



Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed inaugurated the National Flower Exhibition '99 at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city yesterday. —PID photo

JU syndicate okays new appointments

By JU Correspondent

Six new provosts of dormitories and six other chiefs of various administrative offices in Jahangirnagar University (JU) were appointed recently. JU Syndicate, the highest policy-making body of the university, okayed the new appointments on Wednesday following expiry of tenure of the previous provosts and office chiefs. Vice Chancellor of the university, Prof. Alauddin Ahmed chaired the meeting held at the administrative building. Prof. M. Nasiruddin of History has been appointed provost of Shaheed Salam Barkat Hall. Dr. Farhad Hossain of Statistics — Moulana Bhashani Hall. Prof. Manjurul Karim of Chemistry — AFM Kamaluddin Hall. Prof. Saha Sultana of Geography — Jahangira Iman Hall. Dr. Rawshan Zahar of Statistics — Nawab Faizunnesa Hall and Dr. Tahmina Ferdous of Physics — Fazilatunnesa Hall. Prof. Mirza Mofizuddin of Geography has been appointed director of Examination Office. Prof. Amir Hossain Khan of Physics as director of Centre for Students' Welfare and Counseling and Prof. Abu Taher Mojudum of English as director of Centre for Language and Education. Besides, Prof. Selim Al Din of Drama and Dramatics has been reappointed Director of Teachers and Students' Centre for the second tenure. Meanwhile, Prof. Enamul Haq Khan of History has been appointed teacher-in-charge of central library while Prof. Mahmuda Ghani Ahmed of Chemistry teacher-in-charge of science laboratory. Teachers in the new positions take over shortly, but no specific date has been fixed up.

JS body on telecom meet held

A meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the post and telecommunications ministry was held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday with its Chairman Kamal Ahmed Majumdar presiding, reports BSS. The meeting discussed the overall activities of the public sector telecommunication side by side with the private service rendering bodies like Grameen Phone, Aktel, City Cell and Seba mobile phone, Parliament Secretariat release said. The meeting urged the concerned authorities to properly implement the telephone system which has been introduced in the private sector with the noble objective of reaching better telephone service to the doorsteps of the subscribers. It also underscored the need for ensuring transparency and accountability of their activities.

Satkhira Bar polls 45 nomination papers filed

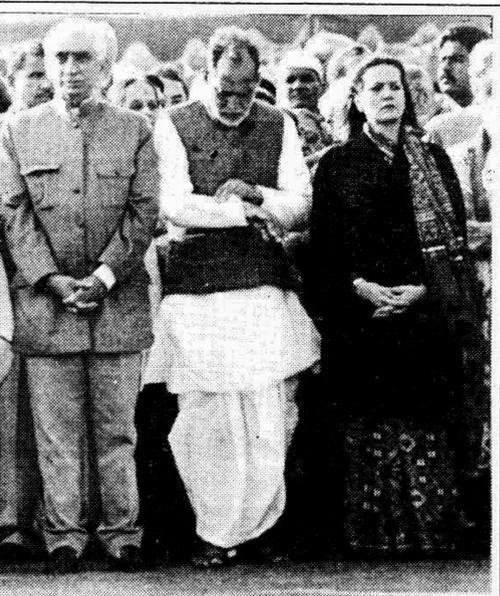
SATKHIRA, Jan 27: A total of 45 nomination papers were submitted for the election of Satkhira District Lawyers Association on Monday, reports BSS. The Lawyers Association election is scheduled to be held on February 18.

One commits suicide in Shariatpur

SHARIATPUR, Jan 27: Failing to wed his lover, a teenager of Japsa union in Naria thana, allegedly committed suicide at his residence in the early hours today, reports UNB. The deceased was identified as Shaheed (19), son of Mafizuddin and a BCL leader of Japsa union unit. Family sources said Shaheed had an affair with Fatema, a class nine student of Shaheed Samad High School of the same union. But father of Fatema solemnised her marriage elsewhere. After hearing the news Shaheed killed himself.

