

Govt high school to be set up at each upazila: PM

Textbooks to be printed at district level

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina announced that textbooks will now be printed at district level and distributed among the students by local authorities, as the present book-supply procedure creates perennial problems.

Under another major step in the education sector, government high schools will be established in every upazila of the country and quality education will be ensured in these schools.

The PM disclosed the plans when a six-member delegation of the University Grants Commission (UGC) led by its Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam called on her at the PM's Office yesterday morning.

Hasina expressed disappointments over the degrading standard of education from primary to university level.

"The fall of the standard of education is alarming," she told the executives of the UGC.

About the book publication affairs Hasina further observed that many students have to suffer for delays in

receiving textbooks as all books are printed centrally in the capital city.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed the newsmen after the meeting, explaining the new measures being taken to resolve the problems in the education sector.

Azad said the CDs of the books will be sent to the district authorities and the textbooks will be printed at a time to rid the students of long wait for textbooks while time of the academic year passes by.

The premier said the quality of education at the university level fell to an alarming level as permission was given to set up many private universities without maintaining proper rules and regulations during the last BNP-led four-party alliance government.

She emphatically said her government would not compromise anyway on the question of restoring the lost standards of education in the universities as the government attaches the highest priority to the education sector.

The PM informed the UGC delegation that the authori-

ties concerned are working to update the existing education policy in line with modern science and technology.

Hasina also felt that country's educational institutions are suffering from a lack of qualified and well-trained teachers. "Scarcity of well-trained teachers will be removed," she assured.

The UGC chairman apprised the PM of the overall situation of private and public universities of the country and demanded government steps to give the UGC more freedom for conducting its activities smoothly.

The premier assured the UGC members of government's earnestness in solving every problem facing the UGC in conducting its activities effectively for the sake of educational development.

As the role of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in spreading education came up during the discussion, Hasina deplored that some 300 students of various levels who depend on financial assistance of Bangabandhu Memorial Trust had to stop their studies as the immediate past caretaker govern-

ment seized the trust's bank account.

She said these dropout students will be brought in the sphere of education again by the Bangabandhu Memorial Trust which bears education expenditures of some 1,000 poor and physically challenged students of various levels.

The UGC chairman gave special thanks to the prime minister as her government has decided to set up Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur to give a boost to the educational arena in the backward northern region of the country.

Prof Nazrul presented the PM a set of books, including 'Education in Science and Education in Bangladesh' published by the UGC.

The UGC chairman also expressed deep shock at the death of noted nuclear scientist and prime minister's husband Dr MA Wazed Miah and prayed for salvation of his departed soul.

Adviser to the PM for Education, Social Development and Political Affairs Dr Alauddin Ahmed and PM's Office Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman were present.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia offers munajat during a discussion marking the 28th death anniversary of former president Ziaur Rahman at the Diploma Engineers' Institute Auditorium in the city yesterday. Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal organised the event.

EIGHTH SESSION OF UN PERMANENT FORUM BEGINS

Call to implement UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples

SANJEEB DRONG, from New York

The eighth session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues began in New York on Monday with a call to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

More than 2,000 indigenous representatives from across the world as well as state representatives, civil society members, academicians and representatives from inter-governmental organisations are taking part in the two-week session.

In the opening session, UN General Assembly President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann said the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should be implemented to address the endless discrimi-

nation and violations of human rights of indigenous peoples around the world.

Indigenous peoples face marginalisation, extreme poverty, hunger, threats and negative impact of mainstream development, he added.

Rachel Mayanja, assistant secretary-general of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, said, "It is through continuous commitment and international cooperation that we will achieve the goal of the Second Decade, namely progress on indigenous issues in the areas of human rights, economic and social development, environment, education, health and culture."

"Let us work towards this goal in partnership with the indigenous peoples of the

world," she added.

Victoria Tauly-Corpuz, chairperson of the session, said, "The biggest challenge is how to get the Declaration implemented by States, UN bodies and by indigenous peoples themselves and by society at large."

She said that indigenous women's rights should be protected under Article 22, which states, "Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration. States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and the guarantees against all forms of

violence and discrimination."

The theme of the session is Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Women, Second Decade and the Arctic Region.

From Bangladesh, Raja Devasish Roy, Father Joseph Gomes, OMI, Goutam Kumar Chakma and Rabindranath Soren are attending the session.

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2000, with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues within the mandate of the ECOSOC relating to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.

EBL-St Gregory Nat'l School Debate ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Eastern Bank Limited-Saint Gregory National School Debate Festival came to an end on Sunday.

The debate competition was organised by the Gregorian Debating Club at the St Gregory's High School on May 15-17.

The three-day competition was inaugurated by former president Dr AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed was present at the concluding session as the chief guest, says a press release.

Former adviser ASM Shahjahan, senior journalist of the Daily Ittefaq Shaheen Reza Noor and Chief of Marketing of Eastern Bank Limited Nazim A Chowdhury were present as special guests while the session was presided over by the Headmaster of the school Brother Robi Purification.

