



PHOTO OF THE DAY

SK ENAMUL HAQ



Two workers hammer down an old building in Malibagh, presumably to make way for skyscrapers -- to match the ones in the background. Manual labour is still a mainstay of construction work in the city, despite the advancement of technology and volume of such work that goes on every day. The photo was taken recently.

USE OF NATURAL FIBRES

Bangladesh tables resolution at UN

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has tabled a draft resolution titled "Use of Natural Fibres such as Jute and Sisal" at the UN for consideration during the 74th General Assembly.

Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Ambassador Masud Bin Momen tabled the resolution at the plenary of the second committee under Agenda-24, "Agriculture development, food security and nutrition" on Friday.

He said Bangladesh is the third largest producer of vegetables, fourth largest producer of rice and fifth largest producer of inland fisheries.

The negotiation process of this resolution will start soon at the UN headquarters, said the Bangladesh Mission in New York yesterday.

Masud encouraged member states to promote the use of environment-friendly natural fibres such as jute, cotton, and sisal. He said enough has not been done to make people aware of the benefits of the use of natural fibres as substitutes of artificial fibres.

He argued that a resolution of General Assembly is required to signal Bangladesh's commitment to protect environment through using natural fibres. He opined the resolution could be an effective tool to raise global awareness on importance of natural fibres, not only to producers and the industry, but also to consumers for a better choice in saving the environment.

Reshuffle admin at all universities: Dr Akbar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted educationist Dr Akbar Ali Khan yesterday called for reshuffle in the administration of all universities, aiming to stop of repetition of the brutal incident in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

"We should not keep our focus only on Buet campus. We should keep in mind that there is a possibility of such problems occurring at other universities", Akbar Ali Khan said about the gruesome murder of Buet student Abrar Farhad, while speaking as chief guest at a debate competition by Debate for Democracy in the capital.

The killing of Abrar, in the hands of Chhatra League activists on the Buet campus, sparked protests in university campuses across the country. Buet Alumni Association and Teachers Association demanded removal of VC Prof Saiful Islam for his failure to ensure security of students.

Meanwhile, Buet administration on Friday

banned all kind of politics on the campus.

Demanding speedy trial of Abrar's killers, he said, "We should not be satisfied with suspension and arrest of them.

One should be satisfied only after their sentences are implemented within the quickest possible time", Akbar Ali Khan said.

"Administration of all other universities should be reshuffled. The education ministry should take steps regarding the issue," said Akbar Ali Khan, also a noted economist and a former bureaucrat.

On another note, Akbar Ali Khan said the ongoing correction drives will contribute to ensuring good governance.

"Good governance comes automatically where rule of law exists. Correction drives are needed when monitoring has been absent for a long period."

Debaters from University of South Asia and Lalmatia Mahila College joined the shadow parliament style debate, with the jury declaring University of South Asia winners.

'No one is smiling on the streets of Dhaka'

Experts discuss mental health issues of children

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children today are not being given an alternative to internet and mobile phones as a means of recreation, which is deteriorating children's mental health, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

Besides, understanding the mind of children is very important, where careful parenting and schooling can play the most important role, they also said.

"What alternatives to internet or mobile phones are we presenting before our children? On the contrary, PSC, JSC [or pressure for GPA] is destroying the spontaneity of our children," said Kamal Chowdhury, associate professor of Dhaka University's department of clinical psychology while speaking in the discussion marking World Mental Health Day.

The counseling unit of BRAC University organised the discussion on its campus, titled "Promoting mental health of young adults: Role of Mental Health Professionals and Academic Institutions."

Nobody on the streets [of Dhaka] is seen with a smiling face; everybody seems angry and is in a rat race to with each other, Kamal Chowdhury added.

Moderated by Dr Mehtab Khanam, psychologist and advisor of the counseling unit of Brac University, a number of psychologists and academicians participated in the session.

Some 53 percent parents cannot understand their children, while eight percent children have no friends, Helal Uddin Ahmed, associate professor of National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital said, referring to a 2017 WHO study on 11 countries.

"These tremendous factors have created an abnormal situation, the solution to which needs a collaboration between schooling and parenting," he added.

Dr Mehtab Khanam said, "We are expressing condolence, [and] sympathy to the incidents like Abrar [killing]. But there is not enough thought on what should be done to overcome it."

Prof Afsan Chowdhury spoke of current situation of sexual abuse and other mental problems in the country, compared to the 1990s: "Situation of sexual abuse to children has remained the same as it was in 1998. Almost half of the abused are male."

"Brac University regularly arranges views-exchange meetings with guardians, to take care of mental health of the students. Other institutions, especially schools, can think of such activities," said Lady Syeda Sarwat Abed, head of the counseling unit of the university.

Huraera Jabeen, associate professor of BracU; Salim Hossain, assistant professor of DU; Roufun Nahar of educational and counseling psychology at DU; and psychiatrist Dr Ashique Selim also spoke.

'Student politics can't be banned by forming law'

Said food minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

An 18-year old can not be denied the right to their freedom of speech, said agriculture minister and veteran politician Dr Abdur Razzaque yesterday.

Reflecting on the brutal murder of Buet student Abrar Fahad and the subsequent ban on student politics at the country's premier engineering university, he said, "A university student can express their political opinion as a constitutional right," said the minister at a workshop at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute in Gazipur.

