

What's on today...

Poush mela: Poush mela will be held at which winter cakes, handicrafts will be put on display along with cultural programmes at a day-long affair. Venue: Ramna Batamul. Time: 8:00 am-9:00 pm.

NFOWD seminar: National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled will hold a seminar on "Disaster Management and Disabled People." Venue: Samaj Sheba Bhaban auditorium, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Time: 9:30 am.

Film show: Three movies — Le beauty du deable (The Devil's Beauty), The reine Margot (The Queen Margot) and the video ballon — will be screened. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 11:00 am, 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm.

Inauguration: The 3rd solo painting exhibition of Rafiqul Islam will be inaugurated. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 4:00 pm.

Launching ceremony: The launching ceremony of *Partisan Portrait* and *A Perspective in Development: Gender Focus* by Raana Haider will be held. Chief guest: State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 6:00 pm.

Exhibition: A 10-day long solo exhibition of paintings by artist Abdus Sattar will be inaugurated. The exhibition will feature works by the painter completed between 1974-2000. Venue: Divine Art Gallery, Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 9:30 am-9:00 pm.

Musical evening: A musical evening by Nazmul Hossain Rubel, a scholar of Indian Council for Cultural Relations of Bangladesh, will be held. Nazmul will present *Rag Imon, Alap Khayals and Tararas*. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 7:30 pm.

Weather

Dry weather likely

Weather may remain mainly dry over the country with partly cloudy sky over Barisal, Chittagong and Dhaka divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over Rajshahi, Chittagong and Dhaka divisions and in the river basins over the country during the morning. Met office said.

Mild cold wave may sweep over Rajshahi divisions and the regions of Satkhira and Jessore.

Slight rise in the night temperature is expected over the country during the time.

The country's highest temperature 29.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Khulna and the lowest 08.2 degrees at Satkhira.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:37 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43 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	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	25.7	13.8	58	57
Chittagong	26.6	13.5	75	67
Rajshahi	24.5	09.4	83	75
Khulna	29.2	10.2	88	54
Barisal	28.2	10.1	89	63
Sylhet	23.4	12.1	88	55
Cox's Bazar	26.8	13.5	66	67

Face to face

From page 12

all too familiar in villages across Malaysia.

Devastated by a currency crisis and low commodity prices, the economic "tiger" is struggling to preserve its fortunes and those of one of the largest populations of Indochinese tigers in South-east Asia.

Government officials estimate there are just over 500 in peninsular Malaysia, where they've been protected since 1976. Roughly a fifth of the population lives in Kelantan.

The Indochinese tiger might be smaller than its Siberian or Bengal cousins but it's still capable of inflicting terrible wounds when it pounces, usually from behind.

Last December, a 10-year-old boy needed 50 stitches after a tiger mauled him near Gua Musang, Kelantan. A month later Mahwat Awang, a 26-year-old Orang Asli (aborigine), almost died while he stalked a wild boar near Kuantan, Pahang.

In August, villagers insisted four tigers killed 29 cattle near Felda Chini Dua, Pahang, decimating a livestock project designed to boost the local economy.

M. Noor Ariri, the deputy director of the Kelantan Wildlife and National Parks Department, said tiger preservation is still one of Malaysia's top priorities, pointing to its policy of taking animals alive whenever possible.

Ariri said state rangers captured two tigers, which were

sent to the Melaka Zoo, near Sri Jaya after the May attack.

However, there could be more than five others lurking in the vicinity, since a tiger's average range is between 40 and 60 square kilometres.

"We receive a lot of complaints from villagers, but we only capture tigers that have attacked people or livestock," said Ariri. "Otherwise, we don't like to bother them."

But Wan Majaid, a 29-year-old Sri Jaya rubber tapper, isn't convinced the government captured the right tiger since he discovered tracks near his house similar to those at the site of the attack.

"We really hope the government can solve this case soon," said Majaid. "We don't care if they take the tiger alive or kill it. This is our livelihood. If they can't take care of it, we'll kill it ourselves."

The reason tigers attack people is also a bone of contention between the locals and the government.

