



Guests at the inauguration of a 10-day exhibition, marking Rabindranath Tagore's 150th birthday, featuring paintings by 150 Bangladeshi artistes on the theme of 'Tagore's works' jointly organised by Bangladesh and India at National Art Gallery of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: STAR

35,000 get back eyesight in 5-yr

UNB, Dhaka

Around 35,000 eyes got back sight under a project the Dhaka Urban Comprehensive Eye Care Project (DUCCEP) over the last five years in capital Dhaka.

Shefali, a 50-year-old widow with four children, was about to become blind due to bi-lateral cataract. But after cataract surgery under the DUCCEP, she got back her eyesight.

She is now a busy vegetable trader at Guntigar Bazar in Juraian of the city and maintaining a dignified life with her family. Only two years back, it seemed like a dream.

Like Shefali, a huge number of the poor in Dhaka city who underwent cataract surgery free of cost under the DUCCEP has gained a new lease of life.

According to DUCCEP, the project began operation in November 2005 to provide eye-care service to the poor city dwellers. About 35,000 impoverished people have got back their sight through the project till April 2011.

During the five year period in two phases, around 35,000 cataract surgeries were performed and some 2.5 lakh eye patients examined under the project.

Among the nearly 12 million population of the capital, some 50,400 adults have been affected by cataract over the years with 10,000 incidence of adult cataract occurring in Dhaka each year. Among the urban poor, over 15,000 are bi-lateral cataract cases and around 22,000 uni-lateral cataract cases.

About 22,000 cataract surgeries are reportedly performed each year in the capital. But the vast majority of these cases either come from outside Dhaka or from upper and middle income group within the city.

The DUCCEP estimated that the number of adult cataract is 58,800 and child cataract 1,400 in the capital while adult refractive error is 381,500 and child refractive error 136,500.

The estimated number of adult low vision is 27,300 and child low vision 14,196.

DUCCEP Project Coordinator M Nurun Nabi said the slums are providing shelter for around four million people in metropolis Dhaka, who lead subhuman life deprived of many basic human rights.

"They earn their livelihood in low-paid jobs like rickshaw-puller, hawker and domestic help - barely enough for food of the family in exchange of hard physical labour. We are working to help the deprived community, proletariats and the have-nots," he said.

Sightsavers and Standard Chartered Bank under its "Seeing in Believing Initiative" are providing support to the project which primarily offer free eye treatment to the slum-dwellers in the capital. However, under this project, others are also welcomed for treatment at low cost. To perform its goal efficiently, Dhaka city is divided into four zones.

The project to run till 2013 is being carried out with the help of four hospitals - Islamia Eye Hospital, BNSB Dhaka Eye Hospital, Ad-din Hospital and Salauddin Specialised Hospital Ltd.

Every month, some 600 people get back their sight through successful cataract operations at no or little cost. People specially poor school students, garment workers, and bus-truck drivers are welcome for primary eye check-up and treatment against refractive error, low vision, and DCR-DCT-Pterygium with cataract.

Beggars, Zakat-recipients, street children, sweepers, homeless, poor persons with disability, domestic help, women-headed household and UPHCP red card holders receive free of cost service under the Dhaka Urban Comprehensive Eye Care Project.

About the blindness scenario of the country, Bangladesh Blindness and Low Vision Survey report revealed that over 750,000 people (among 30+ years) are blind in Bangladesh. Of them, about 650,000 suffer from cataract (79.6 percent). About 150,000 new cases of cataract are added each year in the country.

Sightsavers CEO due today

METRO DESK

Dr Caroline Harper, OBE, the chief executive officer (CEO) of Sightsavers, an international organisation, arrives here today on a six-day visit.

During her visit, she will meet Health Minister AFM Ruhal Haque, State Minister for Ministry of Science and ICT Yeafesh Osman, Deputy British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Acting Representative of World Health Organisation, and CEO of Standard Chartered Bank, said a press release.

