

DOWN TO EARTH

A New Business in College Education

By A S M Nurunnabi

The results of the last SSC examination of the four Secondary Education Boards show that a total of 4 lakh 90 thousand and 90 students have passed this year. From relevant sources, it is learnt that at the higher education level in the whole country, the total number of existing government and private colleges and other institutions is one thousand and fifty-six where the total number of seats available for admission in the 11th class is 3 lakh 21 thousand and sixty. Against this background, a total number of 1 lakh 69 thousand and 30 students will be deprived of opportunity for admission in any college or institution. For obvious reasons, the government and private colleges of the Dhaka city with good name attract the largest number of admission seekers.

It is alleged that taking advantage of the lack of admission prospects of the vast number of students in Dhaka, some quarters in the private sector here are said to be adopting questionable means. In many neighbourhoods of the city, announcement of opening of new private colleges is being made. There is room for doubt that some of these new private colleges are yet to get due affiliation. Whether duly affiliated or not, sponsors of such colleges are seen to place advertisements in newspapers inviting applications for posts of teachers in such colleges. Such action on the part of the sponsors of such new colleges would have been harmless if the applicants for the posts of teachers were not asked to enclose bank draft/pay order/postal order for amounts not less than Tk 100/- in each

case. We all know how acute is the problem of educated unemployed youths in our country, and it is easy to guess that the number of qualified young men and women eligible for application for such posts of teachers must be large.

Since the number of applicants will be large, this will bring in a handsome amount of money for the sponsors of these private colleges in the shape of application fees.

This is not the end of the story. So long we have heard that at the time of new admission in good private schools at the beginning of the year, admission into some such schools is made easy for some students if their guardians come up with offers of substantial donations. Similar practice is reportedly followed also in the case of recruitment of teachers for the new private colleges. When the candidates for the posts of teachers are called for interview by the college authorities, they are reportedly given hints whether they are willing to pay a specified amount of donation for the college. Those candidates who express their inability to give such donation reportedly stand no chance of selection even when they are otherwise well qualified for such posts. In this situation, the qualified youths without the means to pay any donation are placed in a difficult position vis-a-vis other less qualified candidates who have the wherewithal to pay the required donation. This introduces unequal competition where financial considerations gain preference over academic merits. The employment situation is thus vitiated by some

quarters in the private education sector. Some allege that there is a racket going on in this behalf.

In the opinion of some observers, there are some pertinent question involved in the matter. First, whether pending affiliation, it is proper to enroll students or invite applications for new posts in such colleges which give the sponsors of such colleges financial gains in the shape of admission and tuition fees from new students and also realised donations from some candidates for posts of teachers. Secondly, contingencies may arise where some of the proposed new colleges may fail to secure affiliation for some reason or another. In such circumstances, what will be the fate of the students who have been newly enrolled? And what will happen to those candidates who are appointed as teachers on payment of donation?

In the former case, some working arrangement may be made by the proposed new colleges with other private affiliated colleges in the city but in the latter case, there is risk for such candidates losing their donation money.

It is also understood that the donation-paying teachers in some such colleges are not offered any salary on the assurance given to them that they would get it as and when such colleges get affiliation. In the event of any such colleges failing to get affiliation, the new teachers might stand to lose both the donation money and their promised salary.

The authorities concerned may look into the issues raised above.



British Parliament Under Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Anthony Baldry, MP was received by Foreign Secretary MR Osmany at the Zia International Airport yesterday upon his arrival in Dhaka on a four-day visit to Bangladesh. — PID photo

British MP in city

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wealth venture. As a member of the Commonwealth, Britain very much supports the process... I will have no direct role in the dialogue process; my visit is primarily related to the trade mission," Baldry said.

He, however, added that he would have talks with political colleagues in Bangladesh.

Foreign Secretary Mufleh R Osmany was at the airport to receive the British parliamentarian. Also present was British High Commissioner in Bangladesh Peter J Fowler.

Although Baldry, whose responsibilities include bilateral relations with the countries of South Asia, North America and the Caribbean, arrived in Dhaka yesterday, members of the 27-man delegation he heads are due in the capital this morning.

The visit of the trade mission, first from the UK to Bangladesh in years, coincides with the Opposition's dawn-to-dusk hartal for two consecutive days from today, forcing rescheduling and even cancellation of some programmes.

