



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN, PRABIR DAS

DHAKA FEELS THE CHILL... A worker unloads blankets from a rickshaw-van to deliver those to a hawkers' market in Gulistan, left. With the sudden drop in temperature, Dhaka residents are rushing to buy warm clothes from makeshift shops that have sprung up on footpaths in New Market area. The photos were taken yesterday.

Don't prescribe unnecessary tests

President tells doctors

UNB, Dhaka

Criticising some physicians' tendency of trying to make extra money by asking patients to undergo unnecessary medical tests, President Abdul Hamid yesterday urged doctors to refrain from such practice.

"Reports are often published in the media on wrong treatment and harassment of patients -- resulting from the intention to make extra money. From clinics in the capital to the ones in suburban areas are involved in such malpractice for which the entire physician community is held responsible," he said.

The president said this while addressing the inaugural programme of Bangla Cardio-2019, arranged by Bangladesh Cardiac Society at a Dhaka hotel.

"This malpractice affects the relationship between doctors and patients. You have to be cautious about it and take disciplinary actions against the individuals and institutions who are responsible," he said.

President Hamid also asked doctors to remain cautious about adulterated and expired medicines, and stressed the need for developing skilled physicians for introducing state-of-the-art treatment in Bangladesh.

The government is taking all possible steps to make modern treatment facilities available in Bangladesh, he said, adding that hospitals across the country are being provided with advanced equipment.

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Pedestrian killed by bus in the city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was killed yesterday morning after a bus hit him while he was crossing the road in the city's Asad Gate area.

The deceased, Ashraf Uddin Dewan (65) was a resident of Kalyanpur and an employee of a real estate developer.

Sujan Biswas, a sub-inspector of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, said Ashraf was hit by a bus of Projapati Paribahan around 9:30am.

Pedestrians initially took him to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital. As his condition

deteriorated, he was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

Police seized the bus but the driver managed to flee the scene.

Victim's daughter Tania Akter said her father left home for work in the morning.

Improve living standards of the marginalised

Speakers tell govt at NETZ seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Without improving the living standards of marginalised people, the government's goal of achieving higher GDP growth rate will not be sustainable, lawmaker Shirin Akhter said at a seminar yesterday.

"We [government] intended to accelerate our GDP growth rate, but remote areas of this country are still in darkness," she said.

The general secretary of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) was speaking as the chief guest at a seminar on "Success stories of reach up project: Together with government primary schools" at a convention centre in Gulshan.

NETZ Partnership for Development and Justice, a German-Bangladeshi charitable and independent organisation, arranged it.

Termining education a key changer of people's life, Shirin said the government should enhance its monitoring to upgrade primary education in the country as it is globally regarded as the foundation level of education.

"Their [primary students] curriculum should be modified," she said, adding that students must be encouraged to read books besides textbooks.

She also stressed on undertaking

awareness-raising programmes geared towards primary students and their guardians for a discrimination-free society.

Chairing the seminar, Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), said providing basic education to all citizens is the state's duty and NGOs can assist the government in developing relevant policies.

"Children from marginalised families want to get educated too," she said.

So the government should increase facilities for these disadvantaged students, she added.

Rasheda urged the government to nationally declare a special week every year -- dedicating it for reading books on science and literature, among others.

NETZ Consultant Mohammad Golam Nabi shared stories of primary schools which have been successful in drawing a huge number of bright students by increasing facilities including mid-day meal, adequate classrooms, playground and cultural activities.

Among others, NETZ Country Director Habibur Rahman Chowdhury and Programme Manager Manjusree Mitra spoke at the seminar.

Mosquito menace returns

HELEMUL ALAM

After a short-lived respite from mosquitoes and dengue, residents of different parts of Dhaka are now again enduring the menace as the number of culex mosquitoes has been on the rise over last few weeks.

As both city corporations of Dhaka have failed to clean the waterbodies in time, many areas have been riddled with severe mosquito problem since the arrival of winter.

In the absence of clean-up initiative, waterbodies have become mosquito breeding grounds.

Residents of Mirpur, Pallabi, Gandaria, Mohammadpur, Kamrangirchar, Hatirpool, Moghbazar, Manda, Dogair, Dania, Uttarkhan and Adabor seem to be the worst sufferers.

