

Poor have little access to better education

Speakers tell publication ceremony of Halkhata

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Principal Secretary to the prime minister Kamaluddin Siddiqui yesterday expressed deep concern over the division in education system saying its consequences will be dangerous if the division between the rich and the poor is not minimised on an emergency basis.

Kamaluddin Siddiqui said the rich are sending their children abroad or educating them in the best educational institutions, whereas children of the poor are getting education at lower standard institutions.

"As a result children of the rich are getting better jobs depriving the poor and this deprivation will bring dangerous consequences," he cautioned while speaking as chief guest at a publication ceremony of Halkhata, an annual report on primary education by Sushikkha Andolon, a citizens' movement on quality education.

The principal secretary said irregularities in teachers' recruitment, low standard textbooks and lack of teachers' training have downgraded the standard of education.

He specially blamed the authors assigned by the National Textbooks Curriculum Board (NTCB) for making many mistakes in the textbooks.

"I had to blacklist a number of such teachers as they failed to play their due role in writing textbooks," he added.

The demand of the poor for quality education should be strongly articulated, Kamal said, adding that the Sushikkha Andolon is contributing to the process by creating awareness among the people at all levels.

Speaking as special guest Bangladesh Bank Governor



Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud speaks at the publication ceremony of Halkhata at the Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right are Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman and Hua Du and on his left are Kamaluddin Siddiqui and AKA Shamsuddin.

Salehuddin Ahmed said education today has become coaching-centred and teachers-centred where the poor have little access to better education.

Mismatches between the need for education and curriculum of the textbooks are also a setback for better education, he said, adding, "Money is never a constraint for education sector, but what we need is goodwill and participation of all."

Considering quality education as the crucial challenge AKA Shamsuddin, secretary to primary and mass education ministry, said early childhood education, participation of citizens in primary education process, regular monitoring of school activities by thana and district level officials are must to meet the demand.

Activating the school management committees, building adequate infrastructures and reducing the teachers' involvement in non-educational activities are also important to fulfil the goal of quality

education, he said.

Presenting the annual report on primary education Sushikkha Andolon member Khandaker Sakhawat Ali said allocation for primary education has increased, but it is not utilised properly.

He suggested community's participation and regular school visits by eminent personalities of the localities as a means to create awareness for quality education in the society.

Education expert Mamataz Jahan considered nutrition of poor children, completion of syllabus and complementary activities for primary education are some major conditions for developing quality education.

Presiding over the publication ceremony Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud said Bangladesh has achieved a number of successes in different sectors including reduction in birth and child mortality rate and increasing enrolment of girl children.

"This is a revolutionary change in comparison to African and some South Asian countries, but we need to sustain the achievements," he said.

Hua Du, country representative of Asian Development Bank (ADB), said a number of measures including building infrastructures, balancing teachers-students ratio and training of teachers have been undertaken to ensure quality primary education under the Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP II).

Modernisation of madrasa education can contribute a lot to the development of quality primary education in the country, said Hua Du of ADB, one of the donors in PEDP II.

Co-ordinator of Sushikkha Andolon Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, Prof Amirul Islam of North South University, Prof Bazlul Mobin Chowdhury of Independent University and Muhammad Mohsin of Plan Bangladesh also spoke on the occasion.

President hosts reception for Buddhists

UNB, Dhaka

On the occasion of the Buddha Purnima, President Iajuddin Ahmed and his wife, Prof. Dr Anwara Begum, hosted a reception in honour of the members of the Buddhist Community of the country at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Diplomats of Japan, Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam and Sri Lanka, and country representative of ADB were present.

Buddhist religious personalities and Buddhist citizens of different professions of the country attended the reception.

Iajuddin and his wife welcomed the guests, exchanged pleasantries with them and wished them a happy and prosperous future.

Deputy Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan, Secretary of Religious Affairs Ministry Muhammed Ataur Rahman, Secretary to the President Abu Mohammad Maniuzzaman Khan and other senior officials of Bangabhaban and Foreign Ministry were present on the occasion.

No VAT or tax if robbery goes on Jewellery traders threaten govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jewellery traders threatened the government with non-payment of VAT and taxes if effective steps are not taken to end continuing robbery in the jewellery shops.

They will also go for strike and form human chain if the criminals involved in robbery are not arrested in the next forty-eight hours.

Bangladesh Jewellery Samity (BJS) at a press conference yesterday

spelt out their firm stance against a backdrop when robbery incidents in the jewellery shops have become a regular phenomenon.

