

HIGHER EDUCATION

Any Ray of Hope?

by Ahmed Ahsanuzzaman

THE recently-published 1994 BA (Hons) results of the candidates who took up English as their discipline of learning in the traditional system under the National University (NU) have already become a much-talked-about issue.

Not only the students, but also the university colleges authorities that offer English were, reportedly, shocked and disappointed at the horrifying results, which in their opinion, are "unbelievable". One of these colleges, i.e., Eden Girls' College, a leading government college of the country. The college reportedly decided to take up the matter with the NU, the university entrusted with the advanced studies in the country's colleges.

Indeed, the results in question can provide food for thought and introspection as to what has really gone wrong that so many students suddenly failed at this level of study? A look at the results reveals that out of 363 examinees, only 127 could manage to get the Honours Degree (the percentage is 34) while 37 examinees got the BA (pass) Degree since "they did not get the adequate marks to pass the BA (Hons) examination of 1994, but, nevertheless obtained the marks required to get a Pass-Certificate." Out of those 127 who were awarded Honours, only 10 got Second Class and the rest 117 examinees were placed in the Third Class.

The college-wise result table shows that four each from Jagannath College, Dhaka and Eden Girls' College, Dhaka got Second Class. The other two Second Class holders are the students belonging to Dhaka College, Dhaka and BM College, Barisal.

Forty-nine students of Jagannath College and 42 of Eden College could muster Third Class. The numbers are 9 and 17 for Dhaka College and BM College respectively.

Sixteen students of Jagannath College got Pass degree and 11 from Eden College, 2 from Dhaka College and 8 from BM College were awarded the same.

It would be, perhaps, unfair if we say that justice was not done to the examinees, because those who come out from the colleges with Honours in English can seldom write reasonably correct English, let alone good English. As for their spoken ability, this writer does not want to make any comment.

But can we blame the students only? True, they could not perform well in the exams and so they failed. Simple logic. But, are they solely responsible for their failure? Not really. Teachers are also responsible, in some cases their responsibility is much more than the students who could not jump over the hurdle of the Honours examinations. However, learned teachers never suffer. Sufferings are the inevitable fate of the unsuccessful candidates and also those who get Third Class.

Yet these students had to prove their credentials in the form of admission tests or marks obtained in their previous examinations to enter their respective colleges. And all of them secured reasonably good marks in English in their SSC and HSC examinations. After all by satisfying the authorities, they took admission in the colleges of their choice. So, can the prestigious colleges of the country, and for

that matter, the 'brahmins' among the government college teachers deny their responsibilities for the failure of their students?

It is generally said that the standard of our learners has drastically fallen after the Liberation of the country. It is also said that they do not take interest in learning. All they care to know is the technique to pass the examinations. Therefore, the quality of education has also fallen down.

But, we are hardly aware of the fact, or, even if we are aware, we simply turn our back on the aspect that here, too, teachers are responsible. It is the duty of the teacher to ignite the torch of knowledge in the minds of students. A teacher is the guide, friend and philosopher of his or her students. But, how many of our teachers believe in it? The commitment to duty is very important because teaching is never only a profession, it means much more than that. Unfortunately, this commitment is wanting in our teachers. They write guidebooks, an upgraded name for notebooks even for the Honours level students. But they do not guide them personally in the classrooms, and it is what is demanded by our students at all levels.

In government colleges things become all the more complicated because of the absence of any hard and fast rule as regards teacher's transfers and placements. As a result, allegedly merit and performance are ignored and favouritism reigns supreme. It does not matter whether you have quality and all that needed to teach advanced level students. It only matters whether you have 'high connections'. Because of the existing system that fosters corruption generally less competent teachers are posted at the university colleges. A teacher teaching in an Honours college ought to be familiar with latest issues related to his/her subject. If he/she is a teacher of English literature he/she needs to have a firm command over the new trends in literary criticism which will enrich his/her deliberations. Students are also benefited from such classes.

