

HIGH LEVEL MEETING HELD Steps soon to resolve Ctg problems

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A high level meeting yesterday decided to take initiatives immediately on a priority basis to resolve various problems facing the Chittagong city such as waterlogging, traffic congestion, poor housing facilities and water and gas crises.

The meeting was held at Chittagong Circuit House to work out a policy for the development of the region in order to boost the overall economic growth of the country.

The meeting identified the problems and made recommendations, which will be placed at the next meeting of the council of advisers, said Commerce and Education Adviser Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman at a press briefing after the meeting.

Most decisions taken at the meeting might be finalised in the meeting scheduled to be held in Dhaka on March 6, said the commerce adviser, who presided over yesterday's meeting.

Housing and Public Works Secretary SM Rashedul Hye, Joint Secretary for education Nazrul Islam Khan, LGRD Joint Secretary Lokman Hossain, Joint Secretary for communication Tajul Islam, Joint Secretary for commerce Nurun Nabi Talukder, NBR Member (Admn) Farid Uddin, Acting Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong MN Siddiq, Acting Chittagong City Mayor M Manjur

Alam, Chittagong Port Authority Chairman Commodore Mohammad Faruq, Chittagong Regional Taskforce Commander Brig Gen Hasan Nasir, Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Shah Muhammad Akhter Uddin, Bangladesh Railway (East) General Manager Iqbal Molla, Chittagong Customs Commissioner (Import) Nasir Uddin, Chittagong Customs Commissioner (Export) Margub Ahmad, Chittagong Metropolitan Police Commissioner M Akbar Ali, Chittagong Chamber President Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, Better Business Forum (BBF) Member Mahmudul Haq Chowdhury, Asian University for Women Executive Director Prof Dil Afroza Quader and heads of different departments and agencies attended the meeting.

The meeting decided on immediate implementation of two projects -- one for developing Rajakhal and other for the secondary roads -- to remove waterlogging.

Under the first project, around 2 km of Rajakhal would be developed at an estimated cost of Tk 24.75 crore while under the second project involving around Tk 1000 crore, some 1200 km roads would be carpeted.

"We want to start implementing these projects before the rainy season sets in," said the commerce adviser.

The meeting also agreed to make coordinated efforts to bring

about development of Chittagong on the basis of Chittagong Metropolitan Master Plan (CMMP) -- a comprehensive policy-based plan prepared by Chittagong Development Authority (CDA).

It decided to help develop a new township initiated by CDA at Fateyabad and the project would be ready for approval within a month or two, said the adviser.

The meeting also decided to support the construction of a dormitory for women workers, particularly for those working at factories inside Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ), which is likely to start within next two or three months.

As part of interim solution to water crisis, the meeting decided to speed up the process of undertaking project to set up deep tube wells.

It also stressed the need to establish a separate gas distribution station in the port city soon.

The meeting also decided to take initiatives to increase the number of educational institutes in the port city.

As per the decision of the meeting, Joint Secretary for education Nazrul Islam Khan held a meeting with the officials concerned from all the departments under his ministry at 3:00pm yesterday. They discussed ways and means to increase the number of educational institutions or introduce double shifts.

HIDING WEALTH Sajeda's son, his wife sued

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against Awami League leader Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury's son Shahdab Akbar and his wife for concealing information of their assets and amassing wealth illegally.

