

'Kumon' method to be launched in 300 'Schools of Future'

STAR REPORT

State Minister for ICT Zunaed Ahmed Palak yesterday said they will launch the Japanese education method "Kumon" in 300 "Schools of Future" by next year and all Sheikh Russel Digital Labs by 2025 across the country.

He said this while addressing an award giving ceremony – as chief guest – for winners of "Brac Kumon" competition at Brac CDM in Savar, reports UNB.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid and Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Ito Naoki were present as special guests at the event where Brac Executive Director Asif Saleh, among others, also attended.



Ambassador Naoki in his speech said the method will be considered as a model in the days to come in building a skilled manpower in Bangladesh.

Brac officials informed that they have already started the Kumon education method for underprivileged children in Haluaghat area of the port city of Chattogram.

At the event, a total of 330 winners under different categories of four Brac schools were awarded the prizes.

Pricier school supplies threaten dropouts in northern chars

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Many children living on the impoverished Teesta river islands (chars) are getting closer to dropping out of school, owing to the rising cost of stationery items and study materials.

Parents say they are already struggling to stay afloat due to rising prices of essentials. Now, they fear they will no longer be able to pay for their children's schooling.

Getting an education in the char areas is as difficult as swimming against the tide and the rising cost just adds to the burden, they added.

According to education experts, the learning loss that occurred during the pandemic caused irreparable damage to students.

At present, dropout spike is expected in Nilphamari, Rangpur, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram schools.

Last year, schools reopened after a 1.5-year closure. Since then, student attendance hasn't returned to pre-pandemic levels.

While primary education facilities may be found in some schools, higher education is still a far cry due to poverty-stricken inaccessibility.

Chars are fleeting by nature, made from the ebbs and flows of silt. Not every char has a school and those that



do, struggle to stay open. Like all char structures, schools are impermanent and need to be shifted often.

Besides, teachers find it difficult to make the commute from the mainland, frequently missing classes.

With only a few schools holding classes every day, students who want to attend from surrounding chars have to travel quite a distance.

These challenges lead many to drop out. Girls get married off and boys find work to help with family expenses.

While the government provides textbooks free of cost, without access to subsidised school supplies, it will be impossible to improve the literacy rate in

the underprivileged char areas, education experts say.

During visits to some shops in the districts, this correspondent found that prices had risen for all school supplies including school uniforms, shoes, bags, pens, pencils, erasers, sharpeners, markers, loose paper, notebooks, geometry boxes, plastic white boards, scales, calculators, and colouring pencils.

The price of a rim of white paper used by students for making notebooks is now Tk 1,250, up from Tk 750 two months ago.

Similarly, a rim of newsprint paper is being sold at Tk 1,150, up from Tk 700.

Meanwhile, the price of ballpoint pens

has risen by Tk 15-20 per dozen, and plastic whiteboards and geometric boxes are being sold at twice the price.

Abdul Hadi (40), a rickshaw puller in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila, has child who's a Mondoleghat Govt Primary School student.

He said, "We have to cut back on meals in order to send my children to school."

Md Nuruzzaman (50), who's child goes to Purba Satunama Aminpara Govt Primary School at Satunama Char in Nilphamari's Dimla upazila, said, "I couldn't afford a new pair of shoes and a bag for my child. The price of the cheapest pair of shoes is Tk 600 and an ordinary school bag is Tk 550, which were Tk 450 and Tk 300 just a few weeks ago."

Khalilur Rahman, the headmaster of Purba Satunama Aminpara Govt Primary School, said, "The school has a total of 250 students, most of whom come from families who are river erosion victims. They come to class barefooted and without the necessary school supplies. We cannot but be understanding of their situation."

District Primary Education Officer Nobe Uddin Sarker, said, "We request that the district administration increases monitoring in order to stop the syndicate responsible for the price hike of school supplies."

Univ students struggling to find Ousting govt only

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concluded around 75.85 percent university students have been suffering from mental health issues after the pandemic.

