

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



End of Paper Books?

PHOTO:  
IHTISHAM KABIR

Whither *Paper Books*?

Many systems for making books have come and gone. First there were the prehistoric tablets of clay, found in Sumerian civilisation. Then came papyrus scrolls, tree barks, the codex, and various Chinese books. These all suffered from one major drawback: they were available to a select few people since they were not mass produced.

The movable type popularised in 1440 by Johannes Gutenberg overcame that drawback by enabling mass printing of books. The Gutenberg press allowed reproduction and delivery of the written word to large numbers of people. Thus the printed book became a powerful medium for communicating the written word to readers. It has played a long innings.

Are we close to a change? Consider the following.

In 2007, the world’s largest (online) bookseller Amazon introduced the Kindle, an e-book reader based on e-ink technology. Alongside paper books, Amazon started selling e-books for the Kindle.

Amazon invested considerable effort to ensure that the reader enjoys the experience of reading the Kindle. The e-ink display simulates, to some extent, the way printed word looks on paper. This helps reduce the tired eyes that result from reading too many words on a standard glossy, backlit display, such as a computer or a mobile phone. The mobility and lightness of the Kindle also make it attractive.

What were the results?

July 2010: Amazon said sales of Kindle e-books had exceeded their sales of hardcover books.

January 2011: Amazon said Kindle e-books outsold paperback books.

May 2011: Amazon sold more Kindle e-books than all paper (hardcover and paperback) books.

Others have not been sitting idly. Barnes and Noble, another large American bookseller, sells the Nook, an e-book reader also based on e-paper technology.

Apple has sold the iPad since 2010. Like Amazon, Apple has also aggressively courted book publishers to publish for the iPad.

So, is the end of paper books near? Here is my experience after obtaining a Kindle recently.

The Kindle has many advantages. Its light 6 ounces can hold up to 1400 books (though I have downloaded *only* 75 books so far, 74 of them free!) I like reading e-ink. I can search through the books and change the font size to relieve my eyes. I can organise the books into virtual bookshelves. It fits in my pocket and is convenient when travelling. It is easy to find a misplaced book.

Disadvantages include confusing page numbering and far too much time spent browsing for free books.

The upshot? I still prefer reading paper books. Sure, if I want to re-read parts of Thoreau’s *Walden*, or look up a Shakespeare quotation, Kindle is unbeatable. But for the pure pleasure of reading a new book - feeling the texture of paper and smelling it, eagerly turning the pages, thumbing through it, watching the remaining pages dwindle - I still prefer paper books.

But I harbour no illusions. Kindle and its cousins will surely send paper books to the same place that vinyl records and photographic film have gone.

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Invest more in higher education sector

Speakers tell policy dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More investment is needed in the higher education sector as tertiary level education plays the key role in shaping the country’s socio-economic development, stressed speakers at a programme yesterday.

They also said the local universities will have to contribute through their public engagement to build a knowledge-based society.

They made the observations at a Bangladesh policy dialogue on “Building Bridges between Universities and Communities” jointly organised by British Council and University Grants Commissions (UGC) in a city hotel.

The dialogue marked the closing of the three-day regional dialogue on the same theme that began on Wednesday.

UGC Chairman Prof Dr A K Azad Chowdhury said Bangladesh does not have enough knowledge generation and skilled manpower and the society needs more of them from the universities.

Universities have a major responsibility to

contribute to the society through their public engagement, he said adding that, knowledge acquired through laboratory or research should be linked with the society for welfare of the common people.

Mentioning that allocation to the country’s higher education sector in terms of GDP percentage is meagre, he emphasised on increasing the allocation.

There is no alternative to tertiary level skilled manpower for the socio-economic development of a country, he added.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said mindset of the country’s policy makers, politicians and other stakeholders need to be changed with regard to financial allocation and policy level for higher education.

Time has come for investing more in the higher education sector, he added.

Academicians, vice-chancellors of different universities, UGC members, and civil society members, were present at the programme among others.