JP demonstrates in London

Jatiya Party workers in London staged a demonstration in front of Bangladesh High Commission on Tuesday demanding immediate resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner and holding of the municipal elections under caretaker government, reports UNB. The demonstrators, led by Farid Hasan, also submitted a memorandum to the Bangladesh High Commissioner in London to send it to the Prime Minister, said a JP press release.



Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi, right, with Foreign Minister Yashwant Singh, left, and former prime minister Chandra Shekhar, centre, during a reception at Presidential Palace on occasion of the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi Tuesday. — UNB/AP photo

Ershad thanks people for observing hartal

Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad has congratulated people for observing the 18-hour hartal despite 'attacks and repression by ruling party terrorists and police on opposition activists', reports UNB. In a statement yesterday, he said their demands are yet to be realised and the government has not responded to the four-point demand. "We have to continue the movement until our demands are met," Ershad said, demanding immediate release of those who were arrested during the country-wide hartal.

TNO released for misconduct

JESSORE, Jan 27: Sadar Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) Sirajul Islam has been stand released for his 'misconduct' with the Deputy Commissioner on Sunday, reports UNB. The Establishment Ministry in an issue on Tuesday ordered the stand release handing over charge to Assistant Commissioner (Land) Zahurul Islam, officials here said.

Delay by Energy Ministry seen vital reason Uncertainty prevails over termination of PDB's contract with foreign co

Termination of the contract with a foreign power company is still hanging as the Power Development Board (PDB) is yet to get any clear-cut advice from the Energy Ministry, reports UNB. A PDB official yesterday said they have already conveyed their stand to the ministry to terminate the US-based Smith Cogeneration for its failure to comply with the contract. The PDB is awaiting the Energy Ministry's final decision in this regard. "Smithco did not comply with the contract. We've no option but to terminate it," said the official. But the high-ups in the Energy Ministry are divided over the issue, an Energy official hinted. One section is lobbying to avoid termination of the contract with Smithco allowing the company to work here without paying compensation, while the other section supports the PDB stand. At a meeting in the ministry yesterday, PDB again strongly advocated for terminating the US company as it did not fulfil the contract signed on October 14, 1997. As per the agreement, the company was scheduled to build a 100-MW barge mounted power plant at Haripur near Dhaka within 10 months of the signing the contract. In case of failure, they are liable to pay a fine of 10,000 US dollar per day. The delay fine totalled 3.5 million US dollar and PDB asked the company to pay the amount plus 8.5 million dollar as liquidity damage latest by January 17 to keep the contract

Ekushey Feb programmes

The government has taken up elaborate programmes to observe the Ekushey February with due respect and solemnity, an official handout said yesterday, reports BSS. An inter-ministerial meeting, chaired by State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader, yesterday finalised the programmes. The day will be a public holiday and the national flag will be hoisted at half-mast atop all public and private buildings and the educational institutions. Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar will put up special programmes and the national dailies will publish special supplements to mark the day. Bangladesh missions abroad will also observe the day. The religious affairs ministry will organise special prayers in all mosques, temples, churches and other places of worship seeking peace of the departed souls of the language martyrs. Bangladesh Academy, Nazrul Institute, Jatiya Grantha Kendra, Shilpakala Academy and Islamic Foundation will organise book fairs in their respective premises. Besides, these organisations will also hold discussions, seminars, recitations, hand-writing competitions and cultural functions. Different road-islands will be decorated with festoons having Bangla alphabets while a musical soiree of patriotic songs will be arranged at the Ramna Batamul. The meeting decided that Dhaka University authorities will finalise the programme schedule of the Central Shaheed Minar but the ministries of foreign and home affairs, Dhaka metropolitan police and Dhaka University authorities will jointly coordinate the matter of lighting by the head of the state, heads of the government, foreign diplomats and other very important persons (VIP) in the zero hours of the Ekushey February. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Islamic Foundation will jointly organise a programme at Azimpur graveyard in offering *fatcha*, *Gurankhuan* and *munajat*. Necessary measures will be taken for maintaining law and order, smooth supply of water and electricity, setting up emergency toilets and medical camps from Central Shaheed Minar to Azimpur graveyard.

