

What's on today....

BRCS reception: Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BRCS) will accord a reception to Sheikh Kabir Hossain on his appointment as Chairman of BRCS. Chief guest: Minister for Home, Post and Telecommunications Mohammad Nasim. Venue: BA Siddiqui Nursing School auditorium of Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital. Time: 11.00 am.

Launching ceremony: Novartis (Bangladesh) Ltd will launch its marketing operation of "Ovaltine" in Bangladesh. Venue: CIRDP conference room, Chameli House, 17, Tophkhana Road. Time: 11.00 am.

Public dialogue: Centre for Alternatives will hold a public dialogue on "Power and Public Safety." The dialogue will be on the themes: State Laws, State Institutions (Police, Judiciary, Parliament), The Nexus Between Coercive Power and Politics, Human Rights, Minority Rights, Gender Rights etc. Venue: Nat Mandal, Dhaka University. Time: 3.00-6.00 pm.

Discussion: Jowno Nipiron Protirodh Mancha (Platform to Resist Sexual Harassment) will hold its monthly discussion on "Experience of Harassment of Women." Venue: Club Room of Paribagh Sium. Time: 4.00 pm.

Satyajit Ray Retrospective: Chiriyakhana (The Zoo) will be screened. Organiser: Zahir Raihan Film Society. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, Road No 2, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 6.15 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Satyajit Ray Retrospective: Mahanagar (The Big City) will be screened. Organiser: Zahir Raihan Film Society. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, Road No 2, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 6.15 pm.

Weather

Thundershowers likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty to squally wind is likely at many places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Khulna and Barisal divisions during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNEP.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 36.4 degree Celsius at Jessore and the lowest 18.4 degree Celsius at Srimangol.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:27 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:24 am.

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

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius, Humidity in percentage, Morning, Evening. Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

7777 more expelled

Of them, fifteen were expelled in Dhaka city, 57 in Gazipur, 34 in Narayanganj, 217 in Narsingdi, 36 in Manikganj, 51 in Manikganj, 397 in Tangail, 362 in Mymensingh, 193 in Jamalpur, 215 in Sherpur, 48 in Kishoreganj, 65 in Netrokona, 67 in Faridpur, 74 in Gopalganj, 55 in Rajbari, 109 in Madaripur and 44 in Shariatpur districts.

Meanwhile, one vehicle carrying Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) was ransacked yesterday at Damudya in Shariatpur. The incident took place because of the strict measures taken by the local administration to check unfair means at examination centre.

In Rajbari, some expelled candidates ransacked the Government Adarsha Women College and injured at least seven people on the second day of examination.

According to official sources the expelled students and their friends attacked the college principal and some other employees at about 1 pm.

Four policemen were also injured during the incident. One of the injured employees of the college was admitted to Sadar Hospital. His condition was stated to be critical.

Our Jamalpur Correspondent reports: One person was sentenced to two years imprisonment supplying copy during English 2nd paper examination at a centre at Sarishahar yesterday.

Police said Ashraf Ali, son of Solimuddin of Patdeha village, was caught red handed while supplying copies to his friend at Reazuddin Talukder College centre. The on-duty magistrate formed a temporary court where Ali was found guilty and awarded the punishment.

Meanwhile, some untoward incidents occurred at Govt Women College and Pahartal College centres where agitated copy suppliers and candidates ransacked windows and doors of the two colleges.

Forex snatching

Tota confesses, Fattah denies

By Staff Correspondent

A young foreign exchange trader, Khasru, who had identified two policemen who took away 2400 US dollars from him earlier, is being threatened by some men of the accused policemen, his relatives alleged yesterday.

SI MA Fattah of city SB and Tota Miah a suspended policeman, accused of forcibly taking away the dollars, were sent to jail custody on Friday after one-day police remand. Mottijheel police said yesterday.

Tota Mian confessed taking away the dollars from Khasru on April 20, but Fattah denied his involvement in the incident, police said.

The two were caught and beaten by a mob when Khasru identified them in front of foreign exchange branch of Janata Bank at Purana Paltan on Tuesday.

Implement Wage Commission recommendations'

Left Democratic Front urged the government yesterday to announce and implement the recommendations of the Wage Commission for the welfare of millions of workers, reports BSS.

The government has implemented the recommendations of the Wage Commission, but didn't say anything yet about the announcement of the Wage Commission, the left leaders said at a rally in the city.

With its coordinator Bimol Biswas in the chair, the rally was addressed by Manjurul Ahsan Khan, Khalekuzzaman, Nirmal Sen, Rashed Khan Menon, Mujahidul Islam Selim, Dilip Barua and AFM Mahbulul Haque.

They said the Western countries were trying to impose the "labour standard" on the developing countries in the forum of WTO.

Poor service

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deteriorated sharply since 1991, he said.

