

Weather

Rain forecast

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Chittagong, Sylhet, Barisal divisions and at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office said day temperature may remain nearly unchanged across the country.

Meantime, Dhaka experienced the highest 39 mm rain in the 36 hours till 6 pm yesterday. Dinajpur had 26 mm shower, Rangpur 25, Jessore 17, Sylhet 16, Comilla 15, Faridpur 11, Cox's Bazar 10 and Barisal 9 mm during the period.

The country's highest temperature 34.7 degree Celsius was recorded at Rajshahi and the lowest 20.5 degrees at Dinajpur and Ishuri.

The sun sets today at 6:40 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:11 am.

Book released

A book titled "Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation", written by Lt Gen Jack Jacob was released yesterday, a University Press Limited (UPL) press release said, reports BSS.

Jacob was chief of India's eastern army during the Bangladesh War of Liberation in 1971.

The book is published by UPL in its "Road to Bangladesh" series designed to present published accounts of the background of the emergence of Bangladesh.

Buriganga Samaj Kalyan Sangha

An anti-terrorism committee has been formed with Saidur Rahman, Commissioner, Ward No 83, and Humayun Kabir Hira as president and general secretary respectively, reports BSS.

The committee was formed at an anti-terrorism meeting, organised by the 'Buriganga Samaj Kalyan Sangha' at a local community centre on Friday. Local residents, irrespective of party affiliation, attended the meeting.

Belgian envoy presents credentials

The newly appointed Ambassador of Belgium to Bangladesh Ms Cristina Funes-Noppen presented her credentials to President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports UNB.

Welcoming the ambassador, the President said that Bangladesh values her relations with Belgium and consider her as one of the important friends and development partners.

He said that the existing close and cordial relations between the two friendly countries have been reinforced by sharing similar views on many international issues.

Reciprocating the similar sentiment, the newly appointed Belgium Ambassador expressed her happiness that Belgium and Bangladesh will always remain close to each other in spirit, in principle and in action.

She pointed out that Belgium remains the main importers of some of jute manufactured products of Bangladesh. She recalled with satisfaction that the prestigious King Boudouin Foundation prize was awarded to Prof Muhammad Yunus, who has founded the Grameen Bank.



Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori visited 'Grameen check' weaving centres at Brammanadi and Dakkinpara of Arahazar thana, Narayanganj, yesterday. — PID photo

Workshop concludes
Awareness campaign against child abuse stressed

By Staff Correspondent

At the concluding session of a two-day workshop on 'Sexual abuse of children', yesterday, M Azizul Haque, Inspector General of Police, commented that the current laws regarding violent acts against women and children are very strict, awarding convicted offenders a maximum punishment of the death penalty or life imprisonment. In the case of rape of a child or woman, if the victim dies, the culprit would be given the same punishment.

Haque, however, acknowledged that enforcement of these laws was a problem. "The only prevention of child abuse is to develop awareness at all levels," he said. "No matter how strict the legal measures are," he added, "this problem will not be solved unless everyone is involved in creating this awareness."

The workshop, organised by 'Breaking the Silence', a human rights group for children, was attended by school teachers, NGO officials, social activists, journalists, children and others. Sponsored by Radda Baran, the workshop was based on a report, prepared by Afzar Chowdhury for Breaking the Silence, which includes numerous case studies of sexually abused children.

"There are many loopholes in the existing laws," said Shamsul Huda, Director, Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB). "These should be fixed by the law makers. He also pointed out that the judiciary process is very complicated, which makes it difficult for victims of child abuse to gain access to it. He reiterated that most laws need to be fundamentally changed. The police, media and entire society should all be involved in helping the victims and enforcing the law on the culprits."

Participants of the workshop were divided into groups to chalk out a plan of action to find ways to tackle the issue of child abuse.

The groups presented various strategies, including identifying the reasons behind sexual abuse and eliminating them, initiating an awareness campaign through the media, encouraging more openness among children and parents to discuss these issues, treatment rehabilitation and security of

New body to combat trafficking of women formed

By Staff Correspondent

A new organisation named Trafficking Watch Bangladesh (TWB) was formed following a three-day consultation and workshop of 36 grassroots organisations in the city yesterday.

Prof Ishrat Shamim was made the convener of the newly formed network of NGOs, which aims to combat the trafficking of women and children from the country and create awareness among the people through an effective monitoring of cases.

The formation of the organisation was announced in a press conference on conclusion of the three-day consultation and workshop, held under the auspices of Centre for Women and Children Studies.

The press conference was attended, among others, by Prof Latifa Akand, Prof Khaleda Salahuddin, Farah Kabir and Prof Ishrat Shamim.

