

What's on today....

Seminar: A seminar will be held to mark the launching of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) clinic at the NDN Executive Health Check Centre (EHCC). Venue: BIRDEM auditorium. Time: 11:00 am.

BUP roundtable: Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad will hold a roundtable discussion meeting on Urban Housing in Bangladesh. Venue: BUP auditorium, House No 33, Rd No 4, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 4:00 pm-7:00 pm.

INFOFISH seminar: An investment seminar on "Value Added Fishery Product" organised by INFOFISH, a Malaysian organisation will be held in collaboration with Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation and Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association. Venue: Hotel Sonargaon.

..... and tomorrow

Workshop: A 2-day workshop on "Environmental Law and Sustainable Development" will begin. Organisers: Environment Directorate in collaboration with UNEP, SAKEP and NORAD of Joint Environmental Law Project for South Asia. Time 9:00 am.

Conference: Bangladesh Association for American Studies and the United States Information Service will inaugurate a two-day conference on "US Society and Culture". Venue: Academy for Planning and Development, Nilkhet. Time: 9:30 am.

BCPS lecture: Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS) will hold two lectures on "Bell's Palsy and its management" and "Diagnosis and management of acute gout". Venue: BCPS auditorium, Mohakhali. Time: 11:00-11:50 am and 12:00-1:00 pm respectively.

CESTI seminar: Centre for Scientific and Technological Information (CESTI) of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka will hold a seminar on "Foreign Investment in Pharmaceutical Industry in Bangladesh". Venue: Sasakawa auditorium, ICCDRB. Time: 3:30 pm.

Weather

No change in temperature

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Barisal, Chittagong, Sylhet and Khulna divisions and at a few places over Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office said moderately heavy falls may occur over the central parts of the country during the period. Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 33.9 degree Celsius was recorded at Rangpur and the lowest of 24.5 degrees at Teknaf.

The sun sets today at 5:57 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:47 am.

Maximum and minimum 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	30.7	26.5	79	78
Chittagong	31.6	25.0	93	87
Rajshahi	33.4	25.0	84	98
Khulna	31.5	26.0	83	100
Barisal	30.6	26.0	85	92
Sylhet	32.4	26.0	100	86
Cox's Bazar	29.4	24.6	133	36

HERE and THERE

BAI

The orientation course for the newly admitted 1st Year BSc Ag. students of Bangladesh Agricultural Institute (BAI), Dhaka was held on Sunday, says a press release.

Dr Md Abdur Razzak, Director General, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (ARI) was the chief guest while Prof Md Shadat Ulla, Principal, BAI chaired the function. Mr Md Abdus Satter, Director (T&C), BARI and Dr Md Harun-Rashid, Vice Principal, Patuakhali Krishi College attended the function as special guests.

BAICUS General Secretary Dewan Mahbubur Rahman Bada and ACS Hedayat Hossain Sipon delivered speeches at the function. They drew the attention of the Director General to their various problems including accommodation, transport, etc. Dr Razzak, DG, BARI himself a former student of BAI, in his address recalled his memories with BAI and appreciated the existing problems.

Prof Md Shadat Ulla in his speech asked the students to devote themselves in the pursuit of knowledge so that they could

become worthy citizens. He advised the students to be punctual in their classes and attentive to their studies.

The function was addressed among others by Mr Md Abdus Satter, Director, BARI, Prof Md Shamsul Haque, Vice Principal, BAI, Dr Md Harun-Rashid, Vice Principal, PKC, Prof Abdul Mannan Mia, Member-Secretary, Academic Council, Prof Dr Md Hazrat Ali and Asstt Prof Md Rafiqul Islam, President and General Secretary respectively of BAI Teachers' Association. The function was conducted by the Orientation Course Coordinator Associate Prof M Zahidul Haque.

Krishibid Institution

By Staff Correspondent

The Krishibid Institution of Bangladesh in a statement yesterday protested the decision of the parliamentary standing committee on establishment ministry to upgrade the 321 posts of the BCS (Admn) cadres including the DCs.

It urged the government and the standing committee to upgrade all the cadres without favouring any particular group.

Utsho Bangladesh essay competition

Utsho Bangladesh, a voluntary organisation, has announced an essay writing competition for school children to celebrate "World Children's Week", says a press release.

The title of the essay is "My Freedom". All school children are eligible to enter the competition in any of the three groups:

Class III - 50 words
Class IV - 150 words
Class V-VI - 250 words
Entries can be in Bengali or English and must reach Utsho Bangladesh, 109 East Rayerbazar, Rd No 15(Old), Dhanmondi by October 31.

