

# Build Ganges Barrage to increase river navigability

## Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion meeting yesterday stressed the need for implementing the long-proposed Ganges Barrage Project in order to increase river navigability in south-western region and save the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world.

The meeting titled 'Save the river: Save the country' was organised by Nodi Sangkar, Pani Shasan O Byabohar Sangram Parishad, Bangladesh (NPSOBSPB), an organisation working for developing water resources, at the Institute of Diploma Engineers Bangladesh (IDEB) auditorium in the city.

The meeting put forward an eight-point demand including reforms of rivers, haors, baors and beels in planned ways, preservation of rain water for dry season, rehabilitation of the victims of river erosion, stoppage of using ground water and freeing the rivers from illegal occupation.

Speaking as chief discussant at the meeting, Awami League (AL)

Presidium Member and former Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak said, "If the Ganges Barrage is not built, water that flows down from the Farakka cannot be channelled through other rivers of the country, and as a result, the Sundarbans and the Gori project will be damaged, and at least three crore people in the region will be displaced from their homes."

He said if the AL is again voted to power in the next general election, it will build the Ganges Barrage on priority basis in order to increase the flow of water in different rivers and canals of the region.

"The AL is a pro-people organisation, and it never hesitates to take any initiative for the interest of people. If the projects, undertaken during the period of Sheikh Hasina-led government, were implemented, the problems would not have arisen now. The previous four-party alliance government suspended all those projects," he added.

The AL leader said if human and water resources of the country are

properly utilised, 70 percent of its problems would be solved very easily.

"Human and water resources are two main assets of Bangladesh, and if these are properly utilised like China, Bangladesh will become a rich country in the world," he said, adding that the use of ground water will have to be stopped by enacting laws.

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) Secretary General and former state minister Major (ret'd) MA Mannan said steps will have to be taken to stop river erosion and flood, and preserve water for dry season to avoid any serious disaster.

NPSOBSPB member-secretary Md Tariquzzaman Reza presented a written statement at the meeting.

Presided over by NPSOBSPB Convener SM Shahadat Hossain Hamza, the meeting was also addressed by former Navy Chief Rear Admiral (ret'd) Abu Taher, and water resources experts Dr Zahirul Islam, engineer Asaduzzaman and Abdul Aziz.

## Low over Bay

UNB, Dhaka

The well-marked low over north-east Bay and Myanmar coast moved slightly northwards and persisted there until yesterday morning.

"Under its influence, deep convection is taking place over north Bay," said a Met office bulletin.

Squally weather is likely to continue over north Bay and may affect the maritime ports of the country.

Maritime ports of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal number three.

All fishing boats and trawlers over north Bay have been advised to remain close to the coast and "proceed with caution until further notice".

## Bangladeshi executed in Saudi Arabia

AFP, Dubai

A Bangladeshi man was beheaded in Saudi Arabia yesterday after being condemned to death for murdering a Saudi national in a dispute over money, the kingdom's interior ministry announced.

Juman Hussein Jaleddin was executed by the sword for stabbing and then cutting the throat of Yahia Bin Awadh al-Mohammad, the ministry said in a statement carried by the official SPA news agency.

The killer tried to cover up his crime by hiding the body on a farm.

## Three die as autorickshaw falls into river from ferry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Three people were killed as an auto-rickshaw fell into the river from a ferry yesterday at Jagannathpur upazila in Sunamganj district.

The deceased were identified as Mokbulnesa, 60, and her daughter-in-law Shoma Begum of Keshobpur village and Mainul Huda, 8, of Hargram village in the upazila.

Mokbulnesa's sister Muktaranesa was admitted into the Jagannathpur Upazila Health Complex.

Police and local sources said the incident took place at about 10:30am as the driver of the three-wheeler with five passengers lost his control over the vehicle and fell from the manually-driven ferry into the Naljur river.

## Release of Hasina demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of Awami League, yesterday observed the Homecoming Day of Sheikh Hasina amid procession and protest rally demanding her immediate and unconditional release.

Leaders and activists of BCL took out a procession and held a protest rally on Dhaka University (DU) campus to press home their demand.

AL President Hasina returned to Dhaka on May 17 in 1981 ending her self-exiled life in abroad.

