

Existing laws enough to stop road crashes

Law minister tells seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terming the existing laws sufficient to prevent road accidents, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said the government will take more steps if necessary to avoid road crashes.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at a seminar on "Prevention of road accidents: social, state and legal steps" jointly organised by Saif Foundation, Families United Against Road Accidents (FUARA) and Dhaka Officers' Club at the club's auditorium yesterday morning.

Shafique said the ministries of home and communications are tasked with controlling the vehicular movement.

The ministries must see to it that the vehicles are not overloaded and reckless driving and overtaking do not happen, he said.

The minister said the novice drivers manage driving licences by unfair means from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and BRTA officials have to be honest in this regard.

Shafique said there are provisions in the existing laws of punishment against the persons responsible for road accidents, but the offenders often go unpunished, as they are not

convicted in the law court due to faulty police reports in the cases over road accidents.

The home ministry should look into this matter, he added.

Advocate Tarana Halim, MP, presented a written statement saying that on an average around 4,085 road accidents occur and some 3,370 people die and 2,881 are injured every year across the country.

She said most road accidents happen due to reckless driving and exemplary punishment to the drivers is called for in such cases.

State Minister for Home Shamsul Huq Tuku said the existing laws need to be amended and the drivers and owners of vehicles have to be made aware about the accidents.

BRTA Chairman M Ayubur Rahman said some 209 places on the highways have been identified as vulnerable to road accidents across the country.

M Abdul Aziz, cabinet secretary, also chairman of Dhaka Officers' Club, presided over the function, which was addressed by, among others, Primary and Mass Education Secretary Abu Alam M Shahid Khan, Chairman of FUARA Eram Ahmed, and Saif Foundation Chairperson Samia Halim.



Sectors Commander Forum comprising the sector commanders of the War of Liberation forms a human chain in front of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the city yesterday demanding trial of the war criminals. (Story on Page 16)

WORLD POPULATION DAY TODAY

Decrease in use of contraceptives a threat to population control

Says health minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

High rates of unmet need for family planning is posing a threat to population control, said

Health and Family Welfare Minister Prof AFM Ruhul Haque said yesterday.

The unmet need for family planning, which means the couple who want to use contraceptives but could not, is still 17.6 percent, the minister said.

He said this while he was speaking at a press briefing at the health ministry conference room prior to the World Population Day.

The minister said it was 11.3 percent in 2004. It means the unmet need has increased more than 6 percent in last few years for lack of awareness, which must be addressed properly.

As elsewhere across the globe Bangladesh observes the World Population Day today with the slogan 'Everyone Counts.'

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has taken different programmes to mark the day including rally, discussion, film exhibition, special health

service, painting exhibition, distribution of family planning media award 2010 and special programmes on media.

Prof Ruhul highlighted the country's population scenario, challenges of population control and the government's steps to address the issue.

"Every year some 20 lakh new faces have been added to our population. The number of population has been increasing as the infant mortality rate has decreased for years together and the average life expectancy has increased. Much could be done if we could address the unmet need of the married couple," he said, admitting that shortage of family planning workers has been hindering the programme.

A field level family planning worker was to recruit during the 70s to educate and provide contraceptives to 600 couple. But family planning workers were not recruited accordingly during the previous years though the number of population had increased and the programme has slowed down, said the health and family planning officials.

They said a family worker is to cover

nearly 2000 couple currently, which is quite difficult for them.

Prof Ruhul said recruitment for the directorate general of family planning will begin soon.

Terming dropout rate of using contraceptive a big challenge, the Director General of Family Planning Abdul Quaiyum said it is 40 percent.

The authorities are hopeful as the use of contraceptives by males has increased to 15 percent from 0.7 percent for continuous awareness programme.

Furthermore, satellite clinic at each upazila, reforms in district committees and population council, establishment of community clinics and increased number of skilled birth attendants will play an important role in population control, they said.

State Minister Captain (Retd) Majibur Rahman Fakir, Secretary Shaikh Altaf Ali, Director General of Health Services Prof Shah Monir Hossain and Director (IEM) of Family Planning Ganesh Chandra Sarker were present at the briefing.

Govt to resume operations of closed jute mills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken initiatives to resume operations of the closed jute mills in the country to restore its former glory, Textiles and Jute Minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui said yesterday.

The minister was addressing an open discussion titled "Golden Fiber of Bangladesh: Reality, Possibility and Our Duty" as the chief guest at the Senate Hall of Jahangirnagar University (JU), says a press release.

The minister alleged the country's jute sector has been spoiled in a planned way and the neighbouring countries have grabbed this opportunity to flourish theirs.

To ensure fair price for the jute farmers, the government has fixed the minimum price at Tk 1,100 per maund this fiscal, added Latif.

