

'Fund constraints obstacle to research work'

20 scholars receive UGC Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Financial constraints are the key obstacle to conducting innovative research at the universities, academics said at an award giving ceremony in the city yesterday.

They also said that innovative research can identify the causes of problems and find out the solutions, which can help the nation achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Twenty scholars from public and private universities were honoured with 'University Grants Commission (UGC) Award 2002-2005' for their outstanding research works at the ceremony organised by the UGC at its auditorium.

The awardees are Prof Ayesha Begum, Salma Akhter, Prof Md Anwar Hossain, Prof M Bahadur

Meah, Prof AS Md Abdul Haseeb, Prof Monsur Musa, Dr Gour Gobinda Goswami, Prof Dr Md Shamsul Alam, Dr Md Abul Hasnat, Dr GM Tarekul Islam, Prof MM Shahidul Hassan, Dr M Tofazzal Islam, Prof Md Samsul Alam, Prof Dr Md Saidur Rahman, Prof Nurul Absar, Prof MM Shahidul Hassan, Prof Mohammad Asadullah, Dr Swarochish Sarker, Jamila Ahmed Chowdhury, Prof Dilara Choudhury and Prof Dr Tajmeri SA Islam.

Speaking on the occasion, UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam said a huge amount of money is needed to conduct better research activities, but the budget is limited.

"We are now trying to get a Tk 500 crore World Bank fund for innovative research work," he said. He also urged the university

teachers to carry out research in the field of power, environment, food, poverty eradication, education system, medical science, information technology and women empowerment.

Speaking as the chief guest, Prof Mustafa Nurul Islam said the teachers should give top priority to innovative research, which will immensely help the nation develop the education system.

Prof Sirajul Islam, chief editor of Banglapedia, stressed the need for more and more research publications.

He called on the teachers and researchers to take initiatives for joint research collaboration with foreign universities.

UGC Member Prof Dr AHM Zehadul Karim and Prof Monsur Musa also spoke.

Moudud on 12 hours' parole

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained former law minister Moudud Ahmed was given 12 hours' parole yesterday to attend the burial of his elder brother Masud Ahmed.

Masud passed away on Wednesday night due to old-age complications.

Witnesses said Moudud came out of Dhaka Central Jail at 4:15pm. He was taken to Azimpur graveyard straight away by a prison van under escort of police and jail security personnel, where he attended the namaz-e-janaza for his brother.

Later, Moudud was taken to the residence of his late brother at Mohammadpur.

"The home ministry granted 12 hours' parole to Moudud after his family members submitted an application," Brig Gen Zakir Hassan, Inspector General (prisons), told The Daily Star.

Deputy Inspector General (prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiqui said, "At least 16 policemen and a jail security man are escorting Moudud during the parole. He would be brought back to the jail soon after the end of his parole."

Election officials disappoint voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several voters went to Kalabagan Lake Circus Girls' High School in the city yesterday to have their photos taken by election officials for the purpose of voter registration but returned disappointed.

They found no election officials or any arrangement for taking photos at the school, although they were asked to come to the centre on the day.

"According to the voter slip given to us, election officials were supposed to take photos of the voters at the voter registration centre at this school today (Thursday), but I found no officials there," said Advocate ZI Khan Panna, a resident of Kalabagan.

"A security guard of the school told me that no officials came here today to take photograph," he added.

He then contacted the Election Commission office and the officials told him to contact the local thana election office.

When he contacted the local thana election office, an officer told him to contact them after January 6 about the time for taking photograph, the lawyer said.

Mainul's remarks on 6th Wage Board protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Sangbadik Sramik Karmochari Oikya Parishad, an association of journalists, employees and workers of newspaper industry, have strongly protested the recent remarks of Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain about the 6th Wage Board.

In a joint statement, they said when the government announced to form a review committee following the protest of the journalists, employees and workers against the anomalies and mistakes in the 6th Wage Board Award, the 'unwanted' remarks of the adviser is provocative and synonymous to make the situation worse.

The Parishad leaders said the law adviser himself admitted anomalies and mistakes in the gazette notification and he cannot avoid his responsibility for the mistakes.

The adviser did not take any step to minimise the resentment, they said urging the adviser to refrain from delivering provocative remarks about the wage board.

The leaders demanded immediate formation of the review committee for publishing a new gazette notification.

They mentioned that the information adviser made the remarks being vindictive by the demands for investigation into three murders in the daily Ittefaq office and against the mass sack of its staffs.

