

CONFERENCE OF HISTORIANS BEGINS

Call to write true history of nation

DU CORRESPONDENT

A two-day national conference of Bangladesh Ithas Parishad began at Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) auditorium of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday.

A total of 240 historians from home and abroad gathered here to participate in the 38th conference of the Parishad where 70 thesis papers on historical facts are to be presented.

Addressing the inaugural session, DU Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz asked the historians to write the true history of the country upholding the nation's rich heritage and cul-

ture.

"History is the reflection of the national life. We have to learn our own history to place ourselves in the assembly of the civilised nations," he added.

Faiz said the historians should write true history on the basis of objective information and with a sense of responsibility.

Former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Zillur Rahman Siddique presided over the conference.

He said there is a clear difference between Bengali history and the history of Bangladesh after 1971 in the historical arena.

President of Bangladesh Ithas Parishad Dr Nazim Uddin Ahmed said the duty of archaeology department is to collect and preserve the archaeological valuables, which are raw materials of history. But it is now a stagnant organisation.

On the occasion, Dr Badruzzaman was awarded 'Bangladesh Ithas Parishad Award 2006' for his research book 'Muslim Sthapoter Motive O Shilporup'.

Vice-Chancellor of National University Wakil Ahmed, Doctor Enamul Huq and National Professor Sufia Ahmed were also present at the inaugural ceremony.



PHOTO: STAR

CNG Autorickshaw Drivers' Action Council forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the capital yesterday demanding implementation of the government decision regarding the daily rent they give to autorickshaw owners.

'Tiger' made MDG mascot for Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

The UN Country Team in Bangladesh has made a teenage 'Tiger' its mascot to localise the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The move is not only to boost the morale of the Bangladeshi cricketers in the 'World Cup Cricket 2007', but also to inspire the whole nation to work for achieving the MDGs by 2015.

The teenage tiger has been named 'Bagha' in Bangla, said a UN release yesterday.

Bagha came into life during the production process of an animation (cartoon) series on the MDGs in 2005. The cartoon series, which is aimed at advancing the MDGs attainment for the country through using this infotainment devise, uses the roaring Royal Bengal Tiger as the MDG mascot for Bangladesh.

The United Nations in Bangladesh, in cooperation with the British High Commission and DFID Bangladesh, produced eight animation segments to promote the Millennium Development Goals in Bangladesh, specially among the youth. Each segment introduces a relevant MDG.

Appreciating the initiative, eminent cultural personality Mustafa Monwar said, "National culture, symbol and icons should not be confined to museums. Those should rather be employed innovatively to achieve the developmental goals for moving ahead with the changing time."

"The fundamental beauty of these films is that they take the MDGs and other concepts that are often buried in the development jargons and turn them into something real, tangible and understandable, particularly for young people," he added.

Meanwhile, UNICEF representative in Bangladesh Louis-Georges Arsenault said, "Six of the eight MDGs relate directly to children. So what better way to reach kids than to make fun and informative cartoons?"

This is what the MDGs are all about -- thinking of new, creative and innovative ways to reach people, he added.

"We know in Bangladesh that animation could be a powerful tool and is a great method of communication," Arsenault said, referring to the success of the Meena initiative that has created waves as everyone in Bangladesh knows her.

The Millennium Development Goals are a set of international agreed targets for reducing poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, combating HIV/AIDS and discrimination against women by 2015.

The MDGs represent a simple, but powerful idea. By setting basic targets for a number of critically important development outcomes, they provide guidance and direction towards the achievement of eight key goals, beginning with decisive reduction of poverty.

If the world achieves the MDGs, more than 500 million people will be lifted out of poverty. A further 25 million will no longer suffer from hunger, while 30 million children and two million mothers who might reasonably have been expected to die will be saved.

With a view to fulfilling the commitments, Bangladesh has made significant progress in achieving universal primary education (goal 2), which is just 17 percent below the target set for 2015. And in promoting gender equality and women empowerment (goal 3), which is very close to fulfilling its target set for 2015.

Also, Bangladesh has strong initiative to reduce child mortality (goal 4) as presently the number of deaths per thousand stands at 82 for children under the age of five while the target for 2015 is to bring that figure to 50 deaths per thousand.

