

PM vows to build poverty-free country

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said hunger has already been eradicated from the country, and vowed afresh to make Bangladesh poverty-free.

"We've been able to make the country free from hunger. So, now we'll have to make it completely poverty-free," she said while inaugurating the weeklong PKSF Development Fair 2019 in the city.

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) arranged the programme at Bangabandhu International Conference Center.

Sheikh Hasina said the government is implementing 125 programmes under the social safety net. An amount of Tk 74,000 crore is being spent from the national budget for the social safety net to alleviate poverty.

"We've been implementing these programmes to strengthen social empowerment. Rural and grassroots people are reaping benefits of the programmes," she said.

The premier said Awami League prepared action plans to fight poverty even when it was in the opposition.

"I always say that our main enemy is poverty. So, we'll have to fight poverty and make people free from it," she said.

Hasina said poverty rate declined to 21 percent from 41 percent in 2006. "But our goal is to bring it down to at least 15-16 percent, so that Bangladesh does not remain poor and can stand on its own feet. Insha Allah we'll be able to do so," she said.

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Sheikh Hasina hands over a lifetime achievement award to Matia Chowdhury for her contributions to poverty alleviation through development of the agricultural sector as a minister during two tenures.

PHOTO: PID

Remove collaborators' names in three months, HC directs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to remove the names of Pakistani collaborators from roads and structures across the country and rename them after freedom fighters in 90 days.

The court also ordered the LGRD and education secretaries to submit a report after complying with the directive on February 23 next year. It also set February 25 for passing further order on this issue, Deputy Attorney General Amit Dasgupta told The Daily Star.

The bench of Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury and Justice Ahmed Sohail came up with the directive while hearing a writ petition filed by Prof Muntassir Mamoon, a teacher of the history department of Dhaka University, and Shahriar Kabir, an eminent writer, in May 2012.

They stated in the petition that many structures have been named after the leaders of anti-liberation forces at different times after independence, which is against the spirit of the Liberation War.

They mentioned that a road in Khulna and an
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4,711 killed in river accidents in 44 years

State minister for shipping tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State minister for shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday told the parliament that a total of 4,711 people were killed in accidents in river ways in the last 44 years.

A total of 539 people were injured and 482 went missing in 657 accidents in river ways, he said in scripted answer to a query of Awami League lawmaker Nurunnabi Chowdhury.

The state minister said that inclement weather, carrying excess passengers, shortage of skilled operators and uncontrolled operation of vessels were some major reasons behind the accidents.

Responding to a question of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal lawmaker Shirin Akhter Khalid, he said the government has taken an initiative to install CCTV cameras at all major river ports -- aiming to ensure the security of passengers who travel on different river routes from the terminals.

The government has taken initiatives to modernise all river ports to provide improved services to the waterway passengers, Khalid said.

He said Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority
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Rab's successes will be devalued if it can't find perpetrators

High Court says on Sagar-Runi murder investigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday observed that the successes of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) will be devalued to some extent if the elite force cannot find the motive and perpetrators behind the murders of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi.

"It is undoubtedly a matter of regret and disappointment that the motive behind the murders has not been found, the offenders could not be identified and arrested through investigation, and they were not put on trial although a long period after the incident has passed," the HC observed.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the observation while delivering verdict on a petition filed by accused Tanvir Rahman, who is now out on bail.

The court said the successes of Rab in tackling terrorism, drugs, illegal arms and food adulteration will be devalued to some extent if the elite force cannot unearth the reasons, find and arrest

perpetrators behind the murders of Sagar and Runi, and cannot put them on trial.

The court ordered the investigation officer of Sagar-Runi murder case to submit a report on the latest status of its investigation and on the involvement of Tanvir Rahman with the incident by March 4 next year.

The HC also exempted Tanvir from personal appearance before the trial court in connection with the case until the investigation report is submitted to that court.

On November 11, IO Khondker Shafiqul Alam appeared before the HC bench as per its earlier order to explain the progress of the investigation and told the court that the investigation of Sagar-Runi murder case is going on.

Relevant samples of the accused and the deceased have been sent to the laboratory of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the USA for DNA test, and the result is yet to arrive, he said while replying to a query from the HC.