"The number of mosquitoes is too high... Despite shutting all the windows and doors we can't catch a break," said Fajilatunnesa (65), a resident of Jafrabad in Mohammadpur.

"We use mosquito net, but it's not possible to stay inside the net throughout the evening," she said.

Mainul Huq, also a resident of Mohammadpur area, said mosquito presence has intensified in the neighbourhood over the last month.

"Two or three months back, the



A city corporation worker with samples of culex mosquitoes.

FILE PHOTO

situation was fine due to action taken by city corporation after the dengue outbreak. But once again, the mosquito menace has turned acute. I have to use aerosol every night and put up mosquito nets for protection. Otherwise, it's impossible to sleep at night in peace," he said.

Aslam Hossain Rony, a resident of Wari, said closing windows and doors -- even from afternoon -- is not of much use.

Around a month back it was

tolerable, but situation is fast becoming unbearable; city corporation needs to take immediate measures, he said.

Over the last several years, there has been no initiative to clean the Gandaria DIT plot pond -- a major breeding ground of mosquitoes, said Anisur Rahman, a resident of the area.

"We have already started cleaning waterbodies," said Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Atiqul Islam last week.

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DHAKA TODAY

LECTURE
Role of University Education in Economic Diversification of Bangladesh
Organiser: Reading Club
Venue: Institute of Modern Languages
Time: 3:30pm

Venue: Shishu Academy
Time: 11am

COMPETITION
Beatbox Championship Bangladesh
Organiser: Beatbox Bangladesh
Venue: Jamuna Future Park
Time: 3:30pm

DEBATE
IBA Legacies 2019
Organiser: IBA Debate Club
Venue: IBA, University of Dhaka
Time: 10am

THEATRE
Draupadi Parampara
Organiser: Theatre
Venue: Shilpakala Academy
Time: 7pm

FESTIVAL
National Children's Photography Festival
Organiser: Kashful Factory

MUSIC
Pandora
Venue: Jatra Biroti
Time: 7pm

Ensuring women-friendly market system a must

Speakers say at dialogue on agro-entrepreneurship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To ensure economic empowerment of rural women, a safe and women-friendly market system is a must. At the same time, women also need to directly participate in the key market system, said speakers yesterday at the inauguration of a national colloquium organised by ActionAid Bangladesh on "Market System for Women Agro-Entrepreneurs" at Gulshan in Dhaka.

Dr Sheikh Azizur Rahman, director (administration) of the Department of Livestock Services, said, "We cannot deny the contribution of women in the overall development of the country. Livestock department is always ready to help women entrepreneurs," he said.

Rashida Begum, an entrepreneur from

Patuakhali, shared her story at the programme, saying that women face various problems in selling their products at local markets. She demanded that the government ensure fair price of products by creating a direct connection between women farmers and the key market system.

Halima Begum, another entrepreneur, said she started cultivating vegetables after a training from "Making Market Work for Women" project by ActionAid Bangladesh and later, with the help of local administration and ActionAid, she has been able to earn by selling the vegetables she grew.

During a knowledge session titled "Challenges and opportunities in women entrepreneurship development and decision-making," Tony Michael Gomes, technical programme director at World

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KERANIGANJ FACTORY FIRE Death toll goes up to 21

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another worker injured in the December 11 fire at a Keraniganj plastic factory died during the early hours of yesterday, raising the death toll to 21.

Mofizul Islam (45), who sustained 40 percent burns, died at Sheikh Hasina National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute in the city around midnight, said Resident Surgeon (outdoor) of the institute Dr Partha Shankar Pal.

Hailing from Meghna upazila of Cumilla, Mofizul used to live in Armanitola with his wife and three children.

Three more injured are on life support at the institute while eight are in critical condition at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, doctors said.

The plastic factory at Chunkutia had been operating without permission for years. It had a single gate for entry and exit and no emergency exits whatsoever, said survivors and fire officials.

Locals alleged that the authorities concerned turned a blind eye to the lack of safety measures at the factory even though it had been producing disposable plastic cups and plates for around 10 years.

Keraniganj upazila administration sealed it off on December 13. Relatives of the victims demanded stern action against the factory owner, Nazrul Islam, who is on the run, for failing to ensure safety and better work environment.

