



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina lined up with the academics on her way to the dais during the sixth convocation of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) on the campus yesterday. --Star photo

Apply science, turn population into human resources

Prime Minister tells BUET convocation ceremony

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged engineers, technologists and scientists to utilise resources in a scientific way to ensure development of the country, reports UNB.

"We'll have to turn the huge population into human resources, because there is no bigger resource than human resource," she said while addressing the sixth convocation ceremony of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

Hasina, chancellor of the university, said many countries of the world have become developed through proper utilisation of their human resources.

The present government, she said, has taken up massive

programme on science and technology with a commitment to turn the population into human resources.

Former Chief Justice Mostafa Kamal addressed the assembly as convocation speaker while Education Minister ASHK Sadique and Vice Chancellor of BUET Prof Nuruddin Ahmed also spoke at the ceremony.

In the 16th convocation of the BUET, 1,566 students were conferred bachelor degrees, 254 masters and 10 PhDs by the Chancellor. Some 20 students and three teachers were awarded with gold medals for their extraordinary performance in academic subjects.

The Prime Minister said every society would now have to be built

on the basis of science and technology to survive in the ever-changing world in the 21st century.

"In the current century, knowledge will be the only capital," she said adding that the astounding advances of information technology has opened up a new horizon in the development efforts of the world.

Hasina said her government is working with a vision to develop the nation and taking all necessary steps accordingly. The government has restored discipline in the financial sector and ensured smooth growth of economy.

"All economic indicators are moving in positive direction," she

Commercialise PDB, take steps to rationalise power tariff

Speakers at Prothom Alo dialogue urge govt

The government should take steps to make the Power Development Board (PDB) a commercial entity by rationalising the tariff structure and offering it the facilities the private power units get.

Participants in an open dialogue on 'Crisis in power sector: Ways to overcome' in the city also observed that a fair competition between public and private sectors is necessary to solve different niggling problems the sector is in including systems loss which is around 40 per cent at present.

"The government should rationalise the power tariff by taking into consideration the power generation cost," PDB Chairman Brig (ret.d.) A Malek said. "It should also give PDB the facilities and tax exemptions offered to the Independent Power Plants (IPP)."

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Rafiqul Islam was chief guest at the dialogue, organised by the daily Prothom Alo. Prothom Alo Editor Motiur Rahman was the moderator.

By Staff Correspondent

Aziz Khan, chairman of Summit United Power Company; Azimur Rahman, former vice-president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Nuruddin Kamal, former PDB chairman; top PDB, DESA and REB officials; leaders of power employees' association, and people from all walks of life took part in the deliberations.

Malek said that PDB is not getting any subsidy from the government for selling power to organisations like DESA and REB at a rate which is lower than its production cost, which deprives the board of Tk 100 crore per month.

While DESA owes Tk 25 to 30 crore each month to PDB, REB is getting per unit power at Tk 1.86 against a production cost of Tk 2.5. According to Brigadier Malek 2,600MW power is not inadequate for the country since there is at least 20 per cent systems loss due to pilferage.

"PDB has to install new lines which are not financially viable or cost effective. It is PDB's responsibility

to run a generator at the Bangabhaban round the clock. We have to serve the purpose of the government," the PDB chairman said.

REB chairman Mezbahuddin Ahmed said that REB had already installed distribution and transmission lines at some places but those were yet to get power. "We already have gone for power generation and by next month REB will be able to generate 140MW."

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Constitution not violated in appointment of judges: Law Minister

By Special Correspondent

The group of five senior lawyers trying to resolve the issue arising out of appointment of two judges in the Supreme Court held a meeting yesterday to review the situation.

In a statement issued after the meeting, Barrister Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed said they reviewed the situation at a meeting with Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru on Thursday.

Barrister Ishtiaque and Barrister Mainul Hossain, President of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), met the Law Minister on behalf of the five. The three other members of the team are Dr Kamal Hossain, M.A. Malek and Dr M. Zahir.

Barrister Ishtiaque in his statement said, "The Law Minister informed us that the Prime Minister would meet us after her arrival from abroad. We would discuss with the Prime Minister the issue of appoint-

ment of judges in the APD (Appellate Division of the Supreme Court) on the basis of a formula agreed upon by lawyers of both sides".

The PM is leaving Sunday night for a three-day visit to Cambodia to attend a meeting of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace.

The formula Barrister Ishtiaque referred to was the agreement he brokered between pro- and anti-government lawyers to elevate two judges of the High Court to the Supreme Court.

The two judges -- Justice KM Hasan and Justice JR Modasser-- were superceded when Justice Golam Rabbani and Justice Ruhul Amin were elevated to the Supreme Court from the High Court recently.

This sparked off an unprecedented protest in the Supreme Court building.

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BDR, Nasaka hold flag meeting

Dhaka, Yangon agree to defuse tension

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Dhaka and Yangon have agreed to defuse tension and maintain a stable situation in Bangladesh's south-eastern border.

The agreement was reached at a flag meeting between commanders of border forces of Bangladesh and Myanmar yesterday, report received in Dhaka said.

The sides also looked forward to a meeting of the Joint Survey Commission, agreed upon earlier.

The flag meeting between BDR and Nasaka was held at Maungdaw in Myanmar. Colonel Rafiqur Rahman, CO of the 36 Rifle Battalion of BDR represented the Bangladesh side.

Details of the meeting were not available.

However it is learnt that Lt General Wan Tuwa, commander of Myanmar's western region bordering the tension-ridden area, visited troops in the area and briefed them about the understanding reached between the two countries that the Joint Survey Commission would inspect bordering installations. He is reported to have asked Myanmar forces comprising regular troops and Nasaka border guards to exercise restraint.

