

Pvt tuition, coaching blamed for fall in quality of edn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The culture of private tuition and coaching centres run by schoolteachers ignoring classroom duties and the needs of students is the major reason why the quality of education is gradually deteriorating, a common allegation voiced by students yesterday.

Students alleged that those who cannot perform well in the classroom activities for many social reasons and need special care are ignored by teachers, while those who can afford to attend their private coaching get special treatment.

Students who flunked the 2009 SSC examinations, their parents and teachers gathered at a conference at the LGED auditorium in the city, focusing on finding flaws and main barriers to ensuring quality education at the secondary level.

The conference was organised by Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and Education Watch.

Experts attending the gathering stressed the need for introducing a proper education policy mainstreaming schools at the grassroots level. They also attributed the fall to the education system that largely encourages memorising books rather than learning.

Lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on education ministry, called on the teachers to per-

form their duties in the classroom and interact with students and their guardians.

He said since independence, 11 education policies were introduced without proper implementation. A steady education policy is needed to provide quality education.

The experts said a total of 7,97,881 students attended the 2009 SSC exams from eight education boards. Of them, 5,37,878 students succeeded. More than 32 percent students flunked the exams. These students face a bleak future and eventually become a burden of the nation.

Majority of the participating students flunked in math and English, a trend that was blamed massively on the education system, teachers without proper training, flawed unattractive books and students for not being attentive.

The conference revealed that the rate of dropout at the secondary level is also very high. According to a study conducted by Education Watch, the dropout rate among the students of class VI to class X is more than 50 percent. Poverty has been identified as the main reason behind this massive rate.

The students said distance of schools is also a reason why many students drop out, especially females, who face teasing on their way to schools.

Meanwhile, the students with disabilities mentioned

lack of disabled people-friendly facilities and books.

Rasheda K Chowdhury, former adviser to a caretaker government, said only successful students are highlighted after any exams. The needs of the students and what they want to say about their education method should also be considered.

Dr Zafar Iqbal, Tasnim Atahar, additional director of CAMPE, Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, head of news and current affairs of ATN Bangla, and actor Aly Zaker also addressed the gathering.

At the concluding ceremony, IER Prof Nazmul Haque in his presentation showed what the students, parents, teachers and managing committee members think about the reasons of failure and the possible ways they could do to avoid it.

He recommended taking special measures to remove subject-wise weaknesses of students, appointing trained, efficient and subject-wise teachers, increasing interaction between teachers and parents and proper monitoring of educational activities in schools.

Urging the teachers to give up their 'trading mentality', he also recommended ensuring educational apparatus and their use and building subject-wise laboratory at schools.

Speaking as the chief guest, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid held faults and weaknesses of the entire

education system responsible for failure of students in the SSC exams.

He stressed the need for putting strongest emphasis on the education system, saying: "We have to reach such a goal where no student will fail in the exams."

The minister said teachers are the main weapons in ensuring quality education and the government wants to give them minimum financial facilities and dignity.

The government would increase the salary of community and registered non-government primary school-teachers in order to ensure quality education, he said, urging the teachers to carry out their noble responsibility with devotion.

Dr Quazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad, co-chair of Education Policy Formulation Committee, said it is not possible to ensure standard of secondary education unless ensuring quality education at the primary level.

Dropout is a major concern in education and we have to find out the reason behind the problem, he said, suggesting an increase in stipend, making schools more attractive and taking measures to provide meal for students at noon.

Quazi Fazlur Rahman, former adviser to a caretaker government and chairperson of Education Watch, Quazi Rafiqul Alam, chairperson of CAMPE, also presided over the closing session.



Disadvantaged students who achieved GPA-5 in the SSC examinations pose for photo at a reception ceremony in the city yesterday. The Prothom Alo organised the event.

Try BDR mutineers under military law: Hafiz

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Vice Chairman Maj (ret) Hafizuddin Ahmed yesterday demanded that the BDR mutineers be tried under military law, not under civilian law.

"Perpetrators may go unpunished if the trial is held under the civilian law," Hafiz told reporters at his Banani residence in the city.

