



Urdu Speaking People's Youth Rehabilitation Movement, a youth organisation of Urdu speaking people, stages a demonstration in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding security of Urdu speaking people of Pallabi area.

Invest in sanitation to attain MDG

Experts urge govt, donor agencies

BSS, Dhaka

Public health professionals and NGO activists yesterday sought more investment from both the government and the donors for water, sanitation and hygiene (Wash) sector of Bangladesh.

They urged the government and development partners to increase investment in the Wash sector as poor allocation has already been identified as the main factor contributing to slow pace of achievement of health related millennium development goals (MDGs).

The observation came at a roundtable at Cirdap auditorium sponsored by UN Millennium Campaign, WaterAid, Manusher Jonno Foundation and Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC).

"MDGs 4 and 5 on child and mother survival as well as other health targets under several other goals of the United Nations could not be achieved unless Wash is incorporated as an integral part of

health and development," executive director of PSTC Milon Bikash Paul told the function.

He said that the health indicators that helped Bangladesh towards slow but steady progress to certain goals were also in jeopardy due to lack of proper monitoring and follow up.

Dr Rashid-E-Mahbub, former president of Bangladesh Medical Association, said Bangladesh could not progress much in MDG attainment due not only because of poor allocation to the sector but also for high disparity among poor and the rich.

He said the income inequality among the 'have' and 'have nots' must be removed through pragmatic policies.

Assistant programme coordinator of WaterAid Bangladesh Shamim Ahmed presented a snapshot on the progress of the Wash sector in Bangladesh as field level NGO activists supplemented him with poor condition of water sanitation scenario at villages, especially in hard-to-reach areas that include haor and hill

tracts. A field staff of an NGO said they have conducted a survey in 50 union parishes and seven upazilas across the country and found a frustrating picture of poor peoples' health at local levels.

He said children were found to be dying due to 12 to 14 diseases, a condition that has been prevailed in the country for last 40 years.

"An old man took his young grandson to a distant hospital in haor area by boat spending Tk 800 and brought the body of the boy back in the same boat with the same cost as the boy died without any treatment at the upazila hospital," mentioned NGO activist Muzahidul Islam.

He said the general health strategies could not change the life of rural people, who require local health interventions.

WaterAid country representative Dr Khairul Islam and UNAIDS representative Munir Hossain, among others, spoke on the occasion.

10 killed in road accidents

Locals barricade roads

METRO DESK

Ten people were killed and twelve left injured in separate road accidents at Chittagong, Rangamati, Satkhira, Dinajpur, Brahmanbaria, Jessore and Rajshahi yesterday.

Agitating locals put up barricades on Dhaka-Sylhet Highway, a regional road on Jessore-Satkhira route, Panchagarh-Dinajpur Highway and Rajshahi-Naogaon Highway following the separate road mishaps.

Three people were killed and seven others injured in separate road accidents on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Highway and Dhaka-Chittagong Highway under Patiya and Sitakunda upazila in the district yesterday.

Police said Shaha, 2, son of Abdur Razzak, Patiya upazila correspondent of Bengali daily the Prothom Alo, was killed when a private car and a tempoo collided head on at Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Highway at Kharana under Patiya upazila at around 6:00pm.

Seven others including wife of Razzak were injured in the accident that threw the tempoo off the road into a roadside ditch.

The injured were admitted to Patiya Health Complex.

In another accident Rasul, 14, a class nine student of KM High School, was knocked down by a microbus while crossing Dhaka-Chittagong Highway at Fauzderhat under Sitakunda upazila at around 2:30pm.

He succumbed to his injuries after immediate admission into Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) at around 4:00pm.

In the other accident a farmer Mamtaz, 35, was run over by a truck on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway at Baro Aoulia under Sitakunda upazila at around 3:00pm.

Mamtaz was rushed to CMCH hospital where on duty doctors declared him dead at around 5:00pm.

Our correspondent from Brahmanbaria reports: Students of Kazi Shafiqul Islam Degree College in Bijoyagar upazila of Brahmanbaria blocked the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway for over one and a half hours yesterday morning after a student of the college was seriously injured in a road accident.

Abdul Mannan, deputy commissioner of the district, said a Dhaka bound bus hit Shila Das, an HSC first year student of the college, at Islampur

when she was crossing the highway at about 8:45am.

Shila was sent to Dhaka for treatment.

As the news of the accident spread, the students took to the highway around 9:00am and put up a barricade, creating a huge traffic jam on both sides.

The agitating students demanded a speed breaker at Islampur on the highway.

They withdrew the blockade at about 10:40am after the DC rushed to the spot and assured them of constructing a speed breaker within an hour.

Our Benapole correspondent adds: Students of Jamtola DST High School put up a barricade on Baghachra-Satkhira-Jessore road yesterday morning following a road accident that killed one of their fellows.

The dead was identified as Shimul Hossain, son of Bablur Rahman of Barobaria of the upazila and a class IX student of the school.

