

What's on today....

Exhibition: An Exhibition of student projects of BUET will be held. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 10.00 am-12.00 noon, 6.00 pm-8.00 pm.

CUS seminar: A two-day long seminar on "Secure Tenure: Access to Urban Land and Housing Finance" will begin. Organiser: Centre for Urban Studies (CUS). Chief guest: Engr Mosharraf Hossain, Minister for Housing and Public Works. Venue: LGED Bhaban, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Time: 11.30 am.

Film show: Rashed Chowdhury's documentary film on sculptor Novera Ahmed "The Long Wait" will be screened. Venue: Public Library auditorium. Time: 11.00 am, 12.00 noon, 1.00 pm, 4.00 pm, 5.00 pm, 6.00 pm, and 7.00 pm.

Exchange of views meet: The Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) will hold an exchange of views meeting. Venue: Conference room of FCCI, Federation Bhaban, Motijheel C/A. Time 11.00 am.

..... and tomorrow

Launching ceremony: The launching ceremony of Meherba Plaza will be held. Venue: 33 Topkhana Road. Time: 7.00 pm.

Discussion meeting: Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) will hold a discussion meeting on "Registration of architects by Rajuk". Venue: Goethe Institut, House No 10, Rd No 9, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 5.30 pm.

Weather

Dry weather likely

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country with partly cloudy sky over Dhaka, Chittagong and Barisal divisions during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Night temperature may rise slightly over the country during the period while it may fall by 2 degree Celsius in subsequent two days, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 31.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Sitakunda and the lowest of 16.4 degrees at Sathkira.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:12 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:15 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
Dhaka	30.5	19.0
Chittagong	30.3	20.3
Rajshahi	29.7	17.8
Khulna	30.5	19.4
Barisal	30.5	18.0
Sylhet	29.9	19.4
Cox's Bazar	31.0	20.0

Public Administration Reforms Commission submits report

The Public Administrative Reforms Commission (PARC) has so far submitted 23 adhoc recommendations to the government while some others are in the offing as the Commission now closes to finalise the preliminary draft report by December 31, reports BSS.

Since its reconstitution in October 1997, the PARC has given importance to the issue of adhoc recommendations since many of the matters that deserve early attention should not wait till the final recommendations. ATM Shamsul Haque, Chairman of the Commission said.

He said the government has taken a pragmatic approach by approving many of these adhoc recommendations as some have already been implemented while many others are being implemented after approval. Simplification of payment of travel tax is one such adhoc recommendation that has been implemented and "One-stop" utility bill payment system and several others are being implemented.

Haque said the task before the Commission is very important and gigantic, and the preliminary draft report is expected by December 31 and the final report by January 31. A national debate is expected on the draft report in February to ensure the transparency and final report will be finalised by March 31, next before it is placed to the government in April.

The Chairman said the Commission deals with the crucial subject of improvement of the administrative system with a modern and a political outlook so that the country can meet the challenges in the new millennium to turn the system more people oriented. Such an issue cuts across the boundaries of political parties for greater interest of the administrative system which has immense impact on the people welfare and betterment, he said.

Appointment & transfer

Secretary of Religious Ministry Mosharraf Hossain has been transferred as chairman of Tariff Commission, reports UNB.

The government has promoted three secretaries to the post of secretaries. They are: Acting Secretary of Post and Telecommunications Ministry Nazmul Ahsan Chowdhury, Acting Secretary of Housing and Public Works Ministry Sohel Ahmed Chowdhury, and Acting Secretary of Women and Children Affairs Ministry Dr Tahmina Hossain. They were given appointment to the post of secretaries of their own ministries.

Additional Chief Engineer of Public Works Department Ahmedur Rahman was transferred as member of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkhaya on deputation and his service was placed under Housing and Public Works Ministry, said a handout.

