

Urban-rural gap in educational facilities to yield unpleasant result

President says at 3rd convocation of Khulna University

BSS, Khulna

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday warned against the growing gap between urban and rural educational facilities, saying that such a trend would eventually lead the nation towards an unpleasant consequence.

"It appears that the meritorious students of rural areas are being lost

somewhere. But unless we can pick up meritorious people from remote corners of Bangladesh, the eventual gap of merit between urban and rural areas will yield an unpleasant result," he told the 3rd convocation ceremony of Khulna University (KU).

The president said currently the urban-based educational facilities were dominating the merit list of

public examinations discarding the rural ones while "there was a time when meritorious people used to come from remote corners."

"I call upon the people concerned to take necessary steps to improve the quality of education in the educational institutions in rural areas," he said.

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr SMA Faiz

attended the function as the convocation speaker while senate and syndicate members joined it along with nearly 2,500 graduates who were awarded degrees under 16 disciplines.

Khulna University Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman chaired the function.

Appreciating the Khulna University's special emphasis on researches on local natural resources, President Iajuddin said it is a good initiative to explore the potential of the region.

"I hope the results to be found from these researches will unveil the dormant potential of the region which will be a great achievement on the part of the entire nation," he said.

Laying emphasis on quality education, the president said that despite increased literacy rate and enrolment in universities, the standard of education is yet to reach to the desired level.

He urged the education planners to design a proper education system so that the students could meet the challenges using their knowledge and skills and at the same time, the universities become the centres of researches that could be used for the welfare of people.



PHOTO: PID

President Iajuddin Ahmed speaks at the 3rd convocation of Khulna University on its campus in Khulna yesterday.

NGOs should refrain from politics

Law adviser tells FNB delegation

Law and Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain has said he would look into the confusion created by the recent ban on all political activities including meetings and rallies affecting non-political development programmes of the NGOs.

He said the objectives of the

NGOs are to improve the condition of the poor and the disadvantaged and it is desirable that they refrain from any political activity.

The adviser was talking to a delegation of the NGO Federation (FNB) led by its Chair Dr Muhammad Ibrahim when they called on him yesterday, says a press release.

The NGO representatives said their programmes include raising social awareness on poverty alleviation, health, nutrition, education, women's rights and environment, and arrangement of training and workshops for the target groups.

They referred to the revival by the last government of an ordinance promulgated in 1982 requiring government permission for any citizen prior to leaving the country with the sponsor's funding for official purpose.

The Adviser gave an assurance to look into the matter.

The NGOs expressed their support for different initiatives taken by the caretaker government for basic reforms of state institutions, eradication of corruption and terrorism, illegal occupation of land and food adulteration.

Dr Ibrahim handed over a Survey Report on Khas Land to the adviser who is also in-charge of the Ministry of Land.

The National Khas Land Management Executive Committee had entrusted the NGO Federation with the responsibility of undertaking a land survey in six upazilas under six districts in six divisions in the country to find out how many kobuliots of registered agricultural khas land have been executed in favour of the landless from 1991 to 2000 and how many of them are in possession of land according to the kobuliot.

FNB, in collaboration with its member organisations Brac, Samata, Nijera Kori and ALRD, conducted an intensive yearlong field survey in Goalundo, Noakhali Sadar, Chatmohor, Dumuria, Companyganj and Hilla with the help of the local administration, tahsil office and interviewing the landless people.

The report also contains 22 recommendations for ensuring effective functioning of the local land offices for proper distribution of agricultural khas land among the landless poor.

The delegation included Khushi Kabir (Nijera Kori), Rasheda K

Choudhury (CAMPE), Abul Haseeb Khan (RIC), Zakir Hossain (BURO), Shamsul Huda (ALRD), Syeda Rizwana Hasan (BELA), Abdul Kader Mia (Retd Sec) and M Tajul Islam (Federation Sectt).



PHOTO: STAR

Two artistes from Tripura community perform at a cultural function at Public Library auditorium in the city yesterday, the last day of Adivasi Cultural Festival.

