

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Raise teachers' salary to attract meritorious persons

Educationists urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers' salary at primary level, especially in non-government primary schools, will have to be raised to ensure quality education by attracting meritorious persons to this profession, said the educationists at a view-exchange meeting yesterday.

They urged the caretaker government to increase budgetary allocation for primary education as talented people will not be encouraged to become primary school teachers without enhanced salary.

The meeting was organised by Bangladesh Non-government

Primary Teachers Association at the National Press Club in the capital.

The primary teachers also demanded nationalisation of their job before the next national budget.

Speaking as chief guest, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said the existing 11-type primary education has created discrimination in the society, which is not desirable in an independent democratic country.

"Handsomeness salary will have to be provided for talented teachers. Otherwise, quality education at primary level cannot be ensured," he added.

Former education minister Dr Osman Faruk said brilliant and talented people are avoiding the career of primary school teachers due to poor salary causing a downside in the quality of education at the first stage of learning process.

Major General (ret'd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury said bright students do not want to start their career as primary school teachers, and those who accepted the career believing that it is a noble profession, do not continue it for long because a government primary school teacher is paid less than the salary of an upper division clerk of

a government office.

"To improve the quality of teaching, a teacher has to adopt various methods for easy understanding of the students. Only meritorious persons can do that job but they are not interested in the profession because of poor salary," said Economist Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad.

Presided over by Shamsul Alam, president of the association, the meeting was also addressed by association Secretary General Megendra Mohan Saha, politician Kader Siddique and primary teachers from different parts of the country.

61pc indigenous people face discrimination

Sample survey reveals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A survey on 332 indigenous people shows about 61 per cent of them are discriminated against in different ways while 76 per cent fall victim to violence and threats.

The findings of the survey conducted by Dhaka University teachers Prof Dr Nazrul Islam and Prof Dr Asif Nazrul under a project of Bangladesh Manobadhikar Bastobayan Sangstha, were revealed at a discussion meeting at the WVA auditorium in the capital yesterday.

The survey was conducted on 332 indigenous people in Jessore, Mymensingh, Chapainabwaganj, Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Pabna, Rangamati, Sylhet and indigenous students of Dhaka University between March and April last year under the project Strengthening Human Rights Support through Enhancing Access to Justice for

Vulnerable Groups and Advocacy for Reform.

The findings showed about 18.67 per cent of them were evicted from their ancestral land. Besides, 6.02 per cent participants in the survey believe that justice cannot be ensured by court while 5.72 per cent of them are ignorant about legal process.

The speakers at the meeting said most indigenous people are not aware of the laws that guarantee their rights. Besides, human rights organisations also fail to reach out to the victims who badly need their legal support, they said.

Member of the national com-

mittee of Manobadhikar Bastobayan Sangstha Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelly, who presided over the meeting, said the government should formulate and implement new policies to ensure the rights of indigenous people.

Executive director of the organisation advocate Elina Khan said coordination among the organisations working for the welfare of indigenous people is very important to provide them with necessary assistance.

Representatives of different organisations that provide legal support for indigenous people were also present.

European Commission supports trial of war criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Commission yesterday agreed, in principle, with the demand for trial of war criminals of 1971 at a meeting with Sector Commanders' Forum (SCF).

An SCF delegation led by its President Air Vice Marshall (Ret'd) AK Khandker met Stefan Frowein, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of European Commission (EC), at his office in the city, says an SCF press release.

"We support the matter of trying the war criminals, in principle, the press release quoted Frowein as telling the SCF delegation.

"Because, the trial of war criminals and those who committed crimes against humanity is linked with the establishment of democracy and human rights," he said.

AK Khandker told The Daily Star that they told Frowein "The European Union upholds human rights around the world and we hope you support our demand for justice and trial of war criminals here."

The other members of the delegation were Maj Gen (Ret'd) KM Shafiqullah, Maj Gen (Ret'd) CR Dutta, Maj (Ret'd) Rafiqul Islam, and SCF Convener Lt Gen (Ret'd) Harun-Ar Rashid.

'Liberation war, mass upheaval should be base of nat'l charter'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) at a meeting yesterday said national unity created during the liberation war and mass upheaval in '90 should be the base of the national charter proposed by the chief adviser (CA) in his address to the nation, says a press release.

The CA's call for consensus among political parties in some issues with a view to forming the national charter are unnecessary, they added.


The meeting was presided over by BSD President Kahleuzzaman at Shaheed Tajul Auruzzaman of Moni Singh-Farhad Trust Bhaban at Paltan in the city.

They said the country got its constitution in '72 based on the liberation war that reflects the aspirations of people of all walks of life.

Ln Shahjahan governor of District 315 B-2

Ln Engr M Shahjahan Khadem has been elected district governor of the District 315 B-2, Bangladesh of Lions Clubs International yesterday, says a press release.

