

What's on today

- Sketch exhibition: A Sketch exhibition by Tia opens today. Venue: Cafeteria of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 1.00 pm.
Reception: Bangladesh Awami Juba League will accord a reception to the three newly appointed ministers: Amir Hossain Amin (Food), Abdul Jalil (Commerce) and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim (Health & Family Welfare). Venue: Ramna Batamul. Time: 3.00 pm.
Poster exhibition: A poster exhibition on new medicine in France, technology instruments used for surgery and various other developments in the field, is going on. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 3.00 pm - 8.00 pm.
Seminar: A seminar will be held on 'Sovereignty, Ethnic Terrorism and Humanitarian Intervention'. Organisers: Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh (CDR), Asian Affairs. Venue: Women's Voluntary Association (WVA), House no 20, Rd no 16 (New), 27 (Old), Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 4.00 pm.
Lecture: A brief session on 'Scientific Evidence of the Holy Quran' will be held. Key-note speaker: Bro Dr Abdul Ehsan, an Islamic Scholar and advisor to Australian government. Venue: House no 36A, Rd no 118, Gulshan. Time: 6.30 pm.

and tomorrow

GUP seminar: Gono Unnayan Prochesta (GUP) will hold a seminar on 'Soyabean and Housekeeping: Sharing Bangladesh-Japan Experience'. Venue: Samaj Seba Bhaban auditorium, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Time: 9.00 am.

Weather

Light rain likely
Light to moderate rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at a few places over Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna, Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.
Moderate fog may occur over Rajshahi division and river basins of the country during morning. Met Office said adding night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.
The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 28.0 degree Celsius at Chuadanga and the lowest 10.2 degrees at Satkhira.
The sun sets in the capital today at 5.39 pm and rises tomorrow at 6.42 am.
Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:
City/Town Temperature Humidity
in Celsius percentage
Max Min Morning Evening
Dhaka 26.7 17.4 74 71
Chittagong 21.7 17.5 85 85
Rajshahi 27.4 13.0 85 77
Khulna 26.8 16.0 96 81
Barisal 24.2 16.3 96 80
Sylhet 25.0 14.8 84 82
Cox's Bazar 27.0 18.0 84 73

HERE and THERE

- WEST workshop
A 3rd workshop on environment, science and technology (WEST) jointly organised by Centre for Scientific & Technological Information (CSTI) of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, Environment Voluntary Association (EVA) and tollombour was held at the Alliance Francaise de Dhaka premises on Saturday, says a press release.
It included video show on Child Psychology and the Effect of Air Pollution. This was followed by a discussion where participants discussed on formation, selection and planning of strategy for Household Waste Disposal System.
Participants talked about taking initiatives at community level for recycling of household waste, awareness raising programme involving the mass media, family concerned organisations, educational and religious institutions etc.
Matiur Rahman Memorial Trust Fund
A cheque for Taka 1.50 lakh was handed over to Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, vice chancellor of Dhaka University yesterday to constitute a memorial fund after the name of former director of Dhaka University Physical Education Centre late Lt Col (ret'd) Matiur Rahman, reports BSS.
Yousuf Rahman, a former national cricketer and son of late Matiur Rahman handed over the cheque to the vice chancellor at his office.
Pro vice-chancellor Prof Mohammad Shahadat Ali, Treasurer Prof Abul Hashem, Registrar Muhammad Selim, Ms Rawshan Jabin Emy and Shamim Ahmed, daughter and son-in-law of Col Rahman were present.
The university will award a cheque for taka five thousand, a gold medal and a blazer to a renowned sportsman/woman post graduate student of the university once a year out of the interest of the money, the press release said.

