



President Iajuddin Ahmed gives away medals and certificates among the graduating students of the University of Asia Pacific at its first convocation ceremony at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

Promote meritorious rural students

President tells University of Asia Pacific convocation

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday said it was the prime responsibility of both private and public universities to teach and provide special training to meritorious students to make them experts of international standard.

"Let's face the challenges of the world and concentrate on exporting our talents, knowledge and wisdom. In this context, meritorious rural students should be promoted by providing them with sufficient facilities and scholarships," he said.

The President was addressing the first convocation of the University of Asia Pacific (UAP) at Bangladesh China Friendship Centre in the city.

Iajuddin, however, said it would take time in closing the gap between urban and rural areas, particularly in the field of higher education. "I would have been happier had there been competition among universities on providing quality education," he said.

Referring to allegations that the private university authorities overlook criteria in admission of students,

he said, "If it's true, it's really unfortunate for any conscious citizen and the institution itself."

"It's necessary that all qualified students should have the right to go for further education in higher seat of learning. There is less scope to accommodate students below the standard required for pursuing higher education. It's also the question of dignity of the institution concerned," he said.

He also said the authorities should follow the rules and regulations of UGC and a proper vigilance be made so that such allegations do not come in future.

The President said the absence of proper and high-level selection committees for appointing qualified and knowledgeable teachers hampered the process of providing quality education in the concerned institutions.

"The authorities should make sure right persons are selected in the interest of the students whose success depend on the right direction by their teachers," he said.

Education Minister M Osman

Farruk, State Minister for Education Ehsanul Hoque Milon and UAP Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Abdul Matin Patwari also addressed the function.



Ferdous Ara first woman DG of BTB

UNB, Dhaka

Ferdous Ara Begum became the first woman to make it to the post of Director General of the state-run Bangladesh Television (BTB). She joined her new office yesterday.

Ferdous Ara was promoted to Additional Secretary in October last year and attached to the Ministry of Establishment for her next posting.

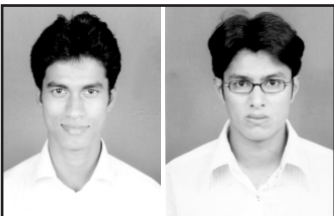
Prior to her elevation, she had been Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs since April 2002.

Grand Ikebana contest on Mar 18

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of Ikebana in Bangladesh, the Embassy of Japan and Asia Bunka Kaikan Dosokai, Dhaka, will jointly organise the Grand Ikebana contest at the Spectra Convention Centre at Gulshan 1 in the city at 2:00pm on March 18, says a press release.

Registration will begin at 11:30am at the contest venue at House 19, Road 7, Gulshan 1 on March 18.

Anyone requiring further information has been requested to contact the Embassy of Japan, Tel: 8810087 (ext 155, 158) or ABKD at 8613856.



SWAGD executives

A 41-member committee of the Students' Welfare Association of Gazipur in Dhaka (SWAGD) was formed at its annual meeting held in the city recently, says a press release.

Ahmed Saimum and Hafizur Rahman Sajol were elected president and general secretary of the association.

Professor Dr Habiba Khatun chaired the meeting while Dr ATM Fakrudin and Al-Amin conducted the election.

Other members of the newly formed committee include Kamrul Ahsan, Salahuddin Soheli, Rony Murshed, Mohammad Ali, Abu Jafar and Tonikul Islam Tarek.

Int'l dialling access code to be changed

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

Bangladesh is going to change its international dialling access code and some emergency service numbers in the wake of growing number of telephone subscribers and the arrival of new telecom companies.

The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has asked the state-owned Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone board (BTB), which handles the country's international gateway, to change the international access code and rearrange emergency service numbers.

The international access code, which is now 00 and is used while dialling a number abroad, is likely to be replaced with 001. And the economy international call number 012 will be replaced with 002, according to a proposal by the BTB.

"More economy services may be launched after this rearrangement," said a source at the BTRC.

The police control room number 999 will be replaced by 100 while 101 will be designated for fire service and ambulance service, instead of 199.

"More short access code would

be designated after reassignment of the series," said another source.

Besides, telephone numbers of all division headquarters will be upgraded to seven-digit numbers from the current five-digit ones in some places by adding 2 or 21.

However, the country code, 880, would remain unchanged.

"The BTRC has been asked to bring changes to the numbers because of the increase number of telephone subscribers," said a BTRC official.

Citing the example of private cellphone operators, he said that those companies have added an additional number considering the growth of their subscribers' base.

Bangladesh, one of the most densely populated countries in the world, has over one million fixed line phones and about four million mobile phones provided by four companies under joint ventures with foreign companies.

The BTB is expected to launch its cellphone service this month.

The telecom watchdog, BTRC, has already awarded licences to some 23 private fixed phone operators and at least half a dozen of them will launch their fixed phone service soon.

'Globalisation needs proper evaluation'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called upon the government to evaluate globalisation properly before signing any permanent agreement.

