



A joyous day for children

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the first Shishu Prohor (special hours dedicated to children) of this year's Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela yesterday, little children and their parents thronged the fair.

The event, arranged every Friday and Saturday at the book fair, continued from 11am to 1pm at the children's corner in Suhrawardy Udyan. Member secretary of book fair's organising committee Dr Jalal Ahmed inaugurated the Shishu Prohor event.

Mascots of popular characters of Sisimpur (the Bangladeshi adaptation of Sesame Street) welcomed the children at the Shishu Prohor. Halum, Iqri and Tuktki performed skits and interacted with the children, much to their excitement.

"I love Tuktki. She is so nice. I hugged her and she hugged me too," said four-year-old Zenia, who came with her parents to the fair.

Zenia's father Md Rashid was seen smiling seeing her daughter's excitement. "I wanted to give her surprise so I brought her here. She is so happy, and so am I."

The children made merry with other children at the designated corner at the book fair.

"I brought my daughter to the fair so that she can play and enjoy. As the day is dedicated to children, it is drawing their attention and helping them learn as well," said Fatima Akhter, who came with her five-year-old son Akash.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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FIRST DAY OF SSC EXAM Wrong question papers given to hundreds of examinees

STAR REPORT

Question papers based on 2018's syllabus were provided to several centres in four districts across the country on the first day of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and equivalent examinations of 2019 yesterday, causing alarm among examinees and guardians.

The first day's exam was on Bangla (first paper).

As many as 600 examinees at the PS Government Model High School centre in Manikganj's Daulatpur upazila took part in the exam with wrong multiple-choice question (MCQ) papers supplied by invigilators.

A number of SSC candidates alleged that they informed the secretary of the centre, hall super and invigilators, but they initially tried to sweep it under the rug, and told students they had to answer whatever questions they were given.

Examinees began to demonstrate at the centre after the exam, until the secretary and hall super of the centre calmed them down.

Secretary of the centre Mizanur Rahman told reporters that they had informed the higher authorities about the matter, but were told the students would be graded on the question paper they answered.

In Chattogram, wrong question papers of Bangla first paper were supplied to examinees in at least seven centres, including Municipal Model High School, Dr Khastagir Government Girls' School, Patenga High School and Garib-e Newaz High School of the port city and Ukhiya Girls High School, Pekua Girls High School and Ukhiya Palong Ideal High School in Cox's Bazar district, education board officials said.

Contacted, Mahbub Hasan, exam controller of Chattogram Education Board, told The Daily Star that they

received the allegations of wrong distribution of question paper from seven schools across the division.

Seventy-seven students at Municipal Model High School, 14 students from Dr Khastagir Girls' School and 50 students from Ukhiya Girls High School were given wrong question papers, he added.

"We issued show-cause notices to seven invigilators for distributing wrong question papers. We don't know the exact number of the students who were given the wrong question paper. We won't let the students suffer," he assured.

Amzad Hossen Khan, a guardian of an SSC examinee told The Daily Star that his daughter, who appeared at the Nasirabad Girls' School centre, was a regular examinee of 2019, but was given the MCQ questions of 2018.

"She did not notice it first, and thought the question was tough this year."

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This parliament doesn't have moral legitimacy

Alleges Mirza Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday alleged that the 11th parliament lacks legitimacy, as its lawmakers were not elected by people's votes.

"The current parliament doesn't have the moral legitimacy to go into session, since they [MPs] were not elected. It was a farce and a cruel mockery with the nation in the name of an election," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said at a programme at Jatiya Press Club.

A newly-launched women's body, "Awaj", arranged the seminar titled "Violence and Women: Present Perspective". Dr Shahida Rafique, a professor of Dhaka University, presented the keynote paper at the programme.

Speaking at the programme, Fakhrul urged his party colleagues to be vocal and active for the restoration of democracy, and removing injustice. "We should not die before our death. Don't get panicked; people of the country are with you."

Nasim urges BNP to join parliament

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) president member Mohammed Nasim yesterday urged BNP to join parliament and play their due role.

"The BNP lawmakers should join the parliament and make constructive criticism of the present government... There is ample time to join the parliament," he said.

Nasim, also the 14-party spokesperson, made the call while addressing a discussion titled "Women's Role in Parliamentary Democracy", organised by Jaago Foundation.

About women empowerment, he said women were empowered under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"Women empowerment in Bangladesh has become an example to the world as there are 50 reserved women's seats in the Jatiya Sangsad," he said.



Law Minister Anisul Huq hands over scholarship to a visually impaired student at Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium in the capital's Mirpur.

PHOTO: STAR

DBBL awards scholarships to 3,986 students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited (DBBL) yesterday at a programme awarded scholarships to 3,986 meritorious and underprivileged students, who passed HSC or equivalent exams last year, and are studying at undergraduate level.

