

UGC needs power to make it effective

ASHIQUIR RAHMAN

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has demanded amendment of relevant laws to make it an effective body to regulate the activities of public and private universities.

Under the present act, the UGC has no authority to take or implement any major decision turning it to an organisation for making only recommendations and assessments, said UGC Chairman Prof M Asaduzzaman.

"People raise questions about the efficiency of UGC, but what we can do if our recommendations lay idle in the ministry" he posed the question.

Many important proposals of UGC like Uniform Recruitment Rules for Teachers and Employees of Public Universities, Uniform Financial Rules and Accounts Manual for Public University, and Amendment of Private University Act 1992 have been gathering dust in the ministry for long, UGC officials said, adding that these could be implemented if the UGC would have decision making power.

Besides, an important recommendation of the UGC for shutting down eight out of 53 private universities for violating rules and regulations has so far not been implemented due to undue influences of the government, they said.

Citing the examples of Pakistan and India, the UGC chairman stressed the need for giving the post of UGC Chairman a status of the cabinet minister so that the UGC can take the decisions and implement them independently.

Quoting the recommendations made in UGC's 20 years strategic plan for higher education, he also laid emphasis on appointing a distinguished academic as its chairman.

In its Annual Report 2004, the UGC also stressed the need for restructuring the organogram of the commission to make it time worthy.

Different recommendations for public and private universities have also been put up in the report.

The UGC recommended necessary steps for stopping the abuse of autonomous power of public universities in recruiting and promoting

teachers and employees and increasing tuition fees without discussing with the government.

It also recommended that new departments will not be opened and new teachers will not be recruited in public universities without the approval of the UGC.

The UGC also called for increasing the public universities' own income like many other universities of the United Kingdom, the United States, India and Pakistan.

The recommendations emphasised on increasing the government grant and scholarship for higher education.

The annual report also suggested a number of recommendations for private universities for filling up different posts including vice-chancellors, registrars and examination controllers and taking steps to make their examinations and evaluation of answer scripts more transparent.

The UGC annual report published on February 2 and its 20 years strategic plan for higher education will be submitted to the Prime Minister soon.

Journo Mukul passes away

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Eminent journalist, columnist and freedom fighter Shafiqul Aziz Mukul passed away due to cardiac arrest at the Labaid in the city on Friday at the age of 60.

Awami League leaders and former student leaders in the sixties rushed to the Labaid Cardiac Centre to see him. He breathed his last in the Labaid Friday noon.

A former central leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League in the sixties, Mukul was the executive editor of the now-defunct Banglar Bani. He had been associated with the daily since its inception.

Mukul, who was involved in all the progressive movements in the sixties, was a presidium member of Awami Jubo League and AL cultural and information secretary.

He used to write columns in different dailies. The latest article was published in the daily Amar Desh on the day he died.

As his body was taken to his Moktarpur residence in Sirajganj at 11:00pm on Friday a pall of gloom descended upon the area.

Later, his body was taken to the district AL office where people from all walks of life pay their last respect.

District AL President Abdul Latif Mirza, General Secretary Advocate KM Hossain Ali Hasan paid their last tribute on behalf of the district AL to the late journalist.

His body was also taken to the Sirajganj Press Club where Press Club President Zakirul Islam, General Secretary Harunur Rashid Khan Hasan placed wreaths to pay homage to Mukul.

He was buried at the Malshapara graveyard in Sirajganj after the namaz-e-janaza on Friday night.

Earlier, his namaz-e-janazas were also held on the Central Shahid Minar, the National Press Club and the Awami League (AL) office premises.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Leader of the Opposition and AL President Sheikh Hasina, ministers and leaders of various political parties condoled the death of Mukul.

Hasina in her message said, "In his death, the nation has lost a journalist, who devoted himself to upholding press freedom and contributed a lot for the cause of journalists."

In another condolence message AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil MP, Joint General Secretary Obaidul Kader prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), Jatiya Press Club also condoled the death of Mukul.



Actor Zahurul Islam

Actor Zahurul Islam passed away on Friday morning at the age of 62, says a press release.

Zahurul Islam was involved in performing arts for the last 40 years and acclaimed through his performance in stage and TV drama, advertising and documentary films.

