What's on today....

Launching ceremony: The launching ceremony of an audio cassette *Tomar Bhubane Eshe* by Luna Zaman will be held. Venue: 30 Naya Paltan. Time: 12.30 pm.

Meeting: The monthly general meeting of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh will be held. A talk will be delivered on "Landscape in Mughal Painting". Venue: Seminar room of the society. Time: 4.00 pm.

Meeting: Pabna Samity in Dhaka will hold a meeting. Venue: Office premises at Shantibagh. Time: 6.00 pm.

Seminar : A seminar titled "Bangladesh in the 21st Century: Socio-economic Perspectives" will be held. President Shahabuddin Ahmed will inaugurate the seminar organised by Society for International Development (SID) — Bangladesh chapter. Venue: LGED auditorium, Agargaon. Time : 10 am.

Confce on Rule of Law: A roundtable conference on "Rule of Law and Role of Police in Democracy," organised by Bangladesh Centre for Democratic Awareness, will be held. Venue : National Press Club. Time : From 9:30 am to 4 pm.

Clinical meeting: A clinical meeting on "Post Cath Management in CCU" will be held. Speaker: Dr Bidyut Kumardas. Moderator: Dr Shams Munwar. Venue: Conference Hall, Z H Sikder Cardiac Care & Research Centre, Dhanmondi. Time : From 9:00 am to 10:00 am.

Discussion meeting: A discussion meeting and milad mahfil, organised by Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), will be held on the occasion of ninth death anniversary of Shaheed Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon. Venue: Dr Milon Mazar premises at Dhaka Medical College. Time : 11 am.

..... and tomorrow

Roundtable: Centre for Strategic and Peace Studies will begin a roundtable discussion on "Aspects of National Security of Bangladesh". Venue: CIRDAP auditorium, Chameli House, Topkhana Road. Time: 9.30 am - 5.00 pm.

Reception: A reception will be held to mark the inauguration of Bank Asia Ltd. Venue: Pool side of Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 7.00 pm.

Weather

Dry weather likely

Dry weather is likely to prevail over the country in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

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

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 31.2 degree Celsius at Cox's Bazar and the lowest 12.5 degrees at Satkhira.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5.11 pm and rises tomorrow at 6.22 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	29.5	15.5	61	80
Chittagong	30.1	18.7	78	72
Rajshahi	28.6	15.3	72	80
Khulna	29.8	15.4	74	76
Barisal	29.8	15.4	81	87
Sylhet	28.5	16.2	70	71
Cox's Bazar	31.2	19.8	69	82

1st South Asian confce on reproductive & child health opens

Cooperation between govt, NGOs must to improve maternal, child healthcare : Yusuf

The three-day first South Asian Conference on Reproductive and Child Health opened at Hotel Sonargaon in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Salahuddin Yusuf, Minister for Health and Family Welfare, was present at the conference as chief guest while Prof M Amanullah, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare, attended as the special guest.

Bangladesh Association for Maternal and Neonatal Health (BAMANEH) organised the programme in association with International Association for Maternal and Neonatal Health (IAMANEH), Geneva, Switzerland, Obstetrics & Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB) and Indian College of Maternal and Child Health (ICMCH), Calcutta, India.

Prof (Retd) Syeda Firoza Begum, President of BAMANEH, addressed the inaugural session which was also participated by Prof A B Bhuiyan, Prof Sayeba Akhtar, Chairperson of the Scientific Committee, Gerda M Santchi, Executive Director of IAMENEH, Prof S N Mukharjee, Chairman, ICMCH, Prof CS Dawn, Secretary General, ICMCH, Prof Shahla Khatun, President, OGSB, Prof Fahmida Jalil of MCWAP and Dr Rawshan Ara Begum, Secretary General of OGSB.

Delegates from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and host country Bangladesh attended the conference.

Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf said the government was striving to do everything possible to reduce the maternal death rate."

He hoped that maternal and child health status would improve significantly with active cooperation of the government and the NGOs.

Prof M Amanullah in his deliberation said "such type of conference will obviously create a great impact on reproductive health issues including maternal and child health."

Prof Syeda Firoza Begum said "one third of healthy life lost in adult women in developing world is due to reproductive health problems as compared to 12 per cent in men."

She hoped that such free discussion would pave the way for rich and significant learning experience in reproductive and child health sector.

Gerda Santchi held the view that most of the women in developing countries suffer from illness and disabilities throughout their lives due to social discrimination and lack of access in the specific field of reproductive and child health care.

