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Mun Mun Ahmed presents a dance recital at a programme staged to commemorate the birth centenary of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam at the National Museum auditorium yesterday. —Star Photo by Sk. Enamul Haq

Paying tribute to the Rebel Poet

A month-long programme to mark the birth centenary of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam at the national level was formally inaugurated in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Chief Advisor of former caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman inaugurated the function at the National Museum auditorium, said a press release.

The programmes, from May 1 through May 23, include music conference, Sadhak conference, reading and recitation conference, poet conference, evaluation of centenary, international conference and fine arts exhibition.

Besides, a Nazrul Mela will be held at Nazrul Institute premises. The main programme of the birth centenary will be held at Osmani Memorial Hall on the 11th of Jaishida.

Speaking on the occasion, Habibur Rahman termed Nazrul as the part and parcel of our culture and said Nazrul is recognised not only in our country, but researchers from abroad are also working on his works.

Terming Nazrul as the first humanitarian poet of our language, he said Nazrul's poems and songs would inspire the humanists to resist all sorts of discrimination in the world.

Rahman said Nazrul is his writings including the editorials of his literary magazine "Dhumketu" strongly protested the colonialism of his time and demanded the full autonomy of the then British India.

"It is really a rare honour for a poet to be awarded national reception at the age of 42," he said pointing out the "National Reception to Nazrul" at the Reception Hall of Calcutta on December 15 of 1929.

Presided over by the President of Birth Centenary Uddayan Committee and State Minister for Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader, the inaugural function was addressed, among others, by Artist Hashem Khan, Prof Anisuzzaman, Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed, Prof Rafiqul Islam, Sudhin Das, Dr Rajib Humayun and Secretary of the Uddayan Committee Nurul Huda.

Earlier, Habibur Rahman inaugurated a fine arts exhibition of 50 artists on the life and works of Nazrul.

Kibria seeks ADB aid for Ganges Barrage, CHT

MANILA, Apr 30: Asian Development Bank (ADB) is expected to lend Bangladesh 105.5 crore US dollar in next three years, ADB officials hinted here today, reports BSS.

In a meeting with Bangladesh Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria ahead of the bank's governors' annual meeting, the officials said they were actively considering Bangla-desh's proposal for ADB assistance for the development of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Mr Kibria sought the bank's assistance in constructing the proposed Ganges Barrage saying that it was a crucial project for using the water resources for the riverine Bangladesh.

The bank officials said they continued their help for small irrigation, embankment and other such projects but they would reconsider their strategies for supporting the Ganges Barrage project.

Later, Kibria met ADB Chairman Edgardo Espiritu, the Philippines finance secretary, and the bank's President, Tadao Chino to discuss bilateral and international economic and financial issues.

Tadao Chino praised Bangladesh's success in the economic fields and assured that the ADB assistance would continue in coming years as a major development partner.

A sweet surprise for Sonia

NEW DELHI, Apr 30: Prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee disavowed a debate on Congress president Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin issue during the coming elections saying it would not be healthy, reports PTI.

Asked what would be the BJP's slogan for the polls, he said without naming Gandhi that suggestions have been made to amend the constitution to debar those not born in India from holding offices of the president, vice president, prime minister and even the chief justice of India.

"But my fear is such a debate will not be healthy. Bahut Sach Soch Ke Bol Raha Hoon Main (I am choosing my words very carefully)," Vajpayee said in an interview to the latest issue of India Today magazine.

Dogs detect 106 bottles of phensidyl

By Staff Correspondent

A police dog squad yesterday recovered 106 bottles of banned phensidyl and arrested 28 people from City Pally slum under Demra thana on the second day of the squad's operation.

According to police, the raid was carried out from 4 pm to 6 pm at the City Pally slum. Members of the dog squad recovered the said amount of phensidyl from the area. A small amount of hashish was also recovered during the raid.

Earlier, the dog squad took part in operation at Tu Para slum, Balurmath, Sayedabad and Jurain on Thursday and the operation apparently failed to deliver the expected result, sources said.

The government has set a dog squad to strengthen police capability to fight crime and provide security. Twenty-five dogs were bought from Britain at the end of November last year to train them up here.

Agri-product export holds promise

By Rafiq Hasan

Bangladesh has tremendous prospects for exporting agricultural products to the world market.

"There are tremendous prospects for exporting agricultural goods from Bangladesh and increase its export earning," Ronald Black, chief of the Agrobased Industries and Technology Development Project (ATDP), told The Daily Star.

"If quality can be improved and preservation facilities developed, almost all kinds of agro-based products can be exported to the international market," he said.

In this regard, he mentioned export of potato from Bangladesh this year.

Black, a US national, came to Bangladesh in 1993 and has been working in the field of agriculture since then. ATDP is a USAID-financed organisation.

Black said facilities in shrimp processing plants can be expanded and used to preserve agri-products like fruits and vegetable for export.

The ATDP helped some exporters to export potato to Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka for the first time this year.

