

WB report on Bangladesh

Educating mothers key to increasing school attainment

From Govinda Shil

WASHINGTON, May 5: Educating mothers is the single most important factor in Bangladesh's school attainment, says a World Bank report.

The report on Education Achievements and School Efficiency in Rural Bangladesh said a one-year increase in a mother's education over the current average of one-year increases school participation of boys by 11 per cent and girls by 17 per cent. However, a one-year increase in a father's education from the existing three-year average increases boys' participation by 3 per cent and the girls by 4 per cent, the report revealed.

Prepared by Shahidur R Khan in March this year, the report, based on 'General Education Project (1990)' and the 'Female Secondary School Assistance Project (1992)', said the government might influence schooling outcomes by providing direct inputs to the school system and developing

infrastructure in the rural area. Terming the parents as 'key players' in determining schooling outcomes it said improved water supply and sanitation facilities also have an indirect effect on a child's schooling outcomes. 'The effect is especially important for girls, who are often responsible for the care of the family members who are ill,' said the report.

Emphasising teachers' education that improves the school attainments, the report also suggested recruitment of more female teachers, better-trained and educated teachers, better water and sanitation facilities, rural electrification and irrigation.

It said the mean value of household assets, according to a survey in 29 thanas of Dhaka, Khulna, Chittagong and Rajshahi regions, is around Tk one lakh for boys' families while Tk 96,000 for girls' families.

Indian troops fire on UN observers in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, May 5: Indian troops along the contested Kashmir border fired on several civilians and two United Nations military observers in Pakistan, state-run media reported today, says AP.

The UN officials were not injured in the firing, but five civilians suffered minor wounds, The Associated Press of Pakistan reported.

Official from the United Nations Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan would not immediately comment.

According to the news report, the UN observers were in Kashmir investigating an alleged ceasefire violation near the disputed border. The report did not say when the incident took place.

The UN observers were fired on near Jabra Bridge, about 170 kilometers (100 miles) north of the Pakistani capital Islamabad, the report said.

Pakistan has filed thousands of complaints against Indian

border troops, accusing them of firing indiscriminately across the Kashmir ceasefire line.

The report did not identify the UN officers, but said one was from Uruguay and the other from Finland.

Pakistan and India have fought two of three wars over Kashmir, which was divided between them shortly after the subcontinent won independence from British rule in 1947.

A spate of cross border firings earlier this year heightened tensions between the rival South Asia countries.

In February, Indian troops hit a Pakistani mosque with a Russian-made rocket, killing at least 19 people. A week of intensive border clashes followed that incident.

Outside observers, including the Central Intelligence Agency, say simmering hostilities in Kashmir have raised the risk of another confrontation in South Asia.

Polls in Kashmir a must for peace: Rao

JAMMU, India, May 5: Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao of India vowed today to complete this month's elections from Jammu-Kashmir despite 'interference by Pakistan' in the return of democratic rule to the northern state, reports AP.

It was the first visit by a prime minister to the state since the Muslim campaign for independence began in 1989. India and Pakistan have fought three wars over the Himalayan territory.

Winding up an election campaign in Jammu for this month's general elections, Rao said he did not rule out 'more mischief by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir to thwart the poll.'

Arrest warrant against filmstar Raj Babbar

LUCKNOW, May 5: A city court today issued arrest warrant against Samajwadi Party (SP) candidate from Lucknow 'filmstar Raj Babbar' for allegedly assaulting the polling officer of Sultanpur-Madarli polling booth in old Lucknow area on May two, reports PTI.

The duty magistrate also issued warrant against an SP activist, Dr Arvind Singh. Police said both the accused who were named in the FIR lodged with the Vazirganj police station, were absconding.

Nor'wester

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Meanwhile, six to seven light or moderate nor'westers are likely to lash Rajshahi, Dhaka divisions and the regions of Comilla and Sylhet during the current month, weathermen predicted.

A Met Office forecast said in Dhaka today that one to two light or moderate nor'wester is also likely elsewhere across the country.