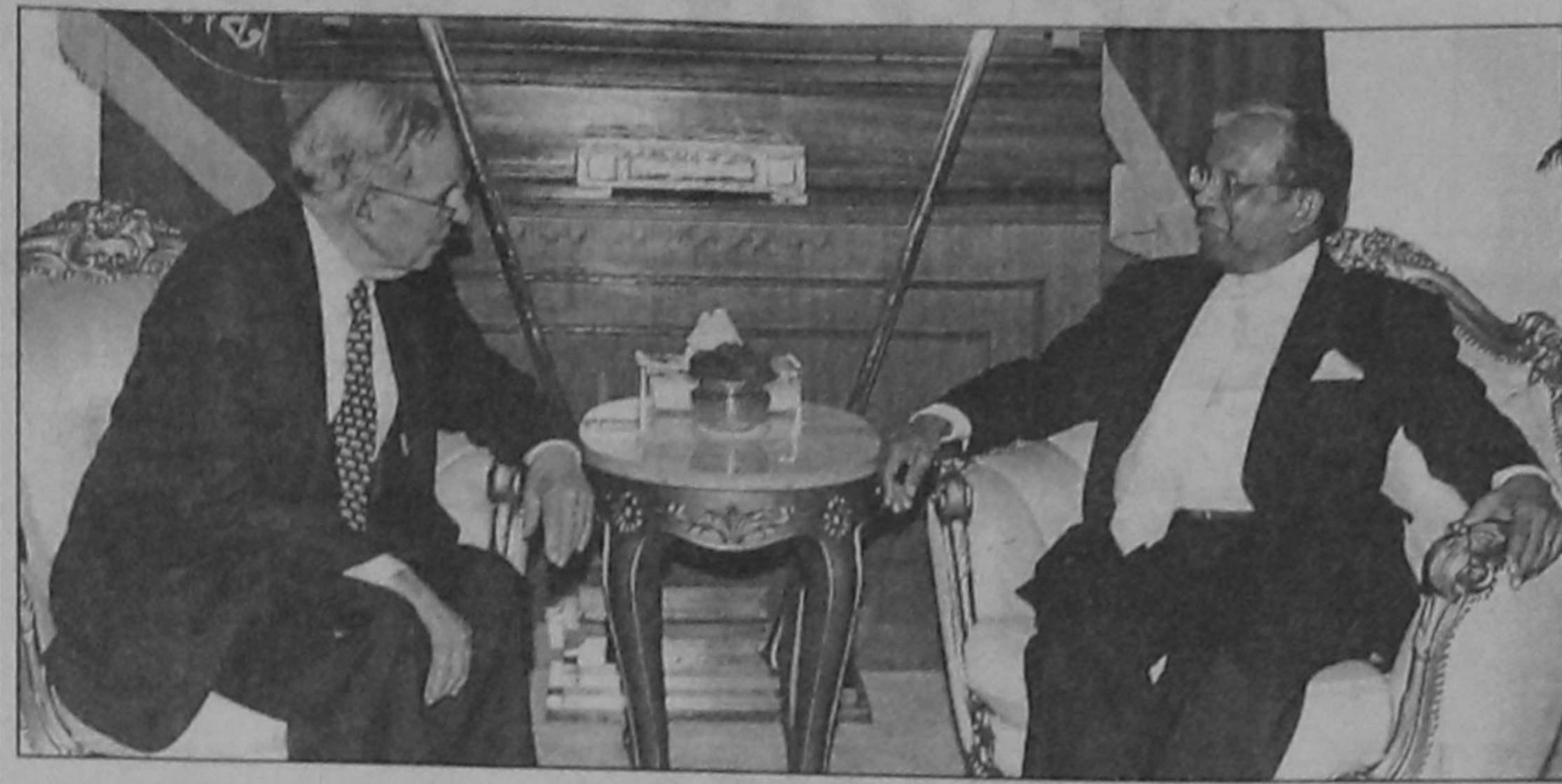
ACC Assistant Director Khairul Huda filed the case with Ramna Police Station, accusing Shahdab and his wife Shahnaz Khan of concealing information of assets worth about Tk 95.38 lakh and acquiring wealth worth over Tk 1.24 crore beyond their known sources of income.

The case was filed under sections 26(2) and 27(1) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004, section 109 of the Penal Code and section 15D(5) of the Emergency Power Rules, 2007.

The ACC served a notice on Shahdab on September 26 last year, asking him to come up with the accounts of assets in his name and that of his dependents. He complied with the ACC directive on October 10.

Meanwhile, the commission yesterday questioned five government officials of different departments in connection with the Niko case against detained former prime minister Khaleda Zia, former ministers Moudud Ahmed and AKM Mosharraf Hossain, and two others.