A memorandum will be submitted to the Prime Minister on the situation of trafficking of women and children from the country shortly, the organisers said.

The organisers suggested formation of an inter-ministerial cell, comprising ministries of Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Law and Parliamentary Affairs, to deal with the trafficking issue.

Khaleda greets new Iranian president

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday greeted newly elected Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, reports UNB.

In a message to president-elect Khatami, Begum Zia expressed her optimism that relations between Bangladesh and Iran would be further strengthened under his leadership.

4 terrorists arrested

By Staff Correspondent

A team of Detective Police (DP) arrested two wanted terrorists from the Bakshibazar area under Lalbagh thana on Saturday. A foreign-made pistol with three rounds of ammunition were also recovered.

The arrested persons are Kowsar Ahmed Kowsar and Abdur Rahman. Police said both were travelling in a private car at the time of their arrest.

Meanwhile, the same team arrested two other terrorists — Shams Alam Mukta and Sheikh Shahidul "Tipu" Islam — from Mirpur section 2 yesterday and recovered a foreign-made revolver with two rounds of ammunition.

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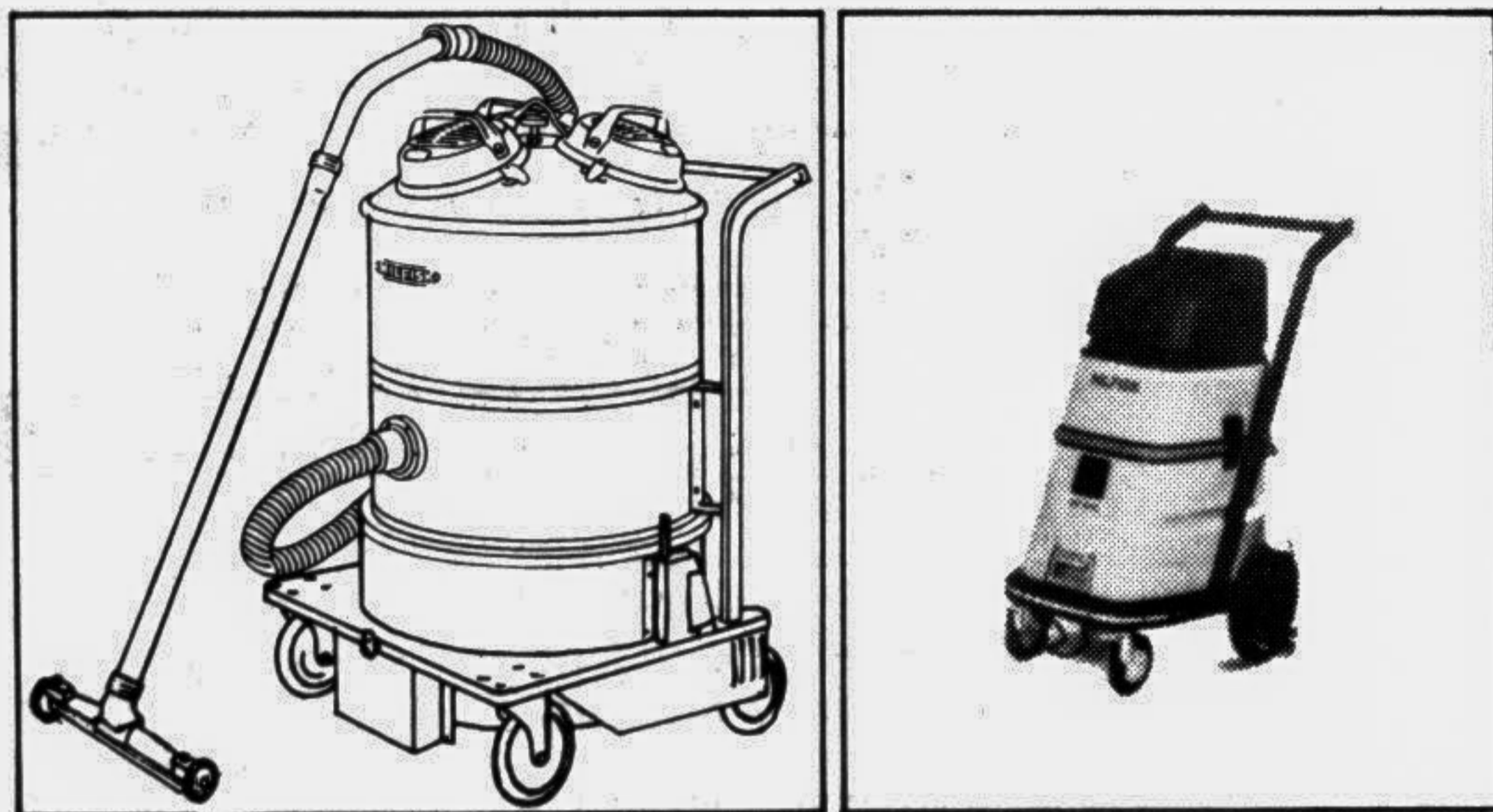
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What's on today . . .