The services Additional Divisional Commissioner of Dhaka M Mamtaz Uddin and Senior Finance Controller (Works) of Dhaka Cantonment Abdullah Al Mamun were placed under Housing and Public Works Ministry to appoint them as the members of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkhaya on deputation.

adding successive governments attached importance to this and the present government injected a new thrust in the subject.

Haque said the Commission has made significant progress by this time and it held free and frank discussions with professionals including the business bodies, media, NGOs and others. He said adhoc recommendations have been particularly important since some of them are critically important to public interest. For instance, he said, the objective of the "One-stop" utility bill payment system is to avoid the hassle of paying different utility bills in different banks in different times.

The appointment of Ombudsman is one of the adhoc recommendation of the Commission and it is in the process of implementation after the Prime Minister has declared its acceptance. Haque said. He expressed the hope that the final report of the Commission will be of tremendous importance and stressed the need for sound modalities to follow-up the recommendations after government's decision on the final report.

Sayed urges Betar to highlight programmes on Liberation War

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed yesterday called upon the Bangladesh Betar to properly highlight the incidents of mass killing and oppression by the Pakistani Army and their local collaborators during the Liberation War, reports BSS.

The State Minister made this call while presiding over a meeting of the high officials of the Information Ministry and Bangladesh Betar.

Underlining the role of media, especially radio, in creating a strong base for making the nation developed and prosperous, the state minister said the authorities would have to work for making the radio programmes consistent with the free flow of information.

The meeting discussed the development programmes that took place during the last three years in Bangladesh Betar.

The meeting was informed that during the period Bangladesh Betar established full-fledged stations in Thakurgaon, Barisal and Rangamati while the construction work for such station in Cox's Bazar is almost complete.

The meeting was also told that Bangladesh Betar won the international Radio Award 99, instituted by Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (APBU).

Obituary

CHITTAGONG, Nov 16: Prof AFM Serajud Dowla Chowdhury, head of the department of Bengali, Chittagong Government College, died of cardiac arrest at his residence here today, his family sources said. He was 58, reports BSS.

He left behind his wife, one daughter, one son and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

The namaz-e-janaza of Prof Chowdhury was held at Parade Ground this afternoon and he was buried at Shah Garib Ullah graveyard in the city.



Anti-hartal procession by ruling Bangladesh Awami League in front of Secretariat building during dawn-to-dusk hartal yesterday.



Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) staged a protest rally in the city during hartal hours yesterday.

Task force report submitted Life span of 11 sugar mills has expired long ago

The life span of 11 sugar mills out of 15 in the country, all run by the government, has expired long ago and their worn-out machinery are causing a rise in the production cost, reveals a task force report, says UNB.

The 15 mills with a production capacity of 2.10 lakh tons are far behind the annual sugar consumption of 3.80 lakh tons that will rise to 4.09 lakh tons in 2000 and 5.07 lakh tons in 2005.

Import will be the only option to meet the widening gap between production and demand if capacity of the mills is not increased and new mills are not set up, said the task force formed by the government with experts and officials.

The 14-member task force, headed by Shamsur Rahman Sharif MP, submitted its recommendations to the government recently with detailed assessment of the situation of sugar mills, identifying the causes of huge losses and suggesting remedies.

Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC), that runs all the sugar mills, has already initiated phased implementation of the task force recommendations.

"We've already taken effective steps for development of sugarcane cultivation. Measures have also been taken to increase sugar production," BSFIC chairman AS Salahuddin Ahmed said.

In line with the task force recommendations that call for reducing manpower, the BSFIC has stopped recruitment, he said.

The government is now looking for opportunities of balancing, modernising, rehabilitation and expansion (BMRE) under suppliers' credit arrangement. Teams from China and Pakistan have already visited the

mills for this purpose, officials said.

Sugar mills of annual capacity below 20,000-25,000 tons are not considered profitable. But the capacity of all mills but two is below 20,000.

The task force suggested increasing production capacity above 20,000/25,000 tons to make the mills profitable. It also recommended a sugarcane development programme to facilitate cultivation of high-yielding varieties and ensure adequate agricultural loans.