Dr C S Dawn observed that reproductive and child health care deserved top priority in order to save mother and infant.

Prof S N Mukharjee said "scientific discussion on health of women and children will help exchange ideas among participants which will culminate in further improvement of maternal and child healthcare.

Prof Hamida Jalil highlighted the steps taken by Pakistan government to reduce child and maternal death rate. She stressed the necessity of in-depth study to create awareness among mothers.

Prof A B Bhuiyan in his address of welcome said, "we have lot of commonalties in reproductive health and child health issues.

In her vote of thanks, Prof Rowshan Ara Begum appreciated the role of UN agencies and other development partners including UNICEF for their unstinted support to various programmes in Bangladesh for rapid improvement of maternal and reproductive child health care.

Students of the Eden Girl's University College brought out a colourful procession in the city yesterday to mark the end of Masters final year classes. —Star photo

NU exams

Candidates are yet to get admit cards

Star Report

Graduate level examination under the National University (NU) hangs in the balance as admit cards of a large number of candidates are yet to be handed over to them.

Meantime, teachers and officials of different colleges thronged the offices of the National University to collect admit cards even on Friday, only one day ahead of the examinations.

About 2,66,103 candidates are likely to appear at the examinations from 600 colleges across the country. Authorities said that they were confident about conducting the examination as per schedule.

The university authorities acknowledged disruption in their normal works due to hartal and government holiday over the last few days.

Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr. M. Lutfor Rahman told the BBC that "only a few admit cards are yet to be distributed". These cards will reach the students before the examinations, Rahman said.

DRU polls today

Voters of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) will cast their votes through computer to elect a 21-member executive body for a one-year term today, reports UNB.

The software being used for computer voting, named "magic vote manager," was developed by Business Information and Advisory Services Limited (BIASL).

Some 492 reporters are likely to cast their votes at the Jatiya Press Club from 9 am to 4 pm without any break.

This is for the first time in the country that computers are being used for any polls.

Hotel expansion plan

Business offices asked to vacate Sheraton premises

By Staff Correspondent

Business organisations using premises of the Sheraton hotel have been asked to vacate their offices by the end of January next as the hotel gears up for a massive expansion programme.

"We have been advised by our owning company Bangladesh Services Ltd (BSL) that in the backdrop of the NAM summit they will be carrying out an expansion work," said the hotel authorities in a letter sent to the business organisations.

The expansion plans include a lobby with an atrium, a grand ballroom, meeting rooms, office space and underground car parking facilities.

"The owners would like to start the expansion work immediately and requires the space to be available from February 1," the letter said.

"We request you to kindly hand over the keys of your offices to our possession by January 31, next".

"Bangladesh Services Ltd. has some vacant space available and the hotel can also offer you space in the guest rooms on the third floor should you want to rent these," the letter added.

At least 24 business organisations occupy 17,000 square feet, sources said, adding that all the organisations have been served with notices to vacate the premises by the end of December. The notice was served on November 9.

However, some top executives of the business organisations said they don't have enough time to move before the January 31 deadline. Others complained the space offered was insufficient.

A Sheraton executive dismissed the claim. He said the organisations were given enough time as stipulated by the hotel's "leave and license agreement". Either party may terminate the contract with one month's notice, he added.

Most of the offices have been offered space for relocation in the BSL complex, at the backyard of Hotel Sheraton, sources said. Efforts are underway to accommodate all the organisations in the available space there.

Asked whether the space was sufficient to accommodate all these offices, a source in the BSL administration said that 14,000 sq. ft area was available with the complex.

She gave us the courage : PM

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tions with the motherly poet, the prime minister said: "I feel lonely with the death of the beloved poet. I had a personal relationship with her."

"Off and on I used to rush to her at times of hardships and difficulties. She was very close to me, the nearest one."

The prime minister said this liberal and simple lady had given her love, and affection, and advice and suggestion when ever she had rushed to her in crisis.

Sufia Kamal always dreamt that Bangladesh would be happy and prosperous, free of all sorts of communalism, Hasina said.

Sajed Kamal, the youngest son of the late poet, said his mother wanted every citizen of the country to live happily, with dignity and honour.

She wanted that democracy would be established here and communalism, autocracy would not exist and human rights would never be violated, he said.

"My mother wanted trial of the killers and collaborators of the 1971 Liberation War. We will be able to show our real respect to her if we can realise her desires and dreams," said Sajed Kamal.

