

Save Our Heritage

Sir,—The reports in the Ittefaq April 6, the Bangladesh Times, April 7, and the editorial in The Bangladesh Observer April 8 1983 on the collapse of a part of roof of Dhaka Government Muslim High School are quite disconcerting and a matter of grave concern.

The Dhaka Madrasa was established in 1874. Its first Principal was the renowned Oriental scholar Maulana Uoaidullah Al Ubaidi Suhrawardy. An Anglo-Persian Department was attached with Dhaka Madrasa on the demand of the Muslims in 1906 housed in the British Dak Bungalow.

Dhaka Madrasa was bifurcated to function independently in the year 1916 under the 'New Scheme of Madrasa Education' and was renamed as the Government Muslim High School, the name it carries even today. After bifurcation the school was housed in the Dak Bungalow at Patuatuly and was shifted to its present building in 1943.

This building, a Portuguese Fort, was erected in 1691 A.D. During Second World War it was occupied by the ARP Brigade. At the end of the War it was vacated and Dhaka (Government Muslim High School) was transferred there in 1945. Since then the school has been running there.

The library is situated in the old Portuguese Fort building, the parts of roof reportedly collapsed early of April 1983.

We made a cursory glance at the books contained in about 20 almirahs—in the present Headmaster's room, in the main library hall and in the room of the Headmaster in the main Fort Building.

We saw many rare books written in Bengali, Persian, Urdu and English on Language, Grammar, History, Philosophy, Geography, Science and Culture and bound copies of world and Indo-Bangladesh political geographical economic Atlas.

There is a series on the history of the historians of the world in 25 volumes Encyclopaedia Britannica—36 volumes History of the World—full set, dictionaries, Arabic—Persian and English published in 1852.

Books on Muslim history, religion, society and culture in Urdu, English and Bengali published during 19th and early 20th centuries. The autobiographies of the eminent Hindus and Muslims of Bengal in Bengali, English and Urdu of the 19th and early 20th centuries are also available in the library. There is an almirah full of grammar Bengali, English, Urdu and Persian written during 19th and early 20th centuries. Old school registers containing the names of the students, their guardians with occupations have been found.

We are shocked to find all those books in neglected condition, some of them are worm eaten, torn and in dilapidated condition.

In view of the above facts we urge the conscious people of the country in general and the administration in particular to save heritage from total destruction not only of the Dhaka Government Muslim High School, but also of the libraries of many such old schools and institutions which were established before the establishment of the universities in the country.—Yours etc
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