

Acquire science & IT skills to face globalisation challenges

President tells students at UODA convocation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Zillur Rahman yesterday said a meritorious generation enriched with the knowledge of information technology (IT) and modern science need to be created to face the challenges and competitions of the globalisation.

"In the era of globalisation, the degree of competition is intensifying every day and we have to prepare ourselves to face the challenges," he said.

He also called on all to work together to uphold the stature of the universities, which rank high, to materialise the aspirations of the nation.

The president made the

call while addressing the 2nd convocation of the University of Development Alternative (UODA) at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

He said Bangladesh is a country of immense potentiality and so the aim of education should be building a knowledge-based society apart from turning the huge population into human resources.

"The universities are not only the centres of practising text-based lessons, but also the centre-points of creating human values among the students, practising freethinking and building a decent

society," he said.

The present government has taken a programme to create a generation enriched with the knowledge of IT and modern science, he added.

"I believe that with the cooperation of all concerned, the programme would be implemented and Bangladesh would strengthen its position in the field of information technology."

Congratulating the new graduates, Zillur Rahman called on them to give utmost priority to the development of the country.

"Wherever you will be in your professional life, always remember the country and

countrymen. Never bow down to injustice and untruth," he said.

In his convocation speech, Dr Mashiur Rahman, adviser to the prime minister on economic affairs, said the current educational system slipped away from the policy of the constitution and the spirit of right.

Farhana Helal Mehtab, coordinator of department of law and human rights of UODA, read out the written speech of Dr Mashiur.

There is a huge difference between Bangla and English medium schools in primary level and this difference becomes wider in the facilities in professional life, said Dr Mashiur, adding that this difference is also visible in the private universities.

Reforms in the education system are needed to ensure the country's progress and peace and to survive in the competitive world with dignified position, he said.

University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam said the quality of education depend on the university's infrastructure and number of teachers, library, laboratory and educational method.

A new amended version of Private University Act 1992 will be formulated soon, he said.

UODA Founder and President Mujib Khan and Vice-Chancellor Emajuddin Ahmed also spoke.

A total of 883 students were conferred undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in the convocation. Of them, 15 students were awarded gold medals for their outstanding academic achievement.



President Zillur Rahman distributes gold medals to successful graduates at the 2nd convocation of the University of Development Alternative (UODA) at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

Set up more labour courts to ensure rights of workers: Justice Rashid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Commission Chairman Justice M Abdur Rashid yesterday said the application of the existing laws is most important to ensure justice in the society.

"Forming or reviewing of laws is not enough, implementation of that laws is also important to ensure justice," he added.

The law commissioner was speaking as chief guest at a report launching ceremony at the National Press Club in the city.

Justice Rashid said since the overall prosecution system of the country is weak people especially the poor are deprived of justice.

Pointing to shortage of judges in the Appellate Division the law commission chairman said around 36 courts are carrying out their duties with only seven to eight judges.

He stressed the need for increasing the number of judges and developing expertise by the lawyers in the relevant field for a better judiciary.

On labour compensation he

said as the issue of compensation is written down in the existing labour law so the worker must get compensations for deaths while working.

The report on 'Investigation of workplace deaths: Compensation, accountability and legal reforms' was organised by BRAC Human Rights and Legal Services, and the Centre for Corporate Accountability.

It was revealed in the report that police and the factory inspectorate are failing to investigate whether workplace

deaths are the result of criminal offences due to shortage of factory inspectors as their total number is only 18 across the country.

The report said half of all workplace deaths are the result of the violation of the existing health and safety laws.

It was also revealed that in 40 percent cases health and safety law failed to protect workers and 80 percent of dependent families are failing to receive the adequate amount of compensation stipulated by law.

Termining the existing seven labour courts in four places is not enough to deal with the labour issues the experts at the programme stressed the need for setting up more labour courts as a matter of priority to ensure legal rights of labourers.

The government should appoint more inspectors dealing with workers health and safety issues, they suggested.

The other recommendations include raising awareness about existing laws amongst workers and employers, providing training to the police and the inspectors of factories and establishments on the investigation of workplace deaths.

Dr Faustina Periera, director of BRAC's Human Rights and Legal Services, moderated the programme which was also addressed by Mohosin Ali Khan, executive director of BLAST, and rights activist Dr Hameeda Hossain.



Justice M Abdur Rashid speaks as chief guest at a report launching ceremony at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is Dr Faustina Periera and on his right is Dr Hameeda Hossain.

SDC DG meets UCEP students at Rajshahi

METRO DESK

Martin W Dahinden, director general (DG) of SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), Swiss Ambassador Dr Dora Rapold and SDC Programme Manager Jaquiline Schmid visited UCEP-Rajshahi Technical School on April 27, says a press release.

The SDC DG said UCEP's nationwide initiatives at different levels of technical training which would largely contribute to the growth of professional skills development and create employment opportunities for the underprivileged children.

