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Seventh convocation of RU today

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY. Nov 28: The seventh convocation of Rajshahi University will be held at Kazi Nazrul Islam Auditorium on the campus tomorrow.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed, Chancellor of the university, will distribute certificates among the degree holders from 1969 to 1990. M Phil and PhD degree holders up to September 1998 will also be given certificates in the convocation.

The Chancellor will take part in the convocation rally to be held on the campus at 10 am which will end at Kazi Nazrul Islam Auditorium. He will inaugurate the convocation at 10:20 am. He will also address the house at 10:27 am and 11:15 am.

Four PhD degree holders, Dr Abdus Salam, Dr Selina Afroz, Dr Sultana Nazrin and Dr Muhammad Nurul Islam will take certificates from the Chancellor.

Former Vice Chancellor of the university Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, the Convocation Speaker, will deliver his speech at 11:05 am.

A total of 984 degree holders have registered their names for the convocation. Of them, four are PhD, seven M Phil, six MBBS, 35 BSc, Engineering, and 935 Master degree holders.

A 15-lakh take package has been allocated for holding the 7th convocation. Tk 9,840,000 has been received through the



President Shahabuddin Ahmed addressing the 20th Bangladesh Science Conference, organised by BAAS at BUET auditorium yesterday. — PID photo

President calls for 'science-based dev policy'

Design strategy to survive

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed inaugurated the 20th Bangladesh Science Conference in the city yesterday calling for a "science-based development policy," reports UNB.

The government should follow the scientific approach to decision-making, he told in the inaugural session of the Conference at the BUET auditorium in the morning.

The three-day Conference, organised by Bangladesh Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS), was chaired by its outgoing president and chairman of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission Dr M A Wazed Miah.

President Shahabuddin said: "We must aim at choosing and developing the best places where a sufficient concentration of scientists and technologists can make the most decisive changes in the knowledge structure and operative technological structure."

However, he said, this may require "fundamental changes in the organisational structure of our educational and research institutions."

The President said the objective of the Government is to design a strategy to survive, face the poverty of resources and natural disasters, win in the competitive struggle with other nations and keep the nation on the path of progress.

"Such a plan calls for new scientific knowledge, the creation of new techniques and new system of action through scientific research."

In the 21st century, he said, technologies, including agriculture, medicine and even social engineering, will be more dependent on new knowledge and basic understanding of nature.

"Genetic engineering is going to bring the world to the threshold of a new agricultural revolution by direct manipulation of genetic materials in contrast to the random manipulations, characteristic of traditional plant and animal breeding."

President Justice Shahabuddin said the generality of scientific theories and impressive theories of science has given man the power to predict and to control rather than the power to describe only.

"This overwhelming success and the prospect of science and technology have also increased the expectation of the people in general from the scientists and technologists," he said.

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"This overwhelming success and the prospect of science and technology have also increased the expectation of the people in general from the scientists and technologists," he said.

The President said people are now confident that development is possible through science and technology even for countries like Bangladesh.

Newly elected president of BAAS and Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof A K Azad Chowdhury and chairman of the Conference organising committee and BUET VC Prof Nooruddin Ahmed also spoke at the inaugural function.

Experts suggest region-based smaller power plants

Smaller power plants, based regionally, can be a more attractive economical choice for Bangladesh in place of the planned giant plants which often upset the age-old wobbly national transmission network, power experts say.

They suggest more decentralised power generation to reduce pressure on the 36-year old National Grid and save construction cost of transmission network as well as to maximise the number of electricity users, now an estimated 16 per cent of the country's population.

The power System Master Plan of 1995, now under review, should focus on region-based smaller power units, the experts recommended.

"We must move away from larger plants... smaller plants should be the order of the future power scenario," Power Development Board (PDB) Chairman Nuruddin Mahmud Kamal told UNB.

He said the northern region, including Rajshahi and Bogra, has tremendous potential which would be explored by installing individual smaller plants.

The PDB chairman, however, said the large gas-fired power plants would be viable in major consumption areas like Dhaka and Khulna. "But in the rural areas, smaller units will rather be a more economical choice," he said in a paper read out at a function recently.

The power system loss, currently around 30 per cent, is partly due to the transmission and distribution faults, according to PDB officials.

They said the distribution system in DESA areas, which consumes 53 per cent of the total power, is almost incapable of taking additional load.

The PDB chief identified power distribution as the "main culprit in the power sector," which is now being decentralised to reduce system loss and improve revenue collection. The private sector is being involved in the process, he said.

