

## What's on today....

**Satyajit Ray Retrospective:** Zahir Raihan Film Society in association with High Commission of India organises Satyajit Ray Retrospective. On the 1st day of the retrospective *Kanchenjunga* will be screened. A seminar on 'Women in Satyajit Ray's Films: A Feminist Reading' will also be held. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, Road-2, Dhanmondi. Time: 5:00 pm.

**National workshop:** Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) in cooperation with Ministry of Land, Ministry of Environment and Forest and UNDP will hold a national workshop on 'National Land Use Policy (Draft)'. Chief guest: States Minister for Land Rashed Mosharraf. Venue: IDB Bhaban, E/8-A, Begum Rokeya Sarani, Sher-e-Banglanagar. Time: 9:30 am.

**Memorial lecture:** A memorial lecture in memory of Latifa Kowsaw, one of the organisers of a journal 'Samaj Chetana', will be held. Prof Hasan Azizul Haque will give a speech on 'Movement for Women's Liberation: Bangladesh perspective'. Venue: Modern Language Institute. Time: 4 pm.

**Discussion on Earth Day:** Bangladesh Environmental Journalist Association has organised a discussion to mark the Earth Day. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 12 noon.

## ..... and tomorrow

**Film show:** Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen 'Jal-shaghar' (The Music Room) as part of its programme — Satyajit Ray Retrospective. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, Road-2, Dhanmondi. Time: 6:15 pm.

## Weather

### Thundershower likely

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty/squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia and Comilla during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country. Met Office said predicting slight rise in day temperature.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 36 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 21.2 degree Celsius at Rangamati.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:24 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:30 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
Dhaka	33.4	22.9
Chittagong	33.5	21.5
Rajshahi	33.5	21.6
Khulna	34.6	24.5
Birsa	34.4	23.5
Sylhet	32.5	21.7
Cox's Bazar	34.5	24.8

## Fire Service & Civil Defence week begins today

Fire Service and Civil Defence Week-2000 begins today, reports UNB.

On the occasion, Fire Service and Civil Defence Department chanted out elaborate programmes throughout the country.

The programmes include voluntary blood donation, brief exercises on fire extinguishing and rescue operation, publicity through electronic media, display of fire equipment, holding rally and speech on fire resistance at all the industrial units and educational institutions.

On the occasion, President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages highlighting the significance of Fire Service and Civil Defence Week-2000.

In his message, the President underscored the need for making efforts to create awareness among the people about fire fighting at grass-root level.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called upon the countrymen to come forward along

with the workers of Civil Defence for helping the affected and distressed people during fire, natural disaster and accident.

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim will formally inaugurate the week at Fire Service and Civil Defence Training Complex today.

### Health minister returns

Health and Family Welfare Minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim returned yesterday from a 12-day official visit to the United Kingdom, reports BSS.

During the visit, the minister acquainted himself with the hospital management, health economy, different aspects of technology in the health services and other related matters which will help improve the health services and hospital management in Bangladesh.

The minister also discussed with the UK high officials on bilateral matters of mutual interests.

## SAARC fashion show May 4

The SAARC Women's Association will organise a SAARC Fashion Pageant at Hotel Sonargaon at 7:30 pm on May 4, says a press release.

Designers from the countries in the region will display contemporary and traditional fashions at the show.

## Zillur says Conspiracy to foil verdict of Bangabandhu Murder Case on

KULIARCHAR, Kishoreganj, Apr 22: Local Government Minister Zillur Rahman today said the anti-liberation elements are conspiring to foil execution of verdict in Bangabandhu Murder Case, reports BSS.

"No body would be able to save the killers of Bangabandhu. The verdict of the Bangabandhu trial case would be implemented as the people of the country are united," he said while speaking at a rally at the Chhaisuti High School field in Kuliarchar upazila in the district.

Chaired by president of Kuliarchar Awami League, the rally was also addressed by local leaders of Awami League and its front organisations.

Referring to various development activities of the present government, Zillur Rahman said the present government under the able leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh is implementing various development projects across the country. "The opposition alliance is conspiring against the government to foil the on-going progress of the government," he alleged.

He said that law and order situation had improved in the country after making the Public Safety Act (PSA).

Later, the minister laid foundation stone of the main building of Kuliarchar High School and Faridpur Union Parishad Bhaban.

## Easter Sunday Christian League for govt holiday

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Christian League has demanded that Easter Sunday be declared a government holiday.

