

Quality medical education draws more foreign students

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

An increasing number of foreign students is coming to study medical education in Bangladesh.

In recent years, 500 to 550 foreign students entered the medical education every year, which was only 150 five years back.

In under graduate public medical institutions, there are some 50 seats for foreign students under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation quota and 45 seats under non-Saarc quota.

"But, more students are coming nowadays beyond the quota for receiving quality medical education from Bangladesh that would boost the image of the country and at the same time it earns huge foreign currency," said Khondhaker Mohammad Shefyetullah, director for medical education of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

A total of 173 foreign students from 16 countries applied for admission in MBBS course at the public medical colleges here in 2009-10 session.

And except the 95 students, all are going to the country's different private medical institutions, DGHS sources said.

Students are coming from Malaysia for the last three years, which is a very good sign as previously students were used to come from Nepal, Sri Lanka and other Saarc countries only.

But, in the last session students from Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Iraq and Italy also got admitted to different medical colleges in Bangladesh.

The course fee for a foreigner student in public medical institutions is \$US 15,000, which varies from \$25,000 to \$30,000 at the private medical colleges that is cheaper than many other countries.

But the main important thing here is the field for practical education is really vast in this populous country, said the experts.

The DGHS officials said the govern-

ments from different countries have been trying to increase their quota in the medical system here. A team from the health ministry of Malaysia came to Bangladesh last year and visited some of the private and public medical colleges to test the feasibility to send more students here.

"Malaysia thinks of sending one hundred medical students here in Bangladesh. In recent past, they used to produce health professionals from Egypt," said Dr Shefyet.

While talking to The Daily Star, Dr MA Zaman, principal of Bangladesh Medical College, said the number of foreign students got admitted in the medical colleges has been doubled this year.

"The number of students from Canada, USA and Nepal are increasing day by day. Last year some seven students got admitted to the different colleges. But, this year the number rose to 14," he said adding that along with the quality, the cost of medical education is relatively cheap here especially

comparing with those of Indian medical colleges.

All the medical institutions in Bangladesh are following the same curriculum that was prepared in assistance with the World Health Organisation (WHO). The comprehensive course curriculum 2001-03 is also followed in the South East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) countries including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Abul Hossain Ansari, a foreign student who got admitted to Mymensingh Medical College in 1999, said at that time the number of private medical colleges was very limited.

"With the increase of private medical colleges, there is a significant increase in the number of foreign students," said a Nepali doctor, who is now working as a lecturer of Public Health at Atish Dipankar University. "From the quality side, Bangladesh is second in the Saarc region after India."

Eve-teasing protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday condemned the incident of eve-teasing by spoilt boys that resulted in the suicide of a schoolgirl on April 3.

Umme Kulsum Elora, 13, committed suicide by taking pesticides after she found it hard to put up with the abuses the boys hurled at her.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad along with Elora's family members formed a human chain in front of her residence at Nandipara in the city yesterday.

Samajtantrik Mahila Forum Convenor Rawshan Ara Rusko and Member Secretary Syeda Parvin Akhter in a statement demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits responsible.

Karmojibi Nari also formed a human chain in front of the National Press Club yesterday protesting the incident.

Pabna Muktiyoddha Forum, Dhaka also expressed grave concern over the incident and demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits.



PHOTO: STAR

Karmojibi Nari forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday protesting the incidents of eve-teasing.



PHOTO: STAR

Noted artist Mustafa Monwar admires artworks by children with special needs after inaugurating an exhibition at Autism Welfare Foundation in the city yesterday.

Mojaheed blames caretaker govt for power crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed yesterday blamed the previous caretaker government for severe electricity crisis.

Both the Awami League government of 1996 and the BNP-led four-party alliance government had increased power generation, but the caretaker government did not add a single megawatt to the national grid during their two-year period, he said at a meeting at the National Press Club.

Mojaheed also said that former army chief Moeen U Ahmed along with his old friends is pulling the strings behind the scene regarding the trial of war criminals.

Quoting from Power Development Board's statistics, he said the previous Awami League government took over in 1996 when electricity generation capacity was around 2100 MW and the capacity increased to 3,300 MW at the end of its tenure in 2001. Later, the four-party alliance government increased the capacity to 4150 MW, but the caretaker government did not add a single megawatt to the national grid.

After revealing the statistics, Mojaheed said, "The four-party alliance government added more electricity to the national grid than the previous AL government." But the figures show that the four-party alliance government added 850 MW while the AL government added 1200 MW to the national grid.

The Jamaat leader also threatened to launch one-point 'oust government' movement if a ban is imposed on their party politics.

Dhaka city Jamaat Ameer Rafiqul Islam Khan presided over the meeting addressed by Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, ATM Azharul Islam and Abdul Kader Mollah.

Tk 130CR WORK ORDER TO INT'L CO BB notice on National Bank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday served notice on National Bank for not following an appropriate procedure in awarding a Tk 130 crore work order to an international company to construct a 20-storey building.

The central bank asked why legal steps should not be taken against National Bank for "irregularity" in awarding the deal and set the private bank a one-week deadline to reply.

It also put a bar on the release of funds for the project to construct the building on National Bank's land at Karwan Bazar.