Paying rich tributes to the deceased, the condolence resolution says Sufia Kamal was the conscience of the nation, the voice of the national hopes and aspirations. She was the pioneer for women renaissance and symbol of courage.

"In all activities of the poet we got the inspiration for wresting freedom from bondage, independence from chains — at state, family and personal levels."

In his presidential speech, Prof Kabir Chowdhury said a vacuum was left in national life with the death of the beloved poet.

She was the source of love. She had deep feelings for the humanity and thirst for truth and beauty, and she always stood against communalism and fanaticism. She will be a permanent source of inspiration for women renaissance, said Kabir Chowdhury.

"By leaving us she has united us all, now we'll have to fight together to carry forward her spirit and values," he told the gathering.

The meeting was also addressed by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Mayor Mohammad Hanif, Rashed Khan Menon of Workers Party, Begum Sanjida Khatun of Chhayanaut, Manjurul Ahsan Khan of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, Ataur Rahman of International Theatre Institute, Prof Anisuzzaman of Afro-Asia Gano Sanghati Samity, Justice K M Sobhan of Bangabandhu Parishad, Hasanul Huq Inu of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Golam Quddus of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Advocate Sharakhatun of Bangladesh Mohila Samity, Syed Hasan Imam of Udichi, Rokunuzzaman Khan Dadabhai of Kachi Kanchar Mela, Aysha Khanom of Mohila Parishad, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik of Gono Forum, Ali Aksad of Shanti Parishad, Barrister Shafiq Ahmed of Supreme Court Bar Association, Dhaka University VC Prof A K Azad Chowdhury, Dr M Akhtaruzzaman of College University Teachers Association, Prof Abdul Mannan of Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Jatiya Samannay Committee, Salauddin Badal of Joy Bangla Sangskritik Jote, Bazlur Rashid of BSD, Shirin Akhtar of Sammilita Nari Samaj, M A Gani if NAP, Liakat Ali Laki of Group Theatre Federation, Hasan Arif of Abrity Samannay Parishad, Aroma Goon of ADAB, Dileep Barua of Samyabadi Dal, A F M Mahabubul Huq of BSD, Shariar Kabir of Nirmul Committee, Nirmal Sen of Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal, Nasiruddin Yusuf of Gram Theatre, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin of BMA and Col (retd) Shawkat Ali of Muktijoddha Sanghati Parishad.

Condolence meet on poet Sufia Kamal on Dec 4

CHITTAGONG, Nov 26: A meeting will be held on December 4 at 3 pm at the Central Shaheed Minar here to condole the death of poet Begum Sufia Kamal, reports BSS.

A 101-member citizens' committee has been formed to hold the meeting. The committee was formed today at a meeting of prominent citizens held at Chittagong Press Club with Dr Anupom Sen in the chair.

Begum Umratul Fazal, Dr Anupom Sen and Nasiruddin Chowdhury were made president, executive president and member-secretary respectively of the committee.

Photojournalist Belal dead

By Staff Correspondent

Veteran photojournalist and founder member of Bangladesh Photo Journalists' Association (BPJA) Belayet Hossain Belal died of cardiac arrest at his residence yesterday morning. He was 47.

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

Belayet Hossain had long been associated with The Weekly Chitrali, the country's pioneering cine magazine published by the Observer House. He also served as joint secretary of BPJA.

First *namaj-e-janaza* of Belal was held at the Jaitya Press Club. The body was then taken to the Film Development Corporation (FDC) where a second *janaza* was held.

Later his body was taken to his village home at Feni for burial.

In a statement yesterday, BPJA expressed profound shock at the death of Belal.

President and general secretary of BPJA expressed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Followers

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College in Madanpur in protest against ideology of Mahabube Khoda Diwanbagi, *peer* of Dewanbagh Darbar Sharif, that he has published in a number of his books.

The clash occurred when a group of people attacked followers of *peer* of Charmonai who were returning from the rally. A large number of police personnel were deployed near the Dewanbagh Darbar Sharif since the morning.

Both the groups chased each other with sticks and brickbats, hospital sources added.

When contacted last night, Samsuddoja, an ASP of Narayanganj, denied that any such clash had occurred near Dewanbagh Darbar Sharif in the presence of police. He however said at one stage supporters of Dewanbagi chased those returning from the rally but police soon took the situation under control.

Vajpayee

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ister said.

Vajpayee said a venal and time-consuming judicial system was also affecting the economy and development. "India cannot afford justice in slow-motion at a time when we want to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development," he said.

"The rate of conviction of the accused in various crimes is pathetically low. Big economic offenders almost invariably go scot-free using their considerable resources."

