

What's on today....

CSYO rally: Commonwealth Student and Youth Organisation (CSYO) will hold a rally on occasion of the National Youth Festival starting tomorrow. It will also distribute educational equipment among students living in slums. Venue: Science Laboratory to the old airport. Time: 6:00 am.

Launching ceremony: Shatadru Systems (Computer Sales and Service centre) will be launched. Venue: 54, Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani. Time: 4:00 pm.

Inauguration: Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh (ICMAB) will inaugurate a 5-day long Professional Course on VAT. Venue: ICMAB auditorium. Time: 4:00 pm.

Premiere: Three documentary films *Kalighar*, *Shet Dhaka*, *Shet Buriganga* and *Uttar Adibashi* produced by Steps Towards Development, will be screened. Venue: Auditorium of Planning Development Academy. Time: 5:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Procession: Padakhep, a Non Government Organisation (NGO), will bring out a procession to mark World AIDS Day. Venue: From Padakhep office premises at Ka-58 Pisciculture Housing Society, Shyamoli. Time: 8:30 am.

Seminar: World Bank Office in collaboration with Economic Relations Division (ERD) will hold a seminar on "Loan Administration Change Initiative (LACI) and Financial Accountability". Chief guest: Abdul Matin Khasru, Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 10:00 am.

Weather

Dry weather likely

Dry weather may prevail over the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Night temperature may rise slightly over the country during the period but it may fall in the next two days, Met Office forecast. The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 30.8 degree Celsius at Cox's Bazar and the lowest 12.6 degrees at Sathkhira.

The sun sets, in the capital today at 5.10 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:25 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 | 28.5 | 16.6 |
| Chittagong | 29.5 | 17.6 |
| Rajshahi | 28.0 | 17.0 |
| Khulna | 29.4 | 15.2 |
| Barisal | 29.0 | 14.8 |
| Sylhet | 29.1 | 17.0 |
| Cox's Bazar | 30.8 | 18.4 |

HERE and THERE

Workshop

A three-day training workshop on "Implementation of Chemical Weapon Convention" began yesterday in the city, reports UNB.

Three experts from the Netherlands have been conducting the workshop, said a hand-out.

Jointly organised by the Hague based Organisation of Prohibition of Chemical Weapon and Bangladesh Armed Forces Division, some 24 participants from Home, Foreign, Law, Defence, Information, Agriculture, Commerce, Industry, Science and Technology ministries and Armed forces are attending the workshop.

Certificates will be awarded to the participants on the concluding day of the workshop on Friday.

Bangladesh ratified the Chemical Weapon Convention in April 1997.

PLAGE meeting

The first meeting of the Implementation and Monitoring Committee on WID was held at the CIDRAP auditorium recently, says a press release.

The meeting was chaired by the Professor Zinnatun Nessa Talukdar, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs. It was conducted by Professor (Dr) Thamina Chowdhury, secretary of the ministry.

The implementation and monitoring committee of WID is one of the recommendation of National Action Plan and the National Policy also lays emphasis on it. The committee discussed the implementation status of the National Action Plan by different ministries.

In her inaugural speech the Secretary welcomed saying that this meeting is the implementation of one of the article of the National Policy and also the National Action Plan which is the result of Beijing Platform for Action. She said that the committee is formed with the combination of representative from the Civil Society NGOs and concern govt officials.

The committee will guide, monitor and follow up the implementation status of the National Action Plan by the different ministries.

In her speech the chairperson, Professor Zinnatun Nessa

Talukdar said that the meeting brings together different stakeholders of the society in a forum for establishing gender equality in the society. It is also the implementation of government commitment towards gender equality.

The meeting also discussed the implementation of the NAP by different ministry such as Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Primary and Mass Education Department, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Youth and Culture, Ministry of Home Ministry. Among others Dr Nazma Chowdhury, Salma Subhan, Aysha Begum Mahin Sultan were present at the meeting.

Muktir Katha

Muktir Katha (Words of Freedom), an 85-minute documentary on the oral history of the Liberation War, was screened yesterday for hundreds of viewers in the Shishu Academy auditorium in the city, reports BSS.

Tareque Masud and Catherine Masud, the directors of the film along with the members of the projectionist group of another documentary on the liberation war, Muktir Gaan Tajul, Rozy, Nahid and others took four years and Taka 1.1 million to complete the laudable venture.

The film narrates mass resistance and exodus of 1971.

The makers of Muktir Katha in their documentary ventures to narrate another film on Liberation War and how it inspired millions to speak of their hopes and aspirations for their motherland, not without pains though.

