

What's on today...

HR Day programme: Ain O Salish Kendra and Law Review have jointly organised a poster exhibition and theatre marking Human Rights Day. Venue: Liberation War Museum. Time: 4 pm. Chief guest: Begum Suifa Kamal.

Discussion: A discussion meeting commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will be held. Organiser: Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh. Venue: Caritas auditorium, 2 Outer Circular Road, Shantibagh. Time: 3:30 pm.

HR Day programme: Democracywatch has arranged a day-long programme, including poster exhibition, open discussion and film show (Skin Deep and Mississippi Burning), to commemorate Human Rights Day. Time: 10 am, 4 pm and 5:45 pm respectively. Venue: 7 Circuit House Road, Kakrail.

UNAB symposium: The United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) will hold a symposium to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Venue: Hotel Razmoni Isha Kha, Kakrail. Time: 6 pm.

Documentary programme: Young Theatre Workers will present a documentary programme 'Poh O Panchal' in memory of Bibhutbhushan Bandopadhyay, written by his son Taradesh. Venue: TSC auditorium, Dhaka University. Time: 4 pm.

Film session: A 4-day session of films of Khan Ataur Rahman, organised by Chalachitra Film Society commemorating his first death and 70th birth anniversaries, will begin with the screening of 'Nawab Sirajuddin'. A discussion on the late filmmaker and music director will also be held. Venue: Central Public Library auditorium. Time: 6 pm.

Discussion: A discussion meeting commemorating the 150th anniversary of the communist manifesto and the 81st anniversary of the Soviet revolution will be held. Organisers: Gonatantrik Majdoor Party and Fourth International-Bangladesh Section. Venue: Jatiyo Krira Parishad auditorium. Time: 3 pm.

Council meet: A 2-day central council meet of Jatiya Shromik Jote-Bangladesh will begin. Venue: Paltan Maidan. Time: 10 am.

Club meeting: The weekly meeting of Rotary Club of Dhannoidi Dhaka will be held. Venue: Upstairs family lounge, Dhaka Club. Time: 5:30 pm.

Code of conduct for teachers, students urged

By DU Correspondent

Nari Pakkho has urged the authorities concerned to introduce a code of conduct for teachers and students to contain incidents of sexual harassment at universities, says a press release.

Along with the code of conduct, a clear procedure for filing complaints of sexual harassment should be set up, either within each department of the university or centrally, the press release added.

Nari Pakkho also congratulated the Dhaka University female student for having the courage to file a written complaint alleging sexual harassment by a male teacher.

They also congratulated the six women teachers who met the vice chancellor of DU to demand an investigation.

Bijoy Utsab begins Dec 12

The five-day long Bijoy Utsab '98 in celebration of the Victory Day, organised by the Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, begins in the city on December 12, reports BSS.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed is expected to inaugurate the festival at the Central Shaheed Minar at 4 pm.

The programmes of the festival include music, dance, drama, folk songs and recitation.

A meeting of the sub-committee on the function yesterday reviewed the activities and progress of the upcoming festival, a press release said yesterday. It also urged all concerned to cooperate for holding the festival peacefully.

With committee convenor Afzal Hussain in the chair, the meeting was attended, among others, by Golam Kuddus, Jahir Ahmed, Nahid Hasan, Utpol Chakrabarty and Milton Ratna.



Shaheed Janani Jahanara Begum (posthumous) was awarded Begum Rokeya Padak this year. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina giving away the award to Umma Salma Chisty, younger sister of Jahanara Imam, at the Osmany Memorial Hall yesterday. —PID photo

Consensus on keeping Ctg port open under any circumstances

CHITTAGONG, Dec 9: A meeting of the broad-based Advisory Committee of the Chittagong Port Authority today forged a consensus on keeping port operations uninterrupted under any circumstances, reports UNB.

However, a unanimous decision is expected against hartal in the next meeting after today's day-long discussions spearheaded to rid the country's main seaport of shutdowns.

