



Hindu devotees offer prayers during Saraswati puja on Jagannath Hall premises on the Dhaka University campus yesterday. Saraswati is the goddess of knowledge. PHOTO: STAR

## EDN INSTTS Authorities mull election to student bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities of different educational institutions are mulling the option to hold elections to the student unions, including Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu), Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid told the House yesterday.

The authorities have already talked to a good number of student bodies. Necessary steps will be taken following the discussions, Nahid said in a scripted answer to a query.

Replying to lawmakers' queries, the education minister said enactment of a new law to stop private tuition and coaching center business across the country is under the government's consideration.

He said a bill updating the

private universities law will be placed in the parliament soon to bring admission or coaching centers under legal frame and to bring back order and ensure quality of education in the privately run higher education institutions.

On not receiving free books in many primary and secondary schools, the education minister said those who did not send their demand list to the ministry did not receive books.

"But we will try to send books to the schools those did not get books," he added.

Primary and Mass Education Minister Afsarul Amin said the government is hopeful to complete the ongoing appointment process of headmasters in different primary schools by March while the assistant teachers will be appointed by April.

## Take steps to curb air pollution immediately

Environment secy tells IG11 session

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Air pollution in the South Asian region is a growing concern that needs immediate response and solution to halt further deterioration of the environment of Bangladesh, said Environment and Forests Secretary Mihir Kanti Majumder yesterday.

He said management mechanisms, which have been implemented so far, cover various legal and non-legal measures involving strengthening firefighting capability and facilities and monitoring mechanisms at domestic level.

"However, the incidence of air pollution, especially through open burning, is still rampant and uncontrolled."

The secretary said this as the chief guest at the inaugural session of the 11th Intergovernmental Meeting (IG11) under Malé Declaration held at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

The fast growing countries of the region are using huge amount of coal for generation of power. Bangladesh would be the worst victim of trans-boundary air pollution due to its geographical location, he added.

The ministry of environment and forests is working together with the regional countries to help combat trans-boundary air pollution in line with the Malé Declaration, he said.

"I hope that the meeting will put forward some specific recommendations to enhance speedy implementation of the declaration," he said.

Regional Director of UNEP Dr Young Woo Park said Malé Declaration is being considered as an example for South Asian regional cooperation. It provides a framework for South Asia to cooperate with the regional countries not only on air pollution issues, but also for environmental security.

The inaugural session was chaired by Director General of Department of Environment (DoE) Dr Zafar Ahmed Khan while former project director of Malé Declaration Project Quazi Sarwar Imtiaz Hashmi also spoke.

The participants from seven countries -- Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Iran -- took part in the programme which was organised by DoE in association with UNEP, RRC AP, SACEP, SIDA and SEL.

## ACC approves filing of 4 cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) have approved filing of four cases and submission of ten charge sheets and nine final reports in the first 15 days of January on charges of amassing wealth beyond known sources, concealing information, taking bribe, forgery and misappropriation of funds.

Three people were accused in the four cases ACC filed, said an ACC press release.

The accused include assistant store officer of livestock department Afsar Ali, and office assistant of Shibganj upazila land office in Bogra

Nazmul Huda, whom the ACC caught red-handed while taking bribe.

In the approved charge sheet, 26 were accused, including Muladi upazila education officer in Barisal ABM Khalilur Rahman, principal of Satkhira Alia Madrasa Shamsur Rahman and former managing director of Rupali Bank Hajiganj branch Yakub Ali.

Of the final reports, one was submitted in a case filed against former state minister for textile AKM Jahangir Hossain, head master of Wills Little Flower School in Dhaka Shah Alam and former EVP of IFIC Bank Ltd Abdus Sattar Miah.

## FIFTH AMENDMENT Hearing on petitions resumes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court (SC) will hold a hearing for the second day today on the leave-to-appeal petitions against the High Court (HC) verdict that nullified the fifth amendment to the constitution.

The amendment had legitimised all governments that had been in power following the coup of August 15, 1975 till April 9, 1979, including late president Ziaur Rahman's ascension to the presidency.


The six-member full bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Md Tafazzul Islam, on Tuesday adjourned the first day's

hearing till today.

BNP secretary general Khandaker Delwar Hossain, and three SC lawyers Tajul Islam, Kamruzzaman Bhuiyan, and Munshi Ahsan Kabir filed two separate leave-to-appeal petitions with the SC in May last year.

Advocate TH Khan, counsel for the BNP secretary general, is expected to place arguments before the apex court today.

On August 29 in 2005, the HC in a verdict declared illegal and void this amendment, rendering illegal the regimes of Khandaker Moshataque Ahmed, Abu Sadaat Mohammad Sayem, and Maj Gen Ziaur Rahman between August 15, 1975 and April 9, 1979.



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