

Govt yet to decide on reserved seats in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over two years have passed since the takeover, but the government is yet to decide how to reintroduce reserved seats for women in parliament.

The debate is still on among the government's policy makers whether the women representatives will be elected directly or by the lawmakers. Number of seats has also not been fixed.

"We are planning to reintroduce reserved seats for women in parliament and a bill will be placed before the House in the upcoming session beginning on January 18 to amend the constitution," Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed told The Daily Star Thursday night.

He said the final decision on the women seats would be taken after the return of the prime minister from the Saarc summit in Islamabad.

The government is now considering several proposals including the old system with 30 reserve seats elected by the lawmakers, said sources in the law ministry.

According to another proposal, the number of seats will be raised to either 50 or 60 and the candidates will be elected either through general election or by the lawmakers, the sources added.

The ruling BNP pledged before 2001 general election that if voted to power, it would introduce direct election for reserved seats of women and increase their number.

In her winding-up speech at the

second session of the 8th Jatiya Sangsad, Prime Minister and Leader of the House Khaleda Zia assured that a constitution amendment bill would be placed before the House at its third session to reintroduce the women seats.

But the assurance was not fulfilled and the sitting parliament passed over two years keeping the reserved seats for women vacant.

Considering the empowerment of women, 15 reserve seats were introduced for them in parliament for 10 years in 1972. Later, the number was increased to 30.

As the tenure was over, the reserved seats were reintroduced for another 10 years in 1990.

The present parliament has been constituted without reserve seats for women.

Int'l confce on thermal engineering begins

UNB, Dhaka

A three-day International Conference on Thermal Engineering began on the Bangladesh University of

Engineering and Technology (BUET) campus yesterday.

Science and Information & Communication Technology Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan inaugurated the conference.

Some 200 engineers and scientists from the USA, the UK, India, Iran, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, Singapore, Pakistan and the host Bangladesh are taking part in the conference.

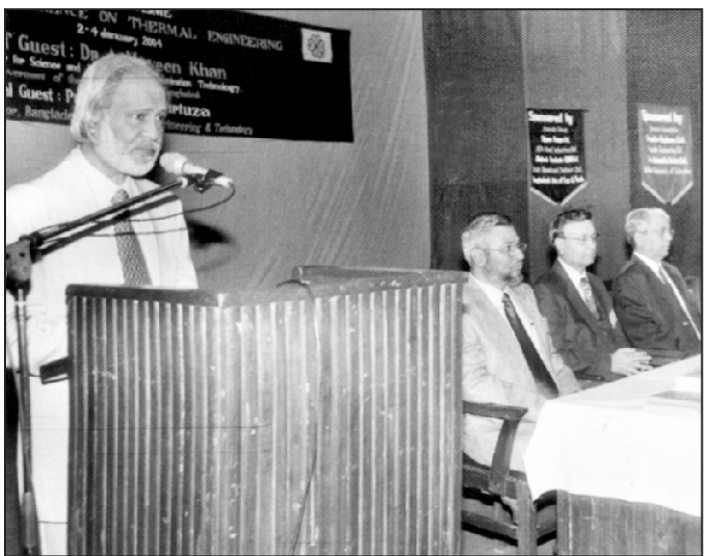
Bangladesh Society of Mechanical Engineers (BSME) and American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) jointly organised the conference.

Addressing the conference, Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan urged the Bangladeshi scientists and engineers working abroad to return to the country for accelerating development by applying their experience.

In the inaugural session, Prof Fazle Hussain and Dr Khairul Q Zaman were given BSME Gold Medals for their excellent performances in the field of engineering. The daughter of Dr Khairul Q Zaman received the medal as his father is now abroad.

A total of 150 papers will be presented in 22 technical sessions of the conference.

BUET Vice-Chancellor Prof Alee Murtuza, BSME President Professor Anwar Hosain, Professor RK Shah, Professor Fazle Hussain and Professor Dr M Imtiaz Hossain addressed the inaugural session.



Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan speaks as chief guest at the inaugural session of a three-day International Conference on 'Thermal Engineering' at the Buett auditorium in the city yesterday. Bangladesh Society of Mechanical Engineers and American Society of Mechanical Engineers jointly organised the event.



Visitors leaf through books at Dhaka Book Fair which began at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city on January 1.

