

Introduce secular edn system to ensure social justice

Speakers say at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A secular education system should be introduced in order to build a true democratic society and ensure social justice and communal harmony, experts on law, media and development said at a seminar yesterday.

"We require a secular democratic education system... and a government of the people and for the people," Justice Golam Rabbani said at the seminar on 'Relevance and impact of conscientisation and mobilisation

as a development strategy in the 21st century'.

Nijera Kori, an NGO, that is working to conscientise the poor and landless people, organised the seminar at Brac Centre Inn in the city where three studies on the impact of its activities since 1980 were presented.

Prof Abul Barkat presented a study on 'Development as conscientisation: The case of Nijera Kori', Dr Naila Kabeer on 'Constructing citizenship from the grassroots: What difference does Nijera Kori make?', and AKM

Masud Ali of Incidin-Bangladesh presented a study on 'Palm-print of identity: Impacts of the emerging identities of organised rural landless'.

Justice Rabbani, who chaired the seminar, said religion is a private matter where a person builds communication with his creator. Education, therefore, should be secular in general, he said, referring to a High Court verdict in 2001 declaring all kinds of fatwas (religious edict) illegal and unconstitutional.

Secular education through

media and at educational institutions is needed to institutionalise democracy, which is a major instrument of development, said Nurul Kabir, editor of The New Age.

Referring to the state of emergency, he said, "We want a political process, but we also saw that political parties were not following democratic principles."

He also suggested expansion of the activities of Nijera Kori, which work to unite the poor and victims of exploitation and educate them about their rights and responsibilities, so that they can bring changes to themselves and society.

Dr Atiur Rahman of Unnayan Samannay said economic efforts could be incorporated into the conscientisation process for long-term impact. Greater connectivity through radio, television, newspapers and internet should be built to make information accessible to more and more people, he said.

On democratisation, he said the countrymen should be realistic in their expectations from the political parties. "Don't think Bangladesh will be a Switzerland in a day."

Dr Naila Kabeer said Nijera Kori has made a significant difference at local levels by changing the attitude of local courts, leaders and journalists towards the poor and marginalised people.

Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir said, "When people are conscientised, they can realise the rights enshrined in the constitution, identify their own problems and solve them by themselves."

Research Director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies Dr Simeen Mahmud also spoke.



PHOTO: STAR

Prof Abul Barkat speaks at a seminar at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday. On his left are Dr Naila Kabeer, Dr Atiur Rahman, Justice Golam Rabbani, Nurul Kabir and AKM Masud Ali.

Bangladesh, China need greater security cooperation

Says Chinese specialist on S Asia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and China need to develop greater security cooperation and people-to-people contact in order to dispel misunderstanding and suspicion between the two countries, said a Chinese specialist on South Asia yesterday.

Hu Shi Sheng, director of South Asian Studies at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, made this observation at a seminar titled 'Sino-Bangladesh Relations' organised by the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute

NAT'L TV DEBATE

DU Jagannath Hall becomes champion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University (DU) became champion in the final of the National Television Debate Championship which was held at the BTV auditorium in Rampura on July 3.

Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall became the runner-up while the 3rd and the 4th places were held by Rockya Hall and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology respectively.

Uttam Roy, Animesh Kor and Rajib Sarkar were the debaters from the Jagannath Hall while Mohammad Enamul Kabir, Sheikh Ashiq Iqbal and Mohammad Masudur Rahman represented the runner-up.

Eminent educationist Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury presided over the competition which was conducted by Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiran, founding chairman of the National Debate Federation.

The main theme of the debate was 'Daridra Mukto Banglaesh Hok Muktiuddher Chetonar Ongikar' which translates as 'Let a poverty-free Bangladesh be the embodiment of the spirit of the Liberation War'.

DU Vice-chancellor Dr SMA Faiz congratulated the winning team and the runners-up and expressed the hope that such talented debaters would engage themselves in making Bangladesh a beautiful place for everybody to live.

Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury called on the debaters to help revive the spirit of the liberation war and become the ideal citizens of the country.

Prof Atiqur Rahman, Rashid-un-Nabi, Father Bakul Rogario (CSC), Kamrul Islam (FCA) and Prof Rafiqul Islam were the judges.

In all 64 teams took part in the championship which is organised by the BTV every year.

Meanwhile, a huge jubilant procession led by Provost of Jagannath Hall Prof Ajoy Kumar Das was brought out on the campus to mark the victory.

(BEI) at its auditorium in the city.

Hu also said that the massive trade imbalance between the two countries is "not so conducive to furthering trade relations". According to 2006 figures, China-Bangladesh trade stands at \$3.2 billion annually.

In 2006, Bangladeshi exports to China were \$88 million while Bangladeshi import of Chinese goods was over \$2 billion.

