

What's on today . . .

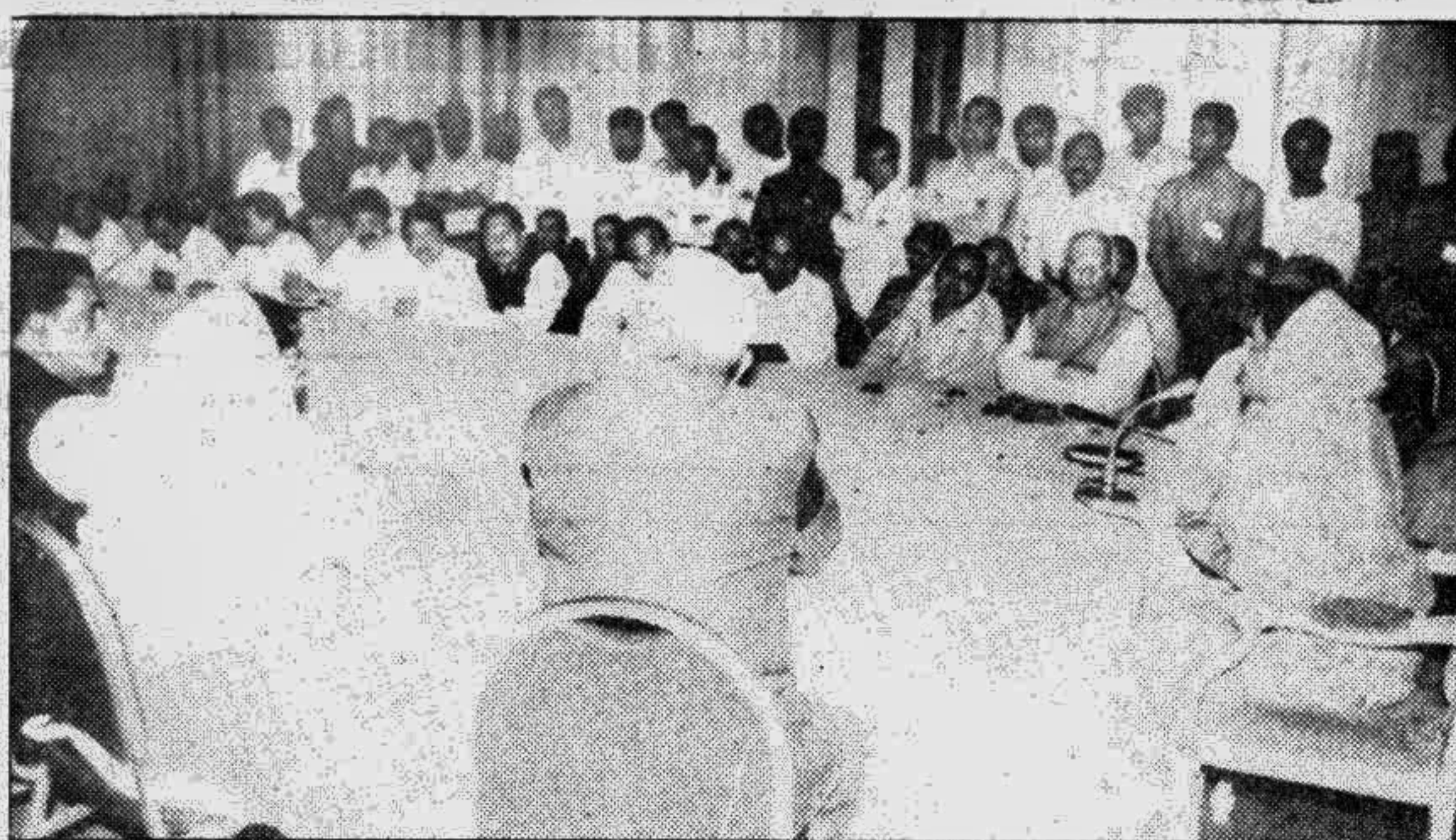
Discussion meet: Bangladesh National Museum has organised a discussion meeting on 'The Bangladesh National Museum the 21st century' to mark the 'International Museum Day'. Venue: Poet Sufia Kamal auditorium, National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 11:30 am.

