



A drawing competition for children was held at the National Museum premises yesterday on the occasion of the 77th birth anniversary of Artist Qamrul Hasan.

— Star photo

## • What's on today... •

**Founding anniversary:** Bangla Academy has organised a day-long programme to celebrate its 43rd founding anniversary. A video documentary on the academy and folklore will be shown and Gazul Haq will deliver a lecture. Venue: Academy premises. Time: 10 am.

**Film show:** Zahir Raihan Film Society has organised a day retrospective on 'French Cinema in the Nineties' that begins today. Judgement in Stone directed by Claude Chalrol will be shown on the opening day. Venue: Alliance Francaise. Time: 5:30 pm.

**Brech on Stage:** As part of a three-day programme on 'Brech on Stage', Nagorita Natyangan will stage 'The Three Penny Opera' on the concluding day. Venue: Central Public Library. Time: 7 pm.

**BAPS seminar:** Bangladesh AIDS Prevention Society (BAPS) has arranged a seminar on 'Awareness among people on HIV/AIDS prevention.' Chief guest: Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid. Venue: Hotel Sundarban. Time: 4 pm.

**Manipuri dance:** Muktijuddha Jadughar Cafe Theatre has organised a winter evening programmes. As part of this programme, Tamanna Rahman and co-artists will perform Manipuri dance titled 'Moitoi Jagoi'. Venue: Jadughar premises. Time: 6:30.

**Training programme:** Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) has organised a two-week training programme on 'Essential Contract Law for Entrepreneurs and Executive.' Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru will inaugurate the programme today. Venue: Institute premises, House: 22, Rd: 7, Dhanmondi. Time: 5:15 pm.

**Ananda Mela:** A 4-day Ananda Mela, organised by Officers' Club Women Committee, begins today. Communication Minister Anwar Hossain will inaugurate the Mela. Venue: Club premises. Time: 10 am.

**Handicrafts fair:** A 3-day fair on handicrafts to promote small and cottage industries begins. Organisers: Desh Sangskritik Kendra and Anirban Samaj Unnayan Sangathan. Venue: Desh Gallery, 27, Monipuri Para, Sangsab Avenue. Time: 10:30 am.

**Function:** International Turkish Hope School has organised a function to celebrate the Victory Day. Venue: School premises, House 27/B, Rd 103, Gulshan-2. Time: 10:30 am.

**Condolence meet:** National Non-smokers Forum has organised a condolence meeting in memory of its life member late Zahanara Islam. Venue: 132 Shantibagh. Time: After Asr prayers.

**Rotary club meet:** The weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhanmondi will be held. Dr Sean A Tate, International consultant, UNDP, will speak on 'The Fan and other lessons for modern managers' as guest speaker. Venue: Dhaka Club Family Lounge. Time: 5:30 pm.

## Docs, nurses end strike at N'ganj Hospital

From Our Correspondent  
NARAYANGANJ, Dec 2: Doctors, nurses and employees of Narayanganj Hospital returned to their work this morning after the intervention of local MP.

Shamim Osman MP, and former MP Nasim Osman held talks with the doctors, nurses and employees last night and assured them of bringing the attackers to book as demanded by them.

They went on strike protesting an incident in which an employee was attacked and seriously injured by some local goons three days ago.

**Int'l IT confce**  
Dec 18

The International Conference on Computer and Information Technology '98 will be held at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) this month, reports UNB.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed is expected to inaugurate the three-day conference on December 18.

## Pry scholarship exam now Dec 12-13

The dates of Primary Scholarship Examination, scheduled to be held on December 8 and 9, have been shifted due to unavoidable circumstances, reports UNB.

The examinations will now be held on December 12 and 13, said an official handout.

According to the fresh schedule, Bengali and Mathematics examinations will be held on December 12 from 10 am to 12 noon and 1 pm to 3 pm respectively. English and Paribesh Parichiti examinations will be held on December 13 from 10 am to 12 noon and from 1 pm to 3 pm respectively.

## Suraiya Rahman becomes first woman brigadier

Colonel Suraiya Rahman has been promoted to the rank of Brigadier with effect from December 1, reports BSS.

Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, and Director of Medical Services Brigadier Muklesur Rahman Khan presented her with the badges of Brigadier at a simple ceremony at the Army Headquarters on Tuesday.

This is the first time that a woman has been elevated to the rank of a Brigadier in Bangladesh, ISPR said.

Brigadier Suraiya was born on July 1, 1944. After her graduation in medical science from the Chittagong Medical College, she got commission in the then Pakistan Army in 1970.

She is working as advisor specialist in gynaecology and obstetrics at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) at present.

## 2-day exhibition of Panasonic products at Sheraton

A two-day exhibition of top quality Panasonic products begins at Hotel Sheraton tomorrow, says a press release.

The show, the first of its kind, is being organised by Nicole International Ltd, the local agent for the wide range of products manufactured by Matsushita Electric (Japan).