Drastic fall in groundwater level hits S-W districts

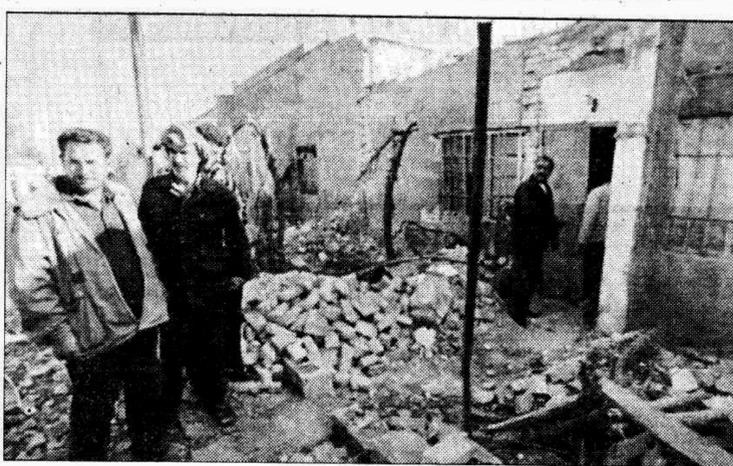
CHUADANGA, Jan 27: The south-western districts of the country are threatened with desertification due to drastic fall in the level of groundwater, reports APB. Ecologists fear that if the use of groundwater continues to increase at the present rate, there will be an acute shortage of water, creating other environmental disasters. They told APB that in Khulna division, about 20,000 crore cubic feet of groundwater is used to irrigate about 81,400 acres of land in Chuadanga and ten other districts of Khulna division for boro crop. The area is increasing and if the rate continues, the groundwater level will fall further. About 2,000 deep tubewells, 1200 shallow tubewells, 1200 power pumps and 2,500 hand-operated tubewells are in use in the region now. Experts say dams and barrages should be constructed to conserve surface water for dry season irrigation. The Water Development Board was planning to take up several projects for preserving surface-water in the south-western region, but could not implement any of those. In 1980, it took up the Upper Bhairab-Mathabhangra Project to construct a barrage in the Mathabhangra river to preserve surface water for dry season irrigation in about 50,000 acres

23 lakh livestock die of starvation, diseases a yr

PANCHAGARH, Jan 27: About 23 lakh livestock die of starvation or diseases in the country every year. Lakhs more are slaughtered by butchers and sacrificed on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. Since the replenishment rate is very low, the livestock population is dwindling drastically. Sources in the local office of Livestock Directorate told APB that there are about 2 crore 70 lakh livestock in the country. The number of bulls and oxen is about 70 lakh, calves 72 lakh, buffaloes 30 lakh and goats and sheep 23 lakh. More than 75 per cent of them suffer from diseases due to malnutrition, they said. The fodder required for the present livestock population is about 13 crore tons annually, but only 4 crore tons can be supplied, they said. Experts say that a cow needs 2 kg of straw and 8 kg of grass daily but the supply is far below that. Cultivation of improved varieties of grass like Napier and Alfalfa has dropped considerably. In '91-'92, 4,944 acres of land were planted with improved varieties of grass which has come down to less than half now, they said. There are 432 grass nurseries in the country, but due to unavailability of fellow lands their impact is minimal.

One killed in Netrakona

NETRAKONA, Jan 27: One person was killed and the wheels of a truck near the town on Netrakona-Barail road on Tuesday, reports APB. Police said Abdul Matin, Organising Secretary of Sadar Thana Disaster Management and Relief Committee, died on the spot when the truck ran over him when he was returning home from Digjan village near the town.



Iraqi villagers gather around a destroyed house on Tuesday after a US missile landed in the village of Abu Al-Khasib near Basra on Monday killing six people and injuring 17. A total of 11 people were killed and 59 injured in five separate missile incidents near the southern Iraqi city of Basra on Monday. —AP/UNB photo

Kumbha mela begins today

CHITTAGONG, Jan 27: A four-day Rishi Kumbha Mela begins at the Rishi Dham shrine under Banskhali thana tomorrow, said a press release of the Mela Parishad. Adviser to Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Suranjit Sengupta is expected to attend the inaugural function of the mela as chief guest. Many spiritual leaders of Hindu community from home and abroad will attend the Kumbha mela. Kumbha mela is held every four years.

