

AUW ACADEMIC PROGRAMME BEGINS NEXT MARCH

Vision to prepare talented Asian women for leadership

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the vision of preparing talented Asian women for leadership in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres, the Asian University for Women (AUW) is going to kick off its academic programmes in March next year.

The AUW stakeholders said this at a press meet at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre yesterday. They also unveiled the campus master plan and forthcoming site development plans.

World-renowned architect Moshe Safdie is the visionary behind the AUW campus master plan and Christopher Mulvey, principle of Moshe Safdie and Associates (MSA), was the project architect for the AUW campus master planning effort. 'Vitti Sthopoti Brindo' of Bangladesh is in charge of establishing the residential university.

The campus will be built over 104 acres of land in Chittagong. According to the organisers, the

campus can be envisioned as a microcosm of a village or a small town.

With the slogan, 'Together -- Educating tomorrow's leaders', the AUW is moving towards its goal.

Speaking at the press meet, Kamal Ahmad, president and CEO of AUW Support Foundation, stressed the need for regional co-operation in the age of disturbance.

The AUW would educate promising young women from all cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds across South and South East Asia, with an emphasis on reaching women from rural, refugee and underserved communities, he added.

Replies to a query about the tuition fee of US \$1000 per year, which is much higher in the context of Bangladesh and other developing countries, Kamal Ahmad said this university is not just for superelite.

Those from the marginalised group will be offered full scholarship. We are even going to start a one-year

pre-collegiate programme 'Access Academy' to prepare the girls for the university," he said.

The university will offer a five-year programme leading to a combined bachelor and graduate degree. The one-year long Access Academy programme, which is going to start in March 2008, is designed with intensive courses in English, mathematics, and computerskills.

Initially, 150 students will enrol on the Access Academy course, while, from September 2009, 300 students will be attending regular courses. The three-year curriculum will be providing liberal arts education with an emphasis on math, science and languages.

Twenty five percent of total students will be from Bangladesh. The AUW will attract faculty of Asian descent who currently teach in the West and wish to return to the region, as well as leading faculty from Europe and the United States.

Besides, AUW hopes to partner with several highly reputable global

institutions. It has already initiated a collaborative partnership with Aalborg University.

Zarina Hossain, a member of AUW foundation, moderated the programme attended by architect Iqbal Habib of Vitti Stahpati Brindo Ltd, Mohammad Omor Sharif of the AUW foundation and architect Saiful Haque.

The Asian University for Women also held a Regional Symposium 2007 at the same venue in the afternoon.

Speaking at the symposium, Rokia Afzal Rahman, chairman of the AUW Support Foundation Bangladesh Board of Advisers and president of the Women Entrepreneurs' Association, said the main vision of AUW is to be a world-class institution of higher education dedicated to preparing skilled women leaders.

She also said the university will help increase regional understanding among the countries and encourage women to contribute their ability to sustainable human and economic development in Asia and throughout the world.

Rukmini Bhaya Nair, professor of linguistics and English and head of the department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology in New Delhi, presented a keynote paper on 'A University of One's Own : Envisioning Education and Empowerment'.

She highlighted the importance of women's education in achieving women's empowerment.

Dr M Osman Farruk, former education minister, said the AUW has to be given full academic autonomy and it is a unique institution that will provide high-quality education for women.

He urged the architects of the AUW Master Plan to construct buildings considering the local condition and weather of Chittagong.

AUW Support Foundation President & CEO Kamal Ahmad and Architect Iqbal Habib Kamal also took part in the symposium.



Model of the campus of Asian University for Women.

CDA's drive against illegal structures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) has launched a massive drive against illegal structures and unauthorised occupation which will be implemented in five phases.

Under phase-1 that began yesterday, the CDA eviction team led by Magistrate Begum Tahera Ferdous demolished a CNG refuelling station at Agrabard Access Road and 50 more unauthorised structures, including small shops, hotels and markets.

"The owner of Taj Re-fuelling Station violated the CDA acts when he built the structure few years ago," sources said, adding that he also failed to show valid documents regarding prior permission.

Prior to the drive, the CDA conducted a survey where they detected around 185 such structures from Kathgur under Patenga Police Station to Bahaddarhat intersection under Chandgaon PS, sources said.

Important roads within the area are Sheikh Mujib Road, Asian Highway, Agrabard Access Road extending from Port Connecting Road to Badamtali, and Dhaka Trunk Road extending from Kadamtali to Olonkar Intersection via Dewhatan Overbridge.

Md Jasim Uddin Chowdhury, CDA executive engineer, told this correspondent that the phase-1 might take a week to complete its drive since the areas under it are vast and the number of structures on both sides of the roads are larger in comparison to other places.

CDA Chairman Shah Md Akhtaruddin said the massive drives are aimed at bringing the city settings into order and making the plying of commuters comfortable and hassle-free.

The eviction team was assisted by the members of joint forces.

Hasina visits her aunt at hospital

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday visited her ailing aunt Begum Ambia Katun at Sikder Medical College Hospital at Gulshan.

Ambia Katun, 87, was admitted to the hospital on Wednesday following development of old-age complications.

Hasina stayed beside her aunt for some time and talked to doctors about her aunt's health condition. Ambia Katun is the sister of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina wished her early recovery.

Awami League leaders Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Sheikh Maruf were also present.

FOOD AID PROGRAMMES

Political affiliation leaves needy households outside

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An American Fulbright student in her recent research has found political affiliation and opportunity in food aid programmes in rural Bangladesh that leave many other households out of the safety net programmes.

