

What's on today

Clinical meeting: ZH Sikder Cardiac Core and Research Centre will hold a clinical meeting on "ICU Infection and Control". Venue: Conference hall of the centre. Time: 9.00 am.

Workshop: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh will hold a workshop on Compilation Style as part of the on-going Encyclopedia of Bangladesh Project. Venue: Auditorium of the society at 5 Old Secretariat Road, Nimital, Ramna. Time: 9.30 am.

Film show: Tanvir Mokammel's *Chitra Nadir Pare* will be screened. Venue: German Cultural Centre. Time: 3.00 pm, 5.00 pm and 7.00 pm.

Weather

Rain likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi and Khulna divisions during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Yesterday's maximum temperature of 34 degree Celsius was recorded at Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal and the lowest of 23.4 degrees at Sylhet.

The sun sets today at 6.00 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.46 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	34.0	27.0	76	85
Chittagong	32.1	26.3	78	85
Rajshahi	31.8	26.0	82	94
Khulna	34.0	26.6	84	79
Barisal	34.0	25.0	80	86
Sylhet	32.5	23.4	93	76
Cox's Bazar	32.2	25.6	79	85

Congratulations



Md Aminul Islam stood first class first in the M. Sc Final examination of 1994 (held in 1998) in the Department of Genetics & Breeding from the University of Rajshahi, says a press release.

He also obtained first position in the faculty of Life & Earth Sciences with 73.83% Marks.

His thesis was "Study of Germination response over five days in Chickpea".

Aminul had also stood 1st class 4th position in B.Sc Honours examination in the year 1993 (held in 1996) from the Dept. of Botany. He hails from village Kashipur, Jibannagar under Chuadanga district.

He is the second son of Hafeze Md. Mawla Karim & Shazeda Khatun.

Prokrichi rejects JS body approval to upgrade 321 posts

By Special Correspondent

The Steering Committee of the Prokrichi-BCS Central Coordination Council has rejected what it said 'one sided' recommendation by the parliamentary standing committee on Establishment Ministry to implement an order to upgrade the 321 posts in BCS (Administration) cadre.

Urging the parliamentary standing committee to reconsider its recommendation the committee reiterated that it would not help resolve the problems in the public administration. Rather, it would create further resentment and frustration among the Prokrichi-BCS cadres, the committee said after a meeting held at the Institution of Engineers on Thursday with Dr Rashid-e-Mahbub, president of the council.

In a resolution adopted at the meeting the council noted that since the partisan declaration to unilaterally upgrade pay scale of the 321 posts in December 21, 1997 leading to disparities in scales of (Administration) cadres with other cadres of equal ranks the Prokrichi-BCS cadres were aggrieved.

They staged protests and submitted a memorandum to the prime minister who ordered its suspension and sent it to the standing committee on establishment for review. It renewed hopes among the cadres but the latest recommendation has dampened it again, the council observed.

It also noted that the Prokrichi members had put forward their grievances before the parliamentary committee and pointed out that even some members of the committee had raised questions on the credibility of facts given to it by the Establishment Ministry.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan had a meeting at the United Nations in New York on Thursday.

Experts: Community clinics

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50 per cent of the beds in Thana Health Complexes (THCs) are utilised for the patients. We must remember that the existing healthcare system failed due to lack of proper accountability and supervision and clients' confidence in it.

"The CCs are being set up for political gains. Some people are behind this to make money," said Dr Morshed Chowdhury, a director of Ganashasthya Nagar Hospital.

"Over the last decades, a few initiatives were taken to improve healthcare services and health centres at union and thana levels as well as health professionals. Despite these,

only 30 per cent people have access to organised primary healthcare."

He said, "If we have to get the best services, we must improve the existing healthcare facilities and develop manpower accordingly."

Some other experts spoke of disparity in resource allocation. "Allocation for health sector is not a priority in the national budget," said one of them.

A recent study revealed that more people tend to bypass thana and district hospitals to seek services in the already overcrowded tertiary hospitals. Others turn to private sector for services against payment.

When asked, Line Director of ESP Dr Shamsul Huq said, "The CCs are being established to give the rural people more access to healthcare facilities. It has been designed so that clients can reach the centres in half an hour's walk at best."

Each CC will have two paramedics, one for healthcare and the other for family planning. They would provide five essential services. These are 'reproductive and child healthcare, communicable disease control, limited curative care and behavioural change communication,' an official said.

Boudha mission

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academic atmosphere at the school which remains closed most of the time. The helpless children taken there in the name of education are compelled to work in fields. They are not given proper food and clothing and are beaten by the Mohathero and his men if they refuse to work.

