

## ● What's on today.... ●

**Workshop:** A 2-day workshop on "Environmental Law and Sustainable Development" will begin. Organisers: Environment Directorate in collaboration with UNEP, SAKEP and NORAD of Joint Environmental Law Project for South Asia. Time: 9:00 am.

**Conference:** Bangladesh Association for American Studies and the United States Information Service will inaugurate a two-day conference on "US Society and Culture." Venue: Academy for Planning and Development, Miriket. Time: 9:30 am.

**BCPS lecture:** Bangladeshi College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS) will hold two lectures on "Bell's Palsy and its Management" and "Diagnosis and management of acute gout." Venue: BCPS auditorium, Mohakhali. Time: 11:00-11:50 am and 12:00-1:00 pm respectively.

**CESTI seminar:** Centre for Scientific and Technological Information (CESTI) of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka will hold a seminar on "Foreign Investment in Pharmaceutical Industry in Bangladesh". Venue: Sasakawa auditorium, ICDDR,B. Time: 3:30 pm.

**Competition:** Shishu Academy will hold a competition for juveniles on "Painting and Patriotic Songs." Venue: Shishu Academy premises.

**Inauguration:** The inauguration ceremony of Global Village, an NGO will be held. Chief guest: Zillur Rahman, Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 5:30 pm.

● ..... and tomorrow ●

**Musical soiree:** Indian High Commission will hold a Classical vocal recital evening by Kalpana Bhattacharya. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre auditorium. Time: 7:00 pm.

**Concert:** Alliance Francaise de Dhaka will hold a live concert by Canopy. Venue: Alliance Francaise premises. Time: 7:00 pm.

## Weather

## Temperature may fall

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over the country with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi and Barisal divisions during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Day temperature may fall by 1 to 2 degree Celsius over the country during the period. Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 32 degree Celsius was recorded at Dinajpur and the lowest of 24 degrees at Faridpur.

The sun sets today at 5:56 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:47 am.

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

| City/Town   | Temperature in Celsius |      | Humidity percentage |         |
|-------------|------------------------|------|---------------------|---------|
|             | Max                    | Min  | Morning             | Evening |
| Dhaka       | 29.5                   | 25.0 | 88                  | 84      |
| Chittagong  | 29.1                   | 24.5 | 82                  | 95      |
| Rajshahi    | 27.1                   | 24.5 | 93                  | 98      |
| Khulna      | 29.0                   | 25.0 | 97                  | 98      |
| Barisal     | 28.5                   | 24.8 | 88                  | 100     |
| Sylhet      | 31.6                   | 24.5 | 92                  | 93      |
| Cox's Bazar | 26.5                   | 24.5 | 95                  | 100     |

## HERE and THERE

## BPATC

The 18th Administrative and Development Management Course began at BPATC yesterday. Dr Ekram Hossain, Rector of BPATC, inaugurated the course as chief guest, says a press release.

Twenty-four participants from different organisations are taking part in the course.

The course will focus on organisational management, governmental system, office management, project management, financial management and commercial application.

## DU seminar

By DU Correspondent A seminar titled "European Union: Integration and Development of Institutions" was held at IBA auditorium on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

The key-note speaker at the seminar was ambassador Antonio de Souza Menezes of European Commission (EC) while DU Vice-Chancellor Prof A K Azad Chowdhury chaired the session.

In his speech, Ambassador Menezes discussed the emergence and role of different institutions under EU and their strategies to meet future challenges.

Chairman of the Department of Political Science Prof Shahidul Huq Munshi

## Roundtable on 'Urban Housing'

## Speakers for updating Tenancy Act

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday stressed the need for updating the Bangladesh Tenancy Act and inclusion of earthquake safety measures in all future housing plans.

Organised by the Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP), the roundtable on "Urban Housing in Bangladesh" was held at its office in the city.

Aktheruzzaman, MP and Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, said that if an earthquake hits the country, the consequences would be much more devastating than that of Turkey or Taiwan.

The unplanned urbanisation has reached such a proportion that there are places in the city from where even a dead body cannot be taken out," he said.

Talking about the irregularities in construction sector, the MP pointed out that a House Building Authority should be set up immediately to oversee the constructions.