The task force suggested that the government should take steps for BMRE in nine mills and set up three new mills during the current fifth five-year plan (1997-2000), which will require an estimated amount of Tk 720 crore.

It also suggested that private sector should be encouraged to set up sugar mills in the country.

DU Marketing Deptt silver jubilee

The Marketing Department of Dhaka University will hold a function at 9.30 am on November 19 at TSC in observance of its silver jubilee, reports BSS.

Vice-chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury will attend the function as the chief guest. About one thousand five hundred dignitaries will also attend it.

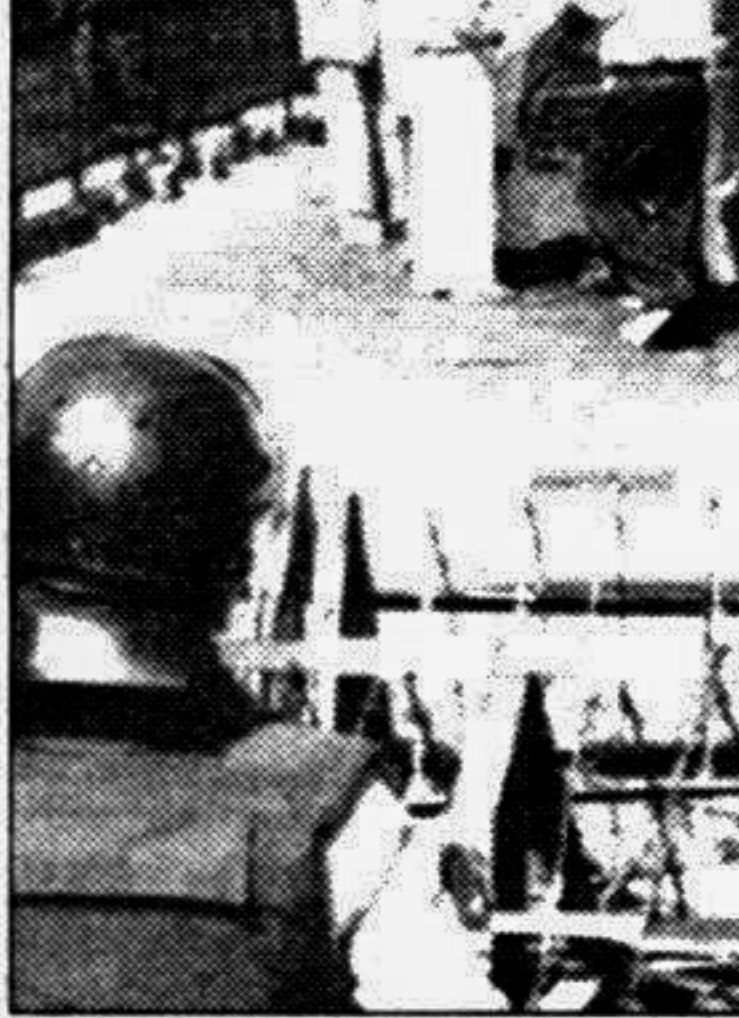
The department will also bring out a colourful rally from the Business Studies Building tomorrow at 10 am in celebration of the occasion. Students, faculty members and former students of the department will participate in the rally.

JCD to observe Hatred Day today

By DU Correspondent

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student front of opposition BNP will observe "Hatred Day" today in protest of the "indecent" remarks of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Khaleida Zia.

Leaders and activists of JCD will bring out a procession from city's Muktangan at 3pm today to observe the day.



Police put up a barricade at city's Bijoy Nagar area during opposition-sponsored hartal hours yesterday.

Dacoity at night coach: 3 robbers held in Comilla

COMILLA, Nov 16: Some 20 passengers were injured and three dacoits of a gang caught red handed during a dacoity in a night coach in Chowddagram here Monday midnight, reports UNB.