Ultimatum for repair of CU building

CU CORRESPONDENT

Arts faculty teachers of Chittagong University (CU) on Thursday gave a two-month ultimatum to the authorities concerned to renovate the faculty building which is now on the verge of collapse.

They will also file separate general dairies (GD) with the police against the vice-chancellor, registrar and chief engineer for any eventuality arising out of their reluctance to the renovation of the

37-year-old building.

The teachers will also go for a vigorous movement if their demand is not met within the stipulated time.

This was decided at a general meeting of the teachers on the campus yesterday with the Dean Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury in the chair.

Around one hundred teachers including the chairmen of 10 departments under arts faculty

were present at the meeting.

Speakers at the meeting blamed the authorities for not repairing the faculty building constructed in 1966.

"Hit by frequent earthquakes, the building has become so dilapidated that it should be declared immediately as 'abandoned' one, they said.

Around five thousand students and 175 teachers of the faculty are apprehending a 'Jagannath Hall Tragedy of Dhaka University' at any moment due to dilapidated condition of the four-storied building.

Over 1,000 held, 8 firearms recovered

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,099 more people, including one listed criminal, during their ongoing countrywide drive in last 24 hours till 6.00am yesterday.

They also recovered eight firearms, five other weapons and 115 rounds of bullet. Nine cases were filed against 17 people under the Arms Act, said a press release issued by the police headquarters.

Maid 'commits' suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage domestic help allegedly committed suicide in the city on January 1.

The victim was identified as Nilufar Begum, 13.

Police recovered the body from the residence of one Haradhan Debnath at 183, Elephant Road at 6.00pm.

The body was found hanging from the ceiling of a bathroom with a pink scarf.

There were no other marks of injury on her body, said Dhanmondi police.

Nilufar's mother Minara Begum alleged that she was strangled and then someone hung her body from the ceiling.

"The landlady used to rebuke and torture my daughter and she wanted me to take her back from that house when I went there some ten days ago," Minara said.

"But I asked her to stay there since they paid Tk 400 per month excluding food and clothing which was a good wage for a teenager," she added.

Nilufar had been working there for one and a half years.

An unnatural death case has been filed in this connection.

Kofi Annan condoles death of army officers

BSS, Dhaka

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has condoled the deaths of 15 Bangladeshi UN peacekeepers in a plane crash in Benin on December 25.

In a message to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on Wednesday, he said, "I was deeply saddened by the news of the tragic death of 15 UN peacekeepers from Bangladesh who served with distinction in the United Nations Missions in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

He also extended his sincere condolences to the members of the bereaved families and the people of Bangladesh, a foreign ministry press release said yesterday.

DHAKA TODAY

Film show
The Academy Film Society will screen an American feature film titled 'Almost Famous'. Venue: Society auditorium, Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Lecture
Asiatic Society of Bangladesh will hold a lecture on 'Befriending the Bay: The Eastern seaboard of the Indian Sub-continent and maritime trade' with Prof Ranabir Chakravarti of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi as guest speaker. Venue: Auditorium of the society, Old Secretariat Road. Time: 4.00pm.

JCD meeting
A meeting of the central council of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal will be held. Venue: DUCSU Bhaban, Dhaka University. Time: 12.00 noon.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Alliance Francaise organises a joint exhibition titled 'Bhutan, an act of offering' by Kama Wangoli, Deepa Islam, Jasim Uddin Xecon and Yannick Jooris. Tashi Wangchuk, counsellor of Bhutanese Embassy will inaugurate it. Venue: Gallery of Alliance Francaise, Dhanmondi. Time: 6.00pm. The exhibition will remain open till January 15 from 9.00am to 12.00 noon and from 5.00pm to 8.00pm daily except Saturday from 5.00pm to 8.00pm.

Film show
The Academy Film Society will screen an American feature film titled 'Bad Boys 11'. Venue: Society auditorium, Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Cold wave may continue

UNB, Dhaka

Dry weather will prevail over the country during the next 24 hours till 6.00pm today.

The mild cold wave over Rajshahi division and the regions of Jessore and Chuadanga may continue during the period, Met office said.

Moderate fog may occur over the country till morning, it said, adding that night temperature may remain nearly unchanged.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 26.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Teknaf and the lowest of 9.0 degree at Jessore.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:24pm today and rises at 6:42am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature In Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	15.1	12.8	95	95
Chittagong	19.5	15.0	79	83
Rajshahi	15.1	09.6	97	91
Khulna	17.5	12.5	95	93