

What's on today

Award giving: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will distribute prizes among the winners of the Prime Minister's National Award on Tree Plantation '97. Organiser: Environment and Forest Ministry. Venue: Osmany Smriti Milonayaton (Osmany Memorial Auditorium). Time: 4:15 pm.

Reception: A reception will be accorded to the ten founders of the Swadhin Bangla Biplobi Betar Kendra at Kalurghat, Chittagong during the War of Liberation. Venue: MuktiJuddha Jadughar auditorium, Segun Bagicha. Time: 3 pm.

Workshop: Forum of Environmental Journalist of Bangladesh (FEJB) will hold a workshop on "Water Resources Management and Peoples Participation." Venue: National Press Club. Time: 9:30 am.

Seminar: A national seminar on 'poverty monitoring', jointly organised by the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), will be held. Venue: CIRDAP auditorium, 17 Topkhana Road. Time: 10 am.

Sanskritik Jote: A 2-day programme of Sammlita Sanskritik Jote will begin. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar premises. Time: 4 pm.

Seminar: A seminar on the centennial of Nirad Chaudhuri, organised by the Department of English, DU, will be held. Keynote Speaker: Prof Fakrul Alam. Venue: Centre for Advanced Research in Humanities, LT Building, DU. Time: 11 am.

Club meeting: The weekly meeting of the Rotary Club Dhaka New City will be held. Venue: Santoor Restaurant, Dhanmondi. Time: 5:30 pm.

Meeting: A meeting of Pabna Government Edward College Ex-students Samity will be held. Venue: Ramna Thai and Chinese Restaurant. Time: 5 pm.

Club meeting: The weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Ramna will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 5:30 pm.

Convention: A convention of the '81's Terminated Bank Employees' Coordination Council, Bangladesh will be held. Venue: National Press Club auditorium. Time: 10 am.

Film show: In observance of the birth centenary of film director Sergei Eisenstein, a 3-day film show and discussion will be concluded with the screening of 'October'. Organiser: Sergei Bondarchuk Film Club. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre, Dhanmondi. Time: 5:30 pm.

Annual dinner: The annual dinner of the Bangladesh Aushad Shilpa Samity will be held. It will be followed by solo musical night by Runa Laila. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 7 pm.

Discussion: A discussion will be held on the occasion of the World Tuberculosis Day. Venue: Office of the Civil Surgeon, Chamelibagh. Time: 2:30 pm.

'Water resources master plan needed for people's welfare'

Speakers at a workshop yesterday underscored the need for drawing up a comprehensive water resources master plan for the welfare of the people of the country, reports BSS.

They were participating in a workshop on 'Meghna Estuary Study', organised by Bangladesh Water Development Board at a hotel in the city.

Water Resources Secretary Dr ATM Shamsul Huda, Water Development Board Chairman Syed Moazzem Hussain, Chief Engineer of the Board Abdur Rahman, the Netherlands Embassy First Secretary P De Vries, among others, spoke at the workshop.

Inaugurating the workshop, Dr Huda said the government would work out a water master plan with the support of all concerned so that some pragmatic and effective programmes could be implemented for redressing the sufferings of the people.

Dr Huda emphasised the need for proper coordination among various agencies so that development projects could be executed smoothly.

He favoured transfer of technology and expertise in the water sector to achieve self-reliance.

How to institutionalise the sector is the concern of both the government and donors, Dr Huda added.

Water Development Board Chairman Syed Moazzem Hussain said the interim development plan would provide an overview of current and forthcoming project activities to be implemented in the Meghna estuary.

He said components of the interim development plan would help enhance levels of safety and facilitate poverty alleviation by stimulating economic development in the study areas.

'Stock of salt sufficient'

A six-member delegation of Cox's Bazar District Salt Producers and Mill Owners called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her Sangsad Bhaban office yesterday, reports BSS.

The delegation led by Nazrul Islam Chowdhury told her that there is sufficient stock of salt in the country and at the present moment over one lakh tons of unsold salt is in the stock.

At present, they said, around 10 thousand tons of crude salt is being produced per day in Cox's Bazar where 45 thousand acres of land are under salt production.

They further informed that the supply of per day salt from Cox's Bazar is one thousand metric tons while the iodine

