

Ensure standard of education

President asks universities

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday asked the authorities concerned to ensure the standard of education so that students could prove their worth in international competitions.

"I urge all concerned to be careful while formulating curricula so that those are not confined only to textbooks," he said.

The president was addressing the first convocation of Stamford University at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre (BCFCC).

Professor Emeritus of Dhaka University Dr Serajul Islam Chowdhury delivered the convocation speech at the function.

Education Adviser to the Prime Minister Prof Dr Alauddin Ahmed, chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Prof Nazrul Islam, president of Board of Trustee of the Stamford University Prof Dr MA Hannan Firoz and Vice Chancellor of the university Prof Dr Majibur Rahman also addressed the programme.

The president, also the chancellor of the university, said universities are the highest seats of learning where practice of free thinking and various aspects of development are discussed alongside education and research. "So,



PHOTO PID

President Zillur Rahman gives away gold medal to a successful graduate at the first convocation of Stamford University at Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

the role of universities is of paramount importance in this regard."

Zillur emphasised the importance of having a science-oriented generation at the present era of information technology.

Referring to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's declared 'charter of change', he said it

would be implemented with sincere efforts of all. "Inshallah, we'll see a prosperous Bangladesh by 2021," he said.

Zillur congratulated the new graduates and advised them not to forget the country and its people during their professional life, no matter where they will be.

"Always strict to truth and justice, give priority to the interest of the country and the nation," he exhorted the new graduates.

Some 1190 students were conferred degrees at the convocation and of them six students awarded Chancellor's Award for their outstanding performance.

ACID VIOLENCE CASES

Govt to take steps to bring back fugitives

Says home minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will take steps to bring back fugitives of acid violence cases hiding abroad, said Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday.

If the ministry receives information, the perpetrators will be detained at the immigration, added the minister while addressing newsmen during a visit to the Acid Survivors Foundation Hospital at Banani.

The minister, who is also the head of National Acid Control Council (NACC), said to speed up acid violence cases the government on Sunday formed a monitoring cell under the NACC headed by Joint Secretary Iqbal Khan Chowdhury.

The monitoring cell comprising ministry officials and representatives from organisations working on acid violence will act as a watchdog regarding the pending cases.

Only valid licence holders will be allowed to sell and purchase acid, she said.

The minister later handed over a cheque for Tk 5 lakh to ASF on behalf of NACC.

Munira Rahman, executive director of the ASF, said acid violence has decreased of late and since 2002 the ratio has decreased by almost 75 percent.

However, the legal procedures of acid violence cases usually take too long to resolve. Thousands of incidents that occurred during the last few years are still awaiting verdict, she said.

The lengthy legal process gives the assailants opportunity to escape sentence. Many acid throwers are hiding abroad while many remain at large even inside the country for lack of cooperation from the law enforcers, she added.

According to a survey of ASF, the number of acid violence in 2002 was 490, the highest in the last ten years, which is coming down gradually.

In 2008 the number was 55 while till April this year the number stood at 22.

Most of the victims are girls aged below 18, who declined marriage proposals. Besides, dowry, land dispute and intention to take revenge have been identified as the main reasons behind acid violence.

Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder and officials of ASF were present during the visit.

Singer SD Rubel's production house looted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of robbers looted musical instruments and other valuables worth around Tk 40 lakh from a production house in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Enamul Haque of Ramna Police Station told The Daily Star that the robbers looted musical instruments, computers and mobile sets worth Tk 37.70 lakh and spare parts of a private car from singer SD Rubel's production house on the ground floor of a six-storey building at West Malibagh.

He said a gang of three robbers entered the house at around 3:30am through a hole which was made to install an air conditioner on the wall at the backside of the house.

The robbers fastened two employees Palash and Sumon and night guard Abdur Rahim who were sleeping in the production room.

Holding them hostages at knife point the robbers looted the things, the SI said, adding that the robbers also looted parts of the private car kept at the garage adjacent to the production house.

The private car belonged to the house owner, he added.

Enamul Haque said Rubel rented the house on April 26 and the work of the interior decoration was going on.

He suspected that one Zakir, who was engaged to work there, might be behind the incident, as he went into hiding after the incident.

Rubel filed a case accusing five to six unidentified criminals with Ramna Police Station at noon.