It seeks to document how an unarmed people fought the well-equipped occupation forces braving genocide and untold atrocities," said Catherine Masud.

Muktir Katha shows how a film, Muktir Gaan, inspired the people to fight so that the village people could live in dignity changing traditional outlook.

The film ends on a sad tone depicting how even after risking everything in the war the poor continue to struggle while the fortunate few are reaping the harvest of war.

Boy beaten to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A 12-year-old boy was beaten to death allegedly by a jewelry shop owner and his employee in the city's B block of sector 11 under Pallabi police station yesterday morning, police and witnesses said.

The identity of the boy could not be confirmed till late last night, police said.

According to police, the boy went to New Dolly Jewelry to buy gold ornaments yesterday morning. The owner of the shop, Guddu, allegedly detained him suspecting him to be a thief. The boy was beaten up mercilessly by Guddu and his employee.

The boy was taken to a house belonging to Guddu when he fell unconscious. As the boy's condition deteriorated he was taken to the hospital. The boy, however, died on way to the hospital.

The owner of the shop then left the body near his house.

Pallabi police recovered the body of the young boy at about 5 pm from the spot which was then sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

A case was filed with Pallabi police but police could not arrest anybody in this connection.

World AIDS Day today

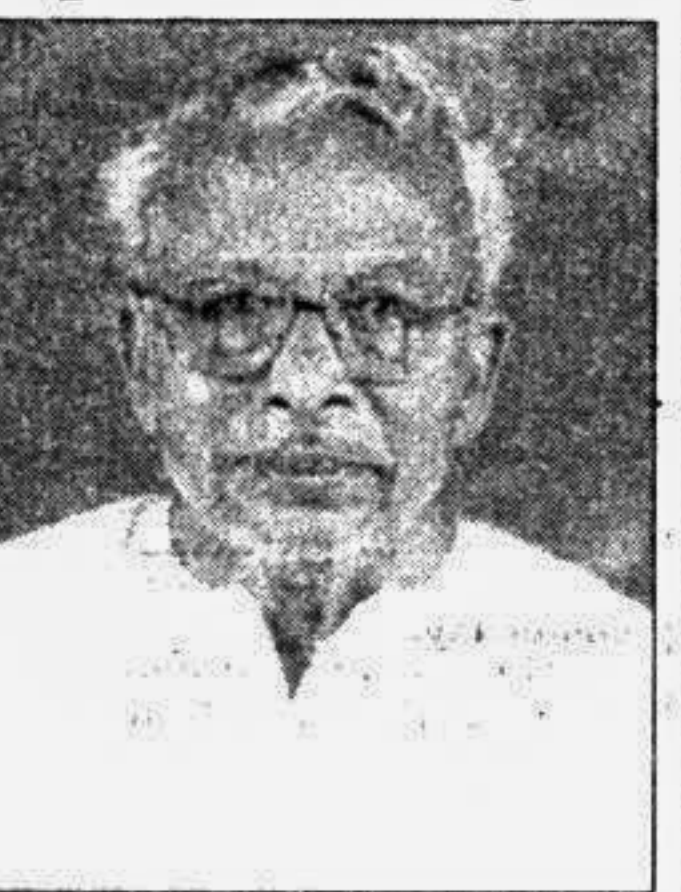
The World AIDS Day will be observed today in the country as elsewhere in the world, reports BSS.

"Listen, Learn, Live," the theme of the world AIDS campaign of this year, last year of the 20th century, marked the hope of bringing the epidemic under control.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the occasion.

Around 16 million HIV infected have died so far out of 50 million infected people around the world. This year alone, the epidemic claimed a record 2.6 million lives. Half of the infected this year are people under the age of 25, UN Information Centre sources said.

Freedom fighter passes away



By Staff Correspondent
Syed Mahabubul Haque (Benu Mia), a valiant freedom fighter and a leading businessman in Magura, died of colon cancer in the early hours on Tuesday. He was 72.

A proud father of four and a very good soul to the poor, Mahabubul Haque lost his long battle with the deadly disease at his sons' Lalmeta residence in the capital. The body of the deceased was taken to Magura, where he was laid to rest at the local graveyard after namaj-e-janaza after the Asr prayers.

He left behind his wife Anwarah Mahabub, three sons - Syed Anwarul Haque, Syed Azharul Haque and Syed Ashfaque Haque - and only daughter, who lives in Melbourne, to mourn his death.

His youngest son Syed Ashfaque Haque is a senior sub-editor of The Daily Star.



Death anniversary of Mizu today

By DU Correspondent

The 28th anniversary of martyrdom of renowned freedom fighter shaheed Mizanur Rahman Mizu will be observed today.

