

What's on today....

GUP seminar: Gono Unnayan Procheta (GUP) will hold a seminar on "Soyabean and Housekeeping: Sharing Bangladesh-Japan Experience." Venue: Samaj Seba Bhavan auditorium, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Time: 9:00 am.

Rabindra Sangeet festival: Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha begins a two-day long Rabindra Sangeet Festival. On the first day today a reception will be accorded to poet Shamsur Rahman. This will be followed by a cultural show. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium. Time: 6:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

BCPS lecture: Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS) will hold a lecture on "Heart Attack: How and Why with New Millennium Management." Venue: BCPS auditorium, Mohakhali. Time: 11:00 am-11:50 am.

Rabindra Sangeet festival: The 2nd day of Rabindra Sangeet festival will be held. A reception will be accorded to Dr Kabir Chowdhury. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium. Time: 6:00 pm.

Weather

Light rain likely

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

Moderate to thick fog may blanket Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions and the river basins during morning. Met Office said adding night temperature may fall by 1 to 3 degree Celsius. Yesterday's highest temperature of 28.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Chittagong and Cox's Bazar and the lowest of 12.8 degrees at Sayedpur and Dinajpur.

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:

| | in Celsius | | percentage | |
|-------------|------------|------|------------|---------|
| | Max | Min | Morning | Evening |
| Dhaka | 27.0 | 16.0 | 69 | 51 |
| Chittagong | 28.2 | 15.5 | 77 | 75 |
| Rajshahi | 21.0 | 13.3 | 100 | 88 |
| Khulna | 26.7 | 17.4 | 96 | 54 |
| Barisal | 26.5 | 14.0 | 94 | 77 |
| Sylhet | 25.2 | 16.4 | 79 | 73 |
| Cox's Bazar | 28.2 | 16.4 | 83 | 79 |

DU programmes on Education Week

By DU Correspondent

Dhaka University authorities have drawn up elaborate programmes to observe the "Education Week" beginning in the city today.

The programmes included education conference, discussion meeting, essay competition, debate, recitation of poems, folk songs and dance.

The topic of Bangla essay competition is "Globalisation and Our Culture" and the topic of English essay competition is "Education in the 21st Century".

The last date for submitting essay is January 27, said a DU press release.

The prize giving ceremony will be held at TSC on the concluding day on January 31.

Two teenaged girls rescued from Mirpur: 2 held

By Staff Correspondent

Police rescued two teenaged girls from the captivity of one Shafik and Shumi from a house at Sheorapara at Mirpur, sources said.

Shafik and Shumi, who pretended to be a husband and wife, were arrested for their alleged involvement in running a prostitution from their residence, according to police and human rights activists.

Of the two girls rescued, one was handed over to the custody of Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights while the other, who was found to be mentally imbalanced, was kept in police custody, sources said.

Police filed a case against Shafik and Shumi under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.



Dr Yogi Mehrotra, Vice-Chairman, IHCL (3rd from left) explaining different aspects of Apollo Hospital Project in Dhaka. From left to right are Chocalingam, GM of IHCL, Sashidhar, Architect of IHCL, Bob Kundanmal, Chairman STS, DJM Meegoda, President of VBL and Muttupulle, CEO of VBL.



Gerd Wahlstrom, Ambassador of Norway in Bangladesh, paid a courtesy call on Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury yesterday at the latter's office. They discussed academic matters during the meeting.

Dhaka places high priority on trade and investment agenda of IOR-ARC

Samad Azad returns from Muscat meet

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday described the extra ordinary Ministerial Meeting of Indian Ocean Rim Association of Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) which just ended in Muscat, Oman as a "highly successful" meet, reports BSS.

It is expected to pave the way for greater interaction among the member states for mutual benefit in a variety of fields, said Azad who led a four-member delegation to the two-day meeting of IOR-ARC.

Five new members including Bangladesh were formally admitted to the regional body formed in March 1997. The other new entrants are Iran, Seychelles, Thailand and UAE. UK and China were admitted as dialogue partners in the Muscat meeting. Egypt and Japan were earlier taken in with the status of dialogue partners. While Pakistan wants to become a full member, France is eager to join as dialogue partner only, the foreign minister said.

Talking to newsmen at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on his return from Oman after attending the meeting, Azad said the growing interests of other countries to become members

and others willing to get dialogue partnership, reflected the increasing importance the Association enjoys.

Dwelling on IOR-ARC, the foreign minister said it is basically an economic grouping whose main objectives are to promote sustained growth and balanced development of the region, create common ground for regional economic cooperation and facilitate trade and investment in the member states through lowering of trade barriers and promoting close interaction among the business community and academic group in the member states.

