

Create more scope for education for poor: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed taking more initiatives so that the country's poor and meritorious students have a greater access to education.

"More initiatives should be there so that the poor and meritorious students get greater scope of education and higher education," she said while presiding over the 3rd meeting of the Advisory Council of the PM's Education Assistance Trust Fund.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed journalists after the meeting.

Hasina said her government has attached the highest importance to the education sector since it was the dream of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to free the country from poverty as well as ensure education for all.

The prime minister said the Awami League government increased the literacy rate by 20 percent during the 1996-2001 period, but the BNP-Jamaat clique after returning to power in 2001, pushed the country backwards in all field as the literacy rate again came down to its previous level.

She alleged whenever BNP-Jamaat assumed office, they stopped the development activities, especially in the education sector.

Mentioning that the PM's Education Assistance Trust Fund was formed with Tk 1000 crore seed money to help the poor and meritorious students continue their studies, she said stipends and support to students from the Trust would continue during the days to come.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of activities of the Trust over the last year.



Unemployed diploma nurses yesterday continued their sit-in in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club, demanding recruitment based on merits and seniority. Opposing a Bangladesh Public Service Commission circular seeking to recruit 3,616 senior nurses through exams, the demonstrators have been saying that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina previously announced to recruit 10,000 nurses. They also claim that many of them could not apply in the last 3 recruitment phases due to the previous system's seniority clause and now it will be unjust if they are to compete with juniors. On top of that they say they believe there is an ill-motive behind the current plan, including selling of jobs.

TONU KILLING

Third HC bench drops plea for judicial inquiry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A third High Court bench yesterday dropped from its hearing list a writ petition seeking a judicial enquiry into the murder of Comilla Victoria College student Sohagi Jahan TONU as the lawyer moving it was not present.

Yesterday's bench comprised Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice Md Salim.

The petitioner, Eunus Ali Akond, who will also place the arguments, told The Daily Star that he was not expecting it to be heard yesterday. He said he would move it before another bench on Monday.

The bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice AKM Shahidul Huq first dropped the petition on April 12 over the same cause.

On April 18, the bench of Justice Niama Haider and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil did the same, reasoning that an investigation was already

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Elements in AL acting against Liberation War spirit

Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee seminar told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday expressed their concern that elements within Awami League (AL), the party which led the country's struggle for freedom, had been creating barriers against spreading the true spirit of the Liberation War.

Muntassir Mamoon, president of Bangladesh Itihas Shommiloni, pointed out that there were writings against the Liberation War in the madrasa curriculum, which was developed with government money.

"Barriers are not always created by BNP or Jamaat (Jamaat-e-Islam), many are coming from within the government," he said, terming madrasas and parties like Olama

League enclaves of Pakistan.

He emphasised the need for teaching the history of the Liberation War and culture, in pace with economic development, at a seminar on the history and spirit of the Liberation War and law against distortion of history.

Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee (Forum for Secular Bangladesh and Trial of War Criminals of 1971) organised the seminar at the WVA auditorium in the capital's Dhanmondi in observation of the 45th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, drawn on April 10, 1971.

Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam, one of the authors of the declaration, spoke of the background in which it came about. He urged Prime Minister

Sheikh Hasina to give a clear call against violence in the name of religion in the upcoming AL council.

"If we cannot prepare ourselves against extremism, we will no longer remain victors, rather, we will become victims," he said.

"Those who are around the prime minister, they are there only to flatter her to change their own fate," said Justice Shamsul Huda of Labour Appeal Tribunal, adding that these "sycophants" were taking her to a point which seems to be a bad omen.

Noted journalist and acting president of the committee, Shahriar Kabir, said the law against distortion of the Liberation War's history must be given constitutional protection so that no

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

SYLHET'S VULNERABILITY TO EARTHQUAKE Fire brigade not prepared

SCC starts evacuating 32 high-risk buildings today

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

Since Sylhet city is in a severe threat of an earthquake due to the close proximity of the Dauki fault line, the city corporation has taken steps to start evacuating 32 high-risk buildings from today, as Fire Brigade and Civil Defense is not yet ready to face the catastrophe.

After the April 13 earthquake, Sylhet City Corporation sent evacuation notices to the buildings and ordered the residents and business holders to evacuate within a week. These buildings were enlisted in a 2005 primary risk-list, and also given notices previously, said Enamul Habib, chief executive officer of SCC.

"We do not have sufficient equipment, though we have trained 5,193 volunteers to join the rescue team in emergency," said Tanay Biswas, assistant director of Sylhet District Fire Service and Civil Defense.

"We need equipment like high-low

ladders, turn-table ladders, snorkels etc. Sylhet fire service is not capable of running rescue operations on high-rises," he said, adding, "We're taking necessary steps in this regard."

According to Sylhet fire service office there are only 16 stations in the division.

Based on a 2009 research paper of Comprehensive Disaster Management Program (CDMP) of the disaster management and relief ministry, Sylhet has 52,000 buildings, 148 kilometers of highway, 2 highway bridges and 268 kilometers of water and gas pipes.

