

What's on today . . .

Seminar: A day-long study based seminar on "Problem and Prospect of Women Union Parishad Member in exercising their role in Union Parishad for the empowerment of women" will be held. Organiser: Mass-line Media Centre (MMC). Keynote paper: Quazi Moushumi Hossain and Zannatul Ferdous Snigdha. Venue: LGED Seminar Room. Time: 10 am.

Ghazal evening: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka will present a Ghazal evening by Mesbah. Venue: Alliance Francaise premises. Time: 7 pm.

Film festival: Chalchitram Film Society in association with Information and Culture Department of the Indian High Commission inaugurates a week-long film festival titled "The Glorious Past of Our Films." Megher Onek Rang by Harunur Rashid will be screened on the first day. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, House No 25, Road No. 2, Dhammondi R/A. Time: 5.00 pm.

BIDS lecture: Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) will present a lecture on "Globalisation and the Emerging Ideological Struggle" by Md Anisur Rahman. The lecture is as part of a series of programmes by BIDS to celebrate the new millennium. Venue: BIDS conference room, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Time: 11.00 am.

Seminar: Muktiuddho Bangladesh O Bangladesh Research Institute will hold a seminar on "Role of national Archive in advanced research. Venue: National University, Room No 101, House No 113, Rd No 9/A, Dhammondi R/A. Time: 4.00 pm.

Discussion meeting: A discussion meeting on "Communalism and Fundamentalism in Bangladesh and distribution ceremony of Jahanara Imam Smriti Padak will be held. Organiser: Ekattur Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee. Venue: Academy of Planning and Development auditorium, Nilkhet. Time: 4.00 pm.

SSJ meeting: Sammilito Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) will hold a representative meeting in preparation for its upcoming conference. Venue: TSC Cafeteria. Time: 5.00 pm.

Theatre: People's Little Theatre presents *Moleyerer Kanjush* and *Madhumala* on the 1st day of a two-day programme to mark its 10th founding anniversary. Venue: Guide House and Mahila Samity auditorium respectively. Time: 7.00 pm.

and tomorrow

Theatre: People's Little Theatre presents *Tasher Desh* and *Tapashi O Tarangini* on the second day of its two-day programme to mark its 10th founding anniversary. Venue: Guide House. Time: 10.30 am and 7.00 pm respectively.

Film show: Three French movies *pierrat le fou* (Mad Pete), *adieu, ma concubine* (Farewell my concubine) and *L'odeur de la papaya verte* (The Scent of Green Papaya) will be screened. Venue: Auditorium of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 11.00 am, 4.00 pm and 6.00 pm.

Children's cultural programme: People's Little Theatre presents *Bajao Agnibina*, a cultural programme by children as part of its programmes to celebrate its 10th founding anniversary. Venue: Guide House, Bailey Road. Time: 11.15 am.

Discussion: A discussion will be held to mark the formation of Dhaka-based Sonamuri Thana Janakalyan Samity (STS). Venue: Ramna Restaurant. Time: 3.00 pm.

Cultural programme: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka presents a classical dance programme by Likhon and Motusli. Venue: Auditorium of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, 26 Mirpur Road. Time: 7.00 pm.

Weather

Light rain likely

Light rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions and the region of Mymensingh till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country during the period, the Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 36.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Khulna and the lowest 24.0 degree Celsius at Cox's Bazar.

