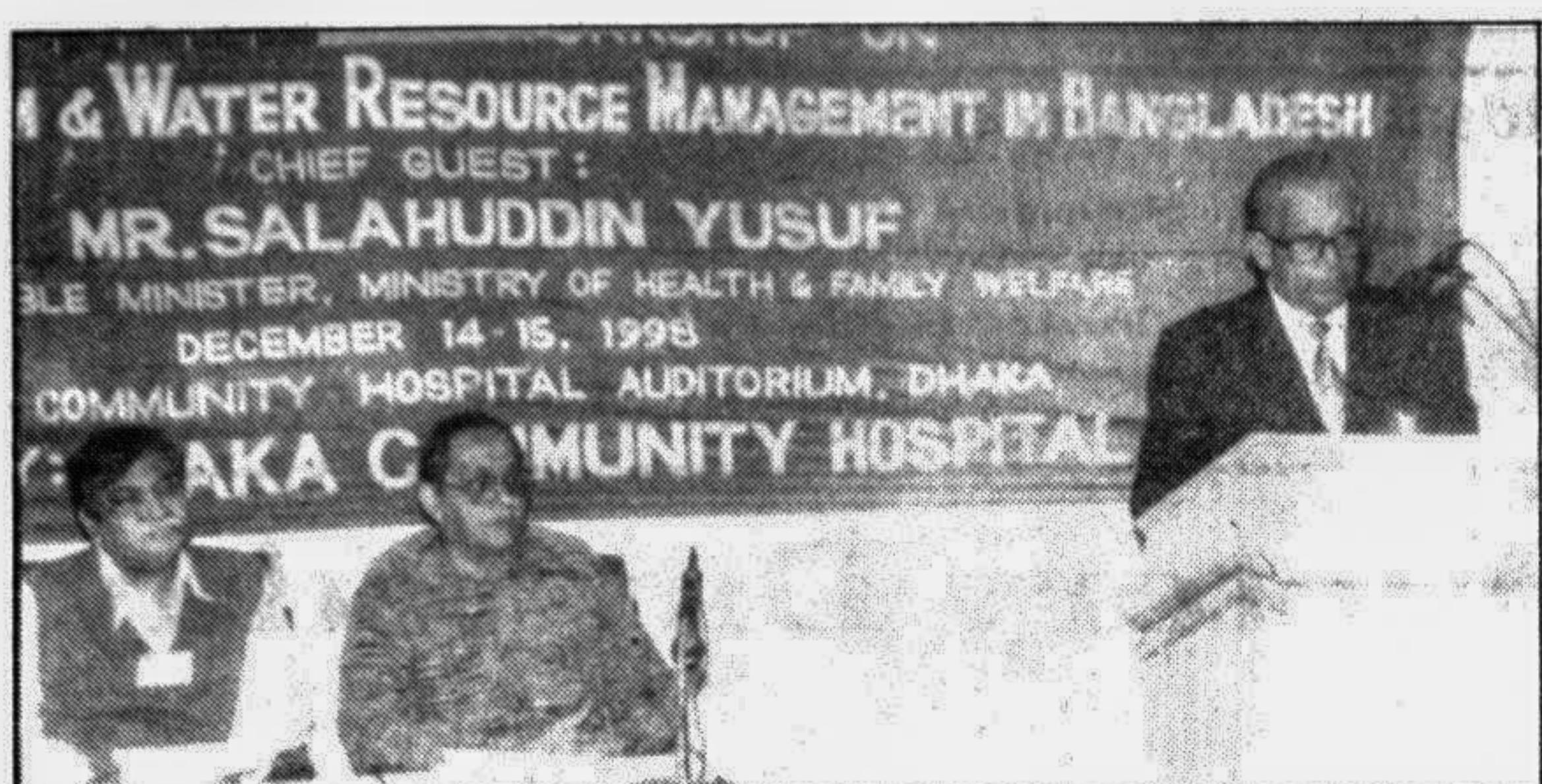


News



Health Minister Salauddin Yusuf speaking at a 2-day international workshop on 'Arsenic problem and water resource management in Bangladesh' at the Dhaka Community Hospital auditorium yesterday.

