



National Alliance of Disabled People's Organisations President Abdus Sattar Dulal inaugurates the National Council of People with Disabilities-2010 by releasing balloons at the Paltan Maidan in the city yesterday.

Call to involve persons with disabilities in dev process

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Persons with disabilities yesterday called on the government to fully implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to establish their rights and social dignity.

They also urged the government to integrate the physically challenged people into mainstream society by involving them in the country's development process.

They made the call at the National Council of People with Disabilities-2010 organised by the National Alliance of Disabled People's Organisations (NADPO), a national network of 91 organisations, at the Paltan Maidan in the city.

NADPO President Abdus Sattar Dulal presided over the council while its Secretary General Jahangir Alam, coordinator Shirin Akhter, executive member Anwar Hossain Hajari and representatives from different districts addressed the council.

They said it is not possible to achieve the desired development of the country without ensuring equal rights of the people with disabilities and that they must be involved in the decision-making process.

Shirin Akhter said the physically challenged people are always subjected to negligence and discrimination. They are deprived of fundamental rights.

She also demanded that the persons

with disabilities have access to national and local politics so that they can raise their voice to ensure their rights.

NADPO President Abdus Sattar said the government has failed to ensure installation of ramps in public and private buildings for the physically challenged people.

The persons with disabilities also placed several demands, including 15 reserved seats in parliament for them, representation of disabled people in all political parties and inclusion of NADPO in all development activities of the government.

Several hundred people with disabilities from across the country joined the council.

'Unite nation to try war criminals'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Sangskritik Abhijatra, a countrywide march of cultural activists to make the nation united in the demand for trial of the war criminals, reached Rajshahi yesterday and held two programmes at Rajshahi University's Martyrs Memorial premises and the city's Bhubon Mohon Park.

Cultural leaders at the programmes said the war criminals have been strong with state support after the liberation, but they must be tried as the whole nation is now united like it did in 1971.

Several hundreds of young people and cultural activists of Rajshahi expressed solidarity with the demand for trial of the war criminals on charge of committing crimes against humanity and peace in 1971 Liberation War.

Sammilito Sangskritik Jote, a platform of cultural organizations, launched the Abhijatra in Dhaka on March 13 and came to Rajshahi as part of its countrywide drive.

Chaired by Jote president and freedom fighter Nasiruddin Yousuff, the programmes were addressed, among others, by Asad-uzzaman Noor MP, noted cultural personalities Sayed Hasan Imam, Pijush Bandyopadhyay, Jote general secretary Hasan Arif, its leaders Golam Kuddus and Selim Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, Bangladesh Gram Theater Federation chairman Liakat Ali, general secretary Jhuna Chowdhury, RU teachers Shah Newaj Ali and Moloy Kumar Bhoomik.

Asaduzzaman Noor called upon all to remain united, saying the conspirators of 1971 are afraid of facing the trial and they

might launch counter attacks on the progressive forces.

Sayed Hasan Imam said Bangladesh was a weak nation without an organised military and foreign support, but India, Russia and some eastern European countries during the 1971 war.

"It was only our national unity that helped us win the war. Now we have more strength to fight the conspirators by the similar national unity."

Nasiruddin Yousuff said the principles of the war criminals are unchanged in the independent Bangladesh. "They must be tried to ensure justice to millions of countrymen who had witnessed their brutalities."

Kanan Bala Sarker, Abu Bakar Siddik and other artistes from Dhaka and Rajshahi performed patriotic songs during the programmes.

Engr Mosharraf, 8 others cleared of charges

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday cleared former housing and public works minister and an Awami League leader Engr Mosharraf Hossain, former Rajuk chairman Azizul Haq and seven others of a corruption case filed against them in September 2002.

The other accused in the case are former Rajdhani Unnayan Katrapakha (Rajuk) officials Khan Mohammad Enayef Hossain, Mohammad Momtazuddin, Abdul Awal Chowdhury, Abdullah Al Mamun, Mohammad Nurul Haq, Mohammad Faruque Ahmed and Humayun Khan.

After accepting the final report, Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of the Senior Special Judge's Court discharged all the accused of the charges brought against them in the first information report of the case.

ACC Assistant Director Amirul Islam, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the final report on January 27 to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka saying that the charges brought against them were not proved.

Golam Shahriar Chowdhury, an official of the now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption, filed the case against on September 16 in 2002 with Motijheel Police Station on charges of cancellation of applications of a large number of people in allotment of plots in Banani and Gulshan areas in the city violating the Rajuk rules and regulations.

Free healthcare services for 1500 marginal people in Naogaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A joint team of Channel i and Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital provided about 1500 marginal people with healthcare services free of cost at Atrai in Naogaon yesterday.

As part of the team's 24th programme on the Health Services of the Farmers, the marginalised people of Chak Shimulia area of Hatkalupara union received the healthcare facilities, including free medicine.

Besides, 300 farmers, who had received cards recently, had their blood group screened.

Director and Head of News of Channel i Shykh Seraj suggested the farmers should take care of their own health.

He also distributed masks among the farmers to use them while spraying pesticides.

A psychotherapy and counselling session also took place, which revealed that 36 percent of the farmers are suffering from severe mental illness.

Later, a view exchange meeting was held between the farmers and the physicians to discuss issues related to nutrition and sanitation.