24,444 women benefit from rural employment project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An employment project involving repair of rural roads has benefited 24,444 poor women in six districts of the country.

The project run by the Local Government Division of the Local Government and Rural Development and Cooperatives Ministry is financed mainly by the European Commission. UNDP and the government are also providing the funds.

The five-year project titled 'Rural Employment Opportunities for Public Assets (REOPA)' is being implemented in 388 union parishads in Narsingdi, Feni, Sirajganj, Satkhira, Barguna and Habiganj from 2007.

The union parishads helped select the women who are mainly from vulnerable groups, Project director Akmol Hossain said at a media dialogue at the National Press Club yesterday.

The women are engaged in repairing rural roads in their villages, he said, adding that each woman gets Tk 100 a day.

Each woman receives Tk 100 a day, of which Tk 70 is paid in cash and Tk 30 is deposited with their bank accounts. They can withdraw the money from the bank at the end of their two-year work period, Akmol said.

Rehana Begum of Narsingdi, who is working under the project, said, "I am now financially stable and can afford to send my two children to schools."

Dr Klaus-Dieter Gautsch, counselor delegation of the European Commission, Goran Jonsson, international team leader of the project, also spoke at the media dialogue moderated by AP Bureau Chief Farid Hossain.

Govt urged to ensure equal power distribution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demra-Shyampur Pani Biddyt Sangram Committee yesterday urged the government to ensure equal power distribution across the country, says a press release.

Alleging that the authorities concerned are not impartial in supplying power and water, they said it would not be fair to supply more electricity to certain places, keeping the other parts of the country in dark.

If the government fails to ensure adequate power supply, people will be compelled to stage violent demonstrations like the one at Shanir Akhra in the city on May 5 in 2006, the release added.



PHOTO STAR

Akmol Hossain speaks at a media dialogue at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is Goran Jonsson and on his right are Farid Hossain and Dr Klaus-Dieter Gautsch.

Enact broadcasting law to ensure free flow of info

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In order to ensure free flow of information, a pro-people national broadcasting law should be enacted, said the speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

They said the proposed law should not seek to restrain the mass media, rather help the industry flourish.

The roundtable titled 'Why broadcasting law is required in Bangladesh?' was organised jointly by Mass-line Media Centre (MMC) and the Unesco at Cirdap auditorium in the city to mark the World Press Freedom Day.

The discussants highlighted the necessity of a national policy for regulating terrestrial, satellite and cable broadcasting services in the country.

"In this era of science and technology, the question of controlling mass media does not arise at all. However, there are needs to have some regulations to ensure free flow of information," said Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique, vice-chancellor of Dhaka University who presided over the roundtable.

The speakers noted that a broadcasting policy was formulated in 2003 and sent to information ministry, but the government is yet to take any initiative to make it law.

"That policy could be taken as a baseline and new terms and conditions should be incorporated into it to make the law more befitting for contemporary situations," said noted media personality Mohammad Jahangir.

"We have policies for the ICT sector, community radio and even for cable operators. As all these sectors including the broadcasting media are interrelated they need to be guided by some common guidelines and principles," said Dr Shamim Reza, a teacher of mass media and journalism department at Dhaka University.

"In the interest of mass media and people, the government will take initiatives to enact the broadcasting law,"

said Reza Ali, member of the parliamentary standing committee for information ministry.

Sukumar Ranjan Ghosh, another member of the committee, expressed surprise over the functioning of the industry over the years without any policy and said enactment of a broadcasting law has become imperative.

B M Mozammel Haque, also a member of the standing committee, said experts' opinion should be taken in enacting the broadcasting law.

"It is shocking that even after 38 years of independence we are yet to have any broad-

casting policy," said Shahriar Alam, another member of the committee.

Shahab Enam Khan, lecturer of international relations department at Jahangirnagar University, Shahid Ullah Lipon, head of the mass communication and journalism department at Daffodil University, MMC Executive Kamrul Hassan Monju, and Unesco Communication Officer Shamim Ahsan Khan also spoke at the roundtable moderated by Head of News at ATN Bangla Manjural Ahsan Bulbul.



PHOTO STAR

National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Port stages a demonstration in the city yesterday demanding cancellation of unequal agreements with foreign companies.

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