

Banned books of Maududi still in CU syllabus

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The Chittagong University authorities are still teaching controversial writer Syed Abul Ala Maududi's books, which were banned in the country in 2010 for contents encouraging extremism and militancy.

The books are taught as prescribed textbooks in three departments--Philosophy, Islamic History and Culture, and Islamic Studies.

Historians, teachers and students have expressed deep concern over the matter.

In a July 16, 2010 notification, the government asked the authorities concerned to remove Maududi's books from mosques and public libraries in the country.

Maududi founded the Jamaat-e-Islami in 1941. His books, originally written in Urdu and translated into Bangla, are essential reading for supporters of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, according to the party's manuals for its activists.

In the philosophy department, the political thoughts and biography of this radical writer, having roots in the hardline Jamaat-e-Islami, are taught in one course, "Contemporary Muslim Philosophy".

The course has been included in the curriculum since 2009, students said. At least six of Maududi's books were found in the department, though they were not referred to as suggested readings in the syllabus.

For the first time, questions on the political thoughts of Maududi appeared in the fourth year honours examination in 2003, and since then at least one question on Maududi has been put by the course teachers every year.

Seeking anonymity, a third year student of the department said course coordinators laid strong emphasis on topics on Maududi.

According to eminent historian and Dhaka University Prof Muntasir Mamun, the philosophy of Maududi could not be acceptable in any stage of our national curriculum.

"Topics included in such books cannot form part of a university syllabus. Maududi's philosophy is the root of all kinds of religious extremism and violence in this subcontinent," he told The Daily Star.

Throughout the country, law enforcers are particularly alert about these "illegal Jihadist books". They not only confiscate the books but also arrest people who possess them.

The largest collection of Maududi's books, 55 of them, was found in the Islamic studies department seminar library. The books are used as references in 11 courses in

the department.

Vice Chancellor Prof Anwarul Azim Arif said the present CU administration was completely unaware of the fact that the books were banned.

"If this is the case, then we shall investigate the matter. Actually, the university had been under the control of anti-liberation forces for a long period and that's why they could pursue a lot of activities detrimental to the spirit of our liberation war, democracy and socio-economic progress," he said.

Dr Md Sirajuddoula, a professor in the public administration department of CU, said the authorities should remove the books from the syllabus. "The authorities should take steps to stop teaching such controversial topics."

Four of Maududi's books were found in the Islamic history and culture department seminar library. The books are referred to as suggested reading in one course.

Asked, Chairman of the department Prof Bashir Ahmed said as far as he knew no books of Maududi were included in the syllabus. "I don't know about the existence of his books in our seminar library," he added.

This correspondent however found Maududi's books cited as reference books in the syllabi both in the Islamic studies department and the Islamic history and culture department.

Prof Gazi Saleh Uddin, former dean of social science faculty of CU, termed the inclusion of such controversial contents as a "philosophical crime". "It is a conspiracy of the anti-liberation forces to brainwash students. The authorities should take stern action to stop such activities," he said.

Prof Muntasir Mamun said a high-powered committee comprising prominent academics should scrutinise the syllabi, teaching methods and teacher recruitment process at the universities so that such a practice no longer existed.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid expressed astonishment when informed of the matter. "I wonder how banned books could be included in the curriculum of a public university."

He told The Daily Star that he agreed the matter was very serious and it should be stopped immediately. The minister said he would ask the CU authorities to submit a report to him in detail about the matter.

Contacted on August 28, the VC said the authorities were yet to receive any instruction from the ministry in this regard.



Shikor, an anti-drug organisation, forms a human chain in front of Chittagong Press Club yesterday protesting death threats issued by the accused in Himu killing case to two witnesses who are also members of Shikor. Himadri Majumdar Himu, 18, was allegedly pushed off the roof of a four-storey building by some friends on April 27. He died in a Dhaka hospital after 26 days. Himu had affiliations with Shikor. PHOTO: STAR

Road crashes kill five

METRO DESK

Five people, including a female primary school teacher, were killed in separate road accidents in Chittagong and Barisal on Friday and yesterday.

Our staff correspondent from Chittagong reports, Biplob Dey, 18, son of Amor Dey, of Boalkhali, died as a truck hit him in front of Uniliver office in Chandgaon yesterday.

In another incident, Md Suman, 26, son of Nazir Ahmed, of Sitakunda upazila, died instantly after a bus crushed him on Pucca Masjid road in the upazila yesterday.

Yet another incident, an unidentified woman, aged around 50, died instantly as an unknown vehicle hit her near Salt Gola circle in Chittagong city early yesterday.

In Barisal, Shiuli Akhtar Sumi, 28, a teacher of Baharamdi Government Primary School in Madaripur, was killed after falling from a motorcycle, ridden by her husband, on Barisal-Dhaka highway at Barthi in Gournadi upazila yesterday evening, said Gournadi police.

Meanwhile, a truck ran Dola Rari Gain, 14, over on the highway at Nilkhola in the upazila on Friday noon, killing her.

HIMU 'MURDER' Accused 'threaten to kill' witnesses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two witnesses in the Himu murder case filed separate general diaries with Panchlaish Police Station in Chittagong yesterday seeking security, stating that the accused had threatened to kill them if they testified against the latter.