Zahurul Islam, founder of 'Bahu Bachan', left behind his wife actress Dolly Zahur, one son and a host of friends, co-artists and fans to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at the Dhanmondi Bhuter Goli Mosque and was laid to rest at the Banani graveyard.

Adv Akram Hossain Amin

Advocate Akram Hossain Amin, president of North Bengal Lawyer Forum, died on Friday at Birdem in the city, says a press release.

His quikhwani will be held at his residence at Amin Vila, House No # 347, and Road No # 4, Baitul Aman Housing Society, Adabor in the city after Asr prayers on February 17.

All are requested to attend the quikhwani.

Durgarani Chakrabarty

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Durgarani Chakrabarty, mother of Uttam Chakrabarty, a senior reporter of the daily Janakantha, passed away due to old age ailment at a clinic in Bogra yesterday at the age of 80.

She left behind her five sons, four daughters and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

She was cremated at Fulbari crematory.

Dhaka Reporters' Unity Acting President Saiful Islam and General Secretary Shahed Chowdhury in a statement condoled the death of Durgarani.



PHOTO: STAR

A lumberjack saws branches off the Neem tree in front of the Gate No 3 of the Secretariat in the city on Friday.

DU ADMISSION Interview under 'Kha' unit begins Feb 16

UNB, Dhaka

The interview for admission test under 'Kha' unit of Dhaka University will begin on February 16 instead of 15.

The DU authorities rescheduled the date for the interviews due to unavoidable circumstances.

According to the new schedule, interview for the candidates holding merit serial from 2001-2125 will be held from 9.30am to 11.15am, 2126-2250 from 11.30am to 1.15pm, 2251-2375 from 2.30pm to 4.15pm and 2376-2500 from 4.30pm to 6.30pm on February 16.

Interview for serial holders 2501-2625 will be held from 9.30am to 11.15am, 2626-2750 from 11.30am to 1.15pm and 2751-2875 from 2.30pm to 4.15pm on February 18.

On February 19, interview for admission for the Department of Arabic and Department of Persian and Urdu for serial 2876-4782 will be held from 9.30am to 12.45pm.

Interview for the same serial number (2876-4782) of the Department of Sanskrit and Pali will start at 2.30pm.

On February 22, interview for the admission of the music section of the Department of Drama and Music of the serial 2876-3100 will be held from 9.30am to 1.15pm and serial 3101-3300 from 2.30pm to 6.30pm.

On February 23, interview for the drama section of the Department of Drama and Music of the serial 2876-3100 will be held from 9.30am to 1.15pm and serial 3101-3300 from 2.30pm to 6.30pm.

The interview for the admission seekers of Arabic Department and Farsi and Urdu Department and Drama and Music Department will take place depending on the vacancies of seats and qualification of the candidates.

Seminar on healthcare delivery system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Northern International Medical College Hospital (NIMCH) organised a seminar on 'Healthcare delivery system in Bangladesh: Role of public and private sector' in the city on Friday.

Child specialist Dr MR Khan was present as the chief guest while Prof Dr Md Fazlul Haque, principal of the medical college, chaired the seminar.

Dr MR Khan said physicians should be sympathetic to the problems of the patients to earn their trust and confidence.

There is a dearth of specialist doctors in the country, he said, adding that so reference system should be developed in the health sector.

Managing Director of the hospital Md Lutfor Rahman, Prof CH Kabir of Bangladesh Medical College, Dr Mahmuda Chowdhury of Dhaka Medical College - Community Medicine, Prof Dr MA Hye and Deputy Director of NIMCH Dr Sibgatur Rahman also spoke.

One killed in road accident

UNB, Laxmipur

A cloth trader was run over by a truck in poura area on Laxmipur-Raipur road on Friday.

Police said Rafiq, 22, son of Abdus Shahid Mia of Pashchim Laxmipur village in Poura area, fell from an auto-rickshaw when the truck hit the vehicle from behind.

As Rafiq fell on the road, the speeding truck ran over him, leaving him dead on the spot.

DETERIORATION OF LAW AND ORDER SITUATION

Rab asked to step up intelligence efforts

Take action on any allegation against Rab: Babar

UNB, Dhaka

In the wake of a resurgence of serious crimes in the capital, the home ministry has directed the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) to intensify its intelligence efforts to keep law and order under control.

