change and emphasised the need for support and assistance from the international community, including the US.

Judith McHale said that the US will further strengthen its bilateral relationship with Bangladesh.

Dipu Moni responded by stating that Bangladesh would like to work with the US directly to further promote the interests of the region.

'Sahara did not term DU student's death stray incident'

UNB, Dhaka

The Ministry of Home Affairs yesterday clarified that Home Minister Sahara Khatun did not term the killing of a brilliant student of Dhaka University stray incident.

The clarification said after a meeting at the law ministry on February 4, the home minister responding to questions from journalists mentioned about taking stern actions against the trouble-makers in Dhaka University.

According to the clarification, the home minister told the journalists that whoever was involved in the incident would not be spared.

The home ministry said the government is determined to maintain healthy academic atmosphere at Dhaka University. It said the student clash at the university on February 1 and subsequent death of a meritorious student is unwarranted and unfortunate. It said the police were instructed to arrest and take legal actions against the persons involved in the incident.

Ensure proper environment for children with autism

Experts tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a workshop yesterday called for ensuring friendly and proper environment for bringing up children with autism in order to foster their proper physical and mental growth.

Mothers as well as family members and society should take care of the special needs of the children with autism, they said.

The Prip Trust in association with the social welfare ministry organised the workshop on 'Children with autism and role of mothers' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Social Welfare Secretary Qamrun Nessa Khanam inaugurated the workshop.

The experts said that although autism as a condition cannot be cured, it is possible to reduce certain autistic behaviours and improve well-being of children with autism.

With regular treatment such as medication and physiotherapy, the children with special needs will be able to lead an almost normal life in terms of physical activities, they added.

Some 50 mothers from 30 districts took part in the workshop.

The discussants said some children are born with autism because of problems in the growth of their brain cells. While these brain cells cannot be recovered by any means, it is possible to treat their various problems.

They also said various traditional and non-traditional treatments to reduce autistic behaviours have been practiced in the past. Although some are given medications to improve general well-being, there is no drug that has shown to be effective in treating symptoms of autism.

Aroma Dutta, executive director of Prip Trust, writer Baby Moudud, psychiatrist Dr Anwara Syed Haque, Dr Zillur Rahman and child-neuro specialist Dr Narayan Chandra Saha spoke at the workshop.

The workshop recommended ensuring friendly and proper environment for bringing up children with autism and ensuring their proper physical and psychological growth.

A documentary film on autism was also shown at the workshop.



Sir Salimullah Hall Ex-students Association President ASM Shahjahan inaugurates its reunion by releasing balloons at the Dhaka University playground yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

PM joins picnic of PMO staffs

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday took off time from her busy schedule and joined a picnic organised by officials and employees of the Prime Ministers' Office at Savar Military Farm.

On special invitation, the prime minister with her younger sister Sheikh Rehana joined the picnic at about 1:00pm. She exchanged pleasantries with the officials and employees and had lunch with them.

Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Finance Minister AMA Muhiid, Planning Minister AK Khandaker, Home Minister Advocate Sahara Khatun, Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni, Advisers HT Imam, Dr Syed Mudasser Ali, local lawmakers Benzir Ahmed and Aurangajeb, Principle Secretary MA Karim, Secretary to the PMO Molla Waheeduzzaman, Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad and Ambassador at-large Ziauddin also joined the outings.

Family members of the PMO staff also took part in the picnic.

CONTAMINATED VEGETABLES

City residents exposed to health hazards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka residents are being exposed to serious health hazards by consuming vegetables contaminated with chemicals, said speakers yesterday during a seminar organised by Save the Environment Movement (POBA) in the capital.

Approximately 1.5 crore residents consume 50 tonnes of vegetables daily and around 30 MT is contaminated with hazardous pesticides.

Speakers said that pesticide residues, microbiological hazards, chemical contaminants and the misuse of artificial additives are responsible for alarmingly low standards of food safety in Bangladesh. Prof Khurshid Jahan,

former director and Prof Khaleeda Islam of Institution of Nutrition Food Sciences presented the keynote papers.

Speakers urged the government to take immediate steps to promote greater awareness of the risks posed by contaminated food.

Other speakers at the seminar at BIRDEM hospital auditorium included Chairman of POBA Abu Naser Khan, Chairman of Cancer Society Dr Molla Obaidullah Baki, Director of BIRDEM Laboratory Service Prof Shuvagata Chowdhury, President of Communist Party of Bangladesh Manjurul Ahsan Khan and the Chairman of Manash, the anti-drug organisation, Dr Arup Ratan Chowdhury.