

Ensure quality education to build digital Bangladesh

Education minister tells workshop

BSS, Dhaka

Education Minister Nurul Islam Naheed yesterday said the government is giving priority to ensure quality education to make it more useful.

"We need quality teachers for increasing quality of education," he told an inaugural session of a workshop on 'Proxy Means Testing Based Stipend and Tuition' under the Secondary

Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project (SEQAEP) at the LGED Bhaban in the city.

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education and the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) jointly organised workshop. Director General of the DSHE Prof Noman Ur Rashid addressed the inaugural session as the special guest with LGED Chief Engineer Md Wahidur Rahman in the chair.

SEQAEP Project Director Md Badiul Alam and Operation Adviser of the World Bank Tahseen Sayed Khan also spoke at the function.

Naheed said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has declared the 'Change for Charter for building a digital Bangladesh by 2121.

Describing education as the main tool for building digital Bangladesh, he said, "We have to ensure education for all particularly quality education for bringing a qualitative change to all spheres of society."

Termining poverty a main obstacle to providing education for all, Naheed said, "We could not remove poverty from the country overnight. So, we have to move ahead by facing the problem of poverty."

Referring to the 48 percent dropout at the primary school level and 42 percent at the secondary level, he said poverty is one of the main reasons for this high dropout rate in the country.

In this context, he said the government is seriously thinking on the issue of poverty.

He said, "We have identified that major parts of the dropout students between Class-IX to Class-X and Class-VI to Class-VII have been forced to leave their schools as they could not buy their

books."

Considering the situation, Naheed said the government has decided to provide books free of cost to all students along with the primary level from the next year to encourage students of poor families to continue their studies.

He said, "We have to publish 21 crore books by this year for implementing the decision of the government."

He said publishing of 21 crore books by this year is a huge task but they are to overcome the challenges for ensuring education for all."

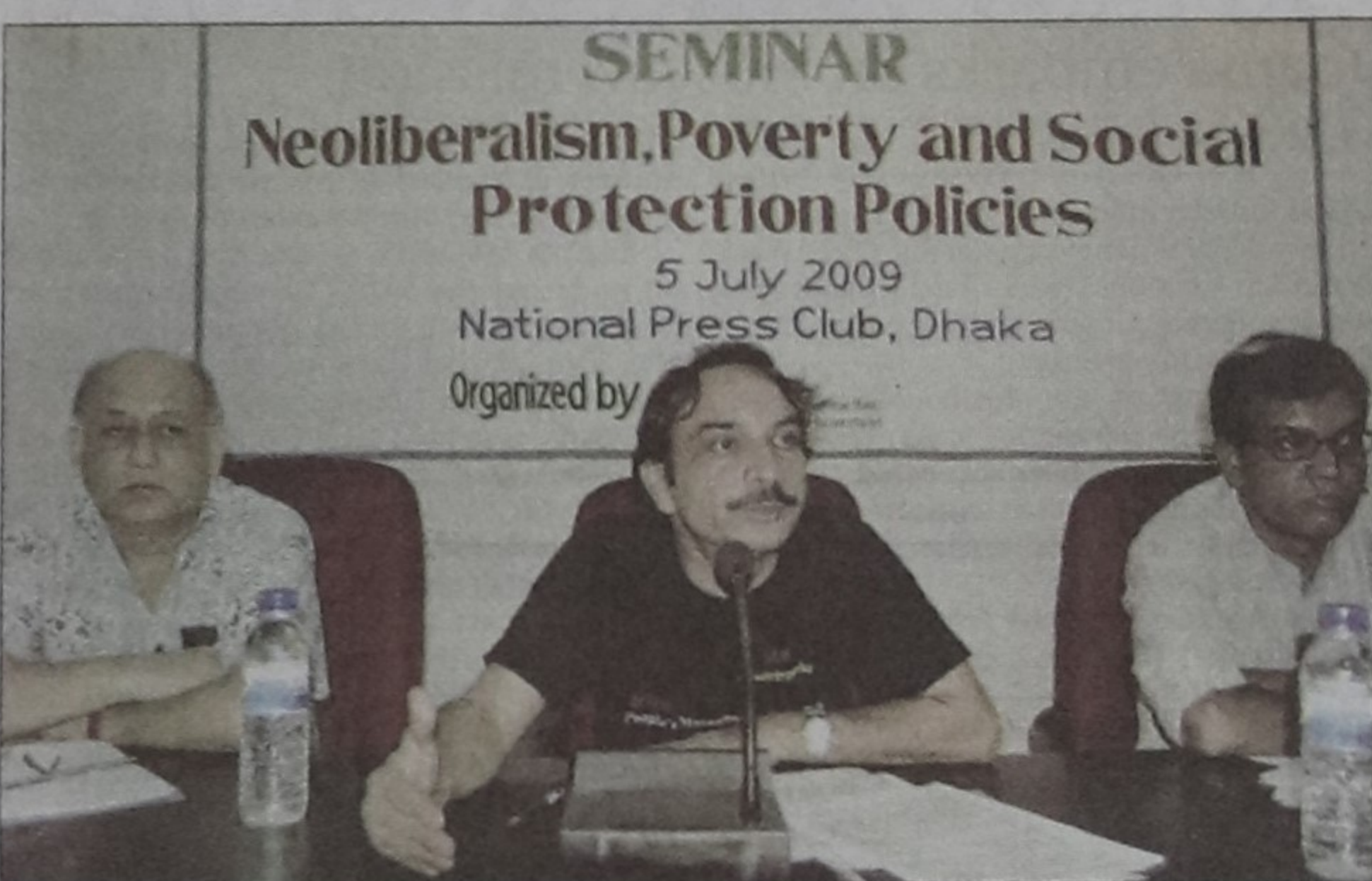
Badiul Alam said the government is implementing 'Proxy Means Testing Based Stipend and Tuition' Project under the SEQAEP for providing stipend and tuition for the students of the poor families and low-income groups.