The farmers received typhoid vaccine free of cost for the first time yesterday, said a press release of Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital.



President Zillur Rahman witnesses the Military Hardware Display-2010 in Tejgaon Old Airport area of the city yesterday.

Family of businessman alleges foul play by enemies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of a businessman, who is also an Awami League leader, at a press conference yesterday alleged that Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) men shot him by falsely accusing him as a criminal.

They alleged that enemies of the businessman, Mir Asaduzzaman Tola, youth and sports secretary of Gazipur Sadar Upazila Awami League, used Rab to damage his social and political status.

Speaking at the press conference at the National Press Club, Mir Amiruzzaman Sandhya, elder brother of Asaduzzaman, said that one Ibrahim, an enemy of Asad, used Rab to tarnish the latter's goodwill in the society.

Asaduzzaman was shot by Rab men on March 25 near the road beside the Jtema field in Tongi.

Amiruzzaman said his brother is also a witness of a murder case in Gazipur, which might be the cause behind filing of the false case and shooting him.

Sandhya also alleged that the Rab men got him drunk before shooting him. "When the [Asaduzzaman] was shown arrested by Tongi Police Station, they [Rab men] showed that they recovered a pistol, bullets, yaba tablets and phensidyl, which were not possessed by him."

Meanwhile, Rab-1 officials have refuted the allegations, terming them baseless.

Rab-1 spokesman Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police Zahurul Islam told The Daily Star, "Rab men asked him [Asaduzzaman] to stop his car at Tongi check post but he did not stop. When a Rab car chased him, he sprayed bullets aiming the Rab car and he received bullets when Rab retaliated."

Plan to procure 50,000 tonnes wheat from farmers

UNB, Dhaka

Food and Disaster Management Minister Dr M Abdur Razzaque yesterday said the government would procure 50,000 metric tons of wheat from the farmers at Tk 19.50 per kg.

"Per kg production cost of wheat is estimated at Tk 18.29 and we've decided to procure 50,000 metric tons of wheat from the farmers across the country at Tk 19.50," he said while briefing reporters after a meeting of the Food Planning and Monitoring Committee (FPMC) at the food ministry.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam and Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury attended the meeting with Food Minister Dr M Abdur Razzaque in the chair.

Razzaque said against the countrywide demand of three million (30 lakh) metric tons of wheat, the domestic production is around one million (10 lakh) metric tons while the rest is imported by the private companies. "I hope the wheat production would exceed the target this year."

He said the committee has decided in principle to increase the production of aman paddy without fully depending on nature.

"The production of aman was hampered in the past for lack of rain and also due to flood and drought. The government has decided to increase the production of aman... necessary steps will be taken to facilitate irrigation."

Razzaque said the committee has decided to continue the OMS activities until the next season if the price does not come down.

The meeting discussed the probable procurement price of boro paddy, rice and wheat as well as activities of Open Market Sale (OMS) of rice and evaluation report on the national food policy, he said.

The food minister said they would fix the procurement price of boro rice in the third week of April considering the estimated production cost of Tk 21.65 per kg.

"Production cost of rice and wheat is coming down due to subsidy in fertiliser and diesel. I hope the farmers will benefit."

He hinted that a decision is likely in the next FPMC meeting regarding the food policy.

The food minister said the distribution of 'fair price cards' for rice is in the final stage. "We'll be able to control the market in a proper way should there be any food crisis," he said.



Children hold copies of two illustrated books on the liberation war -- 'Bir Joddha Iman Ali' and 'Muktijoddha Majhi Abbas' -- at the publication ceremony of the books at a city hotel yesterday. Mahmud Hossain, acting chief corporate affairs officer of Grameenphone, and Maj (ret'd) Kamrul Hassan Bhuiyan, chairman and chief researcher of Bangladesh Liberation War Studies, unveiled the books.



Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad speaks at a seminar titled "One year of Right to Information (RTI) Act: Present status and future plan of work" at the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are MediaWorld Chairperson Rokia Afzal Rahman and Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation Shaheen Anam. (Story on Page 1)

Get ready to resist attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed yesterday asked the party's leaders and activists to be prepared to resist any attacks on the party.

"We will resist any attempt to ban religion-based politics even at the cost of our life," he said at a meeting at Naya Paltan Community Centre in the city.

Jamaat city unit organised the meeting to protest the government's move to ban religion-based politics and the proposed education policy, which it said was designed to wipe out religious education.

"I am asking all activists of the party to be ready. You yourselves will take initiatives to resist any attacks on Jamaat," Mojaheed said.

He also asked the party's city unit leaders to organise 14 meetings in different places across the city like the ruling Awami League-led grand alliance is doing.

Party's Assistant Secretaries General Abdul Quader Molla and ATM Azharul Islam, and Publicity Secretary Prof Tasneem Alam also spoke.

WAR CRIMINALS Speedy trial demanded

BSS, Dhaka

Speakers at a discussion yesterday stressed the need for speedy trial of the war criminals, saying that anti-state conspiracies will continue until their trials are completed.

Demanding restoration of the 1972 constitution, they said there is no alternative to running the country in light with the 1972 constitution to build a non-communal Bangladesh.

Gonotantri Party organised the discussion titled 'Reestablishment of original constitution of Bangladesh and trial of war criminals' at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU).

Gonotantri Party Chairman Md Afzal presided over the meeting.

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