Looting in Pirojpur

PIROJPUR, Jan 27: Pirates looted goods worth about Tk 10 lakh from a Pirojpur-bound trawler from Khulna near Chalna Port in the early hours of Tuesday, reports APB. Pirojpur police said today the pirates, numbering about four, swooped on the trawler, MV Baleswar, beat the crew and looted the goods including TV sets, oil cans and spare parts. The crew filed a case with Baithagata thana in Khulna district in this connection, police said.

School teacher killed in Jessore

JESSORE, Jan 27: A school teacher was killed allegedly by members of an outlawed party at Dalanghata in Kotwali thana here on Tuesday night, reports UNB. Police said about a dozen outfits stormed the house of Anwar Hossain, 35, a teacher of Khajura Junior Girls' High School, at about 10 pm and demanded Tk 50,000 from him. As he refused to pay the toll, they picked him up at gunpoint, stabbed him indiscriminately and left him in a nearby sawmill.

State minister visits fire affected area

SHAHJADPUR, Jan 27: State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Talukder Abdul Khaleque today visited the fire affected shops at Monirupur bazar here, reports BSS. More than 27 shops were gutted and valuables worth Tk four crore were damaged in a devastating fire on Thursday last. The state minister assured the shop owners that the government would provide all possible assistance. He called upon them to start their business afresh. Later, the state minister visited the newly established Bangabandhu Mohila College and addressed a public rally at the Shahjadpur High School premises. He also attended a meeting of the shop owners that the government would provide all possible assistance. He called upon them to start their business afresh. Later, the state minister visited the newly established Bangabandhu Mohila College and addressed a public rally at the Shahjadpur High School premises. He also attended a meeting of the shop owners that the government would provide all possible assistance. He called upon them to start their business afresh.

5000 cooperative societies facing closure

COMILLA, Jan 27: Some 5,000 farmers' cooperative societies in the district are facing closure due to stoppage of loan operations, reports APB. Unrealised loans with the cooperatives under the Comilla Rural Development Board in 11 thanas now stand at nearly Tk 8.30 crore. A source in the Comilla Cooperative Bank said that the problem started when Bangladesh Bank stopped flow of funds for farmers' credit programme in 1988-89. In 1991, the then government had announced that cooperative loans up to Tk 5,000 will be written off. The rate of recovery of loans slowed down since then. But official letters that followed, however, informed the cooperators that the loans had not actually been written off. This created a 'no loan, no recovery' situation in the cooperatives. Credit recovery, savings of shares, annual audit, annual general meetings and elections are not being held for years in succession. The central cooperatives societies now owe Tk 8.30 crore to the Comilla Central Cooperative Bank. The Central Cooperative Bank authorities have meantime filed more than 200 certificate cases against the defaulters. Chairman of the bank, Ali Hossain, told APB that it would be easier to recover the outstanding loans if the outstanding loans are written off or credit flow is started once again. SARIATPUR, Jan 27: Villagers of Anakhanda village in Naria thana here today assaulted a BRAC officer and fined him Tk 12,000 for establishing illicit relations with a girl by alluring her to marry. He was identified as Nazrul Islam, audit officer of BRAC, Madaripur zone. Local people said Nazrul, who came to audit Anakhanda BRAC office, took shelter at the residence of Hamid Bepari and established illicit relation with his daughter Shilpi (18) during the last five days. On suspicion local youths set up vigilance team and caught them red handed Tuesday night.

