

What's on today

Clinical meeting: Z H Sikder Cardiac Care and Research Centre will hold a clinical meeting on 'Myocardial Protection'. Venue: Conference Hall of the clinic at 'Monica Estate', West Dhanmondi. Time: 9:00 am.

DRIK founding anniversary: DRIK Gallery will hold day-long programme to mark its 10th founding anniversary. The programmes will begin with the inauguration of a photography exhibition. Venue: DRIK Gallery. Time: 11:00 am.

Photography exhibition: A three-day long photography exhibition of Syed Masud Hossain will be inaugurated. The exhibition comprises photographs of old and new writers and litterateurs. Chief guest: Md Nasim, Minister for Home, Post and Telecommunications. Venue: Shishu Art Gallery of Shishu Academy. Time: 4:00 pm.

MCE inauguration: Movement for Conservation of Environment (MCE), a student based social organisation, will hold its inauguration programme. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre. Time: 4:00 pm.

Seminar: A seminar titled 'Western Media and Dilemma' will be held. Chief guest: Abdul Matin Khasru, Law Minister. Venue: Jatya Press Club. Time: 4:00 pm.

Painting exhibition: The 7th solo painting exhibition of Mohammad Iqbal will be inaugurated. Venue: Saju Art Gallery, DCC North Super Market, 2nd Circle, Gulshan. Time: 5:00 pm. The exhibition will remain open from 10:00 am to 8:30 pm everyday till September 13.

Discussion: Ustad Ayet Ali Kha Sangeet Niketan will hold a discussion to be followed by a soiree of classical instrumental music. Venue Goethe Institut. Time: 7:15 pm.

Discussion meeting: Children Development Organisation will hold a discussion meeting on 'The next generation must know the true history'. Venue: Shishu Academy auditorium. Time: 5:30 pm.

Founding anniversary: Abritee Angan will hold a recitation production 'Tomsha' by Tarashanker Bandhapadhy at a function to observe its 6th founding anniversary. Venue: Shawkat Osman Smriti auditorium. Time: 7:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Rally: Sammita Samajik Adolon will hold a rally against fundamentalists and communalism. Venue: Central Shahid Minar. Time: 4:00 pm.

Recitation programme: Abritee Angan will hold a recitation programme on the 2nd day of its two-day long function to observe its 6th founding anniversary. Chief guest: Obaidul Qader, State Minister for Youth, Sports and Culture. Venue: TSC auditorium, DU campus. Time: 6:00 pm.

Weather

Light rain forecast

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty wind is likely at few places over Chittagong, Barisal, Khulna and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

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

The country's highest temperature yesterday was recorded at 33.6 degree Celsius at Sylhet and the lowest 24.6 degrees at Satkhira and Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6.14 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.41 am.

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

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening)

HERE and THERE

Pallima Sangsad

State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hussain Chowdhury Maya yesterday emphasised the need for proper grooming of the children to face the challenges of the 21st century, reports BSS.

He was addressing the Parents Day programme of the Shaheed Babul Academy, an institution of the Pallima Sangsad at Malibagh in the city.

Presided over by the Pallima Sangsad advisory council president Hafizur Rahman Maina, it was also addressed, among others, by city Awami League vice-president and Pallima Sangsad life member Monir Hossain Khan and Pallima Sangsad president Engineer Siddique Ullah, governing committee secretary Anisur Rahman and Principal Madina Khatun.

Maya said, without expansion of education, no nation could achieve the development targets.

He said next century would be a century of technology and Bangladesh has to keep pace with the advancement of the rest of the world.

The minister also distributed prizes among the meritorious students of the school, set up in 1976 by the Pallima Sangsad in memory of two valiant freedom fighter members of the Sangsad who were killed by occupation forces in 1971.

Later, the minister witnessed the cultural programme participated by the students of the school.

BNCC

Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC) of Dhaka University Contingent yesterday accorded a farewell reception in honour of its former Director Brigadier Mohammad Ali Hasan PSC at the BNCC office premises, reports BSS.

