

What's on today...

Human chain: Women For Women, a research and study group will form a human chain as part of the worldwide campaign for peace in the new century by National Commission for Women and The Guild Service. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar premises. Time: 11:30 am.

Fashion exhibition: An exhibition of fashion apparatus by Avalon will be inaugurated. Venue: Cafeteria of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 3:00 pm-8:00 pm.

Meeting: The Executive Committee of Jatiya Kabita Parishad will hold a meeting. Venue: Teachers lounge at TSC, DU campus. Time: 4:00 pm.

Fashion exhibition: An exhibition of fashion apparatus by Avalon is going on. Venue: Cafeteria of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Painting exhibition: A painting exhibition by Firoz is going on. Venue: Gallery of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Meeting: The regular meeting of Lions Club of Dhaka South will be held. Venue: Mohanagar Community Centre. Time: 3:30 pm.

Region meeting: A region meeting of Region-14 of Lions International District 315 B-1 will be held with Zone 1 and 2q. Venue: Officers Club. Time: 4:00 pm.

Memorial meeting: K B Roy Chowdhury Smriti Sangshad will hold a meeting on K B Roy Chowdhury, the late DUCSU leader in observation of his second death anniversary. Venue: House No 1, Rd No 2, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 4:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Meeting: Child, Woman, Relief and You (CWRY), a human rights project of Mukti Lawrence Foundation will hold a meeting on "Dignity and Security of Female garment workers." Venue: Sajna Restaurant, Gulshan 1. Time: 3:00 pm.

Weather

Dry weather to continue
Dry weather is likely to continue over the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB. Met Office said night temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country during the period. The country's highest temperature was recorded at 29.4 degree Celsius at Sitakunda yesterday and the lowest 9.6 degrees at Sirimangal. The sun sets in the capital today at 5.15 pm and rises tomorrow at 6.36 am. Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with columns: City/Town, Max Temp, Min Temp, Morning Humidity, Evening Humidity. Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

HERE and THERE

BUET confce
A two-day long International Conference on Fluid Mechanics and Heat Transfer organised by the Department of Mechanical Engineering, BUET concluded on Thursday at the Council Building of BUET, says a press release. Prof Dr Nooruddin Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor, BUET inaugurated the conference as chief guest. Twenty internationally reputed scholars from USA, UK, Australia, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and India participated in the conference as resource persons. Fifty-five research papers including six keynote papers were presented in eight technical sessions of the conference. More than eighty renowned researchers and engineers from home and abroad attended the conference. The inaugural function was also addressed by Prof Dr M A Taher Ali, Chairman, Conference Organising Committee. Prof Dr Md Imtiaz Hossain, Head, Dept of Mechanical Engineering, Prof Dr A M Aziz-ul-Huq, Dept of Mech Engrg, Prof Dr A K M Sadrul Islam, Secretary Conference Organising Committee.

Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Memorial Committee
A meeting of the Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Memorial Committee was held in the city last week with Dr Maliha Khatun in the chair, says a press release. After observing one minute's silence in memory of Begum Sultana Kamal, the meeting took up discussion of the ideals of the famous pioneer of female education in which members of the Samity, including Fauzia Karim, Farida Ali, Dilara Nurunnabi, Ira Islam, Sajeda Saber, and Husna Banu Khanam took part. The discussion decided that at least one female student would be supported in education by the Samity every year in line with the ideals of Begum Rokeya Sakhawat.



Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) placing wreath at the National Mausoleum at Savar on Thursday to mark the 29th Victory Day. — Star photo

Truck accident halts traffic on Dhaka-Bogra route for 3 hrs
From Our Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Dec 18: All traffic came to a halt on the Dhaka-Bogra highway for three hours today after an overloaded truck broke its axle and fell on its side on the Shahebganj bridge of the district. Suffering of thousands of stranded passengers on the highway mounted due to accident. The incident took place at 5:30 pm and left the driver and two of his helpers injured. The police ultimately cleared up the jam on the road at about 8:30 pm. Police said that the truck was carrying 15 tonnes of sugarcane violating the load limit by at least ten tonnes.