- CRWY
A steering committee meeting of Child Women Relief & You CRWY was held on January 21, at Sajna Restaurant on an alternative approach to deal with sexual harassment and rape problem in garments sector, says a press release.
The meeting was attended by five permanent members of the Steering Committee. The members who attended the meeting are advocate Fahima Nasrin, Project Director of CRWY Dr Rana P Sattar (The Asia Foundation), JV Kettelson (European Commission) Mr Roy Romesh Chandra United Federation of Garment Worker) Anwar Hossain, the chairperson of MLF and the secretary general of MLF Dr AA Gurashi.
IEEE
The annual certificate awarding dinner of the Institution of Electrical & Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Bangladesh section was held on Saturday at the BUET cafeteria, says a press release.
Prof Dr Nooruddin Ahmed discredited as chief guest among the students who participates in Windows NT workshops organised by IEEE, Bangladesh section.
Prof Nooruddin in his speech talked about the recent trends in information & communication technology. He said that the internet will be the ultimate communication tools in this millennium.
Prof Dr Shahidul Islam Khan, Chairman IEEE Bangladesh section, SM Nooruddin, Secretary, (IEEE) and Rabul Alam, President, Power Engineering Society Chapter of IEEE and MD, Energypac also attended the dinner programme.
IEEE is a globally renowned organisation for electrical & electronic engineers with branches in 183 countries and over 35,000 members.
Its Bangladesh chapter has about 200 members, including 100 student members.
Justice Abdur Rahman Chowdhury Foundation
Justice Abdur Rahman Chowdhury Foundation held a discussion titled 'Bangladesh: Challenges of the New Millennium' at the CIRDAP auditorium on Saturday to observe the 6th death anniversary of Justice Abdur Rahman Chowdhury, says a press release.
Presided over by former minister and rotary governor Azizul Huq, the meeting was addressed by former president of DCCI M H Rahman, Editor of Jai Jal Din Shafiq Rehman, National Professor and Vice-Chancellor of Darul Ihsan University Prof Syed Ali Ahsan, former Director of UN and Professor of City University, New York Dr ATR Rahman, former Chief Election Commissioner Justice M A Rouf, former minister Barrister Zamiruddin Sircar and former Attorney General Barrister K S Nabi.
M H Rahman said at the discussion that the challenges faced by Bangladesh in the trade and industrial sector was tremendous in view of the liberalisation of trade barriers. He sounded a note of caution that the industrial growth in Bangladesh might be hampered due to such liberalisation. He said that overcoming the technological deficiencies was the biggest challenge before us.
Other paying rich tributes to Justice Chowdhury, recalled him as a visionary judge and said that examples set by him were being followed and applied by present judges.
Bankers Puja Parishad
Bankers Puja Parishad, Bangladesh, has recently formed an executive committee with 101 members for the year 2000-2001, says a press release.
Babu Lal Pal has been made President, while Shyamol Chandriya Roy general secretary, Jagadish Chandriya Sarker is the treasurer of the association.

World Bank report suggests

Health spending should focus on diseases that mostly affect the poor

Governments of developing nations must guard against the temptation to concentrate spending on 'rich diseases' and must shift their focus to diseases of the poor if they aim to best improve the lives of people in the poorest countries, a new World Bank report co-published yesterday with the Global Forum for Health Research said, reports BSS.
The report said health experts have focused on the global rise of non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes in recent years.
The new Bank study 'The Burden of Disease among the Global Poor: Current Situation, Future Trends, and Implications for Strategy' points out, however, that focus on these non-communicable ailments is biased against the poor because the poorest fifth of the world's population suffers disproportionately from communicable diseases such as malaria, maternal conditions, and diarrheal ailments.
'We don't want to downplay the gravity of non-communicable diseases in the world,' said co-authors of the report Davidson R Gwatkin and Michel Guillot. 'But we would

like to emphasize that in the developing world, policymakers need to realise that focusing attention and spending on communicable diseases now will save lives among the poor in the short and long term.'
The report says that, on the one hand, the poorest 20 per cent of the global population would gain over ten times as much as the richest 20 per cent, in terms of added life expectancy during the period from 1990 to 2020, by doubling the rate of decline for mortality from communicable diseases spread evenly across all economic groups. Life expectancy in these poorest countries would then increase by 12.7 years to 66.3 years by 2020.
On the other hand, a comparably-distributed doubling in the rate of decline for non-communicable diseases during the same period would benefit the world's richest 20 per cent nearly four times as much as it would the global poorest 20 per cent.
The report observes that seven types of diseases were responsible for nearly three-quarters of the difference in mortality levels experienced by the world's richest and poorest population groups. The most