Discussion: ICOM Bangladesh and Muktijuddha Jadughar have organised a discussion meeting to mark the International Museum Day. Venue: Jadughar auditorium 95, Segun Bagicha. Time: 10 am.

Lecture: A lecture on Extension of Improved Stove Technology in Bangladesh will be held as part of the National Museum of Science and Technology's (NMST) Lectures on Popular Science Series. Keynote speaker: Dr M Eusuf. Venue: NMST auditorium, Agar-gaon. Time: 4 pm.

Slide show: The High Commission of India along with the Drik Picture Library and Pathshala, The South Asian Institute of Photography have organised a slide show on 'Adventorial Photography' — A personal viewpoint by David D'Souza, noted Indian photographer. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, House No 119 B, Road No 2, Dhanmondi. Time: 6:00 pm.

Club meet: Rotary Club of Dhaka will hold its weekly meeting. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the leaders and workers of her party who came to Gonobhaban yesterday to greet her on the occasion of her Homecoming Day. — PID photo

World Telecom Day observed US company to install 50000 wireless phones

The World Telecommunications Day was observed in the country yesterday as elsewhere in the world with renewed pledges to expand electronic commerce for keeping pace with changing times, reports BSS.

Echoing with the theme of the day 'Electronic Commerce' the Post and Telecommunications and Home Minister Mohammad Nasim said the government is committed to reach the telecommunications services to the doorsteps of general people to expedite the pace of national economy.

Addressing a meeting at the chief guest to mark the day at a local hotel, the minister said that the private sector will install three lakh new telephones

on 'Built and Operate (BO)' basis soon to reach the target of expanding telephone network to 13 lakh from the present four lakh across the country.

Nasim also said that the Cabinet at a meeting yesterday approved a project of a US company to install 50,000 wireless telephones in Dhaka City and a Chinese project to convert 1.5 lakh digital phones to facilitate further trade and commerce in the country.

Referring to the government's policy to encourage private sector investment, Nasim said the present government under the dynamic leadership of Sheikh Hasina has also approved a private sector project to introduce satellite telephones.

He also referred to the private sector's commitment to expand their services through more investment. He was also critical of the private sector for not introducing satellite phones even after government approval.

Mentioning Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board (BTB) as one of the highest revenue earners, the minister said the present government would never privatise BTB as per World Bank recommendations.

The minister stressed the need for joint collaboration between BTB and the Science and Technology Ministry for developing software industry. He said boom of software industries in Bangladesh would create employment opportunity and ensure huge foreign exchange earnings.

Referring to three thousand crore US dollars investment in telecommunications sector around the world by the year 2002, Nasim laid emphasis on more private investment in developing the country's telecommunications sector.

Organised by BTB, the meeting was also addressed by Post and Telecommunications Secretary Nazmul Ahsan Chowdhury, BTB Chairman M A Mannan Chowdhury and Member of BTB K A Matin. Former Secretary S D Khan presented a key-note paper on the theme of the day.

Monwar new Chief Engineer of LGED

By Staff Correspondent
Engineer Monwar Hossain Chowdhury has taken over as the Chief Engineer of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). He replaced chief engineer Quamrul Islam Siddiqui.

Prior his new appointment, Monwar Hossain was the Additional Chief Engineer of the same department.

The post left vacant after Quamrul Islam Siddiqui was made chairman of Power Development Board (PDB).

GSS Karmi Parishad demands expulsion of three

By Staff Correspondent
GSS Karmi Sammiloni Parishad, one of the leading groups of employees in the Gano Shahajjo Sangstha (GSS), yesterday demanded immediate expulsion of three officials of the NGO.