State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar gave the instructions while presiding over a meeting on law and order at the Rab Headquarters yesterday. He also warned against moral aberrations on part of the elite force in the fight against crime.

"Any member of the elite force found guilty of any offence would not be spared," said the state minister.

The law and order situation in some areas of Dhaka City has deteriorated recently with the killing of businessman Haji Shahidullah at Mirpur, BNP leader Matin Munshi at Pallabi and four persons at Badda and a big extortion incident at Mohammadpur.

"We find sudden deterioration in law and order in some areas, but it cannot be termed a failure. It's a society where there are many problems, including unemploy-

ment, that lead to criminal activities," Babar told reporters after emerging from the meeting that lasted for nearly three hours.

Meeting sources said the minister asked the authorities concerned to take immediate action on any allegation against any Rab member through proper inquiry.

The meeting also discussed the problems facing the elite force during anti-crime operations. Babar gave necessary instructions to resolve the problems.

The sources said Babar directed the Rab to complete inquiry into the allegations against Rab members within 20 days and submit its report within 21 days.

Since the establishment of Rab, 48 of its members have been severely punished for grave offences and another 109 given general punishment on charge of minor offences.

About Rab executive inquiry into crossfire incidents, the meeting was told that inquiries in 130 cases, out of 156, have been completed.

Director General of the Rab and its high officials were present at the meeting.



LIFE Chairman Kamrul Islam Sony hands over a copy of LIFE's annual and survey report 2004-05 to Grameen Bank Managing Director Prof Muhammad Yunus in the city on Friday. Dr Afrozi Yunus and LIFE Coordinator Aamirul Islam are also seen in the picture.

Orientation

The orientation of executive participants from banks, insurance companies, capital market and financial institutions in MBA programme of University of Information Technology and Science will be held. Venue: Hotel Purani. Time: 7:00pm.

Reception

The Graduate Reception 2006 of Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia will be held. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 6:30pm.

Launch

The launching ceremony of Bangladesh edition of 'Galpa: Short Stories by Women from Bangladesh' will be held.

Venue: Boli Mela, Bangla Academy. Time: 4:00pm.

BDB meet

A meeting of the city unit of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh will be held with party chief Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury as chief guest. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:30pm.

WSF meet

A meeting of the World Social Forum - Bangladesh will be held. Venue: 8/14, Block-B, Lalmatia. Time: 3:00pm.

RU meet

A meeting of Rajshahi University Old Students Association will be held. Venue: 5/5, Block-C, Lalmatia. Time: 4:30pm.

Thousands protest publication of cartoons on Prophet

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Thousands of devotees took to the streets across the country on Friday to protest the publication of cartoons on Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) by a Danish newspaper.

In the capital, the devotees clashed with police and burned the Danish flag and the effigies of US President George W Bush and other Western leaders.

They also called on the Muslims all over the world to boycott European products.

After the Juma prayers, hundreds of devotees in the capital joined a demonstration under the banner of 'Sammillita Islami Dal' (United Islamic Parties) amid tight security enforced by several hundred members of the police.

The organisations that joined the protest march and rally included Islami Shashontantra Andolon, Hizbut Tahrir Bangladesh, Jamiat-e-Ulama-e-Islam Bangladesh, Bangladesh Jamiatul Mudarresin, Islami Oikya Andolon, Bangladesh Nezam-e-Islam Party, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish and Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon.

The protesters started marching from Baitul Mukarram National Mosque towards the Danish Embassy in Gulshan, but the law enforcers intercepted them at the Kakrail intersection.

Some devotees were injured when they clashed with policemen at Kakrail.

The protesters also announced two action programmes -- march towards the Jatiya Sangsad on Monday to press for their demand for a condemnation bill, and a grand rally on Friday in the city.

Later, they held a rally in front of the Baitul Mukarram Mosque.

Charmonai Pir Fazlul Huq, also the chairman of Islami Shashontantra Andolon, Mahiuddin Khan, Azizul Huq Murad, Abdur Rakib, Md Abul Bashir, Habibur Rahman, Maulana Muhiuddin Khan and Shah Ahmmad Shafi addressed the rally.

According to witnesses, hundreds of devotees from different parts of the capital joined the rally and took part in the demonstration while several hundred policemen from Dhaka Metropolitan Police and Armed Police Battalion were deployed to maintain law and order and ensure security.