He also said that the future of the armed forces depends on the fair trial.

Such offences are tried under military law in foreign countries, he added.

He also criticised the government stance on the trial of BDR mutineers.

Disadvantaged but talented students accorded reception

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ninety disadvantaged students who achieved GPA-5 in the SSC examinations with their indomitable spirit were accorded a reception in the city yesterday.

They were in faded dresses, but their faces were bright. They fought against grinding poverty to make their dreams come true.

These brilliant students shared the stories of their struggle at the reception ceremony organised by the Prothom Alo at the CA Bhaban Auditorium.

Of them, 21 students scored GPA-5 in the SSC exams in 2007, 29 in 2008 and 40 in 2009.

The meritorious students started arriving at the reception venue at 9:00 in the morning with their parents, relatives or schoolteachers. The members of Prothom Alo Bandhu Shabha greeted them with Rajanigandha sticks.

Many of these boys and girls were first-time visitors to the capital city. While filling up registration form at the reception venue at the 9th floor of the CA Bhaban, Ujjal Das from Magura said, "I have never used a lift before."

The reception ceremony kicked off with the members of Bandhu Shabha singing patriotic songs. Prothom Alo

Feature Editor Sumona Sharmin moderated the programme.

Meera Rani Malo, a GPA-5 achiever, came from Madaripur. She narrated how she strenuously pursued her studies, despite all odds.

Her father Shanker Chandra Malo is a fisherman. They do not have any land. They live in a hut by the crematorium at Shibchar. She gets scared when dead bodies are cremated there. But that could not stop her from achieving GPA-5.

Bhaskar Bagchi of Rangpur also told his story. He had to fight against poverty. Moreover, both of his kidneys are damaged. He is so weak that it is very difficult for him to walk. Still, he continued to pursue his studies.

Many present at the function could not hold back their tears hearing the tales of these boys and girls.

Madhu Barman of Mymensingh, Minati Khatun of Sirajganj, and twin brothers Hasan and Hossain also described their experiences.

Faisal of Nawabganj also sang a song. His father died without treatment. So, he wants to become a doctor.

All the students were given crests at the function.

Representatives of the organisations that extended financial assistance to these bright students also spoke. They are Tajmin Aman and MK Arif of American Alumni Association, Kutub Uddin of Overseas Marketing Ltd, Saifur Rahman of Transcom Group, Farid Khan of Summit Group, Akhteruzzaman of Madonna Group and Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam of Dhaka University.

Prothom Alo Joint Editor Abdul Quayyum and Deputy Editor Anisul Haq also spoke at the function.

Prothom Alo has been providing financial assistance to the meritorious students of poor families since 2004. In 2007, the newspaper brought such students under regular monthly stipend for two years. Each student is given Tk 2,500 for purchase of books and admission and Tk 1,500 a month.

Different organisations and individuals contributed to this initiative.

Speaking on the occasion, Prothom Alo Editor Matur Rahman appreciated the contributions of various organisations and individuals who came forward to help these disadvantaged students.

"We want to continue this programme for such students," he added.

He also hoped that these meritorious students would bring changes to society.



Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury speaks at a reception ceremony at the National Press Club in the city on Friday. The club accorded the reception to renowned writers and its writer members.

Education for women a must to control birth rate

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday underscored the need for expanding education for women to make them aware of family planning which will help them control the present birth rate as well as reduce poverty.

If the women are properly educated, they will get facilities of employments and eventually will be empowered to take decision on how many children they will give birth to, they said, adding that if the present birth rate can be reduced, the living standards of citizens will be developed.

The speakers said this at the discussion on 'Fight poverty: Educate girls' organised by United Nations Association

of Bangladesh (UNAB) to mark the World Population Day-2009 at Cirdap auditorium in the afternoon.

Chairing the programme, UNAB President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said the country can get enriched by sharing equal partnership of women in respect of production and development activities.

Almost 80 percent of the total people of Bangladesh are living under the poverty line in any way. The country cannot be developed keeping so many people in abject poverty, he added.

Prof Muzaffer said social awareness and mobility should be stressed to reduce discrimination against women in the family as well as in society.