One of two depression may also form over the Bay during the period, of which one may turn to cyclone, the forecast added.

Some parts of Sylhet division may experience flash flood in the second half of the current month.

Met Office forecast the highest 350-450 mm rain in Sylhet division in the current month. Chittagong may have 270-320 mm rain, Barisal 250-300, Dhaka 220-270, Rajshahi 145-170 and Khulna division 120-130 mm rain during the period.

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Chechen women shout anti-Russian slogans holding the portrait of late Dzokhar Dudayev, demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya during a rally in Mesker-Yurt, 15km from Grozny on May 4.

— AFP photo

Law and order in city has improved: CEC

The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Mohammad Abu Hena, yesterday reiterated his call to all political parties to extend their whole-hearted cooperation to the Election Commission (EC) in holding the coming June 12 general elections in a free and fair atmosphere.

In an interview with BSS, at the Election Commission Secretariat, Hena said the political parties had a great role and responsibility in conducting free and fair elections to fulfil the expectations of the people.

"Political parties as the stakeholders in the elections should have to play their due role at levels of both the leaders and the workers to ensure free and fair elections," he added.

The CEC referred to the measures taken so far by the government and the Commission to ensure free and fair polls and said things have started improving following these measures. He, however, suggested a few more concrete measures to create congenial atmosphere mainly related to law and order situation.

In this connection, Hena identified two important steps to be accomplished by the political parties for holding fair and free elections. These are — public pronouncement by all political parties that they will abide by the Code of Conduct of elections and secondly public pronouncement that they have no connections with terrorists or armed cadres.

The CEC said such pronouncements by the political parties are very vital for ensuring free and fair elections.

Relying to another question, the CEC expressed his satisfaction over the substantial improvement of law and order situation, particularly in the Dhaka metropolitan area, with the recovery of unauthorised arms and arrest of armed terrorists.

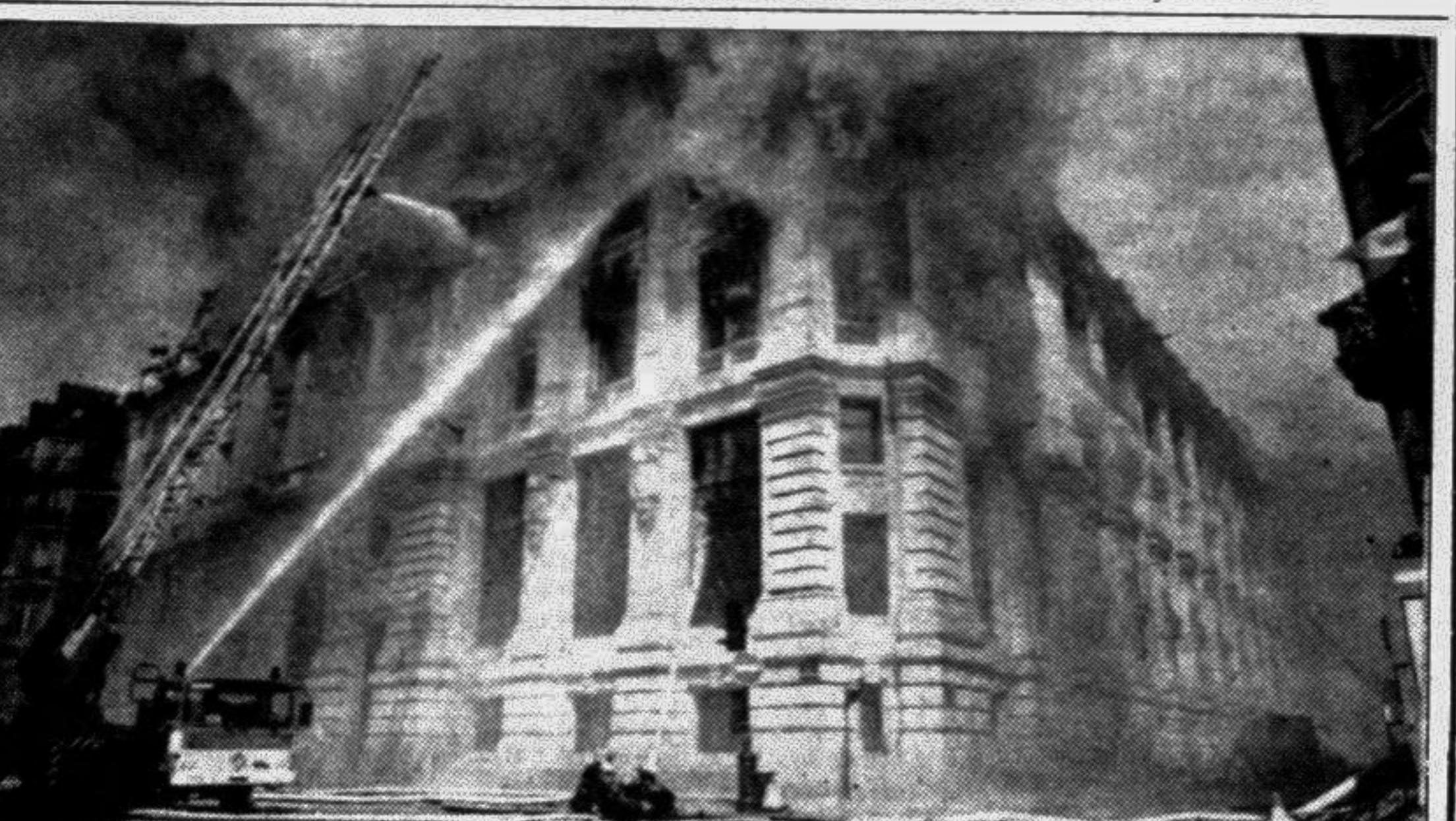
He said the government had given stress on the recovery of unauthorised arms and arrest of *maastans* and terrorists in order to regain people's confidence for free and fair elections. He said law and order committee headed by the Home Secretary was monitoring the progress of the