But, challenges remain in other fields like eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (goal 1), improving maternal health (goal 5) and ensure environmental sustainability (goal 7). In terms of combating HIV/AIDS, Bangladesh needs strong advocacy and awareness building among the people.

Also, to develop a global partnership for development with the developed countries, Bangladesh needs strong advocacy policy to assure cooperation from the donors.

World Health Day today

UNB, Dhaka

World Health Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the world today with a vow to ensure healthcare services for all.

Key messages for this year's day are: Invest in health, build a safer future; health leads to security; insecurity leads to poor health and preparedness and quick response improve international health security.

In Bangladesh, various organisations working on health issues have drawn up elaborate programmes.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser Fakhrudin Ahmed and Awami League President and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the occasion.

In his message, President Iajuddin said there is no alternative to good health to create skilled human resources.

He said, "A healthy nation can make rapid progress. So, we'll have to be more attentive to ensure basic rights like healthcare along with food, shelter, education and safety. It's now demand of the hour to invest more in health sector to ensure healthcare services for the country's huge population."

The president hoped that the affluent section of the society and private organisations would come forward with the attitude of service to invest in the health sector for building a safe and prosperous future for the present generation.

In another message, Chief Adviser Fakhrudin Ahmed greeted all those involved in the health sectors and hoped that their efforts for human welfare would be more dynamic.

AL leader Sheikh Hasina, in her message, demanded steps to ensure health services for the people.

Australia toughens English tests for immigrants

AFP, Sydney

Students and skilled workers will have to meet higher English language standards if they want to migrate to Australia under new laws announced yesterday.

The changes, which come into force in September, are designed to ensure that migrants have a better chance of securing a job amid a shortage of skilled workers.

"We need to improve the level of English if they're going to stay on and work in Australia," Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews told ABC radio.

"It's important from the position of the student who wants to stay here and have a job.

"It's also important from the position of the employer to ensure that somebody coming here and staying on a skilled migration visa is able to understand English and therefore do the job."

Under the new laws, migrants with professional, technical or managerial skills will be required to achieve a score of six, or competent English, on the International English Testing System.

Previously the acceptable level was five, the same standard required of applicants with recognised trade skills.

Students who want to apply for a general skilled migration visa will also have to have a stronger understanding of the English language and undertake relevant work experience, Andrews said.

Opposition immigration spokesman Tony Burke said the new measures were long overdue.

"We can't continue to have highly qualified engineers who aren't able to converse at the workplace, ending up driving Sydney cabs," he said.

Results of Teletalk poetry, essay writing contests

Teletalk Bangladesh Limited yesterday announced the results of the essay and poetry writing competitions it organised to mark the National Independence Day, says a press release.

Nezam Rahagir of Chittagong topped the poetry contest followed by Habiba Akhter of Comilla, Towfiqur Rahman of Gazipur, Masud Karim Khan of Natore and Shah Mohammad Fahim of Comilla who secured 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th places respectively.

In essay writing competition, Azmeri Zaman of Mirpur clinched the first position while Arman Bin Ershad of Mohammadpur, Dhaka, Sharmin Siddiki Mitu of Sylhet, Mostafizur Rahman Milon of Dhanmondi and Zahirul Islam of Bakshibazar secured 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th places respectively.



PHOTO: STAR

A fine arts student is busy making a mask for a rally to welcome Pahela Baishakh, the first day of the Bengali new year. The picture was taken from the Institute of Fine Arts of Dhaka University yesterday.

Seven killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Seven people were killed and 42 others injured in separate road accidents in Comilla, Gopalganj and Chandpur in the last two days.

A correspondent from Comilla reports: An elderly man and his son were killed and seven others injured in a collision between a pick-up van and an autorickshaw on Comilla-Barura road in Barura upazila on Thursday night.

The dead were identified as Maulana Siddiqu Rahman, 65, and his son Sohag.

According to the police, the head-

on collision between the Comilla-bound pick-up van and the three wheeler took place at about 8:30pm.

The injured were admitted to different hospitals and clinics while the bodies were sent to Comilla Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Police seized both the vehicles. A case was filed.

UNB adds: Three people were killed and 35 others injured in a collision between a truck and a bus in Barura upazila in Gopalganj yesterday afternoon.

The dead were identified as truck driver Jahangir, 35, bus driver Sayed Ali, 40, and a passenger, Rabeya, 35.