Obituary

RU CORRESPONDENT

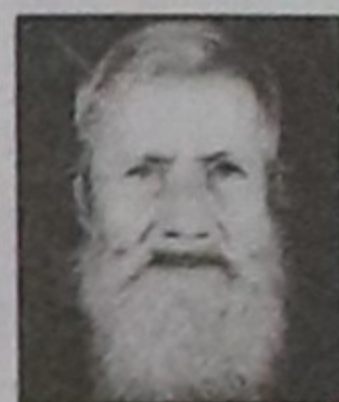


Shorupendu Sarker, a poet and father of Dr Shoroche Sarker, associate professor of Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University, passed away due to old-age complications at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital yesterday at the age of 70.

He left behind his wife, son and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

His cremation will be held at Charbanianari village in Bagerhat today.

Abdul Majid Talukder
METRO DESK



Abdul Majid Talukder, a veteran political personality and father of Prof Rahim B Talukder, vice chancellor of Eastern University, passed away at his Gulshan residence in the city on Saturday at the age of 109, says a press release.

He left behind his six sons and one daughter to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard.

Md Abdul Hakim

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Md Abdul Hakim, a freedom fighter, passed away due to old-age complications at a hospital in Chittagong on Sunday.

He left behind his wife, son and two daughters to mourn his death.

He was buried with state honour at his family graveyard under Nawabganj upazila in Dinajpur on Monday.

One killed in shootout with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal was killed in a shootout between his accomplices and members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Shah Ali area in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Mokhtar Hossain, 30, a resident of Madhya Monipur in Mirpur.

According to Rab officials, a patrol team of Rab-4 found some people gathering on Shah Ali embankment.

As the team approached them, they started firing on Rab personnel, prompting

them to retaliate for the sake of their lives.

After the gun battle, the Rab men found one of the criminals lying on the embankment with bullet injuries.

The other criminals managed to flee the scene.

Monir Hossain, brother of the deceased, said Mokhtar came out of the jail on bail eight months ago after serving seven years.

Then he opened a laundry shop at Monipur, Monir said, alleging that the Rab personnel picked him up from Shah Ali shrine on May 17 and since then he remained missing.

Switzerland keen to invest more in pharmaceutical sector

Says envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Outgoing Swiss Ambassador Dora Rapold yesterday said Switzerland is keen to make more investments in the pharmaceutical sector in Bangladesh.

She said this during a meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Hasan Mahmud at his office yesterday.

The envoy also assured the state minister of increased support for development activities in Bangladesh.

Welcoming the foreign investment, State Minister Hasan Mahmud said the

government will extend full cooperation in this regard.

During the meeting, Dora Rapold thanked the government for its cooperation extended to her during her tenure in Bangladesh.

Dr Hasan Mahmud requested the outgoing ambassador to play the role of an envoy on behalf of Bangladesh in her country.

Dora Rapold also assured Dr Mahmud of playing a strong role in favour of Bangladesh so that Switzerland provides more assistance, said a press release of the foreign ministry.

ASIAN UNIVERSITIES DEBATING ENDS

Debate helps strengthen democracy

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said debate, which is a battle of thoughts, opinions and ideas, can help strengthen democracy and ensure human rights.

Debate can also play an effective role in settling cases outside the court through an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) system, he added.

The minister said this while speaking as the chief guest at the closing ceremony of the 5th Asian Universities Debating Championship-2009 at a city hotel last night. The East West University organised the event.

The minister also said the present government has been working hard to institutionalise democracy.

He also congratulated the winners and participants of the debating contest.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hasan Mahmud, cultural personality Aly Zaker, Prof Mohammad Sharif and Jalaluddin Ahmed, president, Board of Directors of East West University, also spoke.

Jubo League man killed in bomb attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishina

Unidentified miscreants launched a bomb attack on a Jubo League meeting in Judge Court area of Chuadanga district on Monday night, leaving a ruling party leader killed and two activists wounded.

The dead was identified as Baharul Hayat, 40, joint convener of district unit Jubo League, youth front of ruling Awami League (AL).

Police said criminals hurled several bombs when Jubo League leader Baharul was holding a meeting with his party colleagues in the north side field of the court at about 9:30 pm.

Baharul was rushed to Chuadanga district sadar hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead at about 10:45 pm.

Of the injured, Sahinul Islam was admitted to Orthopaedic Hospital in Dhaka.

At night, police arrested five BNP men in this connection. They are Abu Bakar Siddique, joint convener of Chuadanga sadar upazila unit Jubo Dal, Manwarul Islam, cousin of former BNP lawmaker Sahidul Islam and BNP activists Akram Kazi, Atiar and Badsha.

AL and its front organisations brought out a rally in the town yesterday protesting at the killing.

Mahila Parishad condemns rape of schoolgirl in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday expressed concern and condemned the incident of raping a schoolgirl through blackmailing in Shipyard area in Khulna, says a press release.

In a statement, the parishad demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of those are involved in the incident.

They also demanded proper treatment of victim and ensure security of her family members.

Thai minister

FROM PAGE 16 Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok Sunday evening.

Moni was in a stopover there on her way back from Yangon.