Huge construction materials piled up alongside Panthapath in the city narrow down this busy road attributing significantly to severe traffic congestion. — Star photo

Arab, Israel accord to set up 1st war crime tribunal

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 18: Israel and the Arab states have reached agreement on a contentious issue in the treaty establishing the world's first permanent war crimes tribunal that could lead Israel to lift its opposition to joining the court, a leading Jewish organisation said Friday, reports AP. Israel initially supported creation of the International Criminal Court, but voted against it last year because Syria and Egypt inserted language which the Israeli government feared could have put hundreds of thousands of Israelis at risk of prosecution. The issue involved the definition of the war crime of forcible transfer of populations into occupied territory. When the treaty to establish the court was being debated in Rome before its adoption in July 1998, Syria and Egypt inserted language which appeared to eliminate the element of coercion as the key ingredient to making the forcible transfer of populations a war crime. The two Arab nations added the phrase that forcible transfer of population through "direct or indirect" means could be a war crime, opening the possibility that Israelis who received incentives to move to war-captured territories could face prosecution. B'Nai Brith International said this new "crime" was different from other war crimes in that no killing, maiming or torture — and it was aimed specifically against Israel. Israel annexed formerly Jordanian east Jerusalem and has occupied most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, home to over two million Palestinians, since capturing the areas from Jordan and Egypt in the 1967 Middle East war. Successive governments have offered incentives and encouraged citizens to move to the areas, now home to some 150,000 Jewish settlers. Alan Baker, a legal expert at Israel's Foreign Ministry, said after Israel cast a "no" vote that the Jewish state had no choice but to vote against any statute "which would render Israelis war criminals just for being active in setting up or establishing settlements." Since then, Israel has been working at preparatory negotiations on the tribunal to try to undo the Egyptian-Syrian language. And at the three-week preparatory meeting which ended Friday, Israel and the Arab states reached a compromise, with US support. The compromise text says that in order for prosecutors to obtain a conviction, they must prove that the forcible transfer of populations occurred during an international armed conflict, and it says the term transfer must be interpreted in accordance with international humanitarian law. B'Nai Brith, which is part of the coalition of hundreds of voluntary organisations supporting the establishment of the court, said "the wording is ambiguous enough to leave the judgement to the judges of the court." "I am gratified that the compromise that has been reached is acceptable to all parties, including Israel, and I hope that Israel will now be able to become a signatory to the statute of the court," said Harris Schoenberg, director of UN affairs for B'Nai Brith. The court will become operational when the treaty establishing it is ratified by 60 countries, which Philippe Kirsch, chairman of the preparatory commission, predicted could happen within two years. So far 91 states have signed the treaty and six countries have ratified it. B'Nai Brith said it hopes that by the time the treaty takes effect the Middle East peace process will have been successful, which will "render the whole issue of forcible transfers moot." Kirsch welcomed the Israeli-Arab compromise. "It was a difficult issue. It was a sensitive issue. But it is resolved," he told a news conference. "And that obviously could make life a lot easier for certain states in terms of their position vis-a-vis the court." Richard DiCKER, associate counsel for Human Rights Watch, said the agreement was "a very significant development and an indication of the breadth of support for the early establishment of the International Criminal Court."

Law Minister condoles death of Advocate Ramzan Ali Khan

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru has expressed deep shock at the death of former President of Dhaka Bar Association and eminent lawyer Advocate Ramzan Ali Khan, reports BSS. The minister in a condolence message yesterday said that Ramzan Ali's death created an irreparable loss to legal profession in the country. He expressed deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for peace of the departed soul.

Anwar Ibrahim's sodomy trial to resume Jan 25

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 18: The politically sensitive sodomy trial of Malaysia's jailed former finance minister Anwar Ibrahim will resume on January 25 after it was suspended in November, defence lawyers said today, reports Reuters. Anwar's defence lawyer Pawancheek Merlan told reporters the resumption date was set after a meeting with the prosecution and presiding judge Arifin Jaka.