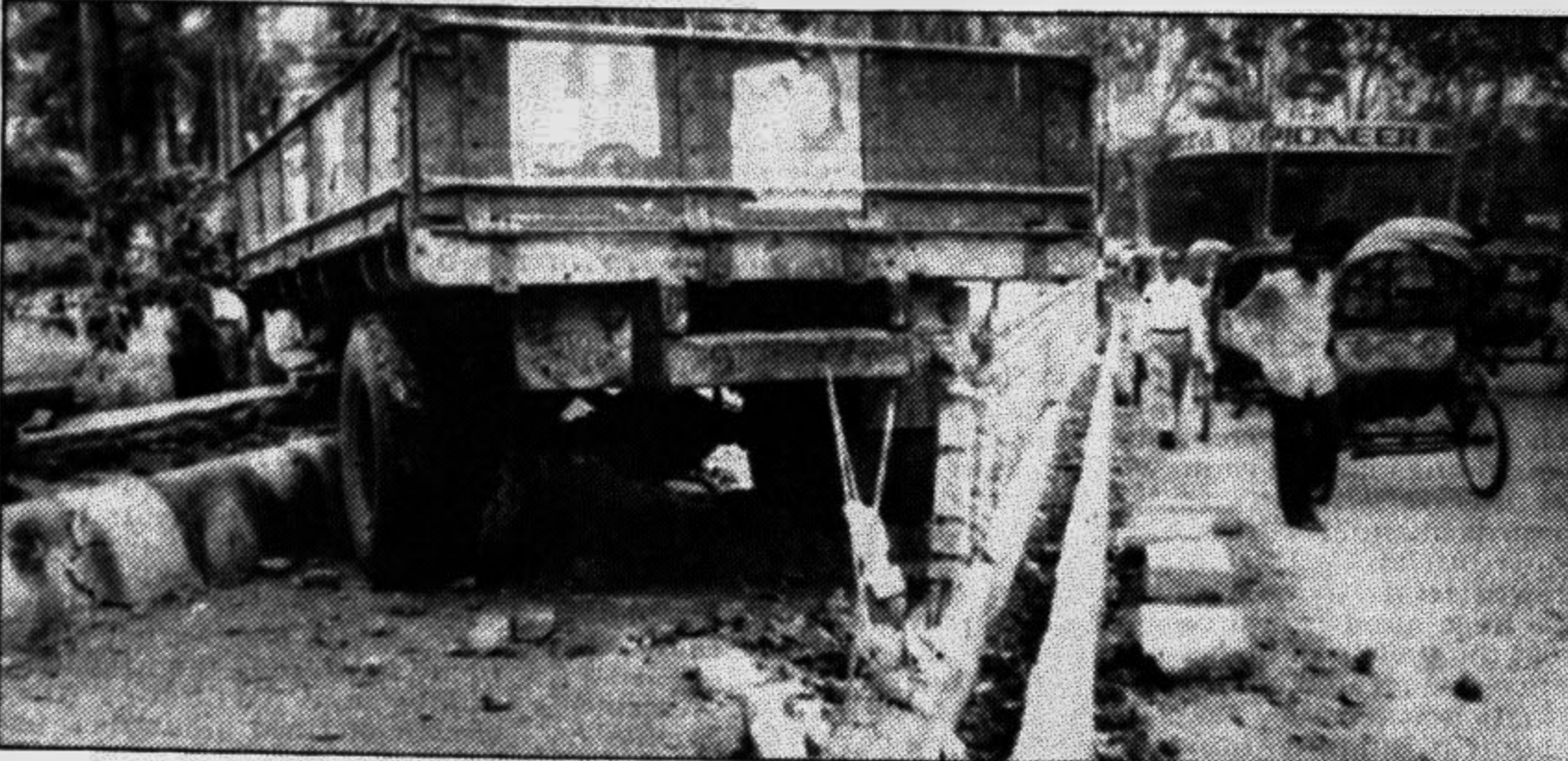
less crushed salt is being sold at Taka 5.50 per kg.

Italian govt scholarships

The Italian government will grant five to six scholarships of one year to Bangladeshi citizens for specialisation courses and research in different sectors of culture, science and technology, reports UNB.

Applications by qualified candidates (education requirements: masters degree, age-below 38 years) should reach the Italian Embassy not later than April 20.

Preferences will be given to persons with knowledge on Italian language.



A truck rammed into the newly-built railing on the pavement near the Matshya Bhaban in the city yesterday. — Star photo

CMSD refutes press report

The Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD) in a rejoinder has termed a Daily Star report 'inaccurate and based on fictitious' information.

The report, headlined 'Unsafe anesthesia units being purchased for govt hospitals' was published on the front page of the daily on January 25.

The rejoinder, signed by the Director, Stores and Supply CMSD, Brig. Zahiruddin Ahmed, said that CMSD acts as per advice and decision of two very high-powered expert committees — 'technical & purchase committees'.

It said that for procurement of medical equipment CMSD offers contract to parties as per the decision of the committees. CMSD also said that the reported anesthesia machines have also been checked and the procurement was decided by the purchase committee on the basis of the recommendation of the technical committee. Hence, it is not true that purchase committee had decided to procure the machines ignoring the recommendation of the technical committee.

Therefore, the question of purchasing 'unsafe' machine should not arise at all, it said.

The Daily Star replies: According to recommendations of the technical evaluation committee, the anesthesia machine, Seneca-2000, offered in the bid by one, Dodhys Agencies, Dhaka was stated to be 'unsafe' due to its heterogeneous origin.

The technical evaluation committee stated that the machine 'is of heterogeneous origin and technical experts and users are not certain of its safety for patients. So, it is not recommended.'

The purchase committee also had asked the technical committee to find out if the model manufactured in Pakistan was of international standard with ISO certification.

A parliamentary probe committee is currently investigating the alleged irregularities in assessing the decisions of the committees on purchase order of the anesthesia machine as well as many other irregularities detected recently.

The purchase committee, therefore, had violated the rules ignoring recommendations of the Technical Committee.

