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Work together
to build 'Smart
Bangladesh'
Says president

BSS, Dhaka

President Mohammed Shahabuddin yesterday urged all to work together to build a developed and enlightened "Smart Bangladesh".

In a message on the occasion of the 24th convocation of North South University (NSU), the president, also the chancellor of all public and private universities, said the government is committed to ensuring quality education.

The president also hoped NSU would give more efforts in nurturing critical thinking skills of students so that they can differentiate the right or wrong in their personal and social activities.

"I urge the students to apply the knowledge they earned for the betterment of country," he added.



Three friends play a game of marbles in the capital's Kamrangirchar. As one of them takes a strike, two others eagerly monitor the glass balls as they wait for their turn.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

All countries
must join hands
to achieve SDGs
Says prime minister

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said it is time to work together to achieve the public health goals outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

"This involves helping countries with less resources to improve their ability to handle health risks," she said.

The prime minister said this while addressing the two-day International Conference on Public Health and Diplomacy held at a city hotel.

Hasina said the Covid-19 pandemic has shown that all are connected, regardless of how isolated they feel.

"None of us can be truly safe until we make sure everyone is safe. Now is the time to work together globally to achieve the public health goals outlined in Sustainable Development Goal-3 and Goal-17," she said.

She mentioned that it is crucial to have a strong commitment from all countries and focused diplomatic efforts to achieve this.

"I believe Bangladesh will play a leading role in this effort, considering its past success in protecting public health and dealing with the impact of the pandemic," she said.



SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Ensure
Odhikar's
right to fair
trial: UN

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN experts yesterday called on the government to end all acts of "harassment" against representatives of Odhikar, a rights organisation, and ensure respect for due process.

"This case is emblematic of the use of criminal proceedings to silence human rights defenders and organisations, such as Odhikar and its representatives, who have documented enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings and cooperated with UN human rights mechanisms in this context," the experts said in a statement.

The UN special rapporteurs include Mary Lawlor, Irene Khan and Clément Nyalestossi Voule who are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council.

"Such reprisals also have a chilling effect and may deter others from reporting on human rights issues

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Engage private sector
in climate budget

Speakers tell CPD seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The current climate budgeting process should be reformed by engaging private sector, recommended Fahmida Khatun, executive director of CPD, at a seminar yesterday.

She made the comments while presenting a key-note at a seminar titled "Review of Climate Budget and Recommendations for Green Public Finance Management in Bangladesh", organised by Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) at Brac Centre Inn in the capital.

In her presentation, she spoke about a large gap in expenditures on climate-related initiatives despite the presence of committed national and global funds for the cause.

"Besides, the allocation for climate-vulnerable people in the social safety net should be increased," she added.

The implementation of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) will require USD 230 billion between 2023 and 2050. Climate resilience will require seven times the current spending to transform adaptation, at a rate of USD 8.5 billion per year, with USD 6 billion per year from external sources, she

said.

The allocation required is increasing each year while the budget allotted to this cause has decreased by 0.45 percent in the 2024 financial year from the previous year.

There's a large gap in expenditures on climate-related initiatives despite the presence of committed national and global funds for the cause. Besides, the allocation for climate-vulnerable people in the social safety net should be increased.

FAHMIDA KHATUN
CPD executive director

Citing a World Bank study, she said, "Bangladesh will need at least USD 12.5 billion, approximately 3 percent of its GDP, by 2025."

During her presentation, the executive director also recommended methods for reporting, monitoring, and verifying climate-related expenditures.

Speaking as the chief guest, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on the

environment ministry, termed climate change a "long existing crisis".

"Bangladesh has taken the first steps by addressing their challenges. They now need to solve the challenges that bars us from

mitigating this problem. But many other countries are still unaware of their challenges," he said.

He concluded his speech, saying, "We have made many plans like the Mujib Prosperity Plan and Delta Plan 2100. Enough with the plans, we need to go into action now. Even the biggest allocations will prove to be inadequate if the world fails to resolve climate change issues."

