

What's on today....

Film show: *Mukhtor Kotha* by Tareque and Catherine Masud will be screened. Venue: Outdoor stage of Shishu Academy auditorium. Time: 5:30 pm.

Drama: Russian Cultural Centre presents *Shaban Ashbaye*, a drama by Rehana Samdani. The drama will be presented by visually impaired performers. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre, Rd No 7, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 5:00 pm.

CESTI seminar: Centre for scientific and technological information (CESTI) of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka organises a seminar on "Art and Aesthetics of Architecture and Photography." Venue: Cafeteria of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, 26, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi. Time: 4:00 pm.

Workshop: British Council and Safety Association for Emergency (SAFE) jointly organises a workshop on "Occupational Safety." Venue: British Council auditorium. Time: 4:30 pm.

Launching ceremony: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka organises the launching ceremony of *Jornoshobor Jacques Prévert (Jacques Prévert aurait uno stello)* by poet Prof Mahmud Shah Kureshi. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 7:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Advocacy seminar: Bangladesh Breastfeeding Foundation (BBF) and BINP has jointly organised an advocacy seminar on Breastfeeding for Bangladesh Private Medical Practitioners Association (BPMMA). Venue: Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST), BCISIR, Science Laboratory. Time: 8:00 am.

Inauguration: Rudra Mela '99 will be inaugurated. Venue: TSC games room. Time: 9:00 am.

Inauguration: The inauguration of the Fourth Annual Quality Convention will be held. Venue: Auditorium of IDB Bhawan, E/8-A Rokeya Sharani, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon. Time: 9:00 am.

Film show: Three movies *L'argent* (France), *Gabbah* (Iranian) and *Le grand bleu* (France) will be screened. Venue: Auditorium of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 11:00 am, 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm.

Annual general meeting: Bangladesh Cancer Society will hold its annual general meeting and conference. Chief guest: Salah Uddin Yusuf, Minister for Health and Family Welfare. Venue: Sasakawa auditorium, 1CDDR, Mohakhali. Time: 3:30 pm.

Certificate giving ceremony: The certificate giving ceremony of a 3-day long workshop on "Scientific Writing" will be held. Organiser: Bangladesh Institute for Technologies (BIRPETH). Chief guest: Dr M Amanullah, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare. Venue: BIRPETH Training Room, House No 105, Rd No 9/A, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 4:00 pm.

Women lawyers' congress: The second women lawyers' congress will begin. Venue: Democracy auditorium of Khan Foundation, Momenbagh. Time: 6:00 pm.

Weather

Dry weather likely

Weather may remain nearly dry over the country with partly cloudy sky over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Night temperature is likely to rise by 1 to 2 degree Celsius over the country during the period but may fall in the next two days. Met Office forecast.

The country's highest temperature 31.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and the lowest 14.0 degrees at Sathkira.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:10 pm and rises on Friday at 6:26 am.

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

Rajshahi	27.8	16.0	87	77
Khulna	29.0	16.0	77	--
Barisal	29.0	15.4	80	90
Sylhet	29.4	16.2	62	73
Cox's Bazar	31.0	19.8	76	75

HERE and THERE

Pabna Samity

Pabna Samity in Dhaka will award 'Pabna Padak-99' to four renowned persons of the district at its annual general meeting at Ramna Restaurant premises at Ramna Park on Saturday next. A Samity press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed will attend the function as the chief guest and formally hand over the Padak among the recipients. Prof Dr M A Kaderi, vice chancellor of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University and M Anwar Hossain, chairman of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation will attend the function as the special guests. President of the Samity Prof Dr M Anwar Hossain will be presiding.

Meanwhile Pabna Samity executive committee has decided to award Padak to Dr Mahjabin Khatun for education and literature, Shamsun H Chowdhury for industry and business, Prof Dr Quaruzaman for treatment and health and Engineer M S A Mannan for public welfare.

All members of the samity have been requested to attend

the function with a registration fee of Taka 40 each.

Green Party

A new organisation, Green Party, has been formed to "promote and uphold the Green Agenda," said a press release yesterday, reports UNB.

It said a 15-member committee was constituted with journalist Shamsuddin Ahmed Pasha as convener and Saleem Samad as member-secretary.