The group, known as supporters of the NGO's executive director Dr F Hassan, also demanded trial of the three employees — Alauddin Mollah, Imdadul Huq Anu and Arijit Roy.

The parishad made the demands in a statement issued to the press yesterday. According to the statement, these people are responsible for destabilising the GSS. The parishad also staged a demonstration in front of the Jatiya Sangsad building yesterday afternoon to press home its demands.

Meanwhile, the other group that supports Alauddin Mollah and others has been demanding resignation of Dr Hassan on allegations of various corruptions.

52 criminals held in Barisal
BARISAL, May 17: Kotwali thana police arrested 52 criminals from different parts of this town in ten days of combing operation here, according to police sources, reports BSS.

Separate cases were lodged against them in this thana, the sources added.

Projects of 4 NGOs selected for Expo 2000 in Germany

Bangladesh will take part in the EXPO 2000 in Germany designed to focus on how people would survive in the future, reports UNB.

The five-month-long World Exposition's motto — 'Humankind, Nature and Technology' — is dedicated to the goal of sustainable development, and reflects its setting in the tradition of the Rio World Summit.

More than 180 countries and international organisations and 500 NGOs are expected to join the exposition beginning June 1 in Hanover. It will continue till October 31.

Briefing newsmen at a city hotel, Christian Hoffman, Regional Consultant for the EXPO said projects of four non-governmental organisations from Bangladesh have been nominated by the jury of the International Advisory Board for this biggest show.

The projects are: Development of Devices for Utilisation of Solar Energy for Food Processing, Development of Small Enterprises for Unemployed

Youth of ANANDA, a cultural group supported by the German government. Supporting the Needy and Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah Teacher's Training College of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and German Red Cross and the Grameen Bank.

Hoffman said he had productive talks with officials of the Ministry of Commerce and Industries about the effective participation from Bangladesh at both the government and NGO levels.

The German government, he said, would provide 100 million DM for consultation with 90 developing countries and give financial support to 50 of them to help participate in the exposition.

This won't be a traditional show of industrial products, but a market of ideas from different industries and organisations on how to face the problems in the new millennium," Hoffman said.

The exposition would seek genuine solutions to genuine problems facing the world, he said.

Bangladesh would get a rare chance to project its problems as well as solutions. He said about 40 million people would be visiting the grand show, first of its kind in Germany.

Jan Axel Foss, Head of the Press Division of German Embassy in Dhaka, said every idea, every approach is needed to tackle the burning issue of improving the living conditions of today's world population without jeopardising the existence of future generations.

He said worldwide projects are dedicated to themes for which solutions are essential for environmental, basic needs, nutrition, energy or the future of work.

In reply to a question, Hoffman said the German government would consider the recommendations of the exposition in giving development assistance to Bangladesh.



Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad addressing a rally at Muktagachha thana of Mymensingh district yesterday. Ershad leading a road march from Dhaka reached Mymensingh on Sunday. — Star photo

Mental patient held for spoiling Picasso painting

AMSTERDAM, May 17: An escaped psychiatric patient was arrested in connection with the vandalism of Picasso's 'Femme nue devant le jardin' ('Naked woman in front of the garden') at Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum, police said Monday, reports AFP.

Museum officials showed the damaged painting, with knife slashes which had almost cut a hole with a diameter of about 50 centimetres in the 1.32 by 1.60 m canvas.

Despite the damage, museum officials said they expect to be able to restore the painting, worth between 6-13 million euros (7-17 million dollars).

A 41-year-old man presented himself at the Amsterdam offices of Dutch daily newspaper De Telegraaf early Sunday evening, and claimed responsibility for the vandalism of this and other paintings. He was subsequently arrested by police.

It was child's play. There was no security whatsoever," the man told the newspaper, brandishing the knife supposedly used for the act of vandalism as well as an admission ticket for the Stedelijk Museum.

Zardari goes on hunger strike

KARACHI, May 17: Former premier Benazir Bhutto's jailed husband Asif Ali Zardari went on a hunger strike Monday after he was handed over to police for interrogation in a new double murder case, his party and lawyers said, reports AFP.

