

TEXTBOOK CRISIS

# Free book at higher secondary level can be a solution

Say media persons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Providing free textbooks at the higher secondary level by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) can resolve the crisis, media persons proposed this to the expert committee yesterday to ensure textbooks in time.

They also suggested ensuring transparency of the NCTB by giving information about the activities of it to the media to resolve all textbook problems.

The expert committee formed on March 9 to ensure textbooks in time at the lower secondary and secondary level yesterday sat with the reporters from different media houses at a view

exchange meeting.

Convener of the committee Prof Akhtaruzzaman said, "The problem has been prevailing in the country for years and we want a permanent solution of it."

"We are taking suggestions from different sections of the people who have stakes in it and as part of that, we held the meeting with reporters." He said, adding that the committee will take all the suggestions into consideration and will give a recommendation to the government in this regard.

Speakers at the meeting said the NCTB act should be reviewed and few corrections should be made to make it a more effective organisation.

The suggestions that came from the meeting include taking actions against those who were involved in creating acute textbook shortage, making NCTB an autonomous body, changing its tender system for giving work orders and marketing textbooks by NCTB's own management.

The meeting was also attended by members of the committee Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam, NCTB Chairman Khan Habibur Rahman and Joint Secretary to the education ministry Md Moyuddin Ahmed.

Earlier on March 31, the committee held a meeting with senior academicians of the country at the senate building of Dhaka University.



Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury hands over a crest to writer and journalist Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury at a reception in his honour at Laldighi Maidan in Chittagong yesterday.

## Country passing thru' a crucial moment

Says Gaffar Chy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Noted journalist and political analyst Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury yesterday said Bangladesh is now passing through a crucial moment.

Though the anti-liberation forces were defeated in the recent election, they are still plotting against the democratic progress of the country, he observed.

The enemies of the nation tried to create anarchy through BDR mutiny on February 25, he added.

He was speaking at a reception accorded to him at Laldighi Maidan in Chittagong yesterday afternoon. Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) accorded him the reception.

CCC Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury presided over the ceremony while Chittagong University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Abu Yusuf, poet Asad Chowdhury, Prof Dr Gazi Salehuddin, Dr Shah Alam, Engineer Dewan Majumdar and CEO acting Chief Executive Officer Md Shamsuddoha were guests at the ceremony.

Gaffar Chowdhury urged the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to identify the real friends and enemies of her party and the government immediately to overcome the present crisis.

Earlier in the morning, a local weekly 'Sahoshi Thikana' gave a reception to the journalist at a ceremony at Theatre Institute Chittagong (TIC).

## Tehran's mayor not mulling presidential bid

AFP, Tehran

Conservative Mayor of Tehran Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said he has no plan "for the time being" to run in the country's June 12 presidential election, Mehr news agency reported yesterday.

"Given the existing circumstances, for the time being I am not a nominee in the tenth (2009) presidential elections," Qalibaf said in an exclusive interview with Mehr conducted three days ago.

Qalibaf, who lost to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the 2005 presidential race, has been considered as a leading conservative prospect in the upcoming elections.

"When I ran in the ninth presidential elections, it was based on an analysis and to fulfil a duty that does not exist now," he said.



A boy carries jerry cans filled with water to his home at Kadamtala in Basabo after collecting water from the tap at Kamalapur Buddhist Monastery in the city yesterday as acute water crisis persists in the area for long.

# Padma Bridge construction to begin next year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain yesterday said construction work of the Padma Bridge would begin next year to establish a direct road link between the south-western region and other parts of the country.

The design and other works of the bridge would be completed this year, he said, adding that the construction would be completed by 2013.

The four-lane bridge will have rail link and gas pipelines.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at the inauguration of zonal office of Gopalganj Road Division.

He directed the newly formed office of the road division to prepare Tk 1,000 to Tk 2,000 crore projects for the development of the region by June.

