

What's on today . . . .

Exhibition: An exhibition of the works of artist T. dus Sattar is going on. Venue: Divine Art Gallery, Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 9.30 am - 9.00 pm.

Discussion meeting: Jatiya Sramik Jote will hold a discussion meeting on "Politics in the new century". Venue: Jatiya Press Club. Time: 10.00 am.

Inauguration: The inaugural session of a week-long international training workshop on "Developing Nutrition Communication Programme Strategies" will be held. Venue: Far Pavilion Ltd, House No 64, Rd No 15, Block C, Banani. Time: 10.30 am.

Orientation: The 23rd orientation programme of "IUBAT (Spring semester) will be held. Venue: Academy for Planning and Development, Nilkhet. Time: 3.00 pm.

Cultural Programme: Rabi Rashmi, a Rabindra Sangeet Organisation, will hold a cultural evening. The programme will feature various artists invited from around the country. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, 758 Satmasjid Rd, Dhanmondi. Time: 6.15 pm.



Sutrapur thana unit of Jatiyatibadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha (JASAS) organised a discussion in the city yesterday on the occasion of 64th birth anniversary of late president Ziaur Rahman. — Star photo

Kuwaiti armed forces team visits Jessorre Cantt

JESSORE, Jan 21: The Kuwaiti Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Ali Mohammad Al-Moumen, visited the Jessorre Cantonment yesterday, reports BSS. The local area commander of the Bangladesh Army received General Al-Moumen and members of his entourage on their arrival at Jessorre. The guests enjoyed a demonstration organised by the local Army Division. The delegation of Kuwaiti Armed Forces later visited the Bangladesh Air Force Academy at the BAF Base Matur Rahman here. The Air Officer Commanding of the Bangladesh Air Force Base Matur Rahman and Commander of the BAF Academy received the guests.

Free children from ethnic conflicts: UNICEF chief

TOKYO, Jan 21: UNICEF executive director Carol Bellamy today called for the world's major powers to help prevent children from being caught up in ethnic conflicts, a Japanese foreign ministry official said, reports AFP. Bellamy, due to visit East Timor on Sunday after a four-day stay here, made the plea when she met with Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono, the official said. In the meeting, Bellamy thanked Japan for contributing to international aid efforts led by the UN children's fund to help reconstruct East Timor as it proceeds with independence from Indonesia, the official said. Kono was quoted as telling the UNICEF chief that "preventing conflicts is very important to save children. This issue has been discussed at meetings of the Group-of-Eight (G8) foreign ministers." Bellamy said she strongly supported G8 efforts in this area. "Serious undertaking by G8 to prevent conflicts is important," she was quoted as saying.

EC: No decision yet

From page 1... The decision of the election tribunal. The appeals are heard by a Division Bench comprising two judges. And as a last resort, the verdict of the HC Bench goes to the country's highest judicial body - the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. "So it is natural that an aggrieved candidate does not get a final verdict within a reasonable time, although the EC is convinced that the whole exercise becomes useless because the final verdict is not available even during the tenure of the parliament concerned," a top EC official said. The Commission believes that the time-limit for a final decision on any election case should not be more than one year from the receipt of an allegation. But it is convinced that mere re-fixing the time-limit is not the answer. The composition of the tribunal and its working station have also to be changed. The Election Tribunal may appoint an Election Tribunal comprising two judges of the High Court Division, exclusively for trial and disposal of election petitions. The EC recommendation said, "The working place of the tribunal should naturally be in the capital where the parliament meets." The EC mentioned some countries practising the system. These include Australia, Canada, Malaysia, Kenya and Ghana. In India, election petitions are disposed of at High Courts in state capitals. Arguing in favour of replacement of divisional level tribunals with a central one comprising High Court judges, the EC says: "Elevated status of the adjudicators may dissuade the counsels from seeking frequent adjournment of hearing on frivolous grounds, while location of the parliament and the tribunal in the same city would require minimum adjustments of the tribunal's schedules." Arguing further, the EC report said, location of the tribunal in Dhaka instead of divisional headquarters will contribute to avoiding frequent adjournment of hearing on the plea that the principal respondent is preoccupied with parliamentary duties. "Occurrences may not be rare when parliament would remain in session for a part of the day, allowing the tribunal to proceed with its business during the rest of the working hours."