Presided over by Shipping Minister A S M Abdur Rab, the 5th meeting of the advisory body was attended by Shipping Secretary Saiful Islam, representatives from Chittagong Chamber, BGMEA, port users, CBA, and 22 trade unions.

They, in the meeting at the Port Rest House, passed the day without going into its three-agenda prepared for discussion today.

The agenda were emergency services in the port, postponement of Trade Union activities after year 2005 and keeping the banks in the port area open as long as the Customs House remains open.

At the outset of the meeting, Chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority Dr Rezwanaul Haq placed decisions and developments of the previous meetings.

The 9-point demands and submission of memorandum to the PM were approved on Tuesday at a grand rally of indigenous people, who mostly live in the northern region of the country.

The Parishad in another faxed message to the Prime Minister complained that some police without any provocation resorted to lathi charge on a peaceful procession of the indigenous people near the High Court on Tuesday afternoon.

The procession was brought out after the rally at Diploma Engineers' Institute. A number of indigenous men and women were injured in the lathi charge, the Parishad claimed.

Most of the indigenous people who joined the procession came to Dhaka for the first time but they were very frustrated at the police action, the release said.

The Parishad demanded action against the police personnel responsible for the attack.

Expatria enthralled audience

By Staff Correspondent

Expatria, a vocal octet formed by foreign expatriates, gave a presentation in the city yesterday and the day before.

They presented an arrangement of western classical choral numbers along with a few jazz ones at the Russian Cultural Centre and American International School auditorium.

The show opened with a presentation of madrigals (unaccompanied by music) which are a layout of lyrics arranged for eight voices. Expatria went on to present numbers from Eastern Europe including Russian and Slovak folk songs, and moved on to more contemporary jazz pieces.

The two numbers 'In the mood' and 'Tea for Two' (from the movie Breakfast at Tiffany's) at the end of the programme took the audience to a nostalgic mood.

Expatria is an octet with diverging members from England, Norway, France, Belgium, Canada, The United States, and New Zealand. Its members are Leslie Jack, Herborg Skjolden, Elaine Delaune, Rick Johnston, Effie Sparkhall, Prue Harman, Timothy Smith and Danny De Schutter.

Embezzlement of college fund: 7 arrested

JESSORE, Dec 9: Police today arrested seven people, including a principal on charge of embezzlement of college fund, reports UNB.

Anti-Corruption Bureau filed a case with the police against Acting Principal of Keshabpur Degree College Kawsar Ali, clerk Abdul Momin and Zahoor Ali, Abdul Wahab, Abdul Gafur and members of the governing body Kawsar Ali and Alauddin on charge of misusing the money amounting to Tk 41,880.

The governing body of the college tried to settle the matter, but failed and later handed over the matter to the Anti-Corruption Bureau.

The BCU leaders urged the students of the university to come under the banner of BCU for regaining the past glory of the student politics.

Dacoits kill two, loot Tk 10 lakh

COX'S BAZAR, Dec 9: Dacoits killed two employees of a rice mill in Ramu thana and looted Tk 10 lakh early today, police said, reports UNB.

They said a gang of dacoits stormed into the Habib Rice Mills at about 4 am. They killed Riton, 28, manager of the mill, and its employee Habib, 28, and decamped with the money.

Police picked up 13 people, including a night guard, for interrogation. The bodies were sent to Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Nari Samaj procession on Rokeya Day

By Staff Correspondent

Members of Sammilita Nari Samaj (SNS) yesterday paraded through the city streets with festoons and banners with quotes of Begum Rokeya in observance of Rokeya Day yesterday.

The Nari Samaj members started their procession on a truck from the Shahbagh crossing at 8:30 am singing songs on women's liberation and reading out from books of Begum Rokeya.

Among others, Farida Akhter, Shirin Akhter and Shamunnah Jyothsna spoke on the occasion.