Independent studies by overseas organisations have ranked India among the world's most corrupt nations.

29 arrested in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Nov 26: Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) today arrested 29 people including two alleged notorious terrorists from different areas of the city, reports BSS.

Shahidul Islam Shamim, 26, and Abu Zafar, 25, were arrested from Ambagan and Kolshidigir area on charges of terrorism and possessing unauthorised weapons. Both are wanted in connection with several criminal cases, police said.

Kotwali Police arrested an absconding accused, Peyar Ahmad, from Fisheries Ghat in the city.

India ready to build dam on river Barak

SYLHET, Nov 26: India is said to have completed all arrangements to construct a high dam in the Barak river, the origin of rivers Kushiara and Surma, posing a threat to ecological balance as well as farmlands of Bangladesh, reports UNB.

According to information received here from across the border, India is going to set up a power plant in Tipaimuk area by constructing the dam in the Barak.

Experts say that if the dam is built, the entire northeastern and southern parts of Bangladesh could turn into deserts while the Sylhet region would come under threat of frequent earthquakes.

They caution that the Surma and Kushiara rivers, tributaries of the Barak, would lose their flow with the construction of the dam, leaving far-reaching adverse effects on socioeconomic condition of one-fourth area of the country, from Sylhet to Barisal.

If the dam is constructed, power generation in Ashuganj plant and production in Fenchuganj Fertilizer Factory will also be threatened, the experts say.

They say production in 130 tea gardens of Sylhet region would come down drastically due to the adverse effects of the dam.

The river Barak enters into Bangladesh through the Amalshid frontier and splits into Kushiara and Surma.

The Surma falls in the Bay of Bengal running through Sylhet, Sunamganj, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur and Bhola districts while Kushiara merges with Surma at Markuli in Ajmiriganj after passing through Zakiganj, Bianibazar, Fenchuganj, Golapganj, Balaganj, Rajnagar, Moulavibazar, Nabiganj and Jagannathpur.

India first took up the initiative to build the dam in the early 90s and later suspended the programme amid strong protest by the people of greater Sylhet.

But it has again embarked on the project in spite of objection by the government of Manipur State. The state government argued that construction of any dam in the river would only prompt earthquakes.

Experts as well as the people of Sylhet region has urged the government to undertake diplomatic efforts to restrain India from constructing the dam.

Neonatal Society formed

By Staff correspondent

Bangladesh Neonatal Society, a professional body for the well being of newborns, was formed at a meeting yesterday, says a press release.

A 20-member steering committee has been formed with Prof M Q Talukdar, Prof Khaleda Banu, Prof Nurul Islam and Prof F H Nazir as advisors.

The society has been formed with an aim to take up various programmes to ensure proper care for newborns. It will also hold national and international seminars and clinical meetings on the issue.

JU teacher awarded gold medal

By JU Correspondent

Arifa Ghani, a lecturer of English at Jahangirnagar University (JU), has been awarded 'Justice Amiruddin Gold Medal' by the Dhaka University (DU) for obtaining highest marks in MA examination (English) under academic session 1993.

Arifa completed her BA (English) in second class and MA in first class. She joined the JU English department in 1996.

Children's Garden, a school for young children, held a "Dress as You Like" competition at its Uttara branch premises recently.

Nat'l seminar on human rights

Rural women and children worst sufferers of HR violations

COX'S BAZAR, Nov 26: Jurists, legal experts and diplomats at a national seminar on human rights here today attributed the rising trend of human rights violation in the country to 'intolerance' and 'arrogance' and said this tendency is leading the people towards expressing their emotions in an 'irrational' way, reports BSS.

The speakers observed that the poor women and children, living in the rural areas, were the worst victims of man-made disaster as they do not have access to law.

Bangladesh Bar Council in cooperation with the Cox's Bazar Bar Association organised the two-day seminar on "Human Rights and Role of Lawyers" at the local Public Library Auditorium.

Justice Latifur Rahman, Senior Judge of Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, formally opened the seminar while Barrister Amirul Islam, Vice Chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council and Chairman Legal Education and Training Institute (LET) presented the keynote paper in the function, participated by around 500 human rights activists from across the country.

Presided over by Cox's Bazar Bar Association President Shahajalal Chowdhury, the seminar was addressed by Dutch Ambassador to Bangladesh Dick CB Den Haas, UNHCR Representative Christopher Lee, Chairman of Human Rights Training Programme of Bangladesh Bar Council Advocate Abdus Salam Talukder and Cox's Bazar Bar Secretary Habibur Rahman.