Three prizes will be awarded in each category and a selection of the essays will be brought out in a publication, the release added.

Utsho Bangladesh runs a residential school for education of children of low-income group parents. It relies on local resources for its maintenance.

Khulna Press Club office-bearers

KHULNA, Sept 20: Shahabuddin Ahmed and Zakir Hossain were elected president and general secretary of Khulna Press Club respectively, reports UNB.

S M Nazrul Islam, Belaluddin and Arun Shah were elected vice-presidents in the election held at the local Press Club today.

Other office bearers are: Joint secretary - Hasan Ahmed Mollah, assistant secretaries - Shaheeb Ali and Masudur Rahman Rana, secretary - Nur Mohammad Tona, and members - Alhaj Liakat Ali, Begum Ferdousi Ali, A Zakir Hossain, Motahar Rahman Babu, Didarul Alam, Asrafal Alam Bachchu, Harun-ur-Rashid, Syed Abdul Matin and Kazi Amanullah.

Re-polling would be required for the post of treasurer as two candidates got equal number of votes.

Annada Shankar Roy honoured

Renowned litterateur Annada Shankar Roy of India has been awarded 'Begum Zebunnesa International Award' in recognition of his contributions to Bengali literature and Bangladesh's liberation war, reports UNB.

Members of Begum Zebunnesa and Kazi Mahbubullah Welfare Trust and Chairman of Privatisation Board Kazi Zafarullah handed over the award at a reception at West Bengal Bangla Academy auditorium on Saturday. The award carries a good medal and Tk one lakh.

The trust, which has given the 'Begum Zebunnesa International Award' for the first time, has so far given other awards to 136 eminent personalities and organisations for their contributions to various sectors, including literature, education, research and sports, since its inception in 1998.

At Saturday's function, newspaper Debodul Banerjee and radio officials Pronbesh Sen and Upen Tarafder were also accorded a special reception for their contributions to the Liberation War of Bangladesh, said a press release.

Chaired by national Professor Kabir Chowdhury, the function was addressed, among others, by Kazi Zafarullah, architect Nilazar Zafarullah and journalist Iqbal Khan. West Bengal Transport and Sports Minister Subash Chakrabarty attended the function as chief guest.

Speaking on the occasion, an emotion choked Annada said, "I am grateful that I have had an international award for the first time. A map can be divided, but we cannot divide art, literature and culture."

He announced that half of the award money would go to the West Bengal Bangla Academy.

Withdraw 'false' cases: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia in a statement yesterday demanded withdrawal of 'false' cases against party leaders and activists including Maj Gen (rtd) Z A Khan, Amanullah Aman, MP, and JCD leaders Habibunnabi Sohel and Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu.

She said 'false' cases were filed against thousands of opposition activists in a bid to foil the opposition movement. She also accused the government of framing charges against 'respectable citizens' of the country.

The government will be held responsible for the consequences unless it withdraws the cases, she warned.

Mannan Bhuiyan condemns arrest of party activists

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a statement yesterday condemned the arrest of party leaders and activists of Mirpur, Pallabi and Kafur thana Juba Dal, including the ward commissioner Ahsanullah Hasan.

They were arrested when they were holding a meeting at the residence of Nazrul Islam Khan, member of national committee of BNP, in preparation for Wednesday's rally and demonstration.

He said police swooped on the meeting without any reason. Such actions suggest that the government is trying to take the politics towards a confrontation, he said, demanding release of the activists.

Mirza Abbas and Gayeswar Roy, president and general secretary of the Juba Dal in a separate statement also condemned the arrests. But they said that 30 activists had been arrested.

Classical vocal recital Sept 28

A classical vocal recital by Shanti Sharma under the auspices of the Indian High Commission will be held at the national museum auditorium on September 28 at 7 pm, reports BSS.

Shanti Sharma is one of the leading vocalists in the young generation of musicians in India. She is at present the music faculty of Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra, New Delhi.

Complementary passes for the programme can be collected from the 1&C Wing, House 121 (old), Road 3, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka from tomorrow afternoon onwards. Passes will be issued on a first-come-first-serve basis.

JCD demands trial and arrest of abductors

By DU Correspondent

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of BNP, demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of those involved in kidnapping a schoolboy from the Dhaka University campus on Saturday.

The JCD leaders were addressing a rally at the *Aparajito* Bangla yesterday morning. They also protested government repression on oppositions and demanded release of its arrested leaders and workers.

Monjur Elahi, vice-president of JCD, alleged that miscreants, backed by BCL, are staying at different residential halls and indulging in various criminal activities on the campus.