A 2009 Hazus analysis estimated that at least 51,858 buildings will be moderately damaged due to a strong earthquake, which will ignite fire in at least 13 areas, leakage in water and gas pipeline in at least 97 zones, and accumulate 5 million tonnes of debris in Sylhet.

Sylhet City Super Market and Women

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2



This old and decayed tree on Shaheed Minar Road on Dhaka University campus could fall any day leaving people walking beneath injured or even dead. The photo was taken yesterday.

HC asks govt to provide treatment to Magura's tortured madrasa student

Wants to know why legal steps should not be taken against 'torturer' teacher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to take necessary steps to provide treatment to 10-year-old madrasa student Abujar Rahman who had been tortured by his teacher at Magura for months.

According to The Daily Star report published yesterday, Abujar, a student of Bagharpara's Darilakur Madrasa, had been physically tortured by his teacher Jahangir Hossain since his admission three years ago.

Police rescued the boy from Magura bus stand area on Monday night, with his left leg still tied up with an iron shackle and a piece of wood.

Following the report, the HC bench of Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice Md Salim yesterday issued a suo moto rule directing the deputy commissioner of the district to take necessary steps for his treatment.

In the rule, the HC asked the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why appropriate legal action should not be taken against the teacher.

The education secretary, chairman of madrasa education board, deputy commissioner of Magura and principal of the madrasa and chairman of its governing body have been made respondents to the rule.

Supreme Court lawyers Ruhul Quddus Kazal and Abu Khaled Al Mamun placed The Daily Star's report before the HC bench for necessary order.

BEATING OF UDAYAN SCHOOL STUDENT HC asks authorities to submit probe report in one month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the principal of Udayan Higher Secondary School in the capital to probe into an allegation of torture on an eighth grader by a teacher of the school and to submit the report to it in one month.

The principal, Umme Salema Begum, was also asked to mention in the report what steps have so far been taken against the teacher.

Issuing a suo moto rule, the court ordered her to take measures so that the student who fell victim to torture can attend the classes and continue his study at the school without any hindrance.

On April 13, Jaoshed Alam, a

mathematics teacher of the school, called the student out while he was attending another class, and beat him up, according to a report published on bangla daily Prothom Alo on Tuesday.

After that, the student got panicked and fell sick.

The HC bench of Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice Md Salim yesterday issued the rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why appropriate legal actions would not be taken against the teacher for the torture after Supreme Court lawyers Ruhul Quddus Kajal and Abu Khaled Al Mamun placed the report before it seeking necessary order.

Education secretary, director general of the directorate of secondary and higher secondary education, chairman of Dhaka education board, deputy commissioner of Dhaka, principal of Udayan school and the managing director of its governing body have been made respondents to the rule.

Kajal alleged that Jaoshed beat the student mercilessly without any specific reason.

However, indicating taunts at teachers by students, the principal said, "Jaoshed was popular with the students...but it is needed to know what led him to get so angry and beat the student," added the Prothom Alo

Water transport workers go on indefinite strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Water Transport Workers Federation embarked on an indefinite strike from today to press home a 15-point demand including increasing their minimum wage from Tk 4,150 to Tk 10,000.

"Our strike started from 12:01am," the federation president, Shah Alam Bhuiyan, told The Daily Star, claiming that the shipping minister's January 16 promise to

fix a wage board in 30 days was yet to be fulfilled.

The wages were last hiked in 2013 and the workers withdrew similar strikes in the past following government promises.

The other demands include ensuring security for workers, preventing extortion, issuance of appointment letters and maintaining navigability of waterways.

The federation estimates that there are around two lakh water transport workers in

STAR WEEKEND

in other news...

This week, the *Star Weekend* has an array of interesting articles for our readers. The spotlight this week is about how rape and sexual assault have risen at an alarming rate, with the authorities still turning a blind eye. There is also an important piece on how our nation is losing its democratic values due to how all the elections are held with the consequence of violence and murder. Don't forget your copy of *Star Weekend* tomorrow, Friday!

IN A STATE OF DENIAL

The numbers on rape cases and sexual assaults have dramatically increased over the last few months in Bangladesh. In fact, human rights organisations have come up with alarming numbers as evidence cases where both women and children have been victimised through rape, molestation, misuse and attempted rape and murder. What's all the more disturbing is that their parents work as school or even at the safety of their very own homes in a regular basis. These news reports have taken the country by storm and thousands are protesting on the streets of Bangladesh almost every other day. However, the response from the authorities seems to be slow or close to apathetic. Despite the fact that sexual assaults of all kinds do occur right in front of our eyes, why is it that we prefer to remain in a state of denial? Turn to pages 4 and 9 to read this week's spotlight.

3 A PROVISION FOR HOME DEMOCRACY

5 BLOOD STAINED ELECTIONS, A FREEDOM FIGHTER'S DREAM

6 NEWSPAPER CROWN GOES TO THE PEOPLE

13 TEMPLE AND A CITY