EU delegation visits 100-yr old Rajshahi school

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A delegation of European Union (EU) visited 100-year-old Palpur Government Primary School at Godagari in Rajshahi yesterday.

The team that spent a while with the students of the school remarked the education system of the school is unique and it's a role model for other schools.

The team included First Secretary of Royal Norwegian Embassy Ingrid T Hung, EU Second Secretary in Bangladesh Stiffen Lock, Development Affairs Adviser to Royal Norwegian Embassy Irin Parveen and EU Senior Programme Officer Laira Baki.



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

A devastating fire rips through the R&H Taitala Staff Quarters slum at Mahakhali in the city yesterday.

Prioritise projects to cut poverty

Adviser asks ministries

BSS, Dhaka

Adviser for Finance and Planning Dr AB Mirza Azizul Islam yesterday asked all concerned ministries to maintain proper supervision for ensuring physical progress of the development and financial activities under the mid-term budget framework.

"Formulation of budget is not an isolated exercise. Priorities should be given to projects that aim at poverty alleviation," he said at a pre-budget meeting with the officials of the concerned ministries at the conference room of the Ministry of Finance at secretariat in the city yesterday.

Azizul said expediting of implementation of development activities is a must for ensuring overall development of the country.

He also asked all ministries to maintain the financial and budgetary discipline for retaining the balance between budget allocation and expenditure in the respective ministries.

Fourteen ministries: Finance, Agriculture, Communications, Health and Family Welfare, Education, Environment and Forest, Local Government Rural Development and Cooperative, Food and Disaster Management, Primary and Mass Education, Water Resources, Fisheries and Livestock, Social Welfare, Science and ICT and Women and Children Affairs are under the Medium Term Budget Framework, sources said.

Secretaries and senior officials of the concerned ministries were present in the meeting.

Hena Das hospitalised

Ailing Hena Das, eminent human rights activist and president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, is receiving treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, says a press release.

Hena Das was hospitalised after she became faint at her residence on Saturday, the release added.

'Bangladesh to suffer most in South Asia if sea level rises'

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh would suffer the most in South Asia in terms of land area, population, agriculture and GDP, if the sea-level rises from one to five meters due to climate change.

The forecast was made at a working paper of the World Bank titled "The impact of sea level rise on developing countries: A comparative analysis". The paper, prepared by a panel of experts led by Susmita Dasgupta, Benoit Laplante, Craig Meisner, David Wheeler and Jianping Van, was released in Washington DC yesterday.

The study revealed the impact on Bangladesh in terms of GDP would be around 0.7 percent, the highest in South Asia if the sea level rises by only one meter while 9 percent of Bangladesh GDP would be lost when the sea level rises by five meters.

In terms of population, Bangladesh would also be the worst hit country in the region with 0.8 percent to over 9 percent.

In terms of area, Bangladesh would also be the worst hit country in the South Asia losing 11 percent, much higher than Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India, the World Bank working paper pointed out.

The experts also argued that Bangladesh's agricultural extent would experience a much larger impact than any other South Asian country with a 10 percent agricultural loss.

In the working paper, the experts assessed the consequences of continued sea level-rise for 84 countries and warned that within this century, hundreds of millions of people are likely to be displaced.

The accompanying economic and ecological damage will be severe for many, they predicted, adding the world has not previously faced a crisis on this scale and planning for adaptation should begin immediately.

Given the scarcity of resources, the experts suggested that it would

seem sensible to allocate aid according to degree of threat.

The WB working paper listed globally 10 'poor countries' that would be severely impacted by the sea level rise -- Bangladesh, Benin, Guyana, Surinam, Egypt, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Vietnam and Sri Lanka.

They also suggested funding under United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA).

The WB team of experts said that for precautionary planning purposes, sea level rise in the range of one to three meters should be regarded as realistic.

"To date, however, there is little evidence that the international community has seriously considered the implications for population location and infrastructure planning in many developing countries," they regretted, yet hoped that more rapid actions would be taken in this regard.