EC: Ministry mum

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eral elections, the EC had to allocate symbols to 90 political parties. Of the parties, 15 did not field any candidate, 16 parties had only one candidate each and nine others only two candidates each.
In the June 1996 national polls, 119 political parties were allocated election symbols. Of those, 31 parties did not field any candidate, 33 fielded only one candidate and 10 parties had only two candidates each.
'Many of these parties fared so poorly in the elections that statistics reflecting percentage of votes polled by each could only be expressed in fractions,' the EC official said. 'It clearly indicates that a number of those parties did not deserve to be recognised as political parties' fit for contesting polls, he added.
The EC, however, categorically said, 'Non-registration of a political party would not debar it from carrying on its political agenda. Registration with the EC is only a pre-requisite for participation in election as a political party.'
The EC proposal said, 'Election is a serious business in a democratic process. So the Commission should not recognise the non-serious individuals, associations or groups as active political parties and encourage them to take part in the national polls.'
Insisting on 'certain legal guidelines for registration of political parties', the Commission said that for registration, a political party should submit to the EC, along with its name, address, constitution and leadership hierarchy, a verified list of 1,000 members of the party with their serial numbers in the electoral roll, a copy of the statement describing its latest annual income and expenditure and the name and address of its appointed auditor with a written statement from him that he has accepted the appointment.
'The law should also authorise the Commission to strike off names of previously registered parties which have become moribund or extinct or those failing to abide by certain provisions to be laid down in the law,' the EC proposal said.

Hasina pays tribute to victims of mass upsurge

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has paid glowing tribute to the memories of the victims of the mass upsurge of 1969 and the Chittagong killing in 1988, reports UNB.
In a message yesterday on the eve of historic January 24, she said the perspective of 1969 uprising against the communal and military autocracy of Pakistan was the same as that of communal and military autocracy of Bangladesh in 1988.
She said January 24, 1969, was a milestone in the struggle of Bangladesh's self-determination which was stained with the blood of martyrs. The event was glorious and painful as well. The people ignored oppression and repression of the Pakistani rulers and defied curfew on this day when Matiur Rahman, a student of Class IX, was killed in police firing.
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had declared the six-point programme, a charter for freedom, in 1969 in order to free the nation from the clutches of Pakistani colonial rule. The pace of struggle for self-determination got momentum, recalled the prime minister.

Khaleeda begins Kushtia tour Jan 26

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleeda Zia will leave Dhaka Wednesday morning on a two-day organisational tour to Kushtia district, reports UNB.
She will address public meetings at Muthurapur College premises in Daulatpur thana at 3 pm Wednesday and at Khoksa-Janipur High School premises in Khoksa thana on Thursday at 3 pm. She will return to Dhaka Thursday.
Mud and filth on the road at Babubazar in the old part of the city have made movement and business activities difficult. - Star photo

Maple Leaf Int'l School registers with Ed-Excel of London University

Maple Leaf International School has recently become the first school in the country to have obtained registration with the University of London Examinations Board Ed-Excel in the United Kingdom, says a press release.
The major implication of this registration is that the Ed-Excel that conducts the GCSE 'O' and 'A' level examinations will now mention the name of the school in the certificates it awards. This means that the students of the school will now be treated as regular students graduating from a prestigious institution and not private candidates.
Maple Leaf International School, established in 1972, is one of the oldest English medium schools in the country. It was also the first institution in the country to obtain permission to conduct science practical classes, paving the way for students to sit for science subjects at 'A' level.

Help Bench dispose of pending cases, president tells SC Bar leaders

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday advised the bar to cooperate with the Bench for quick disposal of pending cases, reports UNB.
'If necessary, extend the court hours and reduce court's vacation for immediate disposal of the pending cases,' he told the leaders of the Executive Committee of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association who called on the President at Bangabhaban.
The lawyers apprised Shahabuddin of an alternative process they are contemplating for settling the cases amicably between the parties through mediation and conciliation before trial.
'This may be adopted as an alternative process of dispute settlement for mitigating the sufferings of the litigants,' the Bar Association members said.
In the meeting they also apprised the President of various problems of the Bar, including delays in installing a lift in the bar building and lack of other facilities for the members.
Association president Advocate Saifuddin Ahmed led the delegation.