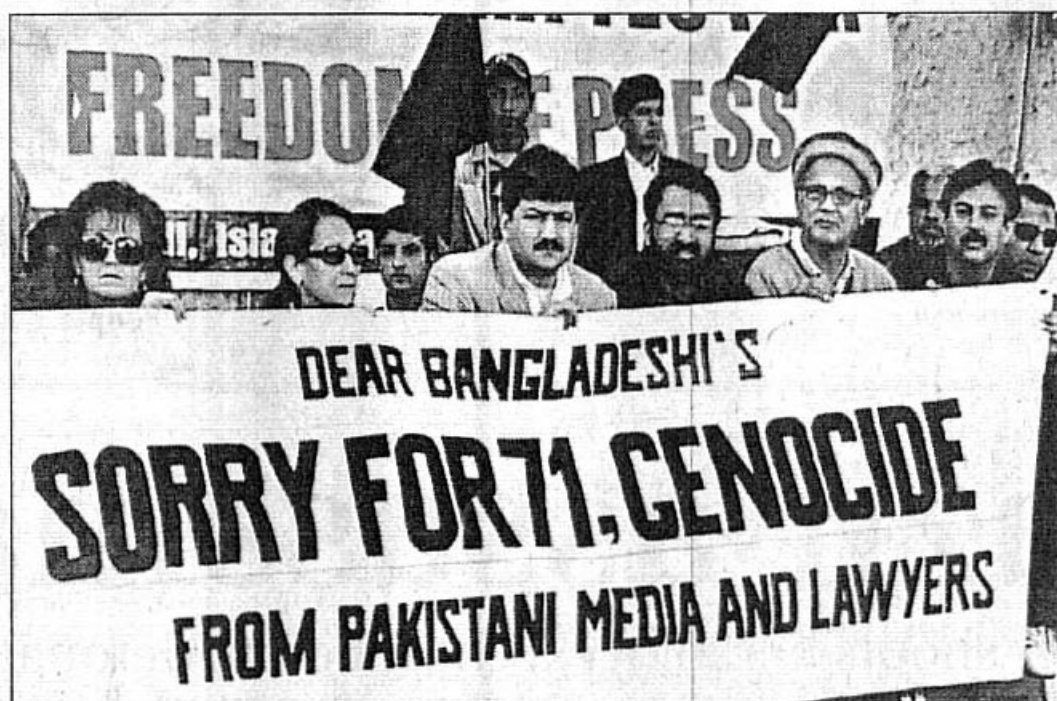
The signatories to the statement are Parishad leaders Moazzem Haque, Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul, Fazle Imam, Ruhul Amin Gazi, Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, Matiuur Rahman Talukder, Akraf Mahmud, Azizul Haque Banna, Omar Faruque, Sarder Farid, Abul Hashem and Khairul Islam.

475 bullets recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered 475 bullets and a pistol magazine from Ladies Park at Gulshan in the city on Wednesday night.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Detective Branch of Police raided the spot and found the bullets and the magazine searching an abandoned handbag.



Pakistani people representing various professional groups, including journalists, lawyers, students and members of the civil society, stage a rally in front of Islamabad Press Club in Pakistan on Tuesday expressing regret to the people of Bangladesh for the genocide perpetrated by the Pakistani army in 1971.

Improve quality of IT graduates to compete in global market

Speakers urge edn instts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a conference yesterday urged educational institutions to improve the quality of IT graduates in the country to compete in global market.

The 10th International Conference on Computer and Information Technology (ICCIIT) began on the United International University (UIU) campus in Dhanmondi in collaboration with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

"Applied research must be emphasised for the development of ICT sector in Bangladesh along with qualitative improvement of the curricula," said Prof AMM Saifullah, vice-chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), while addressing the inaugural session of the conference.

He expressed concern over the performance of country's ICT graduates in international arena.

"Our neighbouring countries like India have developed proper field for IT jobs and the outsourcing of the sector is quiet developed," he added.

Prof Saifullah said it is time to rethink about the output of the sector and draw the attention of the policy makers for the advancement of IT sector in Bangladesh.

He also called for reviewing the progress of ICT sector in the country

in last few years.

Speaking at the conference, Quazi Deen Mohammad Khosru, chairman of IEEE Bangladesh chapter, hoped that the conference would play a vital role in enhancing the state of science and technology education and research in the country.