A 15-member convening committee of the Green Party has been formed with journalist Shamsuddin Ahmed Pasha as convener. Other members are Advocate Z I Khan Panna, Mohiuddin Ahmed Bulbul, Advocate Rokhsana Khondker, Akbar Imam, Mohammad Yunus (New York), Shireen Fatema Liza, Istiaq Aziz Ullah, Golam Mohammad Chowdhury (London), Habibullah Babul (Frankfurt), Mahabubur Rahman Babu (Augsburg), Monirul Hossain, Syed Lutful Haque and Saleem Samad. A full-fledged committee of the Green Party will be formed at a national conference in Dhaka soon.

Death anniversary of Begum Syed Mustafa Ali Dec 6

The first death anniversary of Begum Syed Mustafa Ali, mother of late SM Ali, founder editor of The Daily Star, will be observed on December 6, says a press release.

To commemorate the death anniversary, a *Milad Mahfil* and *Doa Mahfil* will be held at her daughter Principal Fowzia Ali's residence on Friday.

A *Qurankhwan* and *Milad Mahfil* will also be held at her son Syed Ehsan Ali's residence followed by feeding of orphans on the day.

Begum Ali died of lung failure at a clinic in Paris on December 6, 1998. Her son, Syed Muazzam Ali is the Ambassador of Bangladesh to France. She went to Paris for treatment.

Chawb Bazar Exchange

Conversion of analog telephone numbers begin

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) has been replacing analog telephone numbers of group 23 and 24 under the newly established Chawb Bazar Telephone Exchange by digital numbers from yesterday, a BTTB press release said last night.

It includes Chawb Bazar, Chawb Circular Road, Water Wards Road, Islambagh, Shayesta Khan Road, Bangsal Road, Abdul Hasanat Road, AC Roy Road, DC Roy Road, Aga Sadek Road, Moulavi Bazar, Begum Bazar, Beharam Deuri, Mokim Katra, Imanganji, Mitford Road and adjacent areas of Mitford Hospital, the press release added.

The consumers will get a new digital telephone set (free of cost) after receiving the present set connected with the analog number phase by phase, it said.

The six digit numbers of those areas will be replaced by seven digits numbers. The first two digits — 23 and 24 — will be replaced by 731 and last four digits of the previous numbers will remain unchanged.

In this process the first two digits of about 700 numbers have already been replaced by 731. The authorities have said that there has been no problem in keeping the last four digits unchanged in the remaining telephone numbers. This numbers will be changed into new numbers and list of those will be published as advertisement, the press release added.

MIDAS Trade Fair opens today

A three-day long Trade Fair organised by MIDAS opens today at 3:00 pm at MIDAS & IBAIS premises at House No 5, Road No 16 (Old 27), Dhanmondi, says a press release.

The Trade Fair is being held with an aim to provide marketing facilities to the MIDAS assisted small and micro enterprises run by female entrepreneurs. MIDAS organised similar fairs in 1996 at MIDAS premises at Dhanmondi Club playground in 1997 for 200 enterprises of all categories and at MIDAS premises in 1998.

About 50 enterprises sponsored by female entrepreneurs will participate in the fair. A wide variety of traditional and non-traditional items will be offered for sale and display in this fair.

The fair will remain open from 10am to 8pm.

Clarification

Following is the clarification of Power Development Board (PDB) on the item "Meghnaghat Power Project/Site developer fails again to meet deadline" published in The Daily Star on November 19:

Site development works of Meghnaghat Power Project are progressing well. The land which is to be handed over to AES Meghnaghat Ltd. and the access road are substantially complete. AES Meghnaghat Ltd. was invited to take over the land as per schedule i.e. November 15 as per the Land Lease Agreement (LLA). But AES refused to take the land showing some excuses.

So far as the quality of the work is concerned, it has been done as per the approved design/drawing and under physical supervision of Foreign Consultant Mott, MacDonalds. Various test results are found satisfactory.

No opinion was ever passed from anybody of BPDB as regards the quality of the works.

Anniversary of CHT accord

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remained critical of the government because the agreement is yet to be fully materialised.

He had sharply criticised the government for not living up to its promise on a number of accounts like failure to roll back the security forces camps; only 65 of them had been folded, he alleged in an interview with The Weekly 2000.