They put special emphasis on building a 'social movement' with consensus among political parties to check violation which includes rape, kidnapping, dowry and acid throwing, as these are taking new dimensions in society.

They also said that professionals especially lawyers can take the lead to launch a countrywide campaign against human rights violation and build a 'terror-free Bangladesh for the new millennium.'

Justice A K Badrul Huq of the Supreme Court and Justice Naimuddin Ahmed, member of the Law Commission, also took part in the seminar.

Justice Latifur Rahman said gender equality, enshrined in the constitution, should be ensured in society to check abuse of women and children taking place in many ways.

Reading out the key-note paper Barrister Amirul Islam said human rights violation is a man made disaster. Referring to the role of police personnel in the country, the renowned lawyer, said some 300 cases have been filed against police torture in last 10 months. Torture, rape and killing are on the increase while police power of arrest is being abused, he added.

He, however, acknowledged some limitations of the police and the public prosecutors as well. He laid emphasis on establishing a specialised investigation wing in police, which is absent now, and centralised office for public prosecution (PP). "There is a need for creating an independent and honest office of Director of Public Prosecutor with budgetary sanction, legal authority and with proper training and recruitment policy," he suggested.

Dick CB Den Haas, Dutch Ambassador, observed lack of proper education and illiteracy as the major cause of all forms of violation in Bangladesh. He said proper education among the future generation and environment for free exercise of human rights could lead a country towards development.

He also opined that the three pillars of a state the executive, legislative and judiciary — should work independently with good understanding.

BNP secy gen for strengthening party's women's wing

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday called for strengthening the party's women's wing at grassroots level to wage an effective movement against woman and child repression alongside the current oust-government agitation, reports UNB.

Inaugurating an extended meeting of Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal, woman front of BNP, at Minto Road in the morning, Bhuiyan said, "Nobody is secure in the hands of fascist Awami League government."

"The extent of repression on women and children under the rule of present government has exceeded all past records. Number of cases of repression by police and ruling party activists is the highest".

Bhuiyan alleged that women have been victims of killings by police, stripped of their dresses, arrested and harassed.

The BNP secretary general said the government has done nothing for women.

Terming Mohila Dal as one of the sources of strength, Bhuiyan said its organisational activities should be strengthened further to organise women.

Milon's death anniversary

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memorate his death anniversary with due respect.

The Dr Milon Sangsad will place wreath at his grave on the Dhaka Medical College premises in the morning as part of memorial services.

Bangladesh Awami League, the ruling party, will offer wreath at 8 am to his tomb.

Leaders and activists of BNP will place wreaths at the grave of Dr Milon and offer fateha there seeking blessing for the departed soul at 8:30 am. They will also place wreaths at Dr Milon memorial plaque on Dhaka University campus at 9.00 am.

Dr Milon Sangsad has chalked out an elaborate programme to pay respect to the martyr, which include offering of wreaths at his grave.

A discussion will be held at 4 pm at Milon Chattar at Dhaka University. President of the organisation Dr M A Majed will chair the discussion.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave messages on the anniversary of Dr Milon's demise, paying homage to the martyred medical teacher and professional leader.

President Shahabuddin said the nation would ever remember with gratitude the contribution of Shaheed Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon to democracy movement in the country.

"The ongoing democracy movement was reinforced centering the martyrdom of Dr Milon paving the way for reestablishing democracy in the country with united efforts," he said.

So this day carries special significance with regard to restoration of people's infringed democratic rights," said the President.

He prayed for salvation of the departed soul of Shaheed Milon.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called for all to work unitedly for establishing democratic values and economic emancipation of the poor masses in fulfillment of the aspirations of Dr Milon and other martyrs.

She made the call in a message on the eve of 9th anniversary of Dr Milon's death.

"His sacrifice turned the anti-autocracy movement of 1990 into mass uprising which subsequently toppled autocratic regime," the prime minister recalled.

She said Shaheed Dr Milon, from his student life, had dreamt of institutionalising democratic values in the country and economic emancipation of the downtrodden.

"He was a symbol of struggle and perseverance. Sacrifice of this martyr, who had intrinsic political awareness, patriotism, free thinking and devotion to democracy, would never fade away from our spirit," Hasina said.

Volunteers from Sonargaon Hotel painting a tree yesterday as part of its "Environmental Care and Beautification Programme" around the SAARC Fountain on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the city. —Star photo