An ACC team questioned them and recorded their statements at the commission headquarters in Segunbagicha in the capital.



Former US Ambassador Howard Schaffer calls on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the latter's office in the city yesterday.

Progressive parties should unite to bring about meaningful changes

Says Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said all progressive political parties should unite to bring about meaningful changes in the country.

"Meaningful changes are needed to materialise the dreams of the Liberation War. So, we, all the progressive forces, especially liberal and open-minded political

parties, will have to forge unity," he said at a meeting in memory of Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, general secretary of Gono Forum.

"Unity should be forged on the basis of ideological values. Otherwise it would not be possible to achieve economic freedom. We should come forward to establish the people's power," he added.

Dr Kamal also called for upholding honest politics in order to achieve the goals of the liberation war.

Speaking on the occasion, Awami League Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed said political parties should follow the ideology of Saifuddin Ahmed Manik.

Prof Anisuzzaman, journalist Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury, Manik's wife Dr Fauzia Muslem and political leaders Amir Hossain Amu, Muzahidul Islam Selim and Delip Barua also spoke at the meeting held at the auditorium of the Institute of Engineers in the city.

Tk 30 lakh property gutted in fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Eleven shops, eight CNG-run auto rickshaws and valuables worth over Tk 30 lakh were gutted in a fire at Manshar Tek Bazar under Patiya Upazila in Chittagong early hours yesterday.

The fire spread fast and reduced to ashes the adjoining 11 shops, a garage and eight CNG-run auto rickshaws kept in the garage.

Two fire fighting units from Patiya Fire Station rushed to the spot and managed to extinguish the blaze at around 6:15am.

Fire Service and Civil Defence authority suspected the fire might be originated from mosquito coil.

TV confce of Japanese, Bangladeshi students held

A live television conference was held between students of city's Abdul Gafur Shikha Shibir School and Kitakoshigaya Primary School in Saitama yesterday.

School Sister Project (SSP) of Never ending International Work Camp Exchange (NICE) of Japan and BWCA (Bangladesh Work Camps Association) of Bangladesh organised the programme with the support of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The programme aimed at introducing the Japanese culture, life education to Bangladeshi primary-level students and vice versa.

Obituary

Kamal Uddin Ahmed, former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank, passed away due to old age complications at his residence in the city yesterday at the age of 70, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three sons and two daughters to mourn his death.

He was buried at Mirpur Buddhijibi Boro after namaz-e-janaza was at Ahmed Nagar in Mirpur.

His qulqhwani will be held at his residence at 304/3 Ahmed Nagar in Mirpur after Asr prayers on February 22.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the qulqhwani and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Syed Majharul Anwar

Syed Majharul Anwar (Taifur), a freedom fighter, of Kaitola village under Nobinagar upazila in Brahmanbaria, passed away at a city hospital on Monday at the age of 54, says a press release.

He left behind his son and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried with state honour at his family graveyard after namaz-e-janaza yesterday.

Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangad chairman, Dhaka city commander, Adm Muktiyoddhar Shontan president and general secretary expressed deep shock at his death and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Kanok Prova Ghosh

Kanok Prova Ghosh, mother of CPB Narayanjan district committee president Advocate Montu Ghosh, passed away due to old age complications yesterday at the age of 93, says press release.

She left behind her six sons, four daughters and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Bangladesh Students' Union and Bangladesh Garment Shramik Trade Union condoled her death.

Death anniversary

Today is the 8th death anniversary of Kazi Akram Hossain, former president of Bangladesh Chhatra Union and a freedom fighter, says a press release.

On the occasion, milad mahfil and memorial meeting will be held after Maghrib prayers at his wife's Baitul Aman Housing Society residence (Flat-4/B, House-348, Road-4) at Adabor in the city.

A memorial book will also be unveiled on the occasion.

Ataur Rahman Allahma

Today is the 20th death anniversary of Chowdhury Ataur Rahman Allahma, a freedom fighter and founder chairman of Mustafaa Allahma Goldcup Foundation, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his son's office in Dhaka and his village home Deulgram Allahmanagar of Golapganj in Sylhet.

