

S Africa Law Minister due tomorrow

South Africa Law Minister Dr A M Omar is scheduled to arrive here on December 25 on a four-day visit to Bangladesh, official sources said, reports BSS.

The minister will pay the visit at the invitation of his Bangladesh counterpart Abdul Matin Khasru.

Besides having exclusive meetings with Khasru, Dr Omar is expected to call on President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and Chief Justice A T M Afzal.

JUOS executives elected

By JU Correspondent

Executive committee of Jahangirnagar University Officers' Samity (JUOS) for the year 1999 has been formed unanimously, says a press release.

The body, declared yesterday, was formed as there was no contenders for any post.

Doctor ATM Abdul Hannan and Altafuddin Ahmed were made president and general secretary respectively, the release said.

Besides, Meer Abul Kashem was made vice-president, Mohammad Ali, assistant general secretary, Md Bacchu Mia, organising secretary, Nurul Amin, treasurer and Moshir Rahman, publicity and social welfare secretary, the release said.

Abdur Razzak Miji, Akhtar Hossain, Mohibullah Pathway and Sifatullah were nominated as members of the committee.

War Film Week concludes

By DU Correspondent

The 'War Film Week '98', concluded at the Public Library auditorium in the city yesterday.

'Film for Freedom' was the slogan of the week organised by the Dhaka University Film Society (DUFS) on the occasion of Victory Day.

The film festival was dedicated to director Zahir Raihan. Some 23 world famous movies on war were screened.

At the concluding session, a discussion was held in the afternoon.

Presided over by Prof A A M S Arefin Siddique, the concluding ceremony was addressed by Savas Dutt as chief guest. Noted film personality Abdus Samad was present as special guest.

Later, 'The Guns of Navarone' was screened.

BSS Journalists Welfare Assoc election held

Biennial general meeting of BSS Journalists Welfare Association was held in the BSS news room yesterday with association president ASM Habbibullah in the chair, reports BSS.

General secretary Swapan Kumar Saha and Treasurer Mujibul Huq Bhuiyan presented their annual reports, which were unanimously accepted.

Later, the election of the executive committee of the Association for the next term was held with Election Commissioner Hasanuzzaman Khan in the chair.

Chief News Editor A S M Habbibullah and News Editor Swapan Kumar Saha and Senior Sub-Editor Mujibul Huq Bhuiyan were re-elected as president, general secretary and treasurer respectively.

The other office-bearers are: Vice president - Mofakkarul Anam, joint secretary - Goyyuan Khan Milon, executive committee members - Haroon Habbib, S M Zahirul Alam, Shamsul Alam Belal, M Anwar Uddin, Sajjad Hossain Sabuj and Mumtaj Bilkis Banu.

Smuggled Indian sarees seized in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Dec 23: A special patrol team of Rajshahi sector of Bangladesh Rifles seized huge quantity of fine quality of smuggled Indian sarees and insecticide worth Taka four lakh ninety five thousand from Shahbazpur area of Bagha thana of Rajshahi district yesterday, a BDR press release said, reports BSS.

On Sunday, the BDR also seized Indian sarees and spare parts worth Taka over two lakh from Mirganj area of Bagha thana, the press release said.

Obituary

Sirajul Islam, a mechanical supervisor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), died of heart attack Tuesday night. He breathed his last on way to hospital from his Dolaiapur residence. He was 60, reports BSS.

He left behind a host of friends, relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Namaz-e-janaza of Sirajul Islam was held at Dolaiapur and in front of BSS office yesterday. He was buried at Azimpur graveyard yesterday evening.

Qulkhwani

By Staff Correspondent

Eminent physician, social worker and politician of Chandpur district Dr Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury died at Suhrwardy Hospital on Monday. He was 80.

Qulkhwani of Mujibur Rahman will be held today at the Chandpur pujan bazar residence of the deceased after the As prayers. Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the qulkhwani.



Sammlita Nari Samaj staged a demonstration in the city yesterday protesting the recent Anglo-US attack on Iraq. —Star photo

JS body discusses BADC audit objections

A meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on Public Accounts yesterday took several decisions for disposing of audit objections relating to Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC), reports UNB.

The meeting, held at the Sangsad Bhaban with committee president S M Akram in the chair, discussed 20 audit objections involving Tk 67.49 lakh of which Tk 16.75 lakh have already been adjusted.

The objections were raised by the Auditor General and Comptroller, said an official handout.

Committee members Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali, M K Anwar, Whip Vice Principal Mohamad Abdus Shahid, Abul Kalam Azad, Mostafizur Rahman, Khandaker Asaduzzaman, Hafizuddin Ahmed and Abdul Mannan attended the meeting.

Auditor General and Comptroller M Hafizuddin Khan, Agriculture Secretary A M M Shawkat Ali and senior officials were also present.

