

The Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) programme of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) has succeeded in motivating poor parents in many rural areas to send their children to schools.

The BRAC is now running 38,500 NFPE schools all over the country, where some 10 lakh children are getting education up to class III. Over 70 per cent of the students are girl children.

A group of newsmen visited some such BRAC schools in Manikganj yesterday.

Tajul M Islam, Director, Public Affairs and Communications of BRAC told the journalists that a BRAC expert is now working with the UNICEF in Nairobi to replicate the NFPE model there.

So far, some 3,20,340 students have completed their studies under the NFPE programme and 82 per cent of them have moved to 'formal' schools from class four or five. Some 500 NFPE schools will be upgraded this year to enrol students up to class V, he said.

The journalists also talked to students, teachers, organizers, working children at Uchuttia school, Ander Manik school, Berghata school, Purbo Dashtra Kishori (teen-aged girls) Library and Sreejani an employment genera-

A model of non-formal primary education

By Staff Correspondent

tion centre in Manikganj Sadar — all run by the BRAC.

At the Uchuttia BRAC School, all 22 girl students and 11 boy students were seen having lessons from their teacher Aleya Begum. Sumon, son of a grocery shop owner, said, "I enjoy my time in the school very much." Teacher Aleya said her school, which was started in 1987, has no record of drop-out.

Papia Sultana, who was a student of a BRAC school in 1986, is now a teacher of a BRAC school at Karmakar Para in Manikganj. "Things have changed a lot with the spread of literacy in remote areas of the district," she happily noted.

A monthly meeting of parents was going on when the journalists entered the Ander Manik school. Zainob Banu whose girl child reads in that school, said, "My daughter learns many things. She is now more concerned about environment and hygienic living."

At the Purbo Dashtra

Kishori Library, Akhi, a minor girl, who comes to the library every Tuesday, said, "I wish to continue my study. I want to be a doctor." Monowara Sultana, the librarian, said that they were trying to develop a habit of savings among the girls. "Every girl coming to the library save Taka two per month." "We also teach them sewing so that, they can find a way to earn money after getting older."

Some 28 girls after completion of NFPE programme, are now getting training on manufacture of furniture and leather goods at Sreejani an employment-generation centre. Bataashi, who is undergoing a two-year carpentry training there wants to have a furniture shop of her own. "BRAC will provide me with the necessary loan and I must own a shop soon."

Tanveer Qamrul Islam, Communications Officer of BRAC, the Area Manager in Manikganj and some other officials were also present during the visit.



A non-formal primary school of BRAC in Manikganj.



A flood-affected family of Kamrangir Char in the city fetching drinking water from some other area.

City flood

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An industrialist yesterday distributed relief goods among the affected people.

Meanwhile, the Shitalakkhya river marked a fall by one cm yesterday but flood water was yet to recede from the inundated areas.

Our correspondent from Sherpur reports: Flood situation in the district improved further as waters from most of the inundated areas continued to recede. Red Crescent Society distributed relief items while 58 medical teams treated affected people at Jhinaigati, Nikli, Nallatabari, Sribordi and Sadar thanas. The situation in Comilla also started improving, a report said.

Nine held for illegal sale of Holy Quran

By Staff Correspondent

Police yesterday seized 240 copies of the Holy Quran and arrested nine people from Baitul Mukarram area for selling the holy book, presented by the Saudi government for free distribution.

Detective police, in a sudden raid, recovered copies of the holy book that contained Bangla translation.

A section of unscrupulous traders were selling those at high prices, police said.

Dhaka Telecom Region to be divided into two zones

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) has decided to divide the Dhaka Telecommunication Region into two zones from September as the number of telephone lines and exchanges has greatly increased.

The zones will be known as Dhaka Telecommunication Region-North, and Dhaka Telecommunications Region-South, according to a BTB press release.