"The DU authorities are patronising the criminals rather than arresting and punishing them," Monjur Elahi alleged. He urged the university authorities to take immediate actions against the criminals.

5000 die in road accidents a yr

As many as 5,000 people die in road accident every year in Bangladesh, a keynote paper on "Road Safety Engineering" quoted the recent World Bank report as saying, reports BSS.

The keynote paper, read out in a seminar on the theme at the Institution of Engineers (IEB) also quoted statistics of Police Headquarters as saying that last year the number of deaths in road accidents stood at 3,085.

"Till June this year, 1,730 persons were killed, 283 persons received injuries and the number of cases relating to road accidents is 2,544," the papers said, adding, "there may be difference between the figures of World Bank and Police Headquarters but the fact remains that the number of deaths in road accidents in Bangladesh is one of the highest in the world."

Communications Minister Anwar Hussain, speaking as chief guest at the seminar, emphasised the need for abiding by rules and regulations of road traffic.

"If we do not follow rules and regulations in all spheres of our national life, we cannot expect any development," he said with an appeal to the leaders at all level to teach the countrymen how to abide by rules and regulations for a peaceful living.

The Minister advised all to

follow the symbols and signs of road traffic system to avert accidents in the country. In this respect, he pleaded for conformity between signs and symbols in the road traffic network throughout the country.

The Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (Dhaka Centre), organised the seminar with its president Prof Engr M A Hannan and Honorary General Secretary Engr ANH Akhter Husain speaking as special guests. Chairman of the seminar committee Prof Dr Engr MF Bari presided over the session.

Additional Chief Engineer of Roads and Highways Division Khandaker Azadur Rahman and Executive Engineer of Road Safety Division M Habibur Rahman presented two keynote papers on "The Role of Vehicles on Road Accident" and "Prospect of Road Safety Engineering in Bangladesh". Two foreign experts - Allan Jones and Per Mathesen - gave suggestions on averting road accidents.

According to the keynote papers, loss of lives, personal injuries and property damage resulting from road accidents are common in Bangladesh.

"Even up to 65 fatalities and 53 injuries in only one accident has been found," Khandaker Azadur Rahman said in his paper, adding that Bangladesh has a fatality rate estimated at 63

deaths per 10,000 motorised vehicles in 1998, which was one of the highest in the world.

Of the four factors responsible for the accidents, he said human behaviour accounted for 65 to 95 per cent accidents on roads in terms of excess speed, overloading, dangerous overtaking and reckless driving. Others are faulty vehicles, unsafe roadways and lack of awareness.

The two foreign experts suggested identifying accident spots on highways and regional roads to carry out remedial measures. They also recommended training up teams of traffic police officers and enforcing a campaign throughout the country to create awareness among drivers as well as people as a whole to avert road accidents. They also recommended implementing a public road safety campaign all over the country.

As part of the road safety measures devised by the Road Safety Division, a pilot area has been selected at Mirzapur and Kaptai, under Gazipur District to implement remedial measures on 10 spots of road accidents.

The remedial activities will be implemented in the first half of next year through pre-warning, erecting gates, speed breakers, and safe crossing points for pedestrians.

Krishi Bank distributes Tk 24 lakh among slum dwellers for rehabilitation

As part of the government plan for phased rehabilitation of the city slum-dwellers, Bangladesh Krishi Bank yesterday distributed Tk 24 lakh among 130 families for resettling in their native villages, reports UNB.

Beginning May 20 this year, the BKB has distributed Tk 1.08 crore among 555 families so far in four phases under the *Ghare Ghar* (home-coming) programme, named and initiated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Initially, the bank is repatriating 1000 families to their village homes under its Tk 2.08 crore scheme in five phases. The rest 445 families will get Tk 1 crore on October 20.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria handed over cheques to the slum-dwellers, mostly from the Agara slum.

Distributing the cheques at Krishi Bank head office in Motijheel, in the fourth phase of the rehabilitation operation, the minister criticised some political parties, Gano Forum in particular, for using the slum people as their cards.

He also lashed out at those using them for drug trafficking and terrorist activities.

The Finance Minister directed the BKB management to guard against any sort of irregularities in disbursing loan under the programme.

Kibria bitterly criticised the opposition's hartal programmes, which cause misery to common people.

"Such meaningless, aimless and issue-less movement reflects distorted politics. Such kind of politics can never bring any good to the country," he said.

BNP, allies

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There was however no word from BNP. Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh and Islami Oikya Jote, an EC official said.

The Left Democratic Front wrote to the EC yesterday morning that the alliance was not sending anybody to the Commission meeting today. The LDF letter signed by Nirmal Sen cited EC's failure to respond to the recommendations the Front had forwarded before the municipal polls.

