

Take state-of-the-art curricula for quality education

President asks university authorities

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday called upon the university authorities to take the state-of-the-art curricula for providing quality education to empower the students with latest knowledge.

"Universities should take the state-of-the-art curricula so that our students can work at the cutting-edge of technology," he told the 1st convocation of Northern University Bangladesh at Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre here.

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury attended the programme as special guest while Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed as the convocation speaker.

The president called upon the educational institutions to come up to absorb the needed changes and

prepare the generation to meet the needs of the society.

He said universities have a great role to play for giving shape to new ideas suitable for the country. "The university education should empower individuals with the latest knowledge and skill to be professionals of high standard," he added.

The president said: "Apart from meeting the standard professional needs, education must have another purpose towards the development of a value system, which empowers individuals to understand their rights and accountability of the society, and gives them the identity with relevance to morality."

Iajuddin stressed the need for including arts and humanity into university curricula along with science and technology to make the students well-informed and competitive.

"The parents and community will have to ensure the students an atmosphere, in which they can identify the ideals and can see a future, which is decent, bright and assured," he added.

He hoped that all concerned, including the authorities of both

private and public universities, would put in their best efforts to maintain the highest standard of education at the higher level so that students do not lag behind when it is compared with other countries," he said.

Congratulating the graduates, he said, "The country and the people of the soil have sacrificed enough for bringing you to this position and it is your turn to repay the debt by discharging your services with utmost sincerity and dedication."

He called upon them to uphold truth, justice and honesty while discharging duties wherever they are assigned.

The president also thanked the university authorities, guardians as well as the fellow faculty members for providing right directions and proper guidance to the students.

Special Baishakhi offer on Collected Works of Rehman Sobhan

CPD announces a special Baishakhi offer on four volumes of Collected Works of Rehman Sobhan - Challenging Injustice: The Odyssey of a Bangladeshi Economist (vol 1); Milestones to Bangladesh (vol 2); The Political Economy of Malgovernance in Bangladesh (vol 3); and Amar Bondhu Amar Shamalochok (companion volume in Bengali) on the eve of Bengali New Year 1414. Readers will be able to buy the four volumes at a discounted price of Tk 1750; Tk 1500; Tk 550 for each English volume and Tk 300 for the Bengali volume. This offer will be valid throughout the month of Baishakhi, i.e until 14th May 2007. Readers can contact Centre for Policy Dialogue for their copies at House 40C, Road 11, Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209, e-mail: ahsan@cpd-bangladesh.org, telephone 024770, 9141734 or 01714 214758.

Govt plans to import edible oil

UNB, Dhaka

The government is planning to import refined edible oil as it found its present price in the country excessive compared to that of the international market.

An official release yesterday said concerned agencies have been asked to find out whether any person or quarter is involved in the artificial price hike of the edible oil.

"Legal steps will be taken if any one or quarter is found involved in it as the import and supply of edible oil are satisfactory," the release added.

It said the government is also considering reducing the import duties on crude and refined oils to a reasonable level to stabilise the market.

Besides, the release said the situation to open and settle LCs, X-bonds and in-bonds and other indicators is in a better position compared to the last year.

'Withdraw ban on Hasina's return'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday condemned the embargo on the return of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina to her home.

Leaders of the organisations urged the caretaker government to withdraw the embargo immediately and take effective measures so that Hasina, daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, can return home.

The Pachatturer Ghatak Dalai Nirmul Committee termed the embargo 'unconstitutional' and said the caretaker government has violated citizen's as well as human rights of Hasina.

"All moves including issuing embargo on Hasina's return, and filling false case and issuing warrant against her are tantamount to violation of human rights," said Nirmul Committee Joint Convener Faruque Ahmed in a statement.

He said the embargo on Hasina is an anti-democratic move and it will push the nation towards a deep crisis.

Bangladesh Awami Hawkers League President SM Zakaria Hanif and General Secretary Sheikh Ayub Ali protested the embargo on Hasina and said this move has created confusion among the countrymen.

In a joint statement they urged Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed to withdraw the embargo considering the national interest and image of the country.

