

News

● What's on today . . . ●

Talk: Gano Shasthya Nagar Hospital will hold a talk on "Biotechnology in Medicine". Speaker: Dr Ahmed Abdullah Azad, a Bangladesh-born biotechnologist from Australia. Venue: Hospital premises. Time: 9:30 am.

Discussion meeting: Mohammadpur Kendriya Biswabidyalay College will hold a discussion meeting on "Students of the 21st century: Bangladesh context" as part of its Freshers' Reception '99 programme. Venue: College premises at Nurjahan Road, Mohammadpur. Time: 11:00 am.

Recitation programme: Bangladesh Sanskriti Kendra will hold a recitation and solo speech programme to mark the 25th death anniversary of poet Farrukh Ahmed. Venue: Pratyaasha Prangan, 5/5 Gaznabi Rd, Mohammadpur. Time: 11:00 am.

IUBAT seminar: The Centre for Policy Research (CPR) of International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) will hold a seminar on "Natural Gas Use and Regulation—Canadian and Other Countries' Experiences". Venue: Room No 105 of IUBAT, House No 135, Road No 9A, Dhammardi R/A. Time: 5:00 pm.

Meeting: The Executive Committee of Bangladesh Anti Drug Federation of NGOs will hold a meeting. Venue: 2nd floor of 70/A, Purana Paltan Lane (VIP Road). Time: 5:30 pm.

Meeting: An extended meeting of the BAI Old Boys' Association will be held. Venue: Conference room of the Bangladesh Agriculture Institute. Time: 5:30 pm.

Weather

Thundershowers likely

Moderate rain or thundershowers with gusty wind is likely at most places over the country with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over the country till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Slight rise in day temperature is expected over the country during the period, according to Met office.

The country's highest temperature 30.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and the lowest 21.5 degree Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:30 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:58 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	
Dhaka	26.0	23.7	96	95
Chittagong	27.0	23.6	88	97
Rajshahi	26.3	23.2	96	98
Khulna	29.5	24.5	93	93
Barisal	26.6	23.5	98	98
Sylhet	24.5	22.8	93	98
Cox's Bazar	28.0	23.4	95	95

HERE and THERE

JCD

By DU Correspondent

Leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday urged the student community to act in unison to topple the autocratic and subservient government of Sheikh Hasina.

The JCD leaders were addressing a workers' meeting at Mirpur with its central general secretary Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu in the chair.

The fall of the government of Hasina is now only a matter of time as she has lost the faith of the people and is resorting to repressive measures on the JCD men," the JCD general secretary said. Pintu urged Hasina to refrain from such "undemocratic" activities in the future.

Among others, Mamun Hasan, Harun Rasheed, Shamim Parvez, Hafizur Rahman, Golam Mostafa and Muzafur Islam were addressed the meeting.

Unnayan Shamannay

A daylong environmental workshop was held at the CIRDAP auditorium yesterday, reports UNB.

Environment and Forest Secretary Syed Margub Morshed was present as chief guest at the workshop organised by Unnayan Shamannay, a non-profitable organisation for research, development and cultural learning.

UNDP Assistant Resident Representative Shirin Kamal Sayeed, EDP Project Coordinator Faruq Chowdhury and Muhammad Zahangir were present as special guests on the occasion presided over by Unnayan Shamannay Chairman Dr Ataur Rahman.

PDB Sramik

Karmachari

Oikya Parishad

By Staff Correspondent

PDB Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad has called upon the government to save the state owned Power Development Board from the conspiracies of foreign traders and multinational companies.

The Parishad in a protest

rally at the PDB office premises yesterday vowed to foil any conspiracy to privatise PDB due to pressure from donor countries. They also demanded cancellation of the decision of turning Ashuganj Power Plant into a private company.

They also threatened to begin a direct action programme from a rally they are scheduled to hold on October 25 if their demands are not met.

Presided over by engineer Shahid Ahmed, the rally was also addressed among others by Nurul Amin, Shahjahan Khadaker, Mizanur Rahman, Zafurul Hasan and Saedur Rahman.

ADAB

The Association of Development Agencies of Bangladesh (ADAB) yesterday praised the government for banning the import of vetch, an Australian species of pulse, for the sake of public health, reports BSS.

In a statement, ADAB, the apex body of the non-governmental organisations (NGOs), said the prompt response by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed to the demands from experts and the press was an example of democratic accountability.

