

**What's on today....**

**Blood donation:** Global Guardian Network (BD) Limited will hold a blood donation programme on occasion of International Red Crescent Day. Venue: House No 6, Road No 8, Gulshan-1. Time: 10:00 am.

**JU workshop:** A day-long workshop will be held on writing texts for higher education in Bengali. Venue: Senate Hall of Jahangirnagar University. Time: 9:00 am-6:00pm.

**Seminar:** Prothom Bangladesh, a socio-political organisation will hold a national seminar on "Development of mines in Bangladesh: Crises and Prospects". Venue: VIP lounge of Jatiya Press Club. Time: 3:00 pm.

**Film show:** The British Council in association with Lever Brothers Bangladesh Ltd will screen *Meeting Venus and Queen of Hearts*. Venue: British Council auditorium, 5, Fuller Road. Time: 4:00 pm and 6:30 pm respectively.

**Meeting:** The Dhaka central secretariat of Democratic Lawyers Association will hold a meeting. Venue: Room No 74 of Supreme Court Lawyers Association Building. Time: 4:30 pm.

**Satyajit Ray Retrospective:** *Aranger Dinratri* (Days & Nights in the Forest) will be screened. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, Road No 2, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 6:15 pm.

**..... and tomorrow**

**View exchanges meet:** Greater Mymensingh cultural forum will hold a view exchange meet with leaders of Greater Mymensingh on the birth anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. Venue: WASA Bhaban (3rd floor). Time: 5:00 pm.

**Satyajit Ray Retrospective:** *Satyajit Ray's Ashani Sanket* (Distant Thunder) will be screened. Organiser: Zahir Raihan Film Society. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, Rd No 2, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 6:15 pm.

**Weather**

**Rain forecast**

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Chittagong, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka and Khulna divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said and forecast increase of rainfall activity for subsequent two days.

The country's highest temperature 35.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and the lowest 23.0 degree Celsius at Teknaf.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:30 pm and rises on Monday at 5:20 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	32.0	25.2	66	68
Chittagong	32.0	24.4	81	68
Rajshahi	34.5	24.0	65	69
Khulna	33.0	23.3	69	63
Barisal	30.0	24.5	60	68
Silhet	33.3	25.0	78	73
Cox's Bazar	32.0	24.2	78	74

**HERE and THERE**

**Bangabandhu Jubo Parishad-Pallabi**

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at the biennial conference of the Pallabi thana Bangabandhu Jubo Parishad yesterday demanded immediate execution of the verdict of Bangabandhu killing, says a press release.

They said it is undemocratic to try to protect the self-confessed killers. Rezaul Karim Khan Reza, General Secretary of the Parishad, appealed to its activists and leaders to commit themselves to root out fundamentalists and anti-liberation forces from the country.

A 51-member committee of the Bangabandhu Jubo Parishad Pallabi unit, was formed in the conference with Sheikh Raihan as president and Md Nurul Huq general secretary.

**Central Women's University**

The 436th birth anniversary of Shakespeare was observed by the Department of English of the Central Women's University recently, says a press release.

Teachers and students of the department held an Exhibition "A Homage to Shakespeare: The Champion of Women" to mark the occasion.

Shakespeare's portrait, books, documents and other interesting materials were displayed at the exhibition which was inaugurated by Vice-Chancellor of the university Prof Kulum Huda. Prof A M M Azhar Hossain, head of the department delivered a speech on Shakespeare at the opening ceremony.

A paper was also read out by Prof Begzadi Mahmuda Nasir, Professor Emeritus of English, highlighting the writer's positive attitude towards women in his work.

Video shows of his plays *Julius Caesar*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night* were screened at the exhibition.

**Jatiyatabadi Peshajibee Parishad, JU**

A meeting of Jatiyatabadi Peshajibee Parishad was held at Jahangirnagar University campus presided over by Professor Imamuhammad recently, says a press release.

Speakers at the meeting expressed that solidarity with the current democratic movement and that all patriots should be unified under the flag of nationalism.

They said all professionals are being harassed under this government. So all professional

**President condoles Siddiqur Rahman's death**

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed has expressed his profound sorrow at the death of former Ambassador and Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Siddiqur Rahman, who died of lung cancer in Singapore on Friday, reports UNB.