The association has two other organs, the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) and the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG) which meet regularly and interact with the committee of senior officials for formulation and implementation of the policies and work programme of the association.

Azad said that during the past two years the association has identified trade and investment as the driving force of the nascent organisation and has made commendable

progress in its short existence so far.

The Muscat meeting, the Foreign Minister said endorsed the report of the working group on trade and investment and acknowledged that trade, investment and economic achievement will be the yardstick of success of the Association.

Azad, who addressed the inaugural session of the meeting on Saturday, spoke of the importance Bangladesh attaches to IOR-ARC and placed high priority on the trade and investment agenda of the association.

During his stay, the Foreign Minister held bilateral meetings with his counterparts of India, Iran, Indonesia, Mozambique and Deputy Prime Minister of Yemen.

Replying to a question, Azad said Bangladesh supports Middle-East peace progress, but has not changed its attitude with regard to extending recognition to Israel even though four OIC states have established ties with the Jewish state. He denied having met Israeli official in Bangkok recently as reported in Israeli press.

Aceh, Maluku problems will be resolved by March: Wahid

JAKARTA, Jan 24: Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid has expressed confidence the problems in the country's major trouble spots, the province of Aceh and the Maluku islands, would be resolved by March, reports said today, says AFP.

"I expect the problems in Aceh to be solved by this March and I hope Ambon (will be solved) sooner," Wahid was quoted by the Media Indonesia newspaper as telling the private RCTI television station in an interview Sunday night.

Ambon is the capital of the Maluku islands, where more than 1,800 have died in clashes between Muslims and Christians over the past year.

Wahid said a resolution to the Aceh problem, where violence involving security forces and separatist rebels and their supporters has mounted amid calls for a vote on self-rule, will depend on the wish of the people.

"Referendum, fine. No referendum, all right," he said. He denied accusations the government had been too slow in handling the country's trouble spots.

"It has never been easy. It takes time," he said.

Nine more people were killed in Aceh Saturday and Sunday, ahead of talks between Wahid and Acehese community leaders in the Aceh city of Sabang on Tuesday.

Fresh Muslim-Christian violence also erupted in Maluku Sunday, leaving at least 22 dead a day before the scheduled visit there Monday by Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri, who has been officially tasked with handling the trouble.

Wahid has ruled out a vote on independence for Aceh, saying a referendum would only address whether people want to implement Sharia (Islamic law) and a broad autonomy scheme.

Aceh was promised autonomy by Indonesia's first president Sukarno and his predecessor

Suharto, but troops have been fighting rebels there since the 1970s.

The talks will be held on tiny Weh island off the northern tip of Sumatra, for security reasons, officials said.

Meanwhile, preparations for a planned consultative congress on the future of the troubled Indonesian province of Aceh are nearing completion, participants said today on the eve of a visit by President Abdurrahman Wahid to the region.

"There has already been a lot of progress," said Amin Aziz, an academic who has been active in preparing the congress.

The planned conference, expected to take place early next month, is intended to bring together representatives of all sections of society in the oil-rich northern province.

But it remains unclear whether the rebels of the Aceh merdeka (Free Aceh) Movement (GAM) will take part. GAM is fighting for an independent Islamic state in Aceh.

Indian envoy calls on Food Minister

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Deb Mukharjee called on Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu yesterday and exchanged views on bilateral and common issues of interest, reports UNB.

They expressed the hope that the relationship between the two countries would be further strengthened in future, said an official handout.

Madhu Mela begins today

By Our Correspondent
JESSORE, Jan 24: Madhu Mela-2000, a week-long festival marking the 176th birth anniversary of Poet Michael Madhusudan Dutta begins at village Sagardari under Keshabpur thana tomorrow.

Educational Minister ASHK Sadique will inaugurate the festival at 10.30 am.

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Prof Rafiqul Islam, Tabibur Rahman Sardar, Khan Tipu Sultan, Ali Reza, and Shah Haiduzzaman, among others, will attend the inaugural function.

Secretary of the Cultural Affairs Ministry Syed Abdur Rob will preside.

Joint venture hospital project in city

A Tk 144 crore joint venture hospital project is going to be implemented in Dhaka. STS group which promoted the International School, Dhaka at Basundhara is the promoter of the Hospital, says a press release.

Vanik Bangladesh Ltd (VBL) which is playing the role of investment advisor to the Project made a presentation to banks and financial institutions at a local hotel yesterday.