During the visit, Dr Harper will inaugurate a partnership project titled "Vision Bangladesh" of Sightsavers, BRAC and the health ministry. She will also sign a tripartite MoU among Sightsavers, Centre for Services and Information on Disability and Bangladesh Computer Council.

Sightsavers has been working in Bangladesh since 1973 mainly to combat avoidable blindness.

Woman killed by stepson

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A mother was allegedly killed by her stepson in Senergati village of Tala upazila yesterday.

Police said the stepson Zahangir Hossain hit the victim Bakul Bibi, 45, wife of Akram Hossain of the village, on the head with a spade during an altercation and she died on way to Satkhira Sadar Hospital. A case was filed.

Boy killed in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenaged boy killed as a speedy bus hit his bicycle at the city's Tikituli yesterday evening.

The dead was identified as Jang Shah, son of Kamal Uddin Shah who lives in Saidabad.

The boy, who worked in an automobile workshop in Saidabad was returning to his workplace after meeting his father at English Road.

A Narayanganj-bound bus of Bandhan Paribahan crushed him and his bicycle at about 6:00pm. He died on the spot, said SI of Sutrapur Police Station Shahin Uddin.



Pahari Chhatra Parishad brings out a procession from Dhaka University campus yesterday demanding a stop to eviction of indigenous people from Bandarban to construct establishments for Bangladesh Army, Border Guard Bangladesh and Bangladesh Air Force.

Appoint Yunus GB chairman

Employees urge govt
OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gaibandha

The employees of Grameen Bank (GB) here yesterday urged the government to appoint Prof Muhammad Yunus chairman of the board directors of the micro-finance institution.

At a press conference, they said Grameen Bank, which employs 26,000 people and has 83-lakh borrower members, might not run smoothly in the absence of Dr Yunus, also founder of GB.

GB Karmochari Samity organised the press conference at Gaibandha Press Club, which was attended by GB's Gaibandha zone employees.

GB Karmochari Samity president (Gaibandha zone) presented the keynote paper at the conference addressed by its Secretary Shuvendu Mohan Roy among others.

SHIP-BREAKING POLLUTION

File counter cases

JS body chair asks yard owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Ship-breaking yard owners should file a case against each filed against them, said ABM Abul Kashem, chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce, yesterday terming the owners "afraid of cases".

Lawmaker Kashem claimed the owners do not bring ships containing asbestos, which are very harmful for the environment.

He was speaking as a special guest at a seminar titled "Environment-friendly ship-breaking industry, our duty" organised by Environmental and Human Rights Development Society, a non-government organisation, at Agrabad Hotel in Chittagong.

Industries Minister Dilip Barua, addressing as the chief guest, said after talking with the owners, he was convinced about their consciousness on environmental issues and they were very much accountable to the country.

Dilip said Bangladesh has no iron mine and so the steel industry is absolutely dependent on the ship-breaking industry. So it is our duty to save this kind of growing industry, he added.

Hefajetur Rahman, president of Ship Breakers Association of Bangladesh, also spoke with the society's Executive Director AB Razzak in the chair.

Four injured in bomb attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Jhenidah

Four people were wounded as miscreants on a microbus attacked a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader with bombs at Hazi Market of Sheikhpura Bazar in Shailkupa upazila of the district last night.

Police arrested one miscreant Malek from Dakbanga Bazar while he was fleeing after the incident.

The injured are Abdul Bari, Jahidul Islam, Atikul Islam and Pukul Hossain. The leader Shamsuzzaman Tuhin is son of Sekendar Ali of Bashantapur village under Shailkupa upazila.

Later, agitating BCL leaders and activists vandalised vehicles and blocked Khulna-Kushtia road for an hour. OC Sagir Mia of Shailkupa said the attack might be over upcoming UP polls.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Representatives of Bangladesh AOTS Alumni Society (BAAS) hand over a donation of Tk 20 lakh to Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Tamotsu Shinotsuka (second from left), for victims of Japan's devastating March 11 earthquake and tsunami, on May 4.



শেলটেক বৈশাখী মেলা ২০১১

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