Students opined that session jams, difficulties in study, depressions over exam results and unusual curriculum are the key factors behind mental health troubles.

Around 43.9 percent male and 56.1 female students from 38 public universities, 47 private universities, madrasas and national universities took part in the survey.

The new scenario after the pandemic forced the student to study more during exams and have to complete the curriculum in less time than before.

However, some 46.45

percent of students said they lost interest in studying properly after the pandemic period.

Besides, when asked about mental health, some 80.79 percent of students said they feel depressed, and are often affected with bipolar disorders which in turn affects their academic life. This study also revealed that around 77.01 percent of students are having trouble finishing the huge syllabus in a short time.

Meanwhile, some 73.84 percent of students are suffering from lack of confidence following changes made to the curriculum after the long Covid induced university closures.

Besides, some 76.06 percent of students are in distress about their career.

According to Aachol foundation, some 404 students have died by suicide since January this year, where 242 were female and 162 male.

President of Bangladesh Psychological Association Prof Mahmudur Rahman and founder president of Aachol Foundation Tansen Rose were present.

Muezzin

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The mosque committee members said Khademul has been working as its muezzin for around 10 years. Bandar Police Station OC Md Mahfuzur Rahman said, "We are investigating the incident. The Counter Terrorism unit of CMP is also looking into the matter."

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over power to an impartial caretaker government," he said.

"Many of us blame police. Police are just doing it at the behest of the government. It's the government who are responsible for all the misdeeds. The crime of police is that they are obeying the illegal orders or instructions of the government."

Fakhrul also accused the

Man, his mother held

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Ratri's body hanging from the ceiling. Seeing them, Naeem and his mother tried to flee, but locals caught them and informed police around 12:30am.

Police arrested the two around 02:00am, and

government of regulating the media and politicising all the state institutions.

He alleged that the ruling party leaders are indulging in "widespread" plundering and corruption in every sector.

"They have taken up many projects in the name of developing the power sector and siphoned off huge sum of money by indulging in plundering," the BNP leader added.

took the body to the police station.

Md Abdul Matin, officer-in-charge of Gurudaspur police station, said police sent the body to Natore Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. "An investigation is underway," he said.

The bridge that opened doors

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and there will be more traffic," he told this correspondent on Friday.

China Railway 17th Bureau Group Co Ltd constructed the 2.96-kilometre bridge, which was handed over to the Roads and Highways Department.

The Chinese government has provided Tk 654 crore of Tk 894 crore, the total cost.

The bridge established direct road connectivity between Khulna and Barishal divisions. This connectivity covers Kuakata beach, Payra deep-sea port, Mongla sea port, and Benapole land port, said Weng Changnuin, deputy project manager of the bridge project.

Locals and businesses said the bridge has started contributing to trade and tourism. Moreover, it will promote better development of industries like agriculture, manufacturing, fishery and tourism in southern Bangladesh.

During a visit, this correspondent found the bridge buzzing with tourists, who were taking photos and enjoying the river view in an autumn afternoon. New businesses are being set up by the roadside on both parts of the bridge, and along the riverbanks.

People from Barishal division can now easily go to Khulna to see the Sundarbans and Patuakhali sea beach, as well as for business purposes, said Jewel.

"Spices in Khulna are more abundant and cheaper. So, we can easily travel to Khulna and buy the stuff," he said. "So, people can do more business and get jobs."

Truckers said they can easily transport commodities from anywhere in the country to Barishal and Khulna divisions in less time, with lower transport costs.

"When there was no bridge, we had to wait for hours with trucks loaded. Now, we cross the river in a few minutes," said Jan-e-Alam, a truck driver who was going to Khulna from Bhola.

Habibur Rahman Malek, president of Pirojpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said Padma Bridge and 8th Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge have come as huge blessings for the country's southwestern region.