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ZIA CHARITABLE TRUST CASE Khaleda challenges rejection of HC bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday filed an appeal with the Supreme Court challenging the High Court order that rejected her bail petition in Zia Charitable Trust graft case in which she was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment by a lower court.

In the appeal, Khaleda prayed to the apex court to grant her bail in the corruption case.

Citing the appeal, Khaleda's lawyer Advocate Zainul Abedin told The Daily Star that the case filed against Khaleda, a former prime minister, was "politically motivated".

There is no evidence of corruption against Khaleda Zia, he said, adding that she is 74 years old and is very ill and therefore, she is entitled to get bail in the case.

Advocate Zainul also said they will move the appeal before the SC chamber judge's bench next week.

On July 31, the HC rejected the BNP chief's bail petition in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case.

Earlier on October 29 last year, a special court in Dhaka convicted Khaleda in the case and sentenced her to seven years' imprisonment in her absence.

It also awarded the same jail term to Harris Chowdhury, political
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DHAKA TODAY

LECTURE
Current Challenges and Future Directions of Agriculture in Bangladesh
Organiser: Reading Club
Venue: Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka
Time: 3:30pm

TALK
Who funds public universities?
Organiser: Rastrachinta
Venue: Ibrahim Mansion, Paltan
Time: 4pm

FAIR
Tax Fair
Organiser: National Board of Revenue
Venue: Officers' Club, Baily Road
Time: 10am

CONVENTION
Anime Expo
Organiser: Anime Expo Bangladesh
Venue: Shooting Club, Gulshan-1
Time: 10am

FILM SCREENING
Definition of Politics
Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani
Time: 5:30pm

FAIR
TARA Business Owners' Fair
Organiser: Brac Bank TARA
Venue: House 15B, Road 50, Gulshan-2
Time: 11am



Over 29 lakh students sitting for PECE exams Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Primary and ebte dayee terminal examinations for fifth graders of schools and madrasas will begin across the country on Sunday with more than 29 lakh examinees.

However, the number of examinees decreased by 254,598 this year. This is the fourth year in a row that the number of students has decreased.

"It does not mean that these students are dropping out," said Primary and Mass Education Secretary Akram-Al-Hossain at a pre-examination briefing at the secretariat yesterday.

The number of students has been decreasing since 2015 and the reason is the decline in the country's birth rate, he claimed.

This year, a total of 29,03,638 fifth graders have registered for the Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE), considered the largest public examination in the country.

Of them, 25.53 lakh students are from primary schools and around 3.50 lakh from madrasas.

The examinations will be held at 7,470 centres across the country and twelve centres in eight foreign countries -- Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Libya, Greece
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PHOTO: STAR

Students formed a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanding an end to plastic pollution.

'She was killed over domestic dispute'

PBI cracks 30-year-old case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sagira Morshed Salam was killed 30 years ago over a domestic dispute -- as opposed to the previous narrative that it was a mugging incident gone wrong, Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) yesterday claimed to have found in its probe.

Her brother-in-law had "hired one of his patients with Tk 25,000 to teach her a lesson", they said.

The information came to light after PBI on Wednesday arrested Maruf Reza (49), who was allegedly hired by the couple -- Dr Hasan Ali Chowdhury (70) and Sayedatul Mahmuda Shaheen (64).

On July 25, 1989, 34-year-old Sagira was shot dead on the road, while going to Viharunnisa Noon School to pick up her daughter Saharat.

Sagira's husband Abdus Salam Chowdhury filed a case accusing unnamed people with Ramna Police Station the same day. But trial of the case remained halted for the last 28 years, following a High Court order.

Speaking at a press conference in the capital, PBI chief Banaj Kumar Majumdar said Dr Hasan, Abdus Salam and Samsul Alam Chowdhury are brothers who lived with their families at a house in Rajarbagh.

Disputes grew among Sagira and her sister-in-law Shaheen regarding different household matters, and in early 1989, Shaheen told her husband to teach Sagira a lesson, Majumdar added.

Maruf, now a real estate businessman, was a notorious criminal of Siddheshwari area at that time, and used to be Dr Hasan's patient.

