

What's on today

CDRB Seminar: Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh has organised a seminar on 'Initial Public Offering in the Securities Market of Bangladesh: A critical Analysis.' Key-note speaker: Dr. M Mahabub-ul-Islam. Venue: WVA auditorium, Rd No: 27 (old), Dhanmondi. Time: 4:30 pm.

Film show: A fortnightly retrospective cum exhibition documenting German film maker, writer and actor Rainer Werner's life and work will begin. Organiser: Bangladesh Short Film Forum, Goethe-Institut Dhaka and Zahir Raihan Film Society. Venue: German Cultural Centre. Time: 6pm.

NU Discussion: National Professor Kabir Chowdhury will deliver a lecture on Bangabandhu and a 5-day book exhibition on Bangabandhu will begin at National University Library. Organiser: National University. Venue: Dormitory Bhabna, NU campus, Gazipur. Time: 11 am.

Spiritual Lecture: Vassula Ryden, an international known speaker, will speak on 'How to Live a True Life in God.' The meeting is open to all. Venue: Bottomley Home High School ground, Farmgate. Time: 6 pm.

IFB Discussion: Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh has organised a discussion meeting on 'Bangabandhu and Emergence of Bangalee Nation'. Chief guest: Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Matin Khasru. Venue: IFB auditorium. Time: 10 am.

..... and tomorrow

Photography Exhibition: A 10-day long photographic exhibition on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's US visit will begin. These rare pictures were taken by Rajon Debshah. Organiser: Bangladesh National Museum in cooperation with Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Museum. Chief guest: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Venue: Main auditorium of National Museum. Time: 10 am.

Reception to retarded athletes: Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation will accord a reception to Gold Medal winning retarded athletes of Special Olympic. Venue: Protibondhi Foundation auditorium, 12 New Circular Road, West Malibagh. Time: 11 am.

Weather

Light rain forecast

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at many places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls may occur at one or two places over Barisal and Chittagong divisions during the period, Met Office said.

The country's highest temperature was recorded 34.5 degree Celsius at Chuadanga and the lowest 23.5 degrees at Satkhira yesterday.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6.35 pm and rises on Thursday at 5.32 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.0	26.3	81	93
Chittagong	31.5	24.7	86	86
Rajshahi	33.6	25.8	89	88
Khulna	32.0	25.4	81	75
Barisal	29.5	24.8	88	85
Sylhet	31.0	25.5	95	97
Cox's Bazar	--	25.5	92	--

Postal service gaining more popularity

By Mustak Hossain

Postal services have been gaining more popularity in the country despite global growth of electronic mailing (e-mail) system. Bangladesh Postal Service had handled about 29 crore postal articles during the fiscal year 1998-99 (July-June), according to postal service statistics.

It is not undeniable that the people are taking more and more services offered by postal services not only in Bangladesh but also worldwide, a high official of the department told The Daily Star.

"Business, trade and commerce depend a little on verbal words but heavily on written communications. They cannot do and go without a large volume of mail," he said.

He said: The manifold growth of the mail volumes in the developed and the quickly developing countries have come mainly through the generation of what is called the business mail.

There is huge potential of business mails even in Bangladesh, he said referring to British postal service, in Britain it is the third largest advertising medium.

Bangladeshi Express Mail Service (EMS) and Guaranteed Express Mail (GEP) are gradually becoming popular day by day, he said.

Bangladesh post offices had received 92 thousand Express Mail Services (EMS) articles in the year 1993-94 and it rose to one lakh eight thousand in 1988-99. Bangladesh sent one lakh five thousand items abroad in the year 1993-94 which climbed to one lakh 25 thousand in the year 1998-99.

BCL faction fails to hold rally in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 10: Supporters of Bangladesh Chhatra League's (BCL) Nasir faction could not hold a rally at Anderkilla crossing as police chased them away and broke their podium this morning, witnesses said.

BCL supporters organised the rally for demanding the release of Awami League leader of the port city AZM Nasir, who was arrested a month ago in connection with criminal cases.

Police officials said that BCL supporters tried to hold the rally without taking prior permission from the authorities.

BCL supporters were dispersed due to police action. A large number of police were later deployed at Anderkilla crossing to prevent any untoward incidents.

Meanwhile, most of the shops at Anderkilla and Momin Road were forced to keep their shutters down for two hours from 10 am today to observe a token strike called by BCL supporters demanding release of their leader Nasir.

BAAA welcomes recommendations of JS body

By Staff Correspondent

BCS Audit and Accounts Association (BAAA) yesterday welcomed the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Establishment for recruitment and promotion of officers to the posts of deputy secretary and above through competitive examinations. The association in a statement signed by its secretary general Rezauddin M Chowdhury said it was a timely and important step for removing disparity and ensuring justice among all the cadres in filling up the superior posts of the secretariat, which according to the Cadre Composition Rule of 1980 does not belong to any particular cadre.