In the memorandum, they alleged that six girls including a mad orphan were raped by the mission director and his associates last year. The victims were Anumati Chakma, Kabita Chakma, Kajali Chakma, Sonali Chakma, Amena Chakma, and Triratna Ma.

The mission gets Tk. 20,000 from Khagrachhari Social Welfare Department every month. It also gets grants from NGOs and other sources including the Swedish embassy and Danish and Australian high commissions for the helpless children and development of the mission.

But there has been no development and accounts are not maintained properly, they alleged. "Everything done in the name of project implementation is false," they said in the memorandum.

They demanded proper investigation into the affairs of the PMB and punishment to the Mohathero and his accomplices.

When contacted at his office, the Mahathero said all the allegations are "false and motivated" and have been made by "some persons who are working against him since inception of the mission".

A memorandum was also submitted to the Minister for CHT Affairs on September 1, demanding arrest of the Mohathero and his accomplices.

Meanwhile, the residence of Surjyo Bikash Chakma, known as an opponent of the Mohathero, came under attack and a motor cycle was torched there on the night of August 30. Exchange of shots between the two rival groups were also reported on the night.

Surjyo Bikash Chakma filed a case with Khagrachhari police accusing 13 associates of the Mohathero. A close associate of the Mohathero also filed a case against some men of Surjyo Bikash.

Khaleda

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transport, banks, insurance and the Export Promoting Bureau (EPB), it added.

Clearing of raw materials is being delayed, causing failure to meet shipment schedule, it said. As a result the buyers were losing their interest in Bangladesh, it added.

"Many of the garment factories would face closure if hartal is enforced repeatedly," the memorandum warned.

Shop owners

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Referring to the home minister's order, they said "it is for the first time that the government has shown sympathy towards shop owners. This demonstrates that the government recognises shop owners' contribution to the economy of the country".

The leaders, however, said that deployment of police alone does not totally rule out the risk during hartal. Since there is no provision for the BSOA to compensate the owners for any damage during hartal, BSOA can not impose any mandatory order to keep all shops open.

The statement was jointly issued by BSOA Chairman Amir Hossain Khan, and Vice-chairmen M A Zaman Manju and Haji Mukhlesur Rahman on Thursday.

Gayebana

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daker Delwar Hossain, MP, Shamsul Islam, MP and Sadeq Hossain Khoka, MP and other party leaders.

Before the janaja, convener of Dhaka city BNP Sadeq Hossain Khoka paid tribute to Moidul Islam and demanded punishment for the killers.

Matiur Rahman Nijami, secretary general of the Jamaat-e-Islami also attended the janaja.

HERE and THERE

Phul Kuri Aashor

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 17: Phul Kuri Aashor, Chittagong city — a national children & adolescent organisation — has launched its month-long Silver Jubilee festival through a tree plantation drive yesterday.

On the eve of the occasion in a press conference held in a city hotel here yesterday the leaders and patrons of Phul Kuri said that with the motto of 'build yourself Phul Kuri through it's departments (unity, education, character, health and social service)' have been working aiming at building the children and adolescents as worthy citizens of future.

The leaders called upon everyone to come forward to make a fair and poverty-free atmosphere for this future generation of the country.

The month-long programme announced in the conference includes reception to meritorious students, open art competition, observation of world child day and film show on October 4, blood donation programme, and staging drama.

cers, Air Commodore Rashid Ahmed said that in spite of tremendous advancement of modern technology no organisation related to aircraft and flying could overlook the importance of flight safety.

SBED

Shell Bangladesh Exploration and Development BV (SBED) and the Ministry of Energy and Minerals held a joint seminar Thursday on the Y2K issue in the Shell offices, says a press release.

Experts from the Shell Group presented a worldwide status report on Y2K, illustrated with examples on best practice. Business issues, services and processes in Bangladesh were discussed, as well as measures that can be taken to reduce the risk from the virus.

Representatives of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, Petrobangla, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, Geological Survey of Bangladesh, Department of Explosives, the Power Cell and the Hydrocarbon Unit of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals attended the seminar.

BAF

The certificate awarding ceremony of twenty third Flight Safety Officers' Course of Bangladesh Air Force was held at the BAF Flight Safety Institute at the Dhaka Cantonment Thursday an ISPR press release said, reports BSS.

Assistant Chief of Air Staff Air Commodore Rashid Ahmed attended the ceremony as the chief guest and distributed certificates and trophy among the student-officers.

