

Politicisation destroys education sector

Speakers tell AL seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicisation, irregularities and corruption in appointing teachers in different educational institutions have destroyed the country's education sector, said the speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They said the BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government has destroyed the entire education system through appointing political loyalists, less qualified and corrupt persons as teachers, officials and employees from primary to higher level of education.

The seminar titled 'Crumbing condition in education sector during BNP-Jamaat alliance government' was organised by the main opposition Awami League (AL) at the Jatiya Press Club in the city as part of its series of seminars on the failure of coalition government in different sectors.

Discussants at the seminar criticised the government's move to introduce unified system of education at the secondary level and said it would retard the progress of students.

The AL leaders said if voted to power, they would cancel the 'political appointment' in different educational institutions and reward the meritorious who were deprived by the present government.

Commissions would also be formed to punish the corrupt teachers, officers and employees in public universities, they added.

Former education minister AHSK Sadeq presided over the seminar while former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Prof AK Azad Chowdhury



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil speaks at a seminar titled 'Crumbing condition in education sector during BNP-Jamaat alliance government' at the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday.

presented a keynote paper.

Prof Azad said the alliance government ousted VCs, Pro-VCs, and treasurers from 11 public universities and relieved more than 2000 teachers and officials immediately after assuming the office.

They have appointed a total of 735 teachers and 3545 employees politically in seven public universities in last four years, he added.

The former VC pointed out different problems prevailing in education sector under the alliance government including politicisation, killing of and threats to progressive teachers, attack on students, session jam, distortion of history, question leakage, corruption in admission, irregularities in publishing examination result and reduction

of teachers' facilities.

The keynote paper also put forward 13 recommendations to get rid of the situation. These include keeping educational institutions out of politics, taking necessary steps to get rid of session jam, resisting fundamentalism in education sector and dissemination of true history of the country.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil urged people to be united for a free, fair and neutral election to save the country from the grip of anti-liberation forces.

He said the standard of education has reached to its lowest ebb during the present regime.

Al presidium member Tofail Ahmed said the coalition government has been taking revenge of the defeat

in 1971 by taking the country to a dilapidated condition.

He said Public Service Commission, Election Commission and the universities have been destroyed by the coalition government.

Another presidium member Suranjit Sengupta said they would cancel all the private universities functioning commercially and oust the disqualified, corrupt and politically appointed teachers and officials from all public universities, colleges and schools if they can come to power again.

Former state minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir said they would reappoint the meritorious teachers and officials who were ousted by the present government and punish those responsible for the distortion of history if they voted to power.

Dhaka University Teachers' Association President Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said the total education system has been collapsed due to political appointment, corruption and irregularities at all levels of education sector.

President of Bangladesh Economics Association Dr Khiliquzzaman, Prof Habibur Rahman of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Dr Anupom Sen of Chittagong University, Chief Co-ordinator of Jatiya Shikkhak Karmochari Front Principal Farook Ahmed and Convenor of Bangladesh Shikkhak Karmochari Front Principal MA Awal Siddiqui also spoke at the seminar.

Int'l confce on women and development begins in Bangkok

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An international conference on women and development kicked off in Bangkok yesterday with more than 1600 participants, mostly women, from all over the world.

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), an international organisation, has organised the four-day conference, according to information received from Bangkok.

The AWID has nearly 6,000 individual members and over 250 institutional members in over 100 countries, particularly in the global South, Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The conference titled 'How does change happen?' brought together feminists, development practitioners, human rights activists to debate on how institutional policy needs to change in order to end gender discrimination and also to look at ways feminists are addressing priorities and practices.

The idea is to analyse how the world has changed and how women have been a part of that change.

The conference is scheduled to conclude on October 30. A plenary session will be held each day, followed by workshops on issues ranging from domestic violence to unfair trade practices and globalisation.

About 35 men and women from different non-governmental organisations in Bangladesh are taking part in the conference.

Road User Charges to be introduced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to introduce Road User Charges (RUC) for maintenance of roads and highways as it lacks adequate funds for this purpose, said the speakers at a workshop yesterday.

The workshop titled 'Socio-Economic impacts of Road User Charges' was organised by Roads and Highways Department (RHD) and Ministry of Communications at Brac Centre Inn in the city.

RHD Chief Engineer A KM Faizur Rahman said a levy of just Tk one on fuel would raise around Tk 250 crore which could be used for road maintenance.

"We want to ensure that the money is used efficiently for the betterment of the roads," he added.