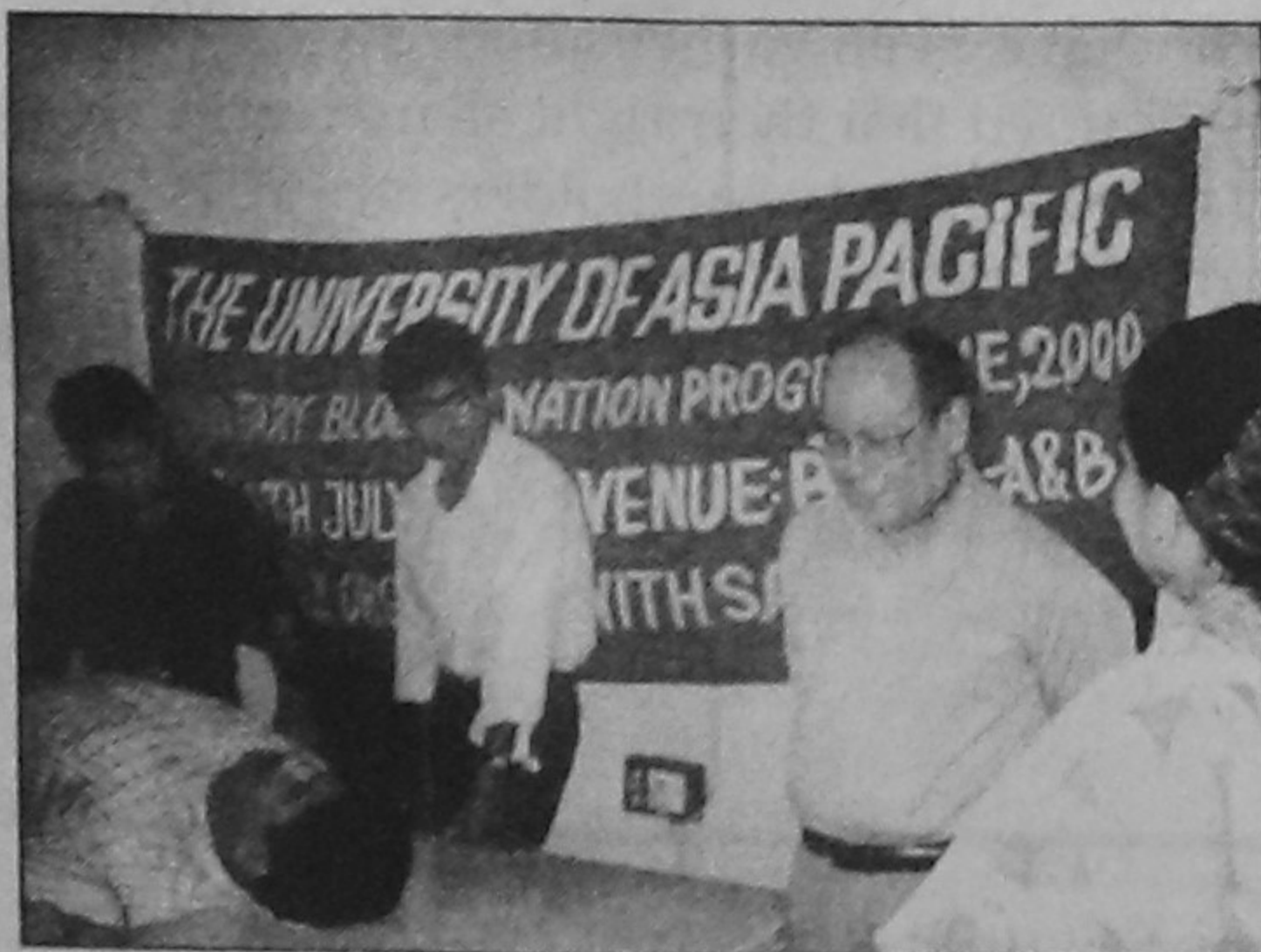
The sun sets in the capital today at 6.50 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.16 am.

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 | 35.2 | 28.8 |
| Chittagong | 34.0 | 27.0 |
| Rajshahi | 32.6 | 27.0 |
| Khulna | 36.2 | 26.0 |
| Barisal | 35.2 | 26.0 |
| Sylhet | 32.5 | 25.0 |
| Cox's Bazar | 33.5 | 24.0 |



Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, Deputy Executive Director of BRAC opened the BRAC Limb and Brace Fitting Centre in the city yesterday.



The University of Asia Pacific (UAP) held a blood donation programme at its Dhanmondi campus recently. UAP Vice-Chancellor Hedayat Ahmed (3rd from left) attended the programme.

Agitation at DU protesting killing, rape

By Staff Correspondent

Different student organisations continued agitation on the Dhaka University campus against the killing and alleged rape of a young woman on the campus recently.

Besides, a new platform, comprising eight student organisations and general students has been formed following the recent unexpected incidents.

According to newspaper reports four BCL activists kidnapped the woman at gun point when she was chatting with two of her friends at the Mall Chat-tar in the evening of June 28.

Later one person was killed and at least six others injured when two factions of JCD clashed on the campus on July 2.

Jouno Nipron O Santrash Protirodh Chhatra Mancha (platform for resisting terrorism and sexual harassment) yesterday organised a press conference at the Madhu's Canteen.

Leaders of the platform demanded formulation of an anti-sexual harassment policy in the university.

They also demanded investigation into the alleged rape incident, the killing and punishment to the killers and rapists.



Obituary

Mohammed Mostafa Chowdhury, Senior Principal Officer, Janata Bank, Credit Division-1, Head Office, Dhaka died of a heart attack in the early hours yesterday at his residence. He was 52, says a press release.

He is survived by his wife, two daughters, a son, relatives, friends and well-wishers.

His *namaj-e-janaza* was held in front of Janata Bank Bhaban and later he was buried at his family graveyard at village Paier Khola in Baradain of Chaudagram, Comilla.