He also criticised the government for leaving the CHT treaty implementation committee in cold. There had not been a meeting since November last year. His list of complaints run deep on the issues of failure to start land survey, rehabilitate the displaced tribes people and not doing enough to resettle the settlers elsewhere.

But the security situation remained faced with threats from another quarter. The PCJSS suffered a split on the issue of peace accord. Mainly younger activists from its student, women and youth and mass front broke away accusing Shantu Larma of 'sale out', pressing for total autonomy.

Clashes between the erstwhile comrades had so far resulted in 16 deaths and, at least on one occasion, a home-made bomb was hurled on the way of a motorcade carrying Shantu Larma to Rangamati to attend ceremonies to take over the Regional Council.

As part of the celebrations of the peace treaty the PCJSS has chalked out elaborate programmes. Shantu Larma is scheduled to address a rally at Rajar Math (ground) in Bandarban this afternoon.

His rivals, who broke away from his Jana Sanghati Samity (JSS) to form People's Demo-

cratic Front (PDF), are also observing the day.

The ruling Awami League has arranged rallies at three hill towns of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban where ministers and tribal leaders will outline the success of the accord in restoring peace in CHT, torn by strife for decades and the development plans the government has taken to improve the lifestyle of its people.

Minister for CHT affairs Kalpanarajan Chakma is scheduled to address rallies at Khagrachhari. State Minister for Land Rashed Mosharrar and CHT affairs Task Force chairman Dipankar Talukder at Rangamati.

The Parbatya Saboradiyo Oikya Parishad, who consider the day as 'black day' will hold a rally. Parishad members will wear black badges and hoist black flags atop their homes.



ADB Resident Representative Philip Suphaphiphat speaking at a press conference at ADB office in Dhaka yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

ADB: Cut system loss

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deals have reduced the overall cost of power, in future, if all power deals offered such low prices, the power tariff might be lowered, he said.

Rahman emphasised that the government must continue to speed up reform in the energy sector like it did when it approved recently the set up of the Ashuganj Power Company.

"We are not trying to privatise the state owned entities," Khalid clarified, "but we are trying to promote competition and break monopoly in the sector since there private investment is coming to this sector."

The bank maintains that by bringing the authority's system loss level down to 18 per cent and improving its bill collection ratio to 95 per cent from the present level of 60 per cent, the authority could become a commercially viable entity. The authority loses roughly Tk 20 crore monthly.

"DESA is working on improving its" performance. Within a couple of months, computerised billing will replace conventional billing," said S Chander, the energy division's senior project engineer. Revenue theft will also be slashed, he added.

"Last month, DESA's collec-

Dhanmondi Lake

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In its meeting yesterday with the prime minister in the chair, the ECNEC also extended the deadline for completion of the project, for the second time since its start, from end-December this year till the first week of March 2000.

The housing and public works ministry will now work out an action plan involving the home ministry to deal with the encroachment on public land. The action plan is expected to be finalised within the next one week, sources said.

Sources also said the ECNEC approved almost all recommendations made by the high-powered committee formed in August and headed by the secretary of the LGED ministry. It however rejected a proposal to build a bridge over the lake at the end of Road-4a and remove all offices and business establishments from the area.

Sources feared that the ECNEC decision to let the LGED officials chalk out a management plan of Dhanmondi Lake may create problem.

They said the lake management plan should be worked out involving a wider range of people including local residents and elected bodies. The fate of the planned restaurant near Kagan will also hinge on the secretary LGED. There were proposals that the restaurant be turned into a museum or handed over to a recreational club of the vicinity.

Victory

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6 in the capital, would now be held after the Eid-ul-Fitr due to unavoidable circumstances, the festival committee said yesterday.

The schedule would be announced later and some 1000 renowned personalities from home and abroad would join the festival, according to a press release of the committee comprising Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzaque and National Professor Kabir Chowdhury.

Beximco

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payments.

ICB also claims it's owed another Tk 1.42 crore in outstanding dues. ICB is the loan trustee for four of the Beximco companies which owe money.

BSSS said Beximco owes over Tk 2 crore in principal and interest, while it owes Tk 9 crore to Janata Bank. Agram Bank said Beximco failed to pay the 15th installments of its debenture loan.