Eighteen-year-old Himadri Majumdar Himu, a student of Summerfield School and College, was allegedly pushed off the roof of a four-storey building, Farhad Mansion, at Panchlaish Residential Area in Chittagong on April 27 by his friends.

Before pushing him off, they beat him up mercilessly and also had set three dogs upon him. Himu died 26 days later in the capital's Square Hospital.

In his statement, the first witness, M Ismail, said the death threat was issued by the accused, Shah Selim Tipu, owner of Farhad Mansion, and his son Junaid Ahmed Riad, both of whom are now on bail.

They arrived with some unknown youths and stopped Ismail before Chittagong Medical College Hospital around 1:45pm on Friday, he said.

"If you testify against us, your fate will be the same as Himu's," Ismail, president of Shikor, an anti-drug organisation Himu was involved in, quoted the accused.

The other witness, Abu Toyab, a Shikor member, stated that the accused had stopped him near Makki mosque of Panchlaish area around 3:00pm the same day and threatened to "bury him alive" if he gave deposition against them.

Tipu and Junaid got an eight-week interim bail on August 14 from a Dhaka court.

HUMAN CHAIN BY SHIKOR

Shikor members formed a human chain before Chittagong Press Club yesterday around 4:00pm protesting the death threat and the slow development in the

case investigation.

They placed several demands, including immediate arrest of the accused, submission of a charge-sheet and punishment to the accused.

Shikor General Secretary Jawed Ali Chowdhury said over three months have passed with no development in the case investigation.

Police, instead of arresting the accused, were providing the accused the opportunity to come and threaten the witnesses and delaying the charge-sheet submission in order to exclude the names of the accused, he said.

"Himu gave the names of his attackers before he died so there is no logic in delaying the case progress," he stated.

Himu's father Prabir Kanti Majumdar expressed his frustration over the role of law enforcers. "Police assured of many initiatives to catch the accused and that the accused would be arrested soon, but nothing happened."

On contact, the investigation officer of the case, Inspector (Investigation) Mohammed Alamgir, said the charge-sheet would be submitted "soon".

Panchlaish Police Station Officer-in-Charge Alamgir Hossain said they would take necessary steps as per the GD.

Asit, a distant uncle of Himu, filed the murder case with Panchlaish Police Station on May 24 accusing Junaid, his father Tipu and his friends Shahadat Hossain Sajju, Danny and Shaon of killing Himu.

Police detained Sajju and a court sent him to jail while Danny and Shaon are on the run. Prabir, a day after the torture on Himu, had filed a general diary with the police station in connection with the torture.

Himu, in the hospital bed on the same day, gave his friends a description of the brutal torture he was subjected to and the four boys who carried it out on him.

FOOD SECURITY PROJECTS USAID team visits southern region

UNB, Dhaka

The visiting USAID delegation continued their tour of US government-funded food security projects in the southern region of the country yesterday.

The delegation included the US Assistant to the Administrator in the Bureau for Food Security Paul Weisenfeld and Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Asia Bureau of USAID Denise Rollins, said a release.

The delegation visited a nutrition project in addition to rice, horticulture and aquaculture projects, funded under President Obama's global "Feed the Future" initiative.

They visited the Strengthening Partnerships, Results and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING)

programme in Shreerampur, Khulna, and met with beneficiaries and observed a counselling session on appropriate feeding of children aged six months to two years.

The next stop was a rice seed production and delivery systems programme in Rupdiah, Jessore. The project works with farmers to promote high yielding and stress tolerant rice varieties in 20 southern districts.

The goal is to intensify rice production while adapting to the potential adverse effects of climate change, including flooding, drought and increased salinity levels.

The delegation met with farmers and seed growers, visiting pilot plots of improved rice varieties.

Visiting USAID's aquaculture project in Pakdia, Jessore, the delega-

tion met with fishermen using modern fish farming techniques to raise Tilapia.

The delegation then visited a horticulture project in Churamon Khati, Jessore touring commercial vegetable gardens that produce bottle gourd, sweet potato and eggplant among other crops.

The US aims to help improve the income and nutritional status of 500,000 people in southern Bangladesh through this project.

With projected funding of up to US\$250 million over five years (pending future US Congressional appropriations), the United States aims to help reduce both overall poverty and child stunting by approximately 20 percent each in the 20 southern districts targeted under the Feed the Future programme.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



A K M Firdousi Maiz of Bogra died at his residence in the capital on Friday. He was 84.

His qukhwan will be held after Maghrib prayers at Parama Community Centre, Road-7, Dhanmondi on Monday, said a press release.

He left behind three sons, three daughters, grandchildren and a host of relatives to mourn his death, it said.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the first death anniversary of Dr Moin Uddin Ahmed (Montu) Doctor, a veteran freedom fighter and former Member of Parliament.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his residence in Monakasha village of Shibganj upazila under Chapainawabganj district.

A commemorative meeting was held at Shibganj Model High School yesterday.

A renowned physician, Moin Uddin Ahmed had been elected Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) in 1970, Member of Constituent Assembly (MCA) in 1972 and Member of Parliament in 1973, 1986, and 1996. He had been elected chairman of Shibganj upazila in 1985 and 1990.

He was also the president and general secretary in Shibganj upazila and Chapainawabganj district units Awami League at different times.



PHOTO: STAR

Hawkers put on sale old, stolen electronic devices and gadgets, including mobile phones, on a footpath just opposite the police headquarters in the capital. The photo was taken on Friday.

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