The EC responded quickly telling the Front in the afternoon that many of the LDF suggestions had already been accepted and some other suggestions sent to "appropriate authorities" which would require amendments to the electoral laws.

The ruling Awami League representatives are scheduled to hold talks with EC today.

Clinton

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establishing peace at national, regional and international levels and requested Sheikh Hasina to continue her crusade for peace.

She also lauded the Bangladesh government's role in the United Nations.

About extradition of the killers of Bangabandhu to Bangladesh, the US Secretary of State said: "We hope it should be possible within the legal system... proceedings are on."

The Prime Minister requested the US Secretary of State to increase the garments quota for Bangladesh by another 30 per cent and thanked her for the help of the US government during the last year's devastating flood.

She said a number of US investors are now in Bangladesh for further investment and hoped the business ties would be further consolidated in the days ahead.

The officials of Bangladesh hoped that the country would get the membership of UN Security Council in the next meeting.

US Permanent Representative to the UN Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Karl Indurth and Executive Assistant to Secretary of State Alex Wolff were present on the US side.

2 Shibir activists beaten up at DU hall

By DU Correspondent

Two Jamaat-backed Chhatra Shibir activists were beaten up by Mohsin Hall resident students at the hall yesterday morning.

The victims were identified as Sagir Ahmed and Baki Bilal.

Campus sources said the students caught the two from the hall gate. During interrogation by the BCL men, they had disclosed some names of other Shibir activists staying at the hall.

A list of a 11-member hall unit committee of Shibir was also recovered from them.

Sources said a number of Shibir members left their rooms at the hall following the incident.

Woman stabbed by ex-husband dies at DMCH

A young woman stabbed allegedly by her divorced husband at Shankhari Bazar in the old city died in Dhaka Medical College Hospital Sunday night, reports UNB.

Hospital sources said the victim Kalpana Rani Das, 17, was allegedly stabbed by her divorced husband Shamsuddin on Thursday on her way back home from the house of her students. She was rushed to the hospital in critical condition.

Family sources said Kalpana had married Shamsuddin, a Muslim, in January this year and had divorced him in April. She was staying with her parents.

The body was sent to the morgue for autopsy and a murder case was lodged with the Kotwali police.

Agri Commission report

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It recommends that marketing of hazardous pesticides as classified by the World Health Organization be banned. It calls for imposition of high tariff rates on pesticides and promoting expansion of IPM (integrated pest management). It calls for banning of advertisements of pesticides in the media.

The Commission feels that proper implementation of 1984 Land Reforms Ordinance is necessary to establish sharecroppers' rights to a legitimate share of profit in crop production.

Other important recommendations include, establishment of a Horticulture Research Institute, establishment of a 100-hectare repository for preservation of local varieties of fruits and vegetables, which are potential sources for developing high yielding varieties and joint ventures with multinational companies for promotion of export-led horticultural products.

It calls for developing network for processing, preserving and marketing of perishable vegetables, fruits, potato, fish, meat, egg and milk and enacting a law on "Plant Variety Right" and intensification of plant quarantine activities.

It says that a National Standing Committee should be formed to assess real demands of fertilizer in the country and fix their prices. It recommends the building up of an emergency fertilizer reserve in BADC godown to face up to possible crises. It recommends setting up of fertilizer factories in the northwestern and southwestern zones of the country.

The Commission recommends introduction of standardized system for strictly following the standard of tilling and irrigation machinery used by farmers. Withdrawal of standardization system and lifting of import regulations on irrigation pumps in the past had resulted in introduction of low quality pumps in the country, it observes.

The Agriculture Commission, formed by the Government on November 9, 1996, with the Prime Minister's Agriculture and Food Advisor AM Anisuzzaman as its chairman. The mandate of the Commission was to prepare policy recommendations for the government on enhancing food production in the country commensurate with the rise in population.

The one-year tenure of the Commission had been extended time and again. Though the report was prepared on May 14 last, the tenure of the Commission has once again been extended till December this year ostensibly for holding workshops on the report with a view to eliciting experts opinion. Four months have passed by, but no initiative has been taken to organize the workshops.

Members of the Commission are Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud, Professor, Economics Department of Dhaka University, Dr SM Hasanuzzaman, former Member (Agriculture) of Planning Commission, M Shahidul Islam, ex-secretary of IMED, Planning Commission, Dr Anun Nishat, Professor of Water Resources Department, BUET, Syed Ali Kabir, former deputy director of Bangladesh

Bank and Dr Zahurul Karim, Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC). To catch up with the challenges of new millennium, annual growth rate in agriculture has to be accelerated at three to four per cent compared to two per cent now. Per hectare production has also to be accelerated giving more thrust on enhancing land productivity and irrigation facilities.

