

Fazle Hasan Abed advocates stronger public health system

Inaugurates regional public health confce
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Highlighting health interventions based on water, sanitation, immunisation and safe and nutritious food, Brac founder and Chairperson Sir Fazle Hasan Abed yesterday called for stronger public health systems to improve the population's health status, especially that of mothers and children.

"Child mortality was 23 per 1,000 in New York in 1979 while it was 135 in Bangladesh," Abed told as chief guest the inaugural of a two-day fifth regional public health conference the Bangladesh University of Health Sciences (BUHS) and Department of International Health, University of Oslo, Norway jointly organised at the former's premises in the capital.

Abed said developed countries themselves used effective health interventions in the 1940s which contributed to dramatic improvements but did not implement those in their colonies.

Bangladesh, on the other hand, focused on hospitals and drugs and emphasis on immunisation came only in the 1980s, he said.

Maternal mortality now stands at 170 per 100,000 live births in Bangladesh, a decline from 600 in 1975, according to World Health Organization (WHO).

"The improvement is good, but we have a long way to go," Abed said, emphasising training and deploying midwives in rural areas and on non-communicable diseases.

WHO says 60 percent of deaths in Bangladesh are due to non-communicable diseases like diabetes, hypertension and cancer which experts believe are preventable through better diets, physical exercise, tobacco control, immunisation and better hygiene practices.

Diabetic Association of Bangladesh Secretary
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Private recruiters

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influence of unscrupulous brokers and recruiting agents has come down significantly," Mosharraf told a press conference in the ministry marking International Migrants Day today.

On UNHCR stating that at least 54,000 people from Bangladesh and Myanmar took the illegal, risky route to Malaysia over the Bay of Bengal this year, he said it was a matter of the home ministry.

Victims of cheating or trafficking by brokers or agents can file cases under the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013. Of at least 158 cases filed this year, 116 have been settled, he added. Mosharraf stated of finding most allegations by female migrant workers and their families of the former being abused and harassed "incorrect".

He denied that the 180 migrant workers in Najaf of Iraq were going through an ordeal for the last seven months with their Turkish employer failing to start the project. Claiming that at least 80 of them secured new jobs, he also vehemently lambasted a non-government organisation for allegedly provoking the workers to pressurise their Bangladeshi recruiting agents to bring them back.

Tarique

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political etiquette. No political norms can be found in you although you are senior vice chairman of BNP. It is not evident from your statement that you have any knowledge about the independence and Liberation War," said Mehedi.

The legal notice asked Tarique to withdraw the "unnecessary, unconstitutional and conceited statement" within seven days; or he would face civil and criminal cases. Tarique made the comments at a BNP meeting in London Monday.



The advent of the winter season sees flocks of migratory birds starting to arrive at Baikka Beel, a wetland in Srimongol of Moulvibazar. The photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: MINTU DESWARA

Quality programmes must for popularity

Speakers tell seminar marking Bangladesh Betar's Platinum Jubilee
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Betar's popularity can be restored by updating its equipment and ensuring quality, interactive programmes addressing the future generation and focusing on popular demand and feedback surveys, speakers told a seminar yesterday.

The radio, alongside Bangladesh Television, should have greater autonomy for a better performance with the former's history interlinked with the Liberation War for its crucial role in inspiring the people and freedom fighters, they said.

"Challenges and Responsibilities of our Betar with Fast Changing Context" was organised in the capital's Bangladesh Betar observing the third day of its Platinum Jubilee.

Stressing creative programmes, Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor said,
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WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Another implicates Siraj, Latif in 42 Hindu killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When the Pakistani army and Razakars cordoned off the market, Ananda and his father Moni Lal held each other closely in fear. But they would be separated soon.

"While I was holding my father closely, Razakars hit me in the left of the head with the rifle's butt," Ananda told the International Crimes Tribunal-1, showing the scars he still bears.

"The Razakar that hit me...was Siraj Master," he said, testifying as the eighth prosecution witness against Sheikh Sirajul Haque alias Siraj Master and Abdul Latif Talukder, two alleged Razakars of Bagerhat.

Ananda went on, "meanwhile, accused Abdul Latif Talukder came there and dragged my father. I held father again" but Latif started beating the two before his father was slipped from his hands.



Siraj Master



Abdul Latif

Moni Lal was later shot dead along with dozens of other Hindus, the witness said, narrating the incident that happened at Shakhari Kathi Bazar of Bagerhat on November 5, 1971. Ananda and Moni Lal went to the market on that day to sell vegetables, the witness said.

The Pakistani army and its auxiliary force, Razakar, cordoned off the market around 4:00pm and rounded up many

Hindus, the witness said.