At a function organised in front of Administrative Building Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka

Kibria calls on Jyoti Basu

CALCUTTA, Sept 3: Bangladesh Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria today called on the West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu at his Writers' Building office here today, reports BSS.

Kibria conveyed the greetings of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Basu. He also apprised the West Bengal CM of the ongoing socio-economic development process in Bangladesh.

Basu showed keen interest in the present development process in Bangladesh. Kibria thanked Basu for his continued support and cooperation and his good offices in promoting economic cooperation between Bangladesh and India.



A team of children from Bangladesh Shishu Academy visited the Muslim Bazar killing field excavation site yesterday. —Star photo

'BNP trying to save killers of Bangabandhu'

KISHOREGANJ, Sept 3: LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman today alleged that BNP was trying to create anarchy in the country to save the killers of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports BSS.

'Transit, transshipment and corridor are not their prime issues, they are, in fact, trying to save the killers of the Bangabandhu and grab power in undemocratic ways,' he said while addressing public meetings at Bajitpur thana.

He said the proposed transshipment facility given to India in no way jeopardises the country's independence and sovereignty.

'The independence and sovereignty of the country is safer in the hand of Awami League than that of any other party as the party has earned the country's independence after 23 years of long struggle against the Pakistani rulers,' he said.

The minister also attended a Janmastami function and addressed several street rallies here.

'Madrassah edn will never be stopped'

SATKHIRA, Sept 3: State Minister for Religious Affairs Alhaj Maolana Nurul Islam said, the government headed by Sheikh Hasina will never stop madrassah education in this country of Muslim majority, reports BSS.

The salary and grants for the madrassahs, will also not be stopped. The government had twice given enhanced allocation for the madrassahs than the other educational institutions, he added.

The state minister was addressing the conference of Ebedayee Madrassah Teachers Association as the chief guest at Satkhira Thana auditorium on Wednesday.

Presided over by ASM Abdur Rouf, the conference was addressed, among others, by Professor Abdur Razzak, Awami League leader Sk Abu Nasim Moyna, Sohrah Hossain, TNO Nimal Chand Biswas, District Education Officer Mrs. Saria Khanam.

The State Minister said, efforts are being made to bring the Fazeel and Title madrassahs under Islamic University. He said, nationalisation of the Forqania madrassahs is also under consideration of the government.

A total of 125 Imams of different mosques are being paid Tk. 500 per head per month, he added.

Constable held for PM's signature forgery

Tangail police has arrested an earlier fired police constable recently for allegedly forging signature and seal of the Prime Minister for getting his job back, a police headquarters press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

A team of Tangail thana police arrested constable Nazrul Islam from his village home at Keshab Majjal under Sadar thana.

The arrested police constable submitted an application to the police headquarters with forged signature and seal of prime minister with recommendation for reinstating him in service and to post him in Sirajganj. But the police headquarters suspected the recommendation of the prime minister and sent a letter to the Prime Minister if the recommendation was correct. The private secretary of the Prime Minister replied in the negative.

Saying none of the signature, seal and recommendation of prime minister. He also informed that the prime minister never do so and it was also done by her.

Peace forum

formation of violent conflicts. It said the governments, people's representatives and civil society organisations should be encouraged to play a significant role in smooth functioning of the system.

The group also proposed a multi-disciplinary approach for peace-building based on active participation of, and cooperation among governments, parliamentarians, NGOs, private sector, media and others in civil society.

The third working group felt that significant efforts be made to downsize military expenditure in Asia. It suggested establishment of an Asian Peace and Research Institute to provide data and information on the stock of arms and defence budget and efforts to ensure transparency and accountability with relations to Arms Trade Agreements and Processes among the Asian countries.

It also underlined the need for promoting use of nuclear technology for peaceful development application and social awareness against the arms race through civil society, political leadership, media and educational institute.

The fourth group suggested enactment of legislation on peace education in the Asian countries as part of the traditional education system at all levels by the year 2005, introduction of specific legislation to ensure the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women and children and establishment of mechanism to document and share experiences within the Asia region as regards resolution of conflicts.