The show will highlight the latest digital products developed by Matsushita electronics and exhibit the various spectrums of Panasonic televisions, VCRs, RCRs and Video cameras. Special deals on purchases will also be on offer.

## One fisherman killed in NASAKA firing

COX'S BAZAR, Dec 2: A Bangladeshi fisherman was killed and four others were injured when Myanmar border security force, Nasaka, opened fire on them in the Bay near Saint Martin's Islands early today, reports APB.

The Nasaka force also took away six boats with huge fish and fishing nets after leaving 49 fishermen in a single boat, Teknaf police said quoting the victims.

The dead was identified as Hakim Ali, 28, of Maheshkhali thana of the districts. The body was sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital.

The injured were admitted to Teknaf Thana Health Complex.

## Kidnapped teenager rescued

JAHALAKATHI, Dec 2: Police rescued a 14-year-old girl kidnapped five months ago and arrested one kidnapper from Binoykathi under the Sadar thana on Monday, reports APB.

The police said Abdul Kalam, 32, of Bajupur, father of three children, had kidnapped the girl on July 8 from neighbouring Rahimpur village and took her to Dhaka.

A case has been filed with Jhalakati police.

## Binod Dasgupta seriously ill

By Staff Correspondent

Elderly journalist, author and columnist Binod Dasgupta has been suffering from various diseases and is undergoing treatment at the Intensive Care Unit at Bangabandhu Medical University. His condition is stated to be critical.

President of Swadesh Chinta Sangha Prof Ahmad Sharif in a statement yesterday urged all kind hearted people and former colleagues of Dasgupta to come forward with support for treatment of the ailing journalist.

## Zikir Mahfil

The monthly Zikir Mahfil and discussion on the significance of holy Shab-e-Barat will be held today after Magrib prayers at Khanikayee Toazia, 27, Diddheshwar Road in the city, says a press release.

The Gaddisin Peer of Darapur Sharif, Hazrat Moulana Shah Sufi Alhaj Abdul Hasan Muhammad Abdul Quayum will conduct the mahfil.

## Clarification

The Japanese embassy in a clarification to a news item creeded by UNB and published in The Daily Star on page 11 on Nov 26 says that the answer given by Shigeo Maruyama, Minister, Japan Embassy, during a discussion has been misinterpreted.

He had, in fact, told the audience that the Japanese Language Proficiency Test is now being held in Calcutta, if conditions permit, it will be held in Dhaka.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the programme.

## Chehul

By Staff Correspondent

The chehul of Principal Dr Ali Azhar Munier, Regional Commissioner (Education and Publication) of Bangladesh Scouts Rover Region and former Principal of Bahadurpur Rover Palli Degree College in Gazipur, will be held at his residence at 38 Bhajahari Saha street in the city after Jumma prayers tomorrow, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the programme.

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## News

# Global slowdown to hit 36 countries hard: WB

At least 36 developing countries will be hard hit by the economic and social costs of global slowdown in 1998-2000 with per capita growth coming down to 0.4 per cent this year, predicted the World Bank yesterday.

The latest World Bank report, however, did not name the countries except Brazil, Indonesia and Russia which are facing the grim prospect.

These three countries and 33 other developing and transition countries having more than a quarter of population in the developing world are likely to see negative per capita growth this year, the report said.

It attributed the reason for the economic slowdown to the unprecedented depth and severity of the recession in the crisis countries of East Asia and its contagion effect on the rest of

the world.

The developing countries have been hurt by Japan's deepening home-grown recession, as well as by a series of shocks related to the Asian crisis. These include collapse of Russian rouble, falling commodity prices, marked slowdown in world import demand, and general risk aversion in financial markets.

On top of this, El Nino-related phenomena brought both severe floods and drought to many parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America, devastating crops, water supplies and rural infrastructure.

The World Bank prescribed certain measures for preventing future crises. These include:

1) A more comprehensive approach is needed when trying to deal with excessive private borrowing and risk-taking in

the presence of large capital inflows and weak financial systems. This often means applying more flexible exchange rates, tighter fiscal policy, improved and tighter financial regulation. Such measures will tend to reduce overly large capital inflows, and the domestic lending booms that usually precede financial crises.

2) Domestic financial sector liberalisation which can greatly increase the risks of crisis should proceed carefully and in step with tighter financial regulation and supervision.

3) Capital account liberalisation should also proceed cautiously. It is unrealistic to expect the best policies and strongest institutions to prevail in developing countries and therefore eliminate the risks of crisis.

wood processors, rural communities bordering the forest and subsistence fisherfolk from the Bay of Bengal.

The state-run Khulna Newsprint Mills (KNM) complex contributes to the problem through the non-sustainable use of a key mangrove species as pulp in newsprint manufacture and by disposing untreated effluent upstream of the forest.

The ADB is also providing a technical assistance grant of USD 570,000 to determine future options, including the financial viability and environmental sustainability of KNM's continued operations.