The government has taken

some steps to reduce discrimination against women, but those are not enough, he said, adding that the society has many responsibilities in this regard.

The former TIB chairman further said that qualitative education is needed for women to get them employed, but the number of qualitative institutions is very poor here.

Justice Kazi Ebadul Huq said expansion of education and reduction of poverty are necessary tools for controlling the high birth rate of population.

The policymakers in the government will have to play an effective role in this connection, he mentioned.

Prof Ahmad Neaz presented a keynote paper at the discussion.

Road march to protest move to lease offshore oil, gas block

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Port started a road march towards Cox's Bazar from Dhaka yesterday demanding scrap of leases of offshore blocks to foreign companies to explore oil and gas.

The committee held a rally at Muktangan and also demanded implementation of the Phulbari accord signed on 2006 after a mass protest against Asia Energy.

Convener of the committee Engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah, member secretary Prof Anu Muhammad, and educationist Serajul Islam Chowdhury, among others, spoke at the rally.

The committee also held rallies at different points on their way.

The speakers at the rallies said that some agents of foreign companies are trying to hand over country's resources to the companies instead of securing national interest.

The road march will end today in Chittagong.

Extortionist asks Unesco official to pay Tk 10,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An anonymous caller yesterday asked a Unesco official to pay Tk 10,000 in toll to his accomplice or face dire consequences.

Sadeq Ahmed, secretary to the Unesco representative to Bangladesh, received the call during his office hours. The caller who identified himself as Shahadat called him eight times and also asked him not to inform anybody of it.

The caller asked Sadeque to pay the money to his accomplice named Rony at 55 Nabi Nagar Branch of SA Paribahan, said a press release of Unesco.

The extortionist also told Sadeque that his accomplices would take position near his (Sadeque) house at Dhanmondi.

In the morning, an anonymous caller also called at Sadeque's home to know about his whereabouts.

Sadeque filed general diaries with Gulshan and Dhanmondi police stations in this regard.



Barrister Ishtiaq's anniversary of death today

METRO DESK

Today is the sixth death anniversary of Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, a prominent lawyer and former adviser to a caretaker government, says a press release.

On the occasion, Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed Smriti Parishad has organised different programmes, including the placing of wreaths at his grave at Banani, offering feteaba and a milad mahfil at an orphanage.

During his eventful life, Barrister Ishtiaq made immense contribution to the legal arena of Bangladesh and acted as an attorney general for Bangladesh and an adviser to the caretaker government in 1996 and 2001.

He also made great contribution to the democratic movement in Bangladesh.

Pvt university student found dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of a private university student from a pond of Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University (SAU) on its campus in the city yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Rakib Ahmed, 23, a student of Daffodil International University.

On information, police rushed to SAU at around 11:00am and recovered the body floating on the pond in front of the Agri-Business Management building.

Tushar, a student of SAU, said Rakib came to one of his friends Shyamol Sarker's room at Kazi Nazrul Islam Hall about 15 days ago and he was residing there.

Rakib went missing since Friday morning. SAU students found his body floating at the pond.

Rakib's father Mujaher Ali said he completed BBA final examinations and was supposed to return his village home in Dinajpur on Friday. DMCH morgue sources said the body had blood-stained nose and mouth.

Delwar questions AL move to hold council by July 25

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain has raised question about ruling Awami League's sudden decision to hold its national council by July 25, the deadline set by the Election Commission (EC).

In an interview with the BBC, the BNP secretary general said, "So far I know, they (AL) are not prepared to hold the party's council."

"Why did they take a different move all of a sudden?" Delwar posed a question.

Delwar said that his party will discuss the issue with the commission.

Awami League spokesperson and LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam last week said his party would ask the EC to extend the time by six more months as the party is not fully prepared for holding the council to approve party constitution by July 25.

However, AL Office Secretary Abdul Mannan

Khan on Friday said they were taking preparations to hold the council within the EC's timeframe.

Mannan Khan also said that an AL delegation would go to the EC on July 16 to discuss the issue.

EC wanted to get all political parties fully registered ahead of the elections, for the first time in Bangladesh, during the immediate past caretaker government.