Photography exhibition: A photography exhibition titled 'Tropical Zone', by Jurgen Straub will be inaugurated. Venue: Drik Gallery, House No 58, Road No 15A, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 5 pm. Organised jointly by Drik Picture Library Ltd and Goethe-Institut, the exhibition will remain open till June 2nd from 3 pm to 7 pm.

Nazrul's birth anniversary: As part of two-day programmes in observance of the 98th birth anniversary of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and the founding anniversary of the Nazrul Academy a cultural function will be held on the concluding day. Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy auditorium. Time: 5:15 pm.

Drama: On the occasion of its 20th founding day, Scholastica School will present a Bangla version of Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 7 pm till May 30.

AGM: The annual general meeting of the National Association of Former Scouts and Guides will be held. Venue: National Scouts Bhawan (70/1 Inner Circular Road). Time: 5:30 pm.

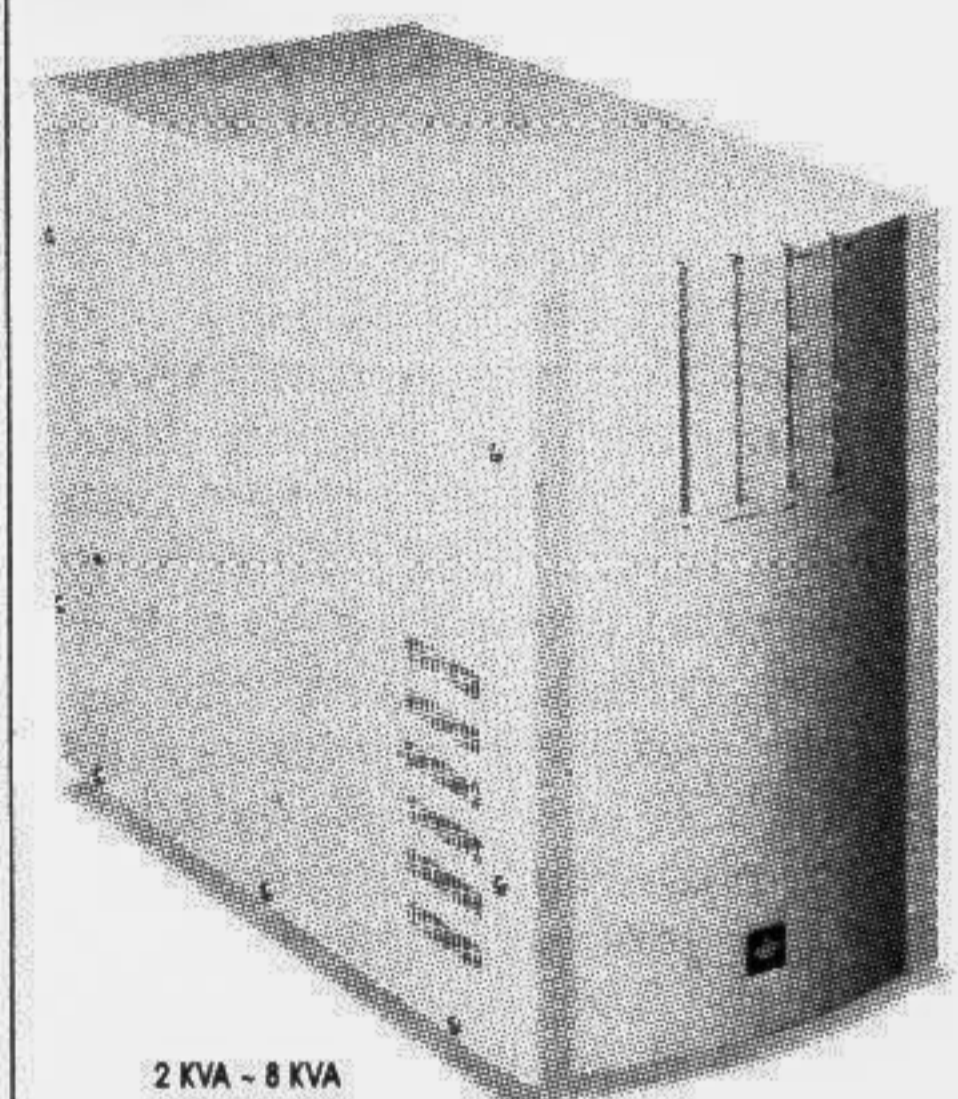
Concluding ceremony: The concluding ceremony of the training course for the college teachers conducted by the National University in collaboration with the legal education committee of Bangladesh Bar Council and Legal Education and Training Institute will be held. Venue: Mehfil Hall of Hotel Purbani. Time: 5 pm.