In a press release yesterday, the Christian League also asked for inclusion of Christian religion in the curriculum of higher education.

The demands were made at a preparatory meeting for Easter Sunday to be observed today.

## Chittagong Chamber directors protest Kamaluddin's statement

The Board of Directors of the Chittagong Chamber has resented the statements of the Chamber's former President Kamaluddin Ahmed, made in a press conference on April 17 at the National Press Club in Dhaka. The Board of Directors held that the different comments made by Kamaluddin Ahmed in the press conference are misleading and ill-motivated, said a press release.

It said, "conventionally, he/they who appoint/elect somebody/group through a particular means can remove him/them the same way. Accordingly, the Board of Directors of the Chamber who selected Kamaluddin Ahmed as President, unanimously removed him from the post for his various misdeeds on 14 March in presence of more than two-thirds of Directors. This was done in accordance with laws of the Chamber for the greater interest of the organisation.

"During that meeting a good number of newsmen were also present in the Chamber. It is for everybody's information that Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu had no connection at all in the entire process of removal. Even in that process, Saifuzzaman Chowdhury had no personal interest. The Board of Directors, to safeguard the interest of the organisation, has removed Kamaluddin Ahmed. Kamaluddin Ahmed's comments relating to the miscreant's involvement in the entire process is apocryphal. Legal action is underway against him for his disgracing comments to the Board of Directors.

The issue raised by Kamaluddin in the press conference that according to the clause 19 of the Chamber's Memorandum and Articles of Association, membership cannot be cancelled without issuing 30 days' prior notice is completely baseless. In reality, his membership has been scrapped in accordance with the clause 4 of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Chamber. And accordingly prior notice was served and replied to the notice was also obtained as usual.

In this regard it is also mentionable that upon his appeal, FBCCI formed a 3-member enquiry committee. The report is yet to be published. However, he termed that report as biased, false and ill-motivated. His comment on the report is disgraceful to the apex body of the business community and the members of the enquiry committee. Moreover, the member fact-finding committee formed by the Ministry of Commerce in response to his appeal, has also come under his attack in the press conference."

## Lawyers' confce ends Recommendations made to keep judiciary above controversy

The two-day national conference of the lawyers ended at the Engineers' Institution in the city yesterday adopting a set of recommendations to enhance the image of the legal profession and keep judiciary above controversy, reports BSS.

The recommendations included speedy trial of Bangabandhu murder case, repeal of all illegal rules, order, SRO and other distortions made in the constitution.

Briefing the newsmen, Barrister M Amir-ul-Islam, Vice Chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council, said the conference was very successful as the lawyers have reached a consensus on some important issues despite their party affiliations.

The other recommendations are ensuring of a corruption-free police, judiciary and public prosecutor (PP) as the primary step to root out corruption from society, separate pay-scale for judges, electing a Chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council instead of the existing provision of the Ex-Officio Chairman, formation of a high-power Judicial Commission to look into the matters of appointment, transfer, promotion and disciplinary proceedings of the judges and formation of circuit bench which will visit the courts and oversee activities.

Barrister Islam said the lawyers have pledged greater unity which will safeguard the image of the judiciary. The lawyers have also expressed their identical views to keep the judiciary above party politics, he added.

Referring to embarrassment issue of judges, he said, it is contained within the article 27 and 31 which ensure the fundamental and constitutional rights of a jurist. He said there is no room for embarrassment of a judge based on a certain political reason or strong public opinion to execute a verdict.

S S Halder, Advocate M A Salam Talukder, Abul Baset Majumder and Syed Ahmed were present at the press briefing held at the Bar Council Bhaban.

## PM: Defeated forces

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ers from across the country flocked at the Paltan Maidan, carrying the National Flag and wearing T-shirts with slogans like 'Joy Bangla' and 'Joy Bangabandhu'. Different organisations of the freedom fighters and pro-Awami League bodies also joined the rally.

The huge rally venue wore a festive look with hundreds of flag flying and banners and festoons all around. The adjacent roads were also crowded with people.

A huge dais was erected with portraits of leader of the independence struggle Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his four close associates in the background.

The prime minister opened the rally by hoisting the National Flag and releasing balloons and pigeons. The audience also released hundreds of colour balloons.

A special team of freedom fighters and children of martyred freedom fighters presented a guard of honour to the prime minister as she reached the venue.

The guard of honour was led by Mahbubuddin, known as SP Mahbub, who had also led the guard of honour presented to the Mujibnagar government when it was formed during the liberation war.