"Such conference will encourage students about the discipline," he added.

Organising Secretary of the event and Director of Students Affairs Suman Ahmed also spoke.

Prof M Rezwana Khan delivered the welcome address while Chowdhury Mofizur Rahman, pro-vice-chancellor of UIU, presided over the session.

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Eminent Jurist Dr Kamal Hossain admires the photographs put on display at an exhibition by Obaidullah Mamun at Hotel Sheraton in the city yesterday. The exhibition was organised by scholarsbangladesh.com.

Another reshuffle in admin

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday transferred a number of additional and joint secretary-level officials and gave them new postings in the latest reshuffle in the administration.

Officer on Special Duty (additional secretary) of Establishment Ministry Ashish Kumar Pal was made director general (DG) of Bangladesh Industrial Technical Assistance Centre while OSD (joint secretary) M Nazrul Islam was appointed DG of Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB).

Besides, OSD (joint secretary) M Asadul Islam and Biman Kumar Saha were made director of Relief and Rehabilitation Department and Executive Director of National

Nutrition Programme respectively while OSD (joint secretary) Dr M Mostafa was made director of Bangladesh Film Development Corporation.

Joint Secretary to the President's office M Abdur Rashid was transferred to fisheries and livestock ministry, Director of Land Record and Survey Department M Firoz Miah to establishment ministry as its joint secretary and Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) Director KM Mozammel Haque to housing and public works ministry as its joint secretary while Rajuk member M Nasir Uddin was made director of National Science and Technology Museum.

Director of Compulsory Primary Education

Implementation Monitoring Unit M Abu Bakkar Siddique was made DG of Compulsory Primary Education Implementation Unit and Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation Director M Taherul Islam made member of Bangladesh Handloom Board while Relief and Rehabilitation Department Director Chandra Nath Basak made director of Land Record and Survey Department.

PIB director Syed M Haider Ali was transferred to BTMC as its director and Bangladesh Coast Guard official Commodore M Moksumul Quader made deputy DG while the service of Coast Guard DG M Abul Kalam Azad was placed with the Armed Forces Division for his posting to Bangladesh Navy.

Power Cell's handling

FROM PAGE 20

Energy Prima is a proprietorship company owned by an individual, Moazzem Hossain, who also owns the Hosaf Meter. This is the first time any tendering authority has considered the offer of a proprietary company in a power bid.

Neither Energy Prima nor Hosaf Meter has the experience of installing and operating any rental power schemes in the last three years, a primary requirement for a bidder to qualify in the rental power scheme. Both these companies identify themselves as 'local agents'. Therefore, the joint venture utilised the experience of Russian company Geo-Spectrum. Again, Geo-Spectrum lacks experience in rental power but the Power Cell overlooked it.

The joint venture formed by these three companies does not follow a legal structure, which the Power Cell admits. Energy Prima produced some electronically gathered documents and signatures of Geo-Spectrum to establish proof of their partnership.

As per the proposal sent to the cabinet purchase committee, the Power Cell's tender proposal evaluation committee (PEC) termed the offer of Geo-Spectrum "unaccept-

able". It contradictorily says, "The opinion of the Legal Consultant (for Power Cell) is that as per laws of Bangladesh, the scanned/electronic signature is not acceptable. Though the PEC did not find any other deviation in the proposal of Energy Prima, the PEC does not recommend the acceptance of its proposal due to the legal concerns."

The cell then tried to pass the onus of the legal issues on the cabinet committee saying, "However, if scanned/electronic signature is considered acceptable by the appropriate authority, the proposal of Energy Prima may be considered as responsive."

Sources said Geo-Spectrum's document submitted to the Power Cell shows that its Chairman Mikhail V Kouritsyn appeared before the notary public office at Mohakhali and signed the joint-venture agreement and an authorisation letter. Sources said the signatures of Mikhail in the documents are actually electronic while the notarised document claims that he appeared in person. This is why the cell's legal consultant did not approve the papers; as

a result, all other submissions of the consortium automatically become illegal.

The other bidders who were recommended by the Power Cell are: Kaltimex Energy and GBB Power for Bhola 35MW plant, and Alstom for Khulna 40MW, Ashuganj 50MW and Bheramara 20MW.

Sources said as per the instructions of the power ministry, the cell is now revising its recommendations and it is likely to place its recommendations within Monday.