Ariri said the expansion of palm oil and rubber estates, coupled with a drop in the number of wild boar, is forcing tigers to hunt closer to villages.

Tigers will also attack people if they are old or injured and thus incapable of hunting larger game, said Ariri.

However, M. Narri Che "Mayee" Hassan, the manager of KB Backpackers Lodge and local guide, said most attacks occur during the February to May durian season, when tigers come out of the jungle to feast on the fruit.

Lauded across South-east Asia as the "King of Fruit," the durian is touted as an aphrodisiac, a label that also plagues the tiger.

Considering its distinctive smell, a cross between an open sewer and a rotting carcass, it's plausible that tigers could be attracted to the plantations during the harvest.

"You can always tell when a tiger has eaten a durian," said Mayee. "They leave the skin and seeds in a neat pile. Humans are messy. They just throw them everywhere."

But Ariri dismissed the suggestion.

"Village people say tigers like to come down from the jungles to eat durian but I think they are after the wild boar that live on the plantations," said Ariri. "Durians aren't a major food source."

Ismail said he doesn't know why tigers are attacking people, but it hardly matters.

"This is the tigers' area," said Ismail, resigned to fearful work in a jungle of ghosts. "They will eat whatever they can catch - fruit, people, it doesn't matter. It's their territory, now."

Deal with US

From page 12

While the United States has so far rejected India's appeals for Pakistan to be labelled a terrorist state, the Times of India Thursday said the decision to form a joint working group (JWG) was "an implied endorsement of New Delhi's concern over cross-border terrorism sponsored by Islamabad."

The JWG is scheduled to hold its first meeting in Washington in early February.

In a BBC interview broadcast here Thursday after the London talks, Singh said the decision was "not a consequence of the hijacking alone, but an agreement to work together to combat the international menace of terrorism."

While stressing India's commitment to "dialogue and reconciliation" with Pakistan, Singh appeared to rule out any talks with the military regime headed by General Pervez Musharraf, who seized power in a bloodless military coup in October.

"I would be prepared to talk to a duly elected government of any country," Singh said. "There must be some democratic legitimacy."

Immediately after the military coup, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said his government would talk with "any establishment" in Pakistan.

"Pakistan has to recognise that the compulsive hostility it demonstrates towards India must cease together with the 'daily cries of jihad (holy war) against India,'" Singh said.

The war of words over the Indian Airlines hijacking has placed further strain on Indo-Pakistan relations, which have yet to recover from last year's brief but bloody border conflict in Kashmir.

Asad dreamt of exploitation-free society

By Staff Correspondent

Different political and socio-cultural organisations observed Shaheed Asad Day yesterday with a call to materialise his dream of a democratic Bangladesh and exploitation-free society.

The programmes of the day included placing of wreaths at the Asad Memorial Plaque, his grave at Shibpur in Narayanganj, discussion meetings, processions and milad mahfil.

On this day in 1969, Asaduzzaman, a student of Dhaka University and leader of the then East Pakistan Chhatra Union, was gunned down by police in front of the Dhaka Medical College.

The death of Asad and another young boy Matiur, who was killed on January 24, triggered off a mass upsurge and hastened the end of the autocratic regime of Ayub Khan.

Shaheed Asad Parishad organised a discussion meeting at the seminar room of the Central Public Library in the afternoon which was addressed by

Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury, Prof M Shahadat Ali, Prof Abul Kashem, Fazlul Haq, Prof Jasimuddin, Kamal Lohani and Prof Shakhawat Ali Khan.

Addressing the meeting, they said Asad had sacrificed his life to build up an exploitation-free society. Earlier in the morning, the Parishad laid wreaths at the Asad Memorial Plaque in front of Dhaka Medical College premises.

BNP organised a discussion meeting at Shibpur in Narayanganj with Azmal Huda Mithu in the chair.

Addressing the meeting as chief guest, BNP secretary general Abul Mannan Bhuiyan said that the supreme sacrifice of Asad touched off the mass upsurge of 1969 leading to the country's independence.