They said if the merits and demerits of globalisation are not adequately evaluated, it may create serious impact on our national economy.

The roundtable was organised by Panos South Asia at the Brac centre in the city.

Two articles, written by noble laureate Amartya Sen and prominent economist Rehman Sobhan, were read out at the roundtable for discussion on the topic.

The articles were published in 'The Little Magazine' in India.

Antara Sen, editor of the magazine, took part in the discussion.

The speakers said globalisation has two sides- one to find new market and the other to lose its own market.

They, however, observed that it is very difficult for a country like ours to survive without being integrated into the outside world.

Moderated by Afsan Chowdhury, director of Advocacy and Human Rights Unit of Brac, the roundtable was participated by Sajjad Zahir, Pratik Kanjilal, S Shahidul Alam, Ahmed Swapan, S M Shah Alam, and Kudrat Elahi.

DIALOGUE ON GOVT ADVERTISEMENT POLICY

'Bring transparency to distribution system'

Most govt ads go to hardly known newspapers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must bring transparency to the advertisement distribution system and take steps to check corruption at the Department of Films and Publications (DFP), which distributes government ads among the newspapers, said senior media persons and academics at a dialogue yesterday.

A corrupt group, both in and outside the DFP, eats up crores of public money by issuing the bulk of the government advertisements to a set of hardly known newspapers, they said.

The Mass-line Media Centre and the weekly Shaptahik 2000 organised the dialogue on the 'government advertisement policy' at the National Press Club.

"Out of 178 dailies published from Dhaka, 150 are rarely seen," said Golam Mortoza, executive editor of Shaptahik 2000, in his keynote paper. People do not even know their names and the circulation figure of such paper does not cross one-hundred mark, he added.

But these papers get government advertisements worth Tk 16.84 crore a year while 20 frontline national dailies earn only Tk 10.90 crore, he said.

According to the advertisement policy of the information ministry, Mortoza said, a Dhaka-based daily having a circulation figure of less than 6,000 will not be entitled to enjoy government advertisements.

"But a hardly known newspaper gets 30-inch government advertisements a day," he said.

Such papers include Bangajanjan, Aker Prottyasha, Aker Jibon, Gonomukti, Ittesal, Amal, Kishan, Ghoshana, Janatar Mancha, Nobo Abhijan, Noya Jamana, Satyachar, Nawroz, Bhorer Kontha, Khola Kagoj, Aker Padma, Dhakar Dak, Sonar Alo, Satyer Alo, Sabuj Nishan, Jonopad, Ajana, Ishtekhilal, Swadin Bangla, Bhorer Akash and Bangladesh Protidin, said Mortoza.

And more than 80 such papers are published from one multi-storey building located in the city's Purana Paltan area, he pointed out.



Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury speaks at a dialogue on 'Government Advertisement Policy' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Though unknown to common people, the Aker Prottyasha and the Aker Jibon received 5759 inches and 4828 inches of advertisements respectively in December and January last, he said.

Mortoza said two groups backed by the ruling party stalwarts are active in the DFP who dominate the distribution process.

The corruption at the DFP not only facilitates channelling a huge amount of public money through providing government advertisements to such hardly known papers, but also hampers the country's overall development activities, said Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star.

The important government tenders published in these papers do not come to the notice of the public, virtually undermining the country's development issue, he said.

"Corruption in development programmes begins with the issuance of advertisements to such papers," said Monzurul Ahsan Bulbul, executive editor of the daily Sangbad.

He suggested formulating clearly drawn broader guidelines for government advertisements and that the Audit Bureau of

Circulation (ABC) should be constituted with representatives from government, editors, publishers and the journalist community.

The corruption at DFP is just a glimpse of the widespread corruption in every sphere of society, said Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury, who chaired the dialogue.

He said that mobilisation of public opinion about the government malpractice as well as transparency and self-scrutiny of the frontline media organisations are equally crucial for an overall fair practice in the industry.

Journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury demanded formation of a press commission, a parliamentary debate on the old commission reports and formation of a small newspapers' association and advertisement allocation for specialised publications.

Journalist Khondakar Ali Ashraf, AP bureau chief Farid Hossain, Dr Asif Nazrul and Shamim Reza also spoke at the dialogue, moderated by MMC Executive Director Kamrul Hasan Monju.

Call for effective leadership at all levels of national life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a course yesterday underscored the need for effective leadership at all levels of national life.

"Everyone has a role to play in the development of the country," said British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury.

"Often it seems that only senior politicians can influence development... However, everyday people have ways to express themselves and make a difference," he said at the inaugural session of the course.

The Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) organised the two-day 'Leadership Development Course' with an aim to 'promote leadership for a better Bangladesh.'

A group of selected university students are taking part in the course at the Sheraton hotel.

Osman Morad, chief executive officer of Standard Chartered Bank, Prof Dr Ataur Rahman, Chairman of CGS, and Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, also spoke.

The group of panelists stressed the importance of realising that leadership begins at a personal level and requires 'being a doer.'