Govt committed to fully implement CHT Peace Accord

Gowher Rizvi tells roundtable

UNB, Dhaka

The government is firmly committed to fully implement the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord at the earliest, prime minister's international affairs adviser Dr Gowher Rizvi said yesterday.

He was addressing a roundtable on "Chattogram Hill Tracts Treaty: Context and Implementation" at Cirdap.

CHT Affairs ministry organised the meeting, chaired by its Minister Bir Bahadur Ushwe Sing.

Dr Rizvi said although there is much to be done to fully implement the treaty, progress has been made. "Our prime minister wants full implementation of the treaty as soon as possible," he said, terming land dispute the crux of the issue.

"The law has already been amended so that the problem can be resolved quickly."

Dr Rizvi urged all parties to fully cooperate to complete the task as early as possible. "The faster it can be done, the better it will be for all of us and for the country," he added.

Kujendra Lal Tripura, lawmaker from Khagrachhari district, said the CHT accord's full implementation will face no barrier if the land dispute problem is solved.

CHT Affairs Secretary Md Mesbahul Islam, during a presentation, said out of 72 articles of the accord, 48 have been fully implemented, 15 partially implemented and nine are to be implemented in the future.

Rangamati MP Dipankar Talukder was present, among others, at the discussion.

Underpaid, deprived, discriminated against

Roundtable highlights plight of tea workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tea workers continue to face difficulties due to low wages and lack of available facilities, said tea worker leaders and rights activists at a dialogue session yesterday.

They said the current minimum wage for workers is Tk 102 per day and they constantly face discrimination in areas such as housing, healthcare and education.

Indigenous Peoples Development Services (IPDS) organised the programme at The Daily Star Centre.

Referring to a study done by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), its Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said, "Although tea workers get different facilities, including housing, from tea garden owners, they are not enough."

"Their monthly salary and living expenses amount to Tk 5,231, which is very low compared to other sectors," he said.

He also said tea workers are contributing to the country's GDP and therefore should be provided with more facilities.

Iftekharuzzaman urged tea garden owners to be more attentive to the needs of their workers.

Presenting a keynote paper, Dhaka University Associate Professor Dr Zobaida Nasreen said, "Maternity benefits are neglected in the tea gardens. During



Discussants at the roundtable at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

pregnancy, there is no available facility for check-ups or arrangement of special allowance."

Even during the pregnancy period, they are bound to do heavy work, she said, adding that there is a lack of sanitation facility at the area, and there is no women supervisor to look after these issues.

Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union General Secretary Rambhajan Koiri said the labour law of 2005 is "discriminatory" towards tea workers as there are many provisions that exclude them.

"For example, Section 115 of Bangladesh Labour Law 2005 allows workers from all sectors to receive 10 days of casual leave but

it excludes tea workers from this provision," he said.

Lawmaker Aroma Dutta said government should properly monitor the gardens regularly so that no tea worker faces discrimination.

National Human Rights Commission's member Kamal Uddin Ahmed said, "The tea industry is doing quite well as Bangladesh exports large amounts of tea, but the picture is different when we turn towards the workers."

Rahmat Ullah, dean of Dhaka University's law faculty, and Sanjeeb Drong, president of IPDS, also spoke among others.

KALYANPUR MILITANT DEN CASE

Hearing on charge framing against 10 JMB men on Jan 14

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday set January 14, 2020 for hearing on charge framing against 10 members of the banned militant group Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), in the Kalyanpur militant den case.

Md Majibur Rahman of the Anti-terrorism Special Tribunal of Dhaka passed the order after receiving copy of an advertisement published in two national dailies regarding a fugitive accused in the case.

The accused are: Rakibul Hasan Regan, Salah Uddin Kamrun, Abdus Sabur Khan, Salah Hossain Rash, Habibur Rahman Sagor, Mamunur Rashid Ripon, Shariful Islam Khaled, Abdur Rouf Proddhan, Mufi Maulana Abul Kashem alias Boro Hujur and Azadul Kabiraj.

Of them, Azadul is on the run while Abdur Rouf and Abul Kashem are now on bail. The other accused are in jail custody.

On July 26, 2016, police came across a militant hideout and nine militant suspects were killed after a fierce gun battle. Regan was captured with injuries while trying to flee.

On April 10 this year, Inspector Jahangir Alam of Counter Terrorism and

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