At the protest rally, BCL leaders demanded Hasina's release before holding formal dialogues and general election, saying that without Hasina, they will not accept any sort of dialogues with the government or elections in the country.

Besides, they also demanded removal of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury for his participation in an anti-corruption rally along with an identified criminal, also a word commissioner of Patia municipality, in Chittagong.

## Sangbad marks 58th founding anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 58th founding anniversary of the Sangbad, the oldest national daily of the country, was observed yesterday at a simple ceremony at its Purana Paltan office in the city.

Sangbad members Dr Mokbulkar Rahman, Dr ARM Debnath and Barrister Nihad Kabir, Managing Editor Kashem Humayun, Senior Assistant Editor Muniruzzaman, Joint News Editor Abdur Rahman, Chief Reporter Salam Zubayer, Senior Reporter Kalyan Saha and Assistant Editor Shobnom Ayesha Mustari were present at the founding anniversary programme.

Paying tribute to the departed soul of founding editor of the Sangbad Ahmadul Kabir and its editor Bazlur Rahman, they expressed their commitment of working for the daily with more sincerity.



Winners of "Aktel Debate Championship-2008" at school and university level contests pose for photograph with the guests at the closing ceremony at Theatre Institute of Chittagong auditorium yesterday.

## AKTEL DEBATE CHAMPIONSHIP '08

## Cider School, NSU clinch titles

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Cider International School and North South University clinched the coveted championship titles at the school and university level contests at the final round of the debate competition titled 'Aktel Debate Championship-2008' here yesterday.

Noted economist Dr Atiur Rahman was present at the prize giving ceremony as the chief guest at Theatre Institute of Chittagong auditorium with Drishty Chittagong Adviser Bilkis Rashed in the chair.

Aktel Head of Corporate Affairs Javed Tariq, Editor of Star Campus Shahnoor Wahid, former president of Bangladesh Debate Federation Bulbul Hasan and Drishty Chittagong Adviser Safia Gazi Rahman were present on the occasion as the guests of honour.

Drishty, an educational and cultural organisation, organised the English Debate competition which was sponsored by Aktel, one of leading mobile phone operators in the country. Star Campus, a weekly supplement of The Daily Star, was the media partner.

Dr Atiur said democracy could not be properly developed in the country in the last few years since leaders and politicians failed to establish the parliament as the proper centre of making policy through healthy debates.

"Practice of debate from school and college levels would help the young generation to be the future parliamentarians, while it teaches

them to learn the art of asking, arguing and respecting opponents as well as expanding their mental horizon," he observed.

Termining English language as the 'gateway to world knowledge' Dr Atiur emphasised on mastering the language to face the present global challenges.

He also called on the students to study Bangla language properly side by side English to become familiar with the enriched national history, heritage and identity.

Javed Tariq hoped that Aktel will continue to cooperate in organising such competitions as it believe in enlightenment through education.

Shahnoor Wahid said The Daily Star always encourages the students in engaging in extra-curricular activities like debate, as it increases their depth of knowledge, makes them skilled in public speaking and interacting with their counterparts.

The topic of the school-level competition was 'Bangladesh is gradually walking backwards'. Cider International defeated Bay View School in the run.

Malhi Ahmed Chowdhury of the losing team was adjudged the best debater in the school-level competition.

Team B of North South University and Stamford University became champion and runners-up respectively in the World's Model debate (British Parliamentary style) on the topic 'Capitalism is hangover from the history'.

Sinha Ibne Humayun of NSU was adjudged the best debater at the university-level competition.

However, Shafkat Fahmid was adjudged the best debater at the 'Best Debater Selection Round' where seven selected debaters from seven schools participated in United Nations model debates.

The topic was 'United Nations is the main solution to establish peace in the world'.

A total of 12 English medium schools including Cider International School, Bay View School, Sunshine Grammar School, Child Heaven School, Chittagong Grammar School, Radiant School, Standard School, European Grammar School, Independent School, Cantonment English School, GEMS English Medium School and Chittagong Sunshine School participated in the competition.

The participating universities were Chittagong University (CU), Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet), North South University (NSU), University of Science and Technology, Chittagong (USTC), Independent University Bangladesh (IUB), Premier University, Stamford University and International Islamic University of Chittagong (IIUC).

Two teams from CU and NSU participated in the competition.