"The dream of Asad was to build a democratic Bangladesh which is yet to be materialised," the BNP leader added.

Earlier, the BNP secretary general, along with the party's local leaders and workers,



Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of BNP, brought out a procession on the DU campus yesterday in protest of the proposed Public Safety Bill. —Star photo



Bangladesh Chhatra League, student wing of Awami League, brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday in support of the proposed Public Safety Bill. —Star photo

Bazlul Huda's brother-in-law placed on remand

By Staff Correspondent

Hanif Bhuiyan, brother-in-law of Bazlul Huda, was granted a two-day police remand by the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate in the city yesterday.

Hanif and Salma Huq Rozy, wife of Kamrul Huq Swapon, younger brother of Maj (ret) Shariful Huq Dalim, were picked up by Special Branch of police from Zia International Airport (ZIA) at midnight Wednesday night, police said.

Huda and Dalim are among the 15 who were sentenced to death in the Bangabandhu Murder Case.

Rozy was barred from boarding a Calcutta bound aircraft at 8 pm on Tuesday and was detained. She was released later, police said.

Hanif was handed over to Cantonment police. He was later placed on a two-day police remand.

Election of JU VC panel tomorrow

By JU Correspondent

The election of a three-member panel for Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University (JU) will be held tomorrow.

Pro-Awami League and pro-BNP teachers have floated four panels to contest the election.

Pro-Awami League teachers have formed two separate panels, dividing into two groups which is a sequel to earlier conflict between former VC Prof Alauddin Ahmed and acting VC and Pro-VC Prof Abdul Baves.

The pro-AL panel led by Prof Abdul Baves is "Pro-Liberation War Panel". The other members are Dean of Social Science Faculty Prof Tajul Islam and Prof Farida Akhter of Chemistry.

The rest of pro-AL teachers have announced their "Pro-Awami Bangladesh Nationalist Panel". This panel is led by Treasurer Prof Sharif Enamul Kabir. The two other members are former dean of Science Faculty Prof Mohammad Salmullah and present dean Prof Khallidur Rahman.

Pro-BNP teachers are also divided into two groups after a

Shadow over confce

From page 1

It will be an exercise in vain if the four business leaders do not join the conference as BGMEA alone contributes over 70 per cent of the country's total export earnings. And also because garments sector is severely affected due to political unrest," he said prefering anonymity.

Addressing a press conference yesterday, Minto admitted that he had not formally invited the business leaders to speak at the "grand conference".

"But as far as we are concerned, no procedural mistake was done as FBCCI is the apex trade body representing all the chambers and trade associations."

He also said there were no scope of opposing the conference as FBCCI's decision meant decision of the entire business community.

There was no division in the business community as, he said, 120 trade bodies out of 165 positively responded to the FBCCI move.

Asked to give the list of business leaders who would speak at the conference, Minto said it has not been decided as only the "heavy weights" will be chosen as speakers he added.

When pointed out that the heavyweights had decided not to attend the conference, the FBCCI chief said all the problems would be taken care of and that all the leaders would join it in due course.

Opposition

From page 12

The circular stated that convenor of the APAC will call meetings and preside those. In absence of the convenor, the committee will nominate a member to temporarily act as the convenor.

The APAC units, if necessary, can give specific responsibility to one or more members. The Central Liaison Committee will coordinate all activities of city and district units of APAC, and the city and the district units will directly report to it.

The city and district units of APAC will coordinate with their respective municipality, thana, union and ward committees.

The APAC will have to be formed and its convenor chosen on the basis of discussion among local units of the parties.

After formation of local units, full lists shall have to be sent to the central committees of the four parties and to the Central Liaison Committee office at 29 Minto Road.

All concerned has been asked to contact the Central Liaison Committee immediately in case of any clarification.

"Let's build APAC in respective areas within the shortest time. Let's topple this fascist government and protect our democratic system, Constitution, independence and sovereignty and territorial integrity," the circular appealed.

City BNP convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka said senior leaders of city committees of the four parties would sit today to discuss formation of the APAC in the capital.

