

Anomalies found in NU recruitments

WASIM BIN HABIB
An enquiry committee found gross irregularities in the appointments of staff to the National University during the tenure of Vice-chancellor Prof Aftab Ahmed.

The committee submitted its 642-page enquiry report to the education minister yesterday. On January 4, it submitted the report to Prof Quazi Shahidullah, vice-chancellor of the university.

contractually, the report said adding that six posts of assistant proctor were created unnecessarily for the university that does not have any students.

The committee held around 50 meetings and reviewed the information received from the university administration, syndicate decisions and several documents. It also collected written information from the staff and got through the newspaper clippings.

Regional cooperation a must to fight human trafficking

Speakers tell meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Speakers at a dissemination meeting yesterday called for regional dialogue and cooperation to address the issue of trafficking in persons.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) organised the regional dissemination meeting on a study 'Saarc Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution: Review and Current Status' at a city hotel.

The meeting is aimed at creating a forum to strengthen regional coordination and advocacy across the Saarc member states to combat trafficking in person through effective and full implementation of the Saarc Convention on Trafficking in Persons.

VULNERABILITY TO EARTHQUAKE

Decision to check some buildings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The high-powered inter-ministerial Earthquake Preparedness and Awareness Committee yesterday decided to check a number of buildings in Dhaka city to see how far they are sustainable in the event of a major earthquake.

The committee, headed by Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque and formed following a High Court order on July 27, 2009, took a number of decisions at a meeting at the ministry.

It will form a technical subcommittee to check a sample number of buildings to see whether they are compliant with Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) and set a required tolerance level (7 on Richter scale) for earthquake intensity for building construction.

Each ministry and department concerned will have a designated focal officer to follow the programmes on preparedness and rescue operations.

The draft contingency plan prepared for Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) for earthquake disaster management will soon be sent to all the agencies concerned for opinion.

Non-compliance with BNBC and Building Construction Rules, scanty open space, unplanned urbanisation and high density of population expose Dhaka city to increased vulnerability to earthquake disaster, said Director General of Disaster Management Bureau (DMB) Md Farhad Uddin at the meeting with Razzaque in the chair.

Prof Mehedi Ahmed Ansary, committee member and vice-president of Bangladesh Earthquake Society, said BNBC requires buildings in Dhaka to have strength to sustain an earthquake of at least 7-magnitude.

A total of 72,000 buildings will collapse completely in the city in the event of a major earthquake of 7.5-magnitude or above with epicentre at Madhupur fault line which is 65 kilometres away from Dhaka, said Farhad Uddin, citing the research findings of CDMP.

It will cause 33,000 buildings to collapse extensively and 53,000 to collapse moderately and generate 30 million tons of debris.

It may take 88,000 lives if occurs at midnight and 61,000 is at midday. Around 32,000 injured persons will require immediate hospitalisation and expensive medical treatment.

Razzaque said his ministry has procured rescue equipment, including trucks, concrete cutters, cranes and cameras, worth Tk 69 crore and handed them over to Fire Service and Civil Defence and Armed Forces Division.

Procurement of search and rescue equipment worth \$1.7 million is under process.

