



State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Motahar Hossain speaks at a roundtable titled 'A National Priority for Education for All (EFA): Reaching Vulnerable Children' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is former adviser Rasheda K Choudhury and on his right are Dr Manzoor Ahmed and Suman Sengupta. (Story on page 16)

Call to raise awareness to combat childhood cancer

Only 10 to 20 percent get cured in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although 80 percent of childhood cancer cases get cured in developed countries, the figure for Bangladesh is only 10 to 20 percent due to lack of awareness and early intervention, experts said yesterday.

Around 1,60,000 children are diagnosed with cancer globally a year and 90,000 of them die. The number of newly diagnosed childhood cancer patients in the country a year is estimated at 5,400 to 9,450, said Prof Afiqul Islam, chairman of the department of Paediatric Hematology and Oncology, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

At a meet the press programme, he explained various types of childhood cancer, need for early diagnosis and its

treatment.

Sanofi-aventis Bangladesh organised the programme at its Conference Hall at Segun Bagicha in the city. Sanofi-aventis along with the International Union Against Cancer has been running the My Child Matters programme to raise awareness since 2004.

It has been providing financial assistance to the ASHC Palliative Unit for supporting the terminally ill children and to the Paediatric Oncology department of BSMMU for capacity building of the health care providers.

"One third of the children with cancer suffer from leukemia, followed by brain tumors and lymphoma," Dr Afiqul said, adding that the manifestation of child cancer, its treatment and doctors are different than that of adult cancers.

But in Bangladesh due to poor referral

system and as many primary health care providers can't understand the magnitude of the disease for poor knowledge of cancer and its symptoms, a huge number of patients receive treatment at the advanced stage, he said.

He also suggested providing short term training for the health care providers in this regard.

He also said the drugs for treating cancer patients are also expensive and unavailable and that the government should address this issue.

Managing Director of Sanofi-aventis Iftekharul Islam said that more social research should be conducted on childhood cancer to get the right picture and make the people aware of it.

Salma Choudhury, chairperson of Ashic Foundation, was also present at the programme.

AL cadres attack BNP demonstration

UNB, Dhaka

A group of unruly Awami League cadres yesterday afternoon unleashed an attack on a BNP demonstration at Alam Market premises in the city's Jurain area, vandalising the dais and driving out demonstrators.

Soon after a speech by BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain at the pre-procession rally, a group of ruling AL activists numbering about 50 appeared at the venue and swooped on the rally chanting 'Joy Bangla' slogans around 4:50pm and chased the BNP leaders and workers.

The incident took place in the presence of huge numbers of police but they did not take any steps to contain the attackers.

Some of the attackers threw bricks towards the gathering, but till the filing of this report at 5:00pm, no injuries had been reported. Following the attack, the demonstrators left the venue.

Later, AL activists brought out a procession in the area chanting slogans in favour of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

As part of the ongoing demonstrations in different parts of the capital organised by

BNP that began on Wednesday, demonstrations were held at 10 points in the city yesterday demanding a resolution to the crisis of electricity, gas and water.

Addressing that rally in front of Alam Market under Shyampur thana before it came under attack, BNP leader Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said any government which cannot provide electricity, water and gas has no right to stay in power.

He said people of the entire country are now aggrieved following the failures of the government.

Mosharraf criticised and refuted the prime minister's recent statement blaming the last BNP led four-party alliance government for the present crisis of electricity, water and gas.

The demonstrations took place peacefully in other areas led by the central leaders including Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir at Mirpur, city Mayor Sadeq Hossain Khoka in front of Moshra Bhaban under Ramna thana, Brig Gen (ret'd) Hannan Shah at Mohakhali-Gulshan area, Mirza Abbas at Khilgaon crossing and Abdul Moyeen Khan in front of New Market.

Wildlife Trust course begins

UNB, Dhaka

A two-day refresher course began at Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh's Conference Room in the city as a follow up of the Human-Elephant Coexistence (HEC) series workshop.

Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh (WTB), Bangladesh Forest Department and Zoo Outreach Organization, India jointly organised the workshop.

The purpose of this workshop is to evaluate the effectiveness of the previous workshops by assessing how well the participants who live in and around the elephant zone cope up with the situation to mitigate life and resource loss.

Dr Tapan Kumar Dey, Conservator of Forests, Wildlife and Nature Conservation Circle, Forest Department was present in the inaugural session as the guest of honor. The chief executive of WTB Prof M Anwarul Islam presided.