Dahinden praised the UCEP programme for its effectiveness in providing education, skill development and employment support for the children in the country.

Earlier, UCEP Executive Director Brig Gen Aftab Uddin Ahmad (ret) presented a short briefing on UCEP to the guests. High officials of UCEP were also present.

KHALEDA'S HOUSE Govt ready to face any legal challenge

Says attorney general

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is ready to face any legal challenge from BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia over the government notice asking her to leave her Cantonment house, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam said yesterday.

He also said his office has been examining and reviewing relevant papers and documents on the allotment of the house to Khaleda and other legal points over the issue.

Recently, BNP leader Moudud Ahmed told reporters that Khaleda might file a writ petition with the High Court challenging the government notice.

"If Khaleda files any writ petition with the High Court against the government notice,

we will legally turn down her (Khaleda) points supporting the petition in the court," the attorney general told reporters after a closed-door meeting with Law Minister Shaifque Ahmed at his secretariat office.

Three additional attorneys General - M Enayetur Rahim, MK Rahman and Murad Reza - and two Deputy Attorneys General - Naïma Haider and Motabar Hossain Sazu - were present at the meeting.

In reply to a question, the attorney general said the government is trying to bring back the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from different countries where they fled to.

Extradition treaties will have to be signed with those countries to bring them back for their

trial and that the law, home and foreign ministries will take necessary steps to this end, he said.

"The government will do everything to try and punish the killers of Bangabandhu," Mahbubey Alam added.

Replying to another question, the attorney general said his office is consulting with some US legal experts to find out the way to bring back laundered money from foreign countries.

Earlier, Renata Lok Dessalieu, resident representative of UNDP, met the law minister at his office.

But neither the law minister nor UNDP representative made any comments to the newsmen on the issues discussed in the meeting.



Karmojibi Nari, a rights organisation, holds a rally at Muktangan in the city yesterday marking the May Day and its 18th founding anniversary.

Call for consensus to resolve trans-boundary water crises

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said the country's water security should be ensured and trans-boundary water problems be resolved in cooperation with the neighbouring countries.

A national unity should be built regarding water security.

Dhaka Wasa to purchase lands to set up water pumps

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To ease water crisis in the capital, Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) has decided to purchase lands to set up water pumps.

Managing Director of Dhaka Wasa Md Shahjahan Ali Molla said this at a review meeting of Direction and Maintenance wing of Wasa yesterday, says a press release.

Any future project proposals for the installation of tubewell must earmark budget allocation for the procurement of land for the project, he said, adding that the land owners will benefit from such decision and Wasa would have its own land for installation of tubewells.

The meeting was also told that five new water lorries have been procured for Dhaka Wasa and the process is underway to procure 200 more generators for water pumps for the upcoming dry season.

The managing director asked the officials concerned to intensify efforts to improve the water supply situation and drainage system.

Deputy Managing Director Dr Liakat Ali, Chief Engineer Md Nurul Haque and superintending and executive engineers were present at the meeting held at the WASA Bhaban.

SCBA appeals for withdrawal of sedition cases against noted lawyers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday submitted applications urging the government to withdraw two sedition cases against some lawyers, including Dr Kamal Hossain, Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam and Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud.

The cases were filed against them on charges of vandalism on the Supreme Court (SC) premises on November 30, 2006.

SCBA secretary SM Rezaul Karim, on behalf of the organisation, submitted two separate applications to the law minister with an appeal to take steps to withdraw the cases.

Supreme Court lawyer Barrister Omar Sadat and court-keeper of Supreme Court Rafiqul Islam filed the cases with Shahbagh Police Station on December 4 and 5 in 2006.

The police have submitted charge sheets to the court in the cases.

The accused are now on bail.



Nagorik Sanghati forms a human chain in front of the Supreme Court in the city yesterday demanding steps to protect the rights of migrant workers.

Swiss assistance sought to fight climate change

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Swiss State Minister for Development Cooperation Martin Dahinden met State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hasan Mahmud at state guest-house Padma in the city yesterday.

Talking to journalists after the meeting, Mahmud said, "Switzerland is an important development partner of Bangladesh. I have requested the Swiss minister to increase

their development assistance to Bangladesh."

"Bangladesh has already formed a 45-million-dollar fund to save environment.

Denmark has pledged to donate 10 lakh kroner to our environment fund. I have requested Dahinden so that Switzerland gives us assistance to combat climate change," he added.

Mahmud said the government is putting emphasis on renewable energy to face

power crisis. Solar panel is very suitable in rural areas and islands of Bangladesh. It is environment-friendly as well.

He further said, "We have also sought Switzerland's assistance for supplying solar panels."

The Swiss minister described the idea as excellent, saying that his country may help Bangladesh in this regard. He also assured of Swiss assistance in fighting climate change.