District relief, coordination body meet held

A meeting of the district relief and coordination committee was held yesterday with Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak in the chair, reports BSS.

The meeting discussed the food for work programmes under rural infrastructure improvement projects and agriculture rehabilitation, livestock maintenance and purchase, restoring communication and renovation of damaged educational institutions under the post-flood rehabilitation programme.

The meeting approved the scheme to provide 5000000 Taka house building assistance to 10 thousand flood affected families and 2820 metric tons of wheat to 135 projects in Nawabganj, Keraniganj, Savar, Dhamrai and Tejgaon circle. Besides, the meeting also approved the list of additional VGF card-holders.

The minister directed the concerned officials to work with honesty and sincerity for speedy implementation of programmes taken for the welfare of the people.

The meeting was attended among others by Habbur Rahman Molla MP, A K M Rahmatullah, Abul Mannan, Moriam Begum and Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka M A Mobarak.

Sonargaon Hotel's spl party for children on Xmas Day

The Sonargaon Hotel has organised a special party for children on the occasion of the holy Christmas to be observed on Friday, reports UNB.

The party — "Children's Holiday Pool Party" will begin at 10 am and conclude at 3 pm. Admission fees have been fixed Tk 100 per person.

Special attractions of the party includes Santa Claus photo session, Children's Zoo — wild life at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon, Merry-Go-Round, Ferris Wheel and Monkey Show.



Santa Claus giving away presents to the children at Frobel Kindergarten Christmas Party.

Tk 20cr sought for Red Crescent programmes

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has sought 153.14 million US dollars to support humanitarian programmes in 60 countries, including Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The federation in an emergency appeal launched in Geneva on Monday asked for the fund of which an amount equivalent to Taka 19.61 crore has been sought for various programmes in Bangladesh, one of the biggest beneficiaries of the appeal, a press release said yesterday.

The largest programmes in terms of beneficiaries or cost also include Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the Caucasus, Afghanistan and support for Liberation and Sierra Leonean refugees.

By region, the largest amount is sought for Africa followed by Europe, Central Asia and Asia and the Pacific.

The money sought for Bangladesh is for the continuation of the ongoing five-year programme (1998-2002) run by the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society. Major activities of the programme include relief operations for the Myanmar refugees, rehabilitation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and community-based disaster preparedness programmes in 23 districts.

It also includes cyclone preparedness programmes in the coastal districts, community services programmes, mother and child healthcare, blood services and institutional development of the Bangladesh Red Crescent headquarters and 42 district branches, the press release said.

Freedom fighters' enlistment in 26 dists completed

Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad has completed enlistment of the names of freedom fighters from 26 districts, who actively took part in the country's War of Liberation in 1971, reports APB.

Scrutiny of freedom fighters from the eight districts will resume today.

The districts include Mysmensingh, Kishoreganj, Habiganj, Kushtia, Rajshahi, Jessore and Satkhira, said a press release.

The Sangsad has undertaken the task of identifying and enlisting freedom fighters throughout the country in phases.

Xmas programme for children at Sheraton

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel has taken measures to celebrate the Christmas and the New Year. On the occasion, the hotel's lobby and various restaurants are being adorned with decorated Christmas trees plus Christmas wreaths and other decorations, says a press release.

The hotel will present a grand programme for children on December 25 from 11 am at the Winter Garden during which lots of games and magic show will be featured. There will be attractive prizes for children in the 'Dress As You Like' competition.

Santa Claus will make a spectacular entry and will give away gifts to all children. Besides, there will be live band and a session of lively songs during Christmas Lunch at the Winter Garden.

BNCB executive body meet held

The first executive committee meeting of the Bangladesh National Council for the Blind (BNCB) was held yesterday with Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf in the chair, reports BSS.

The meeting discussed launch of the activities of the organisation in the areas, especially in the field of malnutrition and in other areas to protect the children from blindness.

Nari Samaj protests air strikes on Iraq

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders and activists of Sammlita Nari Samaj at a rally yesterday protested the air strikes on Iraq and called upon the people to be united against the US and British imperialist attitudes.

It is our solemn duty to resist the aggression of the US who also helped the Pakistani occupation forces during the War of Liberation," said Nalpa Huq, co-ordinator of the women's forum.

Organised by the Nari Samaj, the rally was also addressed by Shirin Huq, Khaleida Khatun, Natasha Ahmed, Nandita Barua and Shaheen Akhtar.

Eagler, leaders and activists of Sammlita Nari Samaj gathered at Gulshan Circle-2 from where they started marching towards the US Embassy.

The marchers were carrying posters that read: "We will not tolerate any more brutality in Iraq," "Stop killing of women, men and children of Iraq by bombs and sanction," "UK and USA are the most uncivilised nations of the world."

