



Editor of The Daily Star and Publisher of Shaptahik 2000 and Anandadhara Mahfuz Anam along with the guests cuts a cake at the inaugural ceremony of 12th anniversary celebrations of the two magazines.

## Quality of public health services declining

Reveals study

DU CORRESPONDENT

The quality and use of public health services are declining gradually with the increasing use of private health services in the country, revealed a study yesterday. The study, run by Sweden-based donor organisation Sida in nine locations across the country, says people's dependency on the government health services continue to decline as the services are grossly understaffed, uncertainty of receiving expected services and fear of imposing additional costs by gatekeepers come in people's mind. The study styled 'Reality Check Bangladesh 2009: Listening to Poor People's Realities about Primary Healthcare' was conducted on 27 families in urban slums, peri-urban villages and

rural villages in three northern, central and southern districts. Taking the form of a 'listening study', researchers documented people's experiences and perception of changing health and education services based on short intensive home stays with the families living in poverty. The report of the study was placed at a dissemination and discussion session on sharing of findings at Cirdap auditorium in the city. Sasthya Andolon, a network of researchers and physicians, organised the programme on behalf of Sida (Swedish International Development Agency). The study found that people actively seek access to health services from a variety of providers but they have limited information about the services.

Being failed by the formal medical services, people tend to go to traditional health service providers where service is cheap but quality may be variable. Most people still feel unable to complain about poor public services and view most health professionals as remote and non-responsive. The study recommended that awareness must be raised among people to demand for better services, and key public health issues, including excessive salt intake, public spitting and first-aid awareness, should be increased using simple messages. The team leader of the northern district Enamul Huda and a member of southern team Nurjahan Begum presented the findings.

## Shaptahik 2000, Anandadhara celebrate 12th anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shaptahik 2000, a weekly magazine, and Anandadhara, a fortnightly entertainment magazine, celebrated their 12th anniversary amid festivity yesterday. Eminent citizens of the country, politicians, government officials, media personalities, artistes, writers and poets joined the day-long celebrations that began with the ceremonial cutting of a cake at the office of the two magazines in the city at 12:00 noon.

Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star and publisher of Shaptahik 2000 and Anandadhara, along with University Grants Commission Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam, former state minister Dharendra Debnath Shambhu, Abdullah Al Kaiser MP, CPB general secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, media personality M Hamid, Asma Jerine Jhumu MP, singers Shaheen Mahmud and Fahmida Nabi, and Chayanika Chowdhury cut the cake.

Media personality Abdun Nur Tusher moderated the inaugural ceremony.

Maj Gen (ret'd) Akbar Khan Rono, Prof Abu Sayeed, Prime Minister's APS Saifuzzaman Shikhor, Information Secretary Kamal Abu Naser Chowdhury, singer Fakir Alamgir, Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, former foreign minister Abul Hasan Chowdhury, former adviser to the caretaker government Rasheda K Chowdhury, actor Afzal Hossain, Berger MD Rupali Chowdhury, Unitrend CEO Tusher Das and Channel i MD Faridur Reza Sagar also came to the office to express their greetings. Cultural functions were also held on the occasion.

## 'Integrate dalit children into mainstream edn'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children of dalit and harijan communities should be integrated into the mainstream of education, as they are deprived of the right to education, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

The constitution guarantees that no citizens of the country will face discrimination based on their religion, cast or gender, but dalits and harijans are deprived of their fundamental rights, they said.

An estimated five to 12 percent of sixty lakh dalits and harijans living in the country are educated, according to Bangladesh Harijan Oikya Parishad (BHOP).

The discussion on 'Inclusion of Dalit/Harijan community in the mainstream of education' was organised by Sharee, a non-government organisation, in association with Oxfam at the National Press Club.

The speakers called on the government to set up pre-primary schools in dalit-populated areas across the country to ensure easy access for Dalit children to schools.

Nirmal Chandra Das, secretary general of BHOP, presented the keynote paper at the discussion.

"Members of the dalit and harijan communities are falling behind day by day due to lack of their awareness about education," he said.

The dalit children think that they would not benefit from studying as they won't get any job, he said and called for elimination of discrimination against dalits in jobs.

He also demanded quota for children of dalit and harijan community in higher education.

Biren Shikder MP was present as the chief guest while Gul Hossain, agriculturist and executive committee member of Sharee, presided over the discussion.



Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury puts his signature on his resignation letter yesterday before submitting his nomination paper as a mayoral candidate in the upcoming Chittagong City Corporation elections. On his right is ward councillor Jahirul Alam Dobhas who will act as mayor until the expiry of the corporation's tenure on June 25. (Story on Page 1)

## BELA LEGAL NOTICE

### 'Stop commercial cultivation at Madhupur Sal Forest'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) yesterday served a legal notice asking the government to stop commercial cultivation of banana and pineapple on the land of Madhupur Sal Forest, including Aronkhola range, and restore the natural forest in occupied areas at Madhupur National Garden.

In the notice, Bela said that an influential quarter have felled hundreds of Sal trees on 250 acres of Aronkhola range in the last one year, and at present

Sal trees on three square kilometers area of Magontinagar village of Aronkhola union are being felled overnight in order to create commercial fruit gardens.

Secretaries to the ministries of environment and land, chief conservator of the department of forest, director general of directorate of environment, deputy commissioner of Tangail, assistant commissioner (revenue), assistant commissioner (land), divisional forest officer, Upazila Nirbahi Officer and Upazila chairman of Madhupur have been made respondents in the legal notice.

## AL attitude weakens unity of grand alliance: Menon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon yesterday blamed the Awami League (AL) for weakening the unity of the 14-party grand alliance. He said this while he was speaking at a press conference at his party office Topkhana road in the city. He said the AL ignores the opinion of the alliance partners in different sectors. There is no representation of the alliance partners in different vital sectors like law and order maintaining committee, land reform committee, education committee and different agriculture programmes. Such an attitude of the AL is weakening the unity of the alliance, he said. He said in protest against the AL attitude and to inform the people about the situation, Workers Party will hold a public meeting at Muktangan in the city on Saturday. He said unity of the pro-liberation democratic forces is must as the government has started the process of trial of war criminals. Rather, the AL has been weakening the unity of 14-party grand alliance by ignoring its partners. Strongly criticising the opposition BNP

for announcing hartal on June 27, Menon said, "No such a situation is prevailing in the country it can enforce a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal." Party General Secretary Anisur Rahman Mallik read out a written statement at the press conference and placed a 10-point demand urging the government to meet those immediately. The demands include immediate arrest of the identified war criminals and their trial, restoration of the constitution of 1972 and ban on politics of anti-liberation forces, immediate solution to water, gas and electricity crises, announcement of a wages commission for the workers, resistance to foreign interference in fuel sector, introduction of rice purchasing centre at different points in rural areas to ensure just price for the farmers and holding of all local government elections immediately. The party will also hold rallies and submit memorandums to deputy commissioner's offices at districts to press their demands, Mallik said. Party politburo members Bimol Biswas, Kamrul Ahsan and Fazle Hossain Badsha were present at the press conference.

## CASE AGAINST ACC BOSS Hearing on admissibility on June 27

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday re-fixed June 27 for hearing on the admissibility of the case filed against Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) chairman and two others for asking former energy adviser Mahmudur Rahman to explain some alleged corruption charges. Judge Imrul Kayesh of the First Joint District Judge's Court passed the order after Mahmudur's lawyers submitted a petition seeking an adjournment of the hearing. In the petition, lawyers said their client would file an appeal with the higher court challenging the legality of the ACC notice that asked Mahmudur Rahman to explain several alleged charges of corruption brought against him into an investigation. The allegations include gaining financial benefits by abusing power from Shinepukur Ceramics Ltd, illegally employing one Lutfullah at the Board of Investment and unusual transactions with IFIC Bank Ltd at Dhanmondi branch in the city. Acquiring wealth through illegal means, sending workers abroad by using false identities and holding a meeting with government officials at Uttara were also among the allegations made by the ACC. The defendants are ACC Chairman Ghulam Rahman, its Deputy Director (training) Mohammad Zahirul Huda and a deputy director-2 (unnamed) at the Prime Minister's Office. In his plaint, Mahmudur, also former executive chairman of Board of Investment, said the ACC in the notice on March 10 asked him to appear at its head office on March 16 to explain the allegations. Mahmudur Rahman, also acting editor of the daily Amar Desh, filed the case against the three on April 12, even though the operation of the notice expired on March 16.



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 Know Bangladesh Better

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