All members of the proposed AAPP should ensure that use of religion, race, sex, culture, class and caste as means of inciting violence and intolerance are condemned, it said.

Besides, it added, all parliamentarians in Asia should recognise the importance of globalisation on the least protected sectors of the society and enact laws for prevention and protection of the environment while ensuring sustainable development.

Congratulations



Begum Murshida (Leeza) of Eder Girls College, Dhaka secured first class 1st position in M Sc Examination for the year 1995 held in 1998 in Zoology Department (Entomology) under the National University of Bangladesh, says a press release.

She is the eldest daughter of Engr Golam Kibria Mollah and Shabanara Begum of MAK Consultancy, an engineering consultancy firm at Uttara.

Assignment

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 3: Dr. Miyan Rukunuddin Ahmed, associate professor of the Institute of Forestry and Environmental Sciences of Chittagong University (CU) has been appointed the Director of the Institute recently.

Dr. Rukunuddin joined in the Institute as a lecturer on 1985. He was a student from the 1st batch of the Institute.

After joining CU he was promoted to assistant professor in 1989 and associate professor in 1993. He returned from USA recently after obtaining a PhD in Forestry from the North Carolina State University. He also did his Masters degree on the subject from Yale University in USA. He has some 35 research publications in the field of his specialisation.

'Country earned independence thru' united struggle'

MYMENSINGH, Sept 3: State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Prof Dr M Amanullah today said Bangladesh was liberated in the bloody Liberation War, joined by people from all communities, irrespective of caste and creed, reports BSS.

'The country is not the home of a particular community, rather it is the home of people from all religious beliefs,' he said in a speech to a religious function organised to celebrate the Janmastami, the birth day of Lord Sree Krishna, on the Durgabari Nal Temple premises.

He said the objectives of the incarnation of Lord Krishna were to establish peace and discipline in society. His incarnation came at a time when the world was teeming with conflicts and violence.

Dr Amanullah said Krishna, who taught love for humankind, established peace and friendship in the world.

Death anniversary

The 27th death anniversary of Shahid Khaja Nizam Uddin, Bir Uttam, will be observed today, says a press release.

Nizam, who came from Malapara village of Brahmanpara thana under Comilla dist, was killed on Sept 4, 1971, while fighting in the Sector 4 regiment in Sylhet during the Liberation War.

A milad mahfil will be held at his younger brother's residence at house no 153, Rd no 3, Mohammadpur on the occasion.



Sadeq Hossain Khoka, MP, convener of Dhaka city unit of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) addressing a protest rally at Mukhtang in the city yesterday. —Star photo

Muslim Bazar site Visitors book opens for comments

A visitors book has been introduced at the Muslim Bazar killing field site to incorporate comments from the thousands of visitors to come to the place everyday, reports BSS.

Nearly 200 children and juveniles from Bangladesh Shishu Academy also visited the digging zone of the mass grave yesterday.

Meanwhile the Liberation War Museum with the help of Bangladesh Army personnel yesterday recovered 36 different sizes of human bones and some clothes from the Muslim Bazar mass grave in Mirpur.

These bones were found while digging towards the south western direction of the mass grave, said a press release.

KLA to form national guard

LONDON, Sept 3: Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) fighters will be allowed to form a lightly armed 'national guard', with uniforms and sidearms, Britain's Guardian newspaper reported Friday, citing Western officials, reports AFP.

The paper said the officials, involved in negotiations on the mandate of the force, indicated it would be between 2,500 and 3,000 strong.

As well as wearing uniforms and carrying sidearms, some members would also be trained to fly helicopters, although only for civilian purposes.

The guard has yet to be given a name, but suggestions include 'Kosovo Corps' and 'Kosovo Emergency Response Service'.

Babu runs

lodge a complaint with the party's tribunal formed in this regard.

They also raised question of violation of party constitution by holding two posts.

The issue was raised in a meeting of the party held at Chittagong Circuit House in presence of party chief and other central leaders when they arrived here early this year, insiders said.

But it remained unresolved and Babu continued the committee as its president barring others to form any committee, they said.