"Community-based targeting (in various safety net programmes) is biased on political affiliation," said Erin Lentz, a PhD student in Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University of the United States, at a seminar yesterday.

The Fulbright seminar was organised by the American Centre of the US Embassy in Dhaka.

The study titled 'The spectre of dependency in food aid programming in rural Bangladesh', which was conducted in northern Bangladesh, looked at various food aid programmes, including vulnerable group development (VGD), vulnerable group feeding (VGF) and food for work (FFW).

"Many households pay their council members (Union Parishad) to be included on FFW roll," she said, adding that many households who understand how to 'beat the system' get double coverage.

Due to leakages in the

programmes, local elites' pockets appear to be high, while local governments appear to be much more dependent on aid than their constituents, she noted.

As a result, Erin Lentz said many other households, including landless labourers, who should be targeted, are left out of such safety net programmes.

In another study on low-income housing for garment workers, Fulbright student Kristin Boekhoff said there is a great need for a structured development system tailored specifically to the requirements of the underserved female garment workers.

Most of the female garment workers, who have minimum income, live in a shabby housing with limited cooking, toilet and ventilation facilities, she said.

A Bangladeshi origin American Fulbright Nabil Ahmed of Johns Hopkins University in his research presentation on male involvement in reproductive health said males should be involved more in reducing the birth rate and improving reproductive health.

Indian origin American Fulbright Sugata Tuni Chatterji presented her mid-way research on 'Bhatiyali: The river music of Bengal'.

Due to leakages in the

'Announce 6th Wage Board Award immediately'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sangbadik Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, an association of journalists, employees and workers of the newspaper industry, has called on the caretaker government to announce the Sixth Wage Board Award immediately taking into account the objections raised by them.

The Parishad leaders made the call in a letter sent to the chief adviser to the caretaker government yesterday after reviewing the latest developments regarding the wage board award at a meeting at the National Press Club on Wednesday, says a press release.

In the letter, the leaders said the 6th Wage Board was formed during the tenure of the previous government following a prolonged struggle by the newspapermen.

After the board submitted its recommendations regarding the wage board award, the newspapermen accepted most of them but raised objections to a few recommendations and urged the then government to reconsider them, the leaders added.

They said Law and Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain at a meeting also assured them of forming a tripartite committee to monitor the issue of announcement and implementation of the wage board award.

"But now we came to know that the information adviser is suddenly trying to bring some amendments to the wage board award without consulting any members of the board or journalists and employees," they said, adding that such amendments would deprive journalists, employees and workers of the facilities they have been enjoying in line with the previous wage board award.

"We are also deeply concerned at informal statements of the information adviser regarding the wage board award, which made us believe that he is acting as a narrow-minded and authoritarian owner in the newspaper industry, not as a representative of the government or state," the Parishad leaders said.

They said the issue of wage board award is linked to the life and livelihood of newspapermen, as they have to depend on it for leading an honest life with their family members.

They also warned that the journalists, employees and workers would not be sitting idle if their basic right to livelihood is jeopardised.

They appealed to the chief adviser to intervene in this situation so that the information adviser cannot impose the award with amendments brought by him alone.

The signatories to the letter are Parishad leaders Mozammel Haque, Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, Fazle Imam, Ruhul Amin Gazi, Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, Matiur Rahman Talukder, Altaf Mahmud, Azizul Islam Banna, Omar Faruque, Sarder Farid, Abdul Hashem and Khairul Islam.

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Mild heat wave, which is sweeping over Rajshahi division may continue, Met Office said.

It said that day temperature may rise slightly over the country.

Highest temperature 38.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Ishwardi and lowest 21.9 degree Celsius at Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:39pm today and rises at 5:12am 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	33.7	28.6	75	66
Chittagong	32.5	27.0	87	82
Rajshahi	38.5	25.9	83	65
Khulna	35.5	28.5	80	70
Barisal	33.0	27.0	88	77
Sylhet	28.9	21.9	96	78
Cox's Bazar	32.5	28.4	84	84

The Community Development Centre (CODEC) organised the discussion titled 'Pre-Budget discussion: Life and livelihood of coastal people'.



The Prothom Alo organised a roundtable titled 'Immediate Action Plan for Election Commission' at Hotel Sheraton in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: STAR

Change people's mindset to make political reforms meaningful

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called for change in people's mindset in order to make the reforms in political parties meaningful.

They said political reforms should not be imposed from outside, rather political parties themselves should initiate such reforms as per people's will.

The roundtable titled 'Reform in political parties: Citizens' thought' was organised by Sammilita Nagorik Adolcon at the National Press Club in the city.

He highlighted the importance of women's education in achieving women's empowerment.

Dr M Osman Farruk, former education minister, said the AUW has to be given full academic autonomy and it is a unique institution that will provide high-quality education for women.

He urged the architects of the AUW Master Plan to construct buildings considering the local condition and weather of Chittagong.

AUW Support Foundation President & CEO Kamal Ahmad and Architect Iqbal Habib Kamal also took part in the symposium.

Kuddus briefly discussed the constitutions of major political parties and drew comparisons among them.

Prof Harun ur Rashid of Dhaka University said the leadership pattern of Bangladesh political parties is not superimposed, rather it is a product of the socio-economic condition of the country.

New Age Editor Nurul Kabir said none of the political parties in Bangladesh is democratic.

He stressed the need for transparency in the financial accounts of political parties.

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