'BNP will stay in Bhola-3 by-polls'

UNB, Dhaka

The BNP will stay in the Bhola-3 by-election unless they are 'kicked out', the party's Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said yesterday.

The party will not pull out of the April 24 fray, he said at a press briefing at the party's central office at Naya Paltan in the city when the reporters wanted to know the party's stance following BNP candidate Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed's request to defer the by-election by a week.

Delwar, however, termed Hafiz's demand logical, saying that illegal arms still remains in the wrong hands in Bhola-3 constituency (Lalmohan-Tojumuddin), which need to be recovered to ensure a free, fair and peaceful election.

He also warned that consequences will 'not be good' if the Election Commission wants to manipulate the

election.

In this regard, Delwar reminded newsmen of the consequences of the Magura by-election in 1994.

Termining the Election Commission an agent of the government, he said the EC is busy implementing the blueprint of the government in Bhola-3 to ensure a win for the ruling party candidate.

He said the AL is trying to prove some level of popularity by snatching the win in the election through terrorism and rigging and using the administration.

Delwar alleged that a group of journalists have formed a 'syndicate' and are making reports in favour of a party (the ruling party). A more serious allegation from him was that many criminals and activists of the ruling party had disguised themselves as journalists and become election observers.

Govt believes in secularism: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed her and her government's strong commitment to ensuring religious freedoms and the dignity of each and every person, asserting her present government's belief in secularism does not preclude religion.

"Secularism does not mean not believing in religion," Hasina said while chairing the first meeting of the National Council for Women and Children Development (NCWCD) at the Prime Minister's Office.

She said everyone is fully free to practise his or her religion with dignity, adding that her government will try its best to maintain freedom of expression and the freedom to practise whatever faith one chooses.

Focusing on the core theme

of the meeting, Hasina directed the Women and Children's Welfare Ministry, as well as other ministries and departments concerned to form a committee and chalk out a holistic plan for rehabilitating all the street children.

Hasina said the working women will have to be provided with safe accommodation, while day-care centers need to be set up in all offices to facilitate a tension-free working atmosphere for them.

She called strongly for the eradication of trafficking in women and children, and the use of children in peddling drugs.

Hasina stressed the need for setting up offices of the Jatiya Mahila Sangstha (National Women Organisation) at every upazila for the betterment of women, as it now has branches in 50 upazilas only. She laid special emphasis on helping the disabled women and children with disabilities.

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No headway in cop murder probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three days have elapsed since the murder of Sub-inspector Gautam Roy in the city but law enforcers are yet to establish its motive or arrest the killers.

Investigators said they got the names of the suspected killers after interrogating some locals including the victim's two friends -- Shamim and Azam -- and a night guard -- Aziz -- who witnessed the incident.

Unidentified gunmen killed the second officer of Bangshal Police Station, and wounded his hotelier friend Mohammad Shamim near Mohiuddin Market at Dholaikhal at about 2:30am when Gautam and his friends Azam reached the spot in Shamim's car where Shamim was waiting.

Investigation officer of the case Mohammad Jalal Uddin, also a sub-inspector of Sutrapur Police Station, said, "We have names of the suspected killers but we are trying to find out their residences. Primarily, we suspect that the killers are associates of Dakait Shahid."

He said the killers will be arrested soon as they have been identified. But, they could not ascertain the cause behind the killing before the arrests, the IO added.

Officer-in-Charge Nazrul Islam of Sutrapur Police Station said, "We're almost sure who were the shooters and now we are trying to ascertain whether the killers were hired or cohorts of Dakait Shahid."

Shawkat gets bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Two Dhaka courts yesterday granted bail to Shawkat Mahmud, adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, in two defamation cases filed against him on charges of making derogatory remarks about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mostafa Shahriar Khan granted bail to Shawkat in a case filed on March 25 by Advocate Moshirur Malek, president of Bangabandhu Foundation.

The court of Metropolitan Magistrate Shahadat Hossain also granted him bail in another case filed on March 28 by lawyer PK Abdur Rob.

The magistrates passed the bail orders upon a bond of Tk 5,000 with two guarantors after Shawkat along with his lawyers appeared before the courts and sought bail.

In his complaint, Malek said Shawkat Mahmud, also president of the National Press Club, at a rally organised by local BNP at a hotel in Cox's Bazar on March 20 called Qamrul Islam a low quality lawyer that had tarnished the image of the state minister.

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Romesh Shil: The Tale of the Kobiyal

Send your comments & contribution to

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