The government yesterday banned the import of vetch, which look like Bangladesh's popular "Masoordi" (lentil) following press reports that it contains "chemical elements" which are dangerous for public health.

The vetch was being imported since the early 90s by the private sector. The government, however, never imported the pulse.

An official announcement yesterday said the government sought information from Australian Agriculture Ministry on the vetch and also sent samples of the pulse to BSTI, BCSIR, Nutrition Science Institute and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute for opinions if it was suitable for human consumption.

The government will take decision on already imported vetch on the reports of the studies and information from Australia.

Privatisation Board chief visits puja pavilions

FARIDPUR, Oct. 18: Chairman of the Privatisation Board Kazi Zafarullah visited a number of puja mandaps in different unions of Bangabandhu Thana under Faridpur district on Saturday and Sunday last, reports BSS.

He visited Nurulahganj, Manikdaha, Pukuria, Hamirdi, Bhanga, Sharifabad, Kawlbera, Chumurdhi, Kalamridha, Dewrabazar, Roynagar and Maligra puja mandaps.

During the visit, Kazi Zafarullah talked to the members of the Hindu community and enquired about their welfare. He exchanged views with them and said Bangladesh is a land of communal harmony.

He said the Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Buddhists have been living here peacefully since time immemorial. The chairman donated a sum of money to the puja mandap committee from his personal account.

Valuables worth Tk 20 lakh looted in Gaibandha

GAIBANDHA, Oct. 18: Armed robbers swooped on 12 night coaches and six trucks on Dhaka-Rangpur highway in Sadullapur thana early Sunday and looted valuables worth Tk 20 lakh, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the muggers blocked the highway near Gosajani Bridge with timbers and committed the robbery on the passing vehicles.

At least 25 people, including drivers and helpers of the vehicles, as they tried to resist the highwaymen, who reportedly made off with the booty when patrol police reached the spot.

Speaker returns

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury yesterday returned home after attending the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) conference held in Berlin, reports BSS.

The Speaker led Bangladesh delegation at the 102nd conference of the IPU. He highlighted the prevailing political, economic and social condition in the world.

'Killing of Bangabandhu tarnished image abroad'

State Minister for Information Professor Abu Sayeed said yesterday that the image of the nation was tarnished before the world community with the assassination of father of the nation on August 15, 1975, reports BSS.

"The killers did not follow any norms and showed minimum respect to any religion. Those who had extended cooperation to the killers after the killing had violated human rights," he said.

Prof Sayeed was speaking at a function at the Bangabandhu Betar auditorium here. The programme titled "We are amidst thousands of children" was organised on the occasion of the 35th birth anniversary of Sheikh Russel.

Russel, the youngest son of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was brutally assassinated on that fateful night.

The minister said, we should make our children competent enough to cope with the problems of the next millennium. "They are the future of the country, so we have to build them as worthy citizens of the country providing them all rights and opportunities," he said.

Paying rich tributes to the memory of Sheikh Russel, he said, we have to be cautious so that no one has to become victim of such brutality.

Prof Sayeed demanded immediate implementation of the verdict of Bangabandhu murder case.

Information Secretary M Akmal Hossain, Director General of Bangladesh Betar M I Chowdhury and Regional Director M A Jallal took part in the discussion.

Foundation laid for Khalmoor Youth Training Centre

HABIGANJ, Oct. 18: Finance Minister SAMS Kibria said the government has arranged training programmes for the youth to rear them as human resources for overall economic development of the country through poverty alleviation, reports UNB.

The government expedited the youth-training programmes to involve the youth with economic activities to help them become self-employed," he said at the foundation-laying ceremony of youth Training Centre at Khalmoor in the district Sunday.

Kibria told the function that an employment bank has been established to provide the trained young people with credits to generate self-employment opportunities.

Listing various other steps for the welfare of the unemployed youths, he said the Youth Development Department has imparted training to 8,61 lakh youths during the last three and a half years of the present government's tenure against only 3,25 lakh in last 21 years.

Among others, Poura Chairman Shahid Chowdhury and Enamul Haq Mostafa Shahid MP were present in the function.

The centre will be constructed at a cost of Tk 3.5 crore with a training facility for 400 trainees per year in different trade courses.

Tk 13 cr bridge construction project taken up

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Oct. 18: A Tk 13 crore project to construct the Chowdial bridge over River Manananda in Gomostapur Upazila of the district is being implemented by the Roads and Highways Department, reports BSS.

The project was taken in the last year.

