

50pc dropout at primary level in Bangladesh

Global Campaign for Education concerned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Global Campaign for Education (GCE) yesterday expressed its concern at the 50 percent dropout of students at the primary level in Bangladesh.

"The issue of dropout is a serious problem for Bangladesh. It is a great challenge for the new government to wipe out illiteracy from the society because around 50 percent students, admitted in class one, drop out before completing class five," said Kailash Satyarthi, president of GCE, at a press conference in a city hotel.

Kailash, also the founder of Global March Against Child Labour, expressed his concern over the quality of education, and said the government should

give more attention to quality education by providing modern trainings to teachers and education materials to students.

"Apart from recruiting meritorious persons for teaching profession by providing handsome salary, the government could arrange regular trainings for teachers, updated curriculum, textbooks and free distribution of education materials for the students, and special financial assistance for poor guardians to check the dropouts," he added.

The GCE president also suggested the government to stop child labour and trafficking which are other reasons for the children to leave the school.

Kailash said around 80 million children in the world are still out of school and almost a billion adults are

unable to read and write.

"Education is not a commodity which can be sold or bought. It is a birth right of all people. Personally, I think education is a goal, which can be achievable," he added.

GCE members Assibi Napoe, chief regional coordinator of Education International's Africa Regional Office, Camilla Croso Silva, coordinator of the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education, and Rasheda K Choudhury, former adviser to caretaker government and director of Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) also spoke on the occasion.

The GCE members also met with media men after holding their annual meeting.

Verdict in graft case against Saifur's son on Jan 25

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The verdict in a graft case against Shafur Rahman Babu, younger son of former finance minister M Saifur Rahman, will be delivered on January 25.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case against him for amassing wealth worth Tk 13.85 crore through illegal means and concealing information in the wealth statement.

After completion of arguments by the prosecution, Judge Jesmin Anwar of the Special Judge's Court-4 yesterday set the date for delivery of the verdict in the case.

The court earlier recorded statements of 21 prosecution witnesses, including complainant of the case.

Earlier, the court had also issued an arrest warrant against Shafur and an order to attach his properties, as he has been absconding since the case was filed.

On November 2 last year, ACC Assistant Director Farid Ahmed Pathway, also the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court in Dhaka.

In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that Shafur had amassed wealth worth Tk 13.85 crore through illegal means and concealed information of wealth worth Tk 1.2 crore in the wealth statement submitted to ACC.

ACC Deputy Director Sharmin Ferdousy filed the case against Shafur with Ramna police station on April 29 last year.

Pollution exceeds WHO standards in city

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday said the level of pollution in the city is more than double than that of the acceptance level of World Health Organisation (WHO).

Pollution is on the increase in the city and on its outskirts day by day due to the black smoke of the vehicles, especially the old ones, brick kilns and unplanned factories. The problem needs to be addressed soon, they added.

The speakers said this at the communication strategy and message development workshop on 'Clean air and sustainable environment' project jointly organised by the Department of Environment and Asiatic Marketing Communications Ltd at Bengal Gallery.

Talking about the city's environment and the importance of the five-year project, Mohammed Nasrudin, project director, said it needs to strengthen the department of environment for the development of air quality.

"Clean Air Act exists in many countries, but still we don't have such a law to protect our environment as well as the people," he said, adding, "We should try to reduce or control emissions from the sources and adopt a sustainable urban transport system."

The speakers said the project, which will run up to 2014, aims at strengthening the ability of the department of environment for continuous monitoring, activating the regulatory mechanisms, taking steps to reduce emission from the sources and adopting a sustainable urban transport system.

A pre-feasibility study has also been started under the project, they added.

Speaking as the chief guest, Director General of the Department of Environment Dr Khandekar Rashedul Haque

stressed the need to increase awareness in the society which would contribute to reduce air and environment pollution.

Chief Executive Officer of Asiatic Marketing Communications Aly Zaker said such dialogues should be organised frequently at every level to make people aware as well as to be committed in this regard.

Executive Director Sara Zaker, environmentalist MA Wahab and representatives from different organisations working on environment also spoke.

3rd Edn Worldwide Expo begins in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 3rd Education Worldwide 2009 Expo began in the city yesterday.

The four-day-long exhibition was inaugurated by Vice-chancellor of Brac University Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury at Level 7 of Bashundhara Expo Centre.

Over 50 universities, educational institutions and related service providers are taking part in the expo with 80 booths.