Feni killing

From page 1 and JCD at Kaliganj Deegi in the town. The body of Anwar Hossain was buried at village Birinehi after namaz-e-janaza while the body of Zakir Hossain buried at his village at Durgapur at around 12 noon. Police arrested 11 people for their alleged involvement in the yesterday's killing. Additional police force has been deployed at different point in the town. UNB adds: District Chhatra League announced a weeklong mourning programme, including a procession and rally in the town tomorrow protesting killing of Anwar Hossain Ratan. District Sramik Dal, the labour wing of opposition BNP, brought out a mourning procession and held a rally in the town this morning. As tensions mounted in the town, BNP sources said, the party's district general secretary, Prof Zainal Abedin, left home for an undisclosed shelter for security reasons.

Macau handover

From page 12 Beijing's backing. All sides insist Macau's laid-back and hybrid lifestyle today as they duly carried out ceremonial events including the burial of a time capsule under wind-whipped downpours. The Portuguese are taking pains to assure the handover goes more smoothly than Britain's return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty two years ago, an event preceded by much public bickering between London and Beijing. But as red carpets were rolled out, security metal detectors were set up and thousands of potted flowers were moved into place under gray skies, Portuguese officials conceded privately that they are concerned about Macau's future in two areas: the independent court system and the political system. Macau's 430,000 residents are predominantly Chinese — and they seem happy to be returning to the motherland, although as a special Administrative Region of China, Macau is supposed to retain a great deal of local autonomy. It's the same formula of 'one country, two systems', that has governed Hong Kong since its handover. The Portuguese never cared about us. Beijing understands our needs," said shopkeeper Gogo Fong, 38. "The new government can achieve more with

Hartal: 25 injured

From page 1 Meeting sources said, fresh course of action is expected to be announced from the demonstration day programme, but possibility of calling more hartals in this month is thin. The meeting discussed the latest development of the Chittagong City Corporation election, scheduled for January 3. Sources said, the meeting also discussed withdrawal of all mayoral candidates excepting Awami League candidate ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury from the race and observed that the government once again made the CCC polls a farce by fielding some 'dummy' candidates. Sources said, the liaison representatives of the planning to bring the four chiefs of BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami

Ctg mayor

From page 1 (NAP-Bhasani). Today was the last date for withdrawal. Besides, 61 ward commissioner candidates including three women for reserved seats withdrew their nomination papers. A total of 154 candidates will now vie for 41 posts of ward commissioners and 35 candidates for the 14 reserved seats for women in the January 3 polls. UNB adds: Informed sources said the withdrawal came following their secret negotiations with Mohiuddin, which he strongly denied. "I would have been rather happy with a strong rival candidate in the field." Soon after the withdrawal, Dilip Bhadra said: "I have withdrawn from the race to help overcome the political crisis and also to maintain unity of the pro-liberation forces." Mohiuddin called upon the city dwellers to frustrate those trying to resist the election and thus push the nation towards anarchy. Withdrawal of the ward commissioner candidates left four re-elected and one elected unopposed. They are Jalaluddin Ahmed (re-elected) of Ward No 27, Manzurul Alam Manju (re-elected) of Ward No 10, Anwar Hossain of Ward No 6, Tareq Solaiman Selim (re-elected) of Ward No 31 and Shahidul Alam (re-elected) of Ward No 17. Three candidates for the reserved seats for women returned unopposed. They are Hasina Zafar of Ward No 3, Nilufar Rahim of Ward No 8 and Rabeya Rahman of Ward No 10.

Body formed to detect cause of Friday's fire incident in N'ganj

NARAYANGANJ, Dec 18: A three-member inquiry committee headed by Director (Operation) of Bangladesh Fire Service And Civil Defence has been formed to ascertain the cause of Friday's fire here, reports UNB. Some 50 shops and business establishments were gutted and 20 people injured in the fire that originated from a hosiery at number 2 Rail Gate area of the town.