The construction of the bridge is in full swing and will be completed during the current fiscal year.

Death anniversary

The 4th death anniversary of late Alhaj Zahurul Islam, the founder chairman of the Islam Group will be observed today, says a press release.

On this occasion, arrangements have been made to host a "milaad maflif" at the deceased's native village of Bajitpur under Kishoreganj district at 11:00 in the morning.

All the concerns of Islam Group will remain closed on the occasion.

Chehulum

The chehulum of Joyenuddin Ahmed of Shahjadpur under Sirajganj district will be held today at the deceased's residence at Veruadah, says a press release.

Joyenuddin died on September 9 at the age of 75. He left behind his wife, two sons, a daughter and a number of grandchildren and relatives to mourn his death.

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The chehulum of Fazlur Rahman Khan (Bullet Khan), former AGM of Audit Department of Sonali Bank head office and founder of Bangabandhu Law House in Amlapara, will be held today after Asr prayers at his Amlapara residence, says a press release.

During the visit, Kazi Zafarullah talked to the members of the Hindu community and enquired about their welfare. He exchanged views with them and said Bangladesh is a land of communal harmony.

He said the Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Buddhists have been living here peacefully since time immemorial. The chairman donated a sum of money to the puja mandap committee from his personal account.

All friends, relatives and well-wishers of the deceased have been requested to attend the ceremony and pray for the salvation of his soul.

Human chain in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Oct. 18: Anti-terrrorism Citizens' Committee organised a human chain on the court premises today to protest the killing of a Chhatra League leader, reports UNB.

A procession was also brought out demanding trial of the killers of Golam Murshad, a central leader of BCL, in the town.

Student romance ends in apparent murder-suicide

CHICAGO, Oct. 18: Two students were found dead in a Michigan college dormitory in an apparent murder-suicide, police said Monday, reports UNB.

Police are investigating the shootings, but they believe Neenef Odah, 20, shot his former girlfriend Margaret Wardle, 19, before turning his shotgun on himself, Captain Jerome Bryant said.

The bodies of Odah, from Seattle, Washington and Wardle, from Plainwell, Michigan, were found at Kalamazoo College, in southwestern Michigan, early Monday.

Housewife killed in Satkhira

SATKHIRA, Oct. 18: A young housewife was killed by unidentified assailants in her sleep in Sadar thana Saturday night, reports UNB.

Police said the miscreants swooped on Sabita Rani Das, 35, and her husband Subal Kumar in their house at village Balitha at the dead of night and stabbed Sabita to death.

Japan, Islamabad's biggest aid donor, said today that Pakistan's new military ruler should set clear procedures and a timetable for restoring democracy in his country.

"We consider it important for Pakistan to indicate a concrete process for restoring

Pakistan suspended

From page 1
dia. I thought it was quite good," Clinton told reporters in Washington.

The US ambassador to Pakistan said today he was heartened by army ruler General Pervaiz Musharraf's pledge to usher in real democracy but disappointed his speech set no timeframe for a return to democratic rule.

He told reporters: "Yes, we were disappointed at that, the lack of specific timeframe, but we were also heartened by his pledge that the military would remain in power only as long as absolutely necessary," Ambassador William Milam said.

The United States would take a "wait-and-see" stance on future International Monetary Fund loans to Pakistan, on which the country's crumbling economy depends, Milam said.

Milam said he would have liked Musharraf, who seized power in a bloodless coup last Tuesday, to have addressed the issue of terrorism and Saudi-born terrorist suspect Osama bin Laden, who is a "guest" of Afghanistan's Taliban movement.

In Singapore, International Monetary Fund first Deputy Managing Director Stanley Fischer said the Fund was still assessing the situation in Pakistan and would not resume funding for the time being.

Japan, Islamabad's biggest aid donor, said today that Pakistan's new military ruler should set clear procedures and a timetable for restoring democracy in his country.

"We consider it important for Pakistan to indicate a concrete process for restoring

democracy — including procedure and timetable," top government spokesman Mikio Aoki told a regular news conference in Tokyo.

Meanwhile Pakistani intellectuals expressed fears today that military rule could last much longer than expected, despite an army pledge to return to democratic rule.

"There is no limit on time," AR Rehman, director at the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, told a seminar held to "make sense of the recent events of Pakistan."

Rehman, who recalled past statements of three other military rulers, said Musharraf's "national agenda" was "open-ended" and there was no time frame for its completion.

"I just do not know what this government can do... the economy is in such a bad shape,