But, sadly enough, it isn't the case.

Moreover, because of the highly arbitrary nature of transfer game, a teacher without Honours in the relevant subject can get posted in an Honours college. Again, teachers who used to teach only the HSC students before the nationalisation of their colleges, can get posted in a university college overnight without any experience.

Then of course there is the private tutelage system and teachers of English are in great demand. Most of the university college teachers remain busy in flourishing their money-making industry, neglecting duties. They do not read journals or magazines, nor they care to go to the library. Often you would hear them complaining that books are not available. The fact is that they even don't bother to study the available ones. The result is: the 'fall' in the standard of education.

The pathetic results of the 1994 English Honours examinations send out a message to all of us. If we fail to decode the message, or deliberately neglect its importance, we will soon encounter a total wasteland without any ray of hope.

FOCUS

Security and Services During the Hajj Season of 1416 AH

Improvement Needed

by A B M G Kibria

doned by their group leaders. It is wrong to put the guests of Allah to serious inconvenience either in their own country or in Saudi Arabia.

Between 1975 to 1985, I have had the good fortune of visiting KSA several times. After eleven years, Allah gave me another opportunity to visit during 1996 Hajj season. I am not a religious scholar nor an official Hajj guide. I cannot think of writing a book on rites of attending Hajj. But I have observed this year and also in the past some of the man-made impediments which cause serious strain upon the minds of the pilgrims. On reaching Jeddah, the pilgrims are put under the charge of inexperienced, very often rude servants or drivers of the Moallem. From the time of landing, they are at the mercy of the Moallem and the drivers. Many of the pilgrims continue to suffer in silence during the journey to Makkah, Minna, Arafat, Muzdalifah, Madinah as well as on their return journey to Jeddah. Bangladesh Hajj Mission at Makkah and Madinah can do

with my comments.

The Saudi authorities are keen to identify the positive and negative aspects of the security services in order to extend and upgrade the services as well as to eliminate the negative aspects. This matter should be given serious consideration by our religious ministry as well as by Saudi authorities. The security services cover areas are: a) security measures and services of arrival; b) At the Holy Mosque at Makkah Mokarramah; c) at Arafat; d) at Muzdalifah; e) at Mina; f) at Prophet's Holy Mosque at Madinah Munawarah; g) in Madinah Munawarah; h) health security; i) psychological security; j) food stuff sufficiency at all places visited by the pilgrims; k) security awareness; l) public opinion poll on security measures and arrangement during the Hajj.

The Saudi government including the security and service personnel have done amazing work during the Hajj season in solving the logistics problems related to influx of over two million pilgrims. All

ised the pilgrims and tell them the procedure from the beginning to the end. People, particularly the non-Arabs feel bewildered when confronted with abrasive manners and harsh attitude of the airport personnel including those of the Moallem. The passports were impounded without a receipt at the time of delivering Moallem's cheque for SR. 879.00. The passports were made over to the driver of the bus in a sack who delivered them to the office of Moallem in Makkah on arrival. After a couple of days, Moallem issued an ID card. While leaving for Madinah, airline tickets were again taken away by Moallem.

The bus driver delivered the passport and tickets at the service office in Madinah. The pilgrims had to go again to take delivery of their tickets for reconfirmation. Before departure from Madinah, they had to go to that office for a chit which had to be shown to the bus office (Tankul Hijra) in Madinah. The passports were sent to the bus office from the service office which were checked before issuing boarding pass. The passengers, ar-

baggage from the bus roof. Why could not they drop the passengers at the international airport in the morning to avoid hassle?

In both the Holy Mosques in Makkah and Madinah, women security personnel clad in black burkha rather frightened the women pilgrims from South Asian countries by their attitude and manners. They made a sort of frightening sound with folded prayer mats which resembled the crack of a horse-whip. They were unable to do anything to Egyptians, Palestinian and other Arab pilgrims. I do not understand why they virtually yelled unnecessarily in the Holy Mosque in Makkah.

