

'Fighting illiteracy key to global peace'

BSS, Dhaka

Peace in the world cannot be ensured leaving the majority of the people illiterate and poor, academics said at a seminar in the city.

Peace, either globally or in the state level and family life, could be achieved in phases with a gradual reflection of social justice and practices of religious values at every spheres of life, they said.

The Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO and the National Academy for Education Management (Naem) jointly organised the seminar to mark the International Peace Day on Thursday. A number of teachers, students and officials attended the seminar.

"Peace is being threatened in the name of fighting terrorism. The so-called peace protectors are the main violators of global peace," Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Education Mohammad Rafiqul Islam said.

Former pro-vice chancellor of Dhaka University Prof. Wakil Ahmed said the peace could be restored in the world if the human behaviour towards other human being is changed. He also urged the developed countries and well-off people to do more for the welfare of mankind.

UNESCO Representative Wolfgang Vollmann said that peace would not come easily in the earth as it was never in the world. Universal peace still remains the status quo, he said, adding that only elimination of exploitation and social injustice could bring a climate of culture of peace.

Secretary of the UNESCO Commission Syed Jaglul Pasha underscored the need for incorporating topics of peace into the textbooks.

He also said the UNESCO commission in Bangladesh has been trying its best to promote the message of peace through various activities.

Director General of NAEM Prof. Khalilur Rahman chaired the function.



Police intercept leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League at Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday as they were marching in a procession to rally support for today's hartal called by Awami League.

Air chief returns

BSS, Dhaka

Begum Dilruba Azam attended the "Air Chiefs Spouses' Conference" where she made a presentation on welfare activities of Bangladesh Air Force Women Welfare Association (BAFWWA).

Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Fakhru Azam returned home Thursday from the United States after attending the "Global Air Chiefs' Conference-2003" and "Pacific Air Forces Air Chiefs' Conference" in Washington and Hawaii.

During the visit, the Air Force Chief was accompanied by his wife Begum Dilruba Azam.

Air Vice Marshal Fakhru Azam also took part in the programme in celebration of "Hundred Years Anniversary of First Flying" in Washington, an ISPR press release said here yesterday.

He exchanged views on issues of professional interests with the air chiefs of the participating countries during his visit.

He also met several senior US Air Force officials in Washington and Hawaii.



Dilruba Azam, wife of Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Fakhru Azam, presents a paper on the activities of Bangladesh Air Force Women Welfare Association at the Air Chiefs Spouses' Conference in Washington recently.

IPM strategy to be introduced to better health service

UNB, Dhaka

Health and Family Welfare Ministry plans to revamp the problem-ridden health sector by introducing Individual Performance Management (IPM) strategy in all upazila health complexes, district and medical college hospitals to improve health service delivery.

Sources at the ministry said IPM, a widely accepted management tool in Europe and America, would help make the doctors, nurses and other staff of the public sector hospitals, especially at the grassroots level, accountable.

There are about 100 upazila health complexes, 58 district hospitals and 13 medical college hospitals in the public sector with some 60,000 staff, including 10,000 doctors and 15,000 nurses.

But health service seekers in government hospitals are dissatisfied with the service delivery for various reasons, including management inefficiency, absenteeism and lack of responsibility. IPM creates a clear framework to ensure accountability within the organisation to provide optimum services with the allocated resources.

The IPM rollout programme has been taken into consideration following successful implementation of a pilot project in 53 upazilas of six districts -- Dhaka, Bogra, Barisal, Moulvibazar, Khulna and Comilla -- from June 2002. The rollout programme is likely to begin early next year, the sources said.

According to information received from the 53 upazilas, the officials and employees are now trying to perceive their respective job description in true sense. Each employee is now keeping record of individual responsibilities and indicators of performance through discussion with the supervisor.

The outlook of the officials and employees is changing as they are now participating in work plans and evaluation process. Steps can now be taken to remove bottlenecks identified through IPM charts for completing individual job, the sources said.

Half of primary school dropouts forget literacy lessons in 10 yrs

BSS, Dhaka

Nearly half of the students who had dropped out after four years of schooling are found to have forgotten their literacy lessons in 10 years.

"About half of the students with four to five years of schooling are found literate after leaving the school," said a recent nationwide

survey-based study of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), a coalition of NGOs working for the promotion of literacy.

The report said: "It is seen that there has been a substantial loss of literacy skills of the population, but the loss was dramatically higher for those which 2-3 years of schooling than those with 4-5 years of schooling."

The CAMPE study, the fourth in the series of Education Watch, was aimed at assessing the state of literacy in the country by administering a literacy skill test and recording their opinions and demands.