The bank's board of directors had decided to construct the 237,700-square-foot building with two basement

floors.

The bank selected South Korea's Heerim Architects and Planners Ltd for the job without international bidding, according to the notice addressed to the bank's managing director.

The notice said the minutes of the board meeting had not mentioned specific details on how much to spend on which areas.

A central bank official said BB issued the notice after an investigation.

Abdur Rahman Sarker, managing director of National Bank, told The Daily Star: "I was on leave when the decision was made at a board meeting. I asked the bank's several divisions to give me necessary information. I shall reply to the notice by the deadline."

HC asks Rangpur DC to probe veil issue

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday asked the deputy commissioner of Rangpur to constitute a three-member committee, including two women, to probe the allegation of arbitrary drive by the law enforcers who detained 19 young girls on March 1 while visiting the local zoo and garden in Rangpur without wearing veil.

A division bench headed by Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the order when Sub-Inspector Golam Minhaz of Detective Branch in Rangpur, who led the arbitrary drive, appeared in person before the court in compliance with its order.

Dispensing Minhaz from personal appearance during the hearing on the writ

petition, the court asked the DC of Rangpur to submit the probe body report within 15 days.

On March 2, the High Court, upon a writ petition filed by three Supreme Court lawyers, directed the government to probe the allegation of arbitrary drive by a few law enforcers who detained 19 young girls while they were visiting the local zoo and garden in Rangpur without wearing veil.

The HC had also directed the government to take action against the perpetrators after investigation.

Barrister Mahub Shafique, KM Hafizul Alam and Imranul Hye Sajib filed the petition, which the HC considered as Public Interest Litigation (PIL) writ petition.

UP CANDIDATES HC rule on EC, govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon the Election Commission (EC) and government to explain within two weeks why they should not be directed to collect the details of the union parishad election candidates.

The details include academic qualification, profession, source of income, criminal records, if any, and other issues of the candidates.

The HC bench of Justice A H M Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Md Delwar Hossain issued the rule upon a public interest writ petition jointly filed by seven eminent citizens.

The petitioners are Badiul Alam Majumder of Shujon, columnist Syed Abul Maksud, former IGP ASM Shahjahan, AQM Shafiq Ullah, Manoranjan Mandol, Rasheda Akter and Suria Begum.

They filed the petition on Sunday challenging the legality of the failure of the EC and government in framing any rules for the candidates of union parishads to disclose their personal antecedents.

The EC and the secretaries to the EC secretariat and the ministry of law, justice and parliamentary affairs have been made respondents to the rule.

Barrister Sara Hossain and Barrister Ashraf Hadi appeared for the petitioner.

Biharis for arrest of land grabbers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bahari Rehabilitation Assembly (BBRA) yesterday demanded immediate arrest of land grabbers who have been trying to evict the Urdu-speaking Biharis living in camps at Mirpur in the city.

In a press release, BBRA leaders said they were hold a meeting on the reconstitution of Wapda Building Committee of Biharis at Mirpur section-10 on Saturday, but unknown people foiled the meeting by informing the Pallabi police that Jamaat-Shibir men have gathered there.

HSC EXAMS 63 expelled on 2nd day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teacher and 63 examinees were expelled from different centres for restoring to unfair means on the second day of Higher Secondary Certificate and its equivalent examinations under 10 education boards while 5,101 candidates remained absent yesterday.

Among the expelled students, 39 were under technical board, 12 under madrasa board, five each under Dhaka and Jessore boards, two under Rajshahi board and one each under Comilla, Dhanjpur and Barisal boards.

Of the absentees, 1,523 were from Dhaka, 742 from technical, 549 from Jessore, 542 from Rajshahi, 371 from Chittagong, 342 from Sylhet, 322 from Comilla, 276 from madrasa, 213 from Barisal and 211 from Dinajpur boards.

The next examination -- English first paper -- will be held on Thursday.

ACC decision on questioning Khaleda today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) will decide today its next step regarding investigations into two allegations of corruption against former prime minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The ACC has already issued three notices on Khaleda but failed to get proper response from her with regard to a date for questioning her.

In reply to the third notice issued on March 25, Khaleda said she would not face any questioning before going through documents and papers concerning the allegations, ACC sources said.

Khaleda also wanted the ACC to provide her with

detailed questions in advance of the questioning. The ACC received her reply on Sunday.

The commission issued its first notice on February 14 and the second one on March 3 seeking appointment with her for questioning.

In reply to these two notices, Khaleda had also said she needed to go through necessary documents before being questioned.

Top ACC officials yesterday said there must be an end to this issue of sending and re-sending letters and that the commission would sit today to decide its next step.

ACC sources also pointed out that the law does not permit them to send documents and papers to Khaleda.

The allegations against Khaleda include laundering of about Tk 7.5 crore of public money for purchasing land for Zia Charitable Trust and misappropriation of funds for construction of Bhairab Bridge, which caused a loss of Tk 100 crore to the state exchequer when she was the prime minister, the sources said.

The money laundering probe also involves Khaleda's sons Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko, as they are also trustees of the charitable trust.

Once the ACC inquiry finds sufficient information about an allegation, it files a case and conducts a fully-fledged investigation, ACC officials said.

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