Take steps to make Bangla official language of UN

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the government to take initiative to make Bangla an official language of the United Nations.

They also demanded steps to promote the use of Bangla in all spheres of life and called upon all to bring back the past glory of the mother language.

World Bengali Conference and Bangabandhu National Liberation Council jointly organised the discussion titled 'Language movement and the liberation war' at the National Press Club in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, Maj Gen (ret'd) KM Shafiullah expressed disappointment at the delay by the government in starting the trial of the war criminals.

He also vowed to continue their campaign against the war criminals until the trial begins.

He also said, "The language movement is our pride and we have to show respect to the Language Movement martyrs by using Bangla in all spheres of our life."

Col (ret'd) Abu Osman Chowdhury, language movement veteran Bahauddin Chowdhury and Mizanur Rahman Mizan also spoke.

APPOINTMENT OF LAW SECY

Status quo on HC judgment

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court yesterday issued status quo on operation of the High Court judgment that declared illegal the appointment of acting Law Secretary Kazi Habibul Awal.

Chamber court of Justice MA Matin passed the order following a stay petition filed by Awal and fixed February 26 for hearing the matter before the Appellate Division.

Awal moved the stay petition as he prefers leave to appeal against Monday's High Court judgment.

Lunar eclipse tomorrow

BSS, Dhaka

A total eclipse of the moon will occur on Feb 21.

The moon will enter penumbra at 06 hours 34 minutes 54 seconds BST and will leave penumbra at 12 hours 17 minutes 12 seconds BST, said an ISPR press release.

The moon will enter penumbra at 07 hours 42 minutes 54 seconds BST and will leave umbra at 11 hours 09 minutes 06 seconds BST.

The central eclipse will start at 09 hours 00 minutes 30 seconds BST and will end at 09 hours 51 minutes 30 seconds BST.

Middle of the eclipse will occur at 09 hours 26 minutes BST. The maximum magnitude of the eclipse will be 1.111.



Maj Gen (ret'd) KM Shafiullah speaks at a discussion on 'Language movement and the liberation war' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

DOUBLE MURDER CASE HC commutes death sentences of 5 convicts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday sentenced five convicts to life imprisonment who were earlier sentenced to death by a trial court in a double murder case in the capital.

The HC, however, acquitted 11 others who were also sentenced to death by the same trial court in connection with the case.

The HC bench comprising Judges Fazlur Rahman and Kamrul Islam Siddiqui handed down the verdict after examining and scrutinising the evidences and witnesses taken by the trial court.

The convicts, sentenced to life imprisonment, are Rahid Hasan Suman, Sharif, Nadim, Chhoto Ramjan and Basirul Islam alias Bidyut Roy.

Those acquitted are Sajid Hasan Sujjan, Ramjan, Boro Ripon, Mokter,

Nazrul, Sankar Rakshit, Mintu, Titu, Aziz, Anwar alias Anu and Jahangir. Mohsin and Sayem were killed at Murgitola in Gandaria on September 15, 2000.

The killers cut both the bodies into 12 pieces and dumped them into a manhole in a sack.

The case was filed with Sutrapur Police Station on September 16.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal sentenced 16 people to death on May 14, 2003.

The court also handed down life imprisonment to three other accused, seven years imprisonment to one for destroying evidence while acquitted 14 others as allegation against them could not be proved.

The trial court delivered the judgment after taking deposition of 40 witnesses including nine eyewitnesses including Munwara Begum, mother of Mohsin.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers with hail accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Khulna, Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Barisal, Noakhali and Comilla in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over country, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged night temperature over the country.

"Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning," it also said.

Highest temperature 29.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 12.6 degrees Celsius also at Jessore.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:56pm today and rises at 6:28am tomorrow.

