

Students vow to build enlightened nation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The air of Ramna Park in the city yesterday echoed as thousands of students of different schools from across the city vowed loudly to create an enlightened nation.

The students with Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, founder president of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra (BSK), also vowed to read books.

A total of 5,181 students between class VI and X from 71 schools of the capital have won BSK's 'Book Reading Competition' this year.

Some 3,197 students yesterday received prizes while the rest of the winning students will be handed over prizes today.

The prizes are given in four categories -- shwagata, suvechhha, ovinandan, and biswa sahitya kendra. Students began to gather on the premises of Ramna Batamul from 8:30am.

Expressing his delight, Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal called upon the students to nurture the reading habit of more books alongside textbooks.

He also discouraged students to watch television. "You should not watch TV, as it will reduce your thinking power." Reading books increases power of thinking, he added.

Grameen Phone sponsored the programme in association with Delta Life Insurance Company.

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20 houses gutted in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 20 houses were gutted in a devastating fire in the city's Bhagolpur Lane under Hajaribagh Police Station yesterday.

Sources said the fire originated from a kitchen burner of a house around 12:00pm and soon engulfed to the adjacent houses. Firefighters along with locals doused the flame around 2:00pm.



The Daily Star staff and their families attend the annual get-together on the rooftop of the newspaper's new building on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near Farmgate in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

World must act fast against climate threats

Says Indian environmentalist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Countries across the world are required to act fast against climate threats, as peoples see climate changes happening frequently, says Indian environmentalist Sunita Narain.

"The time for soft talks is over; drastic action is needed. We really need to move ahead," she said.

The greenhouse gas emission continues rising in the rich world and few of the countries made small cut in the emission, said Sunita. "They have to reduce the gas emission extensively."

Sunita Narain, director for Centre for Science and Environment, India, was giving her keynote address on the second day of a symposium titled "Imagining another future for Asia: Ideas and pathways for change" organised by Asian University for Women (AUW) at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

Taking a glass as an example, she

said the rich countries over the years of pollution have filled the glass with emission.

"From the year 1950 to 2000, the USA added the cumulative emission of 30 percent of the glass while Europe contributed 30 percent and China nine percent."

Now, she said, the big challenge is how the rich countries reduce the emission to have a sustainable growth. "It's time to stop the kindergarten approach-- 'you go first, I go first'. We need an agreement based on equity."

Talking about adaptation, she said, "We need to have adequate funding to have sufficient adaptation strategies."

"It must come as payment to the victims," she said. "We need to argue with the world to sign a contract to pay us for adaptation which is our right."

But, it cannot be forgotten that adaptation is not a science, it is development with inclusiveness and sustainability, Sunita said, adding that

the developing countries have to fight and secure the right to development.

Moreover, climate change is not just about fund; it is fundamentally about politics and the politicians must act proactively, she said.

She said the change in the climate order has given an opportunity to rethink and redesign the country without pollution.

Sunita urged Bangladesh to continue its proactive leadership role for arguing its right to development.

State Minister for Environment and Forests Dr Hasan Mahumud said human beings with their irresponsible actions in the name of development have put the earth at risk.

"Bangladesh is contributing nothing, but the country will be the worst victim."

Mentioning that the global military expenditure was around \$1,500 billion, he said, "We are spending money to fight with each other, but we are not spending money to save our world."

Mexico for greater ties with Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

Mexico is keen to widen bilateral relations with Bangladesh.

Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa, president of the United Mexican States said this on Thursday in Mexico City while receiving Akramul Qader as the new Bangladesh Ambassador to Mexico with residence in Washington DC.

While presenting letters of credence, Ambassador Qader expressed his satisfaction for the privilege to serve as Bangladesh Ambassador to Mexico, said a press release of embassy of Bangladesh in Washington DC.

Bangladesh Ambassador also conveyed the warm and profound greetings of the president and the prime minister of Bangladesh to the Mexican president.

NEWS IN *brief*

Zillur for palliative care in dists

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday said he would ask the concerned ministry to set up palliative care units at all government medical colleges and district hospitals to give relief to the ailing elderly people.

He was inaugurating an international conference on palliative care and public health at Osmani Memorial Auditorium here in the evening.

Pro-AL panel wins Sustta poll

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Full panel of the pro-Awami League teachers group won the election to Shahjalal University of Science & Technology Teachers Association (Sustta) held on Thursday.