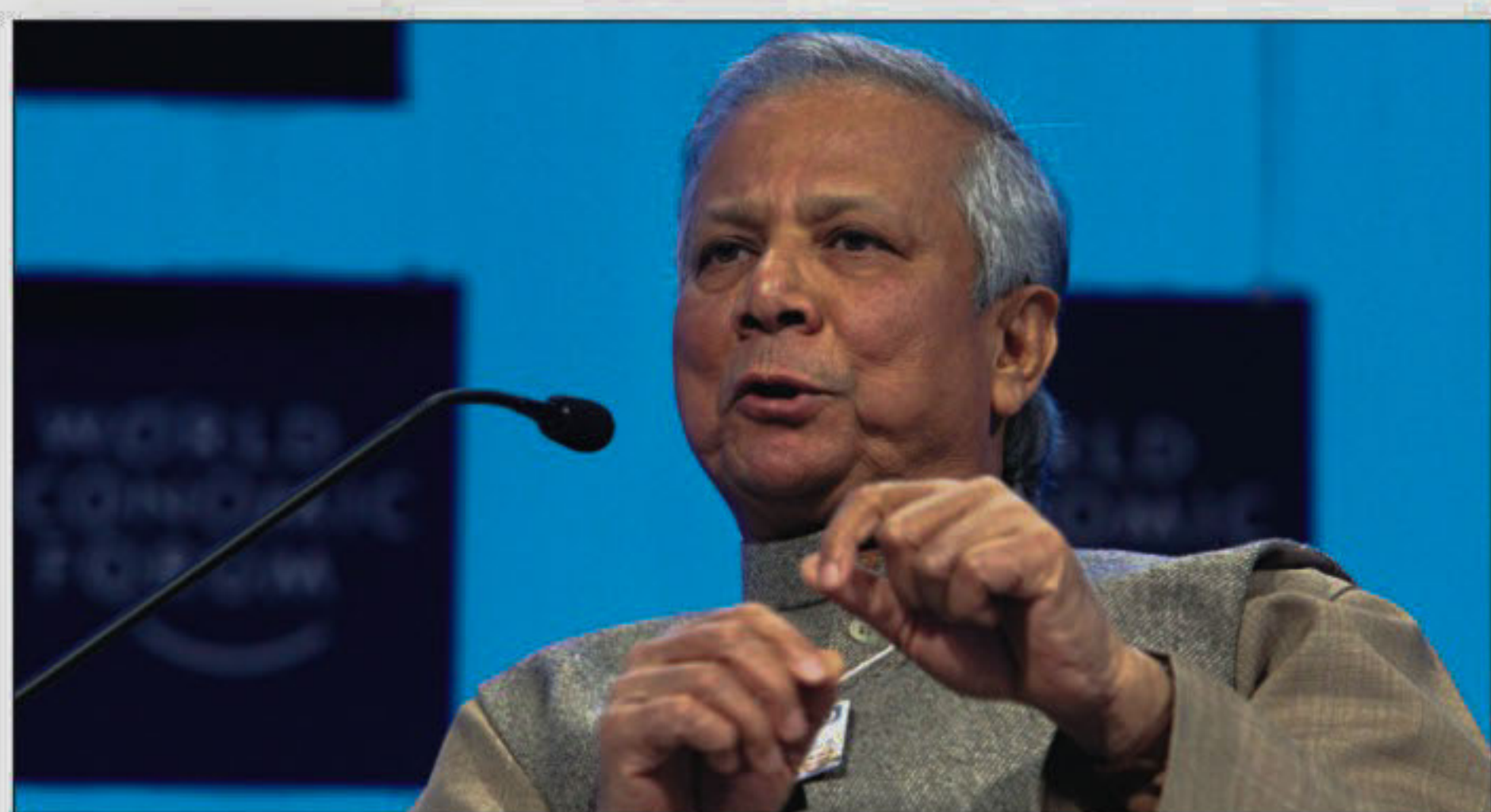


PHOTO: AFP

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus speaks at a session titled 'Rethinking values in the post-crisis world', during the first day of the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos yesterday, which is to be attended by 2,500 top politicians, captains of industries and civil society leaders.

SUICIDE AFTER 'EVE TEASING' Pinky's family tells of threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pinky's family held a press conference yesterday to appeal for police protection against threatening phone calls and public taunting by Murad's cohorts.

Schoolgirl Nashifa Akand Pinky committed suicide on January 19 in her home in Shyamoli, Dhaka.

According to Pinky's suicide note, Murad drove her to suicide after he slapped her in the face in public.

Her uncle Ali Ashraf Akond, who is a complainant in her suicide case, made the appeal at the Bangladesh Crime Reporters Association in Dhaka.

He claims their everyday lives are being paralysed by the phone calls and taunting.

Ali also alleges that some daily newspapers and television channels are publishing and broadcasting misleading information about Pinky's alleged affair with Murad.