However, the procession was intercepted by police while it was proceeding towards the US Embassy.

Later, they burnt effigies of the US President Bill Clinton and the British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

7-yr afforestation programme taken up in Bandarban

BANDARBAN, Dec 23: The government has undertaken a seven-year afforestation programme on 25,000 acres of land to protect the ecological balance and make the country self-reliant in forest resources, reports UNB.

Forest Department sources said, under the Forestry Sector Project, 1,000 tribal hulia families will be rehabilitated through involving them with the project.

Each family will be provided with five acres of land to make their homesteads, kitchen gardens and horticulture.

Besides, saplings will be planted on both sides of 125km roads and highways under the project.

Sources said, with the implementation of the project, production of 14 lakh cubic metre wood, 44 lakh cubic metre bamboo poles and 58 lakh cubic metre firewood would be possible annually.

Moreover, employment opportunity would be created and the forest resources based cottage industry would contribute in the economic sector, it added.

An official of the Forest Department informed that three forest departments including Sangu and Matamuhuri reserves of the district have 2.24 lakh acres of land while 4.20 lakh acres of government khas lands remained fallow.

He said after implementation of the project wild life might be protected in safe sanctuaries of the deep forest.

Water Policy

Following is the rest of story on water policy published in The Daily Star yesterday.

About rural areas the policy points out that the people will be motivated to develop different flood proofing measures such as raising of platform for homesteads, market places, educational institutions, community centres and adjusting the cropping pattern to suit the flood regime.

Under the policy, all existing and future national and regional highways, railway tracks, and public buildings and facilities will be raised above the highest ever recorded level of flood in the country, all plans for roads and railways embankment will adequately provide for unimpeded drainage and plan, and implement schemes for reclamation of land from the sea and rivers.

It said that water resources management requires involvement of the public and private sectors, communities and individuals.

About agriculture, the policy supports the private development of groundwater irrigation alongside surface water development where feasible. But there will be a renewed focus towards increasing efficiency of water use in irrigation through various measures including drainage water recycling, rotational irrigation, adoption of water conserving, crop technology where feasible, and conjunctive use of ground water and surface water.

On water and industry, the policy said zoning regulations will be established for location of new industries in consideration of fresh water availability and effluent discharge possibilities and disposal will be monitored by relevant authorities to prevent water pollution and industrial pollutants will be required under law to pay for the cleanup of water-body polluted by them.

The policy about the water and fisheries and wildlife is to reserve the water bodies like baors, haors, beels, roadsides borrow pits for fish production and development and water development plans will not interrupt fish movement and will make adequate provisions in control structures allowing fish migration and breeding.

About environment, the policy maintains that water resources management actions will take care to avoid or minimise environmental damages.

Under the policy, water will be considered as an economic resource and priced to convey its scarcity value to all users and provide motivation for its conservation. Appropriate financial incentives will be introduced for water re-use and conservation, responsible use of groundwater, and for preventing over-exploitation and pollution.

UN declares 2005 'Int'l Year of Microcredit'

The United Nations General Assembly has officially proclaimed 2005 as the "International Year of Microcredit," reports UNB.

The General Assembly, on December 15, adopted by consensus a resolution entitled "International Year of Microcredit, 2005," according to a message received in the city from New York yesterday.

The resolution was considered by the UN General Assembly under the agenda item "First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty."

This is the second resolution on microcredit adopted under this item. The first ever omnibus resolution on "Role of microcredit in the eradication of poverty" was adopted by the 52nd session of the General Assembly.

The proposal for the UN International Year was made by Bangladesh Prime Minister in her message to the first follow-up Meeting of the 1997 Microcredit Summit in June this year.

Following up on this declaration by the Prime Minister, the Bangladesh delegation presented a draft resolution to the 1998 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in New York in July on behalf of the "Friends of Microcredit at the UN."

The "Friends of Microcredit at the UN" is an informal group of ambassadors at the United Nations and strongly supports microcredit programmes.

At that session, the resolution enjoyed wide support, with about 50 countries co-sponsoring it.

The 53rd session of the UN General Assembly on recommendation of the ECOSOC and thereafter the Second (Economic and Financial) Committee, finalised

Arafat greets Shahabuddin

President of the Palestine authority Yasser Arafat has felicitated President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, reports UNB.

In a message received here yesterday, President Arafat wished the continued peace, prosperity and welfare of the brotherly people of Bangladesh.

Discussion on Bangabandhu, Bangladesh held

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak said yesterday that Bangladesh and Bangladesh is synonymous to each other so the name of one cannot be thought of without the other, reports BSS.