In a major shift, the Myanmar side at the flag meeting yesterday made no mention of a previous complaint that Bangladesh has constructed embankments along the Nafriver.

But the Yangon authorities are learnt to have protested shrimp cultivation by Bangladesh on its side of the Nafriver. Bangladesh responded

by saying that Myanmar is also engaged in similar cultivation, besides construction of embankment and other unauthorised activities in violation of the 1966 border agreement, renewed in 1980.

Meanwhile, around 60 yards of the embankment constructed by the Myanmar authorities have been reportedly washed away by the Nafriver.

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Textbook scam: PMO directive for legal action goes unheeded

Mustak Hossain

Despite a directive from the Prime Minister's Office on January 2 to take legal action against the defaulting printers and distributors of textbooks for primary and secondary levels, the Ministry of Education is yet to take any step in this regard, sources concerned said.

The Ministry took 12 days just to send the letter containing the directive to the Chairman of National Curriculum and Textbook

Board (NCTB).

Three concerns of Beximco group Pustaka, Shuktara and Free Press were awarded the job of printing over eight crore textbooks.

The NCTB, instead of taking any action against the defaulters, has agreed to allow them to pay royalty in six installments in violation of terms and conditions of the tender for the job, the source said.

Earlier, Education Minister ASHK Sadique at a meeting of the

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education had said there was no textbook crisis in the country.

But the reality is that lakhs of students are yet to get textbooks due to fault of the printers and distributors.

Meanwhile, the Beximco concerns have increased the prices of various textbooks for secondary level by about 20 per cent despite an assurance from the NCTB that prices would not be raised.

The Beximco trio was supposed to deposit the textbooks by November 30 last year but the NCTB extended the deadline twice.

Now the companies are likely to distribute books from today in three phases.

JCD leaders meet Khaleda, agree to work together

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday asked leaders of JCD to shun their differences and help intensify the on-going one-point movement, reports BSS.

She was talking to them at her Mintoo Road official residence in the city.

The JCD leaders agreed to work together and hold the reunion meeting on January 23 and representatives' meeting on January 24 with Khaleda as the chief guest on both the occasions, BNP sources said last night.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Dr Khondker Mosharraf Hossain, Sadeq Hossain Khoka, Amanullah Aman, Khairul Kabir Khokan, Fazul Haque Milon, JCD President Nasiruddin Pintu and General Secretary Shahabuddin Laltu and Organising Secretary Mosharraf Hossain were present in the meeting.



Students staged a demonstration in the city yesterday, protesting non-availability of textbooks under the National Curriculum and Textbook Board three weeks into the new academic year. --Star photo

Lalon's shrine in Kushtia under fresh threat

Work on the controversial project resumes

By Staff Correspondent

The authorities have secretly resumed work on the controversial project to build several large structures on the premises of Lalon's shrine in Kushtia, sources said.

The Tk 3.64 project which includes construction of a 500-seat auditorium, a guest house and other structures, is being opposed by bauls, followers of Lalon and people from all walks of life.

A body styled Committee for Protection of Lalon's Shrine, comprising eminent citizens, was formed in Dhaka. Its members visited the shrine recently and submitted a report to the government.

State Minister for Youth, Sports

and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Kader had earlier assured hundreds of protesters that the ministry would consider recommendations of the committee.

Obaidul Kader could not be contacted last night. His PA said he has gone to Noakhali.

When contacted over telephone, Kushtia Deputy Commissioner KPD Choudhury was also not available at his residence at around 8 pm last night.

Sources said yesterday that the authorities in Kushtia, having received a 'go-ahead' from Dhaka, started building the structures on the premises of the shrine.

Lalon, one of the greatest folk

philosophers of this region, died 109 years ago at the age of 117.

Convenors of the Committee, Poet Shamsur Rahman and Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury, on Friday expressed deep concern over resumption of work on the project.

If the authorities do not stop the work immediately, a bigger movement would be launched to protect the shrine, they said in a statement.

They said the authorities ignored pleas from people from all walks of life and went ahead with the construction work to destroy the sanctity of the shrine.

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Underworld gang member shot dead by rivals

By Staff Correspondent

Rivalry between Five Star and Seven Star, two underworld gangs of notorious criminals in the city, has intensified again following Friday's firing incident that left one member of the former killed and another bullet-hit.

Sources claimed that Javed and Bahadur, members of Five Star, were injured seriously when Chanchal, Molla Masud and Zillur led by Subrata Bayen of Seven Star shot them at Moghbazar rail crossing from a close range on Friday night.

They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Bahadur died there yesterday morning. The condition of Javed is

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Kibria promises 'eco-friendly' budget

Duty-free import of waste-treatment plants to be allowed

By Special Correspondent

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria has said he would continue efforts to make the coming budget 'eco-friendly', providing for duty free import of waste treatment plants and equipment to encourage factory owners to comply with rules and keep the environment pollution-free.

"When the question of budget comes, our priority is focussed on poverty alleviation through economic growth. But conservation of the environment had never been a priority before. It is our government which had put emphasis on it as a primary objective", he told a seminar in the city yesterday.

The seminar on 'Greening the

National Budget' was organised by the Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) at the Jatiya Press Club in connection with its 17th annual general meeting. It was also addressed by Ms Leigh Stubbleford, Manager of Natural Resources, Department of International Development (DFID) of UK. FEJB Chairman Quamrul Islam Choudhury presided.

Kibria said that in the past political parties had never taken up the issue of environment and noted the steps taken by the present government. Referring to 'greening of the budget', he said in the last budget

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