The PBI official said Dr Hasan hired Maruf with Tk 25,000 to "teach Sagira a lesson", however, he didn't give the money to Maruf after the incident.

On July 25, 1989, Dr Hasan called his brother-in-law Anas Mahmud Rezwana (59), now an NGO official, and told him to stand in front of Mouchak Market to escort Maruf to identify Sagira.
Around 4:40pm, Anas and Maruf followed Sagira on a bike. Before it
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Sagira Morshed

ASK concerned over Rajuk order to vacate office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) has expressed deep concern over Rajuk's mobile court drive yesterday that fined and ordered the rights organisation to leave its Lalmatia office in two months.

The mobile court led by Rajuk Executive Magistrate Jasmin Akhter conducted the drive at the building that houses the ASK office around noon. At one point, she went to the office and asked why the rights body was running its office in a residential area, said ASK in a statement.

ASK authorities presented all the documents of renting the office and stated that they maintained all the agreements as tenant, and that it is not a commercial organisation.

Besides, there are many business entities, schools and other social welfare-related organisations in the area, they pointed out.

Despite that, the magistrate fined ASK Tk 2 lakh and ordered them to leave the building in two
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Not possible without family support

Speakers say on controlling diabetes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unless combined efforts are made by families to maintain healthy lifestyle, diabetes can never be brought under control, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

As a strategy to fight this widespread non-communicable disease, there is no alternative to preventive measures like ensuring healthy diet and physical activity, they also said in the event at Birdem auditorium in Dhaka.

Diabetic Association of Bangladesh organised the event marking World Diabetes Day 2019.

Since 2007, all United Nations member states are observing the day with the slogan "Let's keep our family diabetes free".

According to physicians, the most common long-term diabetes-related health problems are: damage to the eye, kidney, heart, feet and nerves. However, around 93 percent of diabetes cases are type-2, and 73 percent of type-2 diabetes cases are preventable through maintaining healthy diet and disciplined lifestyle, according to International Diabetes Federation (IDF).

For this reason, speakers at the discussion stressed on creating awareness to ensure a positive family environment.

Prof Md Faruk Pathan, chief of the department of endocrinology and diabetology at Birdem General Hospital presented a keynote paper at the discussion.

"Genetic reason aside, undisciplined and unhealthy lifestyle is the main reason behind the spectre of diabetes across the country," said Prof Faruk.

According to IDF, over 450 million people worldwide have diabetes while the number is over 7.3 million (73 lakh) in Bangladesh.

If the disease is not checked, the number of diabetic patients would stand at 1.4 crore by 2040, according to the federation.

"If every member of a family maintains healthy diet and disciplined lifestyle, a diabetic patient would not feel alienated. This would also keep others away from being affected by diabetes," Prof Faruk also said.
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CIRCULATING VIDEO OF NUSRAT Ex-Sonagazi OC pleads innocence

JNU CORRESPONDENT

Moazzem Hossain, former officer-in-charge of Sonagazi Police Station, yesterday claimed to be innocent in the incident of circulating a video clip of madrasa student Nusrat Jahan Rafi being interrogated.

He also demanded justice, after Judge Mohammad Ash Sams Joglul Hossain of the Cyber Tribunal in Bangladesh read out charges against him from statements of 12 witnesses.

He told the court he filmed Nusrat's video for the interest of investigation.

"I did not circulate the video footage of Nusrat," he said, claiming that the footage was "stolen" from his personal cell phone.

At one stage of hearing, the court asked: "Did you at any other case, film video of the victims and complainants during your tenure at Sonagazi Police Station?"

Moazzem replied that he did not do so.

"The complainant filed this case against me to take social, political and economic advantage [of the situation]," he also said.

He claimed that Investigation Officer Rima Sultana did not investigate him following laws.

Then the judge asked: "Did the PBI film your statement during investigation?"

Moazzem said, "No."

During his 35-minute deposition at the court, Moazzem became emotional several times. He also read out a written statement. The judge took his statement yesterday while hearing a case filed for recording and circulating footage of Feni madrasa student Nusrat.
The last prosecution witness in the case Rima
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