Hasina told the rally that all forms of assault on the freedom fighters started since Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was killed in 1975.

She alleged that the post-75 military governments killed many freedom fighters, distorted the history of independence war, freed war criminals and rehabilitated them in the society, introduced communal politics and snatched people's right to vote and food.

In this regard, the PM referred to late President Ziaur Rahman. "General Zia hanged so many soldiers that he did not spend a single day without passing such orders. It is heard that Zia used to sign orders for hanging while taking breakfast."

Chaired by Dr S A Malek, PM's political adviser, the rally was also addressed by renowned

freedom fighters including ministers, MPs and former army officers—two of them sector commanders.

SP Mahbub read out a declaration that was adopted at the rally. It thanked the Hasina government for reviving the spirit of Liberation War. The declaration contained some demands for the welfare of freedom fighters, especially those in distress.

The declaration called for resisting 'conspiracy to disrupt' normal course of trial of the Bangabandhu murder case and demanded immediate execution of the verdict in the case.

In response, the prime minister mentioned various steps taken by her government for the welfare of freedom fighters and their families. She also promised to do everything possible to ensure the basic needs of the freedom fighters.

"The coming budget will have a block allocation for further welfare of the freedom fighters. I have already asked the finance minister to work out the principles for such allocation," Hasina announced at the rally.

Reminding her party's leading role in liberating the country, the Awami League chief said, "It just cannot happen that a freedom fighter will starve to death or live in distress or without shelter when we are in power... Nor will we let their children suffer. Children of the freedom fighters alive or martyred will be taken care of, they will be provided with education and employment opportunities."

The others who spoke on the occasion included Forest Minister Sajeda Chowdhury, Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu, Industries Minister Tofail, Commerce Minister Abdul Jallil, Fisheries Minister ASM

Abdur Rab, Mayor of Dhaka Mohammad Hanif, State Minister for Shipping Mofazzul Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Maj Gen (ret'd) K M Shaifullah, Maj Gen (ret'd) CR Dutta, Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali, Nur Alam Jitu of JSD, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury of Nirmul Committee, Maj (ret'd) Ziauddin and Ramendu Majumdar of Sam-milita Sangskritik Jote.

## BNP: Judges

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effective, destroying the institution of election, the government was issuing aggressive statements against the judiciary and threatening judges.

The meeting said the procession was directed against the judges of the High Court, an action that surpassed the "barbarism of the medieval age."

The meeting strongly condemned the action and the vilifying statements made by government leaders.

The BNP said ruling party leaders, including the prime minister, have been making false and fabricated statements against the judiciary and the judges since the assumed power. They are issuing threats, asking for implementation of the verdict of a lower court before the appeal in the case is disposed by the higher court.

This is being done to block justice and is intended to destroy the judiciary, it stated.

## Issuance of fitness

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and restricting BRTA from charging the vehicle owners more than Tk 40 for each sticker.

"We have agreed to the price restriction but now the Security Printing Press is unable to find three suppliers of papers," said a BRTA official, explaining the reasons behind the delay in the process.

"Amid thousands of vehicles plying the country's roads and streets without fitness certificate, route permit and payment of tax, BRTA's humble effort to bring back some regularity on the roads now seems uncertain," he said.

Meanwhile, motorists said that they were facing police scrutiny as they failed to display the stickers. BRTA failed to inform the law enforcing authorities about its failure to provide stickers to vehicle owners, he added.

## 50,000 people are in acute water crisis in Bandarban

BANDARBAN, Apr 22: About 50 thousand inhabitants of the town have been suffering from pure drinking water since long. The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) of the district supplies only 12,000 gallons pure water instead of 80,000 gallons, reports BSS.

In 1997, a project at a cost of Taka 4 crore 50 lakh had been established by the PHED to fulfil the demands of water consumption in the town, but after the construction, a part of the project declared abandoned.

The construction plan of the overhead water tank of the project cost at Tk 1.50 crore was wrong and remains inactivated.

Official sources said, now the department has decided to set up 4 overhead water tanks at different places of the town to ensure more supply of pure water.

## Indian poet dies in US

KANSAS CITY, Missouri, Apr 22: Indian-born writer G S Shuratt Chandra, who was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in poetry in 1993, has died. He was 64, reports AP.

Chandra suffered a brain hemorrhage Tuesday evening, and never regained consciousness, said his daughter, Shalini. He died Thursday morning.