Drishty President Masud Bakul and General Secretary Saif Chowdhury were also present at the programme conducted by Bangladesh Debate Federation Joint Secretary Adnan Mannan.

## Allow offshore campuses

## Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called for formulating a policy allowing reputed foreign universities to set up their campuses in the country.

They said setting up campuses of foreign universities in the country would provide an opportunity to Bangladeshi students to acquire international degrees by studying at home.

While thousands of Bangladeshi students are studying abroad for Australian, American and British degrees, the government still couldn't formulate a policy on setting up offshore campuses in the country, which could have saved a lot of foreign currency, they added.

The seminar titled 'Development through education: Opportunities in Bangladesh and

Pakistan' was organised by the University and Industry Alliance (U&I Alliance), a management and development consultant affiliated with Dhaka University (DU), at Radisson Water garden Hotel in the city.

Chaired by Prof GM Chowdhury, president of U&I Alliance, the inaugural session of the seminar was addressed by Prof Dr SMA Faiz, vice-chancellor of DU, Alamgir Babar, high commissioner of Pakistan in Dhaka, and Nasreen Mahmud Kasuri, founder of the Beaconhouse School System.

Dr Faiz said collaboration with other countries, particularly with the ones in the region, is the one way to receive quality education and attract investment in this sector.

He said given the many commonalities between Bangladesh and Pakistan, bilateral cooperation has much potential and many facets yet to be explored and exploited to the full.

Speaking at the seminar, Alamgir Babar announced that Pakistan government would provide 35 fully-funded additional

scholarships for Bangladeshi students over the next two academic years in different disciplines.

"Friendly countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan need to share and fully leverage their academic and educational resources to stay relevant and competitive in the prevailing environment," he added.

Nasreen Mahmud Kasuri said the Saarc countries experience quite identical challenges and issues, therefore, the availability of innumerable inter-regional collaboration opportunities need to be effectively explored so that an inter-regional environment of research and reflection can be established.

Prof GM Chowdhury said globalisation of education, including cross-border education, has drastically changed fee structure, knowledge dissemination mode, and degree awarding criteria by the academic institutions.

For instance, one can obtain a degree from a British university by studying in its off-shore campuses in Malaysia or China, he added.

## Singu Chuli peak expedition starts May 24

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six Bangladeshi mountaineers will embark on an expedition to Singu Chuli peak (21,328 feet) of the Himalayan range on May 24.

This will be by far the hardest expedition for the six members of Bangla Mountaineering and Trekking Club (BMTTC), said club founder Enam Ul Haque at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday.

Nishat Mazumder will lead the expedition team comprising Sajal Khaled, MA Mohit, Nur Mohammad, Riaz Ahmed and Walid Ashraf.

This will be the fourth expedition to a Himalayan peak for the trekking club members. Earlier, they climbed the Fray peak, Cullu Westpeak and Mera peak.

Enam said, "The club started mountaineering programme in 2004. Trekking in the Himalayas is possible only in two months a year in the Himalayas -- in May and September -- and we carried out expedition programme in both the seasons."

"The objective of this expedition is to gain more experience so that we can climb the Everest peak in the near future," he added.

Former adviser to the caretaker government Sultana Kamal handed over a national flag to the team leader, which will be hoisted at the Singu Chuli peak.

GMG airlines and Swiss Bakery are the sponsors of the expedition programme.

## Int'l AIDS Candlelight Memorial Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 25th International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Day will be observed today as elsewhere across the globe in memory of the people died of the disease and wishing long life for the people affected.

More than 170 countries across the globe observe the day of the 3rd week of May every year to show empathy towards the people affected with HIV/AIDS and to pay tribute to those who have expired already.

Expressing solidarity with the international initiatives different organisations including CCD Bangladesh and its partner organisations -- Bangladesh Advance Students Alliance, Women Empowerment Network, Rajshahi Jubo Nagonik Forum and Group of Liberal Debaters will organise different programmes to mark the day.



Six Bangladeshi mountaineers pose for photograph with the guests at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are Enam Ul Haque, Sultana Kamal and Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid.

## 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED

## 'Film Archive needs to have own building'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Filmmakers yesterday stressed the need for Bangladesh Film Archive to have its own building in order to properly preserve the celluloid culture and heritage.