The bank organised the event at

Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium in the capital's Mirpur. Law Minister Anisul Huq and Bangladesh Bank Governor Fazle Kabir handed over the scholarships among the students.

Speaking as chief guest, the minister said, "Ensuring quality education for all is our national responsibility."

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Agri minister pledges increased subsidy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Agriculture Minister Dr Md Abdur Razzaque yesterday promised to increase subsidy for the agriculture sector, and reiterating his call to meet the challenge of increasing safe food production by taking newly-developed rice varieties and associated technologies to farmers' doorstep.

While inaugurating the Annual Research Review Workshop 2017-18 of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) in Gazipur, he asked scientists at the institute to develop more rice varieties and appropriate technologies that can help crops survive adverse environmental effects such as salinity, drought, cold, flood and water resurgence.

Md Nasiruzzaman, secretary to the agriculture ministry, presided over the inaugural session while Chairman of Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation Md Fazle Wahed Kondker, Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council Dr Md Kabir Ikramul Haque and Director General of Department of Agricultural Extension Mir Nurul Alam joined the programme as discussants. BRRI Director General Dr Md Shahjahan Kabir delivered the welcome address while BRRI Director Dr Md Ansar Ali delivered vote of thanks. BRRI Director (Research) Dr Tamal Lata Aditya presented the keynote paper of the workshop.

Experts and officials from different government and non-government organisations along with university students and farmers' representatives attended the workshop, the technical sessions of which will continue for the next five days.

FOOD SAFETY Only realising fines not the solution: food minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder yesterday stressed on raising awareness among people about consuming safe food, rather than realising fines through conducting sudden drives.

"If we do not raise awareness then it [food safety] will not be possible only through enforcing law," he said.

He was addressing a press briefing at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

BFSa arranged the briefing to inform the media about its initiatives centring this year's National Food Safety Day, which was observed yesterday for the second consecutive year.

Marking the occasion, BFSa will arrange a two-day programme including a National Food Safety Fair and a seminar at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh from today.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the programme, the food minister said, adding that various programmes will also be held across the country.

The minister further said drives against unsafe food will be conducted solely by the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority

(BFSa) in future.

"It [BFSa] is still new. It lacks sufficient manpower. I do not think others will be required when it becomes full-fledged," the minister said.

Responding to a query, he said coordination among different government bodies are required to ensure food safety.

Addressing the briefing, BFSa Chairman Mohammad Mahfuzul Hoque said they have plans to provide license to the capital's street food vendors to ensure food safety.

About four lakh vendors are selling street food in Dhaka city at present, he said, adding, they will take help from the city corporations, municipal offices and local government bodies to work to this end all over the country.

BFSa has already provided different grading stickers recognising food standards at some restaurants in the capital, and has been monitoring their activities, Mahfuzul said.

If the restaurants do not maintain standard they will be downgraded, he added.

Secretary of Food Ministry Shahabuddin Ahmed, among others, addressed the press briefing.

Accelerating growth real challenge for new govt: EU

UNB, Dhaka

Appreciating Bangladesh's impressive economic performance over the last one decade, the European Union (EU) yesterday said sustaining and accelerating this growth is the real challenge for the new government.

"I think sustaining and accelerating this growth is, of course, the real challenge for the new government," said EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Rensje Teerink while delivering her keynote speech at Cosmos Dialogue at Six Seasons Hotel in Dhaka.

The ambassador said they are also very keen to pursue and enhance engagement with the new government, with a view to contributing and supporting the deepening of democracy without which a sustainable development will not happen.

Cosmos Foundation organised the symposium titled "Bangladesh-European Union Relations: Prognosis for the Future" as part of its Ambassador Lecture Series. Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque

attended the event as chief guest, which was held with Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Principal Research Fellow at Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), National University of Singapore, in the chair. Cosmos Foundation Chairman Enayetullah Khan delivered the welcome address.

Talking about the passage from the EU's current "Everything but Arms" (EBA) to GSP+ trade privilege, the EU ambassador said GSP+ will not be automatically eligible; Bangladesh will have to ratify, implement and accept 27 core conventions on human rights, environmental and good governance standards.

Foreign Secretary Haque said they will have to move on the GSP+ and time has come to discuss the matter.

Foreign Secretary Mahbub Uz Zaman; German Ambassador Peter Fahrenholtz; French Ambassador Marie-Annick Bourdin; UN Resident Coordinator Mia Seppo; British Deputy High Commissioner Kanbar Hossein-Bor, eminent businesspersons and former diplomats also spoke at the event.



Pedestrians, rickshaws, and motor-bikers continue to break rules, despite DMP's efforts to bring the capital's traffic situation under control during a traffic discipline fortnight. The photos were taken on Friday, when police filed 423 cases, and realised fines of Tk 2,044,050 as part of the drive.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS