

What's on today.....

Inaugural: The inauguration ceremony of the solo painting exhibition by Apurba Ranjan Biswas will be held. The exhibition is titled "Mother Nature". Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 5:00 pm.

Music and dance festival: High Commission of India organises a 4-day long festival of Indian classical music and dance. On the first day today Jugabandi (duo) classical music performance will be by Subhendra Rao (Sitar) and Parthasarathy (sardul). Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 7:00 pm.

Training programme: Centre for Management Development of International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) will begin a 2-week long training programme. Venue: IUBAT premises.

Film show: Chalachitra Film Society organises the 2nd programme of their series "A tribute to Great Filmmakers of the Century: A Selection of Films." Three movies The Battleship Potemkin, Bicycle Thieves and The Firemen's Ball will be screened. Venue: Goethe-Institut, House No 10, Rd No 9, Dhannondi R/A. Time: 4:30 pm, 6:15 pm and 7:45 pm.

Discussion: Investors Forum Sylhet Bangladesh in association with Sylhet Centre UK will hold a discussion on "Investment in Tourism". Venue: Hotel Purbani International. Time: 3:30 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Opening ceremony: A new building of Social Marketing Company (SMC) will be inaugurated. Venue: SMC Building at 33, Banani C/A. Time: 4:30 pm.

Discussion meeting: Renowned journalist Arnold Jehin will deliver a lecture on his experiences during the Liberation War. Arnold was situated in Bangladesh as a correspondent of AP during the war. He is the director of Freedom Forum based in Hong Kong. Venue: Liberation War Museum, Secun Bagicha. Time: 5:00 pm.

Music & dance festival: The second-day of festival of Indian classical music & dance festival organised by the High Commission of India will be held. An Odissi dance performance by Sharmili Biswas and troupe and Samporna, a dance drama on temple dancers will be presented. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 7:00 pm.

Seminar: A seminar will be held on Family Planning Programmes in the 21st century. Organisers: International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), ICDDR,B: Centre for Health and Population Research and Partners in Population Development. Venue: Sasakawa auditorium of ICDDR,B. Time: 8:00 am.

Weather

Dry weather to continue

Light rain or drizzle may occur at one or two places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderate to thick fog may cover the river basins of the country during the morning. Met office said.

The night temperature may fall over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions while may remain nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 31.2 degree Celsius at Teknaf and the lowest 11.3 degrees at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:33 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 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagang, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

HERE and THERE

AIUB: AMA International University, Bangladesh (AIUB) held its orientation programme for the Spring Semester 2000 yesterday, says a press release.

In the morning session the programme was presided for the undergraduate level consisting of four major areas - Bachelor of Computer Science, Bachelor of Computer Engineering, Bachelor of Electronics and Communication Engineering and Bachelor of Business Administration, major in Management Information System.

In the evening session the programme was presided for the Masters in Business Administration (MBA) programme. A total number of 33 students have enrolled in the MBA programme this semester.

Carmen Z Lamagna, the Vice Chancellor of the AMA International University Bangladesh presided over the orientation programmes as the chief guest. Dr Anwarul Abedin, Founder Chairman, AIUB, Prof Dr Tafazzal Hossain, Pro-Vice Chancellor, AIUB, Prof Dr Anwar Hossain, Dean-in-charge, School of Business, AIUB, Hasanul A Hasan, Director HRD & Admin, Ishiaque Abedin, Director International Affairs, Prof Md Ali Ashraf, AIUB, Ehsan Uddin Ahmed, Coordinator of Student Affairs, AIUB also spoke on the occasion. Students' guardians, faculty member, university officials and students largely attended the orientation programme.

ASM Helal Uddin and Mohammad Saiful Islam - members.

JATI: The 183rd judicial administration training course for senior assistant judges was inaugurated yesterday at the Old High Court Bhaban by Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, reports UNB.

Organised by the Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) 34 senior assistant judges are taking part in the 3-week training.

The minister said that the government has established the institute to make the judges aware of the latest development in the judiciary and to equip themselves with the needs of the time.

He hoped that the participants will be able to learn the latest concept on the court management which will help them dispose off long pending cases that run into thousands.

He said the delay in justice virtually tantamount to injustice. He called upon the judges to perform their duties righteously, honestly and independently.

Director General of the Institute Justice M Badruzzaman in his presidential address said judges are not only accountable to the Constitution, Law of the land and the superior court but also to their own conscience.

Director of the Institute Abu Bakar Siddiqui is conducting the course with the help of course coordinators Mian M Ali Akbar Aziz, Deputy Director (Admin) and AKM Mostafa, Deputy Director (Training).

An outstanding debater, Laskar complete his MA from Dhaka University in 1956 and received the Chancellor's Gold Medal for his essay on "the influence of Science on religious outlook of men." He served in the USIS as branch chief for two years before he joined the erstwhile Pakistan Superior Service.

Laskar died at the Mount Sinal Hospital in New York on Tuesday. He is survived by his wife, a son and daughter, and a host of relatives.

JS body on Planning Ministry decides to extract coal from Khalaspeer Coal Mine soon

The 17th meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Planning was held yesterday in the Rangpur Circuit House auditorium with committee member Prof Zannatul Ferdous MP in the chair, reports BSS.

Committee members Science and Technology Minister Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan (retd), State Minister for Forest and Environment H N Ashique Rahman, State Minister for Planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Md Rezaul Karim Heera MP and Abu Lais Md Nabila Chowdhury MP attended the meeting.

After detailed discussion, the meeting took decisions on different matters of Barapukuria Coal Mine and Thermal Power projects, Madhyapara Hard Rock project, Joypurhat Lime Stone Mine, Khalaspeer Coal Mine and on the Ministry of Science and Technology.

The meeting decided to extract coal from Khalaspeer Coal Mine in Rangpur without further delay. Planning Commission Secretary Abdul Hamid, Science and Technology Secretary M Fazul Rahman, Power Secretary Arbinda Kar, Planning Commission members Dr Shah Md Farid, Anisul Huq Chowdhury, Omar Farooq and A K M Anisur Rahman, Power Development Board Chairman Quamrul Islam Siddique and BCSIR Chairman Dr Mashhuz-zaman and senior officials of the parliament secretariat and different ministries were present in the meeting.

Later, a press conference was held in the auditorium of a local tourism motel where secretaries concerned answered the queries of journalists. Minister and state ministers attending the meeting were present.

BTV directed to explore potentials of regional broadcast

MYMENSINGH, Jan 15: State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed today directed the BTV authorities to explore the potentials of broadcasting regional programme through its relay stations across the country, reports BSS.

The state minister gave the directive while visiting My-mensingh relay station.

Prof Sayeed said the BTV authorities should explore the possibilities of enhancing regional broadcasting facilities through its relay centres at Sylhet, Natore, My-mensingh, Rangpur, Khulna, Noakhali, Brahmanbaria, Patuakhali, Jhenidah and Thakurgaon.

Talking to BSS, the state minister said the programme broadcast through regional centres of BTV at the initial stage will include edited video files on local culture and heritage, stories relating to our glorious liberation war and different development activities of the government.

Obituary

Kazi Hafizur Rahman, son of late Kazi Abdur Gafur, died of a cardiac arrest on Monday last. He was 69 years old, says a press release. He is survived by 6 sons, 3 daughters and a host of relatives.

Khorshed Ahmed Kawser, an advocate, former general secretary of district bar association, died of cardiac arrest at Sadar Hospital in Habiganj on Wednesday. He was 50, reports UNB.

His namaj-e-Janaza was held at Shirshola in the town on Thursday and later buried at his family graveyard at Nabiganj.

Late Kawser is survived by his wife, a daughter and a son. Bar president Mohammad Nurul Amin and general secretary Abdur Nur Khan have expressed deep shock at his death and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina administering polio vaccine to a 'millennium baby' at the Rotary District Conference held at a local hotel yesterday. -PID photo

Opposition urged to air their grievances in JS

Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury yesterday urged the opposition to return to Parliament and take advantage of ventilating their views to the nation through the electronic media that telecast the proceedings of the House, reports BSS.