He said initially, the project would be introduced to 121 upazilas. Gradually, it would be introduced across the country in phases, he added.

He said 18 criteria will be considered for selecting the beneficiaries of the project.



Dhaka University Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique inaugurates an online voting campaign in favour of selecting Cox's Bazar sea beach and the Sundarbans among the world's new seven wonders. Dhaka University Tourism Club organised the event at TSC yesterday.



Executive Director of VOICE Ahmed Swapan Mahmud speaks at a seminar on 'Neoliberalism, poverty and social protection policies' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Mohsin Ali and on his left is Dr Monower Mustafa. (Story on B3)

VOTE FOR SUNDARBANS

Monthlong campaign ends tomorrow midnight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The weeklong hectic campaign, which began here on July 2 to vote for the Sundarbans, will come to an end tomorrow at midnight.

The aim of the campaign is to help world's largest mangrove forest in Bangladesh retain its third position among the seven wonders of nature, said

Torrential rain in China leaves 15 dead

AFP, Beijing

At least 15 people have died and over 400,000 had to be evacuated in China after torrential rain destroyed houses and caused rivers to overflow, state media said yesterday.

The fatalities occurred over several days of relentless heavy rain in the centre and south of the country, also leaving another five people missing, according to state Xinhua news agency.

Water levels of some rivers in Guangxi region were the highest since 1998, when downpours led to the worst flooding in over 100 years and resulted in more than 3,600 deaths nationwide, China Central Television said Saturday.

More than 140,000 people had been relocated in Guangxi alone in the last week, with 300 pupils trapped in one school, Xinhua reported.

The heavy downpours also inundated crops, cut power and damaged roads across several provinces.

South and central China are prone to major flooding during the annual summer rainy season.

According to a report issued Wednesday by the state flood headquarters, 95 people have been killed and 21 people went missing in flooding throughout China in the first six months of the year.

Rafiqul Islam Khokon who is member-secretary of Bangladesh Chapter of The Sundarbans Supporters' Committee (SSC).

The second round of votes will end tomorrow at midnight and the results will be announced on July 21, it is learnt.

Rupantar, a non-government organisation, is the main organiser of the campaign to seek votes for the Sundarbans.

Other members of the SSC are Sundarbans Academy, Khulna Press Club, Khulna University (KU), Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (KUET), Khulna City Corporation (KCC), Khulna Zila School and Khulna Shishu Foundation.

Arrangements have been made to keep open computer labs round-the-clock till July 7 at Rupantar, KU, KUET and KCC to give people scope to cast their votes by means of login in the e-mail address www.new7wonders.com.

/nature/en/G or dialing 0041773124041

Rupantar and other members of the SSC have made arrangements for voting by installing e-mail system and Internet facilities.

In the second round, three names would be selected from amongst the seven groups for which 21 natural sites are in the competition.

Earlier on Saturday, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Ministry of Education Rashed Khan Menon cast his vote for the Sundarbans.

He also urged people to vote for the Sundarbans so that it can retain its third position in the second round among the seven wonders of nature.

SSC members have resented the lack of government initiative to create momentum in the campaign to seek vote for the Sundarbans.

The date for third and final round will be announced later.

DU ENG DEPTT Move to introduce evening MA protested

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students at the English department of Dhaka University yesterday urged the authorities concerned to cancel the decision to introduce evening MA course in the department.

To press home their demand, several hundred students of the department staged a demonstration on the campus at noon.