## ICT carnival at Sust on April 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A three-day ICT carnival styled 'Teletalk CSE Carnival-09' will begin on Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) campus on April 10.

University Grants Commission Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam will inaugurate the event.

The events of the programme include inter varsity programming contest, software exhibition, job fair, seminar on ICT and gaming contest.

The minister said the government aims at restoring the process of economic development in the region by implementing different stalled projects, including Patgati Bridge and Poisar Hat Road.

He said for the development of tourism industry, four-lane Faridpur-Kuakata Road and four big bridges would be constructed, adding that the government has a plan to link Bogra to Bhatiapara-Benapole-Khulna-Mongla with Asian Highway.

Abul Hossain said a balanced development in the communications sector throughout the country would be ensured.

# Parties use students to establish supremacy

Prof Shahidul tells JNU Chhatra Union reception

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jagannath University (JNU) unit of Bangladesh Chhatra Union organised its 22nd convention and a reception for the freshmen amidst fighting between two factions of Chhatra League on the campus yesterday.

Prof Shahidul Islam, a former teacher of Rajshahi University, inaugurated the convention held at Shaheed Minar premises on the campus.

Prof Shahidul said at programme that political parties are now using student politics to establish supremacy in political field. In the

name of student politics some student wings are damaging the good name of general students, he said.

Students, teachers and parents have to come forward to restore congenial atmosphere in educational institutions, he added.

Jubo Union General Secretary Hasan Hafizur Rahman, former president of Chhatra Union Samsul Alam Sazzan, president of the central committee Khan Asaduzzaman Masum and General Secretary Manabendra Dev, and president of the Jagannath University unit of the body also spoke on the occasion.

# Online version of Prothom Alo launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a view to reaching more readers immediately, the electronic version of the print edition of the Prothom Alo was launched at its office in the city yesterday with the web address: 'www.eprothom-alo.com'.

The digital edition of the newspaper provides real-time news update, archive of previous editions, printing facility of specific news items or advertisements and scope to share the news with friends and families.

Though the online edition alike the print edition was aired informally from November 4 last year, Brac University Vice Chancellor Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury formally launched the web edition at the conference room of the daily.

Hailing the daily for launching the e-version, Prof Jamilur Reza said with the expansion of modern technology, the print version of newspapers worldwide is threatened somehow, while the online version has gained much popularity.

"With the changes of tastes and demands of the readers, mass media has also been evolving and the e-version of the Prothom Alo will be able to attract young generations more," he added.

The advertisers will have the option to publish their adverts in the electronic edition for an additional, yet optional five percent fee of the printed ad costs.

The advertisements to be published in 'eprothom-alo' will be managed by MNH's Online Ad Management System.

Managing Director of MNH Mashrur Hannan said the online readers will be benefited most from this user-friendly platform and the eprothom-alo could be extended to 32 districts of the country by mid-2009.

Editor Matur Rahman and Joint Editor Abdul Quayum of the daily and representatives from different advertisement farms were also present at the programme.

# OMS gets lukewarm response in Khulna city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The open market sale (OMS) of rice in Khulna Metropolitan City has failed to get momentum this time as dealers are not getting response from low-income people as expected.

The programme started from April 1 in the metropolitan area through 112 dealers at the rate of Tk 18 per kilogram.

People are not buying OMS rice as price of coarse rice in local markets has come down to Tk 17 per kg.

According to the District Controller of Food, each of the dealers is lifting 1000 kgs of rice everyday from Central Storage Depot (CSD) at the rate of Tk 16.50 per kg on condition of selling it among low-income people.

The dealers said they could not sell rice to more than 20 to 25 persons on average a day.

# ACC chief's resignation won't affect anti-graft drives

Says Matia

UNB, Sherpur

To dispel skepticism stemming from the resignation of the ACC chief, Agriculture Minister and the ruling Awami League presidium member Matia Chowdhury said the anti-corruption activities would go on in its natural course.