Ali said that every member of his family has received threatening calls on their cellphones over the last three days.

The caller allegedly uses a mysterious voice to enquire about the whereabouts and well-being of other family members.

"When we ask the caller to give their identity the connection cuts out," he said.

Ali said if they phone the caller back the call is not answered.

"We are suffering a great deal as we receive these calls several times a day."

"Two of my nephews have stopped going to primary school because they cannot face the teasing," he added.

Ali yesterday filed a general diary with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar police station.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mohammad Reaz Hossain said police have visited the family home in West Agargaon several times and will take action if the allegations are proven.

The OC said Murad will face a Dhaka court after being interrogated by police while on a three-day remand.

Police did not collect the memory card which Murad claimed contained photos and telephone conversations with Pinky.

The OC added that police are yet to receive the CID report on Pinky's chit, which she left before committing suicide.

Ali also played a CD containing a recorded phone call between Murad and an unknown woman.

Murad made the phone call from his hideout and allegedly claims responsibility for Pinky's suicide during the conversation.

Ali gave the CD to police as evidence.

Advocate Nurani Bilkis Upama of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, General Secretary of Bangladesh Shishu Sangathan and Chairman Anwar Hossain of Human Rights Legal Aid Society also attended the press conference.

MIRPUR FREE DAY Four-day programme begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A four-day celebration programme marking the Mirpur Free Day begins today.

Mirpur Sangskritik Oikya Forum is organising the event.

Although victory was ensured on December 16, Mirpur was freed on January 31 in 1972 since it was under the control of Bihari and some goons, said Ashiqur Rahman Bhulu, convener of Mirpur Mukta Dibas Uddapan Committee, at a press conference at the Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday.

Reading out a written statement, Bhulu said a group of 87 freedom fighters took position at Muslim Bazar to Water Tank area on January 30 where they were attacked by hundreds of armed Biharis.

Many freedom fighters, including Lieutenant Selim, SP Lodi, Nayek Tajul, Nayek Hafiz, Lance Nayek Nur Islam and soldier Akram embraced martyrdom during the attack.

Noted filmmaker Zahir Raihan, who was searching for his brother and noted litterateur Shahidullah Kaiser, was also killed that day.

Later, freedom fighters, armed forces and policemen attacked the Biharis and freed Mirpur, he said.

"We will organise a seminar on January 31 to inform the next generation about the history of Mirpur," said Bhulu.

Shahidul Haque Mama, leader of famous Mama Bahini who took part in the fight to free Mirpur, President of Mirpur Sangskritik Oikya Forum Kazi Mizanur Rahman and Coordinator of Mirpur Dibas Uddapan Committee Mahbub Alam Shahin also spoke at the press conference.

DU COMMITTEE Aggrieved BCL men explode bombs

DU CORRESPONDENT

Two hand-made bombs were exploded on the Dhaka University (DU) campus yesterday following the announcement of 85 new posts of DU unit of Bangladesh Chharta League (BCL) that created huge frustration among many leaders and workers of the unit.

Aggrieved BCL men claimed that vital posts have been filled in with some 'controversial' activists who were from Faridpur and Barisal as the unit president and general secretary hailed from the regions.

Around 1:20pm, two bombs were exploded near Madhur Canteen that created huge panic among students. However, it could not be known immediately who exploded the bombs.

Today persons are being trafficked not only for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation, but also for the purposes of forced labour and organ removal, said State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury.

She also stressed the need for concerted efforts of the regional states to raise awareness about human trafficking.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with Sonomi Tanaka, Gender Development specialist of ADB, also spoke.

Woman, two daughters jump under train, die

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A woman along with her two daughters killed themselves by jumping under a train at Kaliganj in the district yesterday.

The dead were identified as Shahana Khatun, 25, wife of Sabur Ali of Satgacchia village, and her daughters Shapla and Muslima.

Sources said Ali used to torture Shahana very often. After she was tortured again yesterday, Shahana made her up mind to end this suffering once and for all.