Body of Begum Mustafa Ali arrives tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The body of Begum Syed Mustafa Ali who died on Sunday in a Paris hospital will arrive in the city by a Bangladesh Biman flight on Friday at 9:45 am, family sources said.

Her mortal remains will be taken to her residence at R-24 Nurjahan Road. The first namaj-e-janaza will be held after Jumma prayers at Baitul Fazl mosque while another janaza will be held at Baitul Mukkaram Mosque after Asr prayers. She will be buried at Banani graveyard.

Her qulkhwaani will be held on Saturday at Priyanka Community Centre at Road No 6A Dhanmondi at 11:30 am and monajat will be offered before Juh prayers.

Begum Ali had been suffering from bronchial infection and was flown to Paris on Friday last for treatment.

Begum Mustafa Ali was the mother of late S M Ali, Founder-Editor of The Daily Star and recipient of Swadhinata Padak, 1995. She is survived by Shaikat Ali, Prof Fauzia Ali, Principal, Chittagong Women's College, Syed Moazzam Ali, ambassador to France, Syed Iqbal Ali, Syed Ruhul Amin, Daisy Chowdhury and Najat Chowdhury.

Relatives, friends and admirers may contact her family members over telephones: 819121 and 816052.

Concerts of Chamber music

Two concerts of Chamber music for flute and keyboard will be held at Alliance Francaise de Dhaka auditorium on Sunday and Monday, reports UNB.

Organised by the Alliance Francaise, the programmes will include works by Haendel, Telemann, Beethoven and Faure.

Mandoline will play flute on the concerts while Alain Dealune harpsichord and piano.

Tickets are available at the reception of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, said a press release yesterday.

Confce to forge common regional perspective against landmines ends

The issue of anti-personnel landmines is not yet considered an area of concern for South Asia despite some isolated use of these explosives by insurgent groups in a few countries, reports UNB.

However, security experts yesterday concluded a two-day brainstorming session with the suggestion that due concern about the landmines issue in the region requires "a triangular political process among India, Pakistan and China."

Some 18 defence experts from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, UK and Canada met in the 2-day conference to campaign for forging a "common regional perspective" against anti-personnel landmines that kill or maim some 2,000 people every month globally.

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) and the Centre for Defence Study (CDS) of London's Kings College jointly organised the meeting on "Anti-personnel Landmines and Security in the South Asia" at Rajendrapur, some 40 kms from the city.

Bangladesh, as the lone SAARC country among the 123 nations who so far signed the Anti-landmines Convention, was chosen as the neutral venue for the close door meeting to facilitate Indian and Pakistani military experts to sit across the table on the issue, said the meeting organisers.

Whether the governments signed the anti-landmines treaty does not matter so long "these non-state actors" will be using such mines, they said.

A retired Pakistani Lieutenant General, Talat Masood, said since Pakistan and India have security concerns, they are hesitant about signing the treaty.

But both the countries have understood the humanitarian sides of the issue and for that Pakistan has decided not to export and transfer technology of anti-personnel landmines, he informed. "We've also ensured that all plastic mines do have metal detectors."

General Masood said lack of alternatives is another reason to make India and Pakistan, both charged with security concerns, hesitant about the anti-personnel landmine issue.

Former deputy chief of the Indian Army, General (ret'd) Satish Nambiar said: "We're committed to eliminate the anti-personnel landmines." But security concerns remain the hurdle as there is no alternatives as yet, he added.

Indian Army are not using anti-personnel landmines against insurgents, who, however, have not stopped using the mines, the Indian General said.

The defence experts expressed their concern about the origins of anti-personnel landmines and their routes to Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka.

BISS Director General Brigadier Shaheedul Anam Khan and the guest participants were present during the press briefing at the BISS conference room.

Briefing the reporters about the meeting, UK security expert Dr Chris Smith said security concerns of Pakistan and India, and the lack of trust for each other kept the two countries away from the 1997 Ottawa Treaty against anti-personnel landmines.