Before the 8th Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge opened, only two trucks used to transport produce from Pirojpur to Dhaka. Now, that number has reached 40.

The farmers and fishers

in Pirojpur can now get better prices for their produce, as transport time and costs have drastically gone down. A truck needs less than five hours to reach Dhaka from Pirojpur now, whereas it took more than a day in the past.

"As Mongla port is now being used to ship produce abroad, investors can easily think of building factories in this area. And so, our industries will also flourish," Malek said.

Electoral

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Criticising BNP leaders for their attempts to mislead people, Quader said BNP leaders are making such unconstitutional, undemocratic and false remarks because they want to see unelected and undemocratic government in power.

He said Awami League led by Bangabandhu's daughter and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is always in favour of an inclusive election and it expects a competitive electoral system.

BNP does not participate in elections sensing its defeat and if it joins polls, it does so to make the election questionable, he said. "If BNP secretary general's mentality is like that then the democracy would never be sustainable," he added.

Mental healthcare grossly neglected

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the hospital never prescribed medicines that were not in supply.

UNDER THE SYNDICATE'S CLUTCH

The Daily Star found that the institution spent a substantial amount of money on the purchase of food and medicine. And for years, a syndicate of unscrupulous contractors have been consistently getting the work orders.

They reportedly used their influence to embezzle money by providing subpar food and inadequate medicine.

The syndicate is run by three contractor companies that supply food to the hospital. The companies are owned by three brothers in Pabna – HM Foysal, HM Rejaul and HM Arefin. When questioned, HM Rejaul claimed that they legally participate in the tender process by competing with other bidders to offer the lowest price.

"When we decided to make changes in the traditional tendering

process to break up the syndicate, Rose Enterprise, a company that supplies food to the hospital, filed a lawsuit last year," said Dr Roton. Due to the legal battle with the contractor, supply of food and medicine has been disrupted for the past few months.

"We are managing food for patients from local traders through vouchers, as per the arrangement made by a hospital committee. I'm entitled to spend Tk 10 lakh a year by using vouchers. But in the last two months, I already used up vouchers worth over Tk 37 lakh," Dr Roton said.

Meanwhile, Dr Shafquat said, "We've come to know that the court stay has been removed, but we are yet to get the official papers to this end. If we get the papers, we can go for fresh bidding, but the total process requires time."

"This time, we have suggested using an online tendering process to escape the syndicate's control," he added.

In June, Anti-

Corruption Commission sued the three brothers and two others for allegedly embezzling Tk 88 lakh by manipulating the prices of essential commodities while making a purchase.

The other accused were the hospital's former director Dr Tonmoy Prokash Bishwas, and former marketing officer Humayun Kabir.

LACK OF SPECIALISED TREATMENT FACILITIES Besides the issues with food and medicine supply, the country's oldest specialised mental-health institution also lacks provision for advanced care, which is quite unheard of in neighbouring nations.

The key reason behind this shortage is the facility's shortage of specialised doctors.

The hospital has only 10 doctors on staff, severely limiting its capacity to deliver quality care. Additionally, it lacks other essential staff members.

According to official sources, important departments could not operate for many years

due to a lack of dentists, anesthesiologists, and psychotherapists.

Dr Masud Rana, a resident psychologist, said, "Of the 31 posts of doctors, only 10 are occupied. So, it is quite a tough job to run a 500-bed facility, with an overwhelming number of patients."

"As a result, we are unable to provide essential treatments like electroconvulsive therapy and psychotherapy, while general practitioners are left to handle dental issues," he added.

Of around 643 positions, 176 are vacant, which seriously hinders the provision of proper medical care, he mentioned.

According to official data, the hospital admitted 12,290 patients between 2014 and 2021, and 12,108 of them have been discharged after receiving treatment. In addition, 3,89,000 others received treatment in the outpatient department in the last seven years.