Professor Nazrul Islam, Chairman of Dhaka WASA and Honorary Chairman, Centre for Urban Studies, read out the keynote paper.

Islam said that as 75 per cent of the city population live in rented houses, the planning for housing must be done involving the tenants. Fifty per cent of the city slums are situated on privately owned land while the

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## Heroin

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available clues and that "investigation was on".

The DG also said DNC could have nabbed the culprits earlier but decided to go slow so that the consignment could be seized and the carriers arrested.

"Since we have already arrested the accused and recovered the goods, we also hope to arrest others involved. They have been kept under our vigilance... we will submit the charge sheet shortly. If there is any major development then we may submit a supplemental charge sheet" the DG said.

The consignment was kept in the DG's room amid tight security.

Investigators said racketeers from at least five countries were involved in the drug trafficking unearthed on Monday. The consignment was brought into Bangladesh from Afghanistan through Pakistan and India. It was scheduled to be flown to Birmingham, Britain.

Two people were involved in sale of the drug while two British citizens of Indian origin were the buyers, the investigators said.

According to narcotics department officials, the carriers were asked to contact the buyers using specific code. But the narcotics department sources managed to intercept the transaction and posed as buyers.

At first they agreed to sell half of the consignment, but on insistence of the "buyers", it was agreed that the whole consignment will be sold. Accordingly the parts of the consignment, which were kept at different city areas, were taken to the hotel for delivery to the customer.

Rais, one of the three held, came to the hotel by an autorickshaw and went inside the room at 2:15 pm with a bag. Later when he came out of the room to avail the lift two narcotics department men stopped him.

The team then asked Rais to open the door of his room. As Rais opened his hotel room, the DG of DNC and other officials went into the room and took position.

The consignment was kept in a bag that contained 118 packets of Lux soap. Each packet had 200 grams of heroin.

DNC officials told The Daily Star the arrested immediately confessed that they carried the drug. But they also said that they were mere carriers, not traders.

## UNGA seat

From page 1

UNSC require approval of all 15 members of the Security Council, which is instrumental in accepting or rejecting a decision or resolution.

On general issues placed before the UNSC, nine affirmative votes are necessary to carry out a resolution. However the Big Five or permanent members—US, Britain, China, France and Russia—continue to hold the Veto power enabling them to make or break any decision despite having the seal of unanimous approval by all other or any group of members.

Bangladesh's entry into the UN body was delayed for three years as China gave veto, ostensibly at Pakistan's request, for two consecutive years in 1972 and 1973.

However, Bangladesh consolidated its position in the international arena very rapidly since its entry to the world body in 1974.

In 1978, only four years after becoming a member, Bangladesh, at the initiative of late President Ziaur Rahman, contested Japan for a Security Council seat. It was a bold venture since Japan was not only a major donor but also a member of the rich Group of Seven (G-7). As a member of G-7, Bangladesh lobbied hard with the 120 plus under-developed countries and also sought support through NAM members. Also as a member of OIC countries, it sought vote of all Muslim nations.

To achieve two-thirds majority, Bangladesh required more than 100 votes out of 159 members in 1978. In the first ballot on the election day, Bangladesh secured 80 plus votes while Japan got slightly more than 20. In the fourth ballot, when Japan realized that it could not get much more than 20 votes, it withdrew, giving Bangladesh the Security Council seat for 1978-1979.

Eight years later, in 1987, during the tenure of former President H M Ershad, Bangladesh tried again for a Security Council seat but lost hopelessly to Malaysia.

Bangladesh decided to make a serious bid for the Security Council seat when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made her first official visit to the UN in October, 1996. Although Cambodia announced its candidature much ahead of Bangladesh, Dhaka's diplomacy finally managed to win over full Asian support and withdrawal of Pakistan.

The UN was established 54 years ago in 1945 with 51 original members of the Second World War. The last time the Security Council was expanded was in 1965 when the number of non-permanent members was increased to ten from six.

In recent years, there has been a growing pressure to increase both the number of permanent and non-permanent members. The pressure to expand the Security Council is coming from Japan and Germany who want to be permanent members. Developing countries are putting pressure to increase the number of non-permanent seats.

The secretary said 10,000 units of housings each measuring between 400 and 450 square feet would be built in Duttapara.