Addressing the student-off-

Peace Council

Ali Akasad, General Secretary of the Bangladesh Peace Council and Asian Regional Coordinator of the World Peace Council, in a statement issued Thursday expressed firm support to the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea in their resolve to defend and uphold the Military Demarcation Line at the West Sea of Korea in the interest of peace, territorial integrity and sovereignty, says a press release.

Two CPB leaders mugged

By Staff Correspondent

Two leaders of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) fell victim to mugging while coming to attend a party meeting in the city yesterday.

A party press release said Baduzzaman was coming to city from Joypurhat and Enamul Huq was coming from Rajshahi. Both of them were robbed of cash and valuables.

Two separate cases have been filed but none was arrested till writing of this report.

Admission fee hike JU students go on strike from today

By JU Correspondent

An indefinite strike by students demanding withdrawal of increased admission fees for the first year honours classes begins at Jahangirnagar University (JU) today.

The strike has been called by the General Students Unity (GSU) who announced the programme at a rally in front of the Vice Chancellor's office on Thursday. The strike followed an earlier ultimatum given by GSU for withdrawal of the increased fees that ended yesterday.

GSU and Gonotantrik Chitra Oikya (GCO), which expressed their solidarity with the GSU movement against the fee hike, will bring out a torch procession this evening from 'Prantik' gate. They will also lay siege to Administrative Building tomorrow during the JU Syndicate session.

Both GSU and GCO brought out separate processions and held rallies at all the students' dormitories last night to drum up support for their demand.

The university authority doubled the admission fees with effect from 1998-99 session of honours classes. GCO and GSU brought out a number of processions on the campus and held rallies to protest the move. They also submitted a memorandum to the JU VC demanding withdrawal of the increased fee. The agitating students halted the admission procedures on Thursday and called for the indefinite strike.

Obituary

By Staff Correspondent

Shamim Sultana, a teacher of Loreto School, died of viral encephalitis on Thursday. She was 33.

Wife of Dr Muslehuddin Ahmed, a teacher of Dhaka University, she left behind one daughter, her parents, a host of relatives, friends, and students to mourn her death.

According to doctors and family members, Sultana had been suffering from viral fever since September 6. She fully recovered by September 14, but she again fell sick the next day.

On Thursday evening, she suffered two consecutive convulsions and died after she was taken to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH).

She was buried at Banani graveyard yesterday. Her namaj-e-janaza was held at Boro Moghbazar mosque.

A milad will be held at the residence of her father Atiqul Alam, former bureau chief of Reuters and editor of now defunct Morning Sun, after asprayers today at 109, Boro Moghbazar.

Housewife held with liquor

GAZIPUR, Sept 17: Police arrested a housewife with illegal liquor from her house at Laxipura in sadar thana today, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided two houses of Iman Ali, and Matiur Rahman, a ward commissioner of Gazipur pourasava in the morning. They arrested Majeda Begum, wife of Matiur Rahman, while making liquor. About 55 litre liquor was recovered from the spot.

During the raid, some 10 people, engaged in making the liquor, fled the scene.

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 17: Mohammad Jahangir Alam stood first class first in the M.Sc final examination of Organic Chemistry (thesis group) of the year 1995 (held in November '98) under Chittagong University.

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From CU Correspondent

Al Asad Md Mahamudul Islam stood 12th in the HSC merit list from the Humanities Group under Dhaka Board, says a press release.

Asad who obtained a total of 859 marks with distinctions in 4 subjects appeared from Dhaka College.

He is the son of Md Moslem Uddin of Syedpur thana and Mahfuza Begum, a housewife.

Asad, who wants to prosecute higher studies in law, says he is really grateful to his uncle Rezaul Islam for excellent result.

Congress of environmental journalists ends

KOTBARI, Comilla, Sept 17: The four-day Congress of environmental journalists from Asia-Pacific and Commonwealth countries ended today with pledges for greater co-operation between newsmen for awareness development, reports BSS.

Jointly organised by the Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ) and Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association, the Congress on the media role on water was attended by journalists as well as experts and representatives of environmental watchdogs from some 30 countries.

They discussed issues related to water, one of the most crucial resources of the current and future world, and exchanges views on the strategies to strengthen the role of the media as an active agent for awareness development.

"The theme of this international congress of environmental journalists is very timely because it has appeared as one of the most crucial issues for development" of Bangladesh as well as many other countries, Syed Marghub Murshed, secretary of the Forest and Environment Ministry, told the concluding session of the congress.

He said environmental problems in their entirety are global problems and therefore needed international co-operation.

Dr Rezaul Karim, the chief of Environment Section of the Bangladesh-based UN-ESCAP, said the environmental journalists were now faced with three major challenges — understanding the difficult environmental issues, awareness generation and using the information technology.