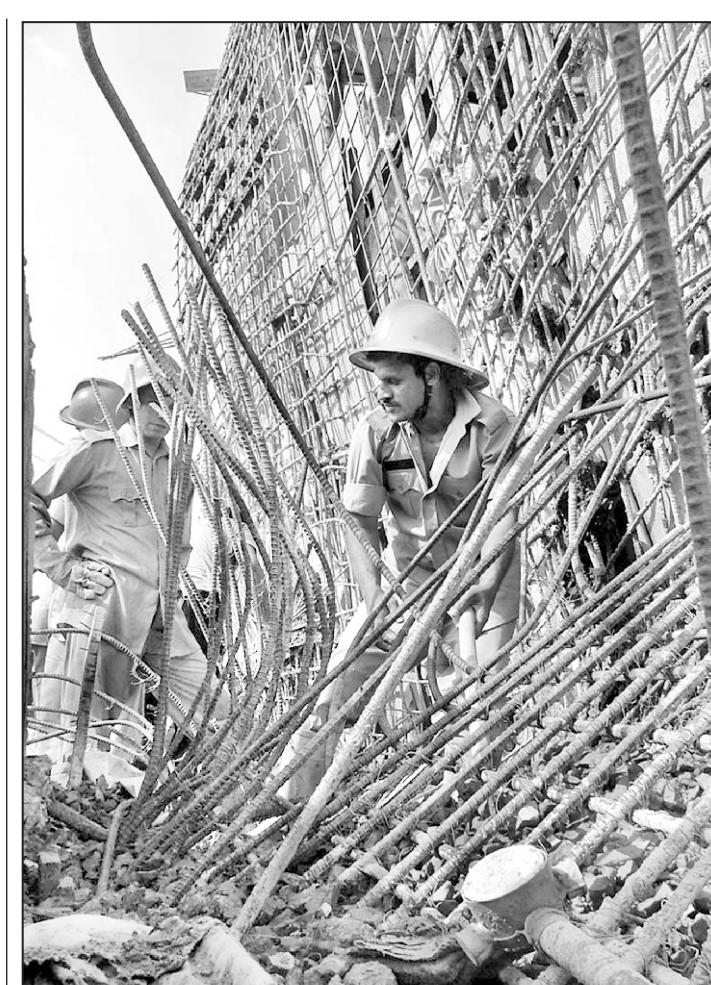


PHOTO: STAR

Fire fighters carry out rescue operation after a roof of an under-construction CNG filling station collapsed at Chandgaon in Chittagong yesterday, killing three of its workers.

UK VISA APPLICATION New system from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UK High Commission (HC) to Bangladesh introduces a new visa application procedure, including collection of biometric data of the applicants, from today to reduce identity fraud in immigration system.

The new system will involve collecting digital photograph and fingerprint of visa applicants using high-tech scanners. Sheilani Nandy, second secretary (Immigration) of the high commission, told a group of journalists during their visit to a visa application centre (VAC) at Saimon Centre in Gulshan in the capital yesterday.

From now on UK visa applicants will have to pay visa fees at designated branches of Brac Bank, and the receipt will have to be attached with the application form.

Bangladesh will be the first in South Asia and 64th country in the globe where biometric system is being introduced with no additional cost and no extra time, he added.

"The new system will help genuine Bangladeshi applicants. It will protect them from identity fraud and help us recognise genuine applicants so that we can facilitate their legitimate travel to the UK more easily," said British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury at a press conference on April 17.

Under the new system, applicants will have to go in person to visa application centres located in Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong to submit their applications, along with biometric features, said the high commissioner.

Our staff correspondent from Sylhet adds: The new process is part of a worldwide UK policy aimed at reducing fraud in immigration process.

Second Secretary (Immigration) of the British High Commission to Bangladesh Derek Jones told a press conference at the local VAC yesterday that the new system will help genuine Bangladeshi applicants.

"It will protect them from identity fraud and help us to recognise genuine applicants so that we can facilitate their legitimate travel to the UK more easily," he added.

The official said collecting biometric data involves taking a digital photograph of each applicant using a high tech electronic finger print scanner.

"The technology is nothing to be scared of and we hope Bangladeshi people will feel comfortable with it very quickly," he said, adding that the images will be stored in a database at the UK.

Derek said the process of issuing visa for the UK had been made simple and transparent.

"The UK authorities are not to reduce the number of visitors, rather we need more visitors and students. But things will now be transparent and fraudulent cases will be detected easily," he added.

Derek said, "Nearly half of Bangladesh's total visa applications are made from Sylhet region and these are handled by our commercial partner the Visa Facilitation Service (VFS)."

Later, the officials showed the newly set up machines for collecting biometric data and electronic finger print scanner at the VAC.

Under the new system, applicants will have to go in person to visa application centres located in Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong to submit their applications, along with biometric features, said the high commissioner.

Save the Environment Movement will hold a seminar on 'Protection of environment and role of green space in public life'. Venue: Office of Save the Environment Movement. Time: 11:00am.

Discussion
Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) will hold a discussion on 'Sound pollution rules and our duty'. Venue: Bapa office. Time: 10:00am.

His wife Shikha Begum with the help of neighbours took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors on duty declared him dead.

"Gias had an illicit relation with a neighbouring woman and he used to beat me over this issue," alleged Shikha.

However, their neighbours alleged that Gias was frustrated with his wife's suspicious character and complaints regarding their lifestyle.