Int'l workshop on 'research methodologies on mangrove ecosystem' opens in Khulna

KHULNA, Jan 27: A two-day international workshop on 'research methodologies on mangrove ecosystem' was inaugurated here today in the Khulna University Academic Hall, reports BSS. Vice-Chancellor of Khulna University Prof. Dr. S. M. Nazrul Islam formally inaugurated the workshop with a call to identify appropriate strategies for the sustainable management of the valuable resources of Sundarbans. He said the Sundarbans are important for a variety of forest and non-forest reasons adding that they provide physical buffer against sea water inundation and coastal erosion and are particularly important in a cyclone-prone and low-lying country like Bangladesh. Presided over by Prof. Dr. M. Saifuddin Saha, Dean of Life Science school of the university and Coordinator of the workshop, the inaugural function was also addressed, among others, by Dr. Simon Kay, Deputy Director, the British Council, Dhaka, Simon Bland, First Secretary Fisheries, the British High Commission, Dhaka and Treasurer of Khulna University Abdur Razzag Sarder. The keynote paper was presented by the Chief Conservator of Forest, Bangladesh Mohammad Golam Habib. The first day technical session on settlement planning was presided over by Prof. Dr. Golam Rahman, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and participated by Dr. Mahmud Hassan and Golam Mostafa. Discussion was also held on settlement pattern around the Sundarban reserve forest, ethnic background of the people living in the Sundarban mangrove forest and their dependence on the surrounding environment and preliminary modelling for suitable site selection for shrimp culture in south-western part of Bangladesh forest areas. The workshop was being participated by over one hundred educationists, scientists, research scholars and specialists from home and abroad.

Terrorist shot dead

CHUADANGA, Jan 27: A gang chieftain and fugitive from justice was shot dead in an inter-caste conflict at Boalmari in Damurhuda thana Tuesday night, reports APB. Police said Sathi alias Babul, 30, leader of a terrorist gang locally known as 'Sabuj Sathi Bahini', was called out of his residence at Charulia and taken to a field by miscreants at about 8:30 pm. Police later recovered his bullet-ridden body. Sathi, a top terror of Chuadanga and Meherpur areas, was a wanted convict in a triple murder case, police said. Several attempts to arrest Sathi, also an accused in six other cases relating to murder, extortion and possession of illegal firearms, had failed as he supposedly fled across the border every time police raided his different hideouts. He was killed apparently as a sequel to an intra-gang conflict, police added. His body was sent to the morgue for autopsy. The concluding session was also addressed by the State Minister for Health and Family Welfare M. Amanullah, WHO Country Representative Dr. W. Hardjotanojo, Primary Health Care Director Dr. Shamsul Hoque and Deputy Programme Manager of National Leprosy Eradication Programme Dr. Jalaluddin Ahmed while Director General of Health Services Prof. A. K. M. Nurul Islam was in the chair.

9 arrested BNP, Jamaat activists freed on bail

BANDARBAN, Jan 27: Nine activists of the allied opposition political parties led by BNP, arrested during Tuesday's hartal violence in the hill town, were released on bail today, reports UNB. The activists belonging to BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami were arrested on charge of carrying out attacks on police and causing damage to property. After their release, the parties held a meeting here in the afternoon which was addressed by district BNP president Mana Ching, Kazi Mohit Hossain Jatno and Jamaat leader Dalilur Rahman. The also brought out a protest procession against the 'attacks' on district BNP office, local Islamic library and a mosque allegedly by ruling party 'terrorists' amid the troubles on Tuesday.