Police did not let him sleep and they keep on interrogating him, counsel Azizullah Sheikh said after a meeting with Zardari.

"I will not eat anything," he quoted Zardari as saying. Aijaz Durrani, an official of Bhutto Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), also said "we sent him meal but Zardari refused to eat anything in protest at the high-handedness of the government."

Sheikh said Zardari was not tortured but was "harrassed" and the police officials did not allow a private meeting with his client.

Zardari was handed over to the police Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) by prison authorities on Sunday for questioning in connection with the 1996 assassination of Sindh High Court judge Nizam Ahmed and his lawyer son, police said.

Ecevit rules out coalition with nationalists

ANKARA, May 17: Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit on Monday ruled out a coalition with a hardline nationalist party after it rejected his request for a meeting in connection with comments made about the party by his wife, reports AFP.

Emerging from talks with conservative leader Mesut Yilmaz, Ecevit said that a three-way coalition between his Democratic Left Party (DSP), the extreme-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and Yilmaz's Motherland Party (ANAP) was no longer on his agenda.

"Our dialogue with the MHP has been cut off due to reasons beyond our control. The door for us to bring them an offer has thus been closed," Ecevit, 74, told reporters in Ankara.

Ecevit's comments came after the MHP said on Sunday its chairman Devlet Bahceli would not meet the premier for a second round of coalition talks after Ecevit's wife, Rahsan, expressed concern over a collusion with the nationalists, infamous for violent street clashes with leftists before the 1980 military coup.



A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Bangladesh and Canada yesterday under which Dhaka will receive Tk 78.80 crore. ERD Secretary Dr Moshir Rahman and Canadian High Commissioner Nicholas Etheridge signed the MOU on behalf of their governments yesterday. — PID photo

Canada to extend facilities for boosting trade ties

Canadian government would extend facilities for promotion of business with Bangladesh in consultation with business leaders of the North American country, reports UNB.

The assurance came from the visiting Canadian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Raymond Chan, when he called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday.

Describing the relationship between Canada and Bangladesh as excellent, the Canadian Minister said the relations in economic field should be expanded for the common good.

He apprised the Prime Minister of his meeting with the Bangladeshi business leaders and ministers during his tour. "We had fruitful and effective talks with them," he said.

Raymond Chan congratulated the Prime Minister on her winning the prestigious UNESCO peace award and praised the present government for excellent flood management, and signing Ganges Water Treaty and CHT peace agreement.

Seminar at JU today

A seminar on 'Role of OIC in Our Liberation War' will be held today at the Arts Building of Jahangirnagar University, reports UNB.

Prof Delwar Hossain of History Department of Dhaka University will present the keynote paper on the topic at 10:30 am, organised by History Department of JU.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Hasina hoped that the excellent relations between the two nations would be strengthened further.

She thanked the Canadian Minister for his country's help during the devastating floods in Bangladesh in 1998.

"With the establishment of the system of holding vote under neutral caretaker government," she said, the people are now exercising their franchise in a free and fair atmosphere.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr S A Samad, Foreign Secretary S M Shafi Sami and Canadian High Commissioner Nicholas Etheridge were present at the meeting.

Pocket-sized copies of constitution presented to Shahabuddin

British High Commissioner in Dhaka David C Walker called on President Sheikh Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports UNB.

During the meeting, Walker presented the President two pocket-sized copies of the constitution of Bangladesh in Bengali and English.

The Foreign and Commonwealth office of the British government and British Council in Bangladesh jointly published it on the eve of British-Bangla Law Week to commemorate the 50 years of universal declaration of human rights.

The President expressed his happiness and thanked the British High Commissioner for publishing such a handy publication of the country's constitution.

It will help people to know about their constitutional rights and obligations, he said.

Meet to approve draft shipping policy today

The draft National Shipping Policy will be finalised today at a meeting of the committee for formulating the national shipping policy, said an official press release yesterday, reports BSS.