The Daily Star report was based on facts, documents and information. Besides, when this correspondent approached the director of CMSD, he had categorically denied access to any information suppressing the documents of alleged irregularities.

The Daily Star stands by its story.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwan of Begum Anwara Khatun Chowdhury will be held today after Asr prayers at her 100, Elephant Road residence, says a press release.

Wife of late Dr Asaduzzaman Chowdhury, a retired principal of Sir Salimullah Medical College died of old-age ailments on Saturday.

Gen Aurora at discussion India's main objective wasn't to divide Pakistan in '71

By Staff Correspondent

General (ret'd) Jagjit Singh Aurora rejected the contention that the main objective of India in helping Bangladesh in its War of Liberation in 1971 was to divide Pakistan into two parts.

Aurora was replying to queries from participants of a panel discussion arranged by the Liberation War Museum at its auditorium yesterday afternoon.

While replying to a query from Prof Syed Anwar Hossain, Aurora, however, agreed that it was an opportunity for India.

"But the opportunity was not created by India rather it was foolishly created by Pakistan," Aurora said, adding "It would have been foolish on the part of India to miss the opportunity."

During the hour-long discussion, Aurora said that India practically started helping Bangladesh through Border Security Forces (BSF) from March 26, 1971 following the military crackdown.

But in the beginning, the actual situation was not clear to the Indian authorities, Aurora said, adding, "India could know the internal situation of Bangladesh when thousands of Bangalees entered India crossing the border as refugees."

Moreover, it was not possible to help Bangladesh before formation of a government and so it took some time for India to

start helping Bangladesh openly, he said.

India started formal help from April-May after the formation of the government in April and accelerated the help in June-July. It was the intention of Indian government to finish the war within a short time.

Talking about the role of MuktiBahini, he said that the youngmen of MuktiBahini did a great job inside the country by some sabotage activities.

Though they were confused at the very beginning, very soon they became organised with the increasing help from India, Aurora said.

The MuktiBahini was helpful for the movement of Indian Army inside Bangladesh. He also spoke highly of the role of military leadership of Bangladesh during the war of liberation.

Replying to a question, Aurora said that Delhi was not worried about the movement of Seventh Fleet in favour of Pakistan and termed it as only an attempt at gun-boat diplomacy.

Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) AK Khondakar, former Bangladesh Air Force chief, however, said that Delhi was worried with the movement of Seventh Fleet. It was not impossible to think that the Seventh Fleet was mobilised to create a stalemate at that critical stage of the War.

World Meteorological Day observed

World Meteorological Day was observed yesterday throughout the country, as elsewhere in the world, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Meteorological Department observed the day in a befitting manner in keeping with the theme "Weather, Ocean and Human Activity" as chosen by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) for the year 1995.

The day's programme began in Dhaka with an inaugural function at the head office of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department at Agargaon.

Minister for Environment and Forest Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury attended the inaugural function as chief guest.

Defence Secretary Syed Yusuf Hossain was present on the occasion as special guest. The Director of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department Md Sajedur Rahman and Deputy Director M Ershad Hossain also spoke at the meeting.

The meeting was followed by a technical seminar and an exhibition of meteorological equipment and charts arranged on the occasion.

Environment Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury said that protecting the environment and balancing the weather and climate worldwide

were one of the main tasks of mankind.

She said that weather, ocean and human activity were complementary to each other. She called for combining talents of different disciplines of the world with the environmental science to find out ways through which the human activity could be directed for ensuring highest well being of the society.

The minister hoped that concerned scientists and experts would be able to find out a direction consistent with the reality of Bangladesh.

She said the government had given special emphasis on proper and well-balanced use of different elements of environment to make the earth habitable for the future generations.

In this context she mentioned that the Sunderbans had been included in the world heritage as a result of consistent effort and initiative of the present government.

Sajeda called upon the industrialised nations to bring about changes in their life-style by reducing consumption to help get rid of the problem.

Public exhibition of meteorological equipment and charts was also held at meteorological and geo-physical centre at Agrabad, Chittagong.

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Notice Inviting Tenders

1. Tender Notice No. : 29/1997-98 (Civil).
2. Name of work : Construction of 95 dilapidated thana bldg as per type plan in Bangladesh — one at Bhola Sadar SH:-Construction of thana-cum-barrack bldg in/c kitchen and latrine (2nd phase).
3. Estimated cost : Tk 41,75,414/-
4. Earnest money : Tk 83,550/-
5. Last date of : On 1.4.98 during office hours, selling of tender
6. Date of receiving : On 2.4.98 up to 12:00 Noon, of tender
7. Place of selling : Office of the all Executive and receiving of tender Engineers under PWD Circle, Barisal and the Divisional Commissioner Office, Barisal.
8. Eligibility of : Valid special class-I and class-I contractors/firms building contractors/firms enlisted of PWD.
9. The work will take in hand after availability of fund.
10. Contractors/firms willing to purchase schedule from other Division should apply to the Executive Engineers concerned at least 5 (five) days before the date of last selling. Otherwise no tender schedule will be sold to him/them.

Executive Engineer
Bhola PWD Division
Bhola
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