

Cataract affects 1.5 lakh each yr

Say experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Almost 80 percent cases of blindness due to cataract that the country's people are suffering from are avoidable, said experts at a programme yesterday.

They said according to a latest government survey, 750,000 adults and 40,000 children are suffering from such blindness, mostly preventable through cataract surgery.

Termining cataract as the main cause of blindness, they said current rate of cataract surgeries being conducted cover only one third of the population's needs, creating a huge backlog as 150,000 people are affected each year.

They were speaking at the launching ceremony of Vision Bangladesh Project organised by Sightsavers, Brac and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at Brac Centre Inn in the city.

The three-year project aims to attain target of Vision 2020 -- eliminating avoidable blindness from the country by 2020 -- and backlog of the surgeries from Sylhet division by 2013, said Sightsavers Country Director Dr Wahidul Islam.

A total of 12 upazilas at four districts of Sylhet division were already brought under the project, he said.

Under the scheme, insolvent patients would be provided free screening, treatment, surgeries and follow-up services.

Health Minister Prof AFM Ruhul Haque was present as the chief guest while Director General of Directorate General of Health Service Khondhaker Shefayetullah; Line Director of National Eye Care Prof Deen Mohammad Noorul Huq; Sightsavers Chief Executive Dr Caroline Harper; and Director of Health Programme of Brac Faruque Ahmed; also spoke.

Dr Mahabub Hossain, executive director of Brac, chaired the session.



Students and artistes of Chhayanuat sing Rabindra Sangeet in chorus on the premises of Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday marking the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore.

PHOTO: STAR

KAMRUL MURDER CASE Ex OC denies allegation

COURT CORRESPONDENT

AKM Rafiqul Islam, former OC of Motijheel Police Station, has denied the allegation against him in connection with the killing of Kamrul Islam Momin in 2005.

Momin, a student of Mirpur Commerce College, was shot dead by a group of miscreants in front of his Ibrahimpur residence in the city's Mirpur.

Rafiqul, now in custody claimed himself innocent and demanded justice before a Dhaka court yesterday after the charges brought against him from statements of 19 prosecution witnesses were read out.

He also submitted a written statement before the court denying the charges.

Judge Mohammad Rezaul Islam of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 fixed May 12 for arguments in the case.

A murder case was filed against OC Rafiqul and 25 others on the day of the incident on Sept 13.

UGC to ensure quality education

Pledges new chief Prof Azad on his joining

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

University Grants Commission (UGC) will not compromise on quality education at universities while providing its all-out support for expansion of country's higher education, said its newly appointed Chairman Prof Dr AK Azad Chowdhury yesterday.

"The commission would take a firm position on quality education otherwise, we would produce substandard graduates not capable of providing the right direction to society and contribute in economic activities," he said.

Prof Azad was speaking at a programme marking his joining at the commission yesterday organised by UGC at its auditorium in the city where vice chancellors of different universities were also present. The government appointed him with the status of a state minister for a four-year period.

He said higher education in Bangladesh is not in a position to be proud of though number of universities has increased.

"We have to go for quality education, be it in public or private sector," he said, urging all to strive in improving quality education and developing the research sector.

There is no alternative of knowledge while competing with global partners and this must be created at universities, he added.

Prof Azad said UGC, with everyone's cooperation, would ensure quality education, create knowledge and remove discrimination of knowledge so that the country can turn into a middle-income one in its 50th year of independence.

Later, while sharing his views with reporters after the meeting, he said his first challenge would be to spread quality education and build education oriented to life and livelihood.

"We want to see Bangladesh as a knowledge-dependent country," he said.

Asked about private universities, Dr Azad said UGC would conduct spot verifications and take opinions of other stakeholders of society about private universities to make an assessment.

He added that if the private universities were found running with only business mentality, UGC's stance would be different.

"But our main aim would be to assist them so that they can provide quality education," Dr Azad said.

About empowering UGC, he said there would be an effort to make the commission into a "Commission for Higher Education".

Asked whether he resigned from Advisory Council of Awami League, he said he quit after being appointed as UGC chairman.

New body of Proshika formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The new governing body of Proshika, an NGO, was formed on Saturday for the next two years.

Prof Dr AM Moyazzem Hossain was elected as chairman while Abdul Matin as vice-chairman and Rafiqul Islam as treasurer, said says a press release.

Other members of the body are Advocate Abdul Wadud, Renuka Biswas, Shahjahan Hawlader, Prof Dr M Amzad Hossain, Ashfaq-ul-Alam, Dr Rahmat Ullah and Rokeya Islam.

The new governing body was elected at its 37th annual general meeting.



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Member REHAB

Resist Amini-led alliance

Urge speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Speakers at a rally yesterday urged all conscious people to resist Islami Ain Bastabayan Committee Chief Fazlul Huq Amini-led alliance and come forward to implement Women Development Policy 2011.

The rally was organised by National Women Development Policy 2011 Implementation Committee at Laldighi Maidan in Chittagong, presided over by women leader Jesmine Sultana Paru.

Awami League lawmaker Nurul Islam BSc; Chittagong University Prof Gazi Sallauddin; Chittagong City Corporation Councillors Rehana Begum Ranu and Rekha Alam Chowdhury; Chittagong District Public Prosecutor Advocate Abul Hashem; Advocate Kamrun Nahar Begum; Bichitra Chowdhury; journalist M Nasirul Haque; and Bangladesh Medical Association Vice President Dr Nurul Islam; spoke at the meeting.

Nurul said Amini is a Wahabi (a branch of Sunni Islam) and Amini-led Wahabis do not believe in the constitution of Bangladesh but want a revolution to establish a medieval-aged government in the name of Islam.

He urged the government to arrest Amini on charge of sedition and called on all Sunnis to come forward to resist Amini-led Wahabis.

Advocate Rehana Begum Ranu said the policy contains nothing contradictory to the Quran. The day being Mother's Day, she urged Amini-led alliance to support the policy if they respected their mothers.

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