The study also depicted a dismal picture of the standard of primary education, saying that more than a third of those who had years of schooling failed to acquire literacy even at the initial stage.

Of the 13,145 people of different ages and gender groups surveyed under the study, 49.3 percent cut a sorry figure in the literacy test receiving less than a quarter of the total score and were categorised as non-literate.

Twenty one percent of the respondents scored at the level of "initial literacy skills" and 20.4 percent had scored at the level of "advanced literacy skills".

"The state of literacy in the country is an indictment of the poor quality of primary education and schooling in general. Major improvements in primary education is essential to make progress in literacy," the study report said.

The study also found that despite massive campaigns to promote literacy for better living, most people do not seem to find the use their literacy skills for improving their living condition or quality of life.

"Only 10 percent people find their literacy skills useful in collecting relevant information for a better life," it said.

"A strong demand exists for post-literacy training for income generating skills, but no model exists for meeting this demand successfully on a large scale," the study said.

Moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at few places over Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy falls at places during the next 12 hours till 6.00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 34.4 degree Celsius was recorded at Rangamati and the lowest of 24.0 degree at Dhaka and Syedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:50pm today and rises at 5:49am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.2	24.0	83	95
Chittagong	32.8	25.4	69	75
Rajshahi	32.5	26.0	77	95
Khulna	34.0	25.5	81	93
Barisal	32.2	26.0	77	98
Sylhet	31.5	25.1	87	82
Cox's Bazar	33.0	25.2	82	77

Chinese film festival begins today

BSS, Dhaka

A week-long Chinese film festival and photo exhibition begins in the city today on the occasion of the 54th founding anniversary of the People's Republic of China.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Begum Selima Rahman and Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Hu Qianwen will jointly inaugurate the exhibition titled 'Beautiful China' at the National Museum auditorium at 11.00am.

A total of seven feature films and 20 documentaries will be screened. Two films and a documentary will be screened at the Sufia Kamal auditorium from 4.30pm to 9.00pm every-day.

Cultural function

Jago Art Centre will hold a cultural function to mark the 23rd death anniversary of Gouhar Jamil. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy. Time: 7.00pm.

ICMAB conference

The inaugural session of the national conference of the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh (ICMAB) will be held with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia as chief guest. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre, Sher-e-Banglanagar. Time: 11.00am.

Moon sighting meet

A meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee will be held with State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharrar Hossain Shahjahan as chief guest. Venue: Conference room of the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh. Time: 7.00pm.

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen a film titled 'The Thomas Crown Affair'. Venue: 21/C, Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Musical evening

Srijon organises a musical evening titled 'Fele Asa Diner Bangla Gan'. Venue: Bishwa Sahitya Kendra auditorium, Bangla Motor. Time: 6.30pm

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen a film titled 'Rabbit Proof Fence'. Venue: 21/C, Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Dialogue

The inaugural session of a two-day dialogue on Focus on Pro-poor Health Strategy, organised jointly by UNFPA and World Bank, will be held with Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman as chief guest. Venue: NEC auditorium, Sher-e-Banglanagar. Time: 10.00am.

Seminar

A seminar on 'Poverty alleviation through sustainable tourism development', organised by BPC and

PATA Bangladesh Chapter

will be held with State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin as chief guest. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 4.00pm.

Concluding session

The concluding session of the national conference of the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh will be held with Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman as chief guest. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 6.30pm.

BISS seminar

The inaugural session of a daylong seminar on 'Environmental security in Bangladesh: Role of youth', organised by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), will be held with City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka as chief guest. Venue: BISS auditorium, Old Elephant Road.

IDPAA seminar

Institute for Development Policy Analysis and Advocacy of PROSHIKA will hold a dissemination seminar on Chittagong Hill Tracts. Venue: IDB Bhaban, Agargaon. Time: 9.30am.

Inaugural ceremony

The inaugural ceremony of a Computer Lab at Child Labour Primary School, organised by the Solidarity Centre and Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Union Federation, will be held with US Ambassador Harry K Thomas as chief guest. Venue: House-48, Road-28, Gulshan. Time: 2.00pm.

Exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of a three-day exhibition titled 'Iran and Tourism', organised by Iranian Cultural Centre, will be held with Prof Aftab Ahmed, vice chancellor of National University as chief guest. Venue: House-54, Road-8/A, Dhanmondi. Time: 5.00pm. The exhibition will remain open from 10.00am to 6.00pm daily.

FICCI meet

Monthly meeting of Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry will be held with Dr David Carter, British High Commissioner as chief guest. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 12.30pm.