—Star photo

Seminar on arsenic problem ends

Call for urgent actions, integrated programme

By Staff Correspondent

Experts from home and abroad have stressed the need for expediting the identification of safe drinking water sources and expansion of mitigation programmes in the affected areas of the country to check arsenic contamination.

The suggestions were made in "Dhaka Declaration" adopted yesterday at the end of a two-day international workshop on 'Arsenic problem and water resource management in Bangladesh', organised by Dhaka Community Hospital.

Calling for urgent actions, the declaration urged all concerned including the government, NGOs, UN bodies and the World Bank to work together and share all information, knowledge and resources to have a sustainable and integrated programme aimed at lessening the sufferings of the affected.

It also called for participation of the stakeholders in developing appropriate strategies to achieve a successful model for mitigation of arsenic con-

tamination.

Recognising the need for community participation in implementing various mitigation alternatives, the experts felt that it is a must to decide the best possible options of

davpur University, India, Dr Tony Fletcher of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Professor Allan Smith of University of California, USA, Shahida Afzal, UNICEF representative in Bangladesh, Dr Shubhash Roy, consultant of Dhaka Community Hospital, Dr A Z M Iftekhar, project director of UNDP-funded emergency arsenic project, David Kinniburgh of British Geological Survey.

Earlier, the health and family welfare minister Salauddin Yusuf addressed the participants yesterday. He said, "The cause of arsenic contamination of groundwater is not yet known. So we must develop a mechanism to provide safe water to the people. For this we need more awareness programmes."

The World Bank's Water and Sanitation chief Babar N Kabir said, "We realise the magnitude of arsenic problem ... the Bank is ready to give an estimated US dollars 300 million in addition" to tackle this problem.

JU programmes on Victory Day

By JU Correspondent
Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus takes a festive look today as different socio-cultural and student organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes to observe the Victory Day.

The day's programmes will begin with hoisting of the national flag by the Vice Chancellor of the university Prof Alauddin Ahmed at 6:33 in the morning.

The teachers and students of the university led by the VC will pay homage to the Liberation War martyrs by placing wreaths at the Savar National Mausoleum at 7 am.

Besides, the final match of the Chancellor's Cup V-Day Football Tournament between Al-Beruni Hall and Shaheed Salam Barkat Hall and the final round of the handball tournament between Nawab Faizunnesa Hall and Shaheed Jahanara Imam Hall will be held at the university playground at 9 am.

Meanwhile, a two-day book and picture exhibition organised to observe the Martyred Intellectuals' Day and Victory Day ended yesterday.

Gold worth Tk 36 lakh seized at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent
Customs authorities at the Zia International Airport seized 230 grams of gold bars and 2152 grams of gold ornaments worth about Tk. 36 lakh from three passengers yesterday.

A customs surveillance team recovered the gold from Alauddin Al Azad, Dudu Miah and Shahjahan Siraji, who arrived from Singapore on a Bangladesh Biman flight about 4 am yesterday.

All three were taken into custody.

Meanwhile, the Customs authorities also seized contraband medicine worth about Tk 20 lakh yesterday.

A customs surveillance team recovered the medicine from a carton addressed to Ruma Enterprises at New Elephant Road in the city.

Zonta Club postpones Fun Bazaar

The Zonta Club of Dhaka-III has postponed its Fun Bazaar, which was scheduled to be held on December 18, at the Gulshan Club, due to some unavoidable reasons, says a press release.

All card-holders have been requested to retain their cards till further announcement and stall-holders requested to contact relevant club personnel.

Obituary

By Staff Correspondent
Mahbubul Haq, a leading industrialist, social worker and Director of Voyager Garments Ltd, died on Monday night at his Dhanmondi residence. He was 50.

He left behind his mother, wife, three daughters, and a host of relatives and friends.

His *qulkuwali* will be held on Friday after Asr prayers at his Dhanmondi residence. Relatives and friends have been requested to attend the *qul*.

BNP delves into Pabna debacle as discontent in the party brews

From Page 1
also on by-election duty insisted on boycotting the vote much earlier citing irregularities. Many others were found missing from election duties, party sources said.

Following conflicting reports, the party top brass in Dhaka had to wait until 9:00 pm that day to reject the vote. As explained by the BNP secretary general on Sunday, they would have rejected the results at 2 pm had the EC not assured them of looking into the alleged malpractice.