NO RESPIRE FROM BROKERS Many patients come in from

outside the district, and they are more likely to fall prey to brokers, who whisk them away to one of several illegal private clinics that have sprung up around Pabna Mental Hospital. These brokers also take money from unsuspecting family members in the name of admitting patients to the hospital.

Law enforcers have frequently conducted raids and arrested brokers. However, these brokers are released after posting bail and immediately return to doing the same thing.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Pabna Civil Surgeon Dr Manisar Chowdhury said they have already closed many clinics for operating without licence.

"We are continuously monitoring the rise of illegal clinics," he added.

Asked about the long-standing problems at Pabna Mental Hospital, Dr Monisor said, "Because the facility is managed independently by its own authority within the health directorate, we are unable to take any action in this regard."

Dengue grips

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"The majority of the patients are Rooppur plant employees," she said, adding that dengue claimed the lives of two project workers last month.

She also said the foreign workers, who were infected, were admitted to the project's own hospital.

Ruhul Kuddus, Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant site office manager, refuted the claims saying that only 30 workers have received treatment to date.

The Russian construction company has already been informed of

the issue, he added.

Engineer Ashrafur Islam, site director of the plant, said even though some workers have been infected, it does not necessarily mean that they contracted it on the project site.

"We instructed all the construction companies working on the project site to start taking initiatives against dengue following last month's outbreak," he added.

He claimed that staffers concerned regularly conduct anti mosquito drives around the project area.

Prabarana Purnima today

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To mark this event, Buddhists will release candle-lit air balloons made of coloured paper (fanush) and set them free to flow towards the sky in the evening, which is the chief attraction of the festival.

The festival will be celebrated in all monasteries, respective offices of the religious organisations and educational institutions through daylong programmes.

President Abdul Hamid, in a message, conveyed greetings to the

members of the Buddhist community.

The programmes will herald with the hoisting of the national and religious flags atop all monasteries at dawn and chanting of the sacred verses from the sacred Tripitaka.

Breaking of fasts of the monks, mass prayers, blood donation, Sangadana, discussions, panchashila and pradip puja will highlight the programmes.

In the city, the main religious congregations will be held at Dharmarajika Bouddha Bihar, International Bouddha Temple, Kalachandpur

Bouddha Bihar, Uttara Bouddha Bihar, Adibashi Bouddha Temple in Mirpur and Ashulia Maithree Bhabona Kendra.

A number of Buddhist periodicals will be brought out on the occasion.

Special prayers will be held in all monasteries seeking peace and prosperity of the nation and the world.

Members of the law enforcement agencies have already been deployed in and around all temples in the city and districts for the smooth celebration of the festival.

মুজিব বর্ষে স্বাস্থ্যসেবা
এগিয়ে যাবে অনেক ধাপ

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
তত্ত্বাবধায়কের কার্যালয়
২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা হাসপাতাল, চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ
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স্মারক নং-তঃস্বাঃ-০৫০শাঃবিঃজেঃবাঃ/চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ/স্মারকসংখ্যা/২০২২-২৩/২২/২৯/১৪৩৬ তারিখঃ ০৮/১০/২০২২ইং

সংশোধনী আদেশ

অত্রাফিসের স্মারক নং-১৪২০, তারিখঃ ০৮/১০/২০২২ইং মোতাবেক প্রকাশিত ২০২২-২০২৩ অর্থ বৎসরের ভর্তিকৃত রোগীদের পথ্য সরবরাহ এবং ময়লা কাপড় ধোলাইসহ ইঞ্জিনিয়ার নিমিত্তে দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির ১১ নম্বর ক্রমিক নং- 'খ' তে বর্ণিত ১৭ ডিজিটের ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি এর স্থলে "১৩ ডিজিটের ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি" পড়তে হবে।

ডাঃ মোঃ মাসুদ পারভেজ
তত্ত্বাবধায়ক
আধুনিক সদর হাসপাতাল, চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ
ফোন নং-০৭৮১-৫২৪৮৯

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