As the archive has been housed in a rented building, many filmmakers would feel reluctant to submit the prints of their films due to the risk of the prints being lost or damaged, they said at a reunion celebrating the 30th founding anniversary of the Film Archive.

The Film Archive in association with the information ministry organised the event at Begum Sufia Kamal Auditorium of the National Museum.

Speaking on the occasion, renowned filmmaker Tareque Masud suggested renaming the post of the chief of Bangladesh Film Archive as 'curator', which is now called 'director general'.

"This post is not for the administrative people. The person who has a genuine love for film deserves this post," he said.

He also said it is a matter of irony that those who are making vulgar films are leading the anti-vulgar film movement.

Speaking as the chief guest, Education and Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said it is time to focus on the cultural sector alongside the political and economic reforms in order to project a new image of the country in the international arena.

Information Secretary Jamil Osman said the government has a plan to set up a film institute and that the formulation of the

organogram of the institute is almost complete.

Renowned filmmaker Suvash Dutt and Director General of Bangladesh Film Archive Jahangir Hossain also spoke.

## 'Take steps against corrupt people at dist, UZ levels'

UNB, Dhaka

Convenor of Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) Dr Ferdous Ahmed Qureshi yesterday urged the government to take immediate steps against top corrupt elements at the district and upazila levels before the elections.

"Take actions against the corrupt elements at the district and upazila levels, or else, they would capture the top political and economic positions at the national level by using their arms and black money," he told a press conference at his party office.

The press conference was arranged to express the party's view about the country's current political situation and give its formal reaction to the CA's address to the nation.

He said the government could set an example by taking steps against the top corrupt people at the district and upazila levels alongside its ongoing drive against the national level corrupt elements.

Qureshi hailed the chief adviser's May 12 address to the nation saying that it has reflected the people's expectations. "It was very suggestive for the nation."



## Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

It also said that day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period. Met Office said.

Highest temperature 38.1 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sathkira and lowest 23.5 degrees Celsius at Sandvip.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:35pm today and rises at 5:14am 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	34.7	26.0	77	76
Chittagong	30.0	24.3	80	90
Rajshahi	33.4	24.5	75	--
Khulna	37.0	29.0	77	--
Barisal	35.2	24.6	83	93
Sylhet	33.2	26.7	80	63
Cox's Bazar	31.4	24.7	74	93

## Only constitution should be national charter

Political leaders tell BBC Sanglap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Formulation of a national charter would not be successful if it is either imposed or tagged with conditions. Only the constitution should be the national charter.

Panelists, including political leaders, said this at the BBC Bangladesh Sanglap yesterday.

There is no need to formulate any national charter if there is a consensus among the political parties on the national issues, code of conduct and a functional political system, they added.

The panelists included Awami League organising secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury, BNP joint secretary general Nazrul Islam Khan, President of Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) Maj Gen (ret'd) ANM Muniruzzaman and Barrister Tania Ameer.

BBC Bangla Service in conjunction with the BBC World Service Trust organised the Sanglap at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital. Kamal Ahmed of BBC Bangla Service moderated it.

Replying to a question, both Saber and Nazrul said the presence of two party chiefs -- Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia -- at the dialogue between the political parties and the government is vital to make the talks a success. Otherwise the dialogue would not be fruitful, they added.

"The constitution should be the only charter if we think of a national charter," said Saber, also the political secretary to AL President Sheikh Hasina.

He said there should be an understanding among the political parties on functional political system and code of conduct in order to get rid of violence-prone politics.

Nazrul said steps should be taken to create a better environment to get rid of hartal and parliament boycott programme.

He said the Chief Adviser in his address to the nation has imposed a number of conditions, but it is not possible to implement all what he has mentioned before December.

If the proposed national charter is formulated in consultation with all political parties, the people can accept it, said Maj Gen (ret'd) Muniruzzaman.

Tania Ameer said it is not possible to formulate any national charter through legal process.

Replying to another question, Saber said Hasina must be released to give her a chance to take part in the dialogue to make it fruitful.

Nazrul said the presence of two party chiefs in the talks is a must for making the election credible and the dialogue fruitful.

About the move for reunification of the BNP, he said positive developments are taking place. "We will get the final results soon as the other faction has become non-existent technically," he said, adding that Awami League's unity is helping reunite BNP.

## Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Jamil Jamshed Azad (Adit), son of eminent poet Alauddin Al Azad, passed away due to cancer at his residence in the city yesterday at the age of 42.

He left behind his three children, wife and parents to mourn his death.

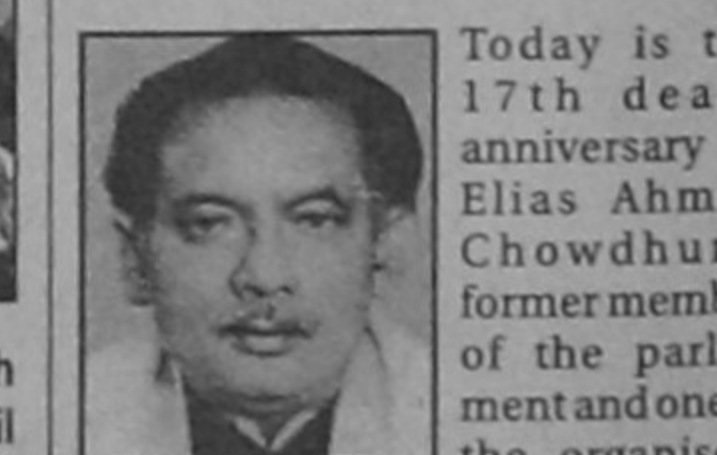
He was buried at Azimpur graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at a mosque at Sector 7, Uttara after Asr prayers.

## Anowara Mannan

Anowara Mannan, a poet and writer of Aparajita and Anar and wife of late Shah Abdul Mannan, passed away at Ibne Sina Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 86, says a press release.

She left a sister, four sons, three daughters, five sons-in-laws and grandchildren to mourn her death.

## Death anniversary

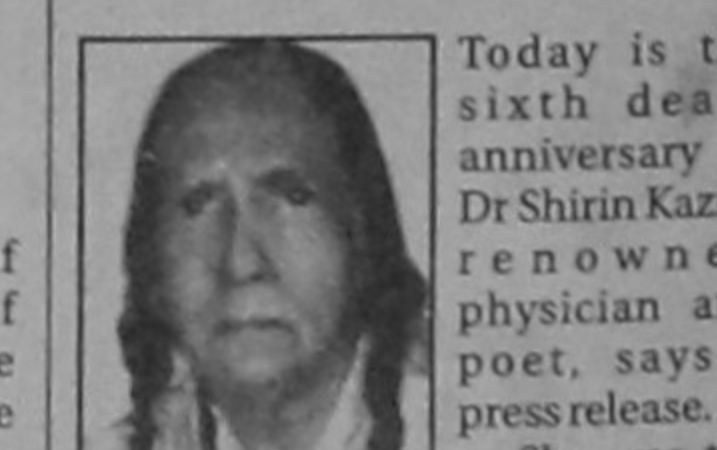


Today is the 17th death anniversary of Elias Ahmed Chowdhury, former member of the parliament and one of the organisers

of the Liberation War, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at Dattapara mosque after Asr prayers.

## Dr Shirin Kazi



Today is the sixth death anniversary of Dr Shirin Kazi, a renowned physician and poet, says a press release.

She was the first Bengali Muslim to obtain DRCOG degree from Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in Britain in 1950 and received Coronation Award from Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

Her ancestral home is in Gopalpur village in Kalkini, Madaripur.

## Private universities need fund of Tk 1000cr for development

BSS, Dhaka

University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam

yesterday said a Tk 1,000 crore fund could be floated for development of infrastructures and other facilities of private universities in the country.

"As the government provides various supports including land and money for development of the industry sector, a big fund amounting to Tk 1,000 crore could be floated for private universities to

ensure better education there," he said at a seminar on better education at the Cirdap auditorium.

Prof Nazrul Islam said UGC has already proposed formulation of a service rule for the teachers of private universities, especially to ensure their salaries at standard levels.

"The strategy to further develop our public and private universities has already been prepared and now we have to implement it properly for coveted results in the education sector," Prof Nazrul said.

Founder Vice-chancellor of East West University Prof Mohammad Farashuddin spoke as the designated speaker while Vice-chancellor of Eastern University Prof Rahim B Talukder moderated the seminar, organised by Dhaka Language Club.

He suggested dialogues between education providers and entrepreneurs, who have been engaged in creating skilled manpower through private universities in the country.