He is the chairman of Voluntary Organisation Bangladesh 2000 and a former government official.

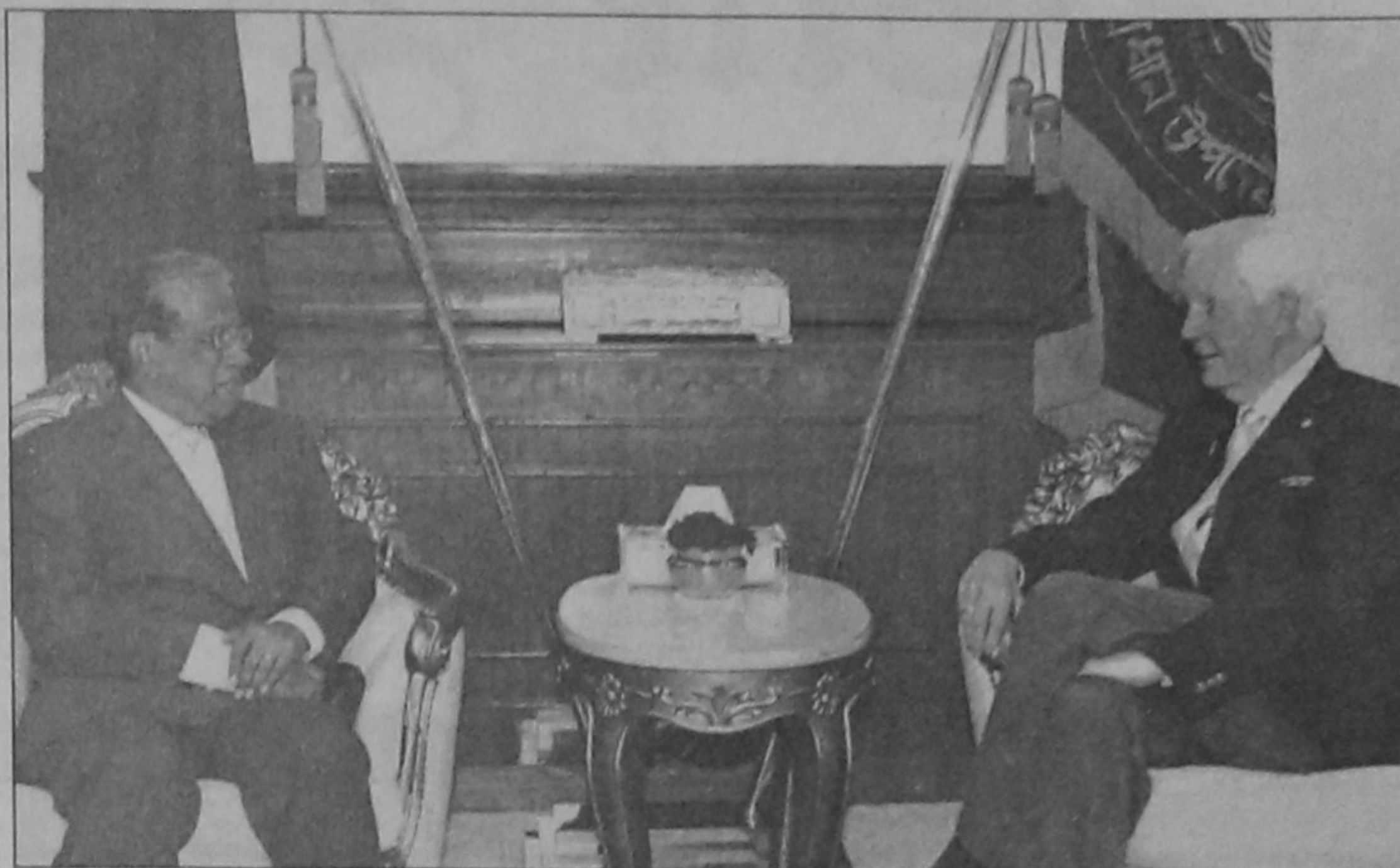


Ln Engr M Shahjahan Khadem
has been elected district governor of the District 315 B-2, Bangladesh of Lions Clubs International yesterday, says a press release.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar
Liver Foundation of Bangladesh organises a seminar to mark the World Hepatitis Day. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Reception
The Scholars Forum will accord a reception to the students who got scholarships in class VIII in 2007. Venue: Supreme Court Bar Association auditorium. Time: 9:00am.



Rotary International President Wilfred J Wilkinson calls on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the latter's office in the city yesterday.

Experts against privatisation of community, union clinics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of health experts yesterday opposed the government's decision to lease around 516 community and union clinics to different private healthcare organisations, service delivery contractors and non-government organisations.