He hoped that the committee would be formed by January 23 when the four parties are scheduled to hold separate public meetings in the city.

Khoka said that BNP as the largest opposition party would get the post of convenor and have a majority in the committees.

BNP sources hinted that Khoka is going to be convenor of the city APAC.

PIB study reveals 1153 general strikes in 52 yrs

By Staff Correspondent

Some 1153 general strikes (hartal) were observed during the last 52 years at local, regional and national levels, according to a study conducted under the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB).

Of the total, some 248, 193 and 712 general strikes were observed in national, regional and local areas respectively since August 15, 1947 till December 31, 1999.

The study, revealed yesterday, stated that the Awami League alone was involved in most cases in calling hartals while Jamaat-e-Islami called the highest number of hartals jointly with others.

As per the study, a total of 244 hartals, of them 166 in local levels, 41 in Dhaka and other regions and 37 in national levels, was observed since March 31 of 1996 till December 31 of 1999.

It was mentioned that a total of 416 strikes took place since December 7 of 1990 till March 30 of 1996 at different levels. Of them, some 266, 69 and 81 strikes were observed in local, regional and national levels respectively.

The report demonstrated that about 200 strikes were observed in local areas since March 24 of 1982 till December 6 of 1990 while 56 and 72 strikes were observed at the regional and national levels during the same period.

Since August 15 of 1975 to March 23 of 1982, a total of 44 strikes were observed at the local level whereas nine and six strikes respectively were observed at the regional levels during this period.

Twelve strikes were recorded in the local areas since 1972 to August 14 of 1975 while five each were observed at regional and national levels during the same period.

Since 1947 till 1971, a total of 47 general strikes were observed at the national level while 13 and 24 were observed at the regional and local levels respectively.

The report found that there were mainly four reasons — political, economical, local issues and protest against oppressions — for calling such hartals.

Some 335 hartals were called for political reasons while 387 strikes were observed in protest of arrest and repression, 51 for economical and 168 for local reasons during the last 52 years, it was mentioned in the study report.

A total of 36 persons were killed, 985 were injured and 288 arrested at the time of strikes during the pre-liberation (1947-1971) era while 200 persons were killed, 12777 injured and 9140 arrested for the same reason since independence.

The report said, the highest number of 94 killings occurred during the Ershad regime while 63 and 36 people were killed during Khaleda and Sheikh Hasina regimes respectively.

Most of the killings were by the law enforcing agencies or political rivals, the report added.

The study also mentioned that the journalists have always been the target by police and other law enforcing agencies at the time of hartal during the last 52 years.

GTF chair

From page 12

The forum will focus on transborder areas to protect tiger habitat. Four priority areas include (a) the Royal Chitwan/Valmiki/Parsa/Bardia/Sobehwa (b) the Sundarbans, (c) the May-U range and Chir Hills and (d) Royal Manas and Phipsoo.

Countries will also prepare Tiger Action Plans, which will be submitted to the forum's secretariat by January 2001. The secretariat will produce newsletter twice a year based on information submitted by the states. It will also establish a Web site by January 2001 subject to the availability of funds.

The forum will approach donors for funding to support its conservation programs and administration costs.

Dr. Christopher Halls, programme director of the World Wide Fund for Nature, said his organisation will channel almost \$5 million for tiger conservation activities in 13 different countries.

The forum will organise a major international conference on tiger conservation in conjunction with its next general assembly scheduled for the winter of 2001.

JS Dismal

From page 1

of the time during the four-hour proceedings, but the business continued as none brought the issue to the notice of the Chair.

The number of MPs, reduced to 37 at one stage, against the required strength of 60 for quorum.

The otherwise dull business yesterday found a woman MP in the Chair. But the rare instance also failed to generate adequate enthusiasm in the House.

Prof Ethin Rakhaine, a ruling party lawmaker, replaced Prof Ali Ashraf and ran the show for 32 minutes. Rakhaine being in the Chair, the second such practice in the present parliament, seemed to have encouraged the women MPs from reserved quota whose presence was bigger than that of their male colleagues.