A study conducted in different areas of Dhaka, Noakhali and Mymensingh revealed that 75 percent of rural, 60 percent of urban and 88 percent of Dhaka City roads are in good and fair condition. A total of 70 percent people expressed their willingness to pay Tk one as fuel levy and Tk 0.25 as bus fair increase.

The study conducted on three hundred people also revealed that people are concerned over the usage of their extra payment, as there is much corruption in this sector.

Judge Mohammad Shamsul Arefin of the Fifth Special Tribunal for Prevention on Women and Children Repression rejected the bail petition of Assistant Sub-inspector (ASI) Mohammad Ujjal for the third time.

In his order, the judge said the case is now at the primary stage of investigation. There should not be reasonable to grant bail to him at this stage. So the bail is rejected.

ASI Ujjal was sent to jail when he surrendered to the court for bail on September 29. The court also asked the Mirpur Police to investigate the case.

The victim filed the case with the Special Tribunal on September 1. ASI Ujjal appeared before the High Court (HC) earlier on September 11 seeking anticipatory bail. The HC, denying his bail, ordered him to appear before the tribunal concerned within three weeks.

In the complaint, the victim said she used to live at Ujjal's house at the Ansar Staff Quarters as a tenant. The Rab member proposed to have illicit relations with her, but she refused. Later, Ujjal raped her on the May 31 evening.

The Mirpur Police refused to accept the incident as a case when she went to the police station to file it the following day. Later, she filed a complaint with the home ministry.

The victim left her rented house as Ujjal threatened to kill her and took shelter to her aunt's residence.

The victim in her complaint said several criminals hired by the accused abducted her from her aunt's house on August 27 but Rab rescued her later.

BIPLOB MURDER

Six get death in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A court here yesterday sentenced six youths to death in sensational Biplob Murder case.

Judge Md Motahar Hossain of the Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court, Manikganj handed down the sentence.

The convicts are Shaheen, 20, son of Tazumuddin of Diara Bhabanipur village, Al-Amin, 21, son of Zamir Uddin and Masud 21, son of Chan Mia of Garakul village, Swapan, 22, son of Fazlu of Kamar Diaz village, Lebu Mia, 24, son of Late Nurul Islam of Angulia village in Manikganj Sadar upazila and Apel, 21, son of Lutfor Rahman of Partilli village in Saturia upazila.

Of them, Al-Amin is tried in absentia and his punishment will be effective from the day of his arrest or surrender, the judge said.

The judge said the prosecution had no witness but was able to prove

charges on the basis of circumstantial evidences and confessional statements of the five accused.

The court recorded statements of 22 prosecution witnesses.

According to the prosecution, the accused used Biplob, son of Kuzrat Ali, to a paddy field near the Dhalaswari Bridge from his house at Garakul village under Manikganj Sadar Police Station on June 3, 2003 and chopped him to death.

Biplob was killed as he asked the youths to give him back Tk 1,00,000, which they took from him promising to send him abroad for job.

Victim's brother Chunnu Mia filed a case with Manikganj Sadar Police the next day.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Md Golam Mostofa appeared for the state while advocates AKM Kayer and Devendra Nath Poddar defended the accused.

Gulshan SI, 7 others sued for demanding toll

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A man filed an extortion case against a Sub-Inspector (SI) of Gulshan Police Station and seven others with a Dhaka court yesterday.

The accused are SI Golam Rahman, six unknown constables of the same police and their accomplice Abul Hossain Molla alias Kalu.

Mohammad Tamizuddin Master, secretary of Mahakali Sattala Basti (Slum) Development and Bazar Executive Committee, filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

In his complaint, Tamiz said SI Golam Rahman along with Kalu went to the shop of the Sattala Slum area and demanded Tk 20,000 from the shopkeepers on July 7 this year. The SI and Kalu beat them when they refused to give tolls.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Md Golam Mostofa appeared for the state while advocates AKM Kayer and Devendra Nath Poddar defended the accused.

At about 9:00pm on October 23, the SI, Kalu and five to six unknown constables went to the Sattala Slum and demanded Tk 20,000 from the shopkeepers on July 7 this year. The SI and Kalu beat them when they refused to give tolls.

The SI and some of his constables went to his (complainant) residence at about 1:00am on the same night and demanded Tk 50,000 as tolls. The accused snatched away Tk 5,000 from his (complainant) pocket, kept for his daughter's college fee, Tamiz added.

After hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mizanur Rahman directed the Additional Inspector General (AIG) of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to take necessary steps against the accused on an investigation into the matter.

Advocate Atiur Rahman moved the case on behalf of the complainant.

DU vacation extended

Dhaka University authorities have extended vacation for six days from November 8 to 14 and postponed all the scheduled examinations during this period, says a press release.

The classes will resume on November 15.

The fresh dates for the postponed examinations will be announced later.

Voters' list is too important

FROM PAGE 1

can't it function as a body? Why is it impossible for three highly respected, experienced, knowledgeable individuals to work together? Even while disagreeing they can and must function as a body. Why does the CEC find it necessary to completely shut out their two colleagues just because they disagree with him?

Since 6th August last, Justice M.A. Aziz, the CEC, has not held any meeting of the EC whereas it is customary for the Commission to meet weekly and even more frequently when necessary. Meanwhile, the CEC is moving full speed ahead with the preparation of a fresh voters' list, which is one of the most complex, difficult and not to mention politically sensitive task that any EC can perform.

The reason for the CEC's umbrage is that the two other commissioners had said 'no' when their chief wanted to go for a fresh voters' list. They are saying that no new list can be made without an amendment to the existing law.

The CEC originally held that view. On 26th July Justice M.A. Aziz said, "Laws will have to be amended to prepare a fresh voters' list. We will ask the government to amend the law if a majority of political parties ask for

fresh list."

Obviously he has changed his mind since then and has now decided to go for a new voters' list. The work for this has started in full swing. Preparations for the recruitment of nearly four hundred thousand enumerators and thousands of other officials and staff have been completed.

According to the present plan, all recruitment will be completed by 15th November (Eid holidays notwithstanding), to be followed by training so that preparation of the voters' list can start from the beginning of the New Year. All this the CEC has decided on his own. So far four different files have been initiated for this work and on all four the two commissioners have given a dissenting note, saying that they cannot support these moves as they cannot be a party to a process that is not permitted by the existing law.

The study conducted on three hundred people also revealed that people are concerned over the usage of their extra payment, as there is much corruption in this sector.

The study report presented by Social and Poverty Expert Priyanti Fernando also revealed the rationales of introducing Road User Charges that included a well connected road network, contribution to poverty reduction, achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustainable mechanism for road maintenance.

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next elections rests.

Take the task at hand for the EC. Holding an election with more than 75 million voters at least is a highly challenging task. Making that election acceptably free and fair is a more difficult one. To do that within the atmosphere of suspicion, antagonism and total mistrust between the two main parties is even more difficult. Now, to all that, if we add a feuding Election Commission then what prospect do we have of the public trusting and feeling assured that we will have a free and fair poll? As we all know one of the core components of ensuring a free and fair election is to have a reasonably accurate voters' list. If we have two commissioners terming the acts of their chief as not permitted by the existing law then what credibility will this voters' list have?

Recently we witnessed another such pivotal body, the anti-corruption commission (ACC), also facing serious problems because of quarrel between its chief and the two commissioners. Here we have a retired Supreme Court judge and former CEC, a former vice chancellor and a former chief of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Literally from day one the two members and their chief have been at loggerheads, so much so that they could not get their commission functioning properly even till today. When corruption is destroying practically every aspect of our political, social, moral and legal edifice we have an anti-corruption commission whose members are themselves questioning the actions of their head. Can such an ACC ever command public respect and support leave alone trust for it to rid of corruption?

Why is such an autocratic attitude, such a desire to show off our power, such a tendency to override colleagues, such a hidden wish to bulldoze one's own points of view, so much disrespect for others' opinions and such an overpowering wish to be dictators? We blame our politicians of being autocratic, myopic, self-centred, power hungry, exclusionary, self-serving, and one-eyed. But when we see such venerable people as former judges, academicians and highly experienced professionals acting in similar manner then who do we turn to for any sanity? How can we build democracy with such behaviour in some of our highest offices?

Trader beaten to death in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A trader was beaten to death allegedly by his partners at Sutrapur in the capital on Wednesday night.

Syed Mohammad Ali Nokeen Tanvir, 35, a resident of Ring Road in Sutrapur, succumbed to his injuries at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) on Wednesday night after three youths admitted him there at 9:30pm.

One of his friends and business partners made a phone call to him at his house at 11:00am on Wednesday and asked him to go to one of his friend's house at Sutrapur to settle some business partners.

Police raided Mahmud's house but could not arrest anyone.

The family also