..... and tomorrow

Open discussion: Health for All will hold an open discussion on "HIV/AIDS". Venue: Ganashasthya Nagar Bb ban, (5th floor), House No 14E, Rd No 6, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 5.30 pm.

Congratulations!



Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) has conferred PhD degree on Shubendra Shekher Sikder, an Assistant Professor of Department of Physics of Bangladesh Institute of Technology, Khulna, says a press release. He was awarded the degree for his thesis "Temperature Dependence of Magnetisation and Induced Magnetic Anisotropy of some Fe, Co and Ni-based Amorphous Ribbons."

China's HR abuses worst since 1989: Rights group

BEIJING, Jan 21: China's human rights abuses last year were the worst since the 1989 massacre of pro-democracy activists in Tiananmen Square, a human rights watchdog warned today, reports AFP. "The abuses in the past year are the worst in the past few years since the crackdown on 1989 pro-democracy protesters," said Sophia Woodman, research director for Human Rights in China. Woodman pointed to the Communist government's crackdown on the spiritual movement Falungong, the numerous arrests of opposition China Democracy Party activists and the suppression of general freedom of association. Based in Hong Kong, Woodman is visiting foreign embassies in Beijing to lobby support for a US plan to table a resolution condemning China's human rights violations at the upcoming United Nations Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva. "Given the situation of these violations, we support the US resolution. It's the mechanism agreed upon by the international community to address human rights problems," Woodman told reporters. "A resolution can support those people already making efforts inside and outside the system to pressure China to respect human rights." The United States last week said it would table the resolution in March, citing a deterioration in China's human rights record last year.

Weather

Light rain likely

Light rain or drizzle is likely to occur at a few places over Khulna and Barisal divisions and at one or two places elsewhere over the country in the next 12 hours till 6pm today, reports UNB. Moderate fog could blanket Rajshahi division and the river basins in the morning, Met office said. Slight fall in the night temperature is expected over the country. Yesterday's highest temperature of 28.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and Satkhira and the lowest of 9 degrees at Rajshahi. The sun sets in the capital today at 5.37 pm and rises tomorrow on Sunday 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	23.8	17.2	88	71
Chittagong	26.6	15.5	77	82
Rajshahi	25.6	09.0	89	66
Khulna	27.8	13.2	87	75
Barisal	26.6	16.5	100	77
Sylhet	25.0	13.8	85	69
Cox's Bazar	28.0	15.5	72	78

HERE and THERE

BDRCS Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BRCS) and Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Thursday distributed relief materials among the victims of Rayerbazar slum fire, reports BSS.

Mayor Mohammad Hanif and BRCS acting chairman Shaikh Kabir Hossain handed over the relief materials which included rice, lentil, blankets and clothing for the affected people. Alhaj Moqbul Hossain MP, BRCS treasurer Monir Hossain Khan and other senior officials of BRCS were present on the occasion.

DAB, DMC By DU Correspondent A 27-member executive committee of the Dhaka Medical College unit of Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB) was formed recently with Dr Erfanul Haq Siddique and Dr Saiful Islam Ansari as president and general secretary respectively.

The committee was formed in its general meeting which was presided over by Dr Mostak Rahim Shwapana. The executive body includes, Meer Fawaz Hossain, Towhidul Islam John, Nazmul Huda Biplob, Imrul Haq Badal, Rashed Reza (vice president), Redwanul Islam (treasurer), Zahidur Rahman Panna (joint secretary), Rashed Sarwar Alam Rony (organising secretary), Asjadur Rahman Sovon (office secretary), Abdul Kader Milon (literature, publicity and publication secretary), Sakhawat Ahmed Nasir (cultural and sports secretary), Baharul Alam (science affairs secretary) and Sayedus Salehin Babu (social welfare secretary).

The executive members of the committee are — Saifulah Jhinto, Sayef Ullah, Golam Mohiuddin Khan Sadi, Hayat Mahmud Rassel, Nuruzzaman Khan Khasru, Bakhtiar Uddin Jewel, Sakhawat Hossain Porag, Imrul Kayes, Enamul Haq, Khalequzzaman Sarker Kajol, Biplob and Aziz.