"It is between you and your consciousness," said Mahfuz Anam. "One must have conviction and the courage to follow that conviction. One must be a dreamer and decide to act on that dream."

Elaborating on the 'Crisis of Leadership', Osman Morad said the same models that were used for

leaders of the past will no longer suffice.

Tomorrow's leaders will need to have strengths in the softer skills; they will need to be encouraging, warm, enthusiastic, approachable and creative, he said.

The speakers also said those who want to become leaders should think beyond politics when thinking of the concept of leadership.

The British high commissioner added that a leader must be able to stand up and say 'no' when asked to do something they know is wrong and must also know when to pull back and allow a more competent person to take over.

"That is the ultimate act of leadership."

College student killed in road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A college student was killed and a university student injured critically in a road accident in the capital yesterday.

The dead was identified as Sumon, 19, student of Northern College, and the injured as Anwar Hossain Khan alias Fahim, 21, student of Northern University.

Sumon died on way to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, while Fahim was undergoing treatment there.

Sumon and Fahim were going to their dormitory in Mohammadpur riding on a motorbike when a truck hit their vehicle from behind at Bijoy Sarani at around 3:30pm.

"I was driving the motorbike while Sumon was sitting in the backseat," said Fahim.

Chehlum



Malibagh Chowdhurypara) after Zohr prayers today, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the chehlum.

Home secy's contract expires

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The contract of Home Secretary Muhammad Omar Farooq expired yesterday.

Additional Secretary of the ministry SM Zahur Islam will work as the acting home secretary until the appointment of a new secretary, sources said.

A farewell was accorded to Omar Farooq at the ministry yesterday.

BNP joint meet today

UNB, Dhaka

A joint meeting of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will be held at the party central office in the city at 4:30pm today.

Party Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will preside over the meeting, says a BNP press release yesterday.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Comilla and Noakhali till 6.00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged, Met Office said. Highest temperature 34.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 16.1 degree Celsius at Sirimangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:09pm today and rises at 6:05am tomorrow.

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	32.6	22.2	71	46
Chittagong	30.5	19.6	59	70
Rajshahi	33.0	18.8	82	53
Khulna	32.4	21.2	96	63
Barisal	33.2	21.0	87	78
Sylhet	31.3	19.4	55	52
Cox's Bazar	31.6	20.0	68	73

Film show

Dhaka Chalachitra Sava will screen two films titled 'Million Dollar Baby' by Clint Eastwood and 'Abar Anonney' by Goutom Ghosh. Venue: 62, Science Laboratory Road. Time: 4:30pm and 7:00pm.

Theatre festival

As part of the National Children's Theatre Festival organised by the People's Theatre Association, six plays will be staged. Venue: Shawkat Osman Memorial Hall, Central Public Library, Shahbagh. Time: 3:30pm.

Cultural festival

A three-day Adivasi cultural festival, organised by the Society for Environment and Human Development, will be inaugurated. Venue: Bangladesh Shipakala Academy, Segun Bagicha. Time: 3:00pm.

Poetry evening

Muldhara, an organisation for writer, journalists and artists, organises an evening of poetry with senior and young poets. Venue: Muldhara Zakia Alam Auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 6:00pm.

Lecture

The Goethe-Institut organises a lecture on the 'Aspects of Contemporary Art in Germany' by architect Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury. Venue: German Cultural Centre Auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 6:30pm.

Conference

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust organises a national conference on 'Women empowerment: Role of women UP member'. Venue: Cirdap Auditorium, Tophkana Road. Time: 10:30am.

BAPA discussion

In observance of International Rivers Protection Day, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon will hold a discussion titled 'Endangered rivers and the role of mass media'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.

Roundtable

Save Environment Movement organises a roundtable on 'Construction of unplanned houses: Our responsibility in protecting environment and health'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of a book titled 'Muslim Ummah in the Contemporary World' by Ahmed Farid, former secretary and ambassador, will be held. Venue: Officers Club, Bailey Road. Time: 7:00pm.

Session

The youth development department with the assistance of the UNFPA will hold a dissemination session on End line survey findings of ARH project with State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman as chief guest. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 9:30am.

Workshop

Bangladesh Medical Association organises a workshop titled 'Maternity mortality: Pledging our responsibilities' with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman as chief guest. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 9:15am.

Founding anniversary

The 10th founding anniversary of Bangladesh International School will be held. Venue: School campus, New DOHS, Mohakhali. Time: 5:00pm.

Inauguration

The inaugural ceremony of Holy Family Public School will be held with Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan as chief guest. Venue: House-32, Section-6, Mirpur. Time: 10:30am.

Brac seminar

Brac University organises a seminar on 'Quality of Bus Service in Dhaka City'. Venue: University campus, Mohakhali. Time: 3:00pm.

Rotary meeting

Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Greater Dhaka will be held. Venue: Hotel Eastern Residence, Banani. Time: 6:00pm.

IDEB meeting

A two-day monthly meeting of the Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh will be inaugurated. Venue: IDEB Bhaban, Kakrail. Time: 5:00pm.