Mizu along with 96 Bangladeshes were killed by the Pakistani occupation army at Ghorasal National Ute Mills on the day in 1971 just before surrender of the army. The incident is widely known as "Ghorasal Massacre", said a press release.

Mizu was born at Munshi para of Dinajpur district. He was a student of Commerce Faculty of Dhaka University and a drama actor of radio and television.

He was an active worker of Munshipara Cultural Club of Dinajpur. He is the nephew of noted personality Bazilur Rahman and younger brother of M Zillur Rahman of Bangla Academy. Mizu was killed along with his younger brother Obaidur Rahman, cousins Mohammad Shahidullah, Mohammad Salimullah, brother-in-law Engineer Mozammel Huq and nephew Abu Tabbal.

Four chiefs hint at

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also believed to have marked the beginning of melting of ice in the relationship between the two - bitter enemies during the former General's nine years of autocratic rule ending in December 1990.

His party later waged a campaign along with present ruling party Awami League to dislodge her from office during her five years as elected prime minister. The General was in jail facing a string of corruption and other charges. On two counts, he was found guilty.

Freely by the newly-installed Awami League government as part of a tacit understanding, the former General joined hands with the Awami League allowing his secretary general to be a Cabinet minister.

The honeymoon over, he breached the understanding to strike an alliance with BNP chief Khaleda Zia, his prime political foe in the previous 14 years. The alliance with BNP cost him his charismatic secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju who opted to continue to toe the ruling party line.

Yesterday's declaration had earlier been agreed upon by the liaison committee of the four-party opposition alliance. The document lists in usual terms the failures of the government.

In their high-profile summit, which evidently generated high hopes in the opposition camp, the four leaders vowed to continue and intensify the current one-point movement "until the final victory".

They declared that all-party action committees would be formed at all levels to carry forward their campaign to fruition.

The present government must resign immediately in favour of a caretaker government... and parliamentary elections have to be held first at the quickest time," said the declaration.

"This is the only peaceful and constitutional path towards protecting our independence, democratic polity, national economy, and our present and future."

"We hereby declare on behalf of the countrymen that the gov-

ernment led by Sheikh Hasina has lost all legitimacy to remain in office," the declaration said, citing its "anti-state, anti-people, anti-Constitutional, autocratic and inhuman activities".

Emerging from the meeting, Khaleda spoke of "a national, patriotic government" after toppling the "repressive regime" of Sheikh Hasina. Ershad said expectations in the opposition camp ran high and that he was happy with the outcome of the meeting.

All four appeared cautious about making remarks to waiting media men, flanked by scores of mid-ranking leaders of the parties.

Their future government would be guided by basic principles of the Constitution, deal sternly with corruption, restore administrative discipline and rule of law, ensure independence of judiciary, stop terrorism and extortion and protect human rights.

The government is conspiring to destroy all key institutions - the judiciary, administration, police, defence and infrastructure for trade and industry, the declaration said.

"The higher judiciary has become the target... they are trying to strip the judges off their dignity... curb freedom of press. The declaration also blamed the government for the share market scam and non-implementation of the national pay scale.

The state-run electronic media have become a government propaganda machine, used to discredit the opposition. Without naming India, the declaration slammed the government for pursuing "suicidal" foreign and economic policies which helped "a particular country" but destroyed Bangladesh's economy.

The government's suicidal policies have stopped local and foreign investment. It said the government failed to generate jobs for 30 million unemployed youths and created anarchy in banks and other financial institutions.

There was not however any deadline for the government to step aside.

Leaders leave happily

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people cleared the waiting journalists when

H M Ershad boarded his crimson Mitsubishi Pajero. When desperate journalists followed the vehicle up to the gate of the 29 Minto Road house, he said he felt "good" about his meeting with Khaleda Zia.

Asked about his expectations, he quipped, "ouster of the government".

The former president, long dubbed an autocrat by his present allies, said that his alliance with BNP and other two partners in the opposition would last long.

The meeting was very cordial. There was no confusion in anyone. It was like a family gathering," Ershad later told UNB at his Kalabagan party office.

Jamaat Ameer Golam Azam called the summit a step further which would strengthen the bonds. "Today we've advanced further and our unity will remain intact," said Azam, walking towards his waiting Pajero. IOJ chief Azizul Haq gave an equally brief reaction before boarding his microbus. Haq said that the unity would continue to flourish but he did not reply when asked whether the declaration envisaged establishment of an Islamic administration in the country.

Guards and the activists responsible for security were vigilant. They were seen checking bags and stopping vehicles at the gate.

