

Include sex education in national curriculum

Speakers at webinar demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There must be training for teachers so that they can deliver the sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) lessons in an innovative and interesting approach, breaking the existing stigma and socio-cultural taboo, said speakers at a webinar yesterday.

They also pointed out the importance of inclusion of SRHR issues in the examinations, so that students become more interested and eager to learn these issues from their curriculum, which will play a great role in preventing sexual violence.

The webinar, titled "Importance of incorporation of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) education in the National Curriculum for the prevention of sexual violence", was jointly organised by Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha (BNPS) and The Daily Star.

Rokeya Kabir, executive director of BNPS, said since in 2021, the national curriculum will be revised, BNPS demands incorporation of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in the national curriculum and it must be treated as the health and sexual rights of women.

Rokeya Kabir also highlighted that a gender-sensitive education system and scientific analysis of CSE from an early age can work as a tool to prevent sexual violence.

Reproductive health specialist Dr Sameena Chowdhury, former head of the Department of Gynaecology and Obs at Dhaka Medical College, who is currently the president of Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB), stressed on the importance of knowing one's body and highlighted the existing taboo related to sexual health issues.

She also condemned the irrelevant objectification of women in the media and stressed on the importance of humanitarian development.

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Moshfeka Begum was reeling from cancer when she began gardening. Today, she is devoted to spreading the joy to as many people as she can. Fellow green enthusiast Barkat, inset, finds a similar kind of zen in his garden, which has over 150 species of plants.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

She found a lifeline

Rooftop gardening helps 65-yr-old cope with cancer; vibrant community budding in Barishal

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

College teacher Moshfeka Begum was diagnosed with breast cancer six years ago. At 59, her vision for a long life was suddenly blurred by this revelation. She was devastated.

When she went to Singapore for treatment, doctors told her to spend time in serene settings, specifically around greenery. They told her to begin gardening, with the hope that tending to leaves and petals help her.

Moshfeka was desperate for a way out of her woes, and she took their words to heart. Immediately after getting back home, she started planning a garden. Living in an urban space, she had no choice but the roof of her four-storey building.

Six years later, she is now the owner of a splendid little rooftop oasis, but more importantly, she is happy as ever.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Giving children a creative outlet

Jolputul inaugurates puppet school in capital



The school offers courses that will teach youngsters everything about the craft of puppeteering, on stage and behind it.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

FAISAL BIN IQBAL, from SHOUT

Jolputul Puppets, a Dhaka-based community of puppetry enthusiasts, inaugurated a new puppet school over the weekend. The school, located at the capital's Elephant Road, will allow young kids to learn the once popular craft of puppetry.

Students will be trained on various aspects of the art form, like how to make and control puppets, and how to design stories and settings for live shows.

"We want our students to get familiar with various kinds of puppets and the process of making them using everyday items," says Saiful. "Our curriculum will also help them understand how to create a setting for a puppet show. Besides, we also teach them how to develop their own stories and make it presentable to their audience."

Originally set to open earlier in the year, the school's inauguration had to be delayed due to the coronavirus. "We had been planning to begin activities at our puppet school for a while," says Saiful Jamal, Creative Director at Jolputul Puppets. "But like everything else, the pandemic brought those plans to a screeching halt."

"Initially, we ran a series of live

puppet-making sessions on our Facebook page. This went on for about 40 days. But we weren't fully on-board with the idea of making kids sit through these virtual sessions," Saiful recounted. "We would rather that they spend less time on smartphones and computers, which is why we decided to begin in-person classes."

Classes are scheduled for weekends, and students can choose to come on any one of the two days. Currently, each session is limited to around 5 to 10 students and is conducted over a period of two-and-a-half hours.

Once the pandemic situation improves, Jolputul Puppets expects to enrol a larger number of students and hold classes outside the capital, Saiful said.

Currently, the school is operating a 2-month course on puppetry. In the first month, students are introduced to the basics, while in the second, they are provided with more advanced lessons related to the craft.

"It's my first day here with my child, and from what I can tell, everything seems very well managed," says Zakir Hasan, parent of a student at the school. "I overheard the children enjoying themselves inside the class, and I feel content to know that."

'MN Larma fought for the marginalised'

Say speakers at event marking his 37th death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manabendra Narayan Larma was a friend of the deprived and marginal people and he fought for their rights, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

The event was organised to mark his 37th death anniversary. The national committee to observe his death anniversary arranged the meeting at Women Voluntary Association (WVA) in the capital.

MN Larma, born on September 15, 1939, was a prominent Chakma politician and a leading proponent of the rights of CHT people. He was assassinated on November 10, 1983.

At yesterday's event, speakers said MN Larma does not belong to any particular group or party; he is a leader for all to follow. He fought for a democratic and progressive Bangladesh, they added.

Larma raised debate in the parliament about the constitution as he thought it did not include the voice of the deprived and marginalised, said speakers. But the government is yet to recognise the rights of the people living in the hills, they said, adding that people there are still fighting for their rights.

Abu Sayeed, journalist and columnist and convener

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Dhaka to have 42 bus routes, down from 291

Says Taposh after meeting of bus route rationalisation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Buses on 291 routes in Dhaka city will in future only run on 42 routes, and a high-powered committee on bus route rationalisation is working on it.

This was stated at a press briefing by Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh at Nagar Bhaban yesterday.

He also said buses which come from different districts will have to stay at terminals at the bordering areas of the city and will not be allowed to enter.

"If we can do it, it will reduce pressure on Dhaka and traffic congestion will lessen," Taposh said.

After the committee meeting of "Bus Route Rationalisation and Operation of Bus Services on Company Basis in Dhaka", he said they have received a report yesterday on bus routes and companies, and following proper examination, they have decided to decrease the 291 routes to 42 primarily.

"There are 2,500 bus owners running their vehicles in Dhaka city. Authorities will bring the number of bus companies down to 22, and all the owners will be able to get ownership of the companies as shareholders," he said.

He said they will hold the next meeting on December 8, and stakeholders will examine the proposal further, and will determine the cluster and routes.

"If we can all come to an understanding of clusters and routes, it will be a major step," he added.

The mayor said they are hopeful for a good result by the end of next year but did not want to give a specific time-frame.

The number of terminals in Dhaka city is very limited: only three in Dhaka, two in DSCC and one in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC).

Buses usually park on roads due to lack of space, he said.

A feasibility study is ongoing and a report will be submitted by March, where

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

'He siphoned off Tk 195cr'

Samrat shown arrested in money laundering case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Expelled Jubo League leader Ismail Chowdhury Samrat, one of the "casino kingpins" in Dhaka and his close aide Enamul Haque Arman have been shown arrested in a Tk 195 crore money laundering case.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Sarafuzzaman Ansary yesterday passed the order after Md Mehedi Maksud, an inspector of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and also the case's investigation officer, produced the duo before the court with a petition to show them arrested in the case.

The magistrate rejected a bail petition of Samrat

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The onset of winter ushers in a busy few months for quilters, as demand for comforters hit the sky. This photo was taken yesterday from Barishal city's Padmabati area.

PHOTO: TITU DAS



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