The Commission estimates that the size of the country's population will stand at 173 million by the year 2020 against the current size of 128 million. Again, it is projected that 46 per cent of total population would be living in urban areas. Policy planners will obviously have to keep in mind the changing food habits of urban population.

According to the Commission's calculation, crop sector has to achieve a 1.2 per cent growth by 2020. The growth targets for potato, vegetables and pulses have been set at 2.4 per cent, edible oil at 3.8 per cent, fruits at 4.7 per cent, spices at 3.2 per cent, sugar and molasses at 4 per cent, fish at 3.5 per cent, meat and eggs at 4.7 per cent and milk at 4.2 per cent.

The Commission finds it a 'very tough job' for Bangladesh to grow enough food to feed its ever-growing population against the backdrop of diminishing farmland, and gradual fall in soil fertility. However, apprehending a limited availability of rice in the world market in future, the Commission cautions that Bangladesh could ill-afford fat food import bills.

The Commission underlines the need for enhancing nutrition value in food. It foresees a negative impact on socio-economic development in the country if the nutrition aspects are not taken care of. It notes that intellect, working capability, life expectancy and disease resistance capacity of the 46 per cent of total population, living under the poverty line, will suffer from malnutrition.

It notes that yield levels at the farmers' lands is far short of what has been achieved at research stations. It focuses on yield loss as a result of drought during Aman season and high temperature during wheat season. It also focuses on current stagnation in irrigation infrastructure development.

The Commission finds 3.4 per cent growth rate achieved in vegetable cultivation as encouraging but blames weak extension activities and lapses in market management for non-expansion of fruit and spice cultivation in the country.

It expresses concern over the ever-decreasing trend in pulse cultivation in the country and recommends the development of high yielding pulse varieties through biotechnological research.

The Commission put the emphasis on the sugar mills' management and trade union activities for country's poor performance in the sugar sector.

Bangladesh is dependent on import for meeting 67 per cent shortage in domestic oilseed production and the Commission asserts that local oilseed production can be doubled by technology expansion and developing the age-old oil extraction methods.

Nasim accuses Biswas

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who was sent on a diplomatic assignment by the current government.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, General Secretary of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), declined to make any comment immediately. Biswas is still a BNP member.

But, General Mahbubur Rahman, now defence advisor to BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia, told AFP: "I have always been a professional soldier and was never involved in any conspiracy at any time during my long military service."

"(Nasim's comment) is a lie, a very sad matter for me, unfortunate and motivated," he added.

A decorated veteran of the Independence War, Nasim alleged Biswas tried "to drum up the so-called coup attempt in a bid to revive the dissolved (sixth) parliament and tried to foil the (June 12, 1996) general elections."

The allegations appeared in signed articles published by the tabloid Manjameen and several other dailies.

Biswas also held the defence portfolio during the interim period after the then prime minister Khaleda Zia resigned in favour of a neutral caretaker government headed by former Chief Justice Habibur Rahman in the face of an opposition campaign demanding a constitutional amendment under a neutral government.

Elections however were held on schedule after days of acute tension during which Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina came to office defeating the BNP.

Sheikh Hasina's Awami League had earlier accused Biswas of trying to undermine the 1996 election by sacking Nasim.

The trouble started after two senior army officers had been fired by Biswas without consulting the army chief as required, and Nasim said he did not get the chance to face the military's investigation team about the May 20, 1996 incident and defend himself.

Biswas in a televised address to the nation on May 20, 1996, said Nasim had been sacked for taking part in a revolt and accused the then army chief of telling troops to march on the capital as he could not accept the forced retirement of the two army officers.

Major General Helal Mursheed and Brigadier Miran

Hamidur Rahman had earlier been forced into retirement without being given a reason.

But in a similar address the same day caretaker government chief Habibur Rahman distanced himself from Biswas's actions and called for peace to ensure the holding of the general elections.

Nasim fought a long court battle. He got back his rank and other facilities given to a retired officer, which are taken away if an officer is sacked.

Zoo

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known existence of the fly. This has led the experts wondering about the carrier of the parasite in Bangladesh.

Since the parasite was found for the first time in Bangladesh, many doctors and virologists are yet to be fully aware of its symptoms and treatment.

"When a person is infected with the parasite, he feels drowsy and goes into prolonged somnolence with high temperature. Eventually the person dies," said another expert at the IEDCR who declined to be named.

The expert was not sure which medicine could be