



Dance artistes perform at the inaugural ceremony of the 2nd Network Meeting of Asian Sites of Conscience at the Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday.

'Democratic practice can ensure human rights'

3-day meet of Asian Sites of Conscience begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The second network meeting of Asian Sites of Conscience began in the city yesterday in a bid to exchange programmes among the museums trying to let the next generation know the history of bitter experiences of gross human rights violation.

Liberation War Museum has organised the three-day regional meeting under the International Coalition of Historic Site Museum of Conscience.

The participating organisations include Sabarmati Gandhi Ashram of India, Museum of Courage and Resistance of the Philippines, Non-violence International of Bangkok, Liberation War Museum of Bangladesh, Toul Sleng Genocide Museum of Cambodia, Badsha Khan Centre of Pakistan and Kyoto Museum for World Peace of Japan.

Participants from different countries will discuss contemporary social and human rights issues in the light of their bitter historical experience of human rights violation, said one of the trustees of

Liberation War Museum Sarwar Ali at the inaugural function at the Cirdap auditorium.

He said many countries have also bitter experiences of atrocity like the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

"It is extremely important for the next generation to raise questions as to how and why the atrocities took place so that they can prevent the recurrence of such atrocities in future," said Air Vice-Marshal AK Khandaker in his presidential speech.

He said human rights would be achieved only when people could be able to practise their democratic rights and no human being should be deprived of it.

"Because of our attitude, practice and belief we have formed a coalition and hope it will help historic site museums expand their work and reach the next generation," said Liberation War Museum Trustee Akku Chowdhury.

Sara Zaker, trustee of the Liberation War Museum, moderated the inaugural session which was also addressed by the repre-

sentatives from different historic site museums.

It was followed by a cultural programme.

The coalition was formed in 1999 with nine museums.

Now a total of 87 historic site museums are the members of the coalition with Liberation War Museum as the founder member.

ECS Computer City, one of the largest information technology (IT) based market, will be inaugurated at Multiplan Centre at Elephant Road in the city on September 11.

An annual computer fair will also begin on the same day. Science, Information and Communication Technology Adviser Tapan Chowdhury will inaugurate the ECS (Elephant Road Computer Samity) Computer City and the computer fair at 5:00pm on September 11.

At a press conference at Multiplan Centre yesterday, leaders of the fair committee said around 450 technology-based shops have already been set up from fourth to ninth floor of the Centre.

Fair Committee Convener Engineer Subrata Sarkar said people will get many additional facilities at the computer market that has been adorned with modern equipment.

UN system to provide more funds for flood victims

UNB, Dhaka

The United Nations system in Bangladesh has mobilised additional funds of \$6 million (approximately Tk 42 crore) to alleviate the suffering of flood-affected people.

This is in addition to UN system assistance of approximately \$11 million since the flood started.

This support was made possible through a grant from the Central Emergency Respond Fund (CERF), a global initiative to enhance UN's response to emergencies, said a press release.

The funds will be channelled through WFP, UNICEF, FAO, WHO, UNFPA and UNDP, mainly in the form of food, but also including nutritional supplements, medical

services, shelter support, non-food items and actions to prevent the loss of livestock.

The UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh, Renata Dessallien, welcomed the grant, and emphasised that the UN system stands by the people of Bangladesh in their hour of need.

"Although we hope that the worst of the floods are over, many people are still in dire need of assistance to make ends meet. Many have returned home to find no home at all, as well as their sources of livelihood destroyed," said Renata Dessallien.

"The new UN system assistance will be used to complement the good work of the Government, and will be targeted at the most vulnerable and impoverished groups."



Students of private universities wash a car on the American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) campus in the city during a fund raising campaign yesterday. Meaningful Change Through Leadership (MCTL) began the three-day 'Car Wash' programme on Thursday to raise funds for the flood victims.

Pvt varsity students come to aid of flood victims

With noble intentions, Meaningful Change Through Leadership (MCTL), a non-political organisation of the students of different private universities, has started a unique three-day 'car wash' programme to raise funds for flood victims, says a press release.

The programme was inaugurated on Thursday through washing the car of Dr Carmen Z Lamagna, vice chancellor of American International University of Bangladesh (AIUB), at the administrative building of AIUB at Banani in the city.

Students of AIUB, East West University, North South University and Brac University have been participating at the carwash programme spontaneously.

Dr Carmen Z Lamagna, Ehsanuddin Ahmed, director of student affairs, AIUB and Ashfaq Huq, chief adviser of MCTL, were present at the inaugural ceremony.

On the second day of the programme, the students worked in Banani, Gulshan-1 and Gulshan-2 and Baridhara diplomatic areas and collected Tk 20000 by washing 50 cars, including the cars of former presidents AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and HM Ershad and popular model Nobel.