"The association expects that this recommendation based on merit and competence will be implemented without any delay to improve the efficiency and performance of the policy level posts in the Secretariat," the statement said.

The association also demanded immediate abolishing of the existing unequal and biased quota system in the appointment to the superior posts and urged the government to expedite recruitment to the posts of deputy secretary and above as per recommendation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee.

Truck driver stabbed

By Staff Correspondent

A truck driver was critically injured when a gang of miscreants stabbed him in his throat at city's Shyampur area yesterday.

Police and hospital sources identified the injured as Firoz Alam, 35, a resident of Shyampur area. Firoz was under treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

According to hospital sources, the gang abducted Firoz from near the Ujala Match Factory and took him beside the Shyampur High School at about 1:30 pm.

They beat up Firoz and at one stage stabbed him in his throat. In a critical condition Firoz was rushed to DMCH where he was operated upon, police and hospital sources said.

Shyampur police said Firoz is accused in a case of kidnapping filed with their thana last month. None was arrested or no case was filed in this connection till filing this report.

BKL rally today

Bangladesh Krishak League (BKL) will hold a rally at the city's Suhrawardy Uddyan today demanding immediate execution of the verdict of the Bangabandhu killing trial, reports BSS.

The rally at 3 PM will be followed by a mourning procession. It will disperse at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi.



Sex workers leaving the police headquarters premises as law enforcers did not allow them to observe their sit-in programme there yesterday. — Star photo

Memorial meeting on Dr Neelan held

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a memorial meeting yesterday expressed deep shock at the killing of Dr Neelan Tiruchelvan, the Sri Lankan lawbreaker and a human rights activist. Addressing the meeting, speakers said Dr Neelan, dedicated his life in struggle for peace and human rights, fought against terrorism but he was killed by terrorists.

Jointly organised by Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) the meeting was held at the CIRDP auditorium.

Among other speakers were Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, Dr Kamal Hossain, Prof Rehman Sobhan, Journalists Matru Rahman and Shah Hussain Imam, Father Tim, PV Pillai and Sri Lankan Ambassador to Bangladesh were present at the meeting.

Dr Neelan was killed by a suspected LTTE suicide bomber near his Colombo residence on July 29.

Strike of MMCH doctors continue

MYMENSINGH, Aug 10: Doctors of Myemensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) abstained from duties for the second day today.

Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) local chapter called a three-day strike. They strike began yesterday protesting the attack on Shafiqul Islam, a doctor in emergency section at his chamber by a group of hoodlums on August 8.

The doctors including private practitioners held a rally on the MMCH premises. Patients are not getting any treatment even in the private chambers and clinics of the town following the strike.

Many patients are leaving the hospital as they are not getting any treatment. Only five emergency medical squads are working at MMCH, the only Medical College Hospital in greater Myemensingh region. BMA Secretary Dr Mustafa Kamal informed.

But the inmates at the hospital informed that they are not having any treatment even they do not meet any doctor during the strike.

BMA Secretary also said that they will announce further course of action tomorrow after holding a meeting on the MMCH premises.

'Police action' condemned

By Staff Correspondent

Naripakkha, a women and human rights organisation, yesterday condemned the 'police action' on activists of Shangkhat during a 'silent demonstration' in front of the police headquarters earlier in the day.

At a press conference at the Jatiya press club, leaders of Naripakkha alleged that police 'attacked' Shangkhat activists without any provocation and snatched away some placards. Police hurled abusive words and also threatened some of the demonstrators to strip them, they alleged.

The Shangkhat was staging the demonstration protesting the recent 'eviction' of sex workers from Tanbaraz and Nimtoli brothels at Narayan-ganj.

The press conference was addressed by, among others, Mahbuba Mahmood, Nasima Akther, Dilip Kumar Ghosh, evicted sex workers' leader Sathi and two former inmates of Tanbaraz brothel, Runa and Anu.

The leaders said about 25 activists of Shangkhat went there with placards in the morning to stage a silent demonstration. But police asked them to leave the place.

Their leaders told police that they would stay there till 10 am and leave the place after submitting a memorandum to the Inspector General of police (IGP).

But police forced the demonstrators to leave the place without submitting the memorandum, they alleged.

Police also nabbed three male activists and took them to the headquarters. They were however released later, they said.

"We were protesting in a democratic way but police misbehaved with our members", Mahbuba Mahmood said. People have the right to protest in a democratic country, she added.