The bank management has expressed their deep sorrow and sympathy for bereaved family.

Chowdhury's *qukhawani* will be held at his village home tomorrow.

Death anniversary

The 6th death anniversary of Tofazzal Ahmed Bhuiyan, Bar-at-law, will be observed tomorrow, says a press release.

Late Bhuiyan was the legal advisor of Bangladesh Tobacco Company Ltd. He and his wife Dr. Prof. Suriya Jabeen set up Lake View Clinic in the city's Gulshan area.

A *milad mahfil* will be held after Magrib prayers on Friday to mark the day at his residence at House No.-5, Road No-79, Gulshan-2.

Clarification

In a news item headlined "BTB smothered VOIP" published in The Daily Star last Monday, it was inadvertently mentioned that GrameenPhone (GP) was involved in seeking loopholes in its contract with the BTB to introduce Nation Wide Dialling system.

The fact is that Grameen-Phone did not use any loophole to introduce its Nation Wide Dialling (NWD) system. Since the GP does not use BTB's network for Nation Wide Dialling, so there is no question of BTB incurring loss of revenue from NWD calls from GP.

Rejoinder

The Dhaka Community Hospital has sent the following rejoinder to a news item published in The Daily Star on June 29 under the headline, "Arsenic mitigation activities bypassing national body."

"The Dhaka Community Hospital (DCH) is developing a project document on community based arsenic mitigation model. DFID has committed funds to the project. Development of the project document is still under process.

"DCH involved the ministry of Health, DPHE, BAMWSP, the World Bank, and DFID representatives in developing the project document. The outline of the project was also discussed in the national steering committee meeting.

"After finalising the project document, the project activities would be implemented according to the government rules. The Dhaka Community Hospital is not implementing any arsenic project bypassing the system of government of Bangladesh."

The Daily Star replies: The Daily Star refutes the claim of Dhaka Community Hospital that The Daily Star report mentioned that DCH is implementing the project. The report never mentioned that the DCH is implementing the project.

It is also not true that the outline of the project was discussed in the national steering committee meeting. The project document came into being in January. Since then no meeting of the national steering committee was held.



Nagarik Samaj launched a signature collection campaign against terrorism and sexual harassment of female students in educational institutions. Convenor of Nagarik Samaj Dr Kamal Hossain addressing a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday to encourage people from all walks of life to take part in the campaign. — Star photo

Signature campaign against terrorism at edn institutions

By Staff Correspondent

Nagarik Samaj, a forum of conscious people, yesterday launched a signature collection campaign to press home its demand for uprooting terrorism and sexual harassment from educational institutions of the country.

Through this signature collection campaign, we want to pressurise the government to constitute a judicial probe commission with a former Supreme Court justice and few former vice-chancellors and educationist to investigate incidents of killing and abuse on different educational institutions of the country," internationally renowned lawyer and convenor of Nagarik Samaj Dr Kamal Hossain said at a press conference at the National Press Club auditorium yesterday.

He said the probe body would

identify causes behind the campus violence and recommend steps to root out terrorism from educational institutions.

Dr Kamal said the attention of Nagarik Samaj has been drawn to sudden deterioration of law and order situation specially in educational institutions.

He said one student was killed and six others were injured in a clash on Dhaka University, in a similar clash students were injured in Chittagong University, a female student was allegedly raped by some armed hoodlums at Dhaka University during the last seven days reflecting severe deterioration of law and order situation.

Under the circumstances, students and their guardians, especially of female students,

have been suffering from anxiety and sense of insecurity, he said.

However, no effective actions so far have been taken in these regards, he said.

Dr Kamal said citizens of the country want to know the reason behind the terrorism on the campus, the persons involved and responsible for these incidents.

The Nagarik Samaj convenor said we have to protect the national interest and we can not let the future of students be destroyed.

The press conference was attended, among others, by Nagarik Samaj leaders — Architect Bashirul Huq, Dr Abdul Latif Mollie, A B M Osman Ghani, Sultan-uz-Zaman Khan, Taleya Rehman, while Eng Abul Kasem read out the written statement.



A publication ceremony of two books — 'Ava' and 'The Stage is Yours' by Sayeema T Hasan Tori was held at the VIP Lounge of National Press Club yesterday. Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria attended it as the chief guest. — Star photo

BB succumbs

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denied loans. With the election year ahead, the same quarter found it an appropriate time for change of the rule and embarked on a massive lobbying.

The finance ministry later contacted Bangladesh Bank asking for its advice. Sources said the central bank told the ministry that discipline in the banking sector was restored to some extent through such stringent rules and changes would not be good for it.