Chandra, who was a professor of English at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, was nominated for the Pulitzer for his 1993 book, 'Family of Mirrors'.

Chandra was born May 3, 1935, in Mysore, India and came to the United States when he was 27.

## Rebel

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beaten by Thandu's supporters when a group of newsmen went to Bagha High School polling centre at 1:30 pm to inquire into allegations of false voting. The attackers also snatched Tk 1100, a camera and a tape recorder from him.

Saidur was given primary treatment at Charghat Upazilla Health Complex. He filed a case with Bagha thana through Charghat thana, official sources said.

An election camp of Raihan was ransacked near Kalu Hat Govt Primary School Centre at around 9:30 am. The attackers, armed with sharp weapons, injured three supporters of Raihan and snatched all papers including the voter list.

Seriously injured Sulaiman, 30, was admitted to a private clinic at Charghat upazilla headquarters while the rest two were given first aid. A case was filed in this connection with Charghat thana accusing four AL activists - Kamal, Jamal, Kalu and Jamrul. Police are yet to arrest any of them.

Three persons were arrested for allegedly trying to cast false votes at three polling centres. One Shamsujjoha of Khairhat village in Bagha thana was arrested for allegedly creating terror in the area.

Though no election fever was seen earlier, a huge number of voters were seen standing in queues in cheerful mood. More than 30 per cent votes were cast by 2 pm, officials said.

At Haldagachi Government Primary School centre, 570 votes were cast till 10:25 am. Out of 3556 votes at Charghat Pilot High School centre, 1215 were cast till 11:10 am.

A total of 917 votes out of 1988 were cast at Yusufpur Government Primary School centre till 3 pm. More than 51 per cent votes were cast at Baduria Government Primary School centre till 3:30 pm, officials said.

At Ramchandrapur School centre, some supporters of Raihan alleged that their voters were being resisted from going to the centre. On-duty police however said that the allegation was not true.

During a visit to 21 polling centres, this correspondent found that the AL candidate could not give polling agents at all the booths.

A good number of activists of the BNP-led four party opposition alliance were seen casting votes. Some of them, when contacted, said local interest was the reason behind this.

## Proshika condemns threat to its president

Proshika yesterday expressed its deep concern and condemnation over the open threat of 'kill at sight' to Proshika President Dr Qazi Faruque Ahmed given from the meeting of religious fanatics in Brahmanbaria on April 19, says a press release.

Registering its vehement protest and indignation over such unlawful and barbaric utterances, Proshika, a leading non-government organisation, called upon the government to take punitive action against those who made such threat.

Using the pretext of a false and motivated news published in only one newspaper misquoting Dr Faruque Ahmed, the communal and fanatical forces of Brahmanbaria, like in the past, were out to spread propaganda against the NGO community and development activists.

The statement said that the fanatical forces not only threatened Dr Faruque Ahmed but also attacked NGO offices in Brahmanbaria, harassed NGO workers and created a reign of terror in the entire town by halting train movements for hours and disrupting public life.

The silence and inaction of the local administration in the face of the destructive design of the fanatics created grave doubts and concerns among the people, the press release added.



## Death anniversary of Shilu Abed today

The third death anniversary of Shilu Abed is today. She died in 1997 at the age of 55, says a press release.

Shilu made significant contribution to the development of handicrafts in the country and to the welfare of artisans.

As head of Arong, a craft project of BRAC, she worked for the empowerment of women.

## Death anniversary

The third death anniversary of Alhaj Md Hassan Ali, former chief engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board, will be observed at Zahuri Mahalla Mosque, Babar Road, Moham-madpur after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

A milad mahfil will be held on the occasion. Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the milad mahfil.



Police inspect the damage to the room after supporters of Charmonai Peer ransacked the Dewanbagh Darbar Sharif in Narayanganj during a clash on Friday. —Star photo

## Frame IT policies

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Submarine Cable Project as soon as possible. There should be a fibre-optic backbone in the country to make network communication faster and more accessible to the commonman."

Internet use is still expensive for the commonman here, which is the primary need to help foster e-commerce, Chowdhury added.

He said banks in developed countries are heavily investing in IT sector, whereas local banks are yet to catch up with this change.

CSE is one of the very few VSAT users in Bangladesh, he said. "We are paying about Tk 45 lakh a year to the T&T Department, which is alone eating up a large part of the CSE revenue."

An individual in USA can have 24-hour internet access at a cost of only US\$ 20 per month. An ISP here can not give us a round the clock internet access even at a cost of Tk 20 thousand, the CSE President said.