The North Region will consist of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Mirpur, Gulshan, Ultra, greater Mymensingh and Tangail district exchanges while central, Nilkhet, Magbazar and Narayanganj district exchanges will comprise the South Region.

Under the restructuring plan, two general managers and four directors will run the administration instead of one general manager and two directors now.

Out of the 3.2 lakh telephone lines in the country, about 1.75 lakh are in the Dhaka region, the press release said.

Female students confine JU hall provost in office

By JU Correspondent

A group of female students kept the provost of Fazilatunnesa Hall of Jahangirnagar University locked in his office for about half an hour yesterday morning protesting a notice asking them to return to the hall by 8 in the evening.

Vice-chancellor of the university Prof Amirul Islam later rescued the provost and postponed the order.

Prof Abdul Hye, provost of the hall, had issued the notice on Monday last.

Some students who returned to the hall after 8 pm Monday found the hall gate locked. They broke the lock, and entered the hall.

On Tuesday, they locked the provosts office. Next morning (yesterday), the provost broke the lock and entered his office.

As the news spread, a group of hall students rushed to the provost's office at about 8.30 am and locked the office keeping the provost inside.

The Vice-Chancellor came at about 9 am, rescued the provost and ordered postponement of the new order.

Girl dies in gate collapse in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, July 19: A minor girl was killed and another critically injured when a portion of a dilapidated gate collapsed on them at a residence at Feeringi Bazar here this evening, police said, reports BSS.

When Smrity Nath, 7, and Ibrahim, 6, were passing through main gate of the residence suddenly a chunk of the old gate collapsed on them.

Smrity Nath died on the spot while Ibrahim sustained critical injuries.

He was later rushed to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Iraq's ultimatum to UN team

BAGHDAD, July 19: Iraq today gave an august ultimatum to the UN Disarmament Commission to complete its work and recommend a lifting of sanctions, reports AFP.

"We can no longer continue working with UNSCOM (UN special commission) without there being something clear," Foreign Minister Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf said on state radio.

Ershad's counsel

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take in the event of a negative reply. Ershad's legal aide said there was a legal remedy as well as an international remedy in case of a negative response from the government.

Dwelling in brief on what he meant by legal remedy, he said a local lawyer would file a writ in the High Court complaining that the former president was being denied legal aid of his choice.

When he was reminded of the law passed by the Bar Council of Bangladesh prohibiting legal practice in this country by a foreigner, Denis said Bar Council of his country passed a similar law debaring foreigners from undertaking legal practice in Canada.

But like the Canadian constitution Bangladesh Constitution entitles an accused to a lawyer of his own choice. Bangladesh Constitution did not impose any territorial limit on an accused's choice of lawyer.

He said he had not come to this country to undertake legal practice here. It is a special case for which he has been hired. He will go back after this case is disposed of.

Explaining what he meant by international remedy, Marcel Denis said international human rights organisations would be informed that

Hearing on framing of charges against Taslima stayed

The High Court yesterday stayed the hearing on the framing of charges against feminist writer Taslima Nasreen at the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM), Dhaka, till the disposal of an appeal lying before it, reports BSS.

The ACMM was to take up the hearing today.

Responding to a submission from Dr Kamal Hossain, counsel of Taslima, about expiry of the stay yesterday, the two-member bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court said, "Let the stay be there till the matter is disposed of in this court". The appeal would come up for hearing today.

The bench was consisted of Justice M Mozammel Haq and Justice Nurul Islam.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

PM ends Feni tour

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Talking to the affected people, she said: "Today I have come to stand beside you on your days of suffering. I am trying my best to resolve your problems."

Begum Zia assured her government's all-out assistance for the victims and said that the government had undertaken all possible measures for their proper rehabilitation.

Pointing out the damaged seedbeds, the Prime Minister said the farmers would be provided with seedlings free of cost and the affected poor people be given house building grants and other necessary materials.

Later, she rushed to Kachari Bazar in Chhagalnaiya thana and distributed huge relief materials.

