

Better edn system a must to face global challenges

Experts say at BBC Sanglap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country needs such an education system which will enlighten its people as well as make them skilled and competent to face the global challenges, panelists at the Bangladesh Sanglap, a talk show of BBC Radio, said yesterday.

It is quiet tough to bring the country's existing three types of education system - general, madrasa and English -- into a single medium overnight, they said suggesting maintaining possible consistency among the types.

The special programme on the education system was hosted at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, a panelist, said there should be such an education system which must enlighten the countrymen and will also be related to life.

He said there are eleven types of education systems only at the primary level and the government wants to impart education of equal standard to all for a certain level.

"We want to ensure equal opportunity to all the children. So, we want to introduce unitrack curriculum," he said, adding: "We want to make some subjects mandatory for all mediums so that they can know about their root."

The minister said they want to introduce modern education in madrasa apart from their own subjects so that they can use their learning in their practical life.

Prof Moniruzzaman Mia, former vice

chancellor of Dhaka University, said it is not possible to make a single track by breaking three mediums overnight, rather there should be consistency in all mediums.

Every medium develops separate characteristics due to long practice, he said, adding that these mediums should be brought closer.

Rasheda K Chowdhury, former adviser to a caretaker government, said the aim of education is not only making the people competent, but also enlightening them.

She said the productivity of the rural people, especially the farmers, who are the backbone of the agricultural economy, will be increased if they are imparted more education.

There will be no problems with having three types of education system if the state sets a standard at the basic level, the ex-adviser said, suggesting that some subjects be made mandatory for all mediums apart from the mediums' own sub-

jects.

Ansul Haq, president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), said the types are not important, rather ensuring quality education is more important.

"We want to keep education sector free from political influence," Nahid added.

Regarding the allegations of private universities, he said the government is preparing a new act accommodating the opinions of private university owners.

Prof Moniruzzaman said there must be an accreditation council for private universities, while Rasheda said the state should have a monitoring mechanism over the universities.

Replying to a question of the participants on the issues of primary education and condition of primary school teachers, Nahid said the government has already appointed 20,000 primary school teachers and would soon appoint 25,000 more teachers.

"Apart from these appointments, we will give minimum training to the teachers," he said, adding that they would increase the salary of teachers of community and registered non-government primary schools.

Asked about the 20 marks in the viva voce exam before appointment of a teacher, the panelists said the matter of transparency and political influence came into front as the marks were increased.

Rasheda K Chowdhury opined for bringing down the marks, while Prof Moniruzzaman said the mark would be reasonable if it is brought down to 10 from 20.

The minister, however, said five marks have been kept for paper qualification and there will be no chance of political influence here.

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Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) forms a human chain in front of the National Museum in the city yesterday protesting the Indian move to construct Tipaimukh dam. (Story on Page 3)

Nat'l Press Club honours writers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Press Club yesterday day accorded reception to eminent writers and member writers of the club for their contribution to literature and journalism bringing about socio-economic and political changes in the country.

The eminent writers were conferred crests, while the member writers medals at a ceremony on the club premises in the city.

The writers who were honoured include Abul Hossain, Shawkat Ali, Syed Shamsul Haque, Badruddin Umar, Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury, Hasan Azizul Haque, Qaiyum Chowdhury, Murtaza Bashir, Fazal Shahabuddin, Kazi Anwar Hossain, Sayeed Ahmed, Rabeya Khatun, Rizia Rahaman, Abdul Mannan Syed, Noorjahan Begum, Humayun Ahmed, Kaiser Chowdhury, Mustafa Zaman Abbasi and Al Mahmud.

The Club also honoured around 150 of its member writers who wrote one or more books.

President of the National Press Club Shaukat Mahmud, life member Faiz Ahmed, General Secretary Kamaluddin Sabuj and AB Bank Managing Director Kaiser Ahmed handed over the crests and medals.

Expressing his feelings, Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury said he is happy on receipt of the honour, but regretted that journalism and literature are attacked by capitalism today.

Journalists played crucial role in the struggle for democracy, but they need to be free from capital to better serve the nation and people, he added.

"Even literature has become a product today," he said, urging the journalists and the writers to be free from all influences of vested quarters, and continue to play their due role for a free and democratic society.

Veteran journalist Faiz Ahmed said different vested quarters have always tried to control journalists who are not free from such efforts even today.

"We must not be the victims of vested quarters," he asserted.

Shaukat presented a paper titled 'Today's crisis of literature and journalism' at the programme that ended with a cultural function.

Three cops suspended for trying to loot money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three police constables were suspended on charges of attempting to loot money from the workers of a bakery in old Dhaka yesterday.

The suspended constables are Ilias Hossain, Tohidiur Rahman and Ahmedullah.

The workers and local people also beat up the constables of the Kayetuli outpost after they entered Purnima Bakery at Nawabkata in the early hours of yesterday and tried to loot Tk 45,000 from the workers.

On receiving information, forces from Kotwali police station rushed to the spot and rescued the injured policemen, local people said.

Talking to The Daily Star, Kotwali Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Mohammad Salauddin said the constables entered the bakery without the approval of the higher authorities.

He, however, said that the workers were gambling when the three constables police entered the bakery.

Two girls raped in Ctg: 2 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A four-year-old girl was raped on Thursday while a 14-year-old girl had been confined to a room and raped for 13 days at Khulshi in the port city.

Two cases were lodged with the Khulshi Police Station.

The police arrested two accused -- Md Sabuj, 20, his brother Shamsher, 25 and sister-in-law Ambia, 22, -- remained at large.

Sub-Inspector Sanak Barua of Khulshi Police Station said Sabuj violated the girl, who lives in a nearby house in the colony, when she came to his flat on Thursday afternoon. The girl later told her mother about it.

Meanwhile, the other victim who was confined to a room for 13 days is now undergoing treatment at the One-Stop Crisis Centre (OCC) of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

The criminals freed the girl on July 7.

A case was filed against four youths -- Ujjal Das, 20, Razzak, 20, Jewel alias Tofael, 22, and Kibria, 23, -- on charges of rape.

Sources said the 14-year-old girl went out of her house at Shaheed Lane on June 23 to sell milk but remained missing since then.

Four held with antique statue

UNB, Lalmonirhat

The police arrested four members of a gang of antique smugglers and recovered a statue of 'Lord Shiva' made of black stone at Goral union in Kaliganj upazila early Thursday.

The arrestees were identified as Matiul Islam, 45, Hanif Mia, 34, Billal Hossain, 50, and Abu Kashem, 37.

Acting on a tip-off, the police conducted a raid at about 2:00am and arrested the four from Goral union.

Acting on their confessional statement, the police recovered the statue weighing eight pounds kept under the earth's surface beside the house of Matiul.

Wealthy, they turned poor for medical bills

FROM PAGE 1
report in parliament on Thursday

"As I am not financially solvent, I shall be grateful if the expenses amounting to Tk 27,86,364 is disbursed from the parliament budget by relaxing 'The Special Medical Attendance Rules, 1950' under rule 12. And for the act of kindness, I shall remain ever grateful," the former speaker wrote to the prime minister in April 2006.

He addressed her as 'Respected Madam'.

Sircar flouted the rules and ignored the parliament secretariat's opposition also in case of Delwar. He however had an undertaking from the then chief whip's son and daughter before disbursement of the funds.

Delwar in his letter to the former speaker said he is incapable of paying for the medical expenses.

He sought Tk 14 lakh, but Sircar directed the parliament secretariat to apply to the then premier for Tk 10 lakh to cover Delwar's treatment costs.

Sircar finally gave him Tk 6 lakh as medical allowance, while the ex-chief whip drew Tk 18 lakh from the parliament members' club to "bear the

medical expenses".

The wealth statements submitted with nomination papers for the December 29 general election do not support the two leaders' insolvency claims.

According to Sircar's statement, he earns Tk 11.67 lakh a year. He has around Tk 27.06 lakh in cash and Tk 2.8 lakh in deposits. His wife has around Tk 2.92 lakh in accounts with different banks and financial institutions.

He has 1,200 tolas of gold [around 14 kg] and electronics and furniture worth Tk 50,000.

He and his wife together have savings and fixed deposits to the tune of around Tk 34 lakh.

Besides, he owns a Toyota Corolla worth about Tk 12.67 lakh.

Of the immovable property, he has 12.09 acres of land, and his wife has 3.32 acres.

As per the affidavit submitted to the Election Commission, he met his election expenditure from his own sources of income.

Sircar, who failed to win in the December 29 polls, has returned to parliament in a by-election recently.

According to Delwar's wealth statement to the EC, he has Tk 20.66 lakh in cash.

He has two flats on New Eskaton Road, shops and

office space in the capital. These along with a pistol, a shotgun and cash were worth Tk 64.98 lakh.

Each of the flats--one of 1,800 square feet and the other 900 square feet--is valued at Tk 46.46 lakh.

He has two bighas of land in Manikganj and Savar, and those are worth Tk 2 lakh.

In fiscal year 2006-07, Tk 8 lakh was earmarked to cover the medical expenses for chief whip, whips and the parliament secretariat officials.

Interestingly, Sircar and Delwar alone took Tk 33.87 lakh as medical allowances, forcing the secretariat to manage the additional amount from allocations for other purposes.

Besides, the then speaker granted his deputy Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui Tk 1.21 lakh in 2008 on an undertaking that the money would be returned.

From irregularities in claiming the expenses, Sircar did not return furniture, air-conditioner, sofa and household appliances worth Tk 12 lakh to the parliament secretariat after his tenure expired.

Delwar did the same, saying many household items had got lost. He was exempted from the liabilities by Sircar.

Essentials' prices go up on poor supply

FROM PAGE 1
soyabean oil is available for Tk 390 to Tk 425.

Retail price of green chilli skyrocketed to Tk 100 a kg although it had been selling for Tk 30 ten days ago.

Shuvo with a perforation in his heart is undergoing treatment at Jessor General Hospital.

Doctors said Shuvo needs urgent operation which will involve at least Tk 3 lakh.

But it is not possible to afford such expensive treatment for his indigenous father Subrata Sarkar who is a journalist at Mohammadpur upazila in Magura district.

So he has appealed to generous people and organisations for financial assistance to save the life of his son.

Contributions can be sent to Subrata Sarkar, Savings Account No 6842, Janata Bank, Mohammadpur Branch, Magura. Interested persons can also call at 01713905338 to contact his family members.

at Tk 24-27.

The price of pulses also went up by Tk 3-5 a kg. Traders at kitchen markets were selling pulses at Tk 88-112.

Mohammad Rubel, owner of a wholesale store, told this correspondent an increase in the wholesale price of pulses in the city over the past week. Price of non-brand palm oil went down by Tk 190-240 for each 37.32 kg (1 maund) of oil.

Wholesale markets in Katunganj are now selling palm oil at Tk 2060-2110 a maund, which was being sold at Tk 2250-2300 two weeks ago.

The new company rate of a 5-litre jerry can of Rupchanda brand soybean oil has been fixed at Tk 415 against its earlier price of Tk 419, which was Tk 439 two weeks ago.

Company rate for the same jerry can of Mostafa brand came down at Tk 392 from its earlier rate of Tk 405.

Battery chicken was selling

at Tk 115 to Tk 120 a kg yesterday against Tk 130 last week.

Price of egg, however, rose by Tk 2 to Tk 4 per hali (four pieces). Retailers were selling egg at Tk 30 to Tk 32 per hali against its earlier price of Tk 28.

Traders said poor production and lack of enough supply due to the recent downpour caused such hike in the egg price.

Retail price of both Indian and locally produced garlic shot up by Tk 8 to Tk 15 a kg. Indian garlic was selling at Tk 40-42 per kg against Tk 32-34 before, while retail price of good quality local garlic rose from Tk 100 a kg from its earlier price of Tk 85.

Price of ginger also rose by Tk 4 per kg, selling at Tk 60 from its earlier price of Tk 56. Onion was selling at Tk 24 to Tk 26 a kg while the price was Tk 16-18 last week.

More aircraft to be taken on lease

UNB, Dhaka

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Quader yesterday said the hajj pilgrims would not face any flight crisis this year as several aircraft would be added to Biman fleet on lease within one and half months.

"We hope the pilgrims will face no problem in hajj flights this year as we'll take some new aircraft on lease within one and half months," he told reporters after attending the inaugural ceremony of Jet Aircraft MD-83 of United Airways marking its 2nd anniversary.

The minister said the process of modernising Biman is going on by removing the aircraft crisis and reforming its management.

"We've taken all necessary

steps to resolve Biman's flight crisis. A total of three Boeing 777s, two 737 and one 747 Airbus would join the fleet soon and one more 747 aircraft would be included on lease, if necessary," Qu