

NEW PROJECT TO REPLACE THE OLD ONE

10 language labs to be set up to help unemployed youths

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

The Ministry of Education is planning to set up 10 language laboratories aimed at enhancing English and Arabic language skills of pre- and post-intermediate level students and service holders to prepare them for overseas job.

Although the ministry had earlier taken a Tk 9 crore project to establish six such laboratories at the divisional headquarters under a 100-day programme of the four-party alliance government, the project eventually bogged down.

The ministry stalled the project twice -- once for corruption and the second time over a dilemma when a supplier firm went to court for viola-

tion of tender contract by the education directorate.

Now it is considering dropping the project and coming up with a new project to establish 10 language labs.

"The ministry has approved the new project and a government order in this regard is in the offing," said a senior official of the education ministry last week.

The ministry would initiate the new project with similar features to replace the failed project considering the uniqueness of the project, officials said.

The initiative is very timely, an official said, adding that the jobless youths will benefit immensely from the project as the language profi-

ciency is a must to get job in overseas market.

The education boards will be the implementing authority of the new project. In the first phase, six language laboratories will be set up at the divisional headquarters to teach youths English and Arabic languages.

The project first hit a snag when a section of officials of the directorate in connivance with some book suppliers tried to procure unnecessary and unfamiliar reading materials without any consultation with the experts to siphon off several crores of taka, industry sources alleged.

The directorate had floated a tender to procure a total of 458 books in English and Arabic --

mostly unknown and unnecessary books for the purpose -- ignoring essential and worthy books.

No experts were consulted before preparing and finalising the list of books. The list was made reportedly with the suggestions of certain suppliers for their benefit.

After a report was published in The Daily Star regarding the faulty selection of books, the education ministry stalled the project.

When the ministry asked for a fresh bid after correcting the book list, a firm participating in the tendering process took the issue to court and the case has been pending since then.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia offers Munajat after inaugurating Fakir Majnu Shah Bridge over the river Shitalakhya at Kapasia in Gazipur yesterday.

FARIDPUR-1 BY-ELECTION

Candidates' personal information to be made public before polls

TAWFIQUE ALI, from Faridpur

Any aggrieved party or even a voter can file a complaint with the pre-election committee if any candidate for the upcoming Faridpur-1 by-election provides false statements regarding personal information, said Returning Officer (RO) Md Nasir Uddin Khan yesterday.

But the RO and other officials could not clarify how quickly and in

what manner the Pre-election Inquiry Committee, headed by a sub-judge, would solve any problem with regard to personal information of the candidates.

A High Court bench in a public interest litigation on May 24 directed the Election Commission to request eight kinds of information from an aspiring candidate so that the voters can have an idea about the candidates and make the right choice.

The by-election in Faridpur-1 constituency comprising three upazilas -- Alfadanga, Modhukhali and Boalmari -- will be held on August 30. The last date for submission of nomination papers is August 6 and the scrutiny will be held the following day.

Nasir Uddin, deputy commissioner of Faridpur, who will act as

the returning officer, said the information about the candidates for this parliamentary by-election will be made public immediately after the scrutiny is done.

According to the HC directive, the aspiring candidates has to provide information about their educational qualification, whether they were accused in criminal cases, profession, sources of income, statement of assets and debt status of candidates and their dependants.

The information, to be furnished along with the nomination papers, will be published through notices, posters, leaflets, local newspapers and announcement in public places, said the RO.

"We will take all-out measures to make the elections fair and free from

any interference and violence," he told The Daily Star.

There are 3,22,365 voters in the constituency and the last date for withdrawal of candidature is August 14, said District Election Officer Abdul Bari.

He said that anybody can have access to the candidate's information soon after the scrutiny of nomination papers.

To raise awareness about the newly introduced system, Sujon, a civil society body working for good governance, held meetings with the local Union Parishad chairmen and members, teachers, journalists and members of other professional groups in Faridpur on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The aim of the HC directive is to discourage criminals, loan defaulters and incompetent candidates from contesting the election, said Member Secretary of Sujon Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, who is also the global vice-president and country director of The Hunger Project.

"Information about the candidate's track records will help the voters make right decision in the election," he said at a meeting at the Faridpur Zila Parishad Auditorium.

"The political parties must take into account the competence and character of a candidate while giving nominations," said Digirichar UP Chairman Md Sadequzzaman.