"It is a cost affair to disseminate your agencies among the people in general. You can do the same thing free of cost if you join the House," she said while taking part in the discussion on the motion for vote of thanks to the President for his inaugural speech.

Begum Chowdhury urged the Leader of the Opposition to come to the House for the sake of democracy and make Parliament effective. She said that hartal is very costly as well as 'opposition parties have to pay their activists for procuring bombs and also to blast it on the streets.'

Leader of the Opposition and her party members are not coming to the House as they have failed to stand the wits of the treasury bench, she added. "Parliament is a forum of battle of wits. Nothing goes one-sided. There are opinions and counter opinions. If you fear to join in arguments or to face awkward situation, none can help."

Earlier, the agriculture minister gave a lengthy resume of the success of the government during the last three years that include Ganges Water Treaty with India, the CHT peace accord and bumper harvest of crops.

Golam Hossain of Jatiya Party taking part in the debate however termed the CHT peace accord as a betrayal towards the nation as the government had compromised with a group of terrorists.

Social movement

From page 1 'environmental hazard'.

"Bangladesh is making some efforts to confront the environmental problems. But these are not adequate for the environmental challenge the country faces," he said stressing a strong social movement in this regard.

"It is not right that the government will do all the necessary things to protect the environment from further deterioration. Rather, people of all strata of society should come forward to save the country and its environment."

The environmental situation in the country is 'very alarming, he said. Fragile ecology, delicate flora and fauna, wetness of land, high density of population, reliance on foreign capital for industrialisation and poverty of the masses are the main reasons, he observed.

The people are environmentally friendly because of their traditional methods of production and way of life, but their struggle for survival is causing environmental hazard. "The civil society and the intelligentsia can play a pioneering role in building up the necessary social movement to make them aware how they are destroying the environment."

He said the country needs cooperation of the 'international environmental movement and pro-environment forces. Without this, it will be difficult to face the situation.

Environment has to be on the agenda of all sections in Bangladesh civil society. Professional and trade organisations will have to take up the issue seriously. Literary and cultural organisations, which represent the most sensitive sections of the society, have to get involved."

Educational institutions and students' women and children's organisations will have to play leading roles and the media can be very effective in creating awareness, Nazrul Islam said. This will ultimately

Slain Jubo League leader's wife demands justice

The grieving wife of slain Jubo League leader Mohammad Yunus Ali has demanded trial of the killers of her husband, reports BSS.

Accusing the business and political rivals of her husband of the murder, Eshita Rahman Laboni at a press conference yesterday. Urged the government to take stern action against the killers.

She said her husband was an innocent victim of 'business and political rivalry' in Mohanmadpur area of the city. Yunus, who owned a rent-a-car service, was killed five days before Eid-ul-Fitr by miscreants at his office in the city's Shyamoli area.

Laboni, who was married to Yunus only five months ago, named some local leaders, businessmen and alleged extortionists of the area as killers of her husband and demanded their immediate arrest and trial.

Relatives of the deceased were present at the press conference.

Dhaka-Sirajganj bus strike called off

From Our Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Jan 15: The passenger bus service to the capital from the district town is expected to resume tomorrow after six days as the bus strike was called off today following a joint meeting with the government officials.

The district official sources said that the Sirajganj Bus Malik Samity and Sirajganj Motor Sramik Union agreed to withdraw the strike following a three hours long joint meeting with the police superintendent of Sirajganj district and Tangail Bus Malik Samity and Tangail Motor Sramik Union in the evening.

The strike was called in protest of hike of tolls at Tangail bus stand on buses plying through the route. Two transport workers were also assaulted at Tangail on Wednesday last when they refused to pay the new toll against the charge of Tk 300 earlier.

Rising crimes

From page 1 Environmental pollution, drug abuse and national security are not regarded as major problems across South Asia (with around 5 per cent or less mentioning it).

The survey noted that the problems well tackled by the governments are not those considered as the major problems facing the nations today.

Thus, corruption is quoted less often as a problem well tackled by the Government in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. The notable exception in this regard is Sri Lanka, where a quarter of the population feel that this problem has been well tackled.

In Nepal, while the proportion of people who feel that none of the problems has been well tackled by the government is almost double that in the other three countries, the highest number -- 44 per cent -- say that environmental pollution has been well tackled.

Most friendly country: In Bangladesh, the US followed by Japan are considered as most friendly countries. For India, the friendliest country is Russia, which comes pretty much at the bottom in the other three countries. The US follows as a distant second in Sri Lanka. Japan, China and the US are far ahead of the other countries while for the Nepalese, Japan and China are much ahead of the other countries.

Most important leader in last 100 years: In Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is regarded as the most important leader in the last 100 years, followed by late Indian prime minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and this is felt more by women. Nelson Mandela of South Africa comes next followed by late president Ziaur Rahman.

'Flu from Europe, US spreading to Asia'

SINGAPORE, Jan 15: Singapore warned today that the influenza outbreak sweeping the United States and Europe has spread to Asia, reports AP.

The Health Ministry urged travellers, especially the elderly, to be on guard and to protect themselves with vaccinations one to two weeks before visiting affected countries.

The influenza epidemic has hit the US and Europe, and recently it has spread to some Asian countries such as China, Hong Kong and Taiwan," it said in a statement.

AFP adds: More than 300,000 people in Belgrade have been hit by a flu epidemic that has gripped the Yugoslav capital since the end of December.

"Since the start of the epidemic on December 27, over 35,678 cases have been declared (to the health services) in the capital, and epidemiologists estimate the real number of ill people is 10 times higher," Tanjug news agency said.

Tanjung did not mention deaths from flu, but private newspapers have reported an alarming rise in the number of people dying every day and said there was a possible link with the epidemic.

At least 34 people have died in other European countries from the bug, which has been identified as the 'Sydney' type A influenza virus.

Over 1100 members of AIS surrender: ALGIERS, Jan 15: Over 1,100 members of the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) have surrendered in eastern Algeria, a state prosecutor said today, two days after a government-imposed deadline for militants to lay down their arms expired, reports AP.

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika set January 13 as the deadline for insurgents to hand in their arms and receive partial amnesty.

Gen Musharraf to visit China from tomorrow

ISLAMABAD, Jan 15: Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf leaves for China on Monday for a two-day visit that Islamabad says will refresh relations between the two traditional allies, reports Reuters.

The trip will be Musharraf's first outside the Islamic world since he seized power in a coup on October 12 last year and comes amid fresh Pakistani tensions with another big neighbour, arch-rival India.

"The visit is intended to reaffirm Pakistan's close and cordial ties with China," a Pakistani Foreign Ministry statement said today.

It said Musharraf would hold an "in-depth exchange of views" with Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji besides meeting President Jiang Zemin and parliamentary Speaker and former premier Li Peng, who is number two in the Chinese political hierarchy.

3 killed in road accident in Manikganj

MANIKGANJ, Jan 15: Three persons were killed and ten others injured in two separate accidents on Dhaka-Archa highway last night, reports BSS.

An accident occurred when an Archa-bound trolley named "Nasiman" collided head-on with a Dhaka-bound night coach near Boyali under Shibalaya police station last night. The two victims were identified as Muzamud-din, 40, driver of the trolley and Mahmudul Hasan, 28. Seven persons were injured in the accident.

One person was killed in the second accident near Golora, under Satoria thana, falling from the roof of a Dhaka-bound minibus.

Khaleda's 11-pt plan

From page 1 include: extensive afforestation at the coastal belt, social and rural afforestation, reduction of urbanisation, ban on excessive import and use of pesticide, curbing of population boom, regular publicity on environment in the media, stopping of dumping wastes in the rivers, increase of use of jute products and banning of polythene bags gradually, alleviation of poverty, controlling of movement of the vehicles that spread black smoke and lead, putting an end to killing of wild animals and taking up of effective steps to halt river erosion.

Khaleda Zia said though the above tasks were difficult but they were not unachievable. Moreover, we will have to do those to halt environmental degradation.