State Minister for Labour Begum Munnujan Sufian and Vice-chancellor of JU Prof Sharif Enamul Kabir addressed the programme as special guests.

Earlier, the minister inaugurated an exhibition on jute products at the university auditorium.

War crimes trial to free nation from stigma

Speakers say at discussion

BSS, Dhaka

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said trial of war criminals is not for taking revenge but to free the nation from the stigma of war crimes committed during the War of Liberation, leaving 30 lakh innocent Bangalees martyred and two lakh women violated.

By holding trial against the heinous crimes against humanity and barbarism taken place during the country's great War of Liberation, they said the nation should have been freed from such a curse long ago.

Bangabandhu Samajkalyan Parishad organised the discussion titled 'War criminals' trial: Progress and what is to be done' was held at the National Museum with its city unit President MAH Haider in the chair.

Former Dhaka University Vice Chancellor and member of the advisory council of Bangladesh Awami League Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Haroon-or-Rashid, War Crimes Facts Finding Committee Convener Dr MA Hasan, Bangabandhu Samajkalyan Parishad

President Engineer Dr Shamsul Haq Bhuiyan, General Secretary SM Bahlul Majnun Chunnun, Dr M Anwar Hossain, Engineer MA Taleb, ABM Shafiqul Alam, Khoka Shikder and Dr Anup Kumar Goshal took part in the discussion.

Prof Azad said the people are now active with their demand for trying those directly involved in the heinous crimes against humanity in 1971. They (people), he said, voted overwhelmingly Awami League to power during the last general election in support of upholding the PM's commitment to try the war criminals.

He said the trial would be an international standard and there is no scope for violation of human rights in the trial process.

Dr MA Hasan accused Ziaur Rahman of giving amnesty to the collaborators by annulling the collaborators' act after the 1975 changeover. Zia was also responsible for rehabilitating the war criminals in politics and giving them voting rights," he said, demanding annulment of all ordinances formulated by the army governments.

Cotton godown gutted at Fatulla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayan

Thirty machines and huge cotton were gutted in a fire at a cotton godown at Purba Delpara of Fatulla in Narayananganj yesterday.

Fatulla Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge Jibon Kanti Sarker said the fire started around 3:45pm at the cotton warehouse of Aftab Textile Mills in the area. The workers of the factory tried to douse the fire that went up to 30 to 40 feet high in the air.

On information, fire fighters from Mondalpara, Hajiganj and Demra Fire Service stations brought the blaze under control after one hour of efforts. The fire originated from an electric short circuit said owner of the mill Abul Bashar quoting fire service.

Subsidised power plants to increase output cost

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a discussion said setting up quick rental power plants would eventually increase production cost instead of solving power shortage in the country.

They said highly subsidised rental power scheme would increase the price of electricity. As a result, production cost would also be increased and this process ultimately will create a negative impact on people's purchasing power and economy.

Bangla weekly Shaptahik organised the roundtable discussion titled "Power crisis and public interest" at BIAM auditorium yesterday.

They also questioned the process of selecting companies to set up these quick rental stations without tender.

Presenting the keynote paper Shuvo Kibria, assistant editor of the weekly, said PDB will have to spend around Tk 5,000 crore as subsidy to purchase power with high cost from these foreign stations and sell it at a lower cost to the

public, they added.

Aminul Islam Chowdhury, former energy advisor to a caretaker government, said some of the rental companies are bringing aged generators, which would not work properly instead consume more fuel and create more emission.

Economist Prof Anu Mohammad said Petrobangla is now considered a "losing enterprise" and blamed the World Bank's prescription for it. He also criticised the government for declining condition of PDB gradually.

He said additional fund for PDB in recently announced budget is actually subsidy allocation for purchasing electricity from these foreign companies.

Justice M Gholam Rabbani, BD Rahmatullah, former director general of power cell, Kazi Faruk, chairman of Consumers Association of Bangladesh, Prof Abu Ahmed, Engineer Sheikh Md Shahidullah, Maj Gen (Retd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury Bir Bikram, among others, spoke.

As the festival of Eid approaches, The Daily Star is putting together the Star Fashion- Eid Album 2010, right ahead of the country's largest shopping season.

If you wish to participate, send outfits and accessories you would like to feature in the album.

In consideration of aspirant participants' requests the last date for submission is extended till July 12, 2010
Product receiving time : 12 noon to 4 pm

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(For submission of products)

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Criteria for Participation:

1. Dresses, such as punjabis, pants, shirts, shalwar-kameez, baby wear, saris and accessories should express the mood of the festival.
2. Materials used should be locally produced.
3. All submissions must be accompanied with a short description of the product, including price.
4. Designs should be original and fabrics should suit the weather and environment.
5. The attires and accessories sent for the album are returnable.
6. Entry fee per entry is Tk 300 (minimum 3 entries for each participating house).

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