But later, under some compulsion, Bangladesh Bank suggested some changes and those have also been approved by the cabinet.

As per the changes, if the loans of a company are considered sub-standard or doubtful, these would not bar a related company of the same group from getting fresh loans. But if the loans become bad, the related companies would be barred.

On the other hand, if a person has less than 20 per cent share in a defaulting company, this would also not hamper his getting fresh loans for a related company.

While such changes in the rules are likely to make the banks once again vulnerable to defaulters, the central bank is also facing pressure from the finance ministry to change the current classification standard. The current standard stating that a loan would be considered classified after repayment failure for three months was applied from January, 1999.

But now, the finance ministry wants reverting to the old system when a loan was considered classified after six months of repayment failure.

In a recent CPD dialogue, Finance Minister S A M S Kibria had openly requested Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr M Farahuddin to reconsider the new standard as he felt it was applied without considering the ground reality.

Dr Farahuddin however curtly replied that he would be defeated if the standard is changed.

"There is no reason to change the standard," said a Bangladesh Bank source. "We expected that classified loans of

the banks would increase by seven per cent when the new standard was applied. But now we find that it increased only by one per cent. So, there is no correlation between the new standard the increase in 'classified loans'. The whole purpose of banking sector reform would be defeated if we change the system."

Buriganga

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They said they would soon organise bigger rallies and processions to save the river from dying.

Shamsul Huda of ADAB (Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh) said the struggle is not only for saving the river but the very existence of the people in the city.

Mofidul Haque, a writer and poet, said all over the country rivers are becoming targets for construction and that the trend has to be stopped.

Nazrul Islam, a professor in a US university condemned the Senakalyan Sangstha and others for encroaching on the river. Professor Muzaffar Ahmed said the river must be saved for the sake of development of the people.

Once the people cared about the fact that the rivers must be saved, but now people with business in mind are plundering public resources such as the river Buriganga. Muzaffar said, Monzurul Hossain Khan of the Communist Party of Bangladesh said if the Shitalakha and Buriganga rivers are destroyed in this way, the entity of the country will be in jeopardy.

"I tell you this movement must be carried forward more intensively to secure our entity," he said.

POROSH's AMA Muhit said that many civilisations in this part of the world have gone into the history books only because of the river Buriganga.

"We appeal to the government to come forward to save the river Buriganga to ensure a better environment," he said. Muhit said that POROSH would soon organise more rallies and protest processions as a part of the movement.

A large number of local people also expressed their solidarity with the movement.

Frequent

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dapara complained that on average power goes off six to seven times a day.

Ruhul Amin, a former general manager of Bangladesh Bank, said even when power supply resumes at night the voltage is low. "Many TV sets and fridge in the area have gone out of order due to sudden fluctuation in voltage," he added.

A resident at Banani said power situation has been worst in the last two weeks.

DESA officials however claimed that there was only 34 megawatt of load shedding in metropolis yesterday.

The situation was better as we could get 980 megawatt power from the PDB against our demand of over 1000 megawatt," said an official.

He however admitted that power supply was disrupted severely outside Dhaka city because of "rise in frequency." Power supply from four sub-stations remained suspended last night due to overloading that caused breakdown in 11 KV line.

The sub-stations are at Mirkadim, Modanganj, Narsingdi and Sripur.

The PDB control room said power generation was 2600 megawatt last night and the shortfall across the country was 175 megawatt. The total demand was estimated to be 2775 megawatt for the whole country.

Power generation in nine plants was remained suspended due to mechanical problems. The plants are, Rouzan-2, Sylhet Gas Turbine, Shahajal Bazar-3, Fenshuganj Gas Turbine-2 and Fenchuganj steam, Ashuganj-2, Khulna Barge Mounted-1 Rangpur Gas Turbine and Ghorashal-5.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad held a rally in front of the victim's residence yesterday demanding immediate trial of her killers.

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Meanwhile, three night guards of the area — Berek Minan, Mosharrar Hossain and Jinal Abedin — were picked up for interrogation. They were released after recording their statements, DB sources said.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad held a rally in front of the victim's residence yesterday demanding immediate trial of her killers.

BIMSTEC

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Chairman of BIMSTEC, Indian State Minister for External Affairs Ajit Kumar Panja would now take over as Chairman.

The issues that may come up at the Delhi meet include an early start of the Trans-Asian Highway linking the five member-countries and a regional airline service connecting their capitals.

The meeting is being held after change of schedule several times. It was initially due to be held towards the end of last year.

Discussions on establishing multi-modal communication including air and sea links are also expected to take place at the meeting.

