

3,560 become literate thru' Reflective Circle

Int'l Literacy Day tomorrow

MOON MOON SULTANA

Punkharay Tripura of Chhoto Kumira in Shitakunda could not read and write. So he was unable to get a job. It was also difficult for him to lead the family only depending on Jhum cultivation.

But after joining the Reflective Circle, he gained the knowledge of literacy and is now leading a solvent life by working as a security guard at PHP Industries. He also started teaching his children.

Like Punkharay, around 3560 people from 50 districts across the country became literate by participating in the two-year-long programme of the Reflective Circle.

It is an approach to collective adult learning ensuring empowerment and social change conducted by the Society for Participatory Education and Development (SPED) with the support of Action Aid Bangladesh.

The success story of 16 participants of the Reflective Circle programme across the country has been depicted in a 16-month calendar (September 2006 to December 2007) which was published ahead of the International Literacy Day on September 8.

SPED and Action Aid

Bangladesh organised the calendar launching ceremony at the LGED Bhaban on Tuesday.

A discussion on 'Investment in Adult Literacy' was also organised on this occasion to regenerate the interest in adult literacy to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in education sector.

Presenting the calendar, Mohammad Muntasim Tanvir of Action Aid Bangladesh, said the success stories of the calendar will motivate people and make them interested in adult education.

"People will look at the calendar everyday and realise the importance of adult literacy," he said.

The Reflective Circle is being conducted in cooperation with around 80 different partner organisations including Nari Maitree, Chhinnomukul Bangladesh, Gram Bangla Unnayan Committee, Amra Kaj Kori, Dristi, YPSA, Eso Desh Gori, Mohidev Jubo Unnayan Sangstha and SAP-Bangladesh.

There are 508 Reflective Circles containing 25 people aged between 15 and 45 years in each group, said SPED Coordinator Foysal Ahmed.

"The participants are being provided with basic literacy knowledge in the first year and different social and global issues are dealt in the following year in the

programme," said Abdul Aziz Munshi of ActionAid Bangladesh.

He told The Daily Star that the calendar has been published to draw the attention of people to adult literacy on the occasion of International Literacy Day.

Wolfgang Vollmann, UNESCO country representative to Bangladesh, inaugurated the launching programme as special guest.

He called for incorporating income-generating programmes with the literacy programmes to motivate the rural people.

Appreciating the initiative of publishing a calendar as a campaign tool State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon urged the NGOs and civil society to come forward to achieve the goal of education for all since the government alone cannot implement all projects.

Zahin Ahmed, executive director of Friends in Village Development in Bangladesh (FIVDB), presided over the function while Syed Nurul Alam, SPED chairman, Shoab Siddique, country director of Action Aid Bangladesh, and Milon Bikash Pal, SPED vice-principal, also spoke on the occasion.

Mobile court seals off bakery at Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court yesterday sealed off an unauthorised bakery for producing confectionery with adulterated raw materials.

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Mohammed Munir Chowdhury sealed off Apan Bakery and Confectionery during an anti-adulteration drive at Bandar Tila in South Halishahar.

The owner, staffs and workers of the bakery fled before the mobile court reached there, sources said.

The court seized a huge quantity of adulterated and low quality biscuits, cake and contaminated raw materials, which were kept in an unhygienic condition in the bakery.

The bakery has been running for long without licence of Bangladesh Standard Testing Institute (BSTI). It supplies a large quantity of confectionery items to different shops in Patenga and CEPZ areas, posing serious health hazards.

During the drive, the court urged local people to avoid food items of such illegal bakeries.

During another drive in Chittagong Court Building area, the court fined 11 people TK 550 for smoking on the court premises.

Ctg-Dhaka rail link snapped as cargo train derails

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Rail communications between Chittagong and Dhaka and a few other destinations were snapped after three compartments of a cargo train derailed near Faujderhat Railway Station yesterday morning. Engineers of Bangladesh Railway, Eastern Zone, who rushed immediately to the scene, could not restore communications as of 5:30pm, sources said.

Chief Traffic Manager (CTM) Kazi Asadullah, however, hoped that the rail communications would be restored in one and a half hours' time.

Sources said the Dhaka-bound cargo train carrying containers from Chittagong port skidded off the railway track at around 9:00am. Three of its compartments derailed, blocking the communications to and from Chittagong.

The accident forced the railway authorities to cancel the schedule of Dhaka-bound Karnaphuli Express and Chandpur-bound Meghna Express. They, however, managed an alternative way for the passengers of Dhaka-bound Mohanagar Godhuli, an inter-city train, by carrying them to the Faujderhat spot in the afternoon.

The Godhuli, which was due to depart at 2:30pm, left Chittagong Railway Station at 3:35pm, said the chief traffic manager.

Explosion of fireworks, crackers banned

UNB, Dhaka

Carrying of all types of firearms, explosives and other harmful objects, and exploding fireworks and crackers in the city from 6:00pm tomorrow have been banned until further order to maintain the sanctity of Shab-e-Barat.

The Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has imposed the restriction under the DMP Ordinance on the eve of Shab-e-Barat to be observed in the country tomorrow.



Chehlum

Chehlum of Novera Deepita, a reporter of The Daily Star, will be held at the residence of her eldest brother at Dhanmondi in the city after Maghrib prayers tomorrow, says a press release.

A bright journalist with shining academic records, Novera committed suicide at her residence on July 27. She had been suffering from schizophrenia.

She is survived by her husband, Harun-ur-Rashid, a sub-editor of The Daily Star, parents, two brothers and a sister. Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the chehlum.



Dr Nazma Chowdhury speaks at a roundtable styled '2007: Women in electoral process', jointly organised by Women and Gender Studies Department of Dhaka University and the daily Prothom Alo, at a city hotel yesterday. On her right is Dr Mahmuda Islam and on her left are Law Minister Moudud Ahmed and Tasmina Hossain.

Moudud rules out repeal of Constitution's 14th amendment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday ruled out the possibility of repealing the 14th amendment of the Constitution that crushed the demand of women's rights groups for direct election to parliament.

He was speaking at a roundtable styled '2007: Women in electoral process' organised jointly by women and gender studies department of Dhaka University and the Prothom Alo at a city hotel.

Admitting that the ruling BNP has violated its election pledge, Moudud said 'power politics' in the country compelled them to adopt many policies.

He hoped that the bodies concerned would get 'gender sensitive response' from all political parties if they demand an increase in the nomination of women candidates.

Taleya Rehman, executive director of Democracy Watch, urged the 'selected members of parliament' to be gender sensitised prior to bringing a change in the structure of patriarchal society.

Termining the selection process derogatory, Elna Khan, executive director of Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangstha, posed questions to selected women MPs, "Can they say how many votes are there in their jurisdiction?" or "Which constituency do they represent in parliament?"

Mahmuda Islam, president of Women for Women, said despite two women heading the government consecutively for the last 15 years, poor representation in decision

making let women left behind the race.

"We have an election commission, an anti-corruption commission, a tax commission, but there is none to represent the women there although number of qualified women is not little to vie for such posts," she added.

Mahmuda said election violence, terrorism and hostile politics actually rob women's right to participate in all phases of election from candidacy to either voting or being voted.

Tasmina Hossain, editor of Anannya and former lawmaker, shared her experience to the table that even she had to play a puppet role. Sonali Chakma, president of Hill Women's Association, stressed the active participation of indigenous woman in parliament to narrate the plight of hill women.

Majeda, a UP member from Tangail, alleged that in institutions like municipality and union parishad where the representation of woman has been ensured, women are being treated badly.

Mahin Sultana, convener of Nari Pakkha, supported the view, saying, "We had dialogues with the women representatives at the grassroots level, and it was found that their power was constrained and they failed to implement their election pledges."

Shamima Sultan Shilu, cited the historic verdict of the High Court that ensured executive authority of women members at the Khulna City Corporation.

Asaduzzaman Nur, Awami League lawmaker, observed that the reservation system regarding the nomination should be implemented

at the party level.

Dr Nazma Chowdhury, professor of women and gender studies department, explained that the nominations offered to women candidates would say how sincere the political parties are in implementing the pledges for women's political empowerment.

Khaleda Akhtar Rosy of the Centre for Policy Dialogue and Munni Saha of ATN Bangla raised questions whether it is possible to ensure women's rights with Jamaat-e-Islami in the alliance as it has no women representative in its executive committee and carries a different ideology.

With election getting close, the women from all walks of society and organisations were vibrant in pressing home their demands for reinstating the National Policy for Women Development '97 and repealing the 14th amendment of the Constitution.

They also wanted to know the strategy of the political parties over the participation of women in the next election.

Jahiruddin Swapan and Fahima Hossain, BNP lawmakers, Samia Zaman, film maker and news presenter, Ayesha Banu, chairman of Women and Gender Studies Department, also spoke on the occasion.

Motiur Rahman, editor of the Prothom Alo, moderated the roundtable.

Pro-AL lawyers observe 'Black Day'

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Dhaka Bar Association (DBA) yesterday wore black badges in protest against the attacks on pro-Awami League lawyers by the ruling party-backed hoodlums on September 6 in 2003.

Sammilita Ainjibi Samannaya Parishad (SASP) also observed the day as 'black day' under their programme titled 'Save the Court and Save the Country' across the country while Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum observed the day as 'development day'.

At least 50 pro-Awami League lawyers were injured at Dhaka Bar Association office in the attack ahead of the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's visit to an adjacent court to lay the foundation stone of a court building on the day.

The ruling party's hoodlums also injured at least 10 photojournalists and two court correspondents and vandalised the portraits of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the association office at noon, half an hour before the prime minister's visit to Dhaka District Judge's Court.

Samannaya Parishad held a protest meeting at the Dhaka Bar Association auditorium yesterday and condemned the attacks on the lawyers.

The speakers also demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits responsible for the attacks.