Pratichi Trust

From page 1 "The award has also provided me with a small opportunity to share my prize with others, in pursuit of objects that I believe are important." Announcing the plan to set up the Pratichi Fund, he said, "I am concentrating on India and Bangladesh, the two lands where I grew up. As it happens, the need for social action in removing deprivations is also actively strong in both the countries." Sen added, Our home in Dhaka, at 14 Latarni Street, was called "Jagat Kutir"—the cottage of the world, which could have been an 'appropriate name too'.

Defamation Newsman held at Barisal

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Dec 18: The staff reporter of Janakantha in Barisal was arrested here last night. Kotwali police arrested Shawkat Milton following a defamation suit filed by Aftab Hossain, former UP chairman of Kashiipur in Barisal. Aftab filed the case following publication of a series of reports "Keptonkholar Tiley" in the daily. Meanwhile, Barisal Sangskritik Sangathan Samannaya Parishad protesting arrest of Milton held a rally in front of the Aswini Kumar Hall in the town today with Mosharrif Hossain Nannu in the chair. Expressing instant reaction after receiving the degree, he said, "I feel proud after receiving the honorary degree from Dhaka University, the principal institute of highest learning in the country."

Malaysia may hold early leadership elections

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 18: Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad wants to bring forward the date of elections in his ruling party which will choose his likely successor, a report said today, says AFP. The Sun newspaper, quoting sources in the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), said the leadership elections would be held after an Islamic festival in March but gave no date. He said Mahathir, the party president, wanted the polls brought forward from the traditional month of June to reduce "excessive politicking among aspiring candidates and supporters." The paper said a meeting of the party's Supreme Council Sunday was likely to discuss the date of the general assembly. The Sun also quoted the sources as saying the resolution adopted at the party's 1995 general assembly — that the top two party posts are not contested — might be retained. The president of UMNO, largest party in the National Front coalition which has ruled since independence in 1957, automatically becomes premier. The deputy president becomes deputy premier but the party position has been vacant since the sacking and jailing of Anwar Ibrahim in September 1998. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is now deputy premier but has not been appointed deputy party president. In January this year Mahathir won UMNO's agreement to postpone the party polls until after the next general election. The National Front won 148 of 193 seats in the November 29 election but UMNO won only 72 seats compared to 94 in the last parliament and the 88 it won in the 1995 election. There was no immediate confirmation of the Sun report. One source told AFP he expected party elections earlier than June but not as soon as March. Mahathir, who turns 74 on Monday and has announced this is his last term, said Sunday's meeting might decide the date for the leadership elections. These are normally held every three years.

Sen: Disagreement

From page 1 on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the same convocation. Quoting lessons of great French philosopher Rene Descartes, Professor Amartya Sen said, "I doubt therefore I exist..." and the culture of intellectual questions would help Dhaka University feel more proud about its graduates. He urged all to protect and nurture the rich heritage of creative intellectual disagreement along with meaningful coexistence on the campus. Pointing towards drastic fall in birth and fertility rate, Prof Sen said according to empirical evidence the fertility rate declined from six to three that means, instead of having six children per family we now have three children here. The Nobel laureate credited the voice of a generation of empowered young women of Bangladesh for success in the family planning sector. Appealing to all not to underestimate the gifted geniuses like Rabindranath Tagore, William Shakespeare and Kazi Nazrul Islam, Dr Sen said they flourished without the benefit of any college or university education. Recalling his long association with Dhaka University, Dr Sen said his father was a faculty member of Chemistry and he had dedicated his time to agricultural chemistry. My grandfather was a member of finance committee of this university, he added. He said universities across the world have produced great personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Aung Sun Suu Kyi and Soviet leader Michael Gorbachev. Termining the conferment as "unquestioning animals", he said social reformer Raja Ramohan Roy could perceive the terrible nature of intellect death. "Just imagine how terrible you would feel when everyone would be alive and you would be dead (Anya Lokya Bakya Kabe Tumi Rabe Nirutar)."