If the public healthcare centres go to the private sector, it would hinder poor people's access to the healthcare services in the country, they said at a press conference titled 'Leasing the public health services: Effect on public health' at the National Press Club in the city.

If the resources of crores of taka of public health sector go to the hands of different groups in the name of privatisation, it would ultimately commercialise the healthcare services, they added.

Organised under the banner of 'Health Professional Society for the sake of the citizens', the speakers said it would also deprive those who donated five decimal of land to establish community clinics in order to get free primary healthcare services.

New act should be formulated to ensure accountability and control over private hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centres, experts said.

While presenting the keynote paper, Prof Rashid E Mahub said leasing the public health system should be stopped immediately.

"At the same time, a national and local committee should be formed in collaboration with the government and people to run an autonomous public health system," he said, adding that corruption of different donor agencies in health sector should be investigated and their suggestions that go against public interest should be rejected.

The main problem in public health sector is mismanagement which should be stopped immediately and it is not wise to blame doctors for the present situation of the total healthcare system and also to privatise it, said Prof Nazmun Nahar, child specialist of BirDEM Hospital, adding that the government in any way cannot avoid the responsibility of poor

people's right to get healthcare services.

The experts demanded the government to ensure healthcare services at a minimum cost and availability of the equipment in the public hospitals, to increase budget allocation and to root out corruption at every level.

From 1998 to 2001, some 11,500 community clinics were established with a view to providing primary healthcare and family planning services to the villagers. For 6,000 people, there is only one community clinic that remains inoperative since the BNP-led four-party alliance regime.

Health and family welfare ministry invited a tender on April 21 to lease 378 community clinics and 138 union clinics at 15 upazilas of Bhola, Cox's Bazar, Sherpur, Shatkhira, Lalmonirhat and Sunamganj districts.

Prof Ruhul Haque, Dr Sharfuddin Ahmed of BSMMU, Dr Abdul Matin, Dr Moshak Hossain and Dr Arman Khan also took part in conference.

Hasina indicted, trial starts May 21

FROM PAGE 1

approved the proposal for setting up the large-mounted power plant after it was scrutinised by different committees of her government.

"Everything of this project was done very transparently. The concerned minister was not charged in this case. But I was made an accused," she said.

Hasina also said at the beginning of the AL government led by her in 1996, the country's total electricity production was only 1,600MW and at the end in 2001 the total production rose to 4,300MW.

"After my government, the subsequent governments could not add a single megawatt of electricity to the national grid. If the Awami League government could continue, electricity production would be 7,000MW now and there would be no deficit of electricity," she said.

Hasina said she is the daughter of Bangabandhu who was elected prime minister and president of the country, but her family members had not piled property by abusing power.

At a stage the judge told Hasina this court thinks her [Hasina] innocent and the prosecution will have to prove the charges during trial.

Hasina however told the judge the court is not independent and neutral.

"If you were independent and neutral, you would have really thought me innocent and exonerated me from the charges. But

there is pressure on you. You cannot deliver justice," she said.

Prosecution lawyer advocate Sharfuddin Ahmed Khan Mukul told newspapers if the charges against Hasina were proved, she would be sentenced to maximum 12 years' imprisonment and be disqualified from contesting the polls.

"The people made Sheikh Hasina prime minister of the country for serving them. But she had committed corruption while she was in state power. We have proved that Sheikh Hasina and the other accused took Tk 3 crore in the name of setting up the large-mounted power plant and the court examining the documents, materials and evidence framed charges against all the accused," he said.

He said the court is functioning independently.

Defence lawyer Barrister Shaifque Ahmed said they have filed petitions with the court for discharging the charges against the accused as there was no evidence, materials or documents of taking bribe by them in the First Information Report (FIR) and charge sheet.

The court rejected the petitions and we have become surprised at the court order," he added.

Hasina and another accused Dr Toufik-e-Elahi Chowdhury were produced before the court amid tight security at 9:50am yesterday. The court started proceedings of the case reading out the charges against the accused.

ACC Deputy Director Sabir Hasan filed the case with Tejaon Police Station on September 2. The case said Hasina and the six others, through their mutual understanding and using their influence, helped a foreign company and its local partners win a deal for setting up the 100MW large-mounted power plant and thus deprived the lowest bidder.

The case was filed under Sections 161, 163, 164, 165, 165 (a)/109 of the Penal Code and 5 (2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947. Later, ACC brought the case under Emergency Power Rules. If the charges are proved, the accused face sentences ranging from life term to one-year imprisonment.

Investigation officer ACC Deputy Director Moshad Alam submitted the charge sheet to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka on January 10.

In addition to the seven accused in the FIR earlier, the name of Bangabandhu Memorial Trust (BMT) curator Sayed Siddique Rahman was also included in the charge sheet.

The other accused are former energy secretary Dr Toufik-e-Elahi Chowdhury, former Power Development Board chairman Noor Uddin Mahmud Kamal, Managing Director of Summit Industries and Mercantile Corporation Private Ltd Aziz Khan and Director Farid Khan, United Group Chairman Hasan Mahmud Raja and Director Abul Kalam Azad.

HC stays injunction on function of SCBA secretary

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday stayed for three days operation of an ad-interim injunction by the lower court directing newly elected Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) Secretary Advocate Nurul Islam Sujon not to continue his function.

Passing the interim order of stay, upon a petition filed by Sujon, the HC issued rule upon the respondent to explain why the temporary injunction order "should not be quashed".

It fixed May 22 for hearing on the petition.

On May 12, the 9th Asstt Judge's Court, following a civil suit filed by Barrister Abdullah Al Mamun, who was declared defeated after a recount of votes, passed the ad-interim injunction.

The lower court also issued a show cause notice upon nine defendants, including Sujon, in connection with the results of the SCBA election held April 28-29.

Youth found dead in Wasa pond

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the floating body of an unknown youth from a Wasa pond at Shyampur in the city yesterday.

Locals informed the police after finding the body of the youth age about 30 who retrieved it and sent to Mitford Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Several marks of bruise were seen in his body.

13 criminals held in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirteen alleged criminals were arrested in separate drives at Pallabi and Kafur area in the city yesterday.

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) early yesterday arrested seven alleged robbers from Kafur in the city and recovered firearms and ammunitions from their possession.

The arrestees are Mohammad Hanif, 40, Alamgir Hossain, 24, Mahim Bhuiyan, 20, Sumon Kazi, 28, Mohammad Anwar, 25, Milon Sheikh, 19, Lal Miah, 28.

Rab said they also seized a pistol, two magazines, 32 rounds of bullet, eight knives, a chapatti from their possession.

Meanwhile, the detective branch (DB) of police arrested six members of another gang of criminals from Pallabi and Kafur area in the city.

The arrestees are Mohammad Akram, Billal, Mamun, Farid, Suman, and Rabiul.

Christian Assoc demands punishment to killer rapist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Christian Association demanded punishment of the culprits who have raped a mother and her daughter and killed the daughter at South Vadati village under Kaliganj upazila in Gazipur on April 30.

In a statement president and secretary general of the association urged the intervention of the chief adviser and the army chief to arrest and punish the culprits.

They said the incident has created anxiety among the minority community people of the country. They also sought compensation for the family of the victims.

Death anniversary

Today is the 56th death anniversary of Prof QAIM Nuruddin, a pioneer in communication and journalism education in Bangladesh, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at Rajuati Saleheen Madrasa and Orphanage at Fatullah in the city after Asr prayers and food will be distributed to orphans after Zohr prayers.

Gazi Rafia Khatun

Today is the 1st death anniversary of Gazi Rafia Khatun, says a press release.

Rafia died a year ago at the age of 92, leaving behind five sons and five daughters to mourn her death.

To observe the day, special prayers and milled mahfil will be offered at the Gazi Bhaban auditorium at Naya Paltan in the city after Esha prayers.

Friends, well-wishers and relatives have been requested to join the prayers.

5000 phones inoperative for cable theft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five thousand telephones of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) went out of order since yesterday morning as the underground cable was stolen, says a BTB release.

According to the source, around 12 metres of underground cable were stolen.

The repairing works are going on and the inoperative telephones will start working within four to five days, it added.

A theft case was filed with Khilgaon Police Station in this connection.

Platinum jubilee of St Alfred's School

A celebration committee was formed in the city yesterday to celebrate the platinum jubilee of Saint Alfred's High School at Bakerganj in Barisal, says a press release.

Former professor of Notre Dame College Gabriel Manik Gomez was made the president of the 17-member committee while Bangladesh Diabetic Association President Dr AK Azad Khan was named the president of the advisory panel.

JNU summer vacation

The Jagannath University authorities have set the date for summer vacation of the university from May 20 to June 19, says a press release of the university.

However, all administrative and departmental works will continue during this period.

Blessings sought

Dr Shahla Khatun, a renowned gynecologist and obstetrician and professor of Bangladesh Medical College, will undergo critical surgery at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore today.

She is the eldest sister of Sheeba Hafiza, director (Human Resources) of Brac.

Her family members have requested her friends, relatives and admirers to pray for a successful operation.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

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

Highest temperature 38.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Satkhira and lowest 21.7 degrees Celsius at Khulna.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:36pm 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	35.0	26.0	79	70
Chittagong	31.9	23.4	75	86
Rajshahi	36.8	24.1	78	64
Khulna	36.5	21.7	84	67
Barisal	35.6	23.7	77	70
Sylhet	28.0	23.2	85	87
Cox's Bazar	33.6	24.0	72	77