Baldry said British businessmen now recognise Bangladesh as an economy which was getting "stronger and stronger" and having the potential for increased trade.

The visit of the high-powered trade mission demonstrates that, he added.

He disclosed that Britain has recently announced the Export Credit Guarantee Scheme which also covers Bangladesh. It is expected to benefit and encourage UK companies intending to invest in Bangladesh.

Britain is the second largest overseas investor in Bangladesh. Some 45 companies have so far invested an estimated 100 million pound sterling.

The British MP appreciated Bangladesh's commitment to privatisation and economic reforms. He, however, observed that reforms should combine with deregulation and cutting back "the dead wood of unnecessary bureaucracy" to create investors' confidence.

"The other necessary precondition is, of course, political stability," he said.

The UK mission represents internationally famous British goods, including British Gas, Bedford Trucks, Midland Electricity — a power generating company, Lasso Plc — a leading oil and gas exploration company, Norwest Holst Ltd.

Prior to 1981, Dr Fuller served for five years as Ford Foundation Representative in Bangladesh, and as an advisor to the National Education Commission and Ministry of Education in Thailand. He also served with the World Bank-UNESCO Cooperative Programme in Paris, and with UNICEF in Beirut, Cairo, and New York.

Dr Fuller was educated in the United States at Stanford University and Harvard University.

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Menon calls to use JS session for a consensus

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Workers' Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon yesterday called upon all concerned to take initiatives so that the Parliament session starting today can agree on a caretaker government formula adding a sub-clause to Clause 123 of the Constitution.

Speaking at a rally at Narail, Menon pointed out that the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad has already become non-functional and the planned resignation by the Opposition members would further aggravate the situation.

The resignations would destroy the last opportunity to resolve the crisis and shatter the prospect of a national consensus, he added.

"Such precipitate action would also enhance the threats of foreign intervention in the country's politics through the back door. Menon warned.

Chaired by local Workers' Party leader Molla Shahadat Hossain, the rally was also addressed by Bimal Biswas, Hafizur Rahman, Nazrul Islam and Golam Morshed.

Govt offers truce around UNITA HQ

LUANDA, Angola, Nov 11: The government offered to stop fighting around UNITA rebel headquarters today in an effort to get the insurgents to sign a peace treaty ending 19 years of civil war, Angolan state radio reported, says AP.

Third formula

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The opposition parties were learnt to be positively disposed to this latest plan, now dubbed as the third formula.

The Commonwealth emissary Sir Ninian Stephen who has been trying to facilitate the dialogue between the ruling party and the Opposition, may discuss this "third formula" during his scheduled meetings with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition today.

If both sides agree to the new proposal, the ruling party would place it officially to Sir Ninian with a view to resuming the dialogue.

But as of last night, both the ruling party and the Opposition were officially sticking to their original positions.

JS goes into session today

From Page 1 Col 3 continued to abstain from the House demanding a constitutional amendment providing for the holding of national polls under a non-partisan caretaker administration.

Meanwhile, the JS business advisory committee met yesterday morning to decide the tenure of the session beginning today. The advisory body also discussed the major subjects likely to come up for discussion in the House during the session.

Opposition members of the committee — seven in the 15-member body headed by Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali — once again did not attend yesterday's meeting.

A treasury bench member attending the meeting told The Daily Star that the advisory body, contrary to convention, avoided setting a tentative date for prorogation of the session.

Replying to a question, the committee members said, "We are optimistic that the Commonwealth's effort to resolve the present political impasse would produce a positive result and the Opposition would return to the House."

If the Opposition returns, we shall untidely decide the length of the 17th session," the member, who is also a cabinet minister, added.

The committee also decided to ask the parliamentary select committee concerned to produce its report on the proposed Zila Parishad Bill in the House during the session.

BNP patronising terrorists: Azam

JENIDAH, Nov 11: Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Golam Azam today accused the ruling BNP of patronising terrorists and lamented that the law enforcing agencies had become helpless due to undue interference by the governing quarters, reports UNB.

"Police nab the terrorists, have to free them under pressure from ministers," he alleged at a public meeting at the local Government Boys' High School ground this afternoon.

In his brief speech, the Jamaat chief urged the leaders of all political parties to work for establishing the dictates of Almighty Allah and rule of honest people in the country.

He refrained from making any comment on the current political situation at the meeting attended by a good number of party activists and supporters from different southern districts.