The 29 Minto Road residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament had been made out of bound for all except selected party leaders since 1:00pm, party sources said.

All cars except those used by the four leaders and their motorcade had to be parked outside the premises of the house.

The snacks that host Khaleda Zia served her guests came from Hotel Purbani. On the menu were sandwiches, cakes and orange among other items.

The chehlum of health scientist and social worker Prof Dr Habibuzzaman will be held on December 3.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani, and offering of Fataha at the grave will be held. The milad mahfil will be held at his Gulshan residence on Friday after Magreb prayers.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers of the deceased have been requested to attend the milad.

A milad mahfil will be held after Magreb prayers at his residence 'Sruty Studio' at Maghbar.

Kabi Moinuddin Academy will organise a discussion meeting on Khan Ata's life and cultural activities at the National Museum's Kabi Sufia Kamal auditorium on December 8 at 3:30 pm.

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Mizu was born at Munshi para of Dinajpur district. He was a student of Commerce Faculty of Dhaka University and a drama actor of radio and television.

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Sculptor Rajib Siddiqi presented his sculpture piece titled *Sangram* at Shapla Art Centre at city's Maghbar area yesterday. The sculpture which is still under construction, is being built to mark the declaration of 21st February as International Mother Language Day.

Indian president condoles death of Prof Razzak

Indian president KR Narayanan has expressed deep shock at the death of National Professor Abdul Razzak whom he eulogised as a dedicated scholar, reports UNB.

In a condolence message, received in Dhaka yesterday the Indian president said, "Professor Razzak was my personal friend and kindred spirit whom I had known from my student days in London."

KR Narayanan observed Prof Razzak was widely respected as a scholar and teacher and an intellectual well known for the courage of his convictions.

The Indian president recalled that the late professor had done a noteworthy work in the area of planning for a developing country in his capacity as a member of planning board in the 50s. He also made a significant contribution to framing Bangladesh Constitution in 1972.

"In his passing we have lost an outstanding academic, fearless patriot and one who has inspired a whole generation of students and youths in Bangladesh," Narayanan said.

Unloading of rice

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those unfit for human consumption. Following the decision, Mezbahuddin Ahmed, Senior Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Food ordered unloading of rice on November 18.

There are two more ships - MV Ordeal and MV Sangang - at Moulvibazar Port loaded with imported rice. But unloading of rice from the ships is yet to be begun due to same problem.

The two ships have been waiting at the port since June this year, said a port authority source.

Taka devalued

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tion of taka would help build up a foreign currency reserve by encouraging people to send remittances through the banking channel instead of using the unofficial channel.

The governor also agreed that the devaluation would increase costs for the industries using imported raw materials. But he said, because of subsequent good crops, there will be a "sobering impact" on inflation.

Currently, the point to point inflation rate stands at 4.5 per cent.

Prof Yunus

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names of Michael Gorbachev, the Kennedy Foundation, Jacques Delors, Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat.

The award is being given to Prof Yunus in recognition of his "extraordinary social action that he has promoted in Bangladesh and in many other parts of the world during his long and fruitful activity for the ideas which, with genial simplicity, he has managed to apply to the cause of economic growth and civil rescue of the poorest populations of the planet," says an announcement in the city yesterday from the Italian embassy.

In fact today the micro-credit system is acknowledged for its enormous and always bigger diffusion among the multitudes of destitute people of the world and the very big potentialities that contains for overcoming their desperate situation of exclusion, degradation and exploitation.

The award consists of a precious sculpture, deliberately designed for each edition by a different and eminent Tuscan artist and is traditionally given in Florence at the seat of the Presidency of the region during an official ceremony.

It will be officially presented to Prof Yunus on February 4.

LDCs adopt

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In his opening remark, To-fail Ahmed said, the WTO members in the Marrakesh Declaration of 1994 have taken a good number of important decisions to give special attention to LDCs to relieve them of the severe effects of globalization and liberalization of trade. He said, these compensatory measures were also endorsed at the WTO ministerial and other meetings with more apathy to LDCs. "But most of the commitments are still remain in words not in actions," he said.

The minister said, today's meeting is very crucial and important for the LDCs as they are facing tough challenges to survive in global trading system which would be tougher in coming years.

He said LDCs want immediate implementation of the market access provisions including duty free market access of LDCs products to all developed and developing countries.

Tofail said they need assistance, technology transfer and debt relief for building trade capacity through diversifying and improving the quality of products.

The minister said WTO members should take immediate steps to increase Overseas Development Assistance and FDI flow to LDCs.