It is difficult to give opinion on security aspect including quality of services unless one has a chance to examine the operation plan as a whole. I had seen the security personnel (Askaris) on roads and highways carrying revolver not properly secured by means of a band or a leather band, while others appeared to be carrying weapons more powerful than Bretta or Sten to face

and polite in dealing with the pilgrims.

2) A simple monograph should be developed to teach the Saudi personnel what to avoid.

3) English, French, Urdu and Bengali speaking volunteers properly trained should be mobilised at the ports of entry and strategic locations to help especially the non-Arabs in overcoming physical and psychological pressure after arduous journey.

4) Computer networking system should be set up at the airport or port of entry which will record all information related to the pilgrims and simultaneously transmit of the information to the checkpoints, pilgrims centres, Moallem's office and even to bus office in Madinah or elsewhere. This will make seizure of passports and tickets quite unnecessary. At all points, the concerned officials may verify the passengers within the bus from the computer data.

5) Moallem's enclosure at the airport be abolished altogether or more personnel engaged to receive cheques and for documentation. They can sit behind immigration personnel and complete Moallem's formalities while immigration officers feed the computers with data. It will cut down time to a great extent. Computer data transmitted to Moallem's office in Makkah will enable them to prepare ID cards and wrist bands well ahead of time and deliver as soon as the pilgrims reach their office.

6) Receipt to passport holders should be given at the time of impounding their passports and the procedure explained verbally or in writing in languages they understand.

7) Transport arrangement at all places and toilet facilities particularly within enclosures of Moallem at Mina, should be further improved, and firmer control exercised over Moallem to avoid deliberate lapses.

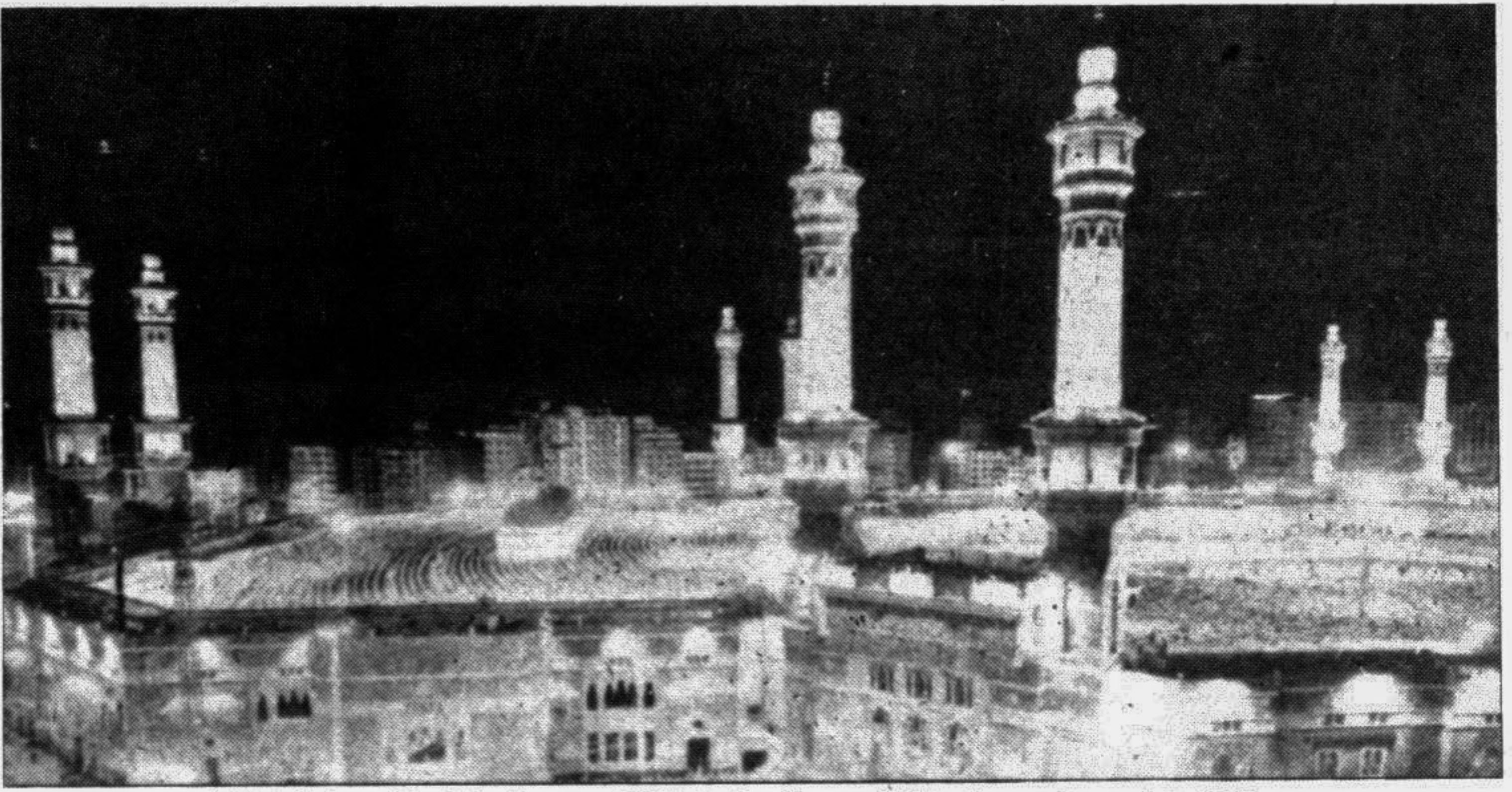
8) Drivers of vehicles carrying passengers should be discouraged from extorting money in the shape of 'bakhshish' and also the loaders at the bus and airport terminals not to press for 'fulus' against the declared policy of Saudi government.