Air pollution

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keep the mask on,' said the official. 'He needs to whistle and do a lot of shouting to manage the traffic.'
Sources said three traffic policemen died last year from complications arising from exposure to pollution. Two of the constables died of cardiac arrest - one on the street - and another died of various complications.
Another traffic department official said they are cracking down on the faulty vehicles plying the streets. In the last ten days, at least 1,500 two-stroke vehicles have been booked.
However, the crackdown has sparked violence. Scooter drivers went on a rampage yesterday, barricading roads at Mirpur, Syedabad and other areas to protest the police action.
'Pollution levels have dropped dramatically because the baby-taxis are not on the road,' said a traffic sergeant near Science Laboratory crossing in the city.

Khaleeda

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The BNP chief also announced movement programmes including 'mass processions' across the country on February 3 and said from now on, there will be tougher programmes till resignation of the government.
She said there are many things including matters related to the Election Commission, 'false' cases against BNP leaders and activists, AL's politicisation of administration and political murders to be discussed with the caretaker government.
The BNP Chairperson said the Jatiya Sangad has become 'one-party parliament' as AL has turned it into a 'discussion forum' of the party. 'The parliament has been made ineffective and even ruling party MPs have lost interest in it.'

Khaleeda Zia alleged that the Sangsad was being used by the ruling party as a place for telling lies and character assassination of opposition parties and leaders.
'It is now time to dissolve the parliament as ruling party MPs do not want to attend the session. It is being run without quorum. Dissolution of this ineffective parliament has now become the desire of ruling party leaders and the people,' she hoped that the government would realise it soon and act accordingly.
The fresh programmes announced at the meeting include: Democracy Killing Day on January 25, countrywide 'Resistance Day' on January 27 to protest government's move to introduce a 'black law' in the name of Public Safety Act.
Jatiya Party Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote also announced similar programmes at separate public meetings in the city.
The BNP Chairperson in her 25-minute speech alleged that there was massive corruption in the recent defence purchases.
'This government and ruling party men looted thousands of crores of taka through the MIG-29 purchase deal. They must be tried. We have already filed a case against the MIG purchase deal, and they [AL men] must face punishment for looting people's wealth.'
On purchase of a Navy Frigate, the former Prime Minister said the government is going to purchase it from a country which does not manufacture frigates. Moreover, the company with which the government signed the agreement to supply the frigate is bankrupt! BNP will sue the people involved in the frigate purchase, she added.
On filing of 'false' cases against an unspecified number of BNP leaders and activists in the last four years, Khaleeda Zia said: 'You [AL government] will realise when a similar number of cases will be filed against you. You have filed false cases against us, but we will file genuine cases against you and those will be counted.'

Khaleeda Zia declared that the government would not be allowed to give transit facility to India. 'Awami League government has no authority to provide this facility to India as people have not given it their mandate to do so.'
She also bitterly criticised the government for its alleged failure in the field of economy, maintaining law and order, and for politicisation of the administration.
Pedrollo Sales Conference '99 was held at Hotel Sonargaon on Saturday. Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru was chief guest at the programme. It was attended by Mario Filippo Pini, Ambassador of Italy, Eliseo Franchetto, Ahsan Habib, Director of Rural Electrification Board, Khurshid Ahmed Chowdhury, Manager of James Finlay, and Sujoy Nag of Tata International.



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IBM Advanced Career Education (ACE) Centre held the graduation ceremony of its first 3 batches of students in the city recently.



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Yousuf Rahman, son of late Lt Col Matiur Rahman, former director of Physical Education Centre of DU, yesterday handed over a cheque for Tk 1.5 lakh to Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, VC of Dhaka University to set up 'Matiur Rahman Trust Fund' at the university.