The meeting of the committee will be held at the Shipping Ministry with State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya in the chair.

The meeting will finalise the Draft of the National Shipping Policy after reviewing the recommendations of a workshop organised by ESCAP and reports of the technical committee and consultant of Danida in this regard.

Condolence meet today

A condolence meeting in memory of Prof Monira Siddiqi, former Head of the Bangla Department, of Dhaka College, will be held in the city today, says a press release.

Organised by Padakkhep '64, the meeting will be held on the East West University campus at 6 pm. The organisation's Chairman and Governor of Bangladesh Bank Dr Mohammad Farash Uddin will preside over the meeting.

Prof Monira Siddiqi passed away on March 8.

Businessman murdered in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, May 17: A businessman was slaughtered by unidentified assailants at his residence in the city's Shahab Bazar area on Sunday evening, police said, reports AFP.

Hospital sources said police recovered the body of Sariful Islam Selim, 42, owner of an electronics shop in the city, from his residence at about 8 pm on Sunday.

Police described the murder as "mysterious". None was arrested in connection with the murder.

A case was filed with Boalia police station.

Freshers' reception held at JU hall

By JU Correspondent
Al Beruni Hall of Jahangirnagar University (JU) arranged a freshers' reception and cultural function Monday to welcome its new students.

Split into two parts, the function was held at the common room. Hall provost Prof Abul Hossain presided over the discussion session. Vice Chancellor of the university Prof Alauddin Ahmed was present as chief guest while Treasurer Prof Sharif Enamul Kabir was present as special guest.

MEAA condemns incidents on BUET campus

By DU Correspondent
Mechanical Engineering Alumni Association (MEAA) yesterday condemned the recent violent incidents and massive vandalism on the BUET campus.

The association also demanded proper investigation into the incident and exemplary punishment to those involved. They also urged all concerned to try their best to restore congenial academic atmosphere on the campus.

Anti-drug operation Army destroys poppy plants in CHT

Bangladesh Army, in coordination with the civil administration, recovered a huge quantity of drug and destroyed narcotic plants in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region in last three months, reports APB.

Conducting comprehensive anti-drug operations and campaign against narcotics production in the CHT region in March, the army so far has recovered some 650 kilograms of cannabis, 30 grams opium, 2.1 kg poppy, four kg poppy seeds and 400 grams of opium seeds.

About three acres of poppy plants across the three hill districts — Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban — were also destroyed during the operations, said an ISPR release yesterday.

It said unscrupulous drug traders in the region had been encouraging the poverty-stricken hill people to cultivate drugs with the allurements of huge amount of money.

The remote and inaccessible areas of CHT, where movement

of the security forces is "restricted", were allegedly being used for the plantation of opium, hashish and poppy.

Since March, a number of anti-drug operations were conducted in difficult terrains of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban. The members of the Bangladesh Army with assistance from the civil administration and law enforcing agencies carried out similar types of anti-drug operations last year.

The Bangladesh Army, as part of its public welfare and motivation programme also launched a campaign to familiarise local people about the harmful effect of drugs and its abuses.

At the same time, the army is also carrying out a vigorous campaign against the production and abuse of drugs in the larger interest of the nation.

The Bangladesh Army is assisting the poorer segment in the inaccessible areas with cash money and other necessities to rehabilitate and motivate them in alternate crop production.

BCU protests construction of confce centre at Osmani Uddyan

By DU Correspondent
Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU), a left-leaning student organisation, yesterday brought out a silent procession protesting the government decision to construct an international convention centre at the Osmani Uddyan by felling some eleven thousand trees.

Eleven BCU activists painted an eleven yard long banner at the park in the morning and paraded some city streets with the banner.

Later, the BCU held a rally in front of the National Press Club which was addressed, among others, by Atiqul Haq Khan, Hafiz Adnan Riyadh and Mahabubur Rahman Shipon.