Govt employee caught while taking bribe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion-4 (Rab) yesterday caught a government employee in the act of taking bribe at Senior Finance Controller's Office (Navy) at the capital's Lalasharai, Mirpur 14.

The arrestee, M Shahadat Hossain, 41, son of late Najim Uddin Khan from Shibchar of Madaripur, is an auditor at the pension department of the office.

Rab sources said M Mahmudul Haq, a retired chief petty officer of the navy, went to withdraw his pension funds last week when he was told by auditor Shahadat that Haq's pension would be processed faster if Haq paid him Tk 4000.

Haq later notified Rab-4 of the incident. To be able to bust Shahadat during the act, Rab made photocopies of Tk 3,000 and asked Haq to go to Shahadat's office and pay him the amount.

Yesterday afternoon, Haq entered Shahadat's office at Room 19 of the Senior Finance Controller's Office and handed over the money to Shahadat.

Soon after Shahadat put the money inside his drawer, undercover Rab personnel entered the room and detected the same notes that they had given to Haq.

After quizzing, Shahadat confessed to receiving the money as bribe from Haq, said Rab sources.

A case has been filed under the Emergency Power Ordinance 2007 with Kafirul Police Station.

Couple commit suicide in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people, including a couple, committed suicide in two separate incidents in the city yesterday.

The couple Shahazul, 30, and Shahnaz, 20, who were married a year ago, committed suicide by jumping under a Tongi-bound container-laden train in Banani rail gate area at about 11:25am.

"When I saw the couple walking along the rail slippers cheerfully about half an hour ago, I asked them to keep away from the rail tracks. Little had I thought that they could commit suicide. Yet, when the train neared, the man suddenly jumped under the train holding the woman in his arms," said Azizur Rahman, gatekeeper of Banani-Kakoli rail gate.

Jahanara Begum, sister-in-law of Shahazul, said he talked to her over cellphone in the morning and said he was very frustrated.

Relatives could not confirm why the couple committed suicide.

Shahazul had been living in his in-law's residence at Ibrahimpur in the city for the last thirty days.

In another incident, Giasuddin, 27, a garment worker living at Jurain, committed suicide by poisoning himself following a dispute with his wife over some private issues.

Giasuddin took poison at 2:00pm at his home after he returned from his workplace.

His wife Shikha Begum with the help of neighbours took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors on duty declared him dead.

"Gias had an illicit relation with a neighbouring woman and he used to beat me over this issue," alleged Shikha.

However, their neighbours alleged that Gias was frustrated with his wife's suspicious character and complaints regarding their lifestyle.



PHOTO: STAR

Sign UN Convention on persons with disabilities

Speakers urge govt at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the government to sign and ratify the UN Convention on the rights of Persons with Disability (PWD) to ensure accountability of the state in establishing their rights.

They also asked for the amendment of the existing disability act in accordance with the UN Convention for mainstreaming the persons with disabilities.

The discussion titled 'The rights of PWD in Bangladesh in the light of UN Convention on PWD' was organised by Action on Disability and Development (ADD) at the National Press Club in the city.

ADD, that works with PWD to promote their human rights, organised the discussion to create awareness among people about the Convention and to sensitise civil society to help implement it.

In his welcome speech

Mozammel Haque, advocacy coordinator of ADD, said the adoption of UN Convention for PWD on December 13, 2006 is the reflection of everlasting desire for mainstreaming 65 crore people with disabilities around the world.

A total of 81 countries, excluding Bangladesh, have already signed the convention, he said, adding that the government has taken initiative to sign the Convention.

Highlighting different aspects of the Convention, Mozammel said the Convention will uphold economic and social rights of PWD ensuring their equal access to health, education and employment.

Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, former chairman of Privatisation Commission, said changes in attitude and behaviour to PWD are needed to flourish their latent talent to help overall development of the country.

Rasheda K Choudhury, director of



PHOTO: STAR

Mosharrif Hossain speaks at a discussion at National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Rasheda K Choudhury and on his left are Enam Ahmed Chowdhury and Ana Campbell Johnston.

EC grant for Brac University

The Brac University James P Grant School of Public Health has recently won a competitive grant from European Commission (EC), Brussels under the latter's 'Asia-Link' programme, says a press release.

The grant of Euro 749,000 will support some of existing activities of the School with its European partner universities and initiate new activities. The activities that will get support through this include curriculum review and development, participation of European faculty in teaching, capacity building (including pedagogic and PhD level training), promoting South-South partnership in higher education, and institutional system development.

Brac University's partners are Kerala School of Public Health in India, Karolinska Institute in Sweden, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and University of Amsterdam.

WEATHER TODAY Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Khulna and Barisal divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 38.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chaudanga and lowest 18.4 degree Celsius at Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital at 6.24pm today and rises at 5:28am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage	
	In Celsius	Max	Min	Morning
Dhaka	34.7	19.0	81	