She assured peasants that the government would provide all necessary agricultural inputs so that they can recoup the losses caused by the flood.

Begum Zia paused at various places in her tour and suggested the farmers not to worry as the government has taken up extensive rehabilitation programmes to mitigate the losses.

At about 12.25 pm, the Prime Minister went to her parliamentary constituency area at GM Hat in Fulgazi

Russia will give 'broad autonomy' to Chechnya

MOSCOW, July 19: Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin have found a 'mutually acceptable' political solution to the Chechen conflict which gives the republic 'broad autonomy', Vyacheslav Mikhailov, Russian delegation leader to the peace talks, said today, reports AFP.

"This formula will fix a very broad framework on the future status of the Chechen republic and allow its people self-determination while preserving the integrity of Russia, the constitution and international norms," Russia's nationalities and regional policy minister told a news conference before leaving for Grozny.

Mikhailov said "conditions of broad autonomy for the republic could form part of a new constitution for Chechnya, put to referendum or adopted by a future parliament."

Peace talks, adjourned since Sunday, are due to resume Thursday in the Chechen capital.

The problem of the future status of Chechnya "remains the only question which could slow the signing of the accord," Mikhailov said.

Moscow has agreed to note the existence in Chechnya of the separatist government of Dzhokhar Dudayev which has never been recognised by Russia, he said.

The two sides have reached agreement on some points of a peace settlement, including the declaration of a ceasefire monitored by joint commissions and the formation of Chechen self-defence regiments in towns and villages which would subsequently be replaced by Chechen police.

SSC candidates enforce hartal in Bhandaria

PIROJPUR, July 19: SSC candidates enforced a half-day hartal in Bhandaria thana of the district today protesting the present system of the examination, reports UNB.

They demanded restoration of the 'question bank' and cancellation of the present provision under which one has to pass both in essay and objective parts of the examination separately.

Kashmir

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phone today, reiterating their demand for the release of 21 jailed Muslim rebels.

"Now that we are in contact with the abductors again, we are optimistic that the crisis will end soon," he said of the rebels' talks with the "crisis management group."

He said the negotiators had appealed to the militants to "show some flexibility," adding that the government was willing to release five militants in exchange for the freedom of the five westerners.

He did not provide any more details of the rebels' talks with the group comprising a retired lieutenant general, state police chief Manohar Nath Sabherwal and Veranaa Aivelli, the head of state intelligence.

3 missing in Sirajganj boat capsizes

SIRAJGANJ, July 19: Three people were missing after a mechanised country-boat carrying 17 passengers capsized in the Cholon-Beel area in Tarash thana today, police sources here said, reports UNB.

However, identities of the missing people were not immediately available.

The engine boat sank into the Cholon-Beel, a few kilometers from Tarash thana headquarters, at around 11 am. The boat was coming from Naogaon district.

Hearing in SC continues

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sequence by his reappearance in parliament, he added.

"But simple presence in the premises of Parliament without taking part in some way in Parliament's proceedings, would not break the sequence," Barrister Ishtiaq said.

Khandaker Mahbub Uddin expressed similar view and said general dictionary meaning of 'absence' should be taken into consideration in interpreting the reference relating to the 90-day consecutive absence of the MPs.

"Whatever be the form of absence they are absent from Parliament," Khandaker Mahbub said, contradicting the contentions of other amicus curiae including S R Pal, Justice T H Khan and Barrister Ashrarul Hossain.

S R Pal, Justice Khan and Barrister Ashrar had earlier said that absence from Parliament due to prolonged boycott is not contemplated in Article 67 (1) (b) which deals with absence from parliament and vacation of seat.

Khandaker Mahbub, who began his submission yesterday, also contradicted the views of Barrister Ishtiaq that there are information or fac-

The Midnight File

Liberian rebels walk out of peace talks

MONROVIA, Liberia, July 19: The latest attempt at peacemaking in Liberia began abortively today when delegates from the main rebel faction walked out after other factions refused to coalesce in opposition. Delegates belonging to Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia walked out after three other factions refused to come under a banner that would have defined them as being opposed to Taylor, reports AP.