Cems Bangladesh has organised the event, the 2nd

biggest education and career event in the country after the EDMEXPO 2008. Asia's largest education and career expo, Cems is providing special space to the exhibitors for their presentations to prospective students every day.

The fair will remain open from 10:00am to 8:00pm daily. The expo has been designed to provide up-to-date and comprehensive education and career guidance.

"This is a perfect platform and unique opportunity for the participants to promote themselves and use it as a medium for direct interaction and counselling with prospective and potential students for spot admissions or interview at the expo premises," said Meherun N Islam, president and group managing director of Cems-Globat.

Inaugurating the expo, Prof Jamilur said the government is now giving more attention to higher education which is a positive sign.

He said 20 to 25 percent students between the ages 17 and 23 can avail higher education in the middle-income group countries, but this percentage in Bangladesh is only four to five. ATN Bangla, the Shamokal and Radio Today are the media partner of the event while its web partner is Prothom-Alo Jobs and technology partner is Acer.

Ban on rallies around JS

UNB, Dhaka

Government authorities imposed ban on carrying harmful and objectionable materials and holding rallies in areas around Sangsad Bhaban from tomorrow midnight as the newly elected 9th parliament convenes in the inaugural session Sunday (January 25).

Carrying arms, explosives and other harmful and objectionable materials and holding rally, procession, and agitation will come under the prohibition ordered by Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), an official announcement said yesterday.

"The order remains in force until prorogation of the first session of the 9th Parliament," it said.

The areas are Mohakhali crossing to Bangla Motor crossing via old airport, west side of link road to SAARC fountain, east side of Panthapath to Farmgate via Green Road intersection, Shyamoli Shibu Mela crossing to west end of Panthapath, Agargaon road to Parjatan crossing, east side of Indira Road to west side of Manik Miah Avenue, and restricted area of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.



PHOTO: STAR

Security was beefed up following a clash between the students of American International University of Bangladesh (AIUB) and Southeast University in the city's Banani area yesterday.

Dipu greets Hillary

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni congratulated Hillary Rodham Clinton on her assumption of office as the Secretary of State of the United States of America.

"I am sure under your dynamic leadership the United States will be able to play its due role in the international community in forging more inclusive and cooperative global interactions. I assure you of our full cooperation in this creative journey," she said in a message of felicitation yesterday.

Dipu Moni said Bangladesh and USA share enduring faith in the value of democracy, rule of law, human dignity, individual entrepreneurship and empowerment of people.

We have also shared interest in consolidating our cooperation in political, economy and other fields for our bilateral interests, and for advancing our common goals of peace and prosperity, said Bangladesh Foreign Minister. "We intend to work closely with you in further cementing our cooperation in all these areas in the days to come, she said."

The minister also invited Hillary to visit Bangladesh at her convenience.

Cooperation in agricultural research to be strengthened Says Pak envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Cooperation in agricultural research between Bangladesh and Pakistan would further be strengthened for mutual benefits of two countries.

This was disclosed during a meeting between Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Alamgir Bashir Khan Babar and Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury at the latter's secretariat office yesterday.

Agricultural Research activities of two countries would be expedited through Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) and Pakistan Agricultural Research Council on the basis of memorandum of understanding signed in 2006.

The minister recalled her visit to Pakistan in her previous tenure in 1996. She said that Pakistan had provided a high yielding variety of wheat after the devastating flood in 1998.

The envoy informed the minister about some of his country-assisted programmes here which include computer training in some districts, providing eight ambulances in different hospitals and renovation of Dhaka Islamia Eye Hospital.

20 injured as students of 2 universities clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Clashes between the students of two neighbouring private universities yesterday injured at least 20 people, turning the Kemal Ataturk Avenue area into a battlefield that halted smooth vehicular movement for around two hours.

During the violence, the agitating students ransacked over 12 vehicles and vandalised several classrooms of a university.

However, both the university authorities brought allegations against each other of attacking their students.

Police said the clashes took place following an earlier feud among the students of American International University of Bangladesh (AIUB) and Southeast University (SU).

Witnesses said during the clashes, both the groups equipped with sticks made attacks and counter attacks and pelted stones and bricks to each other forcing all the vehicles in the area got stranded.

The clashing also went on the rampage and vandalised the vehicles creating a severe panic. The clashes started at around 12:30pm.