In a message of condolence yesterday, President Shahabuddin recalled his brilliant student career and service record since he began his service in the erstwhile Civil Service of Pakistan in 1957.

"Late Mohammad Siddiqur Rahman was a sincere and dedicated government servant and a successful administrator. He was honest and a man of well-behaved personality," he said.

The President conveyed his heartfelt sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

**DU Ka unit admission test result out**

Results of Dhaka University admission test of 'Ka' unit (Science group) for the 1999-2000 academic session were announced yesterday, reports UNB.

The results can be seen at the notice board of the Biological Science Faculty.

Interview of the selected students will be held May 20-22. They have been advised to collect choice form and other instructions from the Dean's office May 16-18, said a DU press release.

**Red Crescent Day tomorrow**

World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day will be observed in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the world tomorrow, says a press release.

On this occasion a children's painting competition was organised yesterday in the auditorium of Nursing School of the Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital.

The chairman of the society Sheikh Kabir Hossain was the chief guest.

A panel of judges comprising Prof Abdul Quayum Chowdhury, Prof Md Rafiqun Nabi, Prof Syed Abul Barka Alvi and Jamal Uddin Ahmed selected the prize winning entries. Sajib Karmaker and Md Arif Islam were adjudged the first prize winners of the paintings in group A and B respectively.

The other prize winners were: Maisha Nowsin Apon, Avijit Shaha Shuvo, Najib Arman, Ifat Bintie Reaz, Adiba Jamal (Esha), Nubala Abbas Binthe Sayeed, Monira Khan Tanima, Ashiqur Rahman and Eshita Alam Aboni. From the group of the handicapped children, Moshir Rahman Emon was declared the 1st winner while Sohel Ahmed, S M Shaifiqu Bari and Shahana Akhter were declared other winners of the competition.

**Grameen CyberNet blacks out again for 2 hours**

Subscribers of Grameen CyberNet couldn't use Internet for over two-and-half-an-hour yesterday as they failed to log-in with the server, reports UNB.

The log-in failure began at 1:30 pm and continued till 4:10 pm creating panic among the users whether any cybernetic problem had gripped the country's leading Internet Service Provider (ISP).

Their panic was intensified as the domain name of BRAC-run ISP was hacked recently and the "LOVEYOU" virus Thursday wrecked havoc on computer systems around the world.

Many subscribers repeatedly telephoned the help desk of Grameen CyberNet to ensure. They were assured that it was not due to hacking or any other kind of cybernetic problem.

"The power lines of the server was being reinstalled. The subscribers couldn't use Internet during the reinstallation period," an official at the ISP said after resumption of operation.

But many subscribers doubted this as there was no pre-announcement from the Grameen CyberNet that the server will not be working during a certain period of the day, as is usually done.

"All ISPs issue notice prior to the maintenance operation. In the past the Grameen also used to serve notices. I don't understand why they would avoid this at a time like now," said a subscriber.

**Workshop held in Khulna**

Khulna, May 6: A day-long workshop on "Appropriate Technology and Participatory Action Research in Context to Khulna" was held here today, reports BSS.

The workshop was jointly organised by Khulna University and Programme for Research on Poverty Alleviation (PRPA)-Grameen Trust at the university auditorium.

The workshop was formally inaugurated by Prof Dr S M Nazrul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of Khulna University as chief guest.

Presided over by Prof Dr Ahmed Hossain Mridha, Dean, Life Science School of the university, the workshop was addressed by Dr Shamsul Islam Bari, Director, PRPA-Grameen Trust and Dr Khairul Azam.



Stranded Pakistanis Youth Repatriation Movement (SPYRM) brought out a bicycle procession in the city yesterday demanding permanent rehabilitation and inclusion of their names in the voters' list.

**Withdraw OC of Charfashion thana, demands BNP MP**

A BNP lawmaker has asked for the withdrawal of and taking departmental action against the Officer-in-Charge (OC) at his constituency in Charfashion thana of Bhola district, reports UNB.

Accusing OC Forkan Sikder of corruption and highhandedness, Nazimuddin Alam MP said the OC with the collaboration of local ruling party leaders and workers had been grabbing shops and houses, and harvesting paddy illegally from others' lands in exchange of money.

Talking to newsmen, Alam, a firebrand student leader during the anti-autocracy movement in 1990, said the OC has the "blessings of a ruling party minister."