Asian Buddhist confce for peace Speakers at a Roundtable meeting on "Buddhist approach to peace, harmony and development in the 21st century" emphasized that durable world peace in the post-cold-war era is closely interwoven with equitable economic development and total nuclear disarmament, a press release said. The meeting held in the city

on Wednesday to welcome the new millennium under the auspices of Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP), Bangladesh National Centre was participated by nearly a dozen leading personalities of the Buddhist community. Dr Barua, Secretary General of ABCP National Centre acted as the coordinator of RTM held at the conference hall of National Council of Churches at New Eskaton. Speakers said Buddha's message of peace and non-violence more than two and a half millenniums ago is timeless and still relevant for the stricken humanity. Describing 21st century as the era of extraordinary technological progress speakers said, peace and harmony constitute an integral part of development, both globally and nationally.

Speakers included Dilip Barua, Secretary General of Bangladesh Samyabadi Dal, Dr Sumangal Barua of Dhaka University, Dr Pravat Barua, Hirahala Barua, M P Barua, Jivanananda Barua, P K Chowdhury, P B Barua, K L Mutsuddi, Shilabrata Barua, Dr Ashim Barua, Swapan Barua Chowdhury, Uttam Barua, Sumal Kanti Barua, Parimal Mutsuddi and Shilabrata Chowdhury.

UPL book launched The University Press Limited (UPL) yesterday launched Ms Raana Haider's 'Parisian Portraits and a Perspective in Development: Gender Focus' at a function on the Alliance Francaise premises at Dhanmondi here, reports BSS.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury attended the function as the chief guest. Foreign Secretary Shaif Sami, French Ambassador to Bangladesh Alain Briottet, former foreign secretary Tabarak Hossain, ambassador Arshad uz Zaman, Director of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka Ms France Lasnier, author Ms Raana Haider and Mohiuddin Ahmed of UPL, among others, addressed the function.

Lauding the work on Paris, the state minister said Ms Raana Haider's book tastes like famous French cuisine if the reader has prior encounters with the most beautiful city on earth.

Chowdhury said Parisian Portraits would enhance existing cultural ties between Dhaka and Paris and help the readers learn more about the city.



Bangladesh Economic Systems Technology (BEST), a California based firm with offices in Dhaka recently organised a seminar in the city on "Supplying Power to the People." Among others Philip Simon, BEST's Sales and Marketing Executive Ishiaq Chisti and Faisal Siddique, Resident Director, addressed the seminar.

Britain to tighten arms sales regulations

LONDON, Jan 21: Close on the heels of Britain's pre-Christmas pledge to write off all debts owed by the world's most impoverished countries, London is to ban the use of export credits for arms sales to 63 nations, reports IPS. Forty-one of these countries are eligible for debt relief under the heavily indebted poor country (HIPC) initiative. A further 22 can obtain "soft loans" from the World Bank on a low cost, concessionary basis. The countries listed include war-ravaged Sierra Leone and Ethiopia, while some of the biggest markets for British arms sales in the past such as Indonesia, Pakistan and Nigeria have been excluded. "This is part of an attempt to ensure aid and debt relief are channeled into poverty reduction rather than military spending," said finance minister Gordon Brown last week. Otherwise, he said, the aid could end up "flowing to prestige projects that do nothing to relieve poverty or to corrupt regimes and to military excess that destroys rather than builds for a better future." Only when combined with the right economic and social policies, which are essential to sustainable economic development, can debt relief be the catalyst for the true release from poverty", Brown said. Treasury sources said the hard line on export credits would include not only military hardware but also luxury goods such as yachts for political leaders in impoverished nations. Brown and the British International Development Secretary Clare Short have, in the