Ataul Kibria, deputy commissioner of Gulshan zone, told The Daily Star, "The skirmishes on yesterday were followed by a clash that took place on Wednesday between two groups of students of the universities."

Sources said the clashes occurred when the SU security guards barred a female student of AIUB, who went to Southern University with her boyfriend, from entering the university campus on Wednesday.

Mid Lutfar Rahman, public relations department director of AIUB, alleged that SU students, led by some Shibir cadres, swooped on the AIUB students all of a sudden, leaving their several students and security guards injured.

He denied the allegations of AIUB students' involvement in the violence.

On the other hand, SU Vice Chancellor Dr Shamser Ali alleged that the AIUB students ransacked many classrooms of this university.



PHOTO: STAR

Mothers of Labib and Azman, who remained stuck for over one and a half hours in a Ferris wheel at Wonder Land in the city yesterday, break down after the children were rescued by firefighters.

Schoolgirl found dead, guard slaughtered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An eight-year-old schoolgirl was found dead at her home at Mirpur in the city while a security guard was slaughtered in his room at a house in Pallabi yesterday.

The body of Fatema Akter Moina, a student of class two, was found hanging from the ceiling fan with a rope at her home at Barobagh.

On receiving information from the local people, Mirpur police recovered the body at about 10:30am.

Both her father Delwar Hossain, a hawker, and mother Gulbanu, a medical attendant, were out of their home as they went to their workplaces at about 7:00am.

Police suspect the girl might have been violated and killed.

Delwar said four boys in the

area often teased the girl.

In the other incident, security guard Mohammad Liton, 45, of the house of businessman Selim Ahmed was killed in the early hours of yesterday.

Pallabi police arrested two persons on charges of killing Liton after seven hours of the killing. The arrestees -- Abul Kalam and Billal Hossain -- are former drivers of Selim.

They told the police that they along with two others entered the house at about 2:30am to steal a private car. But as the security guard recognised them, they killed him.

However, they immediately escaped as the residents of the house became aware of their presence.

Pallabi police said they arrested the two after receiving information from the family members of Selim.

Joy ride sours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An afternoon day-out turned into a fright for two children who were riding a Ferris wheel at Wonder Land at Gulshan in the city yesterday.

Iftakhar Alam Labib, 5, and his cousin Azman Alam, 7, started screaming in panic after the 60-foot rotating wheel came to a sudden halt due to a glitch in its engine.

The glitch left the two stuck in their seats at the top of the wheel for about one and a half hours before the firefighters came to their rescue.

Neither of them was injured. The authorities called in firefighters after failing to restart the engine. The rescuers took about 30 minutes to bring them down.

The children came to the theme park with their families from Manikdi in the cantonment area at about 4:30pm.

Few other children were also on the ride, but most came down on their own, as their seats were close to the ground.



PHOTO: PJO

Saudi Ambassador Abdullah Nasir-Al Bossairi calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

Project real history of War of Liberation

Speakers tell publication ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a publication ceremony yesterday underscored the need to project the accurate history of the liberation war to the next generation as they would lead the country in future.

They said this at the launching programme of a book titled 'Kishore Muktijuddho Kosh' edited by Muntazir Mamun and published by Shomoy Prakashan at the Liberation War Museum in the city.

Speaking at the function, publisher Farid Ahmed drew attention of the guardians to the book as it bears the history of the liberation war along with sufficient pictures, illustrations and information which will help children to be infused with patriotism and make them responsible to the country.

Deputy Editor of Prothom Alo Anisul Huq said it is a good initiative to take the history of liberation war to today's children.

Poet Abu Zafar made BTV DG

BSS, Dhaka

The government yesterday appointed poet Kazi Abu Zafar Siddiqi and Kha Ma Harun as director general and deputy director general respectively of Bangladesh Television (BTV).

The newly appointed top executives have already submitted joining letters to the information ministry.

dren through books, adding that the necessity of knowing the sacrifices of freedom fighters and their mothers for the cause of the country's independence.

"This is also a war, a war of memories against the ignorance of our history and we should commemorate our history through the words printed in books" said the popular author of so many books.

Rhymester Lutfar Rahman Riton said the contributions of the freedom fighters should not only be spoken, rather the misdeeds of the anti-liberation force should be unmasked, especially before the next generation, to eliminate the distortion of the real history by evil quarters.

Noted writer Nasreen Jahan, artist Hashem Khan and litterateur Shahriar Khan also spoke.

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