The concluding session of the programme will start from Baridhara DOHS area at 9:00am today and will be wound up after washing the cars of the film stars at Film Development Corporation.

Int'l Literacy Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is International Literacy Day. The Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere around the globe with a pledge to eradicate ignorance from society through enhancing the literacy rate.

This year the theme is 'Literacy: Key to health and well-being'. The main objective of observing the day is to make society aware about the serious consequences of illiteracy and the importance of universal education.

The government and different non-government organisations (NGOs) have chalked out elaborate programmes to mark the day.

Primary and Mass Education Ministry will hold a function at the Osmani Memorial Hall auditorium at 10:30am in the city in observance of the day.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will be present at the function as the chief guest while Education Adviser Ayub Quadri will preside over the programme.

Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO, Dhaka will bring out a colourful procession led by Additional Secretary of Education Ministry AKM Abdul Awal Majumder from Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (Banbeis) near Palassy at 8:00am that will end at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Non-formal Education Bureau will hold a seminar on 'Non-formal Education Policy-Implementation Strategy' at the LGED auditorium tomorrow.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday issued separate messages on the occasion.

In his message, President Iajuddin said role of non-formal education is boundless along with formal education for ensuring overall human development and improvement of standard of living in developing countries.

He hoped that meaningful participation of all concerned would spread the light of education at all tiers of the society, thereby turning Bangladesh into an illiteracy-free country by 2015.

In another message, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed urged all concerned, including teachers, guardians and private organisations, to work together with devotion for supplementing the government initiative to ensure quality education for all and attaining total literacy.

Bangladesh Betar and BTV will air special programmes highlighting the significance of the day.



An autistic child performs at a cultural programme at LGED auditorium in the city yesterday. HANS organised the programme with the participation of autistic children.

Autistic children display talents at cultural show

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The children look so cute and innocent that anyone would tend to be fond of them.

They can sing, dance, act and speak, but cannot communicate effectively like other children with natural psychological growth.

They are none, but the autistic children with impairment in socialisation, verbal and non-verbal communication.

Their behaviours are of restrictive and repetitive patterns.

But there are examples that with early identification of the symptoms and proper treatment, these children also can lead normal life.

These were learnt from the people working with the autistic children during a cultural programme titled 'Share with innocence' at LGED auditorium in the city yesterday.

Different schools for the autistic children including Autistic Welfare Foundation, Society for the Welfare of Autistic Children (SWAC), Kallyani, Scholars Special School, Beautiful Mind and Caring Glory took part in the show.

At the show, organised by

Hello's Association of Neophyte-Students (HANS), autistic children danced as their teachers showed, sang as their teachers played the harmonium and acted as was dictated from behind the curtain.

"These children have communicative problems, but they can be expert in any particular subjects," said popular novelist Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, who was a special guest at the function.

It is unfortunate that people are not aware of them and therefore behave differently not only with the autistic children, but also with other physically or mentally challenged people, he said.

"We must treat all human being humanely because all deserve so," said Zafar Iqbal, professor of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology.

He said there is one autistic child in every 166 people in the United States.

"This is a global problem, but there is very little awareness about it," he said urging the government to be attentive to the issue of autistic children.

SWAC Chairman Engineer Anwar Hossain, who is also a father of an autistic child, said his child is

so expert in home management that an adult is not so smart in doing so.

He said scientific causes of autism and its treatment are not identified yet but people sometimes forget that they are also human being and term them as mad.

This attitude must be changed, he noted.

Dr Shamim Matin Chowdhury, a child psychiatrist, said doctors in the country know very little about autism.

"So sometimes they apply wrong treatment," he said.

"What we need most is conducting researches and training for the teachers and doctors on autism," he added.

Former governor of Bangladesh Bank Dr Farashuddin was present as chief guest at the function.

Robbery at lawyer's house

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A robbery was committed in a house at Siddhirganj in Narayanganj on Thursday.

Locals said a gang of 9 to 10 robbers broke into the house of Advocate Mafizul Islam by cutting the window grill of his kitchen at around 1:30am.

The robbers held the residents of the house hostage at gunpoint and looted Tk 81000 in cash and gold ornaments weighing 1.5 tolas.

Mafizul was wounded when one of the robbers hit him in his head.

He filed a case with Siddhirganj Police Station in this connection.

3 shops burn down in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Three shops burned down in a fire that broke out in Bayezid area in Chittagong city yesterday morning.

Sources said an electrical short-circuit sparked off the fire at a shop at Shershah Colony at around 6:45am, which soon engulfed the adjoining two shops.

Fire fighters from Bayezid Fire Station rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze after about one-hour struggle.

The loss from the fire was estimated at Tk 3 lakh, said the sources.



Winners of Book Reading Programme of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra pose with Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed and artist Mostofa Monwar at the prize giving ceremony at the Kendra in the city yesterday.

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