As a result, AL's Chittagong South chapter leaders, including Zafar Ahmed Chowdhury, chairman of the UCBL, and Sultanul Kabir, former MP, were kept at bay.

Babu was relieved of the post of Industries and Commerce Secretary of ruling Awami League on Wednesday following the UCBL incident in Dhaka on August 26.

He allegedly led a group of armed hoodlums who stormed into the boardroom when a board meeting was going on at its head office.

Despite central committee's action, he still remains self-styled president of Chittagong South District chapter of AL.

Ershad Sikder

1998. About fifty percent of this ill-gotten money was spent as bribes to some ruling party leaders both at central and district levels, police officials and relatives of the victims.

Ershad Sikder was sent back to Jessore Central Jail from Dhaka on Tuesday. He was sent to the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) in Dhaka under seven days' remand.

He will be produced before the court of the District Judge, Khulna on September 5 in connection with hearing of Joinal murder case, one of about sixty cases, the sources said.

Garments export

EPB and BGMEA.

According to the sources, an influential circle in the garments sector is engaged in various unfair practices for long but they always remain 'untouched' due to legal loopholes and lack action by the government.

They are engaged in illegal quota trading and forging export visas and other documents for long, which is tarnishing the country's image abroad and victimising the genuine exporters, they said.

The circle is very much powerful and maintains strong connection with high-ups in the government', said a high official of EPB.

The government recently transferred Abdur Razzaz, Director General of EPB's Textile Cell, allegedly because of pressure from that circle as he took some steps to bring back discipline in garments export.

Abdur Razzaz had suspended activities of 21 garments factories out of 24 found involved in unfair means. Many other were temporarily suspended and fined for illegal activities.

When contacted Commerce Secretary Alamgir Farouk Choudhury however denied the allegation and said Abdur Razzaz was transferred in normal course.

He however acknowledged that some persons had sent 'unsigned letters'.

Abdur Razzaz also denied that he was transferred because of pressure.

But he was removed from the post before completing three years. He joined the Textile Cell in December 1997 and was transferred to the Economic Relation Division (ERD) as joint secretary last month.

Mysterious disease

Following a 'crop failure' in experimental cultivation of brinjal in Ramnagar area near the district town, a Government-FAO joint IPM programme has come under scrutiny.

Farmers in the vegetable-rich district used to grow brinjal in the traditional method. As the application of IPM did not succeed, brinjal growers at Ramnagar told this correspondent that they would not go for it again.

Official sources in Dhaka said Ramnagar farmers are of the view that only IPM would not be enough to address seasonal pest attacks on eggplants and brinjal.

The sources, however, defended the IPM exercise saying that farmers could gradually reduce pesticide use without crop losses. They pointed out that brinjal growers have developed a 'complete dependence on chemicals' and it would not be possible to change this within a short period.

According to a FAO report, Jessore is one of three regions in Bangladesh where pesticides are used excessively. It recorded application of pesticides in some brinjal fields up to 80 times.

Owners of the farmlands at Ramnagar where FAO and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) carried out their experiment were sufficiently compensated for use of their lands, sources concerned said.

'Before a similar experiment is replicated in other places, as planned by the government, FAO wants to have an independent assessment of what it had achieved already,' one source pointed out.

Besides local farmers and DAE staff, some IPM experts from CARE Bangladesh also joined the Ramnagar exercise. CARE staff at Jessore said that they would have a meeting soon to assess the benefits of IPM experiment. But they declined to say anything about farmers' complaints about huge crop loss due to pest attacks.

Rajan Biswas, whose land was taken for the experiment, said that of the three maunds of brinjal he harvested, barely half a maund was consumable.

Brinjal grower Abdul Gafur who took part in the IPM experiment said, 'They taught us to catch pests by hand and with mosquito nets. They used 'neem oil' (herbal extract) and did not pay heed to our request for even a little use of pesticides. We ended up with crop loss to the extent of 80-90 per cent.'

Farmers said that FAO consultant Prabhat Kumar had told them of the benefits of herbal extracts' but their experience was otherwise.