Police said the passengers were injured while scuffling with the bandits numbering about eight who, in guise of passengers, took control of the Noakhali-bound bus coming from Dhaka at gunpoint when it reached at Batasia.

Patrol police who were passing through the road caught three of the dacoits with the help of passengers when the bus fell into the roadside ditch at Basantapur.

The arrested were identified as Swapan (30) of Aliapur and Nurur Rahim Milon (35) of Hatia of Noakhali district and Jamil Ahmed Shanto (30) of Boritola of Laxmipur district.

A case was filed in this regard.

Regional workshop on adolescents November 20

A sub-regional workshop on promoting advocacy for "Adolescent reproductive health through effective communication: A training programme" for media practitioners will be held at a city hotel on November 20, reports UNB.

Islamic University convocation Dec 5

KUSHTIA, Nov 16: The second convocation of Islamic University will be held on December 5, reports UNB.

Chancellor of the university Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will attend the convocation, university sources said.

The 10 Vice Chancellor at a press conference has sought cooperation of all for successful holding of the convocation.

Reunion of freedom fighters Dec 7

The freedom fighters belonging to the Sector No 8 will hold a reunion at the Martyrs' Memorial Rakta Rin beside the Monoharpur Lake near Jessore Cantonment on December 7, says an ISPR press release.

December 7 is a red-letter day in the history of the Liberation War. On this day, the valiant freedom fighters liberated the Jessore area from the clutch of the Pakistani occupation forces.

Freedom Fighters belonging to Sector 8 and members of the Martyred families who want to participate in the programme have been requested to fill in the prescribed forms available with district Muktiyuddha Sangsads and submit them to the Thana/District Muktiyuddha Sangsads.

FEMA-BNP meet on electoral law reform today

By Staff Correspondent

Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) will hold a meeting with the leaders of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) today at 11:00 am at the Minto Road office of BNP as a part of its on going electoral law reforms initiative in collaboration with Study and Research Group of Manabik Shahajya Sangstha, says a press release of FEMA.

FEMA has already organised consultation meeting with Gono Forum, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Jatiya Party, Workers Party, CPB and Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan MP, M K Anwar MP, M Samsul Islam MP and other leaders of Bangladesh Nationalist Party, FEMA will be represented by Ataur Rahman, Vice-Chairperson, Susanta Adhikari, Treasurer, Feroz M Hassan, Mahbubul Alam, Tarkul Ghani, Executive Director and Burhanuddin Ahmed, Election Consultant will participate in the discussion on behalf of FEMA.

Feroz Hassan, Secretary General of FEMA said that the consultation meeting with the leader of political party related to electoral law reform will help improve immensely the preliminary recommendation formulated by FEMA.

Voyage of discovery arrives at Ctg Port Nov 22

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 16: The "Voyage of Discovery" is expected to arrive at Chittagong Port on November 22 after visiting sixteen countries.

A function will be held on the day at the Coal Jetty near Patenga Airport where the ship will berth. Chittagong City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury will be present at the function as the chief guest.

The Voyage of Discovery will allow visitors aboard on November 24 and 25. It will stay in the port city for five days during which organisers of voyage will arrange a cultural show. Ticket for the show have been fixed at Tk 100 and a total of 2000 visitors will be allowed at the function to be held every day.

The "Voyage of Discovery" sponsored by John Player Gold Leaf started its voyage from London on June 19 this year.

Ahsanullah varsity classes resume November 20

Classes of Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology resume on November 20, a university press release said yesterday.

All dormitories of the university will be reopened on November 19 at 3.00 pm, the release added.

Qulkhwani

The qulkhwani of Nurul Islam Khan, a former chief scientific officer of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), will be held at his 344 Gulbagh residence today after Asr prayers, family sources said, reports BSS.

Islam, a soil scientist, died here Saturday due to respiratory failure at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH), at the age of 67.