9) Complaint centres should be opened at visible locations for relief against harassment or maltreatment. Details of procedure should be explained in Muslim and non-Muslim countries through media at the beginning of the Hajj season.

10) A helpful attitude should be developed in dealing with pilgrims. All personnel dealing with non-Arabs should temporarily forget the use of words like "khalas," "Maafi," "Rue," so forth and so on summarily dismissing the pilgrim without giving a hearing.

11) An Islamic Multi-National Civilian Task Force (not exceeding 250 people) should be constituted under Saudi Command to see how the authorities manage and guide spectacular human movement during the Hajj and assist, if called upon to do so.

The article was written on 12th May, 1996. Hence the development subsequent to it could not be taken into consideration.



A general view of the Holy Mosque at Makkah after the completion of expansion work in 1995.

hundreds of Ulamas have written a large number of books in different languages at different times on what a pilgrim intending to perform Umrah and Hajj should do but few have touched on the physical and psychological aspects as well as administrative and logistics problems encountered by the pilgrims in their own country and also when they land in Saudi Arabian ports. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "The pilgrims for Hajj and Umrah are the guests of Allah. If they pray for a thing to Allah, He will grant it." People from Bangladesh intending to go to Hajj faced tremendous hardship during non-cooperation movement in last March. Allah guides the faithfuls in the straight path and helps them take advantage of blessed efforts, the first Hajj flight from Dhaka left on schedule. Many Bangladeshi pilgrims face serious difficulties during Hajj due to their age and ignorance of rituals. Some of them are even aban-

agencies concerned under the government deserve unqualified commendation for their multiple plans and implementation capacity.

When I visited KSA in 1975, I found the immigration personnel in the tattered airport sitting cross-legged on the tables and dealing with pilgrims. Although not in uniform, they appeared to be prompt and efficient. Now smartly dressed in Khaki, they sit on chairs and behind computers. But they gave the impression of arm-chair loungers. Some custom officials had their noses masked as if to avoid contamination from the pilgrims in Ehram, proclaiming Labbaik Allahuuma Labbaik.

Perhaps, to understand the magnitude of this problem, a Saudi Researcher, Saad Audah Al-Raddadi, has prepared a questionnaire for surveying pilgrims' opinions on "security measures 'taken' and 'services rendered' during the Hajj season of 1416 AH. He is conducting this field survey in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Ph. D dissertation on Hajj.

While at Madinah, I got a copy of the questionnaire which I sent back together

in the early morning of 10th May at Hajj terminal Jeddah. The driver left all the passports on his seat without telling the passengers to pick them up. I was astounded to see a four digit number covering a portion of the photograph and signature on my passport. I never saw such a thing in the past. In 1981, I travelled to Europe from Jeddah for official purpose. I wonder whether this time I could travel to any European country with this kind of international passport, having a number on the photograph and signature.

The Bangladeshi passengers at the Hajj terminal. Two of them were sitting at the counter. The whole night was spent on journey to Jeddah and the whole day wasted at the terminal. In the evening of 10th May, the passengers were taken to the international airport (Matarul Ajaneb). No porter was available to get the

unexpected situation caused probably by a terrorist. It is not a combat situation. Bretta or Sten can spray bullets killing or injuring innocent pilgrims and causing international hue and cry. The security personnel should only carry hand guns and as is required, make target practice every month to improve their shooting skills from different positions. While improving their uniform and deportment, they should also learn how to regulate crowd and deal with people in language other than abrasive. It is, indeed, a difficult task but not impossible for KSA which has accomplished miracles in many fields. My respect for their development efforts and management ability has increased wondrously.

Some Suggestions

1) Necessary training and orientation course should be provided to the field staff everywhere to be more prompt

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Saturday 27th July

All programmes are in local time. We recommend programmes printed in bold. There may be changes in the programmes!

BTV

3:00pm Opening announcement
Al-Quran 3:10 Recitation from the Tripitak 3:15 Movie of the Week 4:00 News in Bangla 5:00 News in Bangla 5:25 Banshori: Folk Songs 6:00 News in Bangla 6:05 Shamchar 6:30 Moner Mukur 7:00 News in English 8:00 News in Bangla 8:30 Mati-o-Manush: Programme Based on Agricultural Development 9:00 Anbaran Patriotic Feature 10:30 News in English 10:30 Shasthakatho: Health Programme 10:35 Drama Series: Dynasty 11:30 News in Bangla 11:35 Tomorrow's programme summary 11:40 Close down

World Headlines 6:05 Under The Blue Flag 7:00 BBC World News 7:20 This Week 8:00 BBC World News 8:30 Time Out: Building Sights 9:00 BBC World Headlines 9:05 Correspondent 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Time Out: Auction 11:20 BBC World News 11:20 This Week 12:00 BBC World News 12:20 The Art Marathon 1:00 BBC World Headlines 1:05 Horizon 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Top Gear 3:00 BBC World News 3:25 Window On Europe 4:00 BBC World News 4:25 This Week 5:00 BBC World News 5:20 The Art Marathon