The academic added that it is also important that greater care needs to be taken to preserve a delicate China-India-Bangladesh relationship, as cosier Sino-Bangladesh relations are provoking suspicious and alarming reactions in Indian academia and the media.

Hu said the Chinese perceive that Islamic militancy is strong in Bangladesh, a perception that was dispelled by his visit here. He felt the two countries need to share greater security information to dispel this widely believed perception since it prevents Chinese investments in Bangladesh.

Hu also stressed the need to build greater people-to-people contact as he felt it was too low to form a strong basis of a bilateral relationship. He also called for developing greater Chinese and Bengali language skills in order to strengthen ties.

Hu said both trade and people-to-people contacts would be strengthened by Bangladesh's commitment to Trans-Asian rail and road links.

He also hoped that China would open up its markets for

Bangladeshi products, especially by giving free-market access to Bangladeshi entrepreneurs.

Lailufar Yasmin from Dhaka University also gave a presentation, stressing that Bangladesh can take advantage of a new posture of China in international politics, such as its commitment to global 'equality and mutual benefits'.

BEI Chairman Farooq Sobhan and Chinese Ambassador Zhen Qingdian were also present at the seminar.

Work on Chaktai Mariners Road begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Work on the construction of Chaktai Mariners Road along the Chaktai canal, the backbone of the port city, was inaugurated yesterday.

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) is implementing the Tk 6 crore project financed by the government to construct 12-km-long roads on both sides of the canal stretching from Chamrergudam to Bahodderhat.

Acting mayor Manjurul Alam and CDA Chairman Shah Mohammad Akhter Uddin jointly inaugurated the work.

The project has been taken up as an emergency step to help smooth passage of drain water through Chaktai canal following June 11 landslides.

110MW Khulna power plant out of order again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The 110 megawatt power plant of Khulna, put into operation on Monday morning after necessary repairing, again went out of order on Tuesday night due to major leakages in boiler tubes.

Neither Western Zone Power Distribution Company (WZPD) nor Goalpara Power Station (GPS) was able to comment on when the power plant would start to generate electricity.

The power plant last went out of order on June 27 just after half-an-hour of going into operation.

The plant is also undergoing major repairing of boiler tubes at a cost of Tk 2 crore, said an engineer of GPS.

The 110MW plant used to generate only 55MW electricity a day giving some relief to the city dwellers who have been experiencing unbearable load shedding.

31 get MSS scholarships

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manabik Shahajya Sangstha (MSS) yesterday distributed scholarships worth Tk 2 lakh among 31 poor but meritorious students as part of its 'MSS Talent Nurturing Initiative' to help them continue their studies.

The scholarship distribution programme was held at National Press Club in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest at the programme, Acting Managing Director of Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) Musharraf Hossain Khan said all organisations should spend part of their income in ensuring healthcare services and education of poor people as part of their corporate social responsibility.

Picking up some poor students every year and providing some financial assistance won't help them much because their families would spend part of the money for their consumption and the rest in academic activities.

Musharraf also suggested that MSS should keep tracks of the awardees so that their academic career does not stop halfway.

He also said that organisations intending to help poor students should open up desks that would keep records of the students and guarantee whatever help they might need in pursuing higher education provided that the students' academic performance is satisfactory.

Mahbubul Alam, a second-year student of Dhaka Imperial College who received Tk 7000 for his result in the SSC exams, said he would get admission into a coaching centre as it would help him do better in the HSC examinations.

Speaking at the programme, MSS Treasurer Musleh Uddin Dhali said they awarded 13 students in 2006 while this year the number is 31 and in the coming days they would provide financial assistance to more students.

MSS Executive Director ANM Imam Hasnat chaired the programme.



PHOTO: STAR

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed gives away a certificate to a participant of a training on sweater knitting at the certificate award and job placement ceremony at BGMEA Institute of Fashion & Technology (BIFT) auditorium in the city yesterday.

Transform 15cr people into united strength

Gen Moeen tells BGMEA job placement ceremony

UNB, Dhaka

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed said the hands of 15 crore people would have to be transformed into a united strength for the welfare of the nation.

"We have 15 crore people who have 30 crore hands. If we can train those hands, there will be no problem. These people are not a curse. Let us turn these hands into strength," he said this while he was speaking at the certificate awarding and job placement ceremony at the BGMEA Institute of Fashion & Technology (BIFT) auditorium in the city.

National University Vice-chancellor Prof Wakil Ahmed and BGMEA President Anwarul Alam

Chowdhury were present while BIFT's governing body President Benir Ahmed presided over the ceremony.

Gen Moeen appreciated the BGMEA initiative to provide jobs to the unemployed youths after giving training at BIFT.

He said members of the Bangladesh Army would continue to send 50 unemployed youths to BIFT every month from poverty-stricken areas in the northern Bangladesh.