Power generation in the country has increased manifold over the years — from 80 MW in 1960s to 3,201 MW today — but strengthening the transmission and distribution network remained unattended for lack of adequate fund and initiatives from the management, Nuruddin M Kamal noted.

A 132 KV transmission line was built in the early 1960s between Kaptai and Dhaka that is still in operation with "reduced capacity and risky operating condition."

The PDB chairman also pointed to the flaws in generation, mentioning that the 420-MW Bazon plant in Chittagong was built in a remote place, but neither the supply of fuel nor

high-voltage transmission facilities were ensured.

He stressed the need for decentralisation of power generation, saying that generation capacity has been unevenly distributed between East and West due to the river Jamuna with 81 per cent located in the East and 19 per cent in the West. The Bangabandhu Bridge will connect the two regions with gas supply and high voltage transmission line.

Chairman of Mechanical Engineering Department of BUET Prof MA Taher Ali said the region-based smaller power plants could be good alternatives to larger plants.

He also favoured regional distribution system of power. Prof Taher referred to the independent 6 MW power generation and distribution system of the Padma Textiles.

"Such small plants can be built in different industrial zones," he said.

Prof Taher said his department once offered generating power and supplying it in the BUET and Dhaka University areas, but the offer, piloted by the previous vice chancellor, was shelved due to "bureaucratic red-tape."

The BUET professor told UNB: "We've capacity to run such a power plant... installation cost will be recovered within five years of operation."

APP terminated in Sherpur

SHERPUR, Nov 28: An assistant public prosecutor (APP) of the Judge's Court here has been terminated recently, reports APB.

Advocate Jamshed Ali alias Sundar Ali was removed by an order of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, the court sources said.



Army Adjutant General Matur Rahman dead

Valiant freedom fighter and Adjutant General of the Bangladesh Army Major General Matur Rahman died of pancreatic cancer at the Combined Military Hospital in the city yesterday morning. He was 54, reports UNB.

President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Shahabuddin Ahmed visited the Cantonment residence of the deceased.

He stayed there for sometime and consoled the members of the bereaved family. He also placed wreath at the coffin.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also visited General Matur's Cantonment residence and consoled the members of the bereaved family. She also placed wreath at the coffin.

The namaz-e-janaza of Gen Matur Rahman was held at the Dhaka Cantonment Central Mosque after Zohr prayers.

Minister and former Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen (Retd) Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan, Chief of the Army Staff Lt Gen Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, Bir Bikram, Chief of the Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Nurul Islam, Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed, former Chief of Army Staff Maj Gen (ret'd) K M Shafulah, MP, Lt Col (ret'd) Muhammad Farooque Khan, MP, former Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen (Retd) Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman, Principal Staff Officers and senior serving and retired officers, among others, attended the namaz-e-janaza.

Later, General Matur was buried at the Banani graveyard with military honour.

The Quilchwan of Maj Gen Mohammad Matur Rahman will be held at his residence at 55, Shaheed Belayat Road, Dhaka Cantonment after Asr prayers tomorrow.

PM: Oppose hartal

From Page 1

ical stability and restoring voting right of the people, which have been established. "Then what is the justification of calling hartal at the cost of people's misery?"

"A leader who was dead against hartal and delivered so many speeches against hartal is now harping on hartal," the PM said, without naming her political arch rival, Begum Khaleda Zia, who is leading an opposition agitation, including hartal.

Requesting all once again to refrain from disrupting the stable situation, the Prime Minister said this government had ensured people's voting right and after completion of its tenure would hand over power to caretaker government for holding elections.

"So there is no need of agitation... on what issue they are calling hartal," she said.

The Prime Minister billed the contributions of the garment sector as very much important for the economic progress of the nation as some 73 per cent of the country's total export earnings come from this industry.

The garment sector of the country has booked the position of fifth-largest exporters to the markets of USA and European Union, she said, citing that in 1997-98 the earnings from garment exports amounted to 3.8 billion dollars, up by 26 per cent from previous year.

She noted that an overwhelming majority of 12 lakh are women among the 14 lakh workers in this potential sector. This is a significant point for the empowerment of women. "I am happy to learn that a favourable working environment for women has been created in the garment sector."

The Prime Minister also suggested to the owners to ensure more facilities and training for the workers, particularly women, which she said will also help them have more quality production.

She cautioned that market would be a tough competitive at the advent of year 2005 as all privileges will be cut on the basis of Multi-Fibre Agreement.

"We'll have to adopt long-term programme to survive this competition," Hasina said assuring all possible help from the government for raising skill and efficiency of the sector to overcome the impending hurdles.