Jatiya Party MP Rabeya Bhuiyan briefly chaired the session 18 months ago.

On the private members' day yesterday, two ruling party MPs were substituted by their colleagues in moving their resolutions. So happened in the case of a minister.

Several Treasury Bench members including one senior minister who were listed as a discussant on the President's address to the House were also absent.

Ustad Phul Mohammad dead

Ustad Phul Mohammad died at a city clinic early yesterday morning. He was 78, reports BSS.

The Ekushey Padak winning maestro Phul Mohammad was suffering from urinary bladder cancer. He was admitted to Comfort Nursing Centre on December 30.

He left behind his wife, six daughters, three sons and a host of students and admirers.

The namaz-e-janaza was held at Phul Mohammad was held in front of his Mirpur residence after Zohr prayers.

He was laid to rest at the Azimpur old graveyard after Magreb prayers.

Quilkhani of Phul Mohammad will be held at his Mirpur residence, near Sony Cinema Hall, on January 23 after Magreb prayers, family sources said.

Indians dominate

From page 1

ered defending champions India to the top of the leaderboard on the opening day of the Second SAARC Golf Championship at the Kurmitola Golf Course yesterday.

Kumar, a 16-year-old exciting prospect on the home circuit, and Gangjee both carried identical scores of one-over 73 as the Indians tallied two-over 146.

Sri Lanka, runners-up last year at the inaugural edition in Bangalore, occupied second spot with five-over 149. Pakistan led in third position on 13-over 157.

Bangladesh followed in fourth thanks to the country's No.1 player Showkat-e-Zaman and Sadiq Quddus. Each scored seven-over 79 apiece. The third member of the team Siddikur Rahman managed 85.

Himalayan countries — Bhutan in fifth and Nepal in sixth — brought up the rear. They collected 164 and 165 respectively.

Kumar after encountering a bogey on the second hole, birdied the third. Besides, he paired the first four holes of his back-to-nine. He also birdied the 14th.

Gangjee birdied the seventh, 14th and 17 holes.

Earlier, Chief of Army Staff and president of the Kurmitola Golf Club Lt Gen M Mustafizur Rahman teed-off the players at eight in the morning as the chief guest.

The second round begins at the same venue at 10 a.m.

Bangladesh, Kenya

From page 1

bowlers can maintain a tight line and length and the batsman play to their potentials, then we have a better chance to win the match," said Dipu.

The bearded coach said that Ashraf is likely to be rested tomorrow. Right-arm seamer Tariq might come in place of the young stroke-maker.

"In that case, wicketkeeper Selim will open the innings with Shaon (Nahidul Haq)."

While Dipu was talking to the press in the afternoon, the Kenyan team arrived at hotel of this spectacular tourist resort. They played their first match against Zimbabwe on January 19 at Galle.

"We will go out for a win. And, I hope the players will play according to the instruction," said the Kenyan coach-manager Edward Tito.

Edward, who is also the elder brother of Maurice Odumba, said that their initial target was to qualify for the Cup league.

"But since we are now in the Plate we must have to do something better in the lesser league," he said.

On the traditional rivalry

Narsingdi JCD leader dead

NARSINGDI, Jan 20: Shabir Ahmed, 28, district Chhatra Dal leader and son of Shamsuddin Ahmed MP of Narsingdi Sadar thana, died of a heart attack at his residence here in the early hours of today, reports BSS.

He was buried at Gabtall graveyard after namaj-e-janaza at Arshi Nagar, Narsingdi.

BNP General Secretary Abul Mannan Bhuiyan and Moht Khan MP attended the janaza.

They expressed shock at the death of Shabir Ahmed and prayed for peace of his departed soul.

Advocate Faruq Omar, a freedom fighter and politician, died of cardiac arrest on Tuesday night. He was 59, says a press release.

He is survived by his wife, two sons, two daughters and a host of relatives.

Omar, from Alyabadi village of Bajitpur thana in Kishoreganj, was working at the Dhaka District Judges Court as an AP.

Bajitpur Samity in a statement condoned his death and expressed sympathy for the members of his bereaved family.

Obituary

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