He hails from Palkarchar village of Banchharampur thana under Brahmanbaria district. He left behind his wife, four sons, a daughter, grandchildren and a host of friends, admirers and relatives to mourn his death.

What went wrong?

From page 1
quoting unnamed New Delhi diplomats that India was not going to vote for Sobhan.

And, in New Delhi and here in Durban, there was unanimity that an Indian vote for Sobhan was the remotest possibility.

So there was frustration among Bangladesh officials. "A lot many countries follow the Indian lead in such circumstances," explained a New Delhi-based Bangladesh diplomat.

Did Sobhan get the Vajpayee vote, finally? The damage had already been done even if he did.

And then, there were other Indian factors too.

A Bangladeshi as Commonwealth secretary general would have killed an Indian's chances of getting the position in the near future after Sobhan had played the Asian card. The three previous chief executives had been from the three other of the four regions that the Commonwealth countries come from. "Their chance would have finished for the next 30 years," said a Bangladeshi diplomat in New Delhi.

Then, Kris Srinivasan, the former Indian foreign secretary, is currently the deputy secretary general for political affairs. Srinivasan was at the helm of the foreign office in New Delhi (February 1994-February 1995) when Sobhan was High Commissioner to India.

It did not go well with the mandarins at South Block that a former Bangladesh diplomat should be the number one and an Indian top diplomat working under him.

This point also gave a huge weapon to McKinnon, who asked his voters:

Should the two top positions go to the same region? A Bangladeshi heading it with an Indian as his deputy? (The two other deputy secretaries general are Canadian and British dealing with administrative, financial and development issues).

But why should Srinivasan still be around when the new secretary general takes over in early April next year? His contract expired on June 30 this year and was supposed to have been extended by six months if one has to go by the norm that the outgoing secretary general has to extend his life at Commonwealth, which will keep him there through 2001, almost half the tenure of Anyaoki's successor. Sources say McKinnon has promised him another two-year extension.

Chief Anyaoki has always advocated for the secretary general to choose his team and accordingly, say some analysts, should have waited for the new secretary general to take over and decide.

"Was it ethically and morally right for the outgoing secretary general to renew the contract of Srinivasan, creating a situation which would have adversely affected the election chances of one candidate?" asked a Sobhan supporter.

McKinnon was walking on a more stable rope, given the fact that he secured good endorsements from the Caricom (a summit on October 25 took the decision) and Pacific countries. "That's 22 votes," boasted a

New Zealand foreign ministry official at the November 12 luncheon party as Sobhan was giving the final touches to his year-long campaign.

"We have got 40 solid votes," claimed S Gimson, the New Zealand diplomat, to this correspondent.

The figures did not tally the claims. So what happened? The Sobhan camp claimed that there was a split right at the middle at the 12-nation Caricom. At least six of them defied the October 25 resolution at their summit.

"Six Caribbean prime ministers came and confirmed their vote. Each one separately spoke to Sobhan and confirmed," said an official at the Bangladesh mission in Pretoria.

Several African heads of government also campaigned for the Bangladesh candidate. "I can guarantee you South Africa supported us," the official said. "They all agreed on the point that someone from a developing country should be the secretary general."

But Bangladesh's status as a poor nation may have also told upon Sobhan's campaign. Diplomatic sources here say McKinnon backers argued that all Commonwealth money would fly out into Bangladesh, being the poorest of the poor, if Sobhan got elected.

The Commonwealth runs certain programmes in support of the 32 small states it has under its umbrella.

Sobhan did his best to ward off such fears. At a seminar at small states here in Durban on the day before the vote, he spoke in presence of 27 foreign ministers and hammered heavily on the problems of these countries, which drew attention of their representatives.

There were other forms of thorns on the campaign path. Speaking to The Daily Star, Sobhan pointed to some bad publicity at home.

"What damaged me is the perception that my government was not backing me, which is completely wrong. Even the president of Kiribati asked me if it was true. I was told by some others that they had received anonymous letters giving such information."

