

News

Satellite phone service in Bangladesh soon

By Staff Correspondent
Bangladesh is going to be covered by satellite telephone service (STS) by the second half of this year.

Asia Cellular Satellite (ACeS) Bangladesh, a nominated national service provider of ACeS International, will launch the service, says a press release.

The service, known as Global Mobile Personal Communication by Satellite (GMPCS), will cover the entire Asia-Pacific region through the Garuda-1 satellite.

ACeS Bangladesh is also planning to install its own gateway in Bangladesh for interconnection with other local operators including BTTB, Sheba, GP and AKTEL, the release said.

Ericsson will supply the satellite hand sets for the system and dual-mode satellite phones can be used both with the satellite and the GSM systems.

Two youths arrested with phenisidyl

BARISAL, Jan 31: Police arrested two youths along with 165 bottles of phenisidyl syrup from Kauna branch road in the town early Friday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided a residence in the area and arrested Nasir, 20, and Khokon, 22.

Another report from Manikganj adds: Passengers caught a young man along with a pipegun from a bus on Singair-Manikganj road at Garada bus terminal Thursday.

The young man, identified as Abdul Khaled, 20, of Dehphat village in Singair thana, was handed over to police.

UNB correspondent from Sirajganj reports: Police arrested a man along with a gun from a house at Dhanbandhi Nimala in the town early Friday.

Foundation stone of Tk 16 cr jail laid in Chandpur

CHANDPUR, Jan 31: Home Minister Rafiqul Islam has said the government's aim is to turn prisons into 'correction centres' for criminals instead of a place for their punishment, reports BSS.

The government has laid emphasis on vocational training for prisoners so they can earn money and lead normal life after being freed from jails, the minister said while laying the foundation stone of a new prison building in the district yesterday.

Besides, the government is considering to hand over to the prisoners portion of their income on release, he said.

The jail will be constructed at a cost of Taka 16.33 crore.

"Construction of new prisons is essential as there is lack of space in the existing ones," the minister said.

The function was also addressed, among others, by Inspector General of Prisons Brigadier Waliur Rahman, president and general secretary of Chandpur district Awami League Sirajul Islam and Fazlul Haq Sarkar, deputy commissioner, police super and chief engineer of Public Works Department.

Opposition leader goes on trial in S'pore today

SINGAPORE, Jan 31: A law restricting free speech is expected to be put to the test on Monday as an opposition politician goes to trial for addressing crowds without police approval, reports AP.

Singapore Democratic Party chief Chee Soon Juan flouted the Public Entertainment Act on December 29 and January 5 when he spoke to hundreds of people in the busy financial district on domestic and foreign policy issues.

Chee says the law, which requires a police permit for any public address or meeting, is wrong.

At issue in the case is the constitutional guarantee of free speech, and indirectly, freedom of the press and the controlled political system that has allowed the dominant People's Action Party to steer this tiny Southeast Asian city-state from a colonial backwater to a prosperous financial and manufacturing centre.

Chee's first trial is scheduled to begin Monday, and if convicted, he faces a maximum 5,000 Singapore dollar (lrs 3,000) fine and a possible five-year ban from running for office.

His defiant actions are highly unusual in this orderly, business-minded country. Political dissent has been curtailed, and avenues for alternative views are almost non-existent, he says.

Pathological laboratory opens at BUET

By DU Correspondent
A modern pathological laboratory has been set up at the BUET Medical Centre.

Vice Chancellor Prof Nuruddin Ahmed inaugurated the laboratory yesterday.

The laboratory's facilities include radiology, ECG, ultrasound, angiography and pathology.

Presided over by Prof Shameem Z Bosunia, the inaugural was addressed, among other, by Dr Azizul Islam and Dr Md Shahjahan Ali.

Deans, head of departments, teachers and other university officials were also present.



Dhaka Leprosy Control Project brought out a colourful procession in the city yesterday marking the World Leprosy Day.

— Star photo

ME peace deal: Deadline expires with little implementation

JERUSALEM, Jan 31: A peace deal tailored by the United States to meet the needs of both parties — security assurances for Israel, 13 percent of the West Bank for the Palestinians — was to have been completed by today, reports AP.

But after three months, little has been implemented.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of using the Israeli elections as an excuse to hold up the deal. Netanyahu countered that the

Palestinians are violating the deal by releasing militants rather than cracking down on them.

The timetable of the staged accord signed by Israel and the Palestinians at the White House on Oct. 23, 1998 was to be completed by today, reports AP.