The institutions alleged that all seven Beximco companies failed to pay their outstanding amounts despite repeated reminders.

ICB made a formal complaint to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and asked capital market regulator to help in "taking necessary action in helping realizing the outstanding dues."

"The investors had made their investment in the debentures after feeling assured that the principal and interest amounts would be paid in due time by the companies," the ICB's managing director told the commission chairman.

The companies deprived investors of their investment in the debentures and blocked the development of a bond market, according to the ICB letter.

However, SEC officials said their hands are tied, since trustees are the only body with the legal authority to deal with debenture complaints.

Taka devaluation

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said the devaluation was necessary to maintain the country's competitiveness.

Exports performed badly last year with a meagre 2.9 per cent growth instead of the usual double digit show," said Bakht, a research director at Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies. "It is now picking up and is clocking about six per cent growth now. But that needs further impetus by maintaining competitiveness."

Bakht acknowledged there would be imported inflation, but the good crop output, fiscal restraints and current low inflation allowed the central bank to implement such a big devaluation. However, Bakht warned that if hartal disrupt production or the government embraces reckless deficit financing, then inflation would jump, negating any positives the devaluation produced.

Another top economist said export-oriented industries heavily influence the manufacturing index, and a boost to them will increase production. But the crucial task is to keep the rural economy vibrant

Left parties call for alternative front

By Staff Correspondent

The 11 left leaning parties yesterday appealed to the people of the country to form an alternative front outside the alliances of major political parties.

The component parties of the new alliance has also outlined a 16-point charter of demands.

The charter was signed by — Dr Kamal Hussain and Saifuddin Ahmed Manik of Gano Forum, Nirmal Sen and Siddikur Rahman of Samik Krishak Samajbadi Dal, Azizul Islam Khan and Barrister Arash Ali of Ganatantri Party, Haji Abdus Salam and Advocate Kazi Oulul Islam of Gano Azadi League, Manzurul Ahsan Khan and Mujahidul Islam Selim of Communist Party, Amol Sen and Rashed Khan Menon of Workers Party, Khalequzzaman and Abdullah Sarker of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, Dilip Barua and Lutur Rahman of Samyabadi Dal and AFM Mahbubul Haq and Rezaul Rahman of Bangladesh

Samajtantrik Dal. Iqbal Majumder and Advocate Abdus Salam of Ganatantrik Mazdoor Party, Ajay Ray and Dr Wajedul Islam Khan of Communist Kendra.

The 16-point demand include the formation of an idealistic alternative front outside those led by Awami League and BNP, issuance of voters identity cards prior to the elections before the day of elections, cancellation of all black laws including the Special Powers Act, ensuring equal rights for people of all religions, protecting the rights of minorities on the basis of ideals of secularism and cancellation of the Vested Property Act.

Body recovered from city Jheel

By Staff Correspondent

A decomposed body of an unidentified young man was recovered from a jheel at Gulshan in the city yesterday afternoon. Gulshan police could not ascertain the reason behind the killing of the young man in his thirties.

Mother Language Day celebration on Dec 7

The government has taken up a day-long programme for December 7 to celebrate UNESCO's declaration of February 21 as International Mother Language Day, reports UNB.

"It is our great achievement. We want to celebrate it," said Education Minister ASHK Sadique at a press conference at his office in the city yesterday afternoon.

He said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will invite representatives of different political parties as well as professional and cultural bodies to the "festival".

He said leaders of BNP, two factions of Jatiya Party and left leaning 11-party will get the invitation.

"Jamaat-e-Islami will not be invited to the festival as I do not know whether they would ideologically accept this festival. We do not want to embarrass them," the minister told a questioner.

Replying to another question, he said, "I do not know whether I/OJ (Islam Oikya Jote) will get invitation or not."

The daylong programmes on December 7 will include a grand rally at Paltan Maidan at 8:30 am to be followed by a colourful procession towards the Central Shaheed Minar. There will also be a cultural function at Paltan Maidan in the evening.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will address the rally to be attended by diplomats, students, youths and the people of all walks of life, the education minister said.