During the meeting, Vikitsreth handed her a letter from Thai foreign minister, said a press release.

The vice-minister said their foreign minister is willing to visit Bangladesh next month.

Dipu Moni welcomed it, and said mutually convenient dates would be worked out soon through diplomatic channels.

During the meeting at Suvarnabhumi Airport, a number of issues of mutual interest came up for discussions. Those include bilateral trade and investment, upcoming 7th Joint Commission Meeting between Bangladesh and Thailand, consular issues, connectivity through land and sea ports, promotion of tourism and Rohingya refugees. Both sides felt the need to hold the meeting at an early date.

The last Joint Commission Meeting was held in Bangkok in November 1999.

Bangladesh requested Thailand to revive the on-arrival visa procedure for diplomatic and official passport holders from Bangladesh, which remains closed since 1997. The Thai minister assured that his government would consider the matter positively.

The Thai minister was accompanied by counsellor of the Thai foreign ministry while the Bangladesh foreign minister by Bangladesh Ambassador to Thailand Mostafa Kamal, Director General of South East Asia Wing Enayet Hossain and embassy officials.

Border remains secured despite arrests of BDR men: Sohel Taj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite the arrest of several thousand BDR members from different parts of the country, the border with the neighbouring countries has remained secured, State Minister for Home Tajim Ahmed Sohel Taj said yesterday.

"The border has remained secured and there are no reasons to be worried," he said, adding that the government is also working hard to further strengthen the border security.

The state minister said this to reporters at his ministry office.

About the way the government is dealing with the BDR issue, he said the government is doing everything the right way to identify the persons involved in the mutiny at the BDR headquarters on February 25 and 26.

The BDR members are being grilled to find out the real culprits, he added.

DHAKA TODAY

<p>Memorial meeting Bangabandhu Shishu Academy organises a memorial meeting to pay tribute to the memories of noted nuclear scientist MA Wazed Miah. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:30pm.</p> <p>Discussion Ubining will hold a discussion to mark International Biodiversity Day. Venue: Nari Grantha Prabartana. Time: 10:00am.</p> <p>Condolence meeting Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association organises a condolence meeting on the death of Advocate Syed Ahmed. Venue: Association auditorium. Time: 4:30pm.</p> <p>Roundtable Sammilita Sangskritik Jote organises a roundtable titled 'The culture of budget: The budget for culture'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.</p> <p>Discussion Voice for Interactive Choice and Empowerment (VOICE) and Bank Information Centre (BIC) will hold a discussion on the policy of the World Bank regarding making information public. Venue: Dhaka Reporters'</p>	<p>Unity. Time: 3:00pm.</p> <p>Roundtable Swadhin Bangla Garments Sramik Karmachari Federation organises a roundtable on minimum wage for the RMG workers. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 10:00am.</p> <p>Orientation The orientation of the students of the Summer Semester '09 of Darul Ihsan University will be held. Venue: Motijheel campus of the university. Time: 10:00am.</p> <p>Discussion Liberation War Museum organises a discussion to mark World Museum Day. Venue: Museum auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.</p> <p>Prize giving ceremony The prize giving ceremony of an essay contest organised by Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation will be held. Venue: Hotel Abakash. Time: 3:00pm.</p> <p>Lecture Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organises FINAS Foundation Lecture 2009. Venue: Society auditorium. Time: 5:00pm.</p>
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Tributes paid to Hosne Ara Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women for Women and Women's Voluntary Association (WVA) organised a condolence meeting in memory of thymester Hosne Ara Kamal at WVA auditorium in the city yesterday.

Hosne Ara, wife of former chief justice Mustafa Kamal and daughter-in-law of legendary folk singer Abbasuddin, passed away on April 16.

Prof Rawshan Ara Rahman was present at the programme while Prof Latifa Akand was special guest.

Jahanara Huq, former principal of Mirpur Bangla College and member of WVA, spoke on the school life of Hosne Ara where she was an icon of brilliance at extracurricular activities.

She could think differently and was advanced than any of her contemporary women, Jahanara added.

"If we take an initiative to publish the unpublished writings of this great soul, that would be the best tribute to her great memories," she also said.

The programme began with songs rendered by Prof Nashid Kamal.

Elite VC Seasonal Fruits Festival begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Elite VC Seasonal Fruits Festival organised by Dhakabashi began at Dhaka University Teacher Student Centre (TSC) yesterday.

Dhakabashi Chief Adviser Inam Ahmed Chowdhury was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony while President of Dhakabashi Md Shukur Salek presided over the programme.

Noted TV artist and Dhakabashi Adviser Dilara Zaman, Deputy General manager of Elite Cosmetics Ltd Abul Hossain, Dhakabashi Adviser Nagina Chowdhury and Secretary General of Jatiya Jubo Sangathan Dural Biswas were present.

The festival kicked off with flute playing by Abdul Quader.

Seasonal fruits mango, jackfruit, litchi, palm, date, watermelon, pineapple, guava and other fruits were on display.

The speakers at the programme urged people not to consume chemical-mixed fruits.