Taking into account the importance and prospect of apparel products the government has declared it as "thrust sector," she said, adding that double L/C charges and Risk Bond and Duty Bond system have been withdrawn for this vital sector to help it flourish.

Further listing the incentives she said the government had reduced insurance premium by 54 per cent for the garment sector and formed various councils and committees with the private-sector people for solution to their problems.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed informed the meeting that the government was going to start the functioning of the Apparels Board. "We don't want to control, we want to assist you," the minister added.

President of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Mostafa Golam Qudus and vice-president Mahub Ali also spoke on the occasion.

Later, the Prime Minister laid the foundation of the BGMEA Bhaban.

JP has made mistake by supporting AL, says Ershad

BARISAL, Nov 28: Jatiya Party Chairman Hussain Mohammad Ershad has said that people already lost their confidence in the Awami League government, reports UNB.

The former president, who is now on a 5-day organisational tour of the southern districts, was addressing his party workers in front of local Aswini Kumer Hall this morning.

He blamed the ruling AL for not fulfilling its election pledges. "People have lost their faith in this government."

The former president regretted that JP had committed a mistake by extending its support to the ruling AL to help it form the government following the 1996 general election.

Referring to the development projects implemented in the southern region during his regime, Ershad claimed that none of the governments — past and present — could take up so many uplift programmes in Barisal division.

Ershad said that his party did not believe in the politics of hartal. "We rather believe in the programme of development."

He claimed that JP had introduced Upazila system for the benefit of the people and pointed out that it was again being introduced by the present government.

Pointing to the statement of President Shahabuddin Ahmed regarding ban on student politics, Ershad said he had made a similar call 10 years ago.

But five JP MPs elected from Barisal division were not present at the meeting.

Unnayan Parishad survey report 95pc of city residents hail no-hartal call

Ninety-five per cent people of the capital Dhaka have welcomed the recent announcement of 'no-hartal' by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, an independent survey released in the city yesterday said, reports BSS.

"Fifty-five per cent of the respondents say that it is a significant and dependable decision, while another 43 per cent view that they support it in principle but its practical implication remains to be seen," said the survey by Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP).

It said 83 per cent people said they were against the use of the general strike as a "political weapon," while 73 per cent hoped that Sheikh Hasina's unilateral announcement would bring back stability and sense of relief among people.

One thousand cross section of people in the city's 15 thanas were asked to give their opinion on several socio-political issues including the trial of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Ninety-one per cent of the respondents said they have all support for the murder trial of the country's founder. They also suggested that holding of the trial under ordinary legal system was indeed a "very good step."

Four per cent were opposed to the trial and five per cent refrained from giving opinion.

Regarding the start of the trial process of the killing of four national leaders in Dhaka central jail, 78 per cent said it was a "very good step."

Eighty per cent said they agreed to the recent comment by President Shahabuddin Ahmed that the jail massacre was a "rare incident in the world history and it will remain as a stigma of our national life as a brutal and barbaric incident."

The study found that 78 per cent believe the trial would help stop political killings in future.

Regarding the initiative for holding the trial of the killing of former President Ziaur Rahman, 71 per cent said it was a "very good step," while 17 others said it was "fairly a good initiative."

Some 45 per cent welcomed the prime minister's recent announcement of holding the next general election one-year ahead of the schedule saying "it is a good decision and it would increase people's confidence in the government."

Another 44 per cent called it a "good decision" but added that one elected government should complete its tenure.

Eighty-nine per cent respondents were opposed to the opposition threat to oust the government.

Forty-four per cent hailed the government activities during the recent flood and its post-flood rehabilitation programme.

Thirty-eight per cent termed the activities "fairly good."

Seventy-three per cent respondents expressed satisfaction over the distribution of relief materials and 27 per cent believe the distribution of VGF was "proper."

One falls from underconstruction bldg, dies

A day labourer died after he fell from an underconstruction building at Mirpur in the city yesterday, reports APB.

Police and hospital sources said Selim, 28, a labourer on the site slipped from the scaffolding while climbing up the underconstruction high-rise building at Mirpur Section No 2 at about 12:30 pm. He died instantly.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy. A case registered with Mirpur police.

India will never use N-arms against non-nuclear states

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee declared today that India would never use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries, reports AFP.

Vajpayee, speaking at a meeting of parliamentarians here, also attempted to justify the Indian decision to test nuclear weapons in May, which prompted tests by neighbouring Pakistan.

"We have declared that our nuclear weapons are meant exclusively for self-defence," he said.

"We will never make first use of them nor will we ever use them against a non-nuclear nation."

Vajpayee said India conducted the nuclear tests to strengthen "Our national security and also to contribute to the cause of global disarmament from a position of strength."