All the LDCs have opened up their markets for others, specifically for developed and higher developing countries through huge tariff cut and removing non-tariff barriers. But they are not getting equal access to the markets of others, he regretted.

The main points reflected in the declaration include, call for the elimination of export subsidies on agriculture by developed countries, improvement of negotiation ability of the LDCs, special and differential treatment for LDCs, easy access of LDCs to WTO, speedy implementation of integrated framework projects for LDCs.

Two-thirds majority

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courageous lone political voice for a democratic and secular Malaysia."

The National Justice Party (Keajaiban) won five seats. It was formed by Anwar's wife Wan Azizah just before he was jailed for six years in April for abusing his powers.

PAS, the DAP, Keadilan and the small Malaysian People's Party are part of the Alternative Front alliance. Anwar was its candidate for premier.

Some analysts said the result indicated widening divisions among the Malays who make up more than half the country's 22 million population. Chinese account for some 30 per cent and Indians 10 per cent.

"The Malay world is in turmoil and nothing has made that more evident than this general election," the pro-government Sun newspaper said in an editorial.

It said the result erased any doubt about Mahathir's command of the political scene with an emphatic win in his fifth and probably last election of age 73.

But as the premier cut a cake early today to cheers and shouts of "Mahathir boleh" (Mahathir can), the daily warned PAS gains signalled a "dissatisfied, protesting Malay multitude." It said the ruling party must now find ways to unite the community.

DAP leader Lim Kit Siang, who lost his own seat, described the election as "a historic opportunity missed" to end the National Front's political domination. "It has set the country on an uncertain and perilous course," he said.

Mahathir's United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the backbone of the National

Front, will be "under great pressure to respond to the PAS challenge by competing on Islamic policies to win back the Malay heartland," he added. Wan Azizah hailed the opposition's "achievement but blamed 'scare tactics' by pro-government media and the exclusion of 680,000 new voters from the electoral roll for the failure to make a breakthrough. Hoarse after days of successful campaigning to capture Anwar's old seat, she told AFP: "We have reduced their majority considerably. A little edge would have given us victory. We have to work a little harder."

Wan Azizah said her seven-month-old party had "done a lot."

"Malays have given us support, our support was mainly from Malay areas."

PAS president Fadzil Noor said his party would bring the people development and ensure its two state governments were clean and free of corruption.

The Bangkok-based Asian Network for Free Election, which deployed observers at polling stations in eight states, said it found traces of fraud such as phantom voters and could not conclude the election was "free and fair."

Sunai Phasuk, a member of the watchdog, said migrants from the Philippines were given identity cards on condition they vote for the National Front. Watchdogs also received reports of the use of fake identity cards in other states.

The group said the irregularities did not mean the overall result of the poll was invalid.

State Bernama news agency said Mahathir was expected to resign the king early Wednesday to brief him on the formation of a new government.

Nat'l Youth Festival begins today

The week-long National Youth Festival '99 marking the achievement and success of youth development programmes since 1996 will be inaugurated in the city today amidst much fanfare and enthusiasm, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the festival at the historic Paltan Maidan at 3 pm. Bangladesh Betar will broadcast live the prime minister's address. She will also give away this year's National awards to 17 successful self-employed youths on the occasion. State Minister for Sports, Youth and Culture Obaidul Karim will chair the inaugural function.

When contacted, Saltic officials advised this correspondent to talk to engineer Jotirnoy Das. Das could not be reached for comment.

Gas: High charge

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as Tk 20,000 from the potential subscribers for connection, with Tk 10,200 the lowest.

The contractors have formed a cartel and are asking exorbitant prices for gas connection, alleged a local resident.

"We are happy that the gas is here, but it is beyond our capacity to pay the amount of money the contractors are asking," he said.

"At least five to six thousand subscribers are willing to get gas connection for domestic purpose at the moment and some 3,500 of them have already submitted applications," said an official.

JS body

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on Foreign Affairs laid stress on the necessity of streamlining the activities of Bangladesh missions abroad on the eve of the new millennium. Members suggested revamping the nature of activities to keep pace with the changed world scenario and the requirements of the next century.

They felt that much more emphasis was needed to be given to "economic diplomacy" in view of global trend on trade and trade diplomacy.

Participants at the meeting said foreign missions should act as the "main window" for promotion of the country's commercial, trading and export-promotional activities abroad.

The missions, the JS members felt, should play a vital role in attracting foreign investment and the matter of trade and economic diplomacy should receive the highest priority.

The meeting requested the Foreign Secretary to prepare a progress report of the state of implementation of the recommendations made in the previous meetings of the JS Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs.