

'Initiate master plan to save jute industry'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday called for immediate initiation of a master plan to save the country's jute industry from destruction.

They said the plan should be formulated after discussion with the farmers, businessmen, economists and administrators for quick implementation.

The press conference was organised by Nagorik Sanghati in association with ActionAid Bangladesh at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) auditorium.

The speakers said unbridled institutional corruption, negative advice of the international financial organisation, and lack of integrated efforts for long have made the poten-

tial jute sector a volatile one.

In a written statement, Sharifuzzaman Sharif, general secretary of Nagorik Sanghati, said jute has started arriving in the market and farmers are selling it to traders at a low price as the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) is not purchasing jute due to lack of money.

Taking the opportunity, a section of traders are hoarding jute and the BJMC will have to purchase jutes from them at a higher price, he added.

Sharif demanded immediate allocation of money for the BJMC so that it can purchase jute from the growers."

He said the BJMC had to count about Tk 140 crore last year for purchasing jute lately.

Sharif said about 60 lakh bales of jute is expected to be produced this year.

Columnist Syed Abul Moksud said when the jute sector is flourishing in the neighbouring country we are lagging behind in this sector.

Engineer M Inamul Haque said the demand for jute products has been increasing in the international market day by day as it is environment-friendly.

He said mismanagement, lack of farsightedness and widespread corruption have brought the jute sector on the verge of destruction.

Nagorik Sanghati President Atiqur Rahman called for reopening of the factories which were declared lay-off and immediate payment of the workers who were sacked from different factories.



PHOTO: STAR
Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka unveils a plaque marking the renaming of Mirpur road at Dhanmondi as 'Bir Uttam Khaled Mosharraf Sarak' yesterday.

Photo exhibition of Bangladeshi Diaspora in UK

DU CORRESPONDENT

A photo exhibition of Bangladeshi Diaspora in the United Kingdom began at British Council in the city yesterday.

Organisers said the weeklong exhibition intends to explore the new generation of British Bangladeshis, their working conditions, family relationships and change in their cultural attitude, heritage, ethics and aspirations.

The British High Commission in partnership with British Council and Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) are jointly organising the exhibition.

Mahmud, a photographer of Map Photo Agency, who took the photographs for the exhibition, said the exhibition features more than 100 photographs.

The exhibition will run till July 22 from 10:30am to 6:30pm everyday.

Buddha's hair relic to be handed over tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Most of the members of the Sri Lankan delegation including Foreign Minister Rohita Bogollagama and five other senior ministers are likely to arrive here in the port city today to collect hair relics of Lord Gautam Buddha in a ceremony tomorrow.

The ministers are scheduled to join a grand prayer (Buddha Puja) at Chittagong Buddhist Monastery at Nandan Kanon this afternoon which will be participated by around 500 Sri Lankan people living in Chittagong, sources said.

Senior Adviser to Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry Lal Kumar Gamaga and Director of South Asia Affairs to Foreign Ministry of Bangladesh Md Badiuzzaman visited the Chittagong Buddhist Monastery yesterday.

Meanwhile leaders of Bangladesh Buddhist Association yesterday urged the government to declare Chittagong Buddhist Monastery as National

Buddhist Monastery because the holy relics of Buddha's hair is being preserved here.

The call came from a press conference organised by the association at Chittagong Press Club.

Association Chairman Ajit Ranjan Barua and General Secretary Adarsha Kumar Barua spoke at the press conference.

The speakers said beside Buddha's hair some other valuable relics like a part of Buddha's body and a few old religious books including Tripitak (written on palm-tree leaves) are being preserved in the century-old monastery.

They said reconstruction of the monastery that was built in 1889 is essential to preserve these national historic objects properly and thus it might become a tourist spot.

They hoped that the handing over of the hair relics to Sri Lanka would intensify the bi-lateral relationship between the two countries.

Dropout rate at primary level still alarming

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The dropout rate at the primary level is still alarming although several initiatives like the second primary education development programme (PEDP-II) have been taken, Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) Director General Khondaker M Asaduzzaman said yesterday.

He was speaking at a workshop on 'Progress and achievement of second primary education development programme' at DPE conference hall in the city.

"The dropout rate at the primary level was 48 percent in 2005 and 33 percent in 2001," said Asaduzzaman.

But he could not provide the present dropout because the survey of DPE is yet to be finished. He hoped that DPE will be able to reveal the result within two months.

Education Adviser Ayub Quadri admitted that the dropout rate is still alarming although the government became successful in other fields of primary education, specially in increasing the ratio of students and teachers and number of educational institutes and infrastructure development of the schools.

"Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and DPE have taken the issue seriously and we will try to reduce the dropout rate through PEDP-II," he said while addressing

the workshop as the chief guest.

DPE Director Ratan Kumar Roy said primary data have been collected from government primary, non-government primary, registered primary and community primary schools to determine the dropout rate.

Hua Du, country director of

Asian Development Bank, said regular evaluation of student achievements is required to ensure quality education at primary level.

M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, secretary to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, said reduction of dropout rate and quality education are yet to be ensured

though government has taken several programmes targeting the access of primary education for all children.

Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, founder of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra, said worse textbooks and low quality teachers are the main obstacles in the way of providing a

better primary education.

Chowdhury Mufad Ahmed, joint programme director of PEDP-II, presented the keynote paper on PEDP at the workshop where academicians and representatives from different NGOs also took part.

DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF SHAMSUR RAHMAN Police prevent journos from holding memorial meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The police did not allow journalists to hold a meeting in memory of slain journalist Shamsur Rahman at the IDEB auditorium in Jessore yesterday.

The Jessore union of Journalists has organised the meeting on the occasion of the seventh death anniversary of the journalist but had to cancel it as the police prevented the union from holding the meeting.

Shamsur Rahman, Jessore bureau chief of the daily Janakantha, was gunned down by extremists at his office on the night of July 16 in 2000.

To mark his death anniversary, the journalists placed wreaths at his grave in the morning. Former president of Dhaka University Teachers' Association Dr Arefin Siddiqui, BFUJ President Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul, General Secretary Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, Treasurer Ajmol Hossain Farazi, former BFUJ president Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and President of Khulna Press Club Makbul Hossain Mintoo were present to pay tribute to the late journalist.

Later, they went to the house of Shamsur Rahman and talked to his wife Selina Akhter Lucky and other members of the family.



PHOTO: STAR
Visitors admire photographs put on display at a photo exhibition of Bangladeshi Diaspora in the United Kingdom at the British Council in the city yesterday.