Black thinks that Singapore can be a 'base market' for Bangladeshi products, from where it can be sent to other countries.

The ATDP organised a trip of a team of frozen shrimp exporters to some importing countries to show them the system and facilities in high-tech processing plants there.

The 19 member team returned recently after a month long visit to the USA, Canada, Japan, Thailand and Singapore with export orders worth USD 18.37 million.

Talking to this correspondent some of them said export earnings from shrimps can be doubled only by value addition.

ATDP is now providing technical assistance, particularly consultancy, to improve the quality of frozen shrimps.

The main problem of

Court summons 18 sued by Jamaat leaders

Some 10 leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami including Golam Azam filed defamation suit against 18 people including journalist Abed Khan on March 9 this year, reports UNB.

The plaintiffs are: Amir-e-Jamaat Professor Golam Azam, its central leaders Abbas Ali Khan, A K M Yusuf, Matur Rahman Nizami, Abdus Sobhan, Delwar Hossain Saydee MP, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, Abdul Kader Mollah and A B M Abdul Khaleq Majumdar.

The accused are: Information Secretary, Chairman of National Broadcasting Authority, Director General of Bangladesh Television, journalist and presenter of "Ghatanar Arale" programme Abed Khan, Fayzul Islam, Syed Amir Ali, Supan Roy, Mehedi Hasan, Kausar Chowdhury, Nazrul Islam, Bulbul Ahmed, Khademul Rasul Razu, Akbar Hossain, Ramna Rahim, Shuva Ahmed, Anil, Kamal Huq and Impress Telefilm.

The court issued summons to the accused to appear before the court within next Sunday.

Sources said, Ghatanar Arale, a TV programme was broadcast on March 31 in 1998 titled on "Unbearable Memories in 1971".

JCD to enforce strike at edn instts tomorrow

By DU Correspondent

Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of opposition BNP, will enforce a strike at the educational institutions across the country tomorrow (Sunday) to protest attack on a JCD procession towards the Prime Minister's Office on Sunday.

At least 10 people, including two policemen were injured in a clash between the police and JCD activists at Bangla Motor crossing in the city. Police also arrested 27 JCD activists on charge of their involvement in destructive activities.

JCD had organised the procession to press home its eight-point demand.

The demands include withdrawal of 'false cases' filed against their activists, reduction of bus fare by 50 per cent for the students, removal of terrorists from the residential halls of the Dhaka University, reduction of prices of educational materials and arrest of those involved in the rape incidents at JU.

Hilly hurdles for rickshawpullers

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Apr 23: The hill-bound port city of Chittagong presents a scenic beauty, but it has become a cause of inconvenience and suffering to us", said 48-year-old rickshawpuller Chand Meah.

"It is really a very hard job to pull a rickshaw in the high-slope hilly areas. Besides, our sufferings have mounted due to heat wave", he added taking a deep breath.

Many other rickshawpullers echoed his sentiment.

Chand Meah, who hails from Muradnagar of Comilla, has been peddling rickshaw in this city for the last 30 years.

He lives in a slum here and somehow maintains his six-member family with the income from rickshawpulling.

"In normal time, I can earn around Tk 150 a day, but now I can't earn that much as I get too tired due to extreme heat wave," Chand Meah told this correspondent, sweating profusely after a trip to Ghatforhadbeg from Kazir Dewri Bazar.

Another rickshawpuller, 32-year-old Habibur Rahman, said "The hilly areas here have created disadvantage for us though traffic jam is less than in Dhaka."

Rahman said he had peddled rickshaw in Dhaka for three months before coming to Chittagong a month ago. "I have come to Chittagong for more earning as my relatives who pull rickshaws in this port city assured me about this. But it is very troublesome to pull rickshaw here because of the hills".

He went on, "I have decided to go back to Dhaka as I can't continue with such a laborious rickshawpulling here though income is higher".

Jafar Ali said, "I have to drink water frequently because of excessive sweating while pulling rickshaws on hilly roads. I am really tired of this".

Jafar said he had started peddling rickshaws two years ago when he was retrenched from a cotton mill here.

Rickshaw fare is high here.

Vajpayee warns Delayed polls may set Delhi slow on CTBT

NEW DELHI, Apr 30: India's ousted prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has said that if elections were delayed it could be difficult for the government to commit to a global nuclear test ban treaty, reports Reuters.

"We will face some difficulties, I am sure. If there was a parliament, we could have struck a consensus on these issues," the India Today magazine quoted Vajpayee as saying in an interview.

A copy of the transcript was faxed to Reuters today.

"But if elections are delayed, it may be highly improper to commit ourselves," Vajpayee said, when asked about possible Indian adhesion to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and other global treaties.

Vajpayee's 13-month-old coalition government fell after it lost a confidence vote in parliament on April 17.

Vajpayee, who shocked the Western world by ordering a series of underground nuclear tests last May, had told the United Nations General Assembly last September that India was prepared to sign the CTBT within a year.

India refused to accept CTBT when it opened for signature in 1996 saying it was discriminatory.