Police and local sources said the bus coming from opposite direction in Chandra Dighala area at about 3:30pm, killing the three on the spot.

Twenty injured people were admitted to local hospital while the rest given first aid. Condition of five injured people was stated to be critical.

Our correspondent from Chandpur adds: Two people were killed in two separate road accidents in Chandpur yesterday.

The dead were identified as Faruque Hossain, 25, a rickshawpiller hailing from Rahmatpur Colony of Chandpur district town and Rustam Ali, 45, hailing from Kathalia under Jhalakati Sadar, said police source.

Police and witnesses said a Comilla-bound passenger bus from Chandpur Sadar suddenly hit and ran over the rickshaw and rickshawpiller Faruque Hossain, killing him on the spot on Chandpur-Comilla highway at Mohamaya area at around 10:00pm.

In another incident, Rustam was found dead on the roof of a Chandpur-bound bus (Eagle Transport) yesterday noon.

His head was found smashed which occurred due to a hit by truck, said witnesses and police.

The bus came to Chandpur at noon from a religious conference in Chittagong.

Police recovered the body.

Three bus robbers caught red-handed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion caught three robbers while they were robbing passengers of a bus in the city's Jatrabari area last night.

Acting on information, Rab-10 members rushed to the scene and managed to arrest three robbers, but 10 other gang members fled away.

The arrested robbers are Ferdous, 23, Nazmul, 18, and Dulal Mia, 28, driver of the car.

Rab sources said the gang in a private car intercepted the Dhaka-bound bus from Chandpur at around 11:45pm to loot money and valuables from the passengers.

Rab members also seized the car used by the robbers.

Green groups, politicians urge quick action on global warming

AFP, Brussels

Conservation groups and politicians urged an immediate global response to a damning UN climate report unveiled yesterday, which predicts a catastrophic future for the planet.

"The urgency of this report, presented by the world's top scientists, should be matched with an equally urgent response by governments," said Hans Verolme, director of the World Wildlife Fund's global climate change programme.

"There's no escaping the facts: global warming will bring hunger, floods and water shortages. Poor countries that bear the least responsibility will suffer most -- and they have no money to respond."

The report by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said that up to 30 percent of animal and plant species will be vulnerable to extinction if global temperatures rose by 1.5-2.5°C (2.7 F to 4.5 F).

It said the world's have-nots would be worst hit by the climate change, predicting greenhouse gases would change rainfall patterns, intensify tropical storms, accelerate the melting of Arctic ice and mountain glaciers, and amplify the risk of drought, flooding and water stress.

"This is a glimpse into an apocalyptic future," said Greenpeace International campaigner Stephanie Tunmore. "The earth will be transformed by human induced climate change, unless action is taken soon and fast."

The Friends of the Earth asked the world's rich nations to cut emissions to avert a looming "humanitarian catastrophe."

"Unless we take action ... far worse is yet to come, condemning millions in the poorest parts of the world to loss of lives, livelihoods and homes. Climate change is no longer just an environmental issue," said Catherine Pearce, the group's climate campaigner.

Death anniversary



Today is the 18th death anniversary of noted journalist M. H. M. A. M. Hussain, says a press release.

Hussain was the news editor of the daily Azad and also vice president of BFUJ.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held after Asr prayers today at D-1, House 19, Road 55, Gulshan 2 in the city.

Friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the milad.

DHAKA TODAY

Workshop

Bangladesh Arthniti Samity organises a workshop for the economic reporters of different media. Venue: Planning and Development Academy, Nilkhet. Time: 4:30pm.

Health Fair

Sheba Mahavidyalaya organises a Health Fair on the occasion of the World Health Day. 2007. Venue: Osmani Memorial Hall. Time: 9:00am.

Roundtable

Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC) organises a roundtable on the participation of the mass in establishing health rights. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.

Discussion

Nagarik Sanghati will hold a discussion on the 20-year-plan of University Grants Commission regarding higher studies. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Rotary Dhaka Central

The regular meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.



Founding President of Saarc Women's Association, Bangladesh Chapter, Sarwari Rahman hands over a cheque for Tk five lakh to President of Dhaka Ahsania Mission Kazi Rafiqul Alam at the Mission Bhaban in the city recently. The association donated the amount for the under-construction Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital.