'Anti-liberation forces will gain from Kader Siddiqui's move'

Muktijoddha Sanghati Parishad terms Abdul Kader Siddiqui MP's ongoing move an effort to strengthen the anti-liberation forces, including main Opposition BNP, reports UNB.

"His move in the guise of welfare of the freedom fighters is designed to weaken the pro-liberation government of Sheikh Hasina and destroy its image," said a meeting of the Central Committee of the Freedom Fighters' Solidarity Council.

The council called upon Kader Siddiqui to refrain from such activities that weaken the pro-liberation forces and indirectly strengthen the anti-liberation elements.

In the wake of confusions among the freedom fighters following Kader Siddiqui's recent anti-government campaign, the council held an extended meeting of its central committee on August 7.

The meeting hailed the government for its efforts to identify and preserve the graves of martyred freedom fighters which was a long cherished demand of the Muktijoddha Sanghati Parishad.

Earlier, the council launched Muktijoddha Smriti Sangrakshak Prokolpo (the Project to Preserve Memories of the Liberation War) to identify and preserve the graves of martyred freedom fighters.

Pak plane downed

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been put on a 'state of enhanced vigilance'.

Fernandes told reporters Pakistan had requested international observers be brought to the wreckage site. But he said no one would be given access without permission.

The Indian High Commissioner (ambassador) in Islamabad, G. Parthasarthy, was summoned to the foreign ministry and a 'strong protest' was lodged, Aziz told reporters.

The Breguet Atlantique maritime patrol aircraft was attacked during a training mission, Pakistan officials said.

The wreckage fell about two miles (3.25 kilometres) inside the international border on the Pakistani side, near the town of Badin, about 300 kilometres north-east of Karachi, a naval official told AFP.

The aircraft was carrying 16 navy personnel — six officers and 10 ordinary ratings — and a Pakistan navy statement said all were killed.

The plane went missing at 11:30 a.m. (0630 GMT) and helicopters sent out to search sighted the wreckage on the ground near Badin, said the navy official.

In New Delhi, the Defence Ministry said in a statement, "A Pakistani maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine aircraft, intruded into Indian airspace."

"The aircraft was shot down by Indian Air Force combat planes at 11:15 a.m. (0545 GMT). The wreckage of the Pakistani aircraft has been found on the Indian side of the international border."

An Air Force spokesman said the Pakistani aircraft had been intercepted and shot down some 10 kilometres inside the international border in the western state of Gujarat.

The wreckage had been located by Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopters, two kilometres inside the border, he added.

The intrusion was detected by ground radar, the spokesman said, and MiG-21 fighters were scrambled.

The IAF fighters closed in to identify and signal the intruding Pakistani aircraft to force it to land at an Indian base.

"The Pakistani aircraft acted in a hostile manner by turning into our fighters. At that stage, the Atlantic was shot down by an air-to-air missile," he said.

"The missile hit the aircraft in the port engine which caught fire," he added.

The spokesman said the aircraft had previously violated Indian airspace on eight separate occasions between May and July.

The plane was downed barely a month after the two sides ended the latest chapter in their decades-old dispute over the Kashmir region.

There was 10 weeks of fierce combat between thousands of Indian troops and Islamic guerrillas and alleged Pakistani army regulars in Kashmir on both sides between May and July.

During the confrontation, Pakistan claimed to have shot down two Indian MiG jets on May 27, capturing alive one pilot who was returned a few days later.

Pakistan's Information Minister Mushadid Hussain accused India of shooting down the patrol plane in 'revenge' for losing the two fighter jets.

Hussain told BBC television: "I guess they wanted to get revenge for their planes which were shot down in the Kashmir crisis when they entered into Pakistan airspace."

Pakistan expels Indian embassy official

Meanwhile, Pakistan on Tuesday expelled an Indian embassy official on spying charges, the foreign office here

Staff of newspaper distribution centre stabbed, robbed in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 10: A group of muggers snatched Tk 50,000 after stabbing the cashier of a newspaper distribution centre in Kulsui area here today, witnesses said.

The injured cashier Rezaul Karim Reza was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital. His condition was stated to be critical, hospital source said.

The muggers attacked Reza at Kulsui road at 1 pm while he was returning from Pahartali newspaper distribution centre by a tempo, witnesses said.

The centre is owned by newspaper agent Md Ishaq. Agent sources said the muggers intercepted the tempo and snatched the bag containing money from Reza. When Reza attempted to resist, they stabbed him and decamped with the money and other documents, sources added.

None was arrested till filing of this report.

Bhutanese

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met with His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck of Bhutan and that Begum Zia is fully aware of the status of Bhutan.