At the rally BCU leaders urged the government to cancel the decision for the sake of ecological balance of the city.

Bus driver stabbed to death in Ctg

From Our Correspondent CHITTAGONG, May 17: One person was stabbed to death, reportedly some of his fellow workers in Bahodderhat area under Chandaghat thana in the city in the early hours of today.

Abul Kalam, 45, a bus driver, was stabbed dead by his fellow workers when he was in sleep at a store house near Azizia boarding adjacent to Bahodderhat bus terminal about 2 am today.

SCF protests attack on its activists

By JU Correspondent
Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) yesterday brought out a procession and held a rally on Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus protesting the recent attack on some of its activists by Islami Chhatra Shibir on the Chittagong University (CU) campus.

Later, at a rally, the SCF leaders said the anti-liberation forces have become the active again and they are now engaged in terrorist activities in the educational institutions throughout the country.

They demanded immediate arrest and trial of the persons involved in the attack.

The rally was addressed by SCF JU unit president Ariful Haq and general secretary Asana Ayub Anney.

HC discharges writ petition of Shafi Ahmed

The High Court by discharging a writ petition yesterday affirmed the removal of Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury from the directorship of Pubali Bank by Bangladesh Bank for his conduct prejudicial to the interest of depositors, reports UNB.

A division bench comprising Justice Kazi Ebadul Huq and Justice Mohammad Mozammel Hossain after hearing the writ petition filed by Shafi Ahmed challenging his removal from the directorship by Bangladesh Bank held that the removal was with lawful authority.

The petitioner argued that he did not act anything prejudicial to the interest of depositors of Pubali Bank.

Two killed on Jessore-Khulna highway

JESSORE, May 17: At least two people were killed and 40 others injured in a road accident on Jessore-Khulna highway at Rajhat in Avoynagar thana on Monday evening, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Bonyar, 4, and Abdul Aziz, 30. Of the injured, 30 were admitted to Avoynagar thana health complex, three at Sadar Hospital, two at Khulna 250-bed hospital and one was sent to Dhaka.

Police said the accident occurred when a Khulna-bound bus coming from Dhaka hit a roadside tree while giving side to a speeding truck at 6 pm.

Body recovered in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, May 17: Hathazari police recovered the body of a youth from Hathazari-Bhattyari Link Road here today, reports BSS.

The victim was identified as Taslim Uddin, 28, son of Badsha Mia Sowadgar of Nanupur union under Fatikchhari thana.

District police said the body bore marks of multiple bullet and knife injuries but could not establish the motive behind the murder. Taslim returned home from abroad a few months ago.

The body was sent to hospital for autopsy and a case was filed with Hathazari thana in this connection.



A workshop on 'Good Practice of Groundwater Irrigation' sponsored by DFID and Cranfield University, UK was held at a city hotel yesterday.

Two killed in city

Two people were killed and one was stabbed in different incidents in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

DMCH sources said Sujan, 25, was critically injured in a train accident near Sainik Club in Banani in the morning. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

In another incident, police recovered the body of a one-year-old boy Rubel, son of Altaf Hossain of section-13, Uttara, from a nearby drain at about 5 pm. Rubel was missing from Sunday.

Kamal, 20, a bus supervisor, and a resident of Narinda was stabbed near Yeast Park at about 2 pm as he refused to give toll Tk 30,000 to local mastans. He was admitted to the DMCH.

Chehlum

Chehlum of Lutfur Nahar Chowdhury, a BCS (education) officer, will be held on May 20 at 'Biswa Darbar', Mirsarai, Chittagong after Esha prayers, says a press release.

Lutfur Nahar, an Editor at National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTBB), died on April 10.

Obituary

By Staff Correspondent
Kazi Taher Uddin Ahmed, retired Chief Designer of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), died at BIRDEM hospital yesterday. He was 68.

He had been suffering from cancer and diabetes.

His wife Halima Begum is the Assistant Headmistress of Mohammapur Girls' High School.

He was buried at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard.