



PHOTO OF THE DAY

RASHED SHUMON



Although a banner says "Section 144 in place: Entry prohibited within 200 metres of exam hall" during an exam of diploma engineers, a jhalmuri vendor sets up his stall right in front of the building. The photo was taken at Dhaka Polytechnic Institute in Tejgaon.

FOOD SAFETY

'Unscientific' reports can hurt consumers' confidence: FAO rep

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is a need for coordination among different government authorities and institutions concerned to ensure food safety while objective reporting in media can help achieve that goal, speakers said at a workshop yesterday.

Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) and BeezBistar Foundation, a non-profit NGO, organised the daylong workshop jointly at The Daily Star Centre at Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

The event was attended by journalists, experts and government officials.

"Media reports on food safety not backed by scientific facts could damage consumers' confidence," AKM Nurul Afsar, national team leader of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said, showing several news clippings in his presentation.

Referring to improper use of formalin test kits in the past, he said hundreds of tonnes of fruits and vegetable have been seized and destroyed, as a result of misconception regarding how formalin works.

"There are concerns [regarding food safety]. But it is not like everything we are consuming is poisonous. Containing chemical below the maximum residue

limit (MRL) is not harmful," Nurul Afsar added.

Referring to a latest study on broiler meat by FAO, he said they found chromium in all samples they tested. "But it was below the MRL."

He said understanding food management chain is important.

Monzur Morshed Ahmed, member of Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFS), said, "Only penalising businessmen will not be fruitful. We have to consider whether they understand compliance or not."

"We need large-scale intervention in all levels of production and food management chain to ensure food safety in the country," he said.

ABM Khaleduzzaman, assistant director (farm) of Department of Livestock Services (DLS), spoke on the state of the country's livestock sector, poultry food supply chain and safety, and the livestock service department's current activities and future projects.

Ghulam Rahman, president of CAB; Prof Nazma Shaheen of Dhaka University; MA Sobhan, president of BeezBistar Foundation; and Mostofa Kamal, executive editor of Bangla daily Kaler Kantho, also spoke at the programme, among others.

Canada lauds Bangladesh for sheltering Rohingyas

Expresses concern over lack of democratic space, rights situation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While Canada lauds Bangladesh for sheltering Rohingyas, it remains concerned about a lack of democratic space and human rights issues in the country, said Canadian High Commissioner to Dhaka Benoit Préfontaine yesterday.

"We note that there are human rights issues which we do raise with the government time to time. We remain concerned about a lack of democratic space in the country, enforced disappearances, and workers' rights," he said.

He made the remarks at a meet the press organised by Diplomatic Correspondents Association of Bangladesh (DCAB) at Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies.

The diplomat also expressed concerns over the lack of media freedom, saying there are areas that the media report well, but there are other areas where it is difficult to report.

"Journalists must have the ability to report facts freely without fear of punishment," he said, adding that Canada will stand up for freedom of expression and freedom of press.

"Promoting media freedom is a key component of Canada's advocacy to strengthen the rules-based international order, democratic resilience, and respect for the right to freedom of opinion and expression," he said.

The diplomat said relationship between Canada and Bangladesh is based on shared values of democracy, good governance, human rights, pluralism and freedom of speech. The relations will continue to grow through various ways including development assistance, bilateral trade and

exchange of education.

Since 1972, Canada has provided over \$4 billion as development assistance to Bangladesh and is proud to have contributed to Bangladesh's significant success in reducing poverty and meeting Millennium Development Goals, he added.

The Canadian high commissioner said his country recognises immense generosity that Bangladesh has demonstrated in welcoming Rohingyas, who fled military atrocities since August 2017.

He said Canada is working both in diplomatic levels -- at the OIC, ASEAN, G7 and Commonwealth -- for ensuring dignified repatriation of Rohingyas and holding the perpetrators of atrocities accountable.

"The real solution to the crisis lies in Myanmar, but as long as they stay here, they should be taken care of," he said, noting the country has provided 86.8 million Canadian dollars to meet humanitarian needs in Cox's Bazar.

Préfontaine said Canada is seeking ways to expand trade with Bangladesh. For the first time, Canada has created a senior trade commissioner's position in Bangladesh, specialised in promoting exchanges in the areas of trade, investment, education and science and technology.

He said according to world rankings, Bangladesh is not an easy country in terms of doing business, but there are significant opportunities. "We are telling Canadians that they should not overlook the Bangladesh market," the diplomat said.

Bilateral trade that was worth 600.5 million Canadian dollars in 2004 went up to 2.36 billion in 2016.

Bangladesh export of garments to

Hill people's problems should be seen from their perspective: Sanjeeb Drong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Government representatives from Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) yesterday said resolving land disputes, dismantling local armed groups, and ensuring rehabilitation of those displaced by Kaptai Lake are some of the major challenges in ensuring stability and prosperity in the region.

Institutions formed in line with the CHT Accord of 1997 -- including the CHT Affairs Ministry and CHT Regional Council -- have to work

effectively, they observed at a roundtable.

Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies (ICLDS), a think tank, arranged the roundtable on "Overall Development of Chattogram Hill Tracts: Importance of Harmony and Coexistence" at Jatiya Press Club.

Speaking at the roundtable, Sudarshan Chakma, chairman of Baghaichhari upazila in Rangamati, said to resolve the problems affecting CHT people, fundamental issues have to be identified first.

The CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission which was formed about two decades ago still has not managed to play an effective role in resolving hill people's land-related problems, he said, adding that the government has to be committed to this end.

"A land survey should be done first in CHT," he said. This will help in assessing land there accurately and ensure coexistence of hill and Bengali communities.

Remote areas of the region are still left out of development activities,

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Ershad's condition improves



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Physical condition of Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad -- undergoing treatment at the Dhaka Combined Military Hospital at the moment -- has improved but he is not out of danger yet, JP Acting Chairman GM Quader said yesterday.

"Doctors said that his condition has improved 25 percent in the last 24 hours. But he is not out of danger yet," GM Quader said at a meeting with party leaders from Barishal and Khulna divisions at a community centre in the capital.

Eighty-nine years old Ershad, also leader of the opposition in parliament, who has been ailing from multiple health complications for about nine months now, was admitted to Dhaka CMH on Wednesday morning as he had fever.

"He is undergoing treatment for acute knee pain, liver complications,

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An aggrrieved Chhatra Dal activist about to throw an egg at BNP's central office in Nayapaltan yesterday to vent anger over its decision to dissolve the previous JCD committee, introducing age ceiling for the new one and expel some leaders.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Holding his own baby hostage

Suspected drug peddler's attempt to avoid arrest ends in vain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As police went to arrest a suspected drug peddler in the capital yesterday, he threatened law enforcers of throwing off his own child from the third floor of a building -- if he is not let go.

"Let me go, otherwise I will throw him outside and police will be liable for his death," he shouted at police, picking up his two-and-a-half-year-old son from the balcony.

The drama continued for around 40 minutes, before police were finally able to arrest Samsul Islam Pakhi along with his brother Badol and seven others.

The incident took place around 1:30pm in Mirpur-2 area, when police conducted a raid at an apartment to arrest the two siblings allegedly over drug peddling.

"There was an escapeway at the back of their flat. At one point, Pakhi even raised a toy pistol of his son to threaten police to escape arrest through the back door. As the police team could not take a decision at the time, they informed higher officials. Additional force arrived at the spot and cordoned off the building," said Dadon Fakir, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station.

Two teams of police -- one inside the flat and another downstairs outside the building -- were deployed during the raid, he said.

Police recovered 155 yaba tablets, 250 grammes of heroin, a toy pistol and Tk 15,000, and seized mobile phones of the family members. Police said the two siblings were accused in several drug cases.

The raid and the unfolding drama drew a large crowd in the area.

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