"Voters also have to create pressure on the two major political parties to nominate competent candidates."

"It is unfortunate that the country's political structure has been destroyed over the last 30 years as people having muscle power and black money are replacing the professional politicians," said Md Shahjahan, a retired professor.

About 50 to 65 percent of the existing voter lists are faulty, said Sharmeen Murshid, executive director of Brotee, an election watchdog and research organisation.

"Only 18 percent of the 39 percent votes cast in the Dhaka-10 by-election was genuine," she said, adding that politics today is dominated by businessmen and black money holders.

Democratic practice within the political parties is crucial for a meaningful election, said Abul Hossain, chairman of Islampur UP in Baliakandi at another meeting at Modhukhali Upazila Parishad auditorium.

Similar meetings were also held in Alfadanga and Boalmari Upazila yesterday, coordinated by Faridpur district convenor of Sujon Ahmed Hossain Mian.

2 girls raped in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

The husband of a government shelter home employee had confined and raped a teenage girl of the home for months, while another teenage girl yesterday escaped from the clutch of a prostitution syndicate.

Nazma Begum, technical instructor of Godnail Shelter Home run by the social service department under the social welfare ministry, had taken the girl as her house help. But there is no provision for the employees to take any of the shelter home's girls to their houses for personal work.

After Nazma fell sick and was hospitalised on November 15 last year, her husband Ramzan Ali, electrician of the food department, raped the girl on November 19.

The girl complained to Kiron, a manager, and Alamgir, the head guard, of the home about the rape. But they had forced her to return to the house of Ramzan, who raped her every night, the girl alleged.

At one stage, the teenager conceived and Kiron and Alamgir asked her to kill the embryo.

As she refused, they called in Nazma's brother, Mokhtar Hossain, and sent her to his house after Nazma died on June 10 this year.

Hearing her ordeals, Mokhtar informed a rights organisation, which yesterday filed a case with the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal against Ramzan, Kiron and Alamgir.

Judge Mafizul Islam ordered the magistrate of Narayanganj (North) to probe the matter and submit a report in a week.

Meanwhile, a teenage girl of Gaita village in Kishoreganj filed a case with Narayanganj Police Station saying she was confined in a posh area in the capital by a prostitution syndicate for three months.

The girl told police she had left home for Dhaka three months ago as her mother got married after her father's death.

She met Swapan, who took and confined her in his Bariadhara house promising her a good job.

Swapan forced her into prostitution after one month and used to take her to posh hotels in the capital.

The girl, however, managed to escape when she was taken to an Uttara house, she told reporters.

GIRLS' EDUCATION

'Marriage major reason for discontinuation'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Marriage is the major reason for discontinuation of girls' education while dowry also influences their enrolment in school, revealed a study at a seminar yesterday.

The other reasons obstructing girls' education are higher school cost, parents reluctance to send them to school, and students own lack of interest in attending the class.

The seminar titled 'Girls' Schooling in Rural Bangladesh' was organised by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) at its auditorium in the city.

Siameen Mahmud, a senior research fellow of BIDS, presented the keynote paper at the seminar.

The study on girls' schooling was conducted in three districts Chittagong, Chapainawabganj and Sherpur.

Siameen in her paper underscored the need for a policy shift from expanding enrollment to improving standard of education.

She said structural barriers like distance, marriage and workload, earlier considered as hindrance for girls' schooling, have changed over the time.

Siameen said the cost of continuation is higher than the cost of enrollment, and as such the decision to enroll girls in school is easier than the decision to keep them in school.

The study showed a significant rise in girls' enrollment only in the

last decade and faster than the rise in boys' enrollment. It was found in both poor and non-poor families.

It also showed that village literacy level has positive impact on enrollment and continuation of girls' education.

School distance no longer remains as a barrier to enrollment now as it was in the past, said the study.

Similarly, village remoteness depresses chances of school enrollment as in the past but it does not affect chances of school continuation, it added.

Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury, coordinator of Gano Swasthya Kendro, and Nilufar Akhtar took part in the discussion.

Khulna city BNP factions cancel rallies on high command's order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The two rival factions of city unit BNP refrained from holding their scheduled rallies yesterday after receiving a faxed message from the central committee.

The rallies of the factions led by City unit Secretary Nazrul Islam Manju and Whip Ashraf Hossain were scheduled to be held at Maharaj Chattrai in the city.