BNP: Boycott

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"manipulative activities" by government leaders.

Two ministers have camped permanently in the constituency (Bogra-2) and are giving instructions to the administration and police in support of the Awami League candidate AK Khandaker." He, however, refused to name the ministers.

Bhuiyan alleged that the ministers were violating the EC rules and code of conduct and making various commitments to local people with direct bearing on the election. He also alleged the ministers were issuing threats to BNP leaders and activists if they did not join the Awami League win.

"Due to continuous threat and pressure, three or four BNP-supported UP chairmen have recently joined the government party, but no workers. Other UP chairmen and local elite are afraid of government action," he alleged.

He quoted unnamed locals to say a section of government officials led by the DC were "nakedly" working to ensure an Awami League win.

Bhuiyan termed the Pabna-2 constituency a stronghold of BNP and said the party candidates had long returned from this seat. In the last election, he alleged, BNP candidate Sem Reza Habib was forebly defeated by only 1,500 votes whereas he was elected in the 1991 parliamentary polls with a huge margin of 26,000 votes.

Calling the Awami League candidate AK Khandaker a "guest artist", Bhuiyan said BNP candidate would surely win in a free and fair election. "We will not raise any objection if our candidate is defeated under a free and neutral election."

Referring to violation of election rules by the government ministers, he said that he himself was a witness to their enjoying full protocol although there was no such provision during elections when on visits to the constituency.

The government rest houses and circuit house are full of Awami League ministers and central leaders. "I didn't get minimum space for lunch in any of the rest houses," he said.

40 children Indian Polls

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'a lot of trouble at the station' for several months. He said the registered kulis of the station were deprived of their jobs as the migrant children took up most of the clients for nominal fees. The kulis also came under attack when several reports of theft reached the railway office.

Railway officials recently sent a memo to the GRP to take steps but when the police let them go free, the kulis along with "others" took the decision to bundle them inside the wagon and take them to the migrant centre at Tongi. The wagon was used so that the boys did not jump out of the windows.

When asked whether it was done lawfully or what would happen if the boys died of an accident or suffocation, the official admitted that the entire operation was done without any legal or official cover.

Indian Polls

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won only four of the 12 seats decided so far for the 40-member House with five going to MNF, two to MPC and one to independent.

Among notable Congress winners were Delhi Pradesh Congress President Shiela Dixit who defeated former test cricketer and BJP nominee Kirti Azad, while Lalit Bhati (Cong) who humbled Rajshahi minister for jail, Kishen Songara in Aizer.

For BJP, Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhairon Singh Shekhawat retained and Anup Mishra, nephew of Prime Minister Vajpayee, got the better of a Madhya Pradesh minister of state Bhagwan Singh Yadav.

In the assembly by polls CPM won two seats against the BJP-Trinamool combine while in Himachal Pradesh BJP wrested Baijnath seat from Congress.

Finalise Unocal deals by Feb 15

From Page 1

(bc) of recoverable gas. The project will save US\$70 million a year spent to import liquid fuels.

Petrobangla experts, and even the World Bank officials, who argued the project was being pursued without a proper feasibility study, had long opposed the WRIP. The experts said this "uneven" contract would mean a loss of about 2 billion dollars for Bangladesh.

Unocal entered the Bangladesh energy scenario in late 1996 and initially wanted to join hands with BAPEX to develop Shahbazpur field. But by January 1997, the government, in violation of its own policy, signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) to allow Unocal study and submit investment proposals.

Unocal came up with WRIP... an ambitious project aiming to develop the energy-deficient southwestern part of the country. Petrobangla was repeatedly asked by the higher authorities to quickly finalise contracts with Unocal.

But Petrobangla detected several vital loopholes in the proposal including high tariff (one dollar per unit of gas transmitted) and duration of pipeline ownership (initially proposed for 99 years). As Petrobangla's resistance continued, the authorities shifted the WRIP negotiations to the energy ministry to speed up the process.

But the ministry also raised technical and non-technical questions that ultimately delayed the whole scheme. Now WRIP has got the push and would be signed before any fresh PSC is signed under the on going Second Round Block Bidding.

Unocal is very enthusiastic about WRIP. The company officials on several occasions said that it wanted to be a major player in Bangladesh as well and that the project would greatly contribute to the economic growth in the western region.

Bangladesh is important for Unocal as it plans to be a key operator in Asia. It has pipeline and exploration-development schemes in Thailand and Myanmar.

The company had also initiated the process of setting up international gas pipeline from Central Asia to Myanmar, passing through Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

According to a BBC report

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