preparations for the coming elections. Hena said "the things are progressing well," and expressed the hope that the situation would further improve in future.

In addition to taking necessary measures for the elections, the Election Commission had decided to form one election observer's team headed by a class one officer at the district level.

The Election Commission had already formed electoral enquiry committees at the district level, he said and added that the training programme for the committees would begin soon.

As part of the programme of the Election Commission, Hena said it would hold meetings with the returning officers and the district level police administration at the National Economic Council auditorium today at 10 am.



Firemen try to extinguish flames of the headquarters of the French bank Credit Lyonnais in a central Paris neighbourhood after a fire broke out early morning yesterday. — AFP photo

Jamaat for Islamic state

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ensuring rule by honest persons saying that the party had built up a group of honest people to establish truth and justice.

Steps would be taken so that everybody leads a religious life and say prayers. Minority communities would enjoy freedom to practise their respective religions, according to the poll manifesto.

Jobs would be ensured for women as per their qualification and they would be allowed to earn their living as per the 'Shariah'. Repression on women would be checked.

Subsidy will be given to the agriculture sector and farmers will be provided with interest-free loans and 'package incentives' to help improve their living standard.

Jamaat would also change the land tax structure and introduce Islamic laws under its land reform policy.

Under its industrial policy, Jamaat would continue privatisation of public sector industries but industries related with defence and public utility services would remain under government ownership.

Armed forces would be strengthened and equipped with modern arms and all citizen of 18-40 age groups would be given "minimum defence training". Defence industrial units would be given priority so that the country becomes self-sufficient in production of defence equipment quickly.

The administration would be restructured in the light of Islamic laws and the police, Ansar and VDP would be strengthened to ensure their honesty.

According to the party's

education policy, religious education would be emphasised and student's politics would be discouraged by encouraging development of their careers.

The Jamaat's poll manifesto said that the interest system would be terminated and import policy would be framed to help growth of local industries. "Tax burden would be relaxed and equitable distribution of wealth would be ensured," it said.