Dr S M Saiful Islam, professor of chemistry department; and Dr Abdul Gani, associate professor of sociology department; were elected president and general secretary.

A total of 294 teachers out of 424 voted in the election held at the teachers' club of the university.

'Killer' of female RMG worker held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested an alleged killer of garments worker Salma at Dogair Paschim para of the city's Demra in the wee hours of yesterday.

Mohammad Masud, 25, of Mathbaria of Pirojpur killed Salma on January 6. Police recovered the victim's mobile phone from him.

Masud said his friend Selim of Konapara had a love affair with Salma and together they killed Salma, as she was insisting Selim to marry her.

According to Masud, Selim promised him Salma's

RU admission date extended

RU CORRESPONDENT

Admission date for the first year honours courses under 2010-11 academic session of Rajshahi University extended to February 28 from January 6, says a press release.

Students were asked to know further detail from the respective faculty offices. The university authorities also advised the students to visit the university website www.ru.ac.bd.

Awareness on human rights stressed

METRO DESK

Speakers at a discussion stressed the need for creating mass awareness to protect human rights.

Journalist Association for Human Rights and Welfare (JAHR) in collaboration with Solarcon organised the discussion titled "Awareness is the precondition to protect human rights" at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

Shah Muhammad Mutasim Billah of Bhorer Kagoj and Ashif Mahmud Faruk, secretary general of JAHR, among others, spoke.



Museum set up to conserve fishes

Photo: Anisur Rahman

BBC ONLINE

Scientists from Stirling University are teaching some of the country's poorest people how to conserve its diminishing fish stocks.

They have set up an education centre and museum to emphasise the importance of sustainable fishing.

Fish is a vital source of food in the country but growing demand is putting pressure on the country's aquatic systems.

The Bangladesh Fish Museum and Biodiversity Centre, set up by Stirling's Institute of Aquaculture, aims to teach a largely illiterate population the importance of conserving the country's native aquatic species.

Based in Mymensingh, the centre offers people of all ages free access to information as well as museum exhibits, many of which were shipped over by the institute last year.

The facility is based in a building gifted by Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), which is supporting the project.

We felt there was an urgent need to promote greater understanding and appreciation of Bangladesh's natural history among ordinary people"

Dr Andrew Shinn, a senior lecturer at the Institute of Aquaculture, said: "We already know how effectively education and conservation initiatives can be used to protect endangered species, as well as sustainably managing others."

"So we felt there was an urgent need to promote greater understanding and appreciation of Bangladesh's natural history among ordinary people.

"And as fish is so central to their daily lives, it seemed obvious to build the idea around the aquatic environment."

As the overseas director of what is

now Bangladesh's first natural history museum, Dr Shinn is trying to secure more museum exhibits from around the world.

He is currently negotiating with an overseas government over a large collection of African animals for the museum.

In the process of setting up the centre, the Scottish institute has also become involved in running a night school for some of the area's poorest children.

Dr Shinn, along with former Stirling students who are now staff members at BAU, has helped to arrange basic education for about 60 children five evenings a week.

The night school receives no government assistance and survives on donations.

Dr Shinn enlisted the help of his family, friends and colleagues, who made donations and raised money through a series of small charity events.

Five drug traders jailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court sentenced five drug peddlers to two years' imprisonment each at BNP Bosti of Agargaon in the city last evening.

Police said they seized heroin from Shipon, Raja, Sharif, Abdul Mannan, and Ripon alias Swapan while the five were trading the illicit drug.

An executive magistrate of Dhaka district administration and Sher-e-Banglanagar police awarded them the punishment.



Reunion

Dhaka University Rokeya Hall Alumni Association will organise a reunion. Venue: Rokeya Hall premises, Time: 9:00am.

Celebration

Volunteers Association for Bangladesh will celebrate its 10 years of operation. Venue: LGED Bhaban, Agargaon, Time: 9:00am.

Seminar

Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled will arrange a seminar. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 3:00pm.

Discussion

Bangladesh Young Journalist Association will organise a discussion. Venue: Shilpakala Academy, Time: 4:30pm.

Hunger strike

Bangladesh Upazila Chairman, Vice Chairman Oikya Parishad will hold a hunger strike programme. Venue: Mukhtangan, Time: 11:00pm.

Meeting

Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will hold a

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