Addressing the meeting, party Secretary General Motiur Rahman Nizami urged the government to accept the Opposition demand for a neutral caretaker government to conduct next general elections.

"This is our only demand... meet the demand now and you will remain in power for the full five-year term," he said.

Blaming government policies for ruining the country's economy, particularly the industrial sector, Nizami said the local markets are now flooded with foreign goods while the local products are not getting due price.

Presided over by district Jamaat Ameer Abul Kashem, the meeting was also addressed by central leaders Abdul Kader Mollah, Dr Anisur Rahman, Sheikh Ansar Ali MP, Shakhawat Hossain MP, Habbur Rahman MP and Kazi Shamsur Rahman MP.

Hartal today

From Page 1 Col 4 force the BNP govt to step down and ensure polls under a caretaker government.

In a statement, she said the ruling BNP is trying to stick to power by denying the people's right to vote and food.

Branding the BNP government as corrupt and vote-bought, she said it is involved in a conspiracy to foil the Commonwealth-brokered dialogue and ignore the people's demand for election under a caretaker government.

Besides, the Awami League President said, price-hike of essentials during this regime has made the public life miserable.

"Under the circumstances, I appeal to the people to intensify the current agitation for a caretaker government," she said.

The Midnight File

Hamas gets two seats in PLO-run religious courts

JERUSALEM, Nov 11: PLO leader Yasser Arafat, in a sign of cooperation with the rival Hamas group, has given it two seats on the bench of PLO-run religious courts in Gaza and the West Bank. PLO officials said today. "Yes, we do have political differences, but we remain one people and we can't accept distancing ourselves from our people," said Sheikh Hamed Al-Bitawi, accepting his appointment to the West Bank court. Bitawi said he was close to the Islamic resistance movement Hamas, reports Reuter.

Serbs launch artillery attacks on Mostar

ZAGREB, Nov 11: Bosnian Serbs launched artillery attacks on the southwestern city of Mostar today killing several children, according to the regional Croat press agency Habena, monitored here. The Zagreb-based agency Hina said a small girl was killed and six other children were wounded, four seriously, in the attacks, reports AFP.

Notices on Huda, 2 others

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last demanding a caretaker government with the Chief Justice as its head.

Huda was dropped from the cabinet the day after the publication of his interview.

The press statements of the two other MPs were also contrary to the BNP stand about the caretaker government issue.

All 14 members of the standing committee were present at yesterday's crucial meeting. One post in the party's highest caucus remains vacant.

The members present were: Mirza Ghulam Hafiz, Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury, Majidul-Huq, Mostafizur Rahman, Sajfur Rahman, Abdus Salam Talukder, Oli Ahmed, Khondaker Delwar Hossain, Dr RA Ghani, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah and Chowdhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiqi.

Meeting sources said that during the 45-minute hearing, the former information minister was questioned, often bluntly, about his intentions which prompted his "objectionable" interview.

Huda reportedly swore by God and said, "I had no intention to embarrass the party. The idea was new which I disclosed as my personal view."

Meeting sources said that he also gave other explanations in favour of this position, most of which have been published in different newspapers following his ouster from the cabinet.

The standing committee would take a decision after studying the written replies of Huda and two others.

The three-hour long meeting, which started at 8 pm, also decided to hold an extended meeting of the party to discuss the overall political situation. Some 250 executive committee members — all the MPs and the district and thana unit presidents and secretaries — are expected to be present at the meeting, to be held soon.

The BNP policy-makers also decided to hold meetings and processions in all the 90 wards of the capital as part of their organisational activities.

From now on, the BNP leaders would inform the people about their proposed formula for a caretaker government sharing power with the Opposition parties. Such a campaign would help the BNP to convince the people that they had given enough concessions to the Opposition which, on the other hand, has stuck to its original demand.

The standing committee will meet again after receiving the replies to the show cause notices on Huda and others, the source added.

Suicide bomber kills 3 soldiers in Gaza

NETZARIM, Gaza Strip, Nov 11: A suicide cyclist with a bomb strapped to his body triggered the explosives as he veered towards an Israeli army jeep today, killing three soldiers and wounding a dozen Palestinians and Israelis, reports AP.

Islamic Jihad, a militant group opposed to Israel-PLO peace-making, claimed responsibility for the attack. The group said it was in retaliation for the November 2 car bomb killing of an Islamic Jihad leader blamed on Israel.