Dialogue

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organises a dialogue on future of Doha Round. Venue: Brac Centre Inn Auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Conference

The 12th national conference of Youth Ending Hunger, Bangladesh will be held. Venue: Gono Swasthya Kendra, Savar. Time: 10:00am.

1700 fowls culled in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

About 1700 fowls were culled at Hakimpur Upazila on Wednesday midnight as the authorities found traces of bird flu at the upazila.

According to the district livestock official sources, traces of bird flu were found at Minnat's poultry farm five days ago.

Later, the authorities sent some samples to Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute in Savar, Dhaka, for testing.

Hakimpur UNO Md Farook Hossain, District Livestock official Md Moniruzzaman and OC of Hakimpur police station were present during the cull.

Statues stolen

FROM PAGE 1

cooperate with the investigators to find out the stolen statues.

The cultural affairs secretary said the statues were not stolen from the custody of the National Museum or the cultural affairs ministry. Those went missing after they were handed over to a homebound.

The 13 carvings were taken to Zia International Airport on December 21 for sending those to Paris for an exhibition at Guimet museum. But a carton containing two Vishnu statues went missing at the airport.

While commenting on bringing back the 42 artefacts from France, he said the foreign ministry has taken initiatives to bring those back. The French Embassy informed them that those would be sent back as early as possible, he said.

When asked whether the government is certain about bringing back the artefacts, he said they had been assured of it.

Replying to a query why the government struck a deal to send the precious artefacts to France despite opposition from different quarters, he said it was required to maintain a good relationship with France.

"The existing friendly relations with France might have strained unless Bangladesh signed such an agreement," the secretary said.

When asked about the fear of receiving replicas instead of the original artefacts he said they had asked the museum authorities to put marks on the statues so that those can be identified easily.

STATEMENT OF FRENCH GOVERNMENT
In a press release yesterday, the French government said it had taken note of the sovereign decision of Bangladesh to cancel the loan agreements between the Guimet museum in Paris and various cultural institutions in Bangladesh.

The French government fully respected the decision while regretting the cancellation of an event likely to enhance the cultural presence of Bangladesh throughout the world.

France reaffirmed its readiness to carry on its cooperation with Bangladesh in the friendly manner that has always prevailed.

The French Embassy in Dhaka said the Guimet museum had been informed of the decision of Bangladesh and the request to send back the 42 items. The artefacts are being carried.

It said the Guimet museum should be contacted directly if more information is sought.

They said considering the complex situation and the ongoing probes they would fully cooperate with the investigators and wait for the results of these investigations before holding any new press conference.

Meanwhile, Foreign Adviser Iftekar Ahmed Chowdhury hoped that the recent incident involving the theft of the two Paris-bound artefacts and the consequent request for calling off the art exhibition at Guimet museum would not have any adverse impact on the larger bilateral relations between Bangladesh and France.

"Despite the regrettable incident and its consequences, we believe that the ties between Bangladesh and France are too strong to be adversely affected, and these spread across a wide spectrum of bilateral and multilateral activities," the adviser said while speaking to the media.

Obituary

Habibur Rahman Khan, son of late Alhajj Ishak Ali Khan of Mathbaria upazila in Pirojpur, passed away due to a prolonged illness yesterday morning at the age of 48, says a press release.

He left behind his three sons, two daughters, two brothers, six sisters and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

Swechchasebok League President AFM Bahauddin Nasim expressed deep shock at his death.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Samina Afroz Orin, daughter of Mosharaf Hossain, Information and Research Secretary of Manikgonj District Awami League, will be held today, says a press release.

On the occasion, milad mahfil and special prayers will be held after Asr prayers and a daylong Quran Khwani at her South Manikpur residence.



Scholars who were honoured with 'University Grants Commission (UGC) Award 2002-2005' for their outstanding research works pose for photograph with the guests at the award giving ceremony at the UGC auditorium in the city yesterday.

10 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least 10 people were killed and two others injured in separate road accidents in Habiganj, Dhaka, Netrakona and Dinajpur yesterday.

UNB from Habiganj says: Six people were killed in a road accident in Habiganj yesterday.

The accident occurred when a speeding bus hit an overloaded tempo on Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Andium in Madhabpur upazila at 2:30pm.

The bus skidded off the road and fell into a ditch, leaving Rangbala, 60, of Mahmudpur village, Kamal Hossain, 30, of Dhankura village and a two-year-old boy dead on the spot. Phul Mia, 60, of Bulla village succumbed to his injuries at Madhabpur Health Complex while Rabeya, 30, wife of Kamal and Tutul, 40, died on the way to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital. The victims were travelling in the tempo.