According to the agreement,

Israel was to have withdrawn troops from 13.1 percent of the West Bank and released 750 Palestinian prisoners. In addition, a route for Palestinians traveling from the West Bank

and Gaza Strip was to have been operational by now, construction for a Gaza sea port should have been under way and an economic agreement between the two sides implemented.

The only thing Israel has done is accuse, the Palestinian Authority of not implementing its commitments," Erekat said.

Netanyahu froze the accord in December, claiming that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat had contributed to an anti-Israeli atmosphere.

Khaleda visits injured leader

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia visited an injured BNP leader at the Chest Diseases Hospital in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Ehsanul Haq Munna, youth secretary of Jessore district BNP, received bullet injuries in Jessore town during the January 26 hartal, said a press release.

Begum Zia stayed beside him for some time and inquired about his treatment.

She was accompanied by BNP leaders, including Major (Retd) Kamrul Islam, Mafiqul Hasan Tripti and Delwar Hossain.

Nat'l consensus in key areas a must for progress: Sayeed

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed yesterday said national consensus is needed in the areas like poverty alleviation, spread of education and curbing terrorism for the greater interest of the people, reports BSS.

Exchanging views with the members of the Bangladesh Press Relations Association (BPRA) at a city hotel, he said, "Once the opposition political parties along with the government take similar stand toward these ends, a positive and qualitative change will be seen in the politics of the country."

"It will also close the back doors for the conspirators for ever to assume state power" Prof Sayeed added.

Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Information Abul Kalam Azad was present on the occasion.

Presided over by BPRA president Khaleda Bhuiyan it was also addressed, among others, by BPRA general secretary Mirza Tarequl Quader, office-bearers M Tazul Islam, Nurul Islam and Shafiqul Barua.

Prof Sayeed said there might be differences on many issues between the political parties but it would not be wise to create any gap in solving the basic problems now prevailing in the country. He said we all must have a common goal to lead the nation toward progress within the shortest possible time with a common agenda.

Referring to different developmental initiatives undertaken by the government, the State Minister said these programmes would not be implemented properly unless all political parties consider those as

their own for the development of the country.

Prof Sayeed said it was widely felt that most of the institutions and enterprises of the country now lack efficient and skilled professionals due to prevailing social problems and instability.

"But the present government led by prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has laid emphasis on solving these problems and manpower development especially in the rural areas," he said adding "this is for the first time that a government had allocated Taka 5500 crore for rural development."

He said PROs could help bridge the gap between the government and people of the country through upholding the ongoing development activities run by the government. He sought cooperation and constructive suggestions from them.

Responding to different BPRA demands including government supports to institutionalise the profession and formulation of a national policy for the public relations profession, the State Minister said the government is considering to evaluate the public relations profession through establishing an institution.

Abul Kalam, president of BPRA and a Parliament Member of BNP and a Parliament Member of the ruling Awami League, said if the PR professionals are not evaluated properly, the higher educated and the meritorious newcomers in the profession would certainly become frustrated. He underscored the need for reactivating the profession through providing them with the scope of advancement immediately.



Nasima's solo painting show held

By Staff Correspondent

Nasima Khan, an architect by profession, and residing in Maryland, USA, had her second solo exhibition of 100 paintings and sketches at the DRIK Picture Library yesterday.

The vast empty spaces that surround her paintings appear to protect and cherish them. Her works are going down memory lane as she vividly recalls the places in Bangladesh that she has visited with her father and husband. Her earthy browns went well with the ultramarine blues and her skill as an architect helped in build this idyllic and nostalgic images of Bangladesh.

She says, "I am telling as much as possible with as little as I can. I am inspired by Tagore songs and the writings of Jibonananda Das. In my paintings, I want to reduce the subjects to two or three elements and let their power play on the viewer. I am also greatly influenced by Japanese art which I feel is unusually aesthetic." She is also greatly affected by Mustafa Manwar's work.

Iron lady Thatcher thinks Tony Blair is too bossy!

LONDON, Jan 31: Former British premier Margaret Thatcher thinks Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair is too 'bossy', according to a report today, says AFP.

The Sunday Times reported comments allegedly made by the conservative ex-prime minister, at a Buckingham Palace banquet when Thatcher sat opposite Blair and Queen Elizabeth II.

"I'm worried about that young man," Thatcher was said to have told a former colleague. "He's getting awfully bossy."

The Sunday Times said Thatcher was arguing that Blair was developing a presidential style of leadership, above his position as a 'first among equals' prime minister.

The comments were received with some amusement: during her 11 years as prime minister, Thatcher earned herself the nickname 'The Iron Lady' for her confrontational and domineering style.



Pilgrim dies at Biswa Ijtema

GAZIPUR, Jan 31: Zakir Hussain, 33, a pilgrim, died of illness at the Biswa Ijtema venue this evening, reports BSS.

Police sources said Zakir, son of Bahar Uddin of Arkanda village of Baliajandi thana under Rajbari district, suddenly fell sick in the afternoon and died after the Magreb prayers at the Ijtema premises.

Ustad Ali Akbar Khan honoured

NEW DELHI, Jan 31: Swarajya, an association devoted to music, has decided to confer the prestigious "Swarajya Puraskar 1998" on sarod maestro Ustad Ali Akbar Khan for his contribution to Indian music, reports PTI.

The award, comprising Rs one lakh, a citation and a statuette, will be presented to Khan at a function here on February 5 by deputy chairperson of Rajya Sabha, Dr Najma Heptulla.

Swarajya Puraskar for the year 1997 was conferred upon Bharat Ratna Dr M S Subbulakshmi.

Suspect charged for raping Miss World

TEL AVIV, Jan 31: Prosecutors charged a suspect Sunday in the rape of an 18-year-old Israeli who won the Miss World beauty contest, reports AP.

Urn Shlomo, an Israeli citizen who immigrated to Israel from Egypt in the 1970's and also goes by the name Noor Shlomo, has said he is innocent.

Linor Abigil has said Shlomo raped her in Milan October 6, two months before she was crowned Miss World in December.

Abigil was in Milan auditioning for modeling jobs when she asked Shlomo, who operates a travel agency there, to arrange for a flight back to Israel.

After Shlomo told her there were no flights from Milan to Israel, he offered to drive her to Rome to catch another flight, Abigil said her statement to police.

Abigil said shortly after the two were outside Milan, Shlomo pulled off the highway and raped her at knife-point.

Abigil said she went public with details of the assault days after Shlomo was arrested in early January in order to encourage other rape victims to come forward.

Justice Ministry spokesman Orit Shemesh said the indictment filed with Tel Aviv's District Court Sunday charges Shlomo with rape and kidnapping.

Obituary

Asgar Hossain, a valiant freedom fighter, politician and social worker of Comilla, died of brain hemorrhage at a city hospital yesterday. He was 85, reports APB.

He left behind his wife, six sons, one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers.

His second son, Iftekher Hossain is a Senior Deputy Principal Information Officer of Press Information Department (PID).

Asgar's name Janaza was held at Jigatola Baitus Salam Jame Mosque after Asr prayers. He will be buried at his family graveyard in Dovidwar thana of Comilla district.

Hossain, who was also an educationist, had been one of the organisers of the War of Liberation and had fought in Sector 2.

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru has expressed his deep shock at the death of Asgar Hossain.

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed yesterday condoled the death of noted educationist and social worker Asgar Hossain.

BCS Information Society also conveyed deep sorrow at the death of Asgar Hossain.



BCL brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday to mark the 'Jagannath Hall Repression Day'.

— Star photo

Fighting in Philippines eases

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines, Jan 31: Sporadic clashes between government troops and Muslim rebels eased Sunday in several southern towns as Philippine officials began visits aimed at preventing more fighting, officials and rebels said, reports AP.

Iqbal said government planes on Saturday had dropped bombs and army soldiers had fired howitzers at MILF positions in Matanog, he said the attacks were threatening peace negotiations, which were scheduled to resume in early February.

But Lt Gen Angelo Reyes, overall military commander in Mindanao, said Saturday it was the rebels who were harassing government positions and soldiers only retaliated.

A temporary truce was agreed to Wednesday but Muslim rebels asked for 48 hours to inform their ground commanders. Saturday was to be the first day when all fighting was to stop.

President Joseph Estrada has tried to minimize the extent of the unrest and has insisted his government is ready to re-take against any lawlessness.

Estrada reiterated today he would not allow the rebels to seize.

He said the government is willing to continue peace talks with the MILF and urged the rebels to help the government prevent abuses against Christian residents in Mindanao amid the renewed civil war against UNITA rebels, reports AP.

Dos Santos failed to re-appear or replace former Prime Minister Jose Eduardo dos Santos who took over control of a reshuffled government that was sworn in Saturday amid the renewed civil war against UNITA rebels, reports AP.

The president, who has also assumed control of the armed forces, appointed a new defense minister, Kundi Palhama, to replace Pedro Sebastiao who was highly criticized by other ministers after the intelligence services failed to detect the rebels' military buildup ahead of last month's return to war.

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