Angered by the outcome of the Pabna by-polls, Khaleda came to her Minto Road office the day after the election and discussed the issue with Manan Bhuiyan and others. In the evening meeting, she was furious that the key election monitors sent "misleading reports".

Many of BNP's election monitors are also being criticised for "not guarding" against alleged rigging and other irregularities in the elections and bringing those to the notice of the authorities in time.

Controversies abound within the party, meanwhile.

According to insiders, the BNP is now divided into three camps on the by-election issue — the central leaders who remained in Dhaka, those assigned to go to Pabna and local leaders. The groups are now blaming each other for the debacle.

Election co-ordinator Patal, candidate Habib and others are being blamed for misleading the central leadership that a BNP win was on the way. While others assigned to monitor the vote are being charged with lapses in their duties.

Patal has his points to defend himself. "There was no lack of preparation on the part of the party. In fact, a congenial atmosphere for election was not there," he told reporters in the city on Monday.

Charges against some partymen are more serious. "There are reasons to believe these people collaborated with the ruling party," said one party leader, without elaborating.

Seven held while looting jute godown

By Staff Correspondent
Seven persons were arrested while looting a jute godown at Mirpur Section-10 on the early yesterday.

Local people chased the youths who were looting jute from the godown at around 2:30 am apparently with an intention to unload the godown for occupying the land, police said.

The arrested were identified as Touhid, Mashru, Abdur Rahman, Zakir Hossain, Mohammad Shafiq, Jahangir Hossain and a constable of the Special Branch Bablu Rahman.

Owner of the godown Shah Piar Ahmad lodged a case with the Mirpur thana.

Craft exhibit

A 3-day exhibition and sale of plants, terracotta pots, Christmas cakes and Bangladeshi rice cakes by Amy's Craft will begin in the city tomorrow.

The exhibition will be held at House 20, Road 42, Gulshan and will remain open from 10 am to 5 pm.

Sathi rendering

Describing the role of student in different democratic movement, Forest and Environment Minister Sajeda Chowdhury said the historic six-point movement was organised by the students as the leaders were then detained in jail.

Addressing a meeting at the TSC crossing of the Dhaka University yesterday, Tofail said the military rulers were responsible for the present deplorable situation of the student politics.

The discussion meeting tilted 'Role of students in the Liberation War' was organised by the DU unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in observance of the Victory Day.

He urged students to take concerted move against the terrorists. Only five per cent students were involved in terrorist activities at the university, he added.

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A child artiste performing dance at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

—Star photo

that the BNP agents were ousted by the ruling party activists who also placed their men as BNP agents in some centres.

Inside the party, there is a lot of discussion. Some veterans of the Pabna battle say the "win-or-not-win" dilemma in fact turned the table against the BNP.

One group believed that a victory would not mean anything at the moment, they say. Rather, a defeat would hand the party a good issue to agitate against the government.

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BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Ashraf Hossain, Mirza Abbas, Alangir Kabir, Amanullah Aman, Nazibul Bashar Majibhandari and Gias Kamal Chowdhury were present on the occasion.



National Crafts Council of Bangladesh organised an award ceremony for Jahanara Begum of Sarsha, Jessor at the UNDP conference room yesterday. Jahanara won the 3rd prize for her natural indigo Kantha piece in the UNESCO Crafts Prize competition in Thailand.

—Star photo

Cultural extravaganza on DU campus

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka University campus and its adjoining areas filled up with the reverberation of melodious sound yesterday as different organisations carried out a variety of musical programmes on the eve of Victory Day.

The Jatiya Party leader presented a bouquet to BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia at 29 Minto Road last night and formally joined the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). re-ports UNB.

Welcoming the newcomer to her party, the BNP chief said his joining would further strengthen the party.

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Didar Bakht joins BNP

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One arrested with firearm

By Staff Correspondent

A special squad of detective police arrested an alleged terrorist and recovered a pistol along with 80 rounds of ammunition from his possession yesterday.

Addressing a meeting at the TSC crossing of the Dhaka University yesterday, Tofail said the military rulers were responsible for the present deplorable situation of the student politics.

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He urged students to take concerted move against the terrorists. Only five per cent students were involved in terrorist activities at the university, he added.

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