6 killed in Kashmir unfight

SRINAGAR, Jan 21: Six people, including two Indian soldiers, were killed today in a gunbattle in India's troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir, police said, reports Reuter. They said the gunbattle erupted around noon in Qazigund area, 70 km (44 miles) south of Srinagar. "Four militants and two security personnel were killed in the encounter", a police spokesman said. Hanman, while on 17, tried to accelerate the scoring rate but was caught and bowled by off-spinner Nitin Patel. After the good work with the willow, Bikaish and Tariqul gave Kenya a chance to score freely. Kenyans could garner only 17 runs in the first ten overs losing the wicket of opener Gore, who top-edged an attempted drive against Tariqul and Kalim took it beautifully at cover. Although Bikaish returned wicketless, his five overs yielded only 11 runs. Anwar Hossain, coming in as first change, then ripped through the middle-order to finish with three for 21 in his ten overs. He had one-down Collins Omondi trapped leg before for three and Nitin Patel magnificently caught by Hanman, who ran about 15 yards from id-off to mid-on to take the slier just inches above the ground. Hanman also clung on to a fierce shot from Mohammed Sheikh, fielding at mid-on. Tariqul, the meaneast of the Bangladesh bowlers, not only passed the endurance test of bowling ten overs at a stretch but also got the reward of maintaining a tight line and length under the melting sun. He finished with two for 15. Leg-spinner Mosaddek mopped up the Kenyan tail to return with fantastic figures of 4-3-6-2. Among the Kenyan batsmen, opener Amit Bhudia scored higher 16 off 77 balls. With this win, Bangladesh confirmed their place in the semifinals with one match in hand against Zimbabwe. The match against Zimbabwe, to be held in NCC ground in Colombo on January 23, will also decide the champions from Group One.

Int'l Director of Lions Club due Jan 25

Nilofer Bakhtiar, International Director of Lions Clubs International, arrives in the city on January 25 on a five-day visit to Bangladesh, says a press release. During her stay in Dhaka, she will attend different programmes of Multiple District 315, Bangladesh, Lions Club International. She will be given a reception at Hotel Purbani at 4 pm on January 26. Nilofer will also visit Chittagong where she will attend a seminar on "Membership Growth and Leadership Development" on January 27. A reception will also be held in her honour in Chittagong on January 28.



Hasina Akhter (Nipa) has passed her MSc final examination of 1996 (held in 1998) securing first class 3rd position from the department of Biochemistry, Dhaka University, says a press release. She is the daughter of captain (Rtd) A G Muhammad Khurshid who was the Navy commander of "9th sector" established during the Liberation War, and Mrs Laila Bilquis Khurshid. During her MSc thesis she worked as an NST fellow under the Ministry of Science & Technology fellowship programme.

Jakarta open to dialogue with Aceh rebels

WASHINGTON, Jan 21: Indonesia's foreign minister said Thursday Jakarta was open to dialogue with separatist rebels in Aceh but emphatically ruled out any possibility of granting independence to the province, reports AFP. "It seems there are some rooms for dialogue still," Alwi Shihab said here before meeting with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Gus Dur (President Abdurrahman Wahid) is trying to use this space for dialogue to convince the factions of the independence movement of Aceh that (they) still can accept cooperation with the central government. Shihab announced that Wahid was due to visit Aceh within four or five days.

Kenya defeated

Bangladesh cross 100 by putting on 51 runs for the fourth wicket. Hanman, while on 17, tried to accelerate the scoring rate but was caught and bowled by off-spinner Nitin Patel. After the good work with the willow, Bikaish and Tariqul gave Kenya a chance to score freely. Kenyans could garner only 17 runs in the first ten overs losing the wicket of opener Gore, who top-edged an attempted drive against Tariqul and Kalim took it beautifully at cover. Although Bikaish returned wicketless, his five overs yielded only 11 runs. Anwar Hossain, coming in as first change, then ripped through the middle-order to finish with three for 21 in his ten overs. He had one-down Collins Omondi trapped leg before for three and Nitin Patel magnificently caught by Hanman, who ran about 15 yards from id-off to mid-on to take the slier just inches above the ground. Hanman also clung on to a fierce shot from Mohammed Sheikh, fielding at mid-on. Tariqul, the meaneast of the Bangladesh bowlers, not only passed the endurance test of bowling ten overs at a stretch but also got the reward of maintaining a tight line and length under the melting sun. He finished with two for 15. Leg-spinner Mosaddek mopped up the Kenyan tail to return with fantastic figures of 4-3-6-2. Among the Kenyan batsmen, opener Amit Bhudia scored higher 16 off 77 balls. With this win, Bangladesh confirmed their place in the semifinals with one match in hand against Zimbabwe. The match against Zimbabwe, to be held in NCC ground in Colombo on January 23, will also decide the champions from Group One.