## ADB approves \$37m for conservation of Sundarbans

A sustainable management and biodiversity conservation system will be developed for Bangladesh's Sundarbans Reserve Forest, part of the world's largest remaining contiguous mangrove area, reports UNB.

Asian Development Bank approved 37 million US dollar equivalent loan for the project that will introduce modern management systems involving all stakeholders in 17 sub-districts around the forest.

The participatory systems will conserve and manage the forest and its biodiversity as a multi-dimensional resource, said a press release of the ADB.



Tongi Shishu Theatre staged a play 'Mora' at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday as part of the on-going street drama festival.

—Star photo

## Biman's protest to Star Story and 'Scam of the year 1998'

By Special Correspondent

Bangladesh Biman has sent a rejoinder to the Daily Star on the news item - 'Neither DC-10 nor F-28 comes Biman Way', published on Tuesday claiming that 'it is found to be baseless and published with an ulterior motive'. The following is the text of Biman's protest:

'Our attention has been drawn to a news item headlined 'Neither DC-10 nor F-28 comes Biman Way' published in your esteemed daily in its December 01, 1998 issue which is found to be baseless and published with an ulterior motive. Hence, Biman authority is outright rejecting and refuting the report in question and issuing the following rejoinder to dispel any misgivings or confusion which may arise out of publishing the report in the minds of general public.'

'As per Government decision regarding privatisation of Biman, work is going on in full swing as per procedure and tender was floated recently for consultancy services which is now under process with the help of World Bank accordingly. As such, the report that Biman's plan to expand has been dented is not correct and is far from the truth.'

'The report that a deal with a non-listed company Chase Air was finalised is completely untrue, unfounded and motivated as well. No deal was finalised with Chase Air. As a matter of fact, Chase Air was one of the companies amongst many which had made an offer to Biman for lease of a DC 10-30. Biman is currently looking into all of these offers and no decision has been taken. As such, the question of finalising any deal with any company has so far not arise.'

'During the process of evaluation, Biman looked into the technical, operational and functional aspects of the aircraft and only aircraft which is found suitable will be considered by Biman. It may be mentioned here that during the process of evaluation, Biman verifies through various sources regarding the authenticity of the companies. As such, the question of signing deals with a 'non-listed' company does not arise.'

'Biman's plan to acquire two more F-28-4000 has received Government's approval and the plan to sale ATPs after the two F-28 is induced is still valid, as such the report that that the plan to sale ATPs has been shelved after newspaper reports

is false and not factual reporting. Neither it is correct as reported that Biman had decided to sale ATPs to Nepalese Company.'

'In order to run the domestic operation smoothly after the loss of one F-28 at Sylhet, Biman had, on emergency basis, leased one F-28 for six months from Fortis Aviation and not two aircraft from Indonesian Company. After the expiry of the six-month lease period, the aircraft has been returned to lessor, as such, the report relating to this is totally incorrect. Furthermore, it is also totally distortion of the fact that Biman has retained this aircraft after the expiry of the lease period.'

'Regarding the 15-year age limit for leasing aircraft, as per existing rules the Civil Aviation Authority can give relaxation on case basis. As such, the report that CAAB has been applying to bend the rules is totally fabricated.'

'Under the above circumstances, it is therefore, now loud and clear that the published report in question is a baseless one, wayward and simply far from the truth.'

The Daily Star replies

We stand by our report as the Biman had failed to explain clearly the issues raised in the report concerning its dealings with Chase Air, a backyard company of USA which is not listed on stock exchange. It did not also spell out how much money it paid in advance to Chase Air's local agent as stated in the newsletter of Aircraft Leasing Corporation, issue number 42, published in October 1998. Nor did it say why the deal with the Chase was cancelled at the eleventh hour, why GIA, another non-listed company, was contacted after a top secret meeting on October 24 (on a weekend) at Biman headquarters, what prompted it to seek GIA's help in obtaining the aircraft? Was it not the ALC's report on the 'Scam of the year 1998' regarding the failure of the company to deliver to Royal Nepal Airlines a Boeing 757-200 aircraft? Queries from ALC with Biman's New York office failed to receive any answer.'

'They neither confirmed nor denied the existence of the deal', the newsletter said.

We made one slip, however. Instead of two, Biman had brought in a 1978 model F-28-4000 aircraft on dry lease from Indonesia, courtesy of the For-

## CIRDAP meet in city opens

### 'People's participation a must for eradicating poverty'

Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Zillur Rahman

yesterday said that planned rural development programmes and people's participation are of utmost importance for the eradication of poverty in countries like Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Inaugurating the 19th regular meeting of the Executive Committee of the Centre for Integrated Rural Development in Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) in the city, he said majority of the people in most of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region live in the rural areas where poverty manifests in all its forms — unemployment, malnutrition, low literacy, homelessness and inadequate service facilities.

It is necessary to make every effort towards poverty alleviation and improve the quality of life of the

people, the minister said.

The opening session was also addressed by Keshav Raj Rajbhandary and Carlton T An