The ruling party terrorists, who in collaboration with the OC have been committing various offences in the area, are also the close associates of the minister, he alleged.

The BNP MP further alleged that OC Forkan has been issuing threats to the BNP activists for joining Awami League or refrain from party activities.

In this connection, he mentioned that once when Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed went to address a public meeting in Charfashion, the OC asked some local BNP leaders either to sit on the dais erected for the meeting or board the police pickup van parked nearby.

Alam, former AGS of DUCSU, introduced to the newsmen a "victim of repression" by police and the ruling party. Moulana Ashraf Hossain whose paddy crops were allegedly looted from the fields by the ruling party activists with the support of OC Forkan.

He also accused the local police of always creating obstacles to his party's political activities saying they harassed the BNP activists, snatched away microphones and damaged the stages erected for his public meetings.

The young BNP lawmaker said the local police also refused to take cases from the victims of repression. "The situation has come to such a pass that if one belongs to Awami League he may get away with anything."



Children participating in a painting competition organised by the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society yesterday on the eve of the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day.

**FFs' programmes for punishment to killers of Bangabandhu**

Bangladesh MuktiJoddha Sangsad announced a fresh programme across the country yesterday demanding punishment to the killers of father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports BSS.

All district units will submit memorandum to the deputy commissioners, hold rallies and bring out processions simultaneously in all district towns on May 20 and at Upazila on May 27 to mobilise public support in favour of their demand.

Chairman of the Sangsad, Principal Abdul Ahad Chowdhury said this while exchanging views with the journalists of different national dailies and news agencies at the office of Bangladesh MuktiJoddha Sangsad in the city yesterday.

Senior office-bearers including Vice-Chairman Sultan Uddin Ahmed Raza, Iqbal Hossain and Kabir Ahmed Khan, Joint Secretary General Sheikh Shamsul Huq Mohan, Liaquat Hossain, Monwarul Huq Khan Lablu, Salahuddin Ahmed and Mazharul Islam Montu were present on the occasion.

Principal Ahad hinted that if necessary action programmes would be expanded at union and village levels for mobilising public support in this regard.

"We have taken such programmes when questions were raised among the people regarding the lengthy trial process of the Bangabandhu Murder Case," he said.

**Spared**

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Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) general secretary Engineer M Atiqul Ahsan told the news agency yesterday.

"All major computer vendors contacted their customers, including corporate firms. There was no report of any collapse by the bug. However, our watch continues," he said.

Ahsan informed that a person made a phone call to BCS office saying he received a mail with subject "ILOVEYOU" and his system collapsed yesterday morning.

"I don't think it was due to LOVE virus. Had it been LOVE bug, the computer would collapse instantly. Perhaps it was due to any other kind of virus or problem," he said.

The BCS has three suggestions on what to be done if any e-mail titled "ILOVEYOU" comes. 1) People who receive the e-mail "ILOVEYOU" or "VERY FUNNY JOKE" should not open it, but delete it immediately. 2) If the message is opened, users should on no account open the attachment "LOVE-LETTER-FOR-YOU.TXT.vbs." 3) If the attachment is opened, users should log off, switch off the computer and contact experts.

**Obituary**

Laila Chowdhury, wife of late Abdur Razzak, former Editor of the *Dainik Barta* and Adamjee Award winner writer, died of cardiac failure late last night at her residence. She was 76, says a press release.

Laila Chowdhury, a retired teacher, left behind her only son Raoshan Zamil, son-in-law Mujibur Rahman, retired scientist, ICDDR, B and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

Her namaz-e-janaza was held at Natari Bazar Jam-e-Masjid after Zohr prayers.

**Stranded Pakistani youths demand enlistment in voters list**

By Staff Correspondent

The Stranded Pakistanis Youth Repatriation Movement (SPYRM) has appealed to the government to enlist their names in the voters list, says a press release.

The leaders and activists of the SPYRM yesterday brought out a procession in the city to drum up their demand for permanent rehabilitation in Bangladesh instead of "False promises of repatriation to Pakistan."

They have also appealed to the authorities to return the money deposited with a trust in Islamabad for the repatriation of stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh.

**New Director of British Council arrives today**

Carl Reuter, the new director of British Council in Bangladesh, arrives today, reports UNB.

Reuter joined British Council as a teacher at Hong Kong over 20 years ago and worked in the council offices of Greece, Abu Dhabi, London, Egypt and Italy.