BJS leaders also demanded formation of special teams consisting of police, CID, DB and Rab members to combat the gang involved in robbery, provision for guard in the jewellery markets seven days a week from 8:00am to 9:00pm and amending the existing law.

Expressing grievances, they said at least 23 major robbery incidences took place in the jewel-

lery shops across the country from December 2001 to March 2003.

If the trend continues, the jewellery industry will cease to exist in the country and 28 lakh people engaged in the sector will face dire consequences, they said.

BJS General Secretary MA Hannan Azad read out a written statement at press conference with its President MA Wadud Khan in the chair.



14-party stages a demonstration on Uttara Azampur Primary School ground yesterday demanding adequate supply of gas, water and power for city dwellers.

SSC examinee drowns in city pond

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An SSC examinee drowned in Police Battalion pond at Kafur in the city yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Nazmul Haque, 16, a student of Notary Public School and College, and resident of government quarter in Mirpur 14.

Fire brigade sources said the incident occurred at around 12:20pm when Nazmul along with his friend went to take bath in the pond after playing football at a playground near the pond.

Locals and his friends called fire brigade as they could not rescue him. The divers of Fire brigade recovered the body and sent it to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

C'nawabganj-Rajshahi bus service suspended for 5 days

BDNEWS, C'nawabganj

Bus communications on Chapainawabganj-Rajshahi route remained suspended for the fifth consecutive day yesterday due to a dispute between the motor workers of Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi.

Though the dispute among the workers of Chapainawabganj was settled earlier, the bus communications on Chapainawabganj-Rajshahi route came to a halt following a fresh dispute between the inter-district workers.

The workers of Rajshahi stopped plying buses from Chapainawabganj after two workers after an altercation over lifting passengers at the central bus station yesterday.

Sources said workers of Rajshahi plied buses up to Baliaghata of Chapainawabganj but workers of Chapainawabganj refrained from plying bus to Rajshahi on security grounds.

Chapainawabganj Motor Workers' Union President Ayub Ali said he is trying to contact with the workers of Rajshahi.

He said the dispute will be settled soon.

Housewife electrocuted in Keraniganj

BDNEWS, Keraniganj

A housewife was electrocuted yesterday at Dakpara under Karaniganj upazila in Dhaka.

The victim was identified as Kulsum, 45, wife of Shamsul Haque as well as mother of three kids.

Family members of the deceased said the incident occurred at about 10:00am when Kulsum went to put the switch on of the water pump of their house.

14-party leaders to visit 29 dists

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Central leaders of opposition 14-party will visit different districts and address meetings demanding adequate supply of power, water, oil and gas, cancellation of 'fake voters' list and reforms in caretaker government system and the election commission.

The 14-party leaders will split into eight teams to join the meetings in 29 districts to be held on May 20-23.

Led by Abdur Razzak MP and Saber Hossain Chowdhury the team 1 will visit Panchagarh on May 20, Thakurgaon May 21, Nilphamari May 22 and Joypurhat May 23.

The team 2 will hold meetings at Lalmonirhat on May 20, Kurigram May 21, Rangpur May 22 and Gaibandha May 23. Suranjit Sengupta and Mahmudur Rahman Manna will lead the team.

Mohammad Nasim MP and Sultan M Mansur Ahmed will lead the team 3 that will address meetings at Chapainawabganj on May 20, Rajshahi May 21 and Natore May 22.

Led by Obaidul Kader and Bir Bahadur MP, the team 4 will visit Cox's Bazar on May 20, Banderban May 21, Rangamati May 22 and Khagrachhari May 23.

Tofail Ahmed and Syed Ashrafur Islam MP will lead the team 5 and visit Habiganj on May 20, Brahmanbaria May 21, Kishoreganj May 22 and Narsingdi May 23.

The meetings in Narail, Magura, Kushtia and Meherpur will be held on May 20, 21, 22 and 23 respectively. Begum Matia Chowdhury and Akhtaruzzaman will lead the team 6 to visit the districts.

Rashed Khan Menon and Dewan Farid Gazi will lead team 7 to hold meetings at Sunamganj on May 20, Sylhet May 21 and Moulvibazar May 22.

The team 8 will be led by Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim MP. The team leaders will address meetings at Feni on May 20, Chittagong (north) May 21 and Chittagong (south) May 22.



A heavy rainfall causes waterlogging on Tongi Diversion Road near Moghbazar intersection in the city yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: STAR