DESA: Deaf ear

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about paying PDB's monthly bills. Normally, PDB charges a monthly bill of around Tk 100 crore from DESA for the power sold to it. 'But DESA seldom pays more than Tk 50 crore a month. Moreover, it did not pay bills for over three months last year,' said the source.
Different types of clients including government offices and industries owe DESA over Tk 1400 crore. 'If every thing was in order in DESA, it would have made a profit of over Tk 20 crore a month,' the source noted.
PDB continues to issue letters to DESA in 'strong language' to improve its performance and pay the arrears by raising its bill collection to over 120 per cent (against the total billing).
The PDB had fixed a target to reduce the system loss to 18-19 per cent from 23 per cent by January and raise the collection-generation ratio to over 100 per cent from last year's 85 per cent.
But despite serious efforts, PDB's system loss could be reduced by only one per cent and it stood at 22 per cent in December. 'However, the collection-generation ratio increased significantly last month,' the source said.
Corruption is so deep rooted in DESA that even transfer of some unscrupulous employees has not produced any significant result, he added.
'The root of all evils is the present billing system'. To remove it, the authorities are now working on a plan to introduce computerised billing system in the city, he said.
'Already' computerised billing system had been introduced in PDB which has 10 lakh clients. It has now computerised billing system for over 70,000 clients in Chittagong, Kushtia and Comilla. By the end of December this year, about two lakh clients will be brought under computerised billing system.
In addition, PDB has introduced a number of reform measures to improve its performance. It has converted its six power distribution zones into 'Strategic Business Units' under which there are 20 District Circles. All these circles will now work as separate 'Cost and Profit Centres', each having separate assets.
Besides, PDB has formed Clients' Service Association at the level of its 250 Electric Supply Units across the country. Headed by a PDB Resident Engineer, these associations have deputy commissioners and people from thanas as members. The members meet every month and submit their complaints and suggestions to improve PDB's performance.
>All these reform measures have become vital for the existence of PDB. Donors are pressing the government to abolish PDB by separating its components as its overall performance continued to deteriorate over decades,' observed a power expert. 'By improving PDB's performance and making it a profit earning entity by 2003, the government wants to prove that the public sector can perform well.'

President's remarks

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reciting the holy Quran, she used newspaper reach her.
'I get hurt when I hear sweeping remarks, because not only me, my party leaders also read a lot,' said Hasina.
The prime minister, who has authored several books on sociopolitical issues, believes once she retires from politics at age 57, she would get enough time to read and write more books.
Asked whether she thinks the quality of leadership is gradually waning due to a lack of knowledge and learning, Hasina said it might be fallout of the rule by military juntas who tried to make some people politicians overnight through political horse-trading.
She said politics means service to people and the country. But quality of politics falls when politics becomes self-centered and people want to spin their fortune out of politics.
'It is unfortunate that dedicated and patriotic politicians, who love the country and sacrifice everything they have for the cause of the people, are being replaced by snobs, who are joining politics to get elected by using money and muscle.'
'Till today we see many people having money joining election, getting elected and becoming politicians by dint of their money and muscle, which is spilling the quality of politics.
The prime minister said these politicians floated parties overnight, collected funds in the name of their parties through corruption and funneled out the money to foreign countries. 'If corruption becomes the policy, then quality evaporates from the politics.'
Asked whether it is difficult to check the present erosion in political values, she replied: 'NO'.
The new generations have got the opportunity of modern technology to build themselves as worthy citizens through advanced knowledge, she said.
She observed that brilliant students after acquiring knowledge should take up the leadership of the student organisations and join national politics on completion of their higher studies.
'But it's unfortunate that non-students or those who even did not cross their school and college doors are at the helms of student organisations which virtually encourage terrorism in the name of student politics.'
Sheikh Hasina, however, would not totally blame student politics. 'Students require studies and knowledge for doing politics. They should take preparation from now to take up the leadership of the country as good politicians.'

PDB Chairman new CONCOPE chief

Quamrul Islam Siddique, Chairman of Power Development Board, has been elected Chairman of the Consultative Committee of Public Enterprises (CONCOPE) for the 2000-2001 term, reports BSS.
The election was held at the Headquarters of Bangladesh Biman on Saturday.
Chairman of BIWTC M A Matin has been elected Secretary General of the CONCOPE.