"Anyone's resignation will not leave any impact on its activities," she said while talking to newsmen at Noyabil UP office in Nalitabari upazila yesterday.

"Anti-Corruption

Commission (ACC) is independent. There is no government interference in the activities of the ACC."

She reassured that the government has its electoral pledge to check corruption. "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina talked about anti-corruption movement in parliament," she said.

Replying to a question from the local newsmen, Matia said ACC Chairman Hasan Mashud Chowdhury resigned neither due to any pressure nor for forcing him to step down.

"He himself explained the reason for his resignation. He said there was no dynamism in the activities of the ACC," the agricultural minister said.

She was distributing VGF rice among the poor people at the UP office where she asked the farmers not to worry about rice prices, which now took a downturn amid government measures for dousing the overheated market.

She assured them that the government would fix Boro price so that farmers could earn profit by selling their produce.

# 2 held with fake currencies

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Two people were arrested with 98 pieces of fake notes of Tk 500 in Jessore yesterday.

The arrestees were identified as Alamgir Hossain, 35, and Akhter Hossain, 33.

# US sees no Taliban link to NY shooting

AFP, Strasbourg

US authorities said yesterday they had found no link between the Pakistan Taliban and a shooting in New York state which left 14 dead.

A US official said on condition of anonymity that the FBI has uncovered no evidence linking the gunman in the New York attack to terrorists.

President Barack Obama told a press conference here that police and authorities were still investigating the shootings in Binghamton, New York state.

"I am heartbroken for the families who survived this tragedy," Obama said. "It just underscores the degree to which in each of our countries, we have to guard against the kind of senseless violence that tragedy represents."

A man claiming to be Pakistan's most-wanted militant on Saturday claimed responsibility for Friday's massacre in Binghamton, but Pakistani officials dismissed the claim as rubbish.

"Whatever happened in America yesterday, was done by our men," Baitullah Mehsud told local journalists in a telephone call from an undisclosed location heard by an AFP reporter.

# KHALEDA'S RESIDENCE

## Hasina's remark protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different front organisations of BNP yesterday protested Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's statement about the Cantonment residence of Leader of the opposition in parliament Khaleda Zia, saying that this is a conspiracy against the house, which reflects narrow-mindedness.

The government is conspiring against the house of Khaleda out of political vengeance and to mislead the people, Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal president Azizul Bari Helal and general secretary Shafiqul Bari Babu said in a joint statement.

It is a conspiracy to remove Khaleda from the house that holds strong memories of late president Ziaur Rahman, they said.

"We also want rehabilitation of the families of army officers killed during the BDR mutiny. But Hasina's call for Khaleda to hand over the house for the purpose of their rehabilitation is humiliating for the families," they said.

Besides, the family of late president Ziaur Rahman, who was also a sector commander, deserves to receive such a house, the statement added.

In another statement, Jatiyabadi Muktijoddha Dal also protested Hasina's statement, saying that it is politically motivated.

Our RU Correspondent adds: Rajshahi district and city units of BNP jointly staged a demonstration at Shaheb Bazer zero point yesterday evening protesting Hasina's remark on Khaleda's Cantonment residence.

Several hundred BNP activists took out a protest process-

sion and paraded through different streets. Later, they also held a rally at zero point.

They called on the ruling party to refrain from making such remarks and to respect the opposition in parliament.

Former Rajshahi mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, BNP leaders Rafiqul Islam Dulal, advocate Kamrul Munir, Elahi Baksh Mondal, Shafiqul Haque Milan, city unit Juba Dal president Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul, city unit Chhatra Dal president Abul Kalam Adal Sweet and general secretary Mahfuzur Rahman Riton addressed the rally.



Touhid Ibne Farid presents the keynote paper at a discussion on 'Water crisis in Dhaka city' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Dr Atiqur Rahman, Advocate Rahmat Ali, Sahida Tareque and Golam Martuza. Nagorik Sanghahti organised the event. (Story on Page 16)

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