Bhutan not only enjoys close and friendly relations with its closest neighbour India but also enjoys similar relations with all the other members of the SAARC, including the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

It is hoped that in the future, senior political leaders would refrain from making such unwarranted statements about a friendly neighbouring country.

Bargain

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extent but will not ruin the entire potential. When the Indian companies will need to pay for using the route, cost of their commodities will be much higher than that of our products."

He replied in the affirmative when asked whether he considered it important to have national level debates on the controversial issue. "The issue is definitely of national importance, and the government has rightly decided to have a debate in the Jatiya Sangsad. Besides, the government should seek opinions of various parliamentary standing committees concerned."

According to the ruling party leader, the JS standing bodies on ministries of finance, industries, commerce, defence and environment can substantially contribute towards facilitating signing of the proposed transshipment agreement "on the basis of our national interests."

"The MPs seldom pursue partisan approaches at committee meetings," the Chairman of the JS body on the Ministry of Commerce observed.

He was asked to comment on the Opposition apprehension that India would eventually convert the transshipment facilities into corridor facilities and that the country's territorial sovereignty would be at stake.

Farid Gazi said, "Sovereignty of a country is not that brittle. The nation will take necessary steps, if India tries to convert the transshipment facilities into corridor facilities."

In this connection, the AL legislator however said: "It would be wise for the government to incorporate a condition that India would never use the route through Bangladesh for any military purposes."

Replying to another question, the AL leader said: "Well, Bangladesh is conditionally committed to support people's struggle for national independence across the world. But in the given circumstances, the country can not afford to be sympathetic to those struggling in the north eastern zone of India. India is a big, powerful neighbour."

The AL leader refused to elaborate.

Indian navy, military on alert

India has put its navy and entire western military command on alert Tuesday.

The Press Trust of India quoted highly placed naval sources as saying the navy had been put on a 'state of enhanced vigilance', while Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes said the 'whole of the western military sector' had been placed on alert following the incident.

Fernandes said the Directors General of Military Operations of India and Pakistan talked to each other on a telephone hotline after the plane was shot down.

He also claimed that several Pakistani helicopters had been spotted near the wreckage site on the Indian side of the border.

"We made it clear that we will not allow them to be there. We will fire. We have warned that any movement onto our side will be treated as hostile," Fernandes said.

"There is cloud cover and it is a marshy area so it will take sometime to recover the wreckage," he added.

EC asks BNP

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them to substantiate their claims that the two BNP lawmakers should lose their seats in Jatiya Sangsad, EC sources said.

The EC also sent letters to the MPs in question, Mohammad Alauddin and Hasibur Rahman Swapan, to defend their position that their joining the Cabinet was not in violation of the Constitution, the sources added.

The Commission asked both the sides to put forward their arguments in black and white in seven days from the receipt of the letters. The letters were sent by EC messengers.

Professor Chowdhury and Khandaker Delwar had separately written to the Speaker in February 1998 that the two lawmakers should lose their seats since they had joined Sheikh Hasina's cabinet. They urged the Speaker to refer the cases to the EC for its verdict.

But the Speaker refused to refer the matter to the EC on the ground that the actions of the MPs did not amount to violation of the Article 70 of the Constitution that bars floor-crossing.

The BNP went to the High Court in April last year to challenge the Speaker's observation. Following a 16-month legal battle, the opposition won the case when the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court asked the Speaker to suspend to refer the disputed issue to the Election Commission.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury referred the case to the EC on Sunday. He, in a letter addressed to the EC, however, said that he was still convinced that the BNP lawmakers by joining the government did not violate Article 70 that bars floor-crossing.

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Citizens cry

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"Our survey has identified 113 illegal structures on the river banks. The situation is alarming. We know, there will be obstacles but we will have to overcome them," she said adding, "The prime minister has asked us to remove the encroachment on the River Buriganga and we will do it, but certain things are still hanging due to legal complications."

Eminent citizens and professionals suggested that an inter-ministerial committee and an independent water front authority be formed to save the river. They said everybody has to stop looking at the River Buriganga as a backyard for dumping. Your demise may come from the neglected backyard which plays a vital role in the life of the city.

Professor Muntazir Mamun said, "First of all we will have to ask whether we could recover the land from the encroachers for proper planning. Since 1980 we have seen a desperate fight by successive governments for occupying land. They are evicting slums to occupy land," he continued, "To save the river, there must be political will."

Mamun said that seven MPs were controlling the city as public representatives. "I want to ask, does Haji Selim want to save the River Buriganga?"

To save it, the people must realise that if the river continues to be treated in this way, our children will not survive," he said.

Daily Star editor Mahfuz Anam said Dhaka grew because the river Buriganga was here. "But