

What's on today....

Discussion: World Peace Organisation (WPO) will hold a discussion meeting. A cultural show will follow the meeting. Venue: TSC, DU campus. Time: 4:00 pm.

Reception: Bangladesh Lekhika Sangha will accord a reception for its literary medal winners. Chief guest: State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Prof Zinnatun Nesa Talukdar. Venue: Begum Sufia Kamal auditorium of National Museum. Time: 10:00 am.

Dance performance: Indian Dance Society, a London-based dance group, will present a programme. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 3:00 pm.

Closing ceremony: The closing ceremony of the international conference on Bangladesh Environment will be held. Chief guest: Khaleda Zia. Chairperson of BNP. Venue: Osmani Memorial Hall. Time: 7:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Weather

Dry weather may continue

Prevailing dry weather is likely to continue over the country with partly cloudy sky over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during morning, said the Met Office.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 30.3 degree Celsius at Patuakhali and the lowest 12.2 degrees at Srirampal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:32 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43 am.

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

Table with 5 columns: City/Town, Max, Min, Morning, Evening. Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.



The illegal water connection in city's Nandipara. - Star photo

37 miners trapped for four days in China

BEIJING, Jan 14: Thirty-seven coal miners remained trapped for a fourth day deep underground in eastern Jiangsu Province, local mining officials said Friday, after a collapse Tuesday that killed three other workers.

Five Bosnian Croats jailed for warcrimes

THE HAGUE, Jan 14: Five Bosnian Croats were sentenced Friday to prison terms ranging from six to 25 years and a sixth was acquitted in the 1993 massacre of more than 100 Muslims in a central Bosnian village.

Leaders blast comments of Golam Azam

Leaders of different political parties and forums yesterday condemned the audacious comments of Jamaat-e-Islam chief Prof Golam Azam and demanded his trial in a special tribunal, reports BSS.

They said there is no problem for trial of the war criminals of 1971 under the Constitution and the law of the land. Prof Azam has dared to utter such imperious comments to BBC on Thursday that he could escape the net for his misdeeds in 1971 due to soft stand of the previous governments, they observed.

Giving reaction to BSS, Hasan Imam, Convener of the Ghatok-Dalal Nirmul Jatiya Samannaya Committee, demanded of the government to try Golam Azam and other war criminals in a special tribunal.

He urged the government to file a case with the Hague-based International Court for trial of all other war criminals including the Pakistanis who unleashed atrocities on the freedom-loving people.

Chairman of the Central Command Council of Muktijoddha Sangsad Principal Ahad Chowdhury said Golam Azam is showing this unusual courage as he did not face trial for his crimes in the previous regimes.

He strongly demanded of the government to set up a special tribunal to try the war criminal and take initiative to get other war criminals tried in the International Court.

Workers Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon said the demand for trial of war criminals is not new and it is very much possible under the constitutional ambit and the existing laws.

All parties except the Jamaat in the fifth parliament reached a unanimous consensus that the war criminals must stand trial, he said. 'I remember, the then Deputy Leader of the House, Prof. B Chowdhury read out the text of the consensus in the House,' Menon said.

Golam Azam cannot deny that he helped, supported and inspired the Pakistani army for genocide in 1971, which is historically recognized, Menon said, adding that there is no scope to evade the charges.

Deputy leader of the opposition in parliament Prof. B Chowdhury told BSS, 'Nobody should have any objection if the constitution and the law of the land are properly enforced to settle an issue.' But these must not be used intentionally against a certain person, Prof Chowdhury added.

In an interview with the BBC radio yesterday, Golam Azam questioned why he was not tried for the last 18 years. He told the interviewer that despite filing cases against him nobody could make him an accused.



Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, an eminent educationist, speaking as chief guest at the biennial general meeting of the Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) at the National Press Club yesterday.

Biennial meeting of FEJB held Developed countries must be blamed for degrading our environment

The 8th biennial general meeting of the Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) was held at the National Press Club yesterday, reports BSS.

The inaugural session of the meeting was presided over by FEJB Chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury while Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury was the chief guest and special guests were Mr Mahbubul Alam, Editor of the Independent and Shaiful Aziz Mukul, Executive Editor of the Banglar Bani.

FEJB General Secretary Bakhtiar Rana delivered the address of welcome and Vice Chairman Gazir Rahman gave the vote of thanks. Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury said once the developed world had turned our country into a poor one by continuous exploitation, the open-market economy is nothing but the ideology of capitalism of the developed world, he said.

Prof Chowdhury also said, 'The developed world should be blamed for degrading the environment to materialise that ideology. All of us should protest against their activities. He underscored the need for setting up of an international

court to take legal measures against the environment polluters. He further said that the number of lanes and markets in Dhaka city is being increased diminishing green spaces and wetlands. Pressure should be created on main political parties to include green agenda in their party manifestoes, he added.

Mahbubul Alam laid stress on an organised movement to protect environment. He thanked the members of FEJB for their contribution in creating environmental awareness among the people.