**Roundtable on edn**

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adult illiteracy in the world by 50 per cent. Meantime, Bangladesh has set 2005 as the target year.

In her opening remarks, Rasheda K Chowdhury briefed the audience about the outcome of the Dakar conference and the role NGOs had played there. The NGOs demanded that the governments recognise education as basic human right, make primary education free and compulsory, announce specifically the amounts of allocation for education sector and develop national plan of action, with participation of civil society, to achieve the targets.

Mahfuz Anam, told the audience that the objective of the Roundtable was to review the progress in Bangladesh in removing illiteracy and find out ways of achieving the target. Underlining the role of media, he offered cooperation of The Daily Star in the government-NGO initiatives in this regard.

Saufur Rahman, BNP legislator and former finance minister, found that lack of proper management and monitoring of primary education was the main impediment to ensuring quality education.

The management and monitoring of primary education have to be decentralised, putting it under the jurisdiction of local governments, he said. "But both primary and secondary teachers want to be under the central government. They have always tried to resist any decision to decentralise the supervision and monitoring system," he said.

Referring to varying standards of education at different categories of schools, he said this is natural in a free market economy. "But equitable distribution of education facilities up to the secondary level is very important."

The former minister observed that introduction of Food for Education programme and stipends for girl students played a pivotal role in increase of enrolment as well as retention of students in primary schools. He praised the government of Sheikh Hasina for continuing the programme.

"But all said and done, it is quality politics that can produce quality education. But politics at present is far from a quality one," Saufur Rahman remarked.

On the question of budgetary allocation, he said it has to be made keeping in mind the tax-GDP ratio. "When the ratio is 9.5 per cent, one should not expect 6 per cent of the GNP to be allocated for primary education sector."

Saufur also differed with the "so-called" achievement of NGOs in primary education sector, compared to those of the state.

Stressing the need for people's ownership of primary schools, he said the entire education system has been left with teachers alone. "The managing committees hardly meet to discuss problems in education."

Nurul Islam Nahid, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education Ministry, said Bangladesh is in a better position as regards setting its target to achieve cent per cent illiteracy, compared to the target set by the World Education Forum. "Bangladesh is to do the job by 2006 while the Dakar conference has set 2015 as the target year for removing illiteracy across the world."

Nahid believes incentives like 'food for education' and stipends for girl students has substantially contributed to the increase in enrolment in primary schools. "But it is the social awareness about importance of education which has played a vital role," the ruling party MP said.

On the problem of quality education, he found the role of teachers to be instrumental and observed there was a severe scarcity of quality teachers these days. "Only 512 of about three lakh graduate and post graduate candidates secured pass marks in the last test for recruitment of primary school teachers," a frustrated Nahid said.

Turning to complaints of limited budgetary allocation for primary education sector, he said there was no disagreement over it. "But it is also important to monitor whether the already available funds are utilised properly."

Former Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Shamsul Huq said that primary education system in the country is a teacher-based one. But teachers hardly play the desired role.

He said the attitude of educational institutions and guardians is not favourable for quality education. "They only want their children to get good marks - not good education."

He also shared his disappointing experience about formulation and implementation of the national education policy under the present government. "We were given only three months time to formulate the national education policy. We, however, took six months to complete it," he said. "When we submitted it to the Prime Minister in September 1997, we told her that we had to work hard to prepare the report and requested her to implement it. The PM assured us of implementing the education policy. But more than two years have now passed. Yet there is no sign of its implementation."

About higher education, he said there should be a law barring political parties from having student wings. "I do not mind the students talking and discussing about politics, but they should not belong to any political party."

Responding to a query, he said that teachers also should not indulge in politics.

Prof Mozafer Ahmed of Dhaka University observed that lack of quality teachers, text books and teachers training centres were the main obstacles to quality education. He stressed the need for integration of education and skill for further improvement in the movement for eradicating illiteracy. "We have to integrate education with the problem of poverty alleviation. Otherwise no progress in eradication of illiteracy would be sustainable."

Prof Ahmed attached importance to social ownership of educational institutions. "Unless the society in general and guardians in particular take up monitoring and supervision of primary education, there is hardly any scope to improve the quality of primary education," he said.

The society has also to address the problem of teacher-student ratio, which is at the moment unfavourable for quality education.