The attack occurred at a main junction on Gaza's north-south highway, which is patrolled by Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organisation forces. Palestinian demonstrators had gathered at the intersection to protest Israel's barring Palestinians from jobs in Israel.

Seven Israeli soldiers were wounded when the cyclist set off the explosive as he drove near a jeep, an Israeli official said. Hospital officials said four Palestinians in a taxi were also wounded.

There were conflicting reports whether the attacker was riding on a motorcycle or a bicycle.

Brig. Saleh Abu Omar, a PLO officer, said a Palestinian on a motorcycle got past PLO police, drove into an Israeli checkpoint and set off the bomb. He said Palestinian police had stopped several buses with protesters who had planned to join the demonstration.

A PLO police colonel was slightly injured in the blast, he said.

N'ganj clash

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Police resisted the villagers as a rival organisation — Upashahar Implementation Committee — convened a meeting at the same time at the same place.

Police obstructed the villagers some 20 yards from the venue as they started pouring in in their hundreds around 2 pm.

As soon as the aggrieved villagers broke the police cordon, the law enforcers resorted to baton-charge.

As the villagers turned increasingly violent, police fired rubber bullets and lobbed tear-gas shells indiscriminately, witnesses claimed.

The militant-villagers and police chased each other for about two and a half hours until 4:30 in the afternoon.

Earlier, the government announced plans to acquire 6751 acres of land in the area to set up a model satellite town — Purbachal — at Rupganj.

The resistant committee, led by Sabed Ali Mollah, is against the government plan. But his men want the government to develop the area without acquiring the land.

On the other hand, the Upashahar Implementation Committee is headed by Mohammad Sharafat, reported to be a relative of the Home Minister.

The resistance committee, in a statement after the incident, blamed their rival group for the attack.

They called a day long hartal in the area tomorrow in protest against the attack.

The body of Sirajul Islam, who was identified as a member of the resistance committee, was taken to the Rupganj police station.

The villagers also clashed with police on the same issue on October 29.

Coup bid in Gambia

BANJUL, Nov 11: Gambia's military junta has foiled an attempt to topple it at the cost of several lives, Vice President Sana Sabally said today, in a first sign of divisions in the small west African nation's army, reports AFP.

Sabally told state radio that several soldiers were killed in the coup bid, which was led by high-ranking army officers and said the ruling armed forces provisional council was in control.

The announcement followed heavy gunfire heard throughout the night from the barracks in the Bakau residential district, 14 kilometres from the centre of Banjul.

Lieutenant Yaya Jammeh's junta would give no details of which officers in the Gambian army, about 1,000 strong, mounted the coup bid, nor of casualties in the fighting.

Residents of Banjul went to work as normal this morning and the shops opened. Witnesses said there were no signs of trouble around the presidential residence, but soldiers were stopping vehicles to carry out identity

US withdraws arms ban

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Britain, France and other Europeans wanted the embargo maintained out of concern any influx of weapons could increase fighting and also out of concern their peacekeepers might be targeted. The United States has no peacekeepers on the ground in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"We plan to fully implement the legal requirement that no US funds be used to prevent arms from going to the Bosnian government," James P Rubin, a spokesman for the US Mission to the United Nations, said Thursday in New York.

Other US officials, who insisted on anonymity, said today the allies had been consulted in advance and told the US Navy would no longer divert ships carrying arms to Bosnia or Croatia, which has aligned itself with the Muslim-led government against the Serbs.

They said, however, the US Navy would continue to intercept heavy weapons, such as surface-to-air missiles, bound for Bosnia, as authorized by the congressional amendment.

Russia, with traditional cultural and religious ties to the Bosnian Serbs, also has opposed any easing of the embargo against the Muslims. There was no assurance Moscow or China would not veto a US resolution in the

Minibus kills 2

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in the morning. The driver lost control over the speeding vehicle and rammed into the busy market place, leaving at least 12 other people injured, they added.

A mob seized the bus and gave its driver a good beating before handing him over to the Narayanaganj police.

The sisters, who had come to the market with their father Habbibullah were standing there when he went to a nearby place.



Dr W P Fuller

President of the Asia Foundation since 1989. Before joining the Foundation, he was Deputy Assistant Administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), where he was responsible for US foreign assistance in Asia and the Near East. From 1981 to 1987, he directed the USAID mission in Indonesia.

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Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motiheel CA, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. FAX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.