2 killed in road accidents

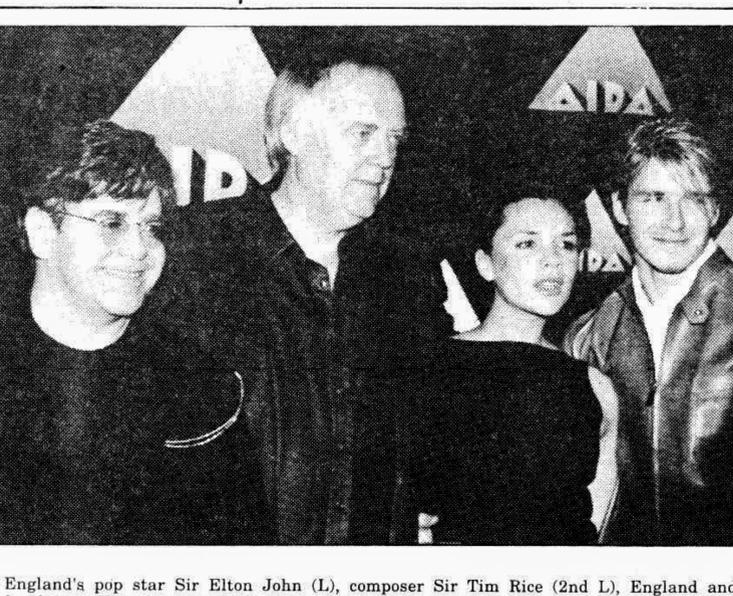
COMILLA, Jan 27: Two people, including a minor girl, were killed and 20 others injured in two separate road accidents in the district today, reports APB. Police and witnesses said a Dhaka-bound bus from Chittagang collided head-on with a private car coming from the opposite direction at Jakla under Chittagang thana on the Dhaka-Chittagang highway at about 11 am. Alamgir, 32, the driver of the private car who was critically injured, died on the way to Comilla Combined Military Hospital (CCMH). Some 14 others injured in the accident were admitted to different hospitals and clinics. Police seized the bus, but its driver fled the scene. In another accident, 8-year-old Rosna, daughter of Bulu Mollah of Pateshor village in Kaliya thana of Barail district, was run over by a Comilla-bound bus at Rampur Mill-gate on the Comilla-Sylhet road. The accident occurred at about 2 pm when the girl was crossing the road with her mother, witnesses said. Her mother and five others were also injured as the bus skidded off the road and fell into a ditch. The injured people were admitted to different hospitals in the area. Police seized the bus, but its driver fled.

Media workshop on leprosy concludes

State Minister for Information Prof. Abu Sayeed yesterday said government will provide allied cooperation in launching a joint campaign by the electronic and print media for elimination of leprosy from the country. He said the media could play an important role in combating leprosy by spreading campaign at the social level. Prof. Sayeed was speaking as chief guest at the concluding session of the two-day media workshop ahead of week-long National Leprosy Elimination Campaign that will begin on February 1. Leprosy is now a completely curable disease which once used to be considered as non-curable and a curse of God, experts at the workshop said. With an estimated 30,000 undetected cases, Bangladesh has the fourth highest leprosy case in the world with a prevalence rate of about three per 10,000 population. Prof. Sayeed said ignorance and wrong education about leprosy had created a dreadful picture about it in the minds of the people. He said all past literatures had projected only the dangers of leprosy and no information was there about its cure. He said both the electronic-radio and television and the print media could be utilised to make the people aware that leprosy is a curable disease and it is possible to free the country from this by the year 2002. He suggested organising rallies of cured leprosy patients to drum up the campaign against the disease. He also suggested display of pictures of eminent public personalities hugging leprosy patients with a view to displaying wrong ideas in society about its infection. The concluding session was also addressed by the State Minister for Health and Family Welfare M. Amanullah, WHO Country Representative Dr. W. Hardjotanojo, Primary Health Care Director Dr. Shamsul Hoque and Deputy Programme Manager of National Leprosy Eradication Programme Dr. Jalaluddin Ahmed while Director General of Health Services Prof. A. K. M. Nurul Islam was in the chair.

Work on 120 km electricity line going on smoothly in Jessore

JESSORE, Jan 27: The setting up of 120-km electricity line is going on smoothly in the current 1998-99 fiscal year, set under Jessore Palli-Bidyut Samiti, reports BSS. The project, costing Taka six crore, will be completed by next June. The GM of Jessore Palli-Bidyut Samiti informed that completion of the work will bring five thousand families of 30 villages under electricity network. Moreover a large number of deep and shallow tubewells, rice mills and small cottage industries will also be benefited. About 40 per cent of the total work has already been completed. The GM informed further that after the completion of the work, another project of setting up of 100-km electricity line will also be started.



England's pop star Sir Elton John (L), composer Sir Tim Rice (2nd L), England and Manchester United soccer star David Beckham (R) and his fiancée Victoria Adams of the Spice Girls, pose for photographs on Tuesday at the launch of the Aida project, a Disney stage musical planned for Broadway, written by Elton John and Tim Rice, adapted from the famous Verdi opera 'Aida'. The launch took place at the Whitfield Recording Studio in west London. —AFP photo