She said all political parties, social and professional organisations, NGOs, civil society and entire nation should have to be involved with state initiatives. Participation by the women folk could play an important role in addressing those issues.

Preservation of environment and appropriate development efforts should have to be turned into a social movement, she added.

The opposition leader said the arsenic contamination was a fresh and a big problem for Bangladesh, and pointed out that excessive reduction of water level in the rivers during the dry season was the main cause of arsenic contamination in the country.

She said desertification had started in country's northern region and the southern region which was worsening owing to 'salinity problem', alongside loss of life, property and crops.

The former Prime Minister listed steps and measures taken by her BNP government to save the country from an environmental disaster.

Khaleda Zia in her lengthy speech blamed the developed and industrialised countries for polluting the environment and called upon the underdeveloped countries to raise their voice against destruction caused by pollution.

Presided over by Poribesh Rokkha Shopoth chairman AMA, Mubashir Hossain's concluding session was addressed, among others, by Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury of BUET, Prof Nazrul Islam of Emory University, USA and Prof Firoz Ahmed of BUET.

Action Council

From page 1 not decide on a meeting of the secretaries general that was supposed to finalise the circular on the guidelines of forming the action councils across the country.

"We have discussed the structure of the proposed AFAC. But we need more time to agree on a perfect structure of the body. We will discuss the issue in our respective party forum," Anwar Zahid, BNP member in the liaison body, told reporters after the meeting.

Chaired by M Shamsul Islam, MP, the meeting was also attended by Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar of JP, Abdul Kader Mollah and T M Azharul Islam of Jamaat-e-Islami, and Fazul Haq Amni and A R M Abdul Matin of the IOJ.

The meeting was held at the official residence of Khaleda Zia, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

Cricket

From page 1 be enough for Bangladesh to beat Holland. They will have to improve their current run-rate (2.44), if not positive. The world of statistics became crucial when all the matches on January 14 were rained off.

New Zealand, probably the worst victim of the Duckworth-Lewis method where no run-rate is counted for a curtailed match, will however be seeking a rain intervention tomorrow following ICC's refusal for a reserve day's play.

A repeat act of January 14 will ensure both the Kiwis and the Indians a place in the Super Eight, no matter what the outcome. Bangladesh-Holland match may be.

This is a very complicated situation. We will have to constantly monitor the other match at Galle and concentrate on improving the run-rate at the same time," said Bangladesh coach Dipu Rai Chowdhury to this correspondent.

Free quota: From page 1 equally, it does not fulfil the objective. To encourage exporters, particular categories can be allotted to those exporters who did not perform on those categories in the previous year, he commented.

But BGMEA Chief Executive Officer Uzair Afzal when contacted denied the allegation made in the investigation report. "It (the allegation) is not well founded," he said.

"We want free quota system to continue for the benefit of our members. It should continue because it is in the government policy," Afzal argued.

The proposal for retaining the free quota system was first rejected by the then commerce secretary who had viewed that it would not help boost garments export.

According to the investigation report, more than 98 per cent of allotments under the free quota during 1998 and 1999 were sold by allottees to others.

"What is the use of keeping free quota if it is not used by exporters who get allotments?" the secretary was quoted as saying at a meeting with BGMEA leaders.

The leaders then met the then commerce minister and requested him to retain the system at least for the period they are in the BGMEA leadership. The minister later agreed and the decision was taken without the presence of any high official of the ministry, the sources claimed.

The investigation conducted under the guidance of the Director General of EPZ and Textile Cell revealed various irregularities and unfair practices in distribution of free quota. An unauthorised quota market has also developed because of the free quota system, the report said.

The US and Canada provide quota facilities to Bangladesh and buy around fifty per cent of its total garment exports.

Last year a professor of Green Town University in USA during a visit to the country warned about the negative impact of quota business in the country's garments export.

Addressing a seminar he had said that quota business affected consumers in the USA because they had to pay higher prices. "It also affected the bilateral relations between US and Bangladesh," he had said.



Heap of garbage spread over half of the Biswa Road near Mugdapara causing inconvenience both for pedestrians and movement of traffic, apart from polluting air, environment. -Star photo