It is important that regulatory process and procedures should be put in place to properly monitor BTB's performance against a range of service quality measures.

The switching and transmission equipment suffer the burden of too many supplier types. There is transmission equipment from Fujitsu, NEC, Alcatel, Motorola, Nokia, GTE, JRC, OKI, TRT and Bell, experts said.

"Only BTB could overcome all sorts of hazards if it took a planned programme to make its service people-oriented," the expert observed.

The BTB should unify its equipment range, establish a monitoring cell and utilise its already installed monitoring equipment, another expert said.

There is a modern monitoring system at Sher-e-Banglanagar but the monitoring system has never been in operation since its installation at least 10 years ago, said a source.

Five ministers

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yesterday evening when asked to comment on a newspaper report that they have accepted the FIR as a case.

He echoed comments of DMP police commissioner Mattur Rahman who had told the BBC Radio on the same day that "it cannot be said that a case has been taken up. There is some confusion. What we understand as recording a case is not like that. It is under investigation. If the allegation is substantiated, we will accept it to restore people's trust."

He also said that "the matter involved the question of civic rights of staging protests and demonstrations.

The accused are Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Forest and Environment Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Home Minister Mohammad Nasim, state minister for Shipping and BIWTA Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, State Minister for Planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Awami League relief and social welfare secretary Mukul Bose.

Seminar

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ment in bus, taxi and four-stroke vehicle services, they said.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Traffic Serajul Islam said solving Dhaka's traffic problems should be a joint task for different agencies. He said his department's plan to turn some roads into one-way thoroughfares was facing stiff resistance.

For example, he said, the business community at Bangla Motor link road has threatened agitation if the road is not re-verted to two-way traffic system. Vikarunnisa School authorities have also refused to open its gates for easing the traffic jam on the road there.

The DC Traffic said about 30,000 warrants are now pending against traffic rule violators. In most of the cases the police could not trace owners of the vehicles concerned because those have changed hands but addresses have not been updated.

Rajuk Chairman M Azizul Haque said Dhaka is the poorest capital in the world with an annual per capita income of 831 US dollars. He said there should be separate lanes for rickshaws. Ten new roads have been planned by Rajuk and the final move is underway to start construction. He said 73 vehicles ply on one kilometre road in Dhaka city compared to 250 vehicles on the same space in many cities in other countries.

Replying to a question he said Rajuk is taking action against people who have built ramps on footpaths to facilitate access to their buildings.

The BTC Chairman said, no new private investment in the city bus service is coming forth due to traffic congestion. He said the government should take steps to ease the problem to attract private investment.

Speakers recommended that TV and other media could be used to create public awareness about proper road use. There should be a well coordinated authority to manage traffic in the metropolises, they said.

Abdul Alam Bhuiya, a design supervisor and consultant, said the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, now in force, was framed in the light of the Motor Vehicle Act 1939 which did not take into account rickshaws, pedestrians and hawkers who occupy footpaths in the city now. The law must be amended, he said.

The workshop was conducted by scout leader and BUET professor Nizamuddin Ahmed.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina consoling a victim of the cyclone at Laxmiganj in Netrokona yesterday. — PID photo

BUP discussion on foreign aid 'Agriculture sector must get priority'

Speakers at a discussion on "Foreign Aid, Trend of Development and Reflection on Rural Life" yesterday identified income inequality as number one problem that increases social unrest, reports BSS.

The inequality is rising day by day between the rural and urban population in terms of access to resources, income and power sharing," said noted economist and chairman of Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) Dr Kazi Kholiqzaman at BUP auditorium in the city.

Dr Kholiqzaman said though the basis of GDP growth is agriculture, donors always suggest curtailing subsidy to it. Agriculture sector must get priority in policy formulation, he added.

Referring to degradation of land and water resources, Dr Kholiqzaman urged all concerned to work for improving the environment.

In his main presentation, noted economist Prof Mosharraf Hossain said the per capita income and living standard of people have increased but 68 per cent of those living in rural areas are still landless.

Prof Hossain said infrastructure of the country has improved during the 60s. Electricity coverage has increased to 59 per cent, number of vehicles increased to 25 per cent and road coverage increased to 18 per cent from the 60s to date, he added.

Referring to the entry of around one million people in labour market every year, Prof Hossain said the huge unemployment and new entry in comparison to slow expansion of labour market is breaking social serenity.

Dr Hossain said three million people out of nine million in Dhaka City alone live in slums. Malnutrition and inhuman living conditions of slum dwellers have put pressure on civil amenities, he added.

Referring to foodgrain production, Prof Hossain said agriculture production is not at par with the population growth condition. Livestock sector, especially poultry farming, has improved a little, he added.

Prof Hossain laid emphasis on people's access to productive resources for building a prosperous nation.

President: Hunger strike

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ence in the functioning of a Republic and the Kingdon of a Republic. He said the decision regarding re-opening of SUST will be taken at the Syndicate meeting on May 6 and if required, "I will go to Sylhet".

The President also said, "I have already talked to the IG of police for your security. I will talk to the Prime Minister to solve the problems immediately.

"As Chancellor, if I give order from Dhaka to re-open the university, it will hamper autonomy of the university. The Syndicate will give decision considering every aspect", he added.

He also inquired about the well being of the students and advised them to devote to studies. He assured them that the problems would be solved immediately and that he would again talk to the Prime Minister in this regard.

The President was accompanied by SUST Vice Chancellor Prof. Habibul Rahman, its Registrar Jamilur Reza Chowdhury and Abul Mai Al Muhit.

Later, Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury also visited the Shaheed Minar and talked to the students.

In fact, they were called for murder instead of settling the dispute, said Noor-e-Alam, one of accused in the case during his judicial confession under 164 on September 1 last year.

Noor-e-Alam was arrested on August 30. Later, he was made government prisoner. He witnessed all the murders as Ershad Shikdar's chief bodyguard.

Khalid murder case was transferred to Khulna thana on May 19 from Tejgaon thana. AC of Kotwali Zone Bakhtiar Hossain investigated the case.

Kibria

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There is an opportunity to invest on power tiller assembling and manufacturing plant as there is growing demand for many power tiller among the farmers. "The demand will certainly go up in the future and the banks should come up with funds to invest in the rural area for the modernisation of the rural economy."

Bank chairman M. Syeduz-zaman, a former finance minister, said his bank's basic competence and technology-based infrastructure for information flow will give its staff the strength to push the frontiers of risk where necessary.

CU students

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Salauddin Ahmed, Yusuf Sharif Khan, Haiat Hossain Mahub Ullah and Monir Ahmed spoke in the meeting.

Meeting sources said some teachers were critical of the CU authorities for the statement and suggested for appointment of new VC and pro-VC for ending the crisis.

But the incumbent VC in his speech said that appointment of new VC and pro-VC won't bring the solution to the crisis.

However, the meeting ended inconclusively, sources said.

UNB adds: The Syndicate has decided to hold an emergency meeting at 11 am tomorrow to discuss campus situation.

During the hunger strike Alamgir, a final year student of English Department, burnt his books, notes and papers to show his anger against continued violence on the campus.

The striking students blamed the university authorities, political parties and government for creating the stalemate.

They vowed to continue the programme until positive steps were taken by the authorities to reopen the university.

Another group of general students and guardians staged a sit-in at New Market from 10 am to 1 pm against the deadlock on the campus.

They announced that they would march towards the campus on May 3 and stage a sit-in at No 1 gate.

PM visits Netrokona

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seeds, for the affected farmers. "We've successfully tackled three big natural disasters during our time — one severe cyclone, one devastating flood and one silent drought. Due to immediate and long term steps of the government people did not suffer much from these calamities," she said listing the measures during the 1998 flood and 1997 cyclone.

She said the government has also formed medical teams and provided healthcare services to the affected people.

Addressing a meeting at Shadupara High School ground in Purbadhala, the Prime Minister criticised the absence of the opposition MPs from Parliament.

She said although the MP of the area is from BNP, but he did not come here to stand beside you. Neither they go to parliament, nor they take care of the people who elected them.

But Awami League is the party of the people and it always stands beside the people during their time of need," she said.

Hasina said on this day (April 29) in 1991 the country was struck by severe cyclone. At that time BNP was in power but they were not at all aware of the cyclone devastation, in which three lakh people were killed.

Even then Prime Minister (Begum Zia) did not confirm how many people were killed in

that cyclone. According to government data 140,000 people were killed, she said.

State Minister for Land Affairs Rashed Mosharraf, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Syed Ashraf Islam, former BNP leader Yunus Manda, Fazlur Rahman Khan MP, Shamsul Huq MP, Jalaluddin Talukder MP, Mosharraf Hossain and Waresat Hossain Belal also addressed the meeting.

The Laxmiganj meeting was addressed by Fazlur Rahman Khan MP.

While distributing relief, including rice, saree, lungi, steel plate and glass tumblers to the storm victims, the Prime Minister inquired about their condition and consoled them by touching their heads.

AL leader Nazrul Islam dead

Veteran Awami League leader of Rangpur region Advocate Nazrul Islam died at a city clinic on Thursday. He was 63, reports BSS.

He is survived by his son, daughter and a host of relatives. Islam, a member of Awami League National Committee and former president of Rangpur Bar Council, devoted his life to progressive politics and socio-cultural activities.

His qalshuani will be held today after Asr prayers at his Guptapara residence in Rangpur.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia speaking at the National Council of Bangladesh Banks' Employees Association at the Engineers' Institute yesterday. — Star photo

System hacked

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on defunct clients, getting more telephone lines from BTB, better service, etc.

It said, "Attention all: you might be the next victim if you can't provide security for clients." The hacking has been done in the greater interest of the Internet users in Bangladesh.

We feel sorry for all Brac Bdmal users for their inconvenience, the message continued.

It also invited comments from anyone on the hacking. Brac Bdmal systems officials, however, denied that there had been any such hacking. "We had a little problem in our systems, but there wasn't any hacking," one official said.

Another official requesting anonymity said, "Probably someone was playing foul in the area where Daily Star is located."

However, at least two users of Brac Bdmal told the Daily Star over telephone that they received similar messages.

Eddie Barlow

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The South African collapsed at around 7 p.m. He was rushed to a nearby clinic in the diplomatic area and later to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) where doctors stated his condition "stable".

"He is out of danger," said Sved Ashraful Hq, general secretary of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), to the Daily Star over telephone late last night.

"But the left side of his body is still paralysed," Ashraful said from CMH, adding that Barlow was kept at the Intensive Care Unit.

BCB President Saber Hossain Chowdhury, who was on way to London to attend an emergency ICC meeting, rushed to the clinic hearing the news and had the middle-aged South African immediately shifted to the CMH.

As the news of Barlow's illness spread out, many anxious people phoned at the Daily Star office.

Barlow attended the first day of the month-long national camp for the Asia Cup on Friday. The jovial BCB development director spent two hours with his boys at the BUET ground and was scheduled to resume the training today after a day's break yesterday.

"We respect cricket lovers across the country to pray for his speedy recovery," said Ashraful in an emotion-choked voice.

Khaleida

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Describing country's situation as grim, Khaleida in her 40-minute speech said the backbone of economy has been shattered due to ruling party's politicisation and integration of its activists in all vital sectors.

Referring to the recent Paris Aid Club meeting, she said government's massive corruption had featured prominently at the donors' meeting.

She said the fragile economy would collapse if Awami League continue in power.

"We are in movement not guided by lust for power but for savings the country from the clutches of plunderers," she said.

Addressing the meeting former Finance Minister Saifur Rahman said the Central Bank should enjoy total autonomy, free from the dictates of the Finance Ministry.

Government could not borrow Tk 4,000 crore from banks if the central bank could act freely without caring for interference of the government in its day to day business.

Calling the Finance Minister as incompetent and lacking foresight, Saifur said he (Kibria) had bluffed the nation in his budget speech. He spoke of raising revenue collection by 22 per cent but it has not increased even by half per cent during the first half of the year.

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Wasteful

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since they target only the pests that eat the crop. Beneficial insects and predators do not feed on that plants so they are not affected, said Siraj.

Siraj admitted some farmers use granule pesticide as preventive application when growing high yield varieties. Siraj attributed the recent increase in pesticide use to the increase in the cultivation of high yield varieties.

Two bodies recovered

By Staff Correspondent

Police recovered bodies of two unidentified young man, one of them was beheaded and another slaughtered, from a rice field at Sanarpur under Demra thana yesterday.

Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital sources said that the bodies were decomposed and apparently left on the rice field beside the Dhaka-Chittagong highway a week ago.

Both were wearing jeans. Farmers tending their field found the bodies and informed Sabubag thana. Later, Demra thana recovered the bodies.

The area where the bodies were found is on the border of the two thanas.

Further details were not available. The bodies were taken to SSMC morgue for autopsy.

Wrist watches worth Tk 6 lakh recovered at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

A special squad of the National Board of Revenue and Customs recovered 1184 wrist watches worth about Tk 6 lakh from the ladies toilet at Zia International Airport on Friday night, said a press release of the customs yesterday.

Public hospitals

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annual budget (MSR) of taka 25,000 for every bed whereas in practice we need at least double the amount. This is beyond imagination."

The NICVD, where mostly poor patients crowd for heart treatment, cannot even supply common drugs, let alone the life saving ones — an illustration of lack of attention to the poor.

Professor M A Zaman, the NICVD Director, had earlier told the Daily Star that with the existing supply of drugs only 30 per cent of the patient's needs can be met while the rest has to arrange their own drugs.

"Poor are made poorer when they are admitted to hospitals, particularly if it involves surgery," said a patient at NICVD. "I got admitted after several attempts over the last two months but now I have to wait until I can arrange my own drugs and medical accessories required for surgery."

To deal with such a crisis, a number of hospitals have set up patient welfare fund but they are available to a very limited number of people.

During the fourth five-year health project, the government annually spent about Tk 50 per person on health which was far too less to meet the minimum requirement.

But experts suggest that the government should gradually raise the annual allocation to at least 12 US dollars per person with special attention for the needs of the poor.