Manju admitted that he received a fax at noon from party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, who asked him not to hold the rally or issue any statements against any BNP leaders.

Bhuiyan also warned that stern action will be taken if anyone from Khulna BNP, no matter what faction they belong to, violates his command.

District BNP Secretary Shafique

Alam Mona told The Daily Star that Bhuiyan has taken a right step by imposing restriction on factional activities.

Whip Ashraf, city BNP President M Nurul Islam MP, Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman and Ali Asgar Lobi MP could not be contacted as they were in Dhaka.

BANGABANDHU MURDER Execution of verdict demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Awami Sangskritik Forum yesterday formed a human chain in front of Mukhtang in the city demanding immediate execution of the verdict in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Speaking at the programme, Joint General Secretary of Awami League Obaidul Kader expressed his doubt that the execution of the verdict will take place under this regime of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

Granting presidential amnesty to BNP leader Mohiuddin Ahmed Jhinto proved that this government would not implement the execution of Bangabandhu's killers, he said.

The government has also failed to track down the culprits responsible for bomb attack on the British envoy in Sylhet as well as the killers of former finance minister Shah ASM Kibria.

2.80 lakh suffer from low vision

Experts tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There are around 2,80,000 low vision (LV) patients in the country who are generally treated as blind, said the experts at a workshop yesterday.

But vision device and professional advice could enable them to do their personal work independently, they added.

Only a little awareness is needed to make LV patients able in the society, the speakers said.

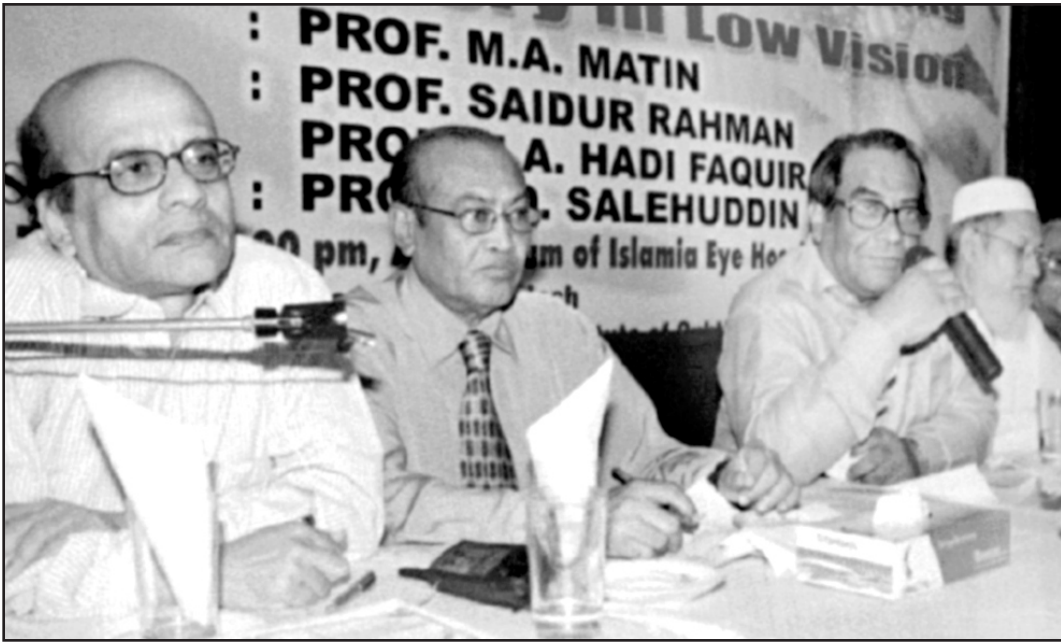
The workshop titled 'Motivation, Awareness Building and Service Delivery in Low Vision' was organised by Islamia Eye Hospital (IEH) and Ispahani Institute of Ophthalmology with the help of Sight Saver International, Bangladesh at the IEH auditorium in the city.

Prof MA Matin MP was the chief guest at the programme chaired by Prof Khan MA Manzur, director general of the IEH.

Prof Matin said there are four LV centres at Islamia Eye Hospital, National Institute of Ophthalmology, Chittagong Eye Inflammatory and Sirajganj BNSB Eye Hospital, but very few of LV patients go there.

"It is a matter of piety that most of the ophthalmologists have little knowledge about LV problems, and that's why the LV patients are deprived of necessary treatment," he said, adding, "We have to create awareness among the professionals as well as the patients."