No hartal

The meeting decided to go for demonstration programme before the Jitima and launch a "militant anti-government movement" including hartal and road barricades from the first week of February, meeting sources said. Jatiya Party will not hold its scheduled meeting in the city tomorrow because party Chairman H. M Ershad will appear before court for trial in the Manjur murder case on that day. But it will observe the programmes to be announced by the alliance. Ershad is the principal accused in the case, filed during BNP rule. Briefing newsmen, BNP leader Anwar Zahid said All Party Action Committees have already been formed in some parts of the country. BNP chief Khaleda Zia will address her party's public meeting at Paltan Maidan, Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Golam Azam will address his party's meeting at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque and Islami Oikya Jote chief Azizul Haq will address a party meeting at Purana Paltan. BNP leaders M Shamsul Islam MP, Tariqul Islam and Anwar Zahid, JP leaders Nazir Rahman Manjur, Mostafa Jamal Haider, Maidul Islam and Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar, Jamaat leaders Matur Rahman Nizam, Abdul Qader Mollah and ATM Azharul Islam and IOJ leaders Fazlul Haq Amin and ARM Abdul Matin attended the Liaison Committee meeting yesterday. Earlier in the morning, Shamsul Islam and Anwar Zahid held a joint meeting with Jagpa President Shaful Alam Proddan, Democratic League leader Saifuddin Ahmed Moni, Progressive Nationalist Party Chairman Shaikh Shawkat Hossain Nilu and Nationalist Democratic Alliance Chairman Nurul Haq Maudumder. The meeting strongly protested Cabinet approval of the Public Safety Bill and urged the government to refrain from introducing the "anti-people and black law" in the parliament.

Obituary

CHANDPUR, Jan 21: Abdul Karim Patwari, former municipal chairman and veteran Awami League leader, died at his Taltala residence in the town this morning at the age of 73, reports UNB. Patwari had long been suffering from respiratory problems. He left behind his wife, five sons, two daughters and a host of relatives and admirers. His namaz-e-janaza was held at Chandpur Government College ground in the afternoon. Later, he was buried at his family graveyard.

Shikdar

to set up a special court through a notification issued on October 23, 1999. All formalities have been completed for beginning trial at the Special Court. Sources said that 15 murder cases revived so far by the police will also be tried in the special court. Chargesheets of nine out of 23 murder cases have already been submitted to the court. Meanwhile, investigation is going on into the security lapses in the Khulna District Jail through which two letters were passed out with instruction from Ershad on how to snatch him from police custody and kill six persons, including three political leaders of AL and BNP.

Rallies

Leaders and activists of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday brought out processions and held rallies in the city to make tomorrow's public meeting a success. Leaders and activists of Dhanmondi thana unit of BNP brought out a procession from New Market area. BNP Mirpur, Ranna, Tejgong, Uttara, Gulshan, Pallabi, Sabujbagh, Mottjheh, Kafuril, Buddhab and Demra thana units also brought out separate processions and held rallies on the occasion.

Bus accident claims 17 lives in central China

BEIJING, Jan 21: Seventeen people were killed and nine injured in a head-on collision between a liquefied gas tanker and a passenger bus in the central province of Henan, state media said today, reports AFP. The bus was travelling on a highway between Xin village and Pan county on Wednesday when the tanker crashed into it while trying to speed pass a section of the highway clouded in smoke, the Beijing Daily Daily said. The smoke was created by a peasant burning wheat straws near the highway, the paper said.

Storms wreak havoc in ME

BEIRUT, Jan 21: Torrential rain wreaked havoc in Lebanon Thursday, flooding buildings in Beirut and other towns, cutting power and turning highways first into muddy streams and then into raging torrents, reports AFP. "It's a disaster," proclaimed the country's most popular television station, the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC), which blamed the authorities for the extensive damage caused by the storm, whose arrival was no surprise to weather forecasters. The authorities could give no figures Thursday evening for the material damage, but said no casualties had been reported. They have set up an "emergency operations room" to assist victims of the flooding. Water poured into homes, shops and official buildings in Beirut and its suburbs, and in the northern port city of Tripoli a hospital and mosque were also flooded, the official Tele-Liban reported. Many rivers spilled over their banks, flooding nearby fields, the official ANI news agency said. A number of retaining walls were washed away. However despite the rains, Beirut's airport continued to function. Initial estimates late Thursday said between 70 and 90 centimeters (28 and 36 inches) of rain had fallen on Beirut in 24 hours.



Flames and black smoke rise from a car, which is suspected to be a vehicle used by presumed terrorists, in Paradinas street in Madrid yesterday. A Spanish army officer was killed and a teenage girl wounded in twin car bombings attributed to the Basque separatist organisation ETA. — AFP photo