Rajuk's Superintendent Engineer, Emdad-ul Islam, said that it was a pity the National Building Code (NBC) is yet to be gazetted. "To tackle irregularities in the urbanisation process it is necessary to gazette the NBC immediately," he said.

Dr Tarafdar Robul Islam, Director of BUP, who was the moderator of the discussion, said that the existing Tenancy Act had to be modernised in order to ensure the rights of increasing number of people who are renting their accommodation.



Professor Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), speaking at the inaugural session of two-day-long international dialogue on "Growth Zones in South Asia: What We Can Learn From South East Asia?" Organised by CPD in association with UN-ESCAP, the dialogue was held in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

## Call for increase in JS reserved seats for women

By DU Correspondent

Women leaders at a press conference in the city yesterday demanded that the government take an initiative in the next parliament session to increase the number of reserved seats for women and their election by direct voting.

They also stressed upon the need for empowerment of women to bolster and implement various government development activities in the country.

The women leaders were speaking a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday, jointly organised by some 25 women organisations of the country.

"The women organisations of the country have been working together for several years for increase in the number of reserved seats for women and their direct election," said Advocate Sultana Kamal of Ain O Salish Kendro.

She said that the women leaders have already exchanged views with various political leaders, including Speaker, Deputy Speaker of JS and MP on empowerment of women through increasing reserve

seats and direct election. "All of them have reacted positively and assured us for cooperation in this regard," she added.

Stressing rapid political empowerment of women, she said it was also an important issue in establishing their rights and status in the society.

In this regard, Sultana Kamal placed forward set of demands which included preservation of women's reserved seats system for at least three terms, increase in number of reserve seats to 64 instead of 30 and election of women by direct voting.

She disclosed at the press conference that a grand rally would be arranged in the city soon to press home various demands of women.

Sultana Kamal, of Ain O Salish Kendro, read out the written speech at the press conference where Ayesha Khanom of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad, Rokeya Kabir of Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, Fowzia Khandaker of Proshika, Laila Arjuman Banu of ADASHA, Tania Amir of The Law Associates were also present.

## Dhaka, Kathmandu for signing road transit accord

Bangladesh and Nepal have decided to increase bilateral cooperation, especially in trade, exports UNB.

With a new trade cooperation strategy chalked out to this end, bilateral trade negotiations would be started soon to explore the areas for expanding bilateral trade.

This was decided at a meeting between Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed and visiting Nepalese Agriculture Minister Chakra Prasad Bastola at the Commerce Ministry here yesterday.

The ministers also agreed that the two countries would identify products for duty-free access.

They also underscored the need for signing Bangladesh-Nepal road transit agreement and improvement of land port facilities at Banglabandha.

Referring to the proposal of transhipment of Indian goods, Tofail Ahmed said: "We have formed task force and appointed consultants to give reports on the prospect and procedure of transhipment."

Later, it will be discussed at both countries' experts group meeting where we are expected to get duty-free market access on 25 items to Indian market on non-reciprocal basis," he said.

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Bangladesh, saying that during last 25 years this partnership has matured. She hoped that development cooperation between Bangladesh and UN agencies would be expanded in the years ahead.

About her continued endeavour for peace, Hasina said her government took steps to foster peace at national, regional and international levels. She mentioned her anti-nuclear peace mission to India and Pakistan after nuclear tests in South Asia.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was present during the prime minister's address to the UN general assembly chaired by 54th UNGA President and Foreign Minister of Namibia, Dr Theo Ben Gurib. After her speech, Hasina was warmly greeted by the UN Secretary General and President of the session.

Bangladesh delegation members, including Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, CHT Affairs Minister Kalpana Ranjan Chakma, Chief Whip Abul Hasan Abdullah, Dhanakar Talukder MP, Bir Bahadur MP and senior officials, were present.

Anti-people activities and its steps against the country's independence and sovereignty".

The demonstrators displayed various placards and photographs that showed "government's atrocities on opposition activists". The US unit of Jatiya Party also joined the demonstration, the press release claimed.

A good number of UN officials and envoys of many countries witnessed the demonstration.

The memorandum, along with a US State Department report on human rights in Bangladesh, was handed over to a senior UN official in charge of the Asia Pacific Division.