Bangladesh Ophthalmologists Society President Prof Hadi Faquir said it is the high time to take steps



Prof MA Matin MP speaks at a workshop at the Islamia Eye Hospital auditorium in the city yesterday.

for LV patients.

"We have to take initiative to make those disabled people able in the society," he added.

Prof Hadi suggested inclusion of 'Low Vision' as a course of Ophthalmology so that an ophthalmologist can learn about LV deeply and refer LV patients to LV centres.

Presenting a paper on 'Update of Low Vision', Dr Sayedul Haque defined LV as "A partial loss of sight. It exists when functional vision

cannot be adequately corrected with eyeglasses, contact lenses, medications or surgery. Low vision services do not cure the cause of low vision but rather utilise the remaining vision to its fullest potential."

He said four LV centres are capable of providing guidance to LV patients on how to walk and work without the help of other persons.

Dr Mastura Khatun in her paper titled 'Types of Low Vision Patient

and Management in IEH' and Kazi Kamal Uddin in his paper titled 'Advantages and Disadvantages of Low Vision Devices' discussed the facilities provided by the low vision centre of IEH and the latest low vision devices.

Chairman of BSMMU Ophthalmology Prof Salehuddin, Chief Consultant of Birdem Prof Saidur Rahman, and IEH Advisor Zaheda Ispahani also spoke on the occasion.

DU FASILATUNNESSA HALL Six students warned

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) Syndicate has warned six students of Begum Fazilatunnessa Mujib Hall for misbehaving with the house tutors on July 17.

The students confined the house tutors, who later resigned, to press home their 13-point demand.

Talking to The Daily Star, Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz said the six students were scolded this time for their wrongdoing, but their minimum punishment was the cancellation of their seats.

He also urged all to maintain teachers-students relationship.

The syndicate at an emergency meeting on Tuesday night, however, did not take any measures against the house tutors.

A six-member inquiry committee in its report blamed the hall administration for its reluctance to meet the students' demands.

Three syndicate members put a note of dissent on the decision saying issuing warnings was not enough as the six students were clearly identified by the probe committee for their misbehaviour with the house tutors.

"We asked the syndicate to expel the students," said one of the members asking anonymity.

The VC will sit with the resigned house tutors today to bring back normalcy at the hall that has been running without any teachers since July 18.

Sources said Prof Tahmina Aktar of Bangladesh-Kuwait Moitri Hall is making hectic efforts to become the provost of Fazilatunnessa hall.

Some other teachers are also lobbying for the post, sources added.

The Blue Panel teachers backed by the opposition Awami League yesterday met the VC and expressed dissatisfaction over the syndicate decision.

They urged the VC to give a copy of the probe report to Dhaka University Teachers' Association.

# WEATHER

## TODAY

### Moderately heavy falls likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over the country till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also expected at places during the period. Day temperature may fall slightly over the country, Met Office said.

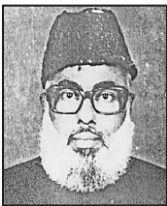
Highest temperature 35.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 24.8 degree Celsius at Sandwip and Feni.

**The sun sets in the capital at 6:40pm today and rises at 5:29am 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	32.7	26.0	76	69
Chittagong	31.9	25.4	76	80
Rajshahi	32.4	26.6	81	73
Khulna	32.7	25.8	95	84
Barisal	31.2	25.8	97	97
Sylhet	35.4	25.7	77	66
Cox's Bazar	30.2	25.5	80	95

Barrister Korban Ali dead



Barrister Moulana Muhammad Korban Ali passed away due to cardiac arrest at a city hospital yesterday at the age of 75, says a press release.

Barrister Korban, also a politician, left behind his wife, three sons, one daughter and admirers to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza was held on the Supreme Court premises and at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the city after Zohr prayers yesterday. He will be buried at his village in Sirajganj.

### Death anniversary

Today is the 28th death anniversary of Dr Nawab Ali, first FRCP of the then East Pakistan and former principal of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, says a press release.

He died on this day in 1977 in Dhaka. He was also a member of the then Provincial Assembly of East Pakistan.

### Quazi Muazzam Husain

Today is the 4th death anniversary of Lion Quazi Muazzam Husain, former member director of BADC, says a press release.

Friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to pray for late Muazzam.