"Our entrepreneurs should take the lead. They have to device their own way to convert their present business to e-business or can start their new venture through e-commerce."

In his 'Keynote' speech, Forouq said the country needs to enact a Cyber law which will protect the vendors as well as consumers. He also called for improving the banking system that will support the Net economy.

"We must have the facility of cost-effective access to Internet, which can put us online in just three seconds. High speed data links and robust telecommunication infrastructure are the prime requirements for e-commerce," he added.

At present, Bangladesh has no direct link with the Internet backbone. "Connection to the Net here is done through numerous 'hops' between the VSAT operators in Singapore, Hong Kong and other countries," he mentioned.

The world is going to be a single inter-connected online

community with mobile phones using the Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) technology. Majority of all online transactions would be carried out through mobile phones, he said, suggesting that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) with WAP technology should be set up in the country.

Bangladesh's IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) draft law in its present form does not recognise computer-generated materials. The evolving nature of e-commerce is producing its own legal problems and confusions even in developed countries, giving rise to needs for Cyber law and its enforcement in all countries, Faruq added.

He said Bangladesh's exchange control regime is a formidable hindrance to conducting e-commerce. Issues concerning taxation and tariff also have to be addressed so that the emerging business models of e-commerce can be implemented in the country.

"Currently, credit-card payment requiring no signature is the most popular mode of payment in sell-side e-commerce. Our banking system needs to learn to cope with it," Faruq observed.

DDCI President Aftab ul Islam said: Just two out of ten calls are successfully completed on an average in Bangladesh compared to nine in EU, eight in China, six in India and five in Pakistan.

At two connections per 1000 residents, Bangladesh's telephone penetration rate compares very unfavourably with 16 in Pakistan, 11 in India and 10 in Sri Lanka, he maintained. "Lot of changes are coming in e-commerce as WAP has already made significant changes in electronic business."

Aftab said Bangladesh also needs funds for R&D and diversification of areas and awareness about security of e-commerce.

IT experts and professionals, entrepreneurs, government officials and around five hundred IT students were present at the seminar.

## Khaleda addresses public meeting at Feni today

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Apr 22: BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia will address a public meeting at Feni WAPDA maidan at 3 pm today.

According to party sources, Khaleda will arrive here at 1 pm. She will hold a meeting with local partymen at the Circuit House.

## Death ref

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A senior judge of a Criminal Division Bench Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury felt embarrassed to hear the case and sent back the documents to the Chief Justice on April 10. This evoked annoyance of the ruling party and triggered controversy. The Chief Justice called on the President Shahabuddin Ahmed on April 20 and subsequently he transferred the case to the bench comprising Justice M M Ruhul Amin and Justice Abdul Matin.

After over 14 months of the verdict of Dhaka District and Sessions Judge, Chief Prosecution Lawyer Advocate Sirajul Huq had moved the High Court bench comprising Justice Kazi Ebadul Huq and Justice Sikhrer Makbul Huq on January 16. The court declined to take up the case and asked the prosecution to move to the Death Reference Bench.

Two other benches, one comprising Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin and Justice S K Sinha and another comprising Justice Md Nurul Islam and Justice Md Montaj Uddin, also refused to take up the case and asked the prosecution to move to the Death Reference Bench.

Dhaka District and Sessions Judge Kazi Golam Rasul on November 8, 1998 sentenced 15 former army personnel to death for killing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members on August 15, 1975.

## Foreign debts

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their own countries what they prescribe for the under-developed countries," Farahuddin said, citing the subsidy cut in agriculture sector in Bangladesh as an example.

He also mentioned the donors' observation that it would not be feasible for Bangladesh to develop backward linkage industries of readymade garments sector and termed it 'irrational'.

The BB governor said that due to pressure from the donors, Bangladesh had to drastically liberalise its import in the early 1990s but that did not contribute much for the economy. Bangladesh's share of the total world trade was 0.42 per cent before liberalisation and now it is 0.45 per cent, he added.

Most of the speakers said foreign aid could not bring about desired development of the country, rather, it changed the fate of only a section of the society. They also said the donors had virtually taken back major portion of the aid. Some of them said the amount taken back was about 90 per cent of the total aid.

But AMA Muhiut said this was not a fact and that a maximum of 25 to 30 per cent of the aid went back to the donor countries as payment for consultancy and procurement of goods and equipment from them.

He also said Bangladesh should try to get as much aid as possible in next 10 to