Enamul Haque, sub inspector (SI) of Baghachra police outpost, said the accident occurred at Jamtola in Sharsha upazila of Jessore at about 8:00am when a speeding truck hit Shimul's bicycle on way to school, leaving him dead on the spot.

The students removed the barricade when police rushed to the spot at about 10:30am.

Police detained the bus driver.

Our correspondent from Rangamati reports: Three people were killed and four left injured in a road accident at Manikchari upazila of Rangamati.

The victims are Rafique, 22, an auto-rickshaw driver and son of Abdul Kader of Ghagra village under Kaulkhal upazila, Nayon Chakma, 32, another auto-rickshaw driver and son of Krisno Moni Chakma and Kamanashis Talukdar, 28, son of Sukumar Talukdar of the same upazila of the district.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Babul Uddin Sarkar of Kotowali Police Station in Rangamati said a Rangamati bound microbus rammed two CNG run auto-rickshaws, which had stopped near a roadside check post for a security check by police.

Rafique and Nayon died on the spot while Kamanashis succumbed to his injuries at Rangamati General Hospital.

Injured Noha, 10, Ovi, 15, Happy, 25, and Popi, 27, were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Police detained the microbus driver.

A case was filed with the police station in this connection.

Our correspondent from Satkhira adds: A man was killed in a road accident in front of Tarali High School in Kaliganj upazila.

The deceased was identified as Sheikh Mohammad Ali, 56, son of Mandar Ali Gazi of village Rajapur in the upazila.

Police said Sheikh fell from a Kaliganj bound engine-ran van on Kaliganj-Tarali road, leaving him seriously injured.

He was rushed to Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex where he succumbed to his injuries.

On contact Kaliganj Thana Officer-in-Charge (OC) Farid Uddin Ahmed confirmed the incident.

Our correspondent from Dinajpur reports: A retired headmaster was killed in a road accident in Birganj upazila of Dinajpur district in the morning.

Agitating villagers blocked Panchagarh-Dinajpur Highway after the accident for an hour, according to police sources.

The deceased was identified as Amir Uddin, 65, son of Yousuf Ali in Bholanathpur village under the upazila and also former headmaster of Nandagaon Government Primary School.

Police said a Dhaka bound bus hit Amir at Kabirajhat village on Panchagarh-Dinajpur Highway while he along with his grandchild were going to school, leaving him dead on the spot.

After the accident, villagers put up barricades on the highway. Later Birganj upazila nirbahi officer along with other local leaders rushed to the spot and removed the blockade after an hour.

Our correspondent from Rajshahi adds: A student was crushed to death under the wheels of a bus in front of Shalbagan BDR gate in the city at noon.

Following the accident, fellow students barricaded the Rajshahi-Naogaon Highway for one hour, putting their bicycles on the road.

The deceased was identified as Imtiaz Ibne Alam Imon, 14, son of Nur-e-Alam, a class IX student of Rajshahi Cantonment Board High School.

Officer-in-Charge of Boalia Police Station Shahadat Hossain said Imon was run over by a Rajshahi bound bus at around 3:00pm while he was returning home from school on a bicycle.

He was rushed to Rajshahi Cantonment Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Senior police officials rushed to the scene and assured the agitating students that the driver of the bus would be arrested.

Dutch support in water sector sought

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday called for greater diplomatic efforts in seeking cooperation from the Netherlands in managing the country's water sector and also building coastal embankments.

The president made the call when newly appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to the Netherlands M Ali Sarkar called on him at Bangabhaban.

He asked the new Bangladesh ambassador

to take steps to create markets for Bangladesh made ships, jute and leather goods, ceramics and pharmaceuticals in the Netherlands.

Zillur expressed satisfaction over the excellent bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the Netherlands. He asked the ambassador to take measures for increasing trade relations between the two countries.

Sarker said he would try his level best in strengthening trade and commerce relations between the two countries.

Concerned secretaries of the president's office were also present at the meeting.

2 'drug traders' hurt in BDR firing

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Two alleged drug peddlers were injured when Bangladesh Rifles fired on them at Noorpur in Comilla sadar upazila yesterday morning.

Zahid Hossain, 30, and Amin Miah, 55, were admitted to Comilla Medical College Hospital with bullet wounds.

Arbindo Mondal, company commander of 33-Rifles Battalion, Kotbari, said local drug traders confined seven BDR jawans who were conducting an anti-narcotics drive at Noorpur, for nearly four hours since 3:45am.

On information of the confinement, Subedar Abdul Karim of the battalion led a drive to rescue their fellows around 7:00am and chased a pickup van of the drug peddlers.

The pickup van driver injured two of the BDR men - Subedar Karim, 31, and Gazir, 29 - with his vehicle during the chase.

The BDR troops immediately opened fire on the vehicle, injuring its driver Zahid Hossain and his associate Amin Miah.

The troops managed to get the confined BDR men released at 9:00am and seized the pickup van with two cartons containing 200 phensydlide bottles.