The programme of the Parishad was presided over by DBA President Nuruzzaman Nani. Its General Secretary Abul Baten, SASP member secretary advocate Subrata Chowdhury, Supreme Court Bar General Secretary AM Amin Uddin and its former secretary M Enayetur Rahim were also present.

The Ainjibi Forum leaders also held a rally outside the auditorium.

The forum programme was presided over by its President Fazlur Rahman Khan.

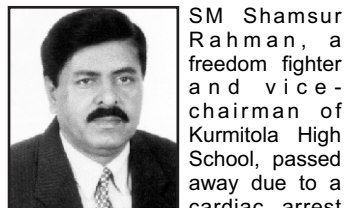


Surya Sen Bitarko Dhara executives

SM Maruf and Anwar Hossain have been elected president and general secretary of Surya Sen Bitarko Dhara, a debate organisation of Surya Sen Hall of Dhaka University (DU), says a press release.

Provost of the hall Prof Dr Md Sirajul Islam announced the names of 13 members of the new executive committee on September 3.

Obituary



SM Shamsur Rahman, a freedom fighter and vice-chairman of Kurmitola High School, passed away due to a cardiac arrest on Tuesday at the age of 52, says a press release.

He was also the secretary general of Muktiyoddha Kalyan Kendra.

He is survived by his mother, wife, one daughter and one son.

He was buried at Namapara Graveyard in Khikhet with state honour.

Shamsur Rahman
Shamsur Rahman, a politician and trade union leader, passed away due to a cardiac arrest on September 4, says a press release.

He was the joint general secretary of Jatiya Sramik Jote. Jatiya Sramik Jote President Mesbahuddin Ahmed and General Secretary Nurul Amin expressed deep shock at his death.

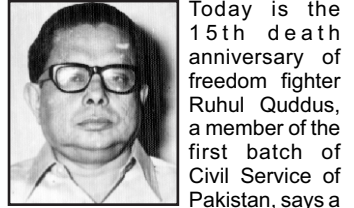
Momtaj Uddin

BSS, Dhaka

Mohammad Momtaj Uddin, a former teacher of Maona High School at Sreepur upazila in Gazipur, died of old age complications at his village home on Tuesday at the age of 80.

He is survived by his wife, three sons and three daughters.

Death anniversary



Today is the 15th death anniversary of freedom fighter Ruhul Quddus, a member of the first batch of Civil Service of Pakistan, says a press release.

He formulated the historic six-point demand of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. As the first principal secretary of Bangladesh government, he made significant contribution to administrative structure and the rebuilding of the country.

He was awarded the Independence Award in 2001 posthumously.

Concert for Children at Sheraton on Sept 12

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel and NTV will jointly organise a charity concert to raise fund to help United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) to immunise about 700,000 children around the world against fatal childhood diseases.

The 'Concert for Children' will be held on September 12 at Winter Garden of the Hotel, where country's four leading band groups - Nagar Baul, LRB, Miles and Souls will perform.

This was disclosed at a press conference at Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

The concert is being organised under 'Unicef Check Out for Children Challenge' programme. The programme, launched in 1995, is a partnership between Unicef and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc., a hotel and leisure company.

Unicef Country Representative Luis-Georges Arsenault, General Manager of Sheraton Hotel Trevor MacDonald, NTV Managing Director Enayetur Rahman and GrameenPhone Head of Marketing Rubaba Uddaula Matin also spoke at the press conference.

Famous pop singer Aiyub Bachchu of LRB, Shafin Ahmed and Hamin Ahmed of Miles were also present on the occasion.

This year the challenge programme is running in all Starwood Asia Pacific hotels to focus on celebrating 60 years of Unicef.

Addressing the conference, Arsenault said the charity concert next week is yet another fun and interesting way for people to participate in making the world a better place for children.

Replying to a question, MacDonald said a total of 1,000 tickets would be sold for the concert. Of them, 800 tickets will be sold at Tk 700 and 200 tickets at Tk 1,000.

Modhu Purnima today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Buddhist community of the country will celebrate Modhu Purnima today.

The Buddhists in India and Bangladesh, especially in the region of Chittagong, celebrates the day of the full moon in the month of Bhadra.

Different organisations have taken up elaborate programmes.

Modhu Purnima is celebrated as a day of unity and charity. Buddhists observe it by bringing gifts of honey to monasteries.

Bangladesh Buddhist Federation will hold different programmes, including a discussion on the significance of Modhu Purnima and world peace at 4:10pm at International Buddhist Monastery in the city.

Buddhagaya International Bhabna Kendra General Secretary D Bar Sambodhi Thero will be present.

The day commemorates an occasion on which the Buddha retreated to the wilderness to bring peace between two squabbling factions of disciples.



Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Sylhet, Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 35.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 24.4 degree at Sandwip.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:11pm today and rises at 5:42am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.8	26.8	74	61
Chittagong	32.8	25.6	82	82
Rajshahi	33.4	26.0	78	72
Khulna	34.1	25.5	87	68
Barisal	34.0	25.6	83	76
Sylhet	35.0	25.2	73	69
Cox's Bazar	32.0	25.6	79	76