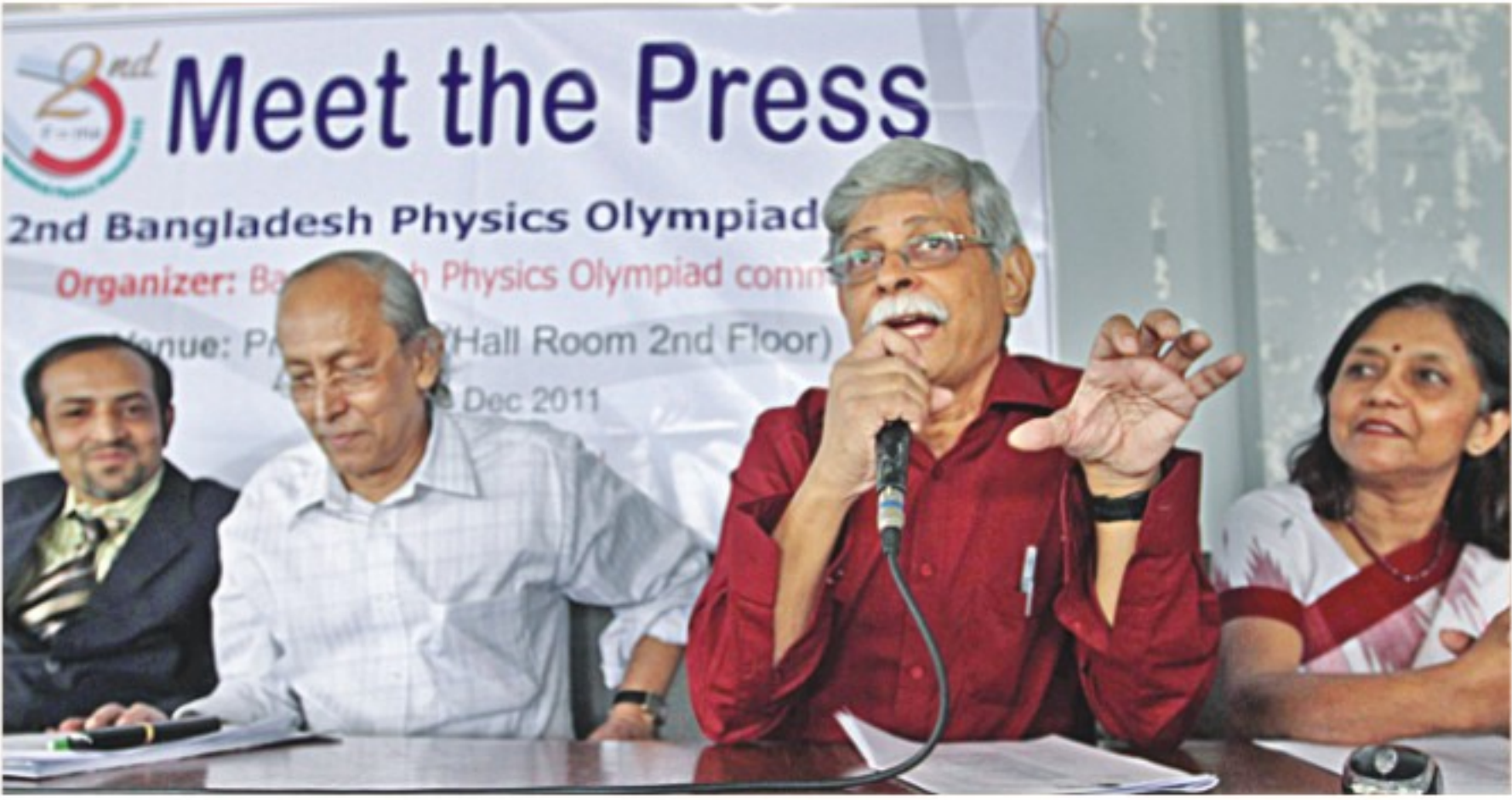


PHOTO: STAR

Senior Vice-President of the Bangladesh Physics Olympiad Committee Prof Zafar Iqbal speaks at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Prof Khorshed Ahmed Kabir and FA Jahangir Masud and on his left is Prof Yasmin Haque.