Tanvir Shakil Joy, MP, a member

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Tk 25,000
minimum
wage for
RMG workers
Demand 11 rights
organisations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Economists, lawmakers and leaders of garment workers yesterday demanded that the government set Tk 25,000 as monthly minimum pay for RMG workers.

They also urged the government to facilitate the new wage board, formed on April 9. Eleven rights organisations held an open discussion titled "Wage Question and Garment Workers' Movement" at the capital's Purana Paltan under a joint initiative named "Movement of RMG Workers for Increasing Wage".

Speakers said the minimum wage should be in accordance with current market values.

Prof Anu Muhammad said the price of basic necessities have increased everywhere, yet neither the wages of RMG employees nor those in other sectors have.

"Unfortunately, inflation has become a weapon of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Abul Hasnat never
compromised on
his values

Speakers tell memorial event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abul Hasnat fought against cultural erosion since his student life. He always depended on the truth when it came to cultural practices, said eminent citizens, recalling the Kali O Kalam editor's work and life. Attending the second installment of "Abul Hasnat Memorial Lecture" yesterday, speakers noted that Hasnat was a silent, behind-the-scenes figure in building a nation of rich cultural and literary legacy.

The event was organised by Bengal Foundation in the capital's Bengal Shilpalaya.

Abul Hasnat worried over the gradual cultural decay but he always kept faith in people. He believed that people will choose the right path ultimately.

Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam

Hasnat, who breathed his last on November 1, 2020, at the age of 75, is best recognised as the editor of "Kali O Kalam", a revered monthly literary magazine. He was also a poet, essayist, art critic, litterateur and cultural personality.

Delivering the memorial lecture, eminent academic Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam said Hasnat's contributions to various cultural fields is incomparable.

"Abul Hasnat worried over the gradual cultural decay but he always kept faith in people. He believed that people will choose the right path ultimately," he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Govt needs to adopt a
consumer-friendly policy
Say speakers at CAB press conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The power of government organisations is limited and, in some cases, entirely ineffective to protect consumers' rights, said Ghulam Rahman, president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), yesterday.

That is why there has been no instances of taking actions against the bigwigs involved in price manipulation of commodities, said the CAB president.

He was addressing a press conference on "Rising Trend of Commodity Prices and What's Needed to be Done", organised by CAB at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

It's time to revise the free market policy, he said, adding that it is not possible to make extra profit in a competitive market.

Syndicates of dishonest businessmen are looting thousands of crores from consumers by creating an artificial supply crisis of daily essentials including sugar, onion, eggs and green chili, Ghulam Rahman said.

He suggested forming separate divisions under the commerce ministry to look after consumers' welfare.

However, CAB senior vice-president Prof M Shamsul Alam said the commerce ministry looks after the businesspersons' welfare. "Now if the same ministry is assigned to protect consumers' rights, then it will not be implemented," he added.

"We want a separate ministry free from the influence of other ministries to protect consumers' rights. And it will consider consumers' interest as its core responsibility," said Shamsul Alam.

He also said the activities of different regulatory organisations -- including the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection, and Competition Commission -- should have strong monitoring mechanisms at every level from import to retail market.

CAB General Secretary Humayun Kabir Bhuiyan blamed unscrupulous businesspeople for the price hike of onion, potato, green chili and other commodities.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



The Gabindapur canal in the capital's Shonirakhra remains choked with plastic waste. Local have set up makeshift bridges on it to cross over. Meanwhile, the platforms are also being used as a parking and storage space.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Lawmaker
Rebecca
Momin
passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rebecca Momin, Awami League lawmaker from Netrakona-4, died at

Square Hospitals in Dhaka early yesterday. She was 76.

"Rebeka Momin breathed her last at around 4:30am today [Tuesday]," said Mohammad Toifal Ahmed, personal aide of Rebecca Momin.

Momin, wife of former AL presidium member and ex-food minister Abdul Momin, left behind a daughter and a host of relatives, friends and well-wishers.

She started her politics as the vice-president

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1