Staff correspondent reports: A six-year-old boy was killed when a pick-up van hit him at Kagojola in the old part of the city yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Fahim.

Witnesses said Fahim suffered fatal injuries after the pick-up van rammed him at around 12:00 noon when he was playing on a road near

his house at Kagojola in Sutarpur. Relatives and locals rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Soon after doctors declared him dead, people, who brought Fahim to the hospital, got infuriated saying that he is not dead.

They also pounded on the police as the law enforcers tried to resist them while they were trying to take away the body without autopsy.

On repeated requests from the victim's family members, police allowed to take the body to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital under police guard where the doctors confirmed Fahim's death.

Our correspondent from Netrakona adds: Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Netrakona Sadar and Purbadhala upazila in the district yesterday.

One person was killed in a road accident on Netrakona-Mohanganj road at Thakorakona in Netrakona Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Sumita Rani Das, 14, daughter of Babul Chandra Das of village Chatta under Barhatta upazila.

Police said the accident occurred when a Mohanganj-bound truck from Netrakona hit

Sumita at Thakorakona when she was crossing the road, leaving her dead on the spot.

A case was filed with Netrakona Police Station in this connection. Police seized the truck but the driver managed to escape.

Another person was killed in a road accident on Netrakona-Purbadhala road at Purbadhala Chowrasta in Purbadhala upazila at about 10:00am.

The dead was identified as Dipak Chandra Bhadra, 35, of village Bodhi under Purbadhala upazila.

Police said the accident occurred when a Netrakona-bound passenger tempo from knocked down Dipak at Purbadhala Chowrasta, leaving him dead on the spot.

Police seized the tempo but driver managed to flee.

Our correspondent from Dinajpur adds: At least one person was killed and two others were injured critically in a road accident at Birampur upazila in Dinajpur yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Mahfuz Aktar, 15, daughter of Md Firoz Mohammad, village Natun Bazar at Birampur upazila.

Police sources said a Dinajpur-bound bus collided head-on with a truck at Birampur rail crossing, leaving Mafuza dead on the spot.

'Bring back artefacts from France'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Left Democratic Front yesterday condemned the steps to send valuable artefacts to France in an opaque way and offensive comment of the French envoy.

They also expressed concern over the uncertainty to bring those artefacts back from France.

At a meeting, the leaders also demanded immediate steps to

bring the artefacts back from France and punishment to the persons responsible for the theft of two Vishnu statues.

Presided over by CPB leader Shahidullah Chowdhury, the meeting was attended by CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, Ruhin Hossain Prince, politburo member of Workers Party Nurul Hasan and Harun Chowdhury of Bangladesh Samyabadi Dal.

No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere over the country during early morning. Met Office said, adding that night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 27.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 9.6 degrees Celsius at Rajshahi.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:20pm today and rises at 6:40am 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	24.8	14.5	83	61
Chittagong	25.0	15.3	77	80
Rajshahi	24.6	09.6	100	90
Khulna	25.6	14.0	100	79
Barisal	25.7	13.0	92	84
Sylhet	26.7	15.2	83	72
Cox's Bazar	27.8	16.2	75	72

Nora Ali donates \$1000 to Dhaka Community Hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nora Ali, the Bangladeshi origin America's Junior Miss-2007, handed over a cheque for \$1000 to Dhaka Community Hospital yesterday.

Nora and her elder sister raised the amount in America for the hospital. Her mother Dr Mahfuz Ali accompanied her during the visit to the hospital.

Nora came to know about the hospital activities from her elder sister Nicole Ali, who completed a course from the hospital in August 2007.

Dhaka Community Hospital authorities accorded a reception to Nora on the occasion.

In her speech Nora expressed her desire to participate in any project of the hospital.

Dr Mahfuz also spoke in the programme presided over by Prof Mahmudur Rahman.

Trial of war criminals demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Shammilita Nari Samaj yesterday demanded the trial of war criminals immediately in a special tribunal.

In a joint statement, Advocate Salma Ali, Parida Akhter, Hajera Sultana, Tahera Begum Jolly, Rokeya Rafique Baby, Sheema Das Shimu, Kohinur Begum, Sultana Akhter Ruby and Suraiya Banu said that the collaborators of Pakistani occupation force should be banned from politics in Bangladesh.