"I knew that I was up against the sitting foreign minister of New Zealand," said Sobhan when asked if he would blame lack of a co-ordinated campaign.

The government within its capacity gave whatever support I needed.

Sobhan travelled as PM's special envoy with the rank of a state minister. But money came mostly from his own pocket.

As the figures did not tally, it was widely believed that some countries promised vote to both.

But Sobhan refused to accept that some countries did not "want" to make Bangladesh unhappy with a blunt refusal.

They have a good reason to lie to New Zealand, a country that has something to offer them in aid. But they have no reason to lie to us."

The numbers will never be known, as veteran Commonwealth watcher Derek Ingram says, there is belief in some circles that Sobhan went pretty close to the glory, a Bangladeshi manning the number one elected position of an international organisation.

Peaceful hartal

From page 1

at 5:15pm. An aged BNP supporter was wounded.

BNP claimed that police without any provocation fired rubber bullets on BNP activists in front of the residence of party MP Abdul Mannan at Dhanmondi.

Two powerful bombs were thrown in the Paltan crossing at around 11:30am from a speeding minibus coming from Gulistan. Two more bombs were thrown from the same bus in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

Pickets exploded two homemade crackers at Khilgaon railway crossing at about 8:30am. Bombs were also exploded at Malibagh, Dholaikhal, Kaltabazar, Shahjahanpur, Fakirerpool, Roysahab Bazar, English Road, Maghbazar, Khilgaon, Kakrai and Nayapaltan areas.

Police said a rickshawpuller, Dulah Sheikh, received bomb injury to his left hand and right leg at the Fakirerpool crossing at 11am. The victim was given first aid at the Rajarbagh hospital.

Another rickshawpuller Selim (22) received bomb injury at the Roysahab Bazar crossing at about 10:30am. He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, police claimed.

Private offices, business establishments, private banks and other financial institutions and educational institutions were closed while trading on the Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges were not held.

Inter-district and long route buses were off the road but rickshaws plied almost normally in the city. Some state-run BRTC buses and mini buses plied along some roads in the city. Train and launch services operated normally.

During the hartal hour, BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islamic Oikya Jote brought out a series of processions and held rallies at Nayapaltan and Bijoyagar areas.

From page 1

the port and the economy as well.

The chairman of Mongla Port Authority (MPA) said, "No-one can stop public utility... and therefore loading and unloading will begin from this evening under government supervision."

The Joint Director, Labour (JDL) K A Sattar told The Daily Star today that the strike at Mongla Port has been banned as it is doing harm to interest of the people and the state. The issue will be sent to labour court, he said.

Sources said both the MPA chairman and the Joint Director tried their best to resolve the crisis, but they failed as a vested quarter is provoking the casual staff to go ahead with the strike.

The deadlock at the port has caused immense financial loss. Frozen food worth over Tk 125 crore are now waiting for shipment to European and American markets. The crisis of clincher has forced suspension of production in two cement factories.

The Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Khulna Bar Association, and Khulna unit of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters' Association have sought intervention of the prime minister to resolve the crisis within the quickest possible time.

Vajpayee

From page 1

anti-terrorism court in Karachi where charges will be formally laid against him.

Last Thursday colonel Atiq-uz-Zaman Kiyani registered a First Information Report (FIR) against Sharif and several other senior officials. The report is the first step in bringing a criminal case in Pakistan.

The charges relate to the night of the coup, when Musharraf was flying back to Pakistan from Sri Lanka and discovered during the flight Sharif had sacked him as army chief.

Sharif tried to prevent Musharraf's aircraft, a Pakistan International Airlines jet carrying 198 passengers, from landing at Karachi, even blocking the runway with three fire engines, according to the accusations.

Musharraf only landed after the army seized control of the airport. When the aircraft touched down it had just 10 minutes of fuel left, the FIR said.

Hours later Musharraf took control of the country, put Sharif under detention and assumed sweeping powers.