Rotary Club of Dilkusha: The weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Hotel Purbani International. Time: 5:30 pm.

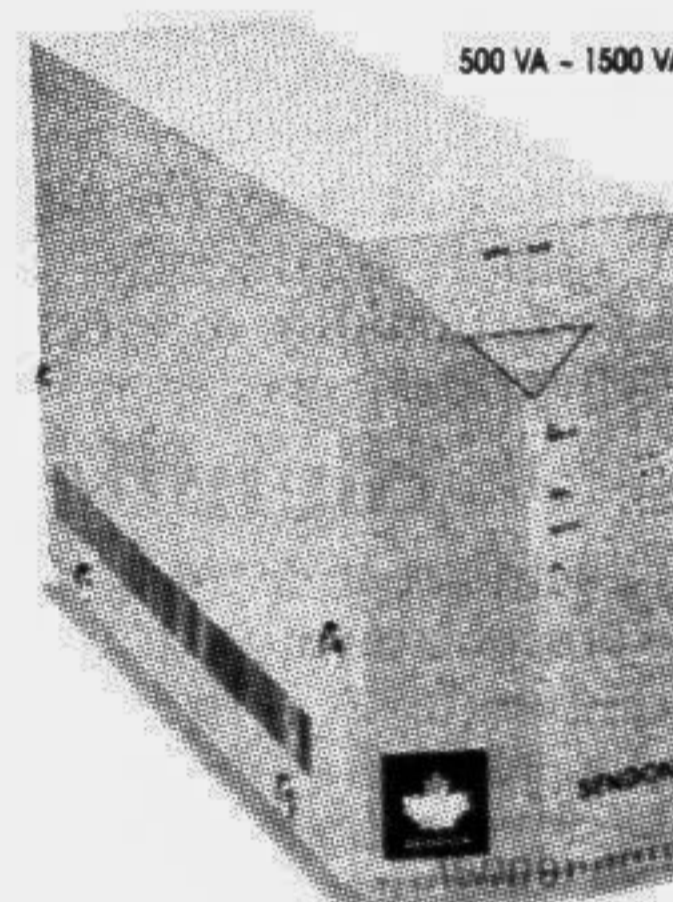
Rotary Club of Dhaka North: The weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.

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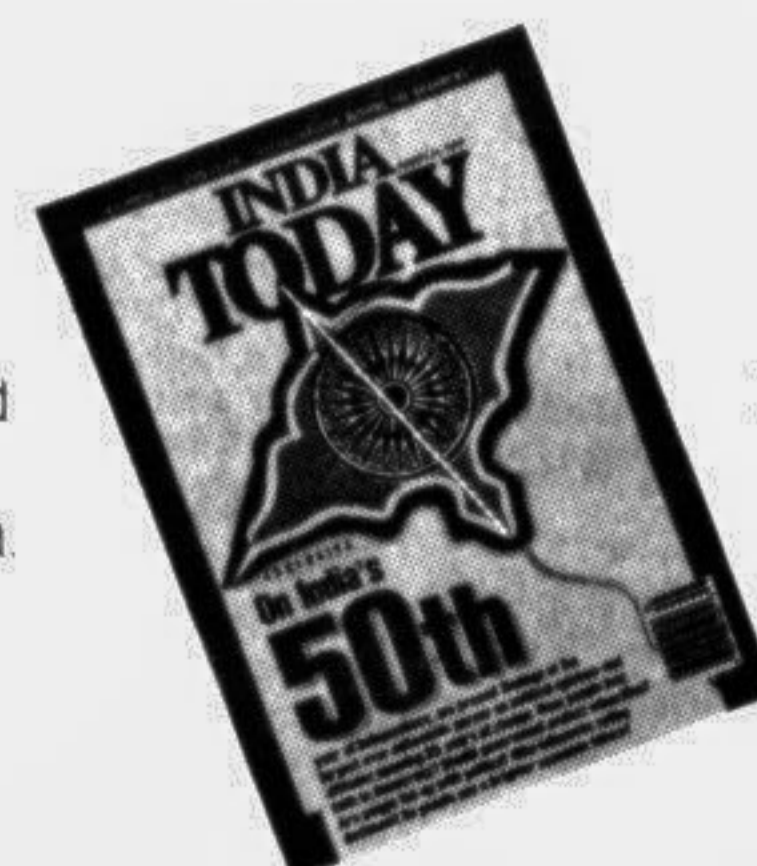
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