Maghi Purnima today

BDNEWS, Chittagong

Buddhists will celebrate "Maghi purnima," a major festival, with traditional enthusiasm and solemn devotion today.

The Maghi Purnima will be celebrated in all monasteries and other religious organisations through day long programmes.

The day's programme will be heralded with hoisting of the national and religious flags atop all monasteries, chanting the sacred verses from the holy Tripitaka.

Breaking of fasting by the monks, discussion meetings, blood donation and illumination are other highlights of the programme.

In the port city, main religious congregations will be held at Nandankanon Buddhist Temple, Katalganj Navapandit Vihar, Purnachar International Buddhist Monastery at Devpahar, Chandgona Saikkymuni Vihar and Agrabad Biswamoitri Vihar.



PHOTO: STAR

Children draw pictures at an art competition at the Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday on the occasion of the 37th death anniversary of Shaheed Sergeant Zahurul Haque.

IF GOVT ALLOWS AEC TO EXPORT COAL

'Energy reserves to be exhausted by 2025'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Energy reserves of the country will be exhausted much ahead of 2025 if the government allows the Asia Energy Corporation (AEC) to export coal from Phulbari coal mine and sell coal from Barapukuria to Tata, speakers at a roundtable said yesterday.

It is beyond imagination what the energy situation will be if Asia Energy exports 80 per cent of coal as per the draft coal policy, they said.

The weekly Saptahik 2000 organised the roundtable on Phulbari coalmine project at the National Press Club where Prof Dr M Shamsul Alam of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet) presented a keynote paper.

According to the power system master plan, the demand for electricity is projected to reach 6400 MW in 2010 and 9900MW in 2015, but the trend of increasing demand suggests that an additional 5000 MW electricity has to be supplied to the power grid by 2010, said Dr Shamsul.

About 14 million tonnes of coal is required to generate this additional electricity, he said, adding that the total reserves of coal will be exhausted by 2025 if the coal is extracted through underground mining.

He also said the AEC had given misleading information and made

major changes in its reports to get the government's nod for mining.

He also observed that relocation of about 50,000 people and educational and religious institutions and extraction of underground water of the vast area in Phulbari will cause a lot of social and environmental problems.

Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad moderated the roundtable while justice Golam Rabbani, Awami League lawmaker Suranjit

Sengupta, former chairman of Power Development Board Nuruddin M Kamal, Prof Dr Badrul Imam, Prof Anu Muhammad, MM Akash, Dr SK Abdullah, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah, Director of BELA Syeda Rizwana Hasan and Saptahik 2000 Acting Editor Golam Mortozzo also spoke.

Husband stabs wife to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Husband stabbed his wife to death following a feud over money in Narayanganj on Friday night.

Suvash Mondol of Doyaganj in Dhaka took his wife Kawsari Begum, 45, to Nandalapur in Fatullah in the name of a visit to the area in the afternoon.

At night he and his associates Delwar and Tutul alias Foysal took her to a nearby field and killed her with sharp weapons.

Locals nabbed Delwar and Tutul and handed over them to police while Suvash managed to

flee the scene.

Kawsari married Suvash nearly one and a half years ago after the death of her first husband around 10 years back leaving two sons and three daughters.

She handed over to Suvash all the money that her previous husband left for her.

A quarrel ensued between them a few days ago when she wanted to know the account of her money, sources said.

Helena, sister of Kawsari, filed a case with Fatullah Police Station in this regard.

No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Light fog may also occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said in a forecast.

It said that night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 32.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sandwip and lowest 9.8 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:52pm today and rises at 6:34am 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	30.4	15.5	63	49
Chittagong	31.5	16.0	59	38
Rajshahi	28.4	15.0	82	71
Khulna	29.5	16.4	92	68
Barisal	29.8	15.2	86	73
Sylhet	31.6	15.5	74	37
Cox's Bazar	31.2	16.4	67	--



82nd birthday of Hena Das today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 82nd birthday of noted educationist and women's rights activist Hena Das will be celebrated today.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) will hold a programme at its office at Purana Paltan in the afternoon on the occasion.

Hena Das is still struggling for establishing democracy and socialism and for the emancipation of women in the country.