The first BIMSTEC ministerial meet was held in Dhaka from December 17 to 19 two years back.

The Delhi meet is expected to give the new regional grouping a more durable shape.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury said ESCAP has been authorised by BIMSTEC to conduct a study for construction of a Trans-Asian Highway linking the five member-countries. Stretches of the highway already exist and it is a matter of linking up and providing facilitation services, he added.

Detailed discussions are likely to be held to find avenues to boost trade, investment,

tourism and exchange of scientific data including meteorological.

Besides, a possible list of tariff concessions and creation of free trade zones in the BIMSTEC countries would figure at the Delhi meet, the state minister said.

Earlier, the Dhaka meeting had set up working groups focussing on six primary areas. The areas and the countries assigned to make working plans for those are: Trade and Investment—Bangladesh, Technology—India, Transport and Communications—Thailand, Energy—Myanmar, Tourism and Fisheries—Sri Lanka.

The original grouping comprising Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand started off being called BISTEC.

Later, at a ministerial meeting in Bangkok, the four founding members agreed to admit Myanmar. The organisation was then renamed BIMSTEC meaning Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand for Economic Cooperation.

Initially it was referred to as the 'Bay of Bengal Economic Cooperation Organisation'.

The regional alliance was initiated considering the great potential of expansion of trade among these countries by taking advantage of their geographical proximity.

Dhaka plans

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more or less static at around nine million hectares from mid 1960s to mid 1980s. However, in the last one decade over one million hectares of cropland disappeared.

With the pressing needs for urbanisation and infrastructure development, more agricultural land will have to be sacrificed in the years to come, experts said.

The country would have to grow an additional five to six million tonnes of foodgrain by 2020 in a land area two million hectares smaller than what it is now. By that time the country's projected size of population would be 173 million, though.

The Agriculture Commission says it would be 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.

Moreover, the cropping intensity in Bangladesh is 175 per cent, the highest in the world. Bangladesh aspires to go for 300 per cent, which means growing crops thrice a year in every piece of tillable land.

But experts say further intensifying cropping patterns would be taxing for soil health as over 60 per cent of existing croplands are already suffering from nutrient deficiency.

Dr M A Sattar Mandal, Planning Commission Member, who used to teach agricultural economics at Bangladesh Agricultural University, observes that timely supply of input, credit and extension services to millions of farmers becomes more difficult for the government because of land fragmentation and decrease in average farm size.

According to official statistics, 64.2 per cent of the total land area in the country is under agriculture while 17.3 per cent under forestry. Urban areas comprise 8.1 per cent and water bodies 6.5 per cent.

PM: Magic

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its contribution to the salaries of private primary school teachers at a range of Tk 1100-1300, the Awami League MP requested the prime minister to increase it to Tk 1000.

An all smiles Hasina took the floor to respond to her Treasury Bench colleague. Her move was quite unusual since there is no provision for responding to the kind of deliberation Shamsul Haq made.

She reminded Haq of her government's decision on raising salaries of the private school teachers, which has already been executed.

Apparently embarrassed by the act of butting, the prime minister said, "It's not true that I can make everything possible. Had I had the power to make a man woman and a woman man, I would have turned you, Mr. Shamsul Haq, into a woman."

BNP

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cently intensified politicisation of administration and appointment of "controversial and incompetent" persons as chief election commissioner and election commissioner is part of the blueprint to rig polls.

The government has also started appointing "incompetent, corrupt party men" as DC, SP and OC to manipulate the national polls, he said and added that this time no one would be allowed to rig polls.

Presided over by city BNP President and APAC Convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, it was addressed, among others, by Jatiya Party Secretary-general Nazim Rahman Manjur, Jamaat Secretary-general Mottur Rahman Nizami, Islami Oikya Jote leader ARM Abdul Matin. BNP leaders Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Mirza Abbas, JP leaders Mostafa Jamal Haider and Saifur Rahman, Jamaat leaders ATM Azharul Islam and ATM Taher, IOJ leader Abdur Rab Yusufi and Jappa President Shafiqul Alam Proddhan.

Later, the opposition parties brought out a procession that paraded different city streets before dispersing in front of Jatiya Press Club.

Rubel murder

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Our Medical Correspondent adds: Mukul Begum was shifted to the coronary care unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Shamim Reza Rubel, 24, a BBA student of the Independent University was picked up by a team of DB police from his Sideswari residence on July 23, 1998 and was tortured to death in the custody the same day.

Metropolitan PP Quamrul Islam appeared for the state while advocates — Mahbub Ahmed, Sharfuddin Mukul, Khan Saifur Rahman and Saika Ferdous for the accused.