"I saw the detainees being taken to the side of a canal and forced to sit down. The accused Siraj blew a whistle twice, and Razakars opened fire on them."

Ananda said he saw the two Razakars take his father to the east of the market where the other detainees were tied.

After the Razakars left, Ananda's mother Laxmi Rani Das
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DISAPPEARANCE OF CTG JEWELLER PALASH

Seven months gone, cops still mum

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Police are yet to find the whereabouts of missing jeweller Palash Dhar even after almost seven months since he disappeared on the way to Noakhali from Chittagong city on May 12.

Palash Dhar, 37, owner of SN Jewellers in the port city's Chawk Bazar area, left the city for Sonapur in Noakhali around 5:00pm to get medicine for his daughter. His wife said he called her around 11:30pm that night and he was not heard from since.

Talking to The Daily Star, Nipa Dhar, Palash's wife, said, "My husband called me from an unknown number at 10:00pm and said his mobile phone has been snatched. Later at 11:30pm, he called again and said he was in Begumganj and that he was in danger."

An abduction case was filed with Chawk Bazar Police Station on May 18.



Palash Dhar

After allegations of non-cooperation from police officials, the case was transferred from Chawk Bazar Police Station to the Detective Branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police on May 22 on demand of family members and jewellers' association leaders.

Although detectives claim that "significant" progress has been made in the investigation, family members of the victim and local jewellers' association leaders say they have not seen any visible headway.

Inspector Aziz Ahmed of DB, the investigation officer, recently told The Daily Star that the investigation was going on.

"We have progressed significantly and will soon find out what happened to Palash," he said but declined to comment on the status of the investigation.
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Unbelievable as it may seem, this rickety bridge over the Thonju Para canal of Kuakata is being used every day by hundreds of locals, including children of four schools, braving the risk of an accident. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Political parties must give women more chances

Prothom Alo roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All political parties must create opportunities for women to participate in all tiers of their organisations -- from the grassroots to national level, said discussants at a roundtable yesterday.

Politicians, irrespective of which political party they belong to, must change their patriarchal mindset to promote women's engagement in politics, they viewed.

The Bangla daily Prothom Alo with support from Democracy International organised the roundtable on women's participation in political parties' leadership at the office of the daily in the capital.

According to the Representation of the People Order (RPO), all political parties must ensure at least 33 percent representation by women in all their committees by 2020.

The discussants, including politicians, academicians and rights activities, also focused on setting up monitoring cells in

each political party and the Election Commission to access how much progress has been made towards achieving the goal.

Health Minister Mohammad Nasim said male politicians have a tendency to marginalise their women colleagues at the grassroots level.

He said they must stop such ill practices.

Osman Faruk, adviser to the BNP chairperson, said women are still facing familial, social and economical barriers that are preventing them from engaging in politics.

Regarding reserved seats for women in the parliament, Osman said this system cannot be a permanent solution for political empowerment of women, but is rather a temporary step.

Congential atmosphere should be created where women are equally capable of directly contesting in parliamentary elections, he said.
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Defence foils hearing

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petitions with the High Court for transfer of the cases to another trial court, as they "would not get justice" here.

But ACC lawyer Mosharraf Hossain Kajol opposed the petitions, saying the HC had already dismissed Khaleda's all leave-to-appeal petitions, clearing the way for holding the trial.

After rejecting the two petitions, Judge Basudev Roy asked ACC official Harun to testify. At that time, Rafiqul came up with four petitions to reconsider his appeals but those were rejected too, and the defence lawyers created a pandemonium. At one point, the judge adjourned recording the statement and left the courtroom.

The court exempted Khaleda from appearance yesterday but passed an order stating that the BNP chief must appear before it on the next scheduled date, December 24, since she skipped the court on three consecutive dates, showing "security grounds".

Earlier, the court failed to record Harun's statement on December 1 and 8.

The other accused include former BNP lawmaker Kazi Saleemul Haque Kamal, and its leader Harris Chowdhury, now absconding.

The ACC filed the Orphanage Trust graft case in 2009 for embezzlement of over Tk 2.1 crore by forming the "fake" trust, which existed only on paper. It filed the other case in 2011 for abuse of power in creating the Charitable Trust.

Both the charities were founded during BNP's 2001-2006 tenure.

220 journos

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According to CPJ, 44 journalists in China are jailed until December 1, 2014, which was 32 the previous year, and reflect the pressure that President Xi Jinping has exerted on media, lawyers, dissidents, and academics to toe the government line.

The administration of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has also maintained repressive measures against the press and this year, Iranian authorities were holding 30 journalists in jail, down from 35 last year, and a record high of 45 in 2012, it said.

A report of Reporters Without Borders on Tuesday said at least 66 journalists were murdered across the world this year while performing their duties.

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