Later, students at a press conference at Dhaka University Journalists' Association (DUJA) office in the afternoon alleged that the initiative is nothing but an attempt to privatise higher education.

They alleged that this course would further increase the existing problems in the department, including session jam.

Sabrina Sharmeen, a student of the department, said, "The process of privatising education in the name of introducing evening MA is against the basic concept of the public universities."

The students demanded that the existing session jam be eliminated and the results of the examinations be published within three months.

The agitating students also submitted a memorandum to the department chair with the signatures of 578 students to press home their demand.

They would also submit a memorandum to Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique today and continue their agitation.

Chairman of the department Khondakar Ashraf Hossain on Saturday told The Daily Star that the evening MA course would be helpful to resolve the existing crisis in the department and 50 percent of the income generated by the course would be used for the welfare of the regular students.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Call to make amendments to Int'l Crimes (Tribunals) Act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Citizen's Commission on the Trial of War Criminals yesterday urged the government to start the trial process even after five months.

The commission is concerned about the time consumption and, at the same time, for the family members of martyrs, freedom fighters and the young voters who are demanding the trial for long, it said.

A commission statement said, "We suspect that the trial would be impossible if it is delayed, as the conspirators will start conspiring."

They said though the par-

liament has passed a proposal on the quick trial of the criminals, the government could not start the trial process even after five months.

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A commission statement said, "We suspect that the trial would be impossible if it is delayed, as the conspirators will start conspiring."

"So, we urge the lawmakers of the grand alliance that the way you passed the proposal to try the war criminals, you should make amendments to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973 and start the trial process," it added.

National Prof Kabir Chowdhury, former ambassador Waliur Rahman, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam and acting president of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee Shahriar Kabir spoke at the meeting, among others.

Recovery of rivers a must to protect environment

Says social welfare minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haq Mustafa Shaheed yesterday said it is urgent to recover the rivers surrounding the city from the encroachers to protect the environment.

The minister called on the new generation to come forward to reviving the past glory of jute industry.

The minister said this as the chief guest at a discussion on 'International Natural Fibre Year and World Environment Day' organised by Textile Engineering department of South East University in the city.

He said the government has already taken some effective steps to revive the neglected jute industry.

Prof Syed Fakrul Hasan, chairman of the department, presented a keynote paper at the discussion which was chaired by Vice Chancellor Prof M Shamsheer Ali.

It also aims at assisting the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) to find a practical way to introduce sustainable participatory water resources management, said a press release.

The total budget of this project is Tk 8,706 lakh. The government of Netherlands will contribute Tk 6,181 lakh while the remaining Tk 2,525 lakh will be provided by Bangladesh government.

The project also aims at giving consideration to gender issues at all levels of project planning to contribute to reduction of poverty and discrimination and also to ensure better functioning and utilisation of systems.

It also aims at giving attention to environmental aspects to avoid degradation and creation of other problems and carry out the rehabilitation and improvement of physical infrastructure to a high standard of design and construction, the press release said.

Dutch Ambassador to Bangladesh Fritz Meijndert and Abul Kalam Mohammad Azad, head of development cooperation of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Dhaka, accompanied the ministers.



Director General of Family Planning Muhammad Abdur Quayyum and UNFPA Representative Arthur Erken admire paintings by children at the National Poster Contest 2009 at National Art Gallery of Shilpakala Academy in the city on Saturday. Directorate General of Family Planning and UNFPA Bangladesh jointly organised the event on the occasion of the World Population Day.

2 killed in road accidents

METRO DESK

Two people were killed and 25 others injured in separate road accidents in Chapainawabganj, Khagrachhari and Patuakhali yesterday.

Our correspondent in Chapainawabganj adds: A rickshaw-van puller was killed in a road accident at Kansat Bazar on Chapainawabganj - Sona Masjid highway in the district yesterday.

The victim was identified as Saiful Islam, 50.

The accident occurred at around 12:30pm when a Shibganj-bound truck from Kansat Bazar crushed Saiful under its wheels while he was crossing the road.

Our correspondent in Khagrachhari adds: A man has killed in a road accident at Bhuyianchhari in the district. The victim was identified

as Mohammad Shukkur Ali Sheikh, 32.

The accident took place when a bicycle hit the victim while he was crossing the road. Locals rushed him to Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital where on duty doctor declared him dead.

Our correspondent in Patuakhali adds: Twenty-five people were injured in a road accident on Patuakhali-Kuakata highway in the district yesterday.

Among the injured, 15 were rushed to Kalapara Upazila Health Complex. Later, Kawsar, 35, Fatima, 30, and Bashir, 35, were taken to Barisal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital, as their condition deteriorated.

The accident took place when a Patuakhali-bound passenger bus from Kuakata lost control and fell into a roadside ditch.

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