Forest court convicts 7

CHITTAGONG, July 19: The forest court here convicted seven people and sentenced them to suffer various jail terms for illegal felling of trees in the reserve forests, reports UNB.

Bazul Karim Chowdhury, 1st Class Magistrate of the Forest Court, on July 11 in two separate cases sentenced two people to suffer one year simple imprisonment with a fine of Tk 5,000 each, in default, to suffer another one month for illegal felling of teak and garjan trees in the Chittagong reserve forests.

The court in another case at Jorarganj Beat convicted three people on July 12 to suffer six months simple imprisonment with a fine of Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer one month more for felling of valuable teak timber in the area.

The same court also sentenced two others to suffer six months simple imprisonment with a fine of Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer further one month each for illegal felling of teak timber

Interim relief for Indian journalists soon

NEW DELHI, July 19: The quantum of interim relief for journalist and non-journalist employees is likely to be decided by next month end, sources in the wage board for them indicated today, reports PTI.

The wage board headed by Justice Rajkumar Manisana Singh held its third meeting here today.

After the meeting, Justice Manisana Singh said that the final hearing on the payment of interim relief would begin on August 22 and completed on or before August 25.

Shantibahini opens fire on VDP men

CHITTAGONG, July 19: The outlawed Shantibahini gunmen exchanged fire with law-enforcing personnel at Kachalong in Rangamati Sadar thana last night, reports UNB.

According to officials, the outlaws were stealing away a huge quantity of teak through the Marissa checkpoint area of local VDP personnel at about 9:15 pm.

The gunmen opened fire on the VDP when they challenged the boat carrying the timber. The VDP personnel returned fire.

The encounter lasted about 10 minutes, but there was no report of casualties in the fighting.

2 shot dead

School, Sheikhdi at Jatrabari in the city because he had protested teasing of girls by some youths.

Hossain, son of Abu Taher of Sheikhdi, was the owner of a screen printing shop in the area, police said.

The armed youths, reportedly from Govindpur, shot Hossain in the right chest and leg. Local people alleged that the youths killed Hossain as he often resisted them from teasing girls of the school, close to his house.

Local people took fatally injured Hossain to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where attending doctors declared him dead.

A case was filed with Demra thana in this connection.

A leather trader, Rafique, 28, received serious bullet and stab injuries when some unidentified armed youths attacked him at Lalbagh in the city.

He was admitted to the DMCH.

HSC candidate missing

Shahidul Islam Shahid, an HSC examinee from Noakhali University College has been missing since July 5, reports BSS.

Shahid was preparing himself for the examination from his aunt's house (Ashraf Manzil) at Jail Road, Matjdi, Noakhali.

A case has been registered with Sudharam thana under Noakhali district in this connection.

Shahid's parents are in critical condition at the news of their son's disappearance.

The Bangladesh!

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This went undetected as the department is under tremendous pressure to issue passports. Upto fifteen hundred passports are issued a day at its Dhaka office alone, he added.

Some people who have obtained the passports with the erroneous seal expressed their dissatisfaction. One of them said they may face complications, even harassment, when these come under scrutiny by immigration officials abroad.

Karachi

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talks between the government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the MQM, which represents the many ethnic Mohajir migrants from India.

The government has blamed the MQM for much of the political and ethnic violence in Karachi where more than 2,000 people have died over the past 18 months.

The group denies the charge and accuses Bhutto of pursuing 'anti-Mohajir' policies.

Toxic waste

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mediately. "Such contamination of the lake water will jeopardise the plan to turn the Dhanmondi lake into a multipurpose tourist spot," the people said. The Tk 500 crore project includes setting up of restaurants, fish culture, boating and other tourist attractions. Work on the project is scheduled to start in mid-1996.