Hossne Ara Begum, a resident of Sharat Gupta Road at Sutrapur, speaks at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday protesting 'illegal eviction' from their four-storey house. On her right are Rokeya Begum and Golam Azim.

Increasingly literate India fuels newspaper boom

AFP, New Delhi

When India hosted the World Newspaper Congress last year, Indian editors and owners were a conspicuously cheerful minority at a gathering dominated by doubts over the future of newsprint.

While many papers in industrialised nations have been laying off staff or folding in the face of freefalling circulation figures and competition from Internet news and television, the printed press in India is booming.

A fast-expanding economy, mushrooming advertising budgets, rising disposable income and, above all, increasing literacy rates have fuelled a newspaper renaissance, with new titles and fatter editions appearing by the month.

Since 2005 the number of daily newspaper titles in India has grown by 44 percent to 2,700, according to the "World Press Trends 2010" survey published by the World Association of Newspapers (WAN-IFRA).

That makes it the world leader ahead of the United States with 1,397 titles and China with 1,000.

India also has the world's highest paid-for daily circulation, having surpassed China for the first time in 2008.

"What we have is education levels and purchasing power improving -- there's a hunger among Indians to know," Bhaskar Rao, director of New Delhi's Centre for Media Studies, told AFP.

Even with 125 million households owning a television, "TV only seems to serve as an appetizer -- after watching the evening news they want to read more about the stories the next day," Rao said.

Indian newspapers are also incredibly cheap, with revenue driven by advertising rather than sales.

Most have a cover price of less than four rupees (eight US cents), allowing many households to subscribe to more than one daily.

The market liberalisation of the early 1990s trig-

gered the rapid expansion of an Indian middle class that was hungry for information and represented a boom in potential consumers as well as newspaper readers.

"A race began to reach this audience," said Robin Jeffrey, author of "India's Newspaper Revolution."

"Advertising avenues were the prizes and these would come largely to newspapers that could convince advertisers that they had more readers than their rivals," Jeffrey said.

India boasts the world's largest English-language newspaper in the Times of India, with a circulation of around four million and a well-educated, affluent readership that allows it to charge ad rates more than 10 times those of Hindi and other language publications.

In recent years, newspaper growth has been fuelled by increasing literacy which has opened up more markets apart from the wealthy but numerically limited urban middle-class.

According to government estimates, only 35 percent of Indians could read in 1976. The current literacy level is almost twice that and youth literacy stands at around 82 percent, meaning a massive pool of future readers.

"There's a huge hinterland that's becoming literate and starting to read newspapers," said Santosh Bhartia, editor of the Hindi-language weekly Chauthi Dunia which tackles such issues as slum clearances and corruption.

"They want to read about themselves, their lives, how to improve themselves and they're getting it from language newspapers which talk about local subjects and issues," Bhartia told AFP.

The clearest sign of this broadening appeal is the ascendance of the non-English press. Circulation of Hindi newspapers, for example, has risen from less than eight million in the early 1990s to more than 25 million in 2009.

And circulation figures only tell half the story, as

many more people read newspapers than actually buy them.

In readership terms English-language newspapers are absent from the top 10 where Hindi titles, led by the 55 million readership Dainik Jagan, take the top four spots, according to the WAN-IFRA survey.

They are followed by Tamil, Marathi, Bengali and Telugu titles, and it's not until 11th place is reached that the Times of India pops up with 13.3 million readers.

While such numbers are enough to make a western newspaper owner with envy, the statistic that really stands out is that, in a country of 1.2 billion people, only around 200 million people read a newspaper every day.

"That means fundamentally there are still 800 million to 900 million people waiting to start engaging with newspapers," said Tarun Tejpal, editor of the investigative weekly Tehelka, who aims to launch a new financial paper before the end of the year.

"That's why there is so much bullishness about newspapers and people believe there'll be traction for newspapers for years to come," Tejpal told AFP.

For the moment, Indian newspapers are not struggling with the same competition from the Internet that has been partly blamed for falling circulation in developed countries.

The cost of connections and a lack of infrastructure means Internet penetration remains low, with only 55 million Indian web users. And while there are more than 635 million mobile phone users, just 20 percent have Internet capability.

"Increasing literacy is creating more demand, but many don't have access to the Internet so they're turning to newspapers," said PriceWaterhouse media consultant Timmy Kandhari.

'Govt gaining popularity'

BSS, Dhaka

Minister for Primary and Mass Education Dr M Afsarul Amin has said the government is gaining popularity day by day due to its welfare-oriented activities for the people.

He was speaking at an Eid reunion on Nurul Haque High School premises at Uttar Kattali in Chittagong on Saturday.

Lawmaker Abul Kashem Master, chairman

of Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) Abdus Salam and leaders of Awami League spoke on the occasion.

Afsarul said the people of the country were satisfied with the improvement of law and order during the month of holy Ramadan.

He said the people did not suffer as the prices of essentials during the month of Ramadan remained stable.

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