Kumar could not be contacted at his Jessore office as he was out of the country.

Sources in Dhaka, however, said that the IPM experiment would come under 'thorough scrutiny' soon.

Many of the vegetable growers in Jessore, however, said an effective IPM method with provision for minimum use of pesticides would put an end to use of low-quality contraband pesticides from across the border, which have 'flooded' the local markets.

Suppliers of local brands of pesticides say that they try to discourage farmers from using those low-quality pesticides. But farmers say that they were not properly informed of what is good and what is bad for their crops.

Pakistan will apologise

Parliamentary practices in Pakistan

Asked how Pakistan reconciles Islamic rule with the democratic right of a national parliament to enact laws, the Speaker said: 'Prophet Mohammad (SM) had a council of advisers. In Pakistan, the parliament is the council of elected advisers to the Prime Minister.'

Replying to another question, he said parliament does not enact any law inconsistent with Shariah. There is a Shariah Council to scrutinise the draft bills in the light of Islam.

When told that the authority of making laws in a democracy is supposed to be lying solely with the elected representative of the people, the Speaker said: 'Islam itself is a democratic religion. It does not believe in social and economic discriminations.'

Asked whether he finds it difficult to reconcile his role as a Speaker with his responsibility as a leader of Pakistan Muslim League, a smiling Soomro said, 'Well, sometimes I definitely find it difficult. It is difficult for any Speaker in the sub-continent who is supposed to play a neutral role while running the business of the House on the one hand, and ensuring accountability to the party he belongs to on the other.'

'In my case, the government of Muslim League has absolute majority in the 217-member House with 50 opposition members. But sometimes, as you understand, a House even with a small majority could be noisy.'

Requested to give his solution to the sub-continental phenomenon, the Speaker said, 'Well, an ideal solution is to opt for the provision followed in British democracy where the Speaker is elected unopposed. But it would take time for us in the sub-continent to adopt the system due to lack of our education.'

Explaining, he said: 'The literacy rate, say in Pakistan, is 30 per cent while in the UK it is 100. So it is only natural that we need to take time to make perfect the Westminster type of governance in the sub-continent.'

'The culture of tolerance is another important component which is evident in the British parliamentary democracy, and again it is related to education. We have not yet been able to create the tradition of tolerance for political opponents.'

Reminded that educated people appear to be the main trouble-makers in sub-continent, the Speaker said: 'Well, here comes the question of accountability of the Executive branch of the government headed by politicians. For the first time in Pakistan, a former prime minister (Benazir Bhutto) has been taken to the court. And let me tell you that the judiciary in Pakistan enjoys freedom.'

According to him, the Treasury Bench should be more tolerant, compared to the Opposition Bench in a parliamentary democracy. 'The extent of the Treasury Bench's tolerance, however, depends on the Opposition provocation in the House.'

Asked about political control over the armed forces of Pakistan, the Speaker replied in the positive. 'The armed forces no longer enjoy the power it enjoyed earlier,' he said adding that the discouraging world environment is perhaps one of the reasons.

He appeared a little evasive about a question over the parliament's free access to military information. He said, 'The government of Pakistan has adequate access to and control over the military information.'

Besides, the ISI (Inter Services Intelligence of Pakistan) is under full political control of the government. Nawaz Sharif and the government was aware of the entire process of the nuclear blast in May 1998.'

South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation

134th day of combing operation: 997 arrested

A total of 997 persons were held and eight illegal arms were seized on the 134th day of the countrywide combing operation by police, Bangladesh Rifles and Ansar forces, reports BSS.

They arrested 517 accused from across the country including four metropolitan areas and seized the arms and ammunition, and explosives. They also arrested 480 wanted accused during the operation.

Of them, 186 persons including 25 warrantees were arrested from Dhaka metropolitan area and seized six illegal weapons, one bullet and two explosives. 25 persons including four wanted persons were from Chittagong metropolitan area. 14 persons including two warrantees from Khulna metropolitan area and 12 persons including eight warrantees from Rajshahi metropolitan area.