

TOBACCO FARMING Farmers to get interest-free loans for crop switch

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will help tobacco farmers switch to farming alternative crops by giving them interest-free loans and incentives, said State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mojibur Rahman Fakir at a seminar yesterday.

"Tobacco companies have been encouraging farmers to cultivate tobacco openly by offering advance incentives in cash and poor farmers are taking up the offer because of money problems," he said.

"So we will give them [farmers] interest-free loans and incentives. Several ministries have been working on this matter," he

added.

Marking the National Tobacco-free Day, Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance (BATA) organised the seminar at Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

The government will soon pass "Smoking and Use of Tobacco Products (Control) (Amendment) Act, 2012" to curb the use of tobacco products through strengthening Tobacco Control Act, 2005, he said.

"Under the act, there are provisions for three months' simple imprisonment and a fine of one lakh taka for airing tobacco advertisements," Fakir said adding that the fine for smoking in public spaces will become double from Tk 50 to Tk 100.

URBAN PLANNING Community-based initiatives stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some aspiring urban planners yesterday stressed the necessity of taking community-based initiatives to ease different problems like water-logging and traffic congestion in different areas of the capital.

The outgoing students of Urban and Regional Planning Department of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) came up with the observation at a workshop on "Community Improvement through Participatory Planning", held at the department.

"Water-logging is mostly the result of dumping waste into drains, which clog the drainage system," said Abu Hanif, convener of the workshop. The students conducted surveys in seven different areas of the capital -- Lalbagh, Monipuripara, North Shyamoli-West Agargaon, Hoseni Dalan, Kathal Bagan, Purana Paltan and Bangshal.

Cop sent on remand for possession of phensedyl

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent a police constable on a four-day remand following discovery of 582 bottles of phensedyl in his vehicle on Monday.

Kashim Ali, a constable at Razarbagh Police Lines, was detained with the illegal drug items.

Qayum Ali Sarder, officer-in-charge at Shabujbagh Police Station, said the drugs were discovered after Kashim had a road accident near Bashabo Buddha Mondir in the capital's Shabujbagh area when he was driving a police jeep.

On information the police went to the spot and found two packets full of phensedyl bottles in the jeep, he said.

Later, a case was filed with the police station, he added.

But Shabujbagh police could not know the details of where the drugs came from or what Kashim intended to do with those drug items.

Later, Shabujbagh police handed the case over to the Detective Branch.

The Detective Branch produced Kashim Ali before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court seeking a 10-day remand yesterday.

RISING Stars

From one passionate man breaking the speed of sound to the power of the little people, we take a look at both the big and the small cogs in this complex machine that is life. On the way, we have a guide to cheap food in expensive areas of Dhaka while a bassist patiently explains why he is Batman. Look out for Rising Stars this Thursday.



ALL THIS AND MORE, IN TOMORROW'S RS.

Nat'l Mental Health Day demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday urged the government to declare July 23 as National Mental Health Day aiming to raise public awareness about mental health issues.

They also called upon the government and citizens' groups to ensure justice for people with psycho-social disorders. Laying emphasis on support to individuals with psycho-social disorders, they said there were many barriers to providing psycho-social support to these people and perhaps the biggest was a lack of knowledge about mental health issues and people's negative attitude towards psycho-social disorder.

About 16 percent of the country's total population country are suffering from different forms of psychological problems and the number is on the rise, said Kamal UA Chowdhury, a clinical psychology teacher at Dhaka University, at the seminar, "Psycho-social Disability and Mental Health", organised by Jatiya Pratibandhi Forum at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Meanwhile, the government has taken various programmes, including holding a rally, distributing leaflets, poster, and publishing special supplements in national dailies, to mark World Mental Health Day today.

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