Shaiful Aziz Mukul said that at present the environment of the country is not only endangered, rather the people engaged in protecting environment are being threatened by some vested quarters. He regretted that not a single political party lodged any protest against such an act at present democratic age. He called upon all environment-conscious people to uphold our tradition and culture in protecting environment.

FEJB Chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury said, 'We will be able to enjoy fresh air and pollution-free water only if we can

intensify the environment movement under an ideal leadership.' At the beginning of the meeting Sardar Abdur Rahman, Rajshahi Bureau Chief of Dainik Sangram, was given the FEJB award for the best report on environment and Abu Taher Khokon, Chief Photographer of the Financial Express, for the best photograph on environment for the year 1999. Besides, a FEJB crest was presented to Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury in recognition of his successful leadership in the movement for saving the trees of Osmani Udyan.

The second session of the general meeting was also presided over by FEJB Chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury. Bakhtiar Rana presented the general secretary's report while Hasan Hafiz presented the treasurer's report. Mahmud Shaif, Alamgir Hossain, Giasuddin Ahmed, Shehabuddin Ahmed, Ahmed Nure Alam, Khandakar Manirul Alam, Mrinal Krishna Ray, Sarwar Jahan, Tahmina Ahmed, Moshammas Kamruzzaman, Rosy Ferdous and Sheikh Enamul Haq participated in the discussion.

HIID economist in city 'Globalisation has interconnected all across the world'

The visiting US economist Prof Jeffery Sachs yesterday strongly pleaded for harmonisation of the four basic factors — trade, production, capital and economic institutions — across the world for achieving desired success from the current globalisation process with particular reference to the developing countries, reports BSS.

Delivering a public lecture on 'Strategies for Economic Growth in the New Millennium' at the Development and Planning Academy here this afternoon, he said some elements had now been developed in the process of globalisation for economic integration all over the world to support different strategies and policies for speedy economic progress.

'Globalisation has interconnected all across the globe,' he said adding globalisation of production means globalisation of trade with participation of all concerned institutions and services across the world and particularly the developing countries would benefit a lot from harmonisation of the four basic factors across all boundaries.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria was the chief guest at the function organised by Bangladesh Economic Association with its President and eminent economist Prof

Industrialist dead

By Staff Correspondent The Quikhwani of Mohammad Harun-ur-Rashid, noted industrialist, proprietor of Rasel Vegetable Oils Ltd and Director of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) will be held tomorrow after A's prayers at his OR Nizam Road residence at Chittagong.

Mohammad Harun-ur-Rashid died of cardiac arrest at his Chittagong residence on Thursday last. He was 47. He has left behind his widow, two sons, a daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He is the younger brother of Sultana Hasem, wife of MA Hasem, proprietor of Partex Group. Rashid was buried at his family graveyard at village Mahabhatpur under Begumganj thana of Noakhali district after his namaz-e-janaja at Chittagong.

The namaz-e-janaja was attended by local elite including Chittagong city mayor ABM Mohiuddin Ahmed.



Best Aviation, country's first private sector helicopter service reached Sylhet Osmani Airport on a goodwill visit. Managing director of the aviation (picture below) describing its services to the local journalists at a press conference in a hotel yesterday. - Star photo

GBM Initiative

From page 1 disputes, after some business leaders expressed that vested groups could capitalise on people's sentiments by misguiding them about the venture.

As FBCCI vice-president MA Mumin said Indian federal laws could affect trade with its eleven other states separately, Indian business leaders informed that both Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and opposition leader Sonia Gandhi have full support to the sub-regional cooperation.

Business leaders from three other countries also came up with similar opinion. Mintoo said Dhaka fully supports their move. But several business leaders, mainly from Bhutan, raised question about the sincerity of the governments.

They categorically mentioned, in this respect, the present predicament of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Present situation of SAARC is known to all... the summit could not be held. But it is not the reason to go for sub-regional cooperation, said Nepalese delegation leader Dipakar Golchha.

Indian leader KK Bangoor, president of Indian Chamber of Commerce, however, said the sub-regional cooperation forum, GBM, has been formed under the framework of SAARC. Apart from members of the steering committee for South Asian Sub-regional Cooperation, initiated in Kathmandu by the business communities of the four nations in November 1998, senior officials of the Asian Development Bank attended the meeting that launched the forum.

The ADB is the 'honest' broker in forming sub-regional grouping across the world. In Calcutta conference, the forum experts will present work papers to set up core groups in areas like trade, infrastructure development, tourism, which would work out the details for

facilitating greater economic cooperation in the sub-region, the declaration said. The Delhi declaration, presented at a press conference here in the afternoon, spelt out that the GBM initiative would work to:

- Enhance efforts to promote sub-regional economic cooperation among eastern India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.
Identify projects that would enhance the scope of sub-regional economic cooperation.
Resolve and recommend policy issues that would enable greater economic cooperation among the members of the sub-region.
Strengthen the private sector initiative for sub-regional cooperation through a focused dialogue with the governments; and

Propagate the benefits of sub-regional cooperation among all sections of society. The meet decided to build a consensus that would lead to a win-win situation for all the member countries in terms of economic development and growth.

In fact, making people aware about benefits of the sub-regional cooperation was a key agenda in the Delhi meeting. As there is generally a negative attitude towards such cooperation in the region, FBCCI president Abdul Awal Mintoo suggested sharing experiences of Canada and Mexico as to how they faced the problem in making cooperation with the US.

Asked whether armed separatists like ULFA would affect the sub-regional cooperation, Mintoo later told the press conference that such cooperation would reduce bloodshed, as it is the people who will ultimately be benefited. Economic disparity is the main reason for unrest. If people are economically benefited, bush war will reduce," echoed AV Lodha, Indian coordinator of the GBM.

PM's grave concern

From page 1 Quality Management Project. Moreover, a 20-year-long master plan has been adopted to ensure 20 per cent forestry coverage in this country. We have formulated Environment (Preservation) Law 1997 to prevent degradation of environment," she said.

The government is implementing programmes for country-wide afforestation, management of environment and wildlife and conservation of bio-diversity in line with world environment system to meet the growing demand for forest resources. Already remarkable success has been achieved in conservation and management of environment through implementation of a number of projects, Hasina said.

More than 29 thousand hectares of land have been brought under afforestation and over 10 thousand kilometres under strip forest in last three years. The Prime Minister said her government has ensured supply of lead-free fuel since last July and increased use of compressed natural gas which is an environment-friendly fuel.

About 21,000 tons of LP gas is being produced annually to increase supply of the cooking gas as alternative to firewood, she said. Turning to a grim feature of Bangladesh's ecology, Prime Minister Hasina admitted that rivers and tributaries were gradually getting contaminated and also drying up. From the severity of floods in 1998 we realised that we should not allow filling up of rivers and water reservoirs.

India asks China for details of Karmapa's 'escape'

NEW DELHI, Jan 14: India called in the Chinese ambassador Friday and requested details from Beijing regarding the shock departure from Tibet of a 14-year-old boy lama, who arrived in India last week, reports AFP.

Ugyen Trinley Dorji, the 17th Karmapa Lama, arrived in the northern Indian hill town of Dharamsala on January 5, having apparently escaped from Tibet over the Himalayas. The Chinese side has been asked to share with us specific details regarding his departure from Tibet, the route taken and other relevant details," a foreign ministry spokesman said.

The request was made during a meeting between T.C. Rangachari, a joint secretary in the Indian foreign ministry and Chinese Ambassador to New Delhi Zhou Gang. During the meeting, Rangachari officially informed the ambassador of the Karmapa's arrival in Dharamsala — seat of the Tibetan government in exile.

The spokesman said Rangachari had also stressed that the Karmapa was in good health and adequate security had been provided for his safety. The Press Trust of India (PTI), meanwhile, said the Karmapa left his heavily-guarded monastery on Friday for a meeting with the Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala.

Lama. His 'escape' has been seen as a major embarrassment for Beijing, which had presented the Karmapa as a model patriot.

Gay men make more caring fathers?

LONDON, Jan 14: Gay men make more committed and sensitive fathers than heterosexual men, according to research on gender published in press reports here on Friday, reports AFP.

The study, carried out by Dr Gillian Dunne for The Gender Institute at the London School of Economics, said gay men were less afraid to show their "caring" side than their heterosexual counterparts. A quarter of the 100 gay fathers or would-be fathers involved in the study took the commitment to their children so seriously that they chose to work under 30 hours a week or gave up paid work to look after them.

The gay fathers "offer us some very interesting role models about how men can be parents, involving extended networks of family and friends," Dunne was quoted as saying by The Independent newspaper. Apart from eight cases, in which access had been denied by court, all the men involved played a major role in the upbringing of their children. Dunne said the men interviewed had become fathers by donor insemination with a surrogate mother, adopting or fostering or had children from a previous marriage. Many of these men have thought long and hard about becoming a parent and are positively choosing to have them and look after them," Dunne said.

Fake currency case against Pak embassy employee

NEW DELHI, Jan 14: Indian police have opened a case against a Pakistani embassy employee here for allegedly passing counterfeit Indian currency, officials said today, reports AFP.

The police have registered a counterfeit currency case against the high commission staffer. Investigations are in progress. Joint Commissioner of Police Amod Kanth said. The employee, Muzaffar Ali Khan, allegedly used a counterfeit 500-rupee (12 dollar) note to pay the fees at his son's school. The principal, V.K. Williams, told reporters that when Khan was told the note was fake he came to the school and offered to replace it. "But I refused and called the police," Williams said. A Pakistani embassy spokesman here said the allegation against Khan was "utter nonsense" and that the note in question was part of money it had received from the State Bank of India.