The next joint congress will be held in June 2000 in the Pacific Island of Fiji.

JSO mass hunger strike Sept 27

Joybangla Sangskritik Oikyajote (JSO) organise a mass hunger strike programme on September 27 to expedite execution of the verdict of Bangabandhu murder case, a press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

It said the hunger strike will begin at 9 am and end at 6 pm at Muktagong here.

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A two-day orchid show began at Gulshan in the city yesterday.



Members of the executive committee of Commonwealth Environmental Journalists' Association who were elected at the Comilla Congress.

PM: Investors

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Hasina said her government had undertaken perhaps the most comprehensive set of economic, social and cultural reforms ever in the history to set every sector in motion.

"For their success we need resources... I can assure you that you would find this a most rewarding experience," she told the American businessmen.

Hasina said there were hardly any trade restrictions in the country, tariff rates being rationalised and had been declining across-the-board and among the lowest in South Asia.

"To promote investment, both direct and portfolio, we have very attractive and competitive incentive packages, Taka, the Bangladesh currency, is convertible to remit profit, dividends and capital etc."

The Prime Minister, however, admitted various shortcomings that stand in the way, but assured that her government wanted to be decisive and remove "bureaucratic road-blocks and foot dragging." "We have sent clear signals about our intention by speedily removing the bottlenecks."

Spelling out the incentives offered by the government under a liberal trade and investment policy, Hasina said the private power companies had been exempted from corporate income tax for 15 years.

She said the exemption of capital gains from transfer of shares by the investing companies had been granted. Avoidance of double-taxation for foreign investors has been ensured through bilateral agreements.

Hasina said investors had started taking Bangladesh seriously. Initial signs indicate a clear rise in registration for foreign direct investment.

Currently, direct investments in Bangladesh stand at nearly 6.7 billion dollars with employment opportunities for 400,000 people.

Hasina said the Industrial Policy 1999 decided to offer special facilities to 16 sectors of industries identified as thrust sectors. These include agro-based, electronics, computer software, frozen goods, textiles, jewelry and diamond cutting and polishing.

Hasina said: "The upward trend in foreign direct investment is a clear testimony to the confidence of investors in the investment-friendly climate now prevailing in Bangladesh."

She said since taking the responsibility, her government has been able to generate additional 800 MW electricity — 200 MW was generated through re-constructing power plants and 600 MW by installing new plants.

She hoped that an additional 800 MW electricity would be generated by December this year and another 1794 MW during 2001-2002.

Hasina mentioned an Infrastructure Investment Facilitation Company (IIFC) had been set up with the backing of the World Bank to catalyse investment by the private sector in the development of ports, roads, energy, telecoms and water supply.

Founded at a cost of 15 million the centre will work closely with the Infrastructure Development Company. The aim is to channel nearly 225 million dollars to the private companies as equity which is expected to attract private capital to the tune of 1.5 billion US dollars in few years.

Turning to political scenario, Hasina said her government does not believe in confrontation but in conciliation.

"Opposition groups are consulted on regular basis and all major issues are discussed in Parliament," she said. "We have been relentless working to create a stable climate for unhindered economic activities."

Giving a resume of the economic performance, she said inflation has stabilised around 4 per cent, industrial production is rising steadily and the growth rate is now estimated to be around 8-9 per cent while export and import trade is growing robustly.

With private remittances of around 1.5 billion US dollars, current account deficit of less than 6 per cent of GDP is well within international norms.

She said foreign-exchange reserves equal three months of import requirement. The exchange rate remains reasonably stable.

She said power generation and telecommunications had been allowed in the private sector. Multiple-entry visas for visiting foreign investors are being given. Provision has been made for allowing import of standby generator free of tax, and sale of excess electricity to nearby industrial units without permission from any agency. Licenses have been issued to four cellular telephone operators.

These speak of the government's commitment to a competitive and market economy with a leading role for private direct investment."

DU clarifies

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PM was taken unanimously in the last two sessions of DU Senate, it said.

The decision followed appreciation of her role in establishing national and international levels, conferring honorary doctorate degrees by some of the best universities in the world like Boston (USA), Yaseda (Japan), Abarte-Dandy (UK), Viswabarathi (India) and Luven (Belgium), and also awarding of the UNECO Peace Prize and an international award by UNFPA, the authorities said.

It also said that the decision has been taken in recognition of her contribution to national, regional and world peace, poverty alleviation, expansion of education, women empowerment and agricultural development.

It is not expected that further debate regarding the decision would arise, the statement said.