Jamaat would follow a policy of "guarded open market economy" and local industries would be protected.

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party was committed to realising the legitimate share of the Ganges water for Bangladesh.

He, however, rejected any package deal on the issue allowing India to enjoy railway transit facilities, use of Chittagong port and natural gas.

We want corruption and interest-free NGOs", he told another questioner.

Asked which party Jamaat will choose in forming a possible coalition government after the election, the party chief said: "We put candidates to all 300 seats. We'll consider the matter when the situation arises."

When his attention was drawn to Awami League's programme for repealing the Vested Property Act, Golam Azam opined that necessary measures in this respect would be taken after proper examination without hampering anybody's interest. "All cases are not similar."

He was asked how he evaluates the killing of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Golam Azam said: "we do not support the politics of killings. We are against any killing."

Replying to a question on monarchy system in the Gulf states, Azam said it is the duty of the peoples of those countries to establish democracy.

"We only can set an example by establishing an Islamic democratic republic in Bangladesh."

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Red Cross Day tomorrow

The World Red Crescent and Red Cross Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the world tomorrow, reports UNB.

To mark the day, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society has drawn up an elaborate programme.

It will organise an art competition on 'Humanity' for the children age between 6 and 12 at the Red Crescent Nursing School at 10 pm on the day.

Eminent artists Quayoom Chowdhury, Mostafa Monwar and Rafiqul Nabi will conduct the competition.

Gen Dastagir joins JP

By Staff Correspondent

Major General (Retd) Kazi Golam Dastagir joined the Jatiya Party last night. Earlier, he had a meeting with the party secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju at the party office in the city, according to press release issued last night.

Barrister Roushan Ali from BNP, the chief of Islami Biplobi Party along with his workers, former Governor of the Lions Club Fakir Ashraf, Giasuddin Ahmed, a businessman from Shariatpur district, also joined the JP yesterday, the press release added.

A rally will also be held at Nur Hossain Square in the capital on the day to demonstrate the protest and press for re-inclusion of the ban in the electoral code agreed upon in meetings of the Election Commission with political parties.

The LDF action programme, first since the caretaker government took office, was announced at a press conference at the Taher Auditorium in the city yesterday.

The Election Commission has surrendered to the fundamentalist forces in striking the rule (prohibition) off the Code of Conduct which was in the draft, the LDF said.

It alleged the provision was deleted as some anti-independence communal forces, including the Jamaat, raised their voice against it when the draft was published in newspapers.

Coordinator of the front and Convenor of Bangladesh Sahamantik Dal (BSD) Khaileuzzaman Bhuyian read out a statement at the news conference.

Khaileuzzaman said the EC which failed to formulate a fully democratic Code of Conduct would definitely fail to create a democratic atmosphere for the coming election.

There've got to be really good biographies," Post, a retired psychiatrist, said in an interview.

He found in a previous study that writers, as a group, tended to have more mental and emotional problems than other people — politicians or scientists, for example.

But poets did not seem to follow the trend. "The poets were less unstable and had fewer depressions than the others."

Careful analysis confirmed this. The poets, including Edgar Allan Poe and Robert Graves, had more mood swings and manic depressions requiring hospitalisation.

But they were less likely than the writers, who included Ernest Hemingway and Jack London, to die young or be promiscuous. Only 31 per cent of the poets were alcoholics, compared to 54 per cent of playwrights.

It seems writing of any sort is linked to poor mental health. Psychosis or depression was evident in 80 per cent of poets, 80.5 per cent of novelists and 87.5 per cent of playwrights.

"I speculate that it is the imagination of novelists and playwrights, who are far more concerned with intimate human fate — they've got to identify and empathise with their characters," Post said. "They have greater stress in their writing."

As for the poets: "They don't deal with human fate. They just describe their religious feelings or their love."

Post said his study did not include women writers as women tend to have different patterns of mental illness from men, and his study period, starting in 1840, had too few women writers.

AL candidates

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were interviewed for 59 seats in 11 districts of Chittagong division