Addressing a discussion on "Bangabandhu and Bangladesh" at the Jatiya Press Club the water resources minister said Bangladesh never deviated from the thoughts of independent Bangladesh. He said Bangladesh spent 12 years in prison out of his 23 years of struggle and he was about to be hanged thrice. But he never bowed down to injustice, the minister said.

The minister said there were conspiracy to erase the name of Bangladesh from the history of Bangladesh during the last 21 years which is still going on.

The minister called upon all to come forward being imbued with the spirit of War of Liberation and foil the conspiracy to keep the name of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ever brightened.

The discussion was also participated among others by Harunur Rashid MP, President of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury.

One killed in road accident

KHAGRACHHARI, Dec 23: One person was killed and 30 others critically injured in a road mishap as a bus overturned near a bridge in the hill town this morning, reports APB.

Police and survivors said the overloaded bus was coming from Chittagong city. The accident occurred at the Chengi Bridge, leaving Sukkur Ali, 32, the bus helper, dead.



Mahbuba Mahmud of Nari Pakkha addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanding 'camera trial' of all sorts of repression of women including sexual harassment. — Star photo

'Effect of flood on environment received less attention'

Leading expert on environment and water resources management Prof. Ainun Nishat yesterday said assessment of environmental loss should be done after natural disasters like flood and cyclone, reports BSS.

Although issues on coping management with the flood situation have been receiving high priority in policy considerations, the effect of the flood on environment has received less attention than the due," he pointed.

Prof. Nishat was speaking at a seminar on "Population-environment" organised by the Department of Population-Environment of the Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB).

here in the afternoon on the IUB premises.

Population specialist Dr Kim Streathfield also spoke at the seminar on "Population and health" while Dr Nashid Kamal Waiz of the IUB chaired the session.

Prof. Nishat said the poorer class of the people suffered most during and after the flood because these people are forced to live in low-lying areas for their worst economic condition.

He pointed out several environmental degradation caused by the flood specially the damages on bio-diversity.

Faculty members, experts and a large number of students attended the seminar.

Tanti Board team meets Jahangir

A delegation of the newly-elected members of the Bangladesh Tanti Board (Weaving Board) Employees Association yesterday called on State Minister for Textiles A K M Jahangir Hossain at his office, an official handout said, reports BSS.

The leaders apprised the state minister of their problems. The state minister assured them of taking steps to solve those.

President of the association Fazlul Haque, vice president Mohammad Mostafa, general secretary Moshir Rahman and organizing secretary Nurul Amin were among the leaders who met the minister.

Seminar on microbial diseases of fish

A seminar titled "Microbial Diseases of Fish with Special Reference to Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EUS)" was held in Dhaka University yesterday, reports UNB.

Dhaka University Zoology Department and Zoological Society of Bangladesh jointly organised the seminar.

Prof Kishio Hatai of Nippon Veterinary and Animal Science University of Japan presented the keynote paper at the seminar.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof A K Azad Chowdhury attended the seminar as chief guest.

Among others, Prof Gulro Begum Sufi, head of the Zoology Department, Prof Dr Shahadat Ali and Prof A T A Ahmed spoke on the occasion.

Weather Dry weather likely

Weather may remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

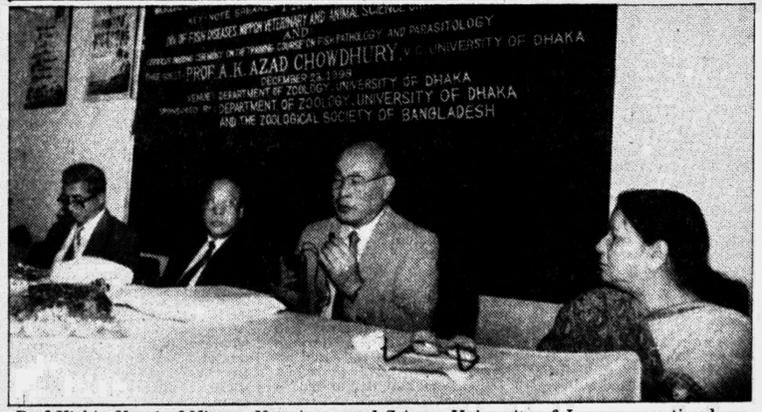
Met Office said light temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

Country's highest temperature 30.9 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and the lowest 9.8 degree Celsius at Srimangol.

The sun sets today at 6.38 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.18 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	26.6	12.5	75	75
Chittagong	29.5	15.9	80	74
Khulna	27.6	14.4	82	75
Rajshahi	26.2	13.2	84	80
Barisal	27.2	12.4	89	-



Prof Kishio Hatai of Nippon Veterinary and Science University of Japan presenting keynote speech at a seminar yesterday on 'fish disease' in the seminar room of the Zoology Department of the Dhaka University. The Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof A K Azad Chowdhury, is also seen. — Star photo