The army chief assured BGMEA and BIFT of all-out cooperation.

He noted that 30 years have passed by since garment industries started in 1978. "But why we have to bring people from abroad? We must train our people and we should

export those trained people," he said.

General Moeen praised the fashion show, presented by students of the BIFT before the certificate distribution.

"After watching the fashion show today, I am sure they (students) can present their own creative ideas and fashion designs not only in Bangladesh but also across the world," he observed.

Later, he distributed certificates and appointment letters among the unemployed youths who have successfully completed one-month training on sweater knitting from BIFT Sweater Manufacturing Training Centre.

Couple held with two stolen babies in Chittagong

CU CORRESPONDENT

Police here yesterday arrested a couple with two babies who were allegedly stolen from Chittagong Medical College and Hospital (CMCH).

The arrestees were identified as Uzzal Das, 45, and his wife Dipali Das, 35, resident of Munna Colony at Bakolia in the city.

On information police raided the house of Uzzal at around 12.30am and found two babies, a boy aged 90 days, and a girl aged 45 days, sources said.

The couple claimed that they bought the children from a woman at the CMCH at a cost of Tk 15 thousand, but they could not give any details about the woman.

The couple was handed over to Panchlaish Police Station for interrogation.

The babies were undergoing treatment at the CMCH.

Relatives go berserk as patient dies due to wrong treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Relatives of a patient, who died at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) early yesterday, went berserk for doctors' alleged negligence to duty and wrong treatment.

Mohammad Badal, 32, was brought to DMCH at around 10:00pm on Tuesday with a chest complaint.

The emergency medical officer told him to have an Echo Cardio Gram (ECG).

Later he sent Badal to Medicine Ward No 3 as nothing bad was found in the ECG report.

But Badal's relatives claimed that as he continued to complain of chest pain, a doctor pushed him an injection at 11:45pm but there was no relief of pain.

At that time they repeatedly requested the on-duty doctor to see the patient, but he did not respond.

However, the doctor turned up after half an hour and pushed him another injection.

But within five minutes Badal fell unconscious and died, they claimed.

Badal's relatives also alleged that only two junior doctors were on duty on Tuesday night and they could not diagnose the patient's problem.

As the death news reached Badal's residence at nearby Aga Sadek Lane, around 20 locals rushed to the hospital and turned unruly.

At one stage they entered the hospital and assaulted two intern doctors inside a toilet where they took refuge.

They also scolded Dr Ziaus Shams, assistant registrar of Ward No 3.

Panic gripped the inmates during the incident.

A doctor said the patient's condition was very critical and that's why he died despite their best efforts.

DMCH authorities did not make any comment on the issue.

Mir Nasir gets 13yrs in jail for graft

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government to confiscate their wealth worth Tk 27.94,91,000 which is disproportionate to the known sources of income of Nasir and his son.

Prosecution lawyers told The Daily Star that Nasir will have to serve in jail for 13 years as the conviction will be implemented consecutively, not concurrently.

Defence lawyer MA Awa said as per Nasir's instructions they will appeal with the High Court on receipt of the order of the verdict.

Special Court-2 Judge AK Roy delivered the verdict in the afternoon in a packed courtroom. He appeared before the court at 2:00pm and read out excerpts from the 186-page judgment. Judge Roy took seven minutes to deliver the verdict.

He allowed the convicted half an hour as per their prayer to consult with their lawyers regarding appealing in the High Court.

Nasir and Helal, who had been taken to the parliament complex at 9:30am, were standing at the dock while the judge was reading out the verdict. Nasir listened to the verdict attentively while his son looked normal.

The judgment was prepared after examining the investigation report, depositions of 32 witnesses, statements of the two accused, and arguments of the prosecution and the defence on 25 workdays since May 20.

Prosecution lawyers were present to receive the judgment.

Expressing satisfaction about the verdict, prosecution lawyer Mir Ahmed Ali told The Daily Star that Nasir has been convicted for 10

years' rigorous imprisonment under section 27(1) of the ACC Act 2004, and three years' simple imprisonment under its section 26(2). Helal has been convicted under section 109 of the Penal Code.

Their conviction will be effective with the pronouncement of the verdict.

Nasir's wealth to be confiscated includes over 800 decimals of land in Hathazari of Chittagong, a plot at Placid Lake Apartment in Dhanmondi and a four-storey building 'Dalia Kunja' worth Tk 89.15 lakh in Chittagong. Nasir concealed information about his ownership of a three-storey building in Gulshan valued at Tk 1.24 crore.

NASIR'S OFFENCE
On February 18, the ACC asked 50 corruption suspects, including Nasir, to submit their wealth statements within 72 hours. Nasir, who had been detained on February 4 by the joint forces, submitted his wealth statement to the ACC through representatives.

