

No scope for compromise on quality of education

President tells vice chancellors

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman said the government has given utmost importance on the education sector to ensure quality education for all and ruled out any leniency on this question.

"I think it is essential to ensure quality of education and there is no scope for compromise on it," he said.

The president also emphasised introducing more IT-based curricula in primary

to university levels from now on for implementing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's declaration for building a 'digital Bangladesh' by 2021.

He made the observations when a delegation comprising the vice chancellors of seven public and private universities called on him at Bangabhaban.

He also underscored the need for taking initiatives to make science education popular in the secondary and higher secondary levels of

education alongside arts and commerce education.

Zillur termed the universities the centre of excellence in practicing freethinking and suggested the VCs to expand extracurricular activities for the students at their respective university and build them as worthy citizens.

He urged the private university authorities to provide special financial aid to the poor but meritorious students as educational expenses are higher in the private universi-

ties.

The delegation comprised VC of Noakhali Science and Technology University Prof Sanjoy Kumar Odhikari, VC of Patuakhali Science and Technology University Prof Syed Shakhawat Hossain, VC of North South University Prof Hafiz G A Siddiqi, VC of Independent University Bangladesh Prof Bazul M Chowdhury, VC of Northern University Prof A W M Abdul Huq, VC of Southern University Prof A Z M Nuruddin Chowdhury and VC of International Islamic University Prof M Mahbubullah.

Members of the delegation, particularly private universities, told the President that it was very difficult to acquire five acres of land in the capital city as per the UGC's conditions for the private universities.

They requested him to ease this condition for smooth running of the private universities.

They also apprised the president of various activities of their universities, saying that they are "committed to ensuring quality education" at their respective institutions.

Secretary of the President's Office Mohammad Shafiul Alam, Military Secretary to the President Maj Gen Md Ehtesham Ul Haque and President's Press Secretary Abdul Awal Howlader were present.



Vice chancellors of different public and private universities pose for photograph with President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

Govt-NGO efforts needed to stop child trafficking

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Long-term project and integrated efforts of the government and non-government organisations are needed to stop child trafficking, speakers said at a seminar yesterday.

They also stressed the need for forming community interventions team awareness forum or watch committee comprising border guards, union parishad and NGO to stop child trafficking in the bordering areas as most of the trafficking incidents take place in the areas.

They also stressed conducting a national survey on child trafficking for getting authentic statistics on trafficking as well as formulating an action plan.

With the support of Terre des Hommes Netherlands, Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) organised the seminar titled "Combating child trafficking: Context Bangladesh citizen's role" at Biam Foundation in the city.

Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder in his speech as the chief guest urged the non-government organisations to come forward to address the issue as it is difficult for only the government to deal with it.

He said media can play an important role in creating awareness among the people about women and child trafficking.

Quoting a study of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA), Dr Mohammad Shahjahan, secretary general and executive director of Bureau of Human Rights Bangladesh in his keynote speech said around 25,000 women and children are trafficked out of the country every year.

Children from rural and slum areas are mostly victims of trafficking due to lack of social security and poverty, he mentioned in his keynote paper.

Additional Inspector General of Police Mohammad Javed Patwary said a total of 661 cases have been in the last five years in connection with the child trafficking and of them, 344 were disposed of.

A total of 233 people were convicted while 172 were awarded life-term imprisonment and eight people were sentenced to death, Javed said.

He said not only the law enforcement agencies but also the people from all strata of life should come forward to deal with the issue as women and child trafficking is a social problem.

Mahmudul Kabir, country director of Terre des Hommes Netherlands, urged the government and organisations concerned to help address the internal trafficking as a large

number of women and children are being forced into prostitution and other illegal activities in the country.

BSAF Director Kafil Uddin moderated the seminar with Anwar Karhal, executive director of Unnayan Shahojog, in the chair. Around 25 NGO representatives participated in the seminar.

Hearing on Amini's bail petition May 27

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Lawyers of Mufti Fazlul Haq Amini, chairman of a faction of Islami Oikya Jote, on Wednesday submitted a bail petition to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka in a case filed for bomb attack on a Sramik League procession on May 1.

After the hearing, Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court fixed May 27 for hearing on the petition along with lower court records.

Metropolitan Magistrate Tofail Hassan on May 17 rejected Amini's bail petition when he along with his lawyers appeared before it.

Sramik League leader Akbar Hossain filed the case against Amini and nine others.

'Root out communal forces from country'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a mourning meeting on Wednesday urged the people to follow the ideology and works of late Syed Ahmed, a lawyer and one of the organisers of the Liberation War, and come forward to build the country a secular and real democratic state and root out the communal forces from the country.

They made the appeal at a memorial meeting of Syed Ahmed, organised by Shammilita Ainjibi Samannay Parishad (SASP) at the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) auditorium.

SASP Convener M Amir-Ul Islam presided over the meeting. Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Abdul Hamid, Awami League presidium member Abdur Razzak, MP, Home Minister Sahara Khatun, state ministers - Abdul Mannan Khan and Shamsul Haque Tuku, SCBA President AFM Mesbahuddin and Secretary SM Rezaul Karim, Bar Council Vice Chairman Abdul Baset Majumder, Syed Rezaul Rahman and ZI Khan Panna, Subrata Chowdhury and Syed Ahmed's daughter Shahnaz Ahmed Joya spoke.

They said Syed Ahmed was not only one of the organisers of the Liberation War but also a responsible leader of the lawyers in the country.

They prayed for peace of the departed soul of Syed Ahmed and expressed sympathy to his family members.