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	27.3	18.5	83	87
Chittagong	-	17.5	89	-
Rajshahi	27.4	15.2	97	77
Khulna	29.0	18.2	92	66
Barisal	28.5	20.0	94	58
Sylhet	22.0	15.5	87	89
Cox's Bazar	27.8	17.9	78	77

Debapriya presents credentials to heads of UN agencies

Debapriya Bhattacharya, ambassador and permanent representative of Bangladesh in Geneva, concurrently accredited to the UN Offices and other international organisations in Vienna, presented his credentials to the organisations concerned on Monday, says a press release.

He presented the credentials to Antonio 'Maria Costa', director general, United Nations Office in Vienna (UNOV), Kandeh Yumkella, director general, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), Tibor Toth, executive secretary, CIBTO, and Ana Maria Cetto, deputy director general and head of Department of Technical Cooperation, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

During his meetings in Vienna, Debapriya apprised the director general of UNOV and other heads of UN agencies and international organisations about the reform initiatives taken by the Bangladesh government to strengthen democratic institutions, improve economic governance and establish the rule of law.

He discussed the challenges of preventing human trafficking, especially child trafficking, during his meeting with the director general of UNOV. They also discussed ways to strengthen activities to fight HIV/AIDS.

In his meeting with the director general of UNIDO, Debapriya stressed the need for result-oriented technical assistance targeted towards industrialisation and modernisation of the economy. They reviewed the country programme, which UNIDO is currently implementing in Bangladesh.

During his meeting with CIBTO executive secretary, they reviewed the progress of the establishment of the Auxiliary Seismic Station AS07 of the International Monitoring System (IMS) in Bangladesh.

They also discussed the modalities for utilising CIBTO data for early warning systems to prevent and mitigate damages caused by natural hazards.

Debapriya discussed the energy situation of Bangladesh with the deputy director general of IAEA and the next steps of cooperation for setting up the proposed nuclear power plant in Bangladesh.

The director general of UNOV and other heads recalled the important and substantive role played by Bangladesh in the UN system and expressed their strong desire to work constructively with the new Bangladesh envoy.

Watford Assoc donates Tk 3 lakh for Sidr victims

BSS, Dhaka

The Watford Bangladeshi Association (WBA), an association of expatriates living in Watford, UK, yesterday donated Tk 3 lakh for the Sidr-hit people of Bangladesh.

A six-member delegation, headed by association Secretary Mohammad Saiful Alam, handed over the cheque for the amount to Foreign Adviser Ittekhkar Ahmed Chowdhury at his office.



AHM Noman speaks at a view exchange meeting on 'Social harmony and rights' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are former adviser to the caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan and Osman Gani. Darp organised the event.

DHAKA TODAY

Conference

The inaugural ceremony of the first international conference on lung health, organised by Bangladesh Lung Foundation, will be held. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 7:30pm.

Discussion

Eastern University organises a discussion on 'The Martyrs Day and International Mother Language Day'. Venue: Eastern University auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of the book 'Amader Muktiyuddha' by Mohammad Aminur Rahman Khan will be held. Venue: Scouts Bhaban. Time: 3:30pm.

Policy workshop

Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) organises a policy workshop on regulatory reform needs of the SME sector. Venue: LGED auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Bilingual book

The launching ceremony of the bilingual book (English and Japanese) 'Essays on International Mother Language Day' will be held. Venue: Birshrestha Munshi Abdur Rouf Rifles College ground. Time: 11:00am.

BEI discussion

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) organises a discussion on 'The future of the RMG and textile sector. Making Bangladesh more competitive'. Venue: BEI conference room. Time: 3:30pm.

Book launching

The launching ceremony of the book 'Remember I Sang', a collection of translations of Tagore's poems and songs by Moyeenul Alam, will be held. Venue: University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh. Time: 4:00pm.

Rally

Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO will hold a rally to mark the International Mother Language Day 2008. Venue: Commission office, Nikhet. Time: 8:30am.

Seminar

North South University Alumni Association organises a seminar on 'Expectations of telecom companies from fresh graduate'. Venue: NSU campus. Time: 3:00pm.

Procession

Bangladesh Cultural Workers Association will hold a decorative procession to mark the International Mother Language Day 2008. Venue: TSC, Dhaka University. Time: 10:00am.