Physics Olympiad from Jan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The second “Bangladesh Physics Olympiad 2012” competition will begin at seven divisions in the country from January to encourage young students to science as well as improve their physics skills.

Bangladesh Physics Olympiad Committee, for the second time, will organise the competition for the students of secondary, higher secondary and pre-university level institutions.

The Olympiad programmes will include presentations, seminars, quiz contest, video show apart from the scheduled exams held in several rounds, said the organisers at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday.

The winners from the regional Olympiads will participate in the National Olympiad to be held in North South University during mid-February. Five students, selected from the winners of the final round of the national Olympiad, will represent Bangladesh in the 43rd International Physics Olympiad that will be held in Estonia.

Khorshed Ahmed Kabir, chairman of

the Bangladesh Physics Olympiad Committee and also a professor of physics department of Dhaka University, disclosed various aspects of the Physics Olympiad to the reporters.

Attending the press conference, Senior Vice-President of the Olympiad Committee Prof Zafar Iqbal said it is really encouraging that Physics Olympiad competition is set to start in Bangladesh for the second time. He said such competition inspires students towards studying science.

Interested students can register for the upcoming Olympiad by sending an SMS which would include their name, date of birth, name of the school and contact number.

The organisers will select the first 750 students to participate in the regional Olympiads.

Prof Arshad Momen, coach of the Bangladesh team for the previous Physics Olympiad, Prof Zahid Hasan Mahmud of Dhaka University, Dr Farseem Mannan Mohammady of Buet and Dr Kazi Abu Syeed of NSU, among others, were present.

Govt to build two Padma bridges

Says Quader

BSS, Luxmipur

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader said that he took charge of the ministry as a challenge to materialise the dreams of the people.

“I want to relieve the people from their sufferings by constructing streets, bridges and culverts, which they have dreamt for long,” he said this while addressing a view exchange meeting organised by the district Awami League at circuit yesterday.

He hoped to get love and affection of the people after making their dreams true.

“The government will construct the first Padma Bridge with utmost priority and think to construct the second Padma Bridge,” Quader said.

“The Meghna, Daudkandi and Gomoti bridges are in vulnerable condition,” he said, adding, “It will be a great achievement for the government to construct the bridges.”

District AL President M Alauddin, General Secretary Mizanur Rahim, Luxmipur Municipality Mayor Abu Taher and former lawmaker Shahjahan Kamal were present at the meeting.



PHOTO: STAR

A woman lights a candle to pay homage to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives during the War of Liberation in 1971 to gift us with an independent nation. Naripakkha organised the candle-lighting programme on the premises of the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday.

International Manipuri cultural conference begins in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, former chief adviser to a caretaker government, said the Manipuri community in Bangladesh has a thousand-year-old rich culture.

The community is vibrant with a bright historical background. Its language, literature and culture would be

flourished further in future, he said.

He was addressing the inaugural function of the 2nd International Manipuri Literature & Cultural conference at the Zila Shilpakala Academy in the city as the chief guest.

Eminent educationist Prof Md Abdul Aziz, researcher Dr Mustafa Mazid and Indian Sahitya Academy award winner Prof N Kunjamohan

Sinha spoke as special guests while Manipuri Sahitya Sangsad President AK Sheram was in the chair.

A colourful cultural function was also held with the participation of the artistes from local and Tripura, Meghalaya and Manipur.

The two-day event includes discussion on Manipuri literature, seminar, poet gathering and cultural functions.

DRUG PEDDLING  
7 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion in separate drives on Thursday and Wednesday arrested seven persons from Manikganj, Chittagong and different parts of the capital for their alleged involvement in peddling drugs and carjacking.

The arrestees are Saiful Islam Liton, 29, Selim Miah, 30, Nasir Uddin, 40, Sentu Miah, 25, Razib, 25, Mahfuzur Rahman, and Mohammad Azam.