CHANNEL V

8:30am Asian Top 20 VJ None 10:30 Big Bang Weekend 11:30 Billboard US Countdown 2:30 The Ride VJ None 3:00 Rewind VJ None 3:30 VJ None 4:00 House At Noise VJ None 5:30 TV 1V 1's 6:00pm The Vibe Weekend 6:30 BBC World News 7:00 BBC World News 7:30 BBC World News 8:00 BBC World News 8:30 BBC World News 9:00 BBC World News 9:30 BBC World News 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 BBC World News 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 BBC World News 12:00 BBC World News 12:30 BBC World News 13:00 BBC World News 13:30 BBC World News 14:00 BBC World News 14:30 BBC World News 15:00 BBC World News 15:30 BBC World News 16:00 BBC World News 16:30 BBC World News 17:00 BBC World News 17:30 BBC World News 18:00 BBC World News 18:30 BBC World News 19:00 BBC World News 19:30 BBC World News 20:00 BBC World News 20:30 BBC World News 21:00 BBC World News 21:30 BBC World News 22:00 BBC World News 22:30 BBC World News 23:00 BBC World News 23:30 BBC World News 24:00 BBC World News 24:30 BBC World News 25:00 BBC World News 25:30 BBC World News 26:00 BBC World News 26:30 BBC World News 27:00 BBC World News 27:30 BBC World News 28:00 BBC World News 28:30 BBC World News 29:00 BBC World News 29:30 BBC World News 30:00 BBC World News 30:30 BBC World News 31:00 BBC World News 31:30 BBC World News 32:00 BBC World News 32:30 BBC World News 33:00 BBC World News 33:30 BBC World News 34:00 BBC World News 34:30 BBC World News 35:00 BBC World News 35:30 BBC World News 36:00 BBC World News 36:30 BBC World News 37:00 BBC World News 37:30 BBC World News 38:00 BBC World News 38:30 BBC World News 39:00 BBC World News 39:30 BBC World News 40:00 BBC World News 40:30 BBC World News 41:00 BBC World News 41:30 BBC World News 42:00 BBC World News 42:30 BBC World News 43:00 BBC World News 43:30 BBC World News 44:00 BBC World News 44:30 BBC World News 45:00 BBC World News 45:30 BBC World News 46:00 BBC World News 46:30 BBC World News 47:00 BBC World News 47:30 BBC World News 48:00 BBC World News 48:30 BBC World News 49:00 BBC World News 49:30 BBC World News 50:00 BBC World News 50:30 BBC World News 51:00 BBC World News 51:30 BBC World News 52:00 BBC World News 52:30 BBC World News 53:00 BBC World News 53:30 BBC World News 54:00 BBC World News 54:30 BBC World News 55:00 BBC World News 55:30 BBC World News 56:00 BBC World News 56:30 BBC World News 57:00 BBC World News 57:30 BBC World News 58:00 BBC World News 58:30 BBC World News 59:00 BBC World News 59:30 BBC World News 60:00 BBC World News 60:30 BBC World News 61:00 BBC World News 61:30 BBC World News 62:00 BBC World News 62:30 BBC World News 63:00 BBC World News 63:30 BBC World News 64:00 BBC World News 64:30 BBC World News 65:00 BBC World News 65:30 BBC World News 66:00 BBC World News 66:30 BBC World News 67:00 BBC World News 67:30 BBC World News 68:00 BBC World News 68:30 BBC World News 69:00 BBC World News 69:30 BBC World News 70:00 BBC World News 70:30 BBC World News 71:00 BBC World News 71:30 BBC World News 72:00 BBC World News 72:30 BBC World News 73:00 BBC World News 73:30 BBC World News 74:00 BBC World News 74:30 BBC World News 75:00 BBC World News 75:30 BBC World News 76:00 BBC World News 76:30 BBC World News 77:00 BBC World News 77:30 BBC World News 78:00 BBC World News 78:30 BBC World News 79:00 BBC World News 79:30 BBC World News 80:00 BBC World News 80:30 BBC World News 81:00 BBC World News 81:30 BBC World News 82:00 BBC World News 82:30 BBC World News 83:00 BBC World News 83:30 BBC World News 84:00 BBC World News 84:30 BBC World News 85:00 BBC World News 85:30 BBC World News 86:00 BBC World News 86:30 BBC World News 87:00 BBC World News 87:30 BBC World News 88:00 BBC World News 88:30 BBC World News 89:00 BBC World News 89:30 BBC World News 90:00 BBC World News 90:30 BBC World News 91:00 BBC World News 91:30