

Remain above politics

Minister urges teachers

BSS, Tangail

Textiles and Jute Minister Shajahan Siraj yesterday urged teachers to keep themselves above partisan politics and make their best efforts to build the students as worthy citizens of the country.

The minister highly lauded the commendable role of Bindubashinee Government High School in expanding education in Tangail and its neighbourhood.

He was addressing the inaugural function of the 125th founding anniversary of the school as the chief guest, an official handout said.

Reminiscing his childhood life in this school, the minister said many youths of

the Tangail region would have been deprived of education if the institution was not established in 1880 by the then Zemindar of Santosh Monmath Roy Chowdhury. Many former students of the institution are now serving the nation at different stages, he added.

Such educational institutions founded by the persons having far sightedness and fond of education in different areas are now playing main role in the promotion of education in the country, he said.

State Minister for Water Resources Advocate Goutam Chakraborty, Director General of Bangladesh Public Administration Training Academy Niranjana Mondol, Deputy Director of

Department of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Hosneara Begum also spoke at the function with Deputy Commissioner of Tangail Saifuddin Ahmed Majumder in the chair.

Shajahan Siraj also mentioned the devotion of the teachers of the school during his studentship saying the students learned ideal education from their (teachers') lifestyle and behaviour.

He urged the teachers to build the students as worthy citizens of the country to face the challenges of the century.

Earlier, present and former students of the school brought out a colourful rally.

Diarrhoea death toll rises to 9 in Sirajganj

UNB, Sirajganj

Diarrhoea broke out in the district, claiming three lives in five days, unofficial sources said.

With the latest deaths, the toll rose to nine and the number of Diarrhoea-affected people over 1,000 in 15 days.

The dead were identified as Zayed Khatun, 52, Ershad Ali, 21, and Kamala Khatun, 29. All were the residents of Khaduli village in Ullapara upazila.

The situation started deteriorating

from the 2nd week of October after floods hit the district for a third time in the past monsoon.

People alleged that treatment of the patients is being hampered for lack of medicines and saline in the hospitals and health complexes.

People of the diarrhoea-prone areas also complained that there were no medical teams to tackle the situation although the health department claimed a number of teams were working to combat the water-borne disease.

Japanese princess to marry commoner fiancé on Nov 15

REUTERS, Tokyo

It's a fairytale in reverse.

Her Imperial Highness Princess Sayako of Japan, scion of one of the world's oldest monarchies, will marry her commoner fiancé on November 15, becoming plain Mrs Sayako Kuroda.

Marriage to Yoshiaki Kuroda, a Tokyo urban planner, means the only daughter of Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko must leave the sequestered environment of the Imperial family for a new life as a housewife.

No daughter of an emperor has married out since 1960 and Japan's tabloid media are watching closely for clues as to how the reserved 36-year-old princess, a keen birdwatcher and student of traditional Japanese dance, will cope with the transition.

Freed from a busy round of formal ceremonies and public appearances, Sayako has also resigned from her part-time job, leaving uncertainty as to how she will spend her time.

Her sister-in-law, Masako, found the shock of the opposite transformation -- from commoner to Crown Princess -- so severe she disappeared from the public eye for over a year, suffering from what courtiers called an "adjustment disorder". Masako made her first solo public appearance in two years on Sunday.

Sayako has expressed unease about dealing with everyday life. That may be one reason why she has given up her job as a researcher at an ornithology centre in Chiba, observers say.

"For ordinary people, learning to be a housewife is no big deal. But it is a different matter for her. I imagine she wants to concentrate on that for a while," said Miiko Kodama, professor of mass communication at Musashi University.

"After all, it is not even clear if she would be able to catch a train. Imagine coping with a packed Tokyo rush hour if you are not used to it," she added.

Sayako's mother, who is also said to have suffered great mental distress as the first commoner to marry an heir to the throne, has tried to prepare her to avoid a similar shock in reverse, royal watchers say.

"Michiko had so many problems and she was determined her daughter would not," said Midori Watanabe, a college lecturer and expert on royalty

who has written books on the imperial family.

The empress sent her daughter to a neighbourhood kindergarten for a year and taught her the basics of cooking and housekeeping.

From an early age, it was Sayako's job to fetch the milk and newspapers for the family every morning, Watanabe said, adding that, as a child she also liked to bake cookies and deliver them to her grandfather, Emperor Hirohito.

A 152.5 million yen lump sum from the government will keep Sayako far from penury, although she will have to swap the grandeur of the imperial palace and its vast gardens where she liked to observe the birdlife, for an ordinary apartment complex.

For her 40-year-old fiancé, their home may seem relatively luxurious. Though a descendant of Japan's now-abolished aristocracy, media reports say Kuroda currently shares a 60 square metre (645 square feet) apartment with his mother.

Since her engagement, Sayako has taken driving lessons, in an apparent attempt to fit in with her racing-car enthusiast fiancé, and has also brushed up her cooking skills. She may also be assigned an adviser to help her with unfamiliar practicalities.

"But I expect Mr Kuroda will have to accompany her to the supermarket at first," Watanabe said.

BREAKING WITH TRADITION

The wedding itself will be a modest affair compared, for example, with the pageantry of the 1973 marriage of Princess Anne to Mark Phillips. There will be no parade through the streets, as when Sayako's older brother Crown Prince Naruhito married the then-diplomat Masako Owada in 1993.

In a break with tradition, the Emperor and Empress will attend both ceremony and reception, but the only other dignitary reported to be on the guest list is Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara, who has been invited in his capacity as Kuroda's boss.

The Imperial Household Agency is tight-lipped about what it says will be a private occasion, but a hotel wedding is a rarity for a member of the Imperial family and tabloid reports say staff at the venue, the Imperial hotel, are scrambling to comply with protocol.