Joint forces arrested Nasir's son Helal when he was withdrawing Tk 5.64 crore from family joint accounts with four different banks in the capital on February 22 to transfer the money to the accounts of his wife and mother-in-law.

On March 6, ACC Deputy Director Sharmin Ferdous filed a graft case with Gulshan Police Station against Nasir for amassing properties illegally.

According to the charge sheet, Nasir, his wife late Dalia Naznin Nasir, their daughter and son have wealth worth Tk 29.22 crore. But

they showed properties worth about Tk 22.50 crore in the wealth statement, concealing information of properties worth Tk 6.72 crore.

The ACC found that the former state minister has Tk 1.28 crore legal savings.

ACC sources said Nasir has more wealth in different names and disguises but those could not be proved due to shortage of time.

ACC officials also alleged that Nasir provided twisted information in his statement. He did not mention anything about Tk 23 lakh spent for the renovation and decoration of his ancestral home in Chittagong, they said. He, however, mentioned that he owns ancestral property worth Tk 30,000.

The ACC found that Nasir's wife and son own several flats, plots and houses in different areas in Dhaka and Chittagong and in most cases they gave twisted information about the wealth.

The ACC also found Tk 5.11 crore in several bank accounts of the former state minister. Eight of these banks—Janata Bank, Agrani Bank, Eastern Bank, Brac Bank, HSBC Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, Shahjalal Islami Bank and Social Investment Bank—are in the city.

On April 29, ACC deputy director Abdullah Al Zahid, also investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet to a Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

The court sent the case to the Special Court on May 6 for quick disposal.

The Special Court framed charges against Nasir and his son on May 15.

ANTI-AEDES DRIVE

Mayor calls for awareness campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday stressed the need for community participation in making the city a safe and healthy place.

He also assured all-out cooperation from the DCC in controlling aedes mosquito, which transmits dengue virus, and strengthen the waste management activities in the city.

"Coordinated community effort is required to raise awareness about dengue. In the last few years, the citizens' body played a significant role in anti-aedes campaign," Khoka said at a preparatory meeting of the National Committee to control aedes mosquito and strengthen the waste management activities.

This year, the DCC would take initiatives to maximise the participation of citizens in controlling aedes through awareness campaign involving the role models from different streams.

The breeding period of aedes mosquito is from May to July. With a view to preventing dengue fever, the DCC has already kicked off its activities. It has asked all the city hospitals to report any dengue case to the DCC Dengue cell. Besides, 5948 bighas of water bodies have been made free of water hyacinth.

The mayor stressed the need to raise awareness about dengue to persuade city residents to keep areas of their houses clean.

Dr Nazrul Islam, an urban planning expert, called for involving non-government organisations in the anti-aedes campaign.

National Professor Dr MR Khan, who has been working with the DCC in anti-aedes drive, insisted on ensuring supply of safe water and proper disposal of sewage to avoid health hazards.

Chief Executive Officer of DCC Saifuddin Ahmed, Chief Health Officer Col Shawkat Ali and Chief Conservancy Officer Maksudur Rahman also spoke.

The next meeting of the National Committee will be held on the first week of August.

135 peacekeepers leave for Sudan

BSS, Dhaka

The third batch of 275 members of the Bangladesh Army Engineers Contingent (BANENGER) is replacing the Bangladesh peacekeepers who have completed their tenure in Sudan.

A total of 135 members of the BANENGER, including seven officers, led by Lt Col ABM Salahuddin left Dhaka for Sudan by a UN chartered aircraft on Tuesday night. However, 114 Army personnel will return home by the return flight.

Of the total 275 members, the rest 140 soldiers will leave Dhaka for Sudan on July 17 while 166 army personnel will return home, an ISPR release said.

Obituary



Fatema Khatun, wife of former assistant registrar of Bangladesh Supreme Court late Abdul Kader and mother of Prof

Nazrul Islam, chairman of University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh, passed away due to old age complications at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) yesterday at the age of 92, says a press release.

She left behind her four sons and two daughters to mourn her death.

Her eldest son is famous psychiatrist Prof Dr Hedayatul Islam, third son Prof Monjurul Alam, adviser of Bangladesh Open University and the youngest daughter Dr Farzana Islam, teacher of Anthropology Department of Jahangirnagar University.

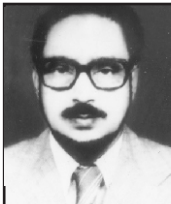
Death Anniversary



says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his village in Naogaon and at Banani graveyard in the capital.

Dr AKM Shamsul Huda



former VP of Sir Salimullah Medical College, says a press release.

On this occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at the Mirpur Martyred Intellectual Graveyard Mosque and special food will be distributed at the orphanages.