After leaving home, she was waiting beside the rail track near Khosalpur Rail Crossing Gate and when she saw Rajshahi-bound the Mahananda Express approaching at around 2:30pm, Shahana jumped under it with her daughters.

Rashida Begum, stepmother of Shahana, said the latter had not come to her father's place for several months.

BOOK ON LIBERATION WAR History changes with change of govt: Dr Murshid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Prothoma Prokashon, a publication house, launched a book on the liberation war entitled 'Muktijuddha O Tarpor: Ekti Nirdolito Itihas' by Dr Ghulam Murshid yesterday.

"Our history changes with the change of the government in our country. So, I felt the need to write an impartial history. I have written this book mainly for the youths who do not know much about the country's history," said the author at the publication ceremony of the book at Liberation War Museum in the city.

"This book provides a comprehensive history of the liberation war. History doesn't know any party or its opinion. It cannot be biased," said historian Prof Syed Anwar Hossain, who presided over the ceremony.

Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury said, "The writer has set an unique standard in this book. He praised good qualities of a historical figure and also tried to find out flaws in the same breath. As a writer, he has tried to remain impartial throughout the book."

Matir Rahman, editor of the Prothoma Alo, said, "This book takes us to the days of our liberation war and the days after independence."

He also announced that the publication house, Prothoma, is set to begin its journey from the Ekushey Book Fair with publication of about 40 books.

It will encourage researches on the liberation war, he added.

Clash over recovery of JNU dorms: 10 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people, including a policeman, were injured following a string of clashes between students and policemen on the Jagannath University campus yesterday over recovering its 12 dormitories occupied by illegal boarders.

Eyewitnesses said the clash ensued when policemen attacked the students who were staging a demonstration by putting up a blockade on the road in front of the university with a demand for recovering the dormitories around 11:20am.

Police started chasing the students when some of them from the street started hurling bricks and stone pieces towards the building of a branch of Bangladesh Bank near the campus.

Traffic movement on the streets came to a halt for half an hour following the blockade.

Police arrested three students of the university on charges of vandalism on streets and attack on policemen.

Those who were injured included students, pedestrians, hawkers and a police constable.

Chases and counter chases continued for an hour. Police charged batons to bring the situation under control.

CAR THEFT CASE Accused

escapes from police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An accused in a car theft case escaped from police yesterday afternoon when he was being taken to a Dhaka court.

Accused Shafiqul Islam ran away from the police and disappeared into the crowd in front of the court. Shafiqul was scheduled to give his confessional statement in a car theft case, the police said.

Officer-in-Charge of Dhanmondi police station Mohammad Salahuddin told The Daily Star that the car theft case was filed around three months ago.

111 children of BDR members get scholarship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) has given special scholarships to 111 meritorious children of the border security personnel.

A total of Tk 6.05 lakh has been distributed among the meritorious students under 'BDR DG Special Scholarship', said a press release.

Of them, 101 students were awarded scholarships for obtaining GPA 5 in the secondary and higher secondary level examinations and 10 others for their outstanding results in exams at higher educational institutions.

Zia orphanage case: Hearing adjourned

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka Court yesterday adjourned the hearing on charge framing against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, her elder son Tarique Rahman and four others till March 3 in the Tk 2.1 crore embezzlement case.

Meanwhile, the High Court deferred the hearing till February 2 on the petitions filed by Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman seeking to stay the proceedings of the case filed for misappropriating the money by forming Zia Orphanage Trust.

Judge Mozammel Hossain of the Special Judge Court-3 passed the order after Khaleda and Tarique's lawyer submitted separate petitions seeking adjournment of the hearing.

Khaleda could not appear before the court as she was busy in organising party activities while Tarique Rahman, also senior vice-chairman of BNP, had earlier gone abroad for treatment.

The two others accused--former BNP lawmaker Kazi Saleemul Haq Kamal and Sharfuddin Ahmed--could not appear before the court due to sickness.

Advertisement for Rupayan Town featuring a portrait of a man and text describing the project as a planned satellite city.

Large advertisement for Rupayan Town detailing project specifications, contact information, and a list of nearby locations.