Asked whether he will call a meeting of political parties to forge an agreement on the treaty, Vajpayee said: "We will try that as well. But I don't have much hope since we are in the midst of pre-elections".

India's election authorities have called a meeting of all political parties next week to set dates for the country's third election in as many years.

Political parties are divided over whether elections should be held in June or in September.

The Election Commission has hinted that polls may not be possible before the end of July as the electoral rolls are still being updated.

Under the constitution, elections must be held within six months of parliament's dissolution.

Vajpayee, in another interview to the outlook magazine, said elections should be held in June.

He said revision of electoral rolls can be stopped and elections held. "It can be stopped. It has been done before."

Conspiracy

From Page 1

was the initial reason but instigation from certain quarters could be another reason.

Provost of Ahsanullah Hall Prof Abdul Muqtadir said that he had heard teachers discussing about instigation from certain quarters though he was not sure about it.

Leaders of BUET Teachers' Association, earlier in a press conference on Thursday, blamed students for the vandalism and declared their motive to be the rescheduling of examinations.

All Party Students Unity (APSU), formed just after the "infinite closing of the university," held certain teachers responsible for instigating students to attain their own political interest and topple the Vice Chancellor. APSU in a press release said, "neither the student bodies nor the central students' union was involved in the attack. It was an action perpetrated by common students to vent their anger about the university administration," APSU said.

Vice Chancellor Prof Nooruddin Ahmed said it was unnatural that the students were so agitated about rescheduling the examinations. "It is a mystery for us and we are investigating the matter," he said.

New private hospital in city

By Staff Correspondent

A 150-bed general hospital with modern healthcare facilities opens in the city tomorrow.

One of the unique features of the hospital will be giving proper attention to the needs of the patients. Nurses, doctors and other staff are well-trained in developing relationship with the patients, owners of the private sector hospital said.

"In the private sector hospitals, patients expect proper care, but doctors and nurses fail to identify or understand the needs of their clients. Here we want to deal with this problem and I believe that is what matters most," said a young doctor at the hospital.

"Maintaining cleanliness is our priority. We cannot afford to compromise on this," said another doctor.

The hospital has four fully equipped operation theatres with special overhead lights designed to produce minimum heat.

Interns' absence leaves RMCH in bad shape

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Apr 30: An indefinite strike by intern doctors at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital began today, disrupting normal work at the hospital.

The Intern Doctors' Association, RMCH Unit, called the strike in demand for immediate arrest of those who attacked Dr Sabuj and ensuring safety of doctors at the hospital.

Some attendants of a child patient stabbed Dr Sabuj yesterday in Ward No 24 after he declared the baby dead.

Six patients died today. Usually three to four deaths are recorded daily, RMCH sources said.

Patients were seen lying on the beds and on the floors without treatment. A number of patients left the hospital. Only a few senior doctors were seen attending patients in some wards.

The striking doctors brought out a procession and held a protest rally on the hospital premises. Speakers at the rally demanded immediate arrest of the attackers and removal of Director of the hospital for his 'failure' to ensure safety of the doctors.

"They vowed to continue the strike until their demands are met."

Power project pace

From Page 1

Development Board (PDB), Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA), Rural Electrification Board (REB) and the Power Cell were represented. All the agencies were sceptical about the practicality of implementing a so-called "crash" programme. Both the PDB and the Power Cell strongly prescribed competitive bidding for all power projects.

But, as the higher authorities intended to save time by skipping the bidding procedures, it is now taking decision disregarding the advice of its agencies.

A PDB official said that even if the government has to "stage" tendering procedures, it would do so by outlining some generalised terms and a four-page proposal with 20 days to bid.

PDB and industry insiders have expressed great concern about this programme. It's said that to use the existing barge-mounted contracts would be disastrous for the country's economy. The barge-mounted contracts are flawed and full of loopholes.

"For example, the \$10 million bond in a barge mount contract, was changed to \$1.5 million at signing plus \$8.5 million 30 days before commercial operation deadline. If the party is going to default, he will not put up \$8.5 million in bond just to lose it in 30 days. Thus, PDB could only e-cash \$1.5 million from defaulting parties and not the \$10 million as was the original intent and spirit of the tender," said a source.

Due to the inadequacy of the barge-mounted contracts, Smith Cogeneration, a defaulting company, has already taken the Government of Bangladesh to International Arbitration.

"Its well known that the barge-mounted contracts were supposed to have been commissioned 10 months after signing - not a single barge-mounted project met that schedule. It's now been over two years and practically only one barge mounted project is operating," the source noted.

Sources expressed their fears that if the GOB proceed with this crash programme, it would meet the same fate as the barge projects with even higher tariffs.

A week ago, the government assured the Donor Consortium meeting in Paris that it would adopt a transparent bidding process for all future Independent Power Projects. It further promised that all bidding would be done on the basis of least cost in relation to energy sector development programme, competitive bidding, review of fiscal and financial burden, and balance of payments implications.

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