Not that they are less concerned about the anti-humanitarian impacts of such landmines worldwide, especially in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mozambique, Angola and Somalia, observed Dr Smith, a director of London's Centre for Defence Study (CDS).

He, however, called the two-day meeting "successful" as it would contribute a lot to mould a strong regional commitment to stop use of landmines.

If alternatives to landmines are developed, South Asia should have easy access to that technology, he felt.

Retired military officials of India and Pakistan were of the view that security concerns and lack of alternatives have kept India and Pakistan away from the Ottawa Treaty.

They also felt that emphasis should be given on the use of landmines by insurgent groups, whom they called "non-state actors."

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Fifty torches were lighted to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday. Bangladesh Human Rights Coordination Council organised the ceremony. —Star photo



Visitors on the opening day of the BIMST-EC Bazaar on the grounds of the Thai Embassy at Baridhara in the city yesterday. The bazaar, featuring products and traditional food items from five member countries - Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand - will be open till December 19. —Star photo

7 Rohingyas repatriated

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Dec 9: Seven more Rohingya refugees belonging to two families returned to their homeland from Kutupalong camp this morning.

Repatriation official and UNHCR representative saw the refugees off on the bank of the river Naaf at Teknaf. Immigration officials of Myanmar received the refugees at the Kaningchong reception centre.

With today's batch, a total of 2,29,544 refugees have so far returned to Myanmar, officials said.

Some 50 more refugees are expected to leave for Myanmar on Wednesday.

Clarification by BPC Chairman

Md Anwar Hossain, Chairman of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, has sent a clarification on a news item headlined "Violation of Code of Conduct: 7 more govt. officials asked to show cause" published in The Daily Star on Dec 6.

He said that as an Additional Secretary of the Republic and Chairman of a government Corporation "I should not and cannot take part in such activities" and that he had been engaged in urgent task related to post-flood rehabilitation.

"I like to mention that the schedule of the by-election was announced on 9.11.98 while the political parties nominated their candidates on 15.11.98 the last day of submitting of nomination papers was 17.11.98. Since November 8, I have never visited the area for any reason and in any manner."

Jagannathpur to be made pourasava soon

JAGANNATHPUR, Sylhet, Dec 9: Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad has said Jagannathpur thana sadar of Sylhet district will be declared as pourasava very soon, reports BSS.

The Foreign Minister made the announcement while addressing a public meeting arranged by Awami League at Jagannathpur Bazar on Tuesday, an official handout said.

Presided over by Nurul Islam, president of thana Awami League, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Deputy Minister for Food, Dhirendra Debnath Shambhu, Relief and Social Welfare Secretary of Awami League Mukul Bose, assistant publicity secretary of Awami League Nurul Islam Bulbul and secretary of thana Awami League Akmal Hossain.

Shambhu said the present government was working relentlessly to develop the country and change the lot of the people.

Addressing another function in Sylhet on Tuesday, the Foreign Minister said the implementation of food assistance programme for the poor and flood affected people through VGF card was an epoch-making success of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Azad was speaking at relief distribution function at South Surma Girls High School in Sylhet town. He said its our moral and religious duty to stand by the side of poor during calamity. The Foreign Minister said 42 lakh VGF cards were distributed among the flood affected people this year.

Modern cancer hospital to be set up

A 200-bed modern cancer hospital will be set up at Tongi near the capital city by Dhaka Ahsania Mission, reports UNB.

A three-acre plot has already been allotted by RAJUK for the Tk 200 crore hospital and design work is going on. Mission's executive director Kazi Rafiqul Alam told a press conference yesterday. He also urged financial assistance from local and foreign donor agencies and individuals.

The design works will take one year while three years will be required for construction, Alam said. By this time, preliminary treatment for cancer will begin in Dhaka, he added.

The hospital will ensure quality health service equivalent to any American cancer hospital and patients will no longer need to go abroad for treatment of the deadly disease, he hopes.