A team of Rab-4 on Thursday morning conducted a drive in a bus of Shohagh Paribahan near Gabtoli Bus Terminal in the city and recovered a kilogram of heroin, said Captain Tahsin Salehin Rana of Rab-4.

The team arrested bus supervisor Saiful and helper Selim. The drug was being carried from the port city, added the Rab official.

Posing as drug traders, members of Rab conducted another drive at Singair Bazar of Manikganj on Thursday afternoon and arrested Nasir, Sentu and Razib with a kg of cocaine.

Meanwhile, Rab on Wednesday arrested Mahfujur Rahman, owner of a garage at Pallabi, when he was painting a stolen car.

Mahfujur bought the car from Mohammad Azam, a member of a carjacking ring, in the port city a few days back, mentioned Captain Tahsin.

Later Rab arrested Azam from Chittagong.

NEWS IN *brief*

Rare identical quadruplets born

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A woman from Habiganj gave birth to extremely rare identical quadruplets at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital yesterday.

The four boys were born around 8:00am without any need for Caesarean section and are in good health, said doctors.

One BBC report stated that chances of quadruplets are one in 13 million.

Dr Khorsheda Hossain of the hospital said the naturally conceived babies had a gestation period of around nine months. However, the weights of the newborns were not provided by the hospital.

The father, Reful Miah, a farmer of Pitua village under Nabiganj upazila, said they found out about the quadruplets around six months ago through ultrasound.

The mother, Kulsuma, was very happy with her newborns.

The quadruplets have a five and a half-year-old

Hasina returns home

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned home yesterday afternoon after ending her five-day visit to Myanmar and Indonesia.

A special flight of Bangladesh Biman carrying Hasina and her entourage arrived at Shahjalal International Airport at about 4:55pm.

Later, visited President Zillur Rahman at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the city immediately after her return from abroad.

Prime Minister’ son Sajib Wazed Joy and other high civil and military officials accompanied the

Reception to Archbishop Rozario

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Archbishop Patrick D Rozario of Dhaka was accorded a public reception at the Archbishop’s House at Kakrail in the city yesterday, says a press release.

The retired archbishop, Paulinus Costa, was also thanked for several decades of his services to the Church as well as to the nation.

Archbishop Rozario, head of the country’s Christian community, was appointed on November 25 by the Vatican.

Addressing the reception, he said serving the people, establishing harmony among people of various religions and preaching the truth are his prime tasks.

State Minister for Religious Affairs advocate Shahjahan Mian, lawmakers Rashed Khan Menon, Meher Afroz Chumki, attorney general Mahbubey Alam, Islamic Foundation Director General Shamim Mohammad Afzal, bishops from different dioceses, leading figures of different religions, and

BU admission test results published

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Results of the first year admission tests of Barisal University (BU) were published yesterday evening.

The examinations were held at eight centres in the city on Thursday and 7,536, out 9,924 of students, vied for 400 seats in six subjects under three faculties.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Harun-or-Rashid at a press briefing at his office said average pass mark was 48 and a total of 1,186, out of 7,536 candi-

WVA Int’l Meena Bazar today

METRO DESK

Women’s Voluntary Association (WVA) International Meena Bazar will be held at Banani Chairman Bari Field, Road # 1 in the city today.

Entry cards will be available at WVA office at house # 405/A, Road # 27 (Old), Dhanmondi and at the entrance of the Meena Bazar, said a press release.

To raise fund for the charitable projects, since 1954, WVA holds an International Meena Bazar every year in where ladies from different embas-



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Thick fog may occur over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions and light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins elsewhere over the country during mid night till morning, Met office said.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

**The sun sets in the capital at 5:12pm today and rises at 6:31am tomorrow.**

Country’s highest temperature 31.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox’s Bazar and lowest 13.8 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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	28.4	18.2	71	70
Chittagong	28.0	17.6	87	76
Rajshahi	23.2	16.5	97	90
Rangpur	25.0	17.7	95	86
Khulna	29.0	17.3	80	74
Barisal	30.1	15.5	89	88