"Therefore, you cannot ban student politics by law," he said.

"Practicing democratic spirit is a fundamental political right."

Party-based student politics is a common practice in many countries of the world including neighbouring India, where elections to students' union are held on the basis of political affiliations, he said.

Student politics has been a long tradition in this country as well, he said, but it has to be transparent, ethical, and in democratic spirit.

Abrar murder is a heart-wrenching tragedy and is utterly unacceptable, said the minister. "It is unthinkable that the country's brightest students may indulge in such brutal act of beating a co-student to death."

ROHINGYA ISSUE

Int'l conclave in Hague Oct 18

UNB, Dhaka

An international conclave will be held in The Hague, Netherlands, on October 18 to bring focus the issue of 'justice and accountability' for Rohingyas.

Experts from home and abroad, researchers, policymakers, human rights activists and others are expected to participate.

The Centre for Peace and Justice of Brac University, Asia Justice Coalition, and the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam will organise the event.

"The goal is to bring justice and accountability to the centre of the Rohingya crisis," Manzoor Hasan, Executive Director of CPJ, told the media in Dhaka yesterday.

Bring forth less-known aspects of Liberation War

Speakers urge journalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday urged journalists to bring forward less explored areas of the Liberation War including accounts of refugees relocated to the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh and participation of indigenous community in the war.

Noting that the 50th anniversary of independence is coming up in two years, they suggested that print and electronic media journalists work on research-based stories that would interest the new generation.

The daylong views-exchange meeting on journalistic articles about the Liberation War for "Bazlur Rahman Smriti Padak" was held at Liberation War Museum in Agargaon.

With financial support from family members and friends of late eminent journalist Bazlur Rahman, the museum authorities have been giving the award since 2008.

Liberation War Museum Trustee Dr

Sarwar Ali said the country has changed a lot since 1971 and audience for the memoir-based articles on the war has declined over time.

Freedom fighter Maj (retd) ASM Shamsul Arefin suggested writing more on the interim Mujibnagar government.

At the event, Researcher and Dean of Faculty of Arts at Dhaka University Dr Abu Md Delwar Hossain shared some less-known aspects about those who surrendered to Bangladesh and Indian joint command on December 16, 1971.

Referring to the killing of Abrar Fahad, former DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said, "We talk about the spirit of Liberation War, but it did not reach the children generation after generation."

He urged journalists to do stories that would rekindle the Liberation War spirit among youths.

Eminent journalist Ajay Dasgupta; media personality Nowajesh Ali Khan, and museum trustees Ziauddin Tariq Ali and Rabiul Hasan also spoke at the meeting.



Labourers push a two-wheel cart carrying some 20 large barrels, tied together by rope, on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. They said they were taking the empty containers to Karwan Bazar from Old Dhaka to sell those. The photo was in Paribagh area yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



A transformer sandwiched dangerously between two buildings in Lalbagh shows not a lot has changed in terms of fire safety measures in Old Dhaka. Locals often leave their clothes out to dry on adjacent windows, creating an electrical fire risk. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

ABRAR MURDER PROBE

FORUM-ASIA calls for transparency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) has called upon the Bangladesh government to carry out a thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into the murder of Buet student Abrar Fahad and bring the perpetrators to justice.

In a press statement, issued Friday night, the rights body also demanded that the government ensure freedom of expression for all, and respect and protect it as a fundamental right. It also stressed the need for ending the culture of impunity in the country.

Condemning the brutal murder of Abrar, the Forum -- a coalition of 81 rights organisations in Asia -- said the incident indicates that freedom of expression in Bangladesh has been "severely challenged" due to shrinking civic space.

"The killing of Abrar exposes not only crimes committed by Chhatra League, but also the dysfunctions of the institutions of the country, including the law enforcement agencies and the judiciary," the Forum said in the statement.

"The abuses by Chhatra League in forms of harassment, criminal intimidation and extortion are often reported, and there is seemingly no attempt from the government to hold these perpetrators accountable," it added.

It further said the death of Abrar has not only stirred public outcry in Bangladesh, but also earned condemnation from the international community.

DHAKA TODAY

PROTEST

Demanding fair trial of Abrar murder and ensuring safe environment in all educational institutes
Organiser: Swapner Dhaka University
Venue: National Museum
Time: 4pm

REPORT LAUNCHING

Secondary School Teachers in Bangladesh in the Light of SDG's
Organiser: Campaign for Popular Education
Venue: LGED-RDEC Building, Agargaon
Time: 11:30am

SEMINAR

Artificial Intelligence on Data Science and Machine Learning
Organiser: Skill Jobs
Venue: DF Tower, Dhanmondi
Time: 3pm

WORKSHOP

American Music and Culture
Organiser: U.S. Embassy
Venue: American Centre, Baridhara
Time: 3pm

MUSIC CLASS

A Journey with Irish Whistle
Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani
Time: 3pm

FESTIVAL

Digital ICT Fair
Venue: Multiplan Centre, Elephant Road
Time: 10am

AWARDS

Bangladesh Business Innovation Award 2019
Organiser: Bangladesh Innovation Conclave
Venue: Le Méridien Dhaka
Time: 7pm