On the issue of gender discrimination in education, Prof Ahmed said girls' participation in the science education is still lower than that of boys. "It is not only true for the tertiary education, it is also true for primary and secondary education."

He also said that there could not be better education without spending enough money. "However, resource allocation has to be in favour of disadvantaged educational institutions."

He felt that there should be a public hearing on the education system before adoption of the national education policy.

Prof. Abu Hamid Latif of Dhaka University said that introduction of early-childhood education would play an important role in inspiring children for education on the one hand and upgrading the standard of education on the other.

Besides, the minimum qualification for primary school teachers should be graduation, while a special cadre of professionals should be created to supervise the standard of education at the P-12 level," Latif said.

Shafi Ahmed of Jahangirnagar University said political will of governments is the most important for eradicating illiteracy and ensuring quality education. "But in this country, education policy changes with the change of government, ignoring the fact that education is a matter of continuous process."

He also underlined the need for decentralisation of authority in controlling or supervising education system.

Moshaque Chowdhury of BRAC said the present rate of enrolment of children in primary education is 77 per cent, while the rate of retention is 70 per cent. Referring to a study, he said, "Girls surpassed the boys over the period 1993 to 1995 in terms of enrolment. Besides, the poorer section in rural areas was doing better than the affluent."

He attributed the success mainly to programmes like food for education and stipend for girl students.

Some of the participants, however, disagreed with the figures provided by him.

Momena Khatun, General secretary of Bangladesh Teachers Federation, stressed proper planning for spreading education across the country. As regards alleged lack of commitment and competence of teachers, she said they face lot of problems. "You have to resolve their problems before you expect better services from them."

Hena Das, President of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, pointed out that the government is yet to fill up the quota of female teachers. In this regard she said that accommodation problems in rural areas discourage women to take the profession.

Others who took part in the discussion included ANM Yusuf, Kazi Rafiqul Alam, Mahfub Alam and Prof. Shamsul Haque.

**Data : Flood**

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progress has been made in this regard but more needs to be done, officials said.

In fact, Bangladesh has no access to data monitored by India on other common rivers except the Ganges, the experts said.

Since Bangladesh is at the receiving end as regards flow of water, management and sharing of water has to be done through consultations and joint planning as per international law. This has already been accepted in principle by both countries in the preamble of the water sharing treaty.

Talks on sharing of Teesta water has only come up for discussion at the third meeting of the Joint Committee of Experts (JCE), held this January, three and a half years after the Ganges treaty was signed.

Meanwhile, as per figures released by the Joint Rivers Commission of Bangladesh, the flow of Ganges water at Harding Bridge point this year has been "satisfactory", experts say. As per the treaty, Bangladesh received its "due share" of water during the first four months of the dry season that began on January 1, 2000. With the dry season ending on May 30, JRC experts hope that the share of water stipulated for the season will be made available as per the treaty.

The Ganges water sharing treaty entered its fourth year this season. With the exception of the dry season in 1997, there has been "satisfactory" discharge of Ganges water," said Khalilur Rahman.

A Joint Scientific Committee of Bangladesh and India is identifying the reasons for water shortfall since the end of 1997 to suggest remedial measures to avoid such situation in future. Its report is yet to be completed, it was learnt.

**512 teachers**

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took three months more, it submitted the report to the Prime Minister in September 1997. "While submitting the report we worked very hard to prepare the report and requested her to consider it with due importance," Prof Huq said.

Despite assurance from the PM, the report is yet to see day light, he added.

**Newspapermen's fresh programme**

Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SSKOP) has decided to form units in all newspapers and news agencies as a first step for launching countrywide movement to realise its 9-point demand, reports UNB.

It was decided at its meeting at the National Press Club with Amanullah Kabir in the chair, said a press release.

A month-long programme announced after the meeting included handing over memorandum, to Information Minister and BSP, discussion with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Ministry, exchange views with SKOP, ILO, human rights and labour organisations, NGOs, Editors and former BFUJ and DUJ leaders.

The SSKOP will hold a meeting with SKOP leaders at the National Press Club on Saturday next.

BFUJ leaders G M Yakub, Akhtar Ahmed Khan and M A Aziz, Sangbadpatria Press Sramik Federation president Hajj Mosharraf Hossain and secretary general Mozammel Huq, Sangbadpatria Karmachari Federation vice president M Anwarul Huq.