Garment worker killed in accident

GAZIPUR, Dec 1: A female garment worker was killed in a road accident near Chaydana on Dhaka-Gazipur Road under Gazipur Sadar thana today, reports BSS.

Police and hospital sources said, Dhaka-bound bus ran over her near Chaydana on Dhaka-Gazipur Road. She died on the spot.

Police identified the body as Shuly Akhter of Matlab thana under Chandpur district.

Zakera Begum's body due today

The body of Zakera Begum (Bina) will arrive in the city today from London by a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight, family sources said yesterday, reports BSS.

Bina, a deputy secretary to the Ministry of Housing and Public Works died of heart attack in London on November 27. She was staying there to participate a training programme. She was 52.

She will be buried tomorrow at the Mirpur Intellectuals' Graveyard after her Namaz Janaza at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Juma prayers.

Her qulkhwan will be held at the residence of Photo-journalist Khondokar Kamrul Huda, husband of late Zakera Begum, at 64/B, Azimpur Government Quarter after Asr prayers.



Zakera Begum

Qulkhwan

The qulkhwan of Al-haj Kazi Abdur Rahman (Habib) will be held today after Asr prayers at his 10 Wyer Street residence at Wari, says a press release.

Rahman, from Elachpur village under Manikganj district died on November 25.

He is the father-in-law of Afzal H Khan, MP, Managing and Executive Editor of Dainik Dinkal.

All friends, relatives and well-wishers have been requested to attend the qulkhwan.

Second Round of NID today

Second round of the 6th National Immunisation Day (NID) will be held in the country today, reports UNB.

More than 20 million children of five years of age are expected to be administered with two doses of polio vaccine on the day, officials said.

In addition, children aged between 1 and 5 years will also be administered with a high-powered vitamin-A capsule.

The observance of the day is aimed to free the country from the curse of polio by the year 2000.

Massive preparations have been taken to make the second round of the 6th NID a success. The first round was held on November 2.

Zaker Party joins 1-pt movement

By Staff Correspondent

Zaker Party yesterday announced its decision to join in the current one-point movement, launched by the BNP-led opposition alliance.

The announcement was made when a delegation led by ZP Chairman Mostafa Amir Faisal called on BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia at her 29 Minto Road official residence yesterday evening.

Earlier, the BNP Chairperson sent Amanullah Khan MP to ZP chief with an invitation letter.

EU urges

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try. Continuing political confrontation and intolerance negatively affects domestic and foreign investments, slows necessary reforms and seriously diminishes prospects for reducing poverty. Good governance depends on 'even handedness' and tolerance. The EU partners called on government and political leaders of the opposition again to work together for the country and its people. The EU partners stressed that the meeting was part of an on-going dialogue and that they were not involved in any form of mediation between the political parties.

UNB adds: Earlier the diplomats of the European Union countries in Bangladesh were briefed about Tuesday's opposition summit which resolved that resignation of the government is the only way out of the staggering political crisis.

The best possible way to safeguard national interests and promote well-being of the people is that the present autocratic government must step down without delay for holding an election under a caretaker government," they were told.

A party announcement said the briefing took place when the envoys met some top BNP leaders as part of the process of on-going informal dialogue initiated earlier in the year.

They explained to the diplomats the background and salient features of the joint declaration made Tuesday by the leaders of the four opposition political parties — Khaleda Zia of BNP, H M Ershad of JP, Prof Ghulam Azam of Jamaat and Shaikhul Hadit Azizul Haq of IOJ.

Among the European envoys were Ambassadors of Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Italy and the European Commission as well as High Commissioner of Britain and Counsellor of France.

On the BNP side were Dr A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury MP, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan MP, party secretary general, Dr Khondokar Mosharrar Hossain MP, Shamsul Islam MP and two advisers M M Rezaul Karim and Reza Rahman.

Abu Hena

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would be able to diagnose the disease and start its treatment, Hena said.

Some doctors, however, said that he was being given high dosage of antibiotics.

Mushtaque Ahmed Chowdhury, one of the Election Commissioners has taken over as the acting CEC.

The secretary Election Commission also visited the CEC at the hospital and stayed with him for over an hour yesterday afternoon. Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon also met him at the hospital yesterday.

"These were courtesy visits", Hena said.