The parties, however, said they needed time to fulfill all the conditions of registration, including finalising their constitutions.

They got registered with the EC, ahead of the December 29, 2008 polls submitting draft constitutions pledging to submit amended constitutions through holding councils later.

The Representation of the People Order, amended before the election, accordingly gave all political parties six months from the new parliament's starting date.

Journo Sarwar Zahan passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Sarwar Zahan, a senior journalist and freedom fighter, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at city's Lab Aid Hospital in the early hours of yesterday at the age of 62.

He got admitted to Lab Aid Hospital on July 2 following a heart attack.

He left behind his wife, three daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Sarwar was the News Consultant of The Financial Express (FE). He served as a war correspondent of the 'Joy Bangla' during the War of Liberation in 1971.

He served in various capacities in the Daikin Desh, New Nation and other dailies before joining the Financial Express on August 11, 1997.

He was laid to rest at his village at Tithkhor under Shahjahanpur police station in Bogra after a namaz-e-janaza at Mohammadpur in the capital.

Alice A Islam

METRO DESK



Alice A Islam, former principal of Shaheed Anwar School and Foundation International School of Dhaka, and wife of M Tajul Islam, director of NGO Federation, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at a city hospital on Saturday, says a press release.

She left behind her husband, three children and host of students to mourn her death.

Askar Ali Sarkar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Askar Ali Sarkar, freedom fighter and Gazipur Upazila Awami League leader, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at the Mount Elizabeth Hospital, Singapore on Friday at the age of 56, says a press release.

He was under treatment at the hospital since June 30.

He left behind his wife, three sons and one daughter.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held on the Chandra High School premise at 11:00am today.

DCC to buy 100 waste compactor vehicles

BSS, Dhaka

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is set to purchase 100 waste compactor vehicles at a cost of about Tk 100 crore aimed at carrying out its existing solid waste management programmes in more organised way, DCC officials said yesterday.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) under its environmental grant aid programme will provide the financial support to the DCC to have 35 compactors and 65 CNG-run container-carrying trucks equipped with world-standard Japanese technologies.

Zaki M Ziaul Islam, programme officer of JICA, told BSS that vehicles used by the DCC used to emit huge carbon and resulted in environment pollution. The compactors and CNG-run container carriers will help cut at least 20 percent carbon emis-

sion, he claimed.

Against the backdrop of perilous impact of climate change, Islam said the JICA has introduced an innovative technique of ward-based waste approach (WBA).

Under the mechanism, each ward of the city corporation will be divided into five zones and an officer to be designated as conservancy inspector will coordinate with dwellers and waste collectors registered by DCC.

JICA expert Akio Ishii, additional chief, waste management officer of DCC Dewan M Shah Alam, regional executive officer Nazrul Islam responded to queries raised by city dwellers in the meeting.

Sources said in DCC areas, an estimated 3,200 metric tonnes of wastes were generated everyday and it has only 7,500 cleaners in 90 wards to dispose of the huge quantity of wastes.

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable
Save the Environment Movement and WBB Trust jointly organise a roundtable on disease prevention issue in National Health Policy. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

Publication ceremony
The publication ceremony of the books 'Nandantattay Gorar Katha' and 'Shilpa, Dhama O Bigganer Samajtattay' by Prof Bulbon Osman will be held. Venue: Gallery Chitrak. Time: 6:00pm.

ADD roundtable
Action on Disability and Development (ADD) organises a roundtable on organisations of the people with disabilities and donor's assistance. Venue: Biam auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

Amra Kuri
The inaugural ceremony of 'Amra Kuri 2009' will be held. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy. Time: 3:00pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely
UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at many places in all the six divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely to occur at the places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong, divisions, Met Office said.

It said day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:49pm today and rises at 6:19am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 33.7 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Tangail and lowest 24.0 degrees Celsius at Rangamati.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	31.6	26.4
Chittagong	30.1	24.4
Rajshahi	33.0	25.8
Khulna	30.2	26.0
Barisal	31.7	25.8
Sylhet	31.0	25.3
Cox's Bazar	29.5	24.5