Artists perform a dance number at the inaugural ceremony of a week-long festival titled 'Celebrating Life' at Titu Auditorium in Bogra on Wednesday. The best films and photographs selected from a contest titled 'Celebrating Life 2008', a joint initiative of The Daily Star and the Standard Chartered Bank, are being shown in the festival.

Finance minister's comment on trade union condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) in a statement on Wednesday condemned the comment of Finance Minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhith on halting the activities of trade union.

The leaders said that through the negative statement his ignorance about trade union activities has become clear.

Terming his speech 'unexpected', the leaders also said that according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention, trade union activities is important to establish a healthy relationship between the workers and the owners.

The purpose of the trade union is also to increase productivity through ensuring the workers' rights, the leaders said, adding that if any unwanted incident takes place at a particular establishment, trade union cannot be blamed grossly for that.

A vested quarter with the support of the government and the authorities who always try to serve their own interest are responsible for that, they added.

The statement also said that trade union should work on its own way without any intervention from the government or from the parties.

Signatories to the statement include President of Jatiya Sramik League Abdul Matin Master, President of Jatiya Sramik Federation Bangladesh Abul Bashir, Dr Wazedul Islam Khan of Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra, Abdullah Sarkar of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, Abdul Kader Hawladar of Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh, Mesbah Uddin Ahmed of Jatiya Sramik Jote and Chowdhury Ashikul Alam of Trade Union Sangha.

They also urged the government to refrain from such speech that goes against their election manifesto.

Cardiac Society executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr M Aman Ullah MP and Prof Dr Khawaza Nasir Uddin Mahmud were elected president and secretary general of the working committee of Bangladesh Cardiac Society recently for the term 2009-10, says a press release.

Candidates form both the Swadhinata Chikitshak Parishad and the DAB contested in the election.

Swadhinata Chikitshak Parishad won 27 posts out of 31 while DAB candidates one and independent three posts.

Future elections to be held without army: CEC

UNB, Shariatpur

Chief Election Commissioner Dr ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said army will no longer be needed in holding future elections.

He said, "No elections would be held across the country on a single day." Elite-force Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) will be deployed along with police for maintaining law and order in election.

Dr Shamsul Huda, who has presided over the process of transition from the military-backed interim regime through the last general election, came here to visit the proposed places of server station for electoral database in six upazilas.

He made the remarks while talking to media men at the local circuit house about the deployment of army in ensuring city corporation, pourashava and union parishad elections.

"The Election Commission is contemplating making laws for keeping the next elections free from the influence of ministers, lawmakers and other people of equivalent status," Dr Huda said.

He mentioned that the EC had sent a letter to the Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad requesting him to take steps so that ministers and lawmakers do not use their influence in constituencies in last elections. "The ruling party complied with the request while the opposition ignored," the CEC regretted.

In reply to a query, he said more reforms would be brought in the electoral laws. But, "we alone don't want to do anything."

Dr Huda said electoral laws have been reformed after holding talks with 16 political parties earlier and it would also be done in the future by holding talks with political parties.

Referring to irregularities in upazila polls, he said 481 upazila elections were held simultaneously across the country. "Hence, some irregularities might have happened," said the CEC, adding that departmental investigation was launched wherever allegations came from.

Later, he visited the proposed sites of server station in Sadar, Gosairhat, Damuda, Bhedorganj, Naria and Jazira upazilas.



The teachers and students of Cox's Bazar Government Women's College sign their 'pledges' on a gigantic banner on the college premises yesterday as part of the Prothom Alo's campaign for change across the country.

PROTHOM ALO'S CAMPAIGN FOR CHANGE IN CTG Teachers, students make pledge to change

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The students of Cox's Bazar Government Women's College yesterday pledged to change the society by cleansing all its evils, odds and woes.

They took a vow to say 'no' to evil and 'yes' to peace. The students wrote their respective pledges on 'The banner for writing pledges' on the college campus.

The 'pledge' writing campaign organised by leading vernacular daily the Prothom Alo continued for three hours where they promised to bring about positive changes in society.

The fortnight-long campaign of the daily was launched yesterday on the occasion of its 10th anniversary.

The programme kicked off in Cox's Bazar with the slogan 'Change yourself, change others' to encourage countrymen to make pledges to change themselves or others.

The oath taking campaign will be observed through much fanfare on the municipality building premises on May 29.

Acting principal of the college Md Sarwar Alam inaugurated the programme. He wrote, "I will spread the light of knowledge among women. I will make them aware and cooperate with all for the overall human development."

Teacher of Political Science department Shirin Noor Chowdhury, Sarwar Kamal of Philosophy department, Kamrun Nahar Chowdhury of Computer Studies department and Sultana Dilruba of history department also wrote their

pledges.

Nilufa Yasmin, a student of class XI, wrote, "I will come forward to save environment." Hira wrote, "I will build up myself as a realistic artist and work for the welfare of the country." Esmika wrote, "I will plant a tree every month."

Bobby wrote, "I will follow the beautiful path and remain cheerful," while Bilquis Kutubi wrote, "I will not marry those who take dowry."

At the start of the

programme, Prothom Alo Cox's Bazar regional office chief Abdul Quddus Rana said: "You have to change yourself first to change the society. The educated class would have to play a leading role in bringing positive change."

Sarwar Azam Manik, Ikram Chowdhury Tipu, Prof Sanwara Begum, Biplob Kanti Paul, Dr Chandan Kanti Das, Shamim Akhter, Biswajit Paul Bishu and Didarul Alam Rashed also spoke.



Risking their lives, a man stands and a woman sits precariously on buffers between two carriages of a shuttle train bound for Chittagong University to have a free ride as it leaves Sholo Shahar Railway Station in Chittagong yesterday. Although such practice is commonplace, the authorities appear to turn a blind eye.

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