Bangladeshi expatriates in USA and UK have already responded positively to the appeals for financial help, the press conference was told at Jatiya Press Club.

Annual confce of BCU begins

Annual conference of Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU), Dhaka University unit, began yesterday on the campus, reports BSS.

The BCU leaders urged the students of the university to come under the banner of BCU for regaining the past glory of the student politics.

Seminar on book policy begins

A two-day regional seminar on formulation and implementation of book policies of South and South-East Asian countries began in the city yesterday with a call for increasing readership, reports APB.

Participants at the seminar will exchange views on widening technical cooperation in streamlining publishing industries and evolve common strategies for the countries of the region.

Jointly organised by the National Book Centre and UNESCO, the seminar will review library legislations. A report on the Afro-Asian Book Council Secretariat will also be placed.

Publishers from the Philippines, Malaysia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, China and host Bangladesh are taking part in it.

Inaugurating the seminar at National Museum, State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader said the country's book industry registered a slow but steady growth after the independence.

JCD threatens agitation

Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal yesterday brought out a procession in the city and held a rally at Paltan crossing demanding "free and fair" polling in the Pabna-2 by-election schedule for today, reports APB.

JCD, the student wing of opposition BNP, also threatened to launch a "vigorous movement" if the ruling party manipulates the by-polls result.

"Awami League is hatching conspiracy to rig the by-election in a planned way apprehending their defeat," claimed acting president of JCD Manzur Elahi.

The government, he alleged, was trying to "intimidate" the voters, particularly the women.

The JCD president urged the Election Commission to take steps for ensuring peaceful atmosphere during polling so that people can cast their votes without fear.

JCD general secretary Nasiruddin Pintu accused the ruling party of making JCD activists its target for "repression".

He demanded immediate release of their leaders and workers, including JCD president Habib-un-Nabi Sohel.

Among others, Abdul Khaleq, Monwar Hossain Rana, SM Nuruzzaman, Monir Hossain, Mozaffar Hossain Zakir, Helen Jerin Khan and Asaduzzaman addressed the rally.

4 boys hurt in bomb blast

Four boys of a slum in south Jatrabari area suffered splinter injuries when unidentified miscreants hurled a bomb at the slum yesterday morning, reports UNB.

The injured boys — Uzzal, 7, and Sajal, 6, sons of Abdul Mannan, Jahangir, 7, son of Shamsul Huq and Asgar, 8, son of Khaleq were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Meanwhile, a man who was admitted to the DMCH with serious injuries on Tuesday night died at the hospital early yesterday.

Hospital sources said Golam Hossain, 35, son of late Rostom Ali at Pirebag in Mirpur, was missing since Friday.

Local people recovered him from Shah Ali's Mazar in Mirpur in a critical condition on Monday and brought to the DMCH, where he succumbed to his injuries at about 2 am.



Sharmina Nasreen, right, a final year student of International Relations at Dhaka University, receiving the Rokeya Memorial Foundation Gold Medal '98 from DU Vice Chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury at a function marking Begum Rokeya Day at the Rokeya Hall of the university yesterday.

Indian investors urged to set up joint-venture industries

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria has urged Indian entrepreneurs to come forward in setting up joint-venture industries in Bangladesh, reports APB.

The minister made the urge when Indian Commerce Secretary PP Prabhu called on him at his office in the city yesterday.

Kibria said there was adequate scope for exporting goods manufactured in joint-ventures to different parts of India, particularly her eastern states, by utilising natural gas and other facilities available in Bangladesh.

Kibria and Prabhu discussed matters on expansion of cooperation in the fields of trade and economy between the two neighbouring countries.

Further increase in the existing facilities in transportation of passengers and goods between India and Bangladesh also came up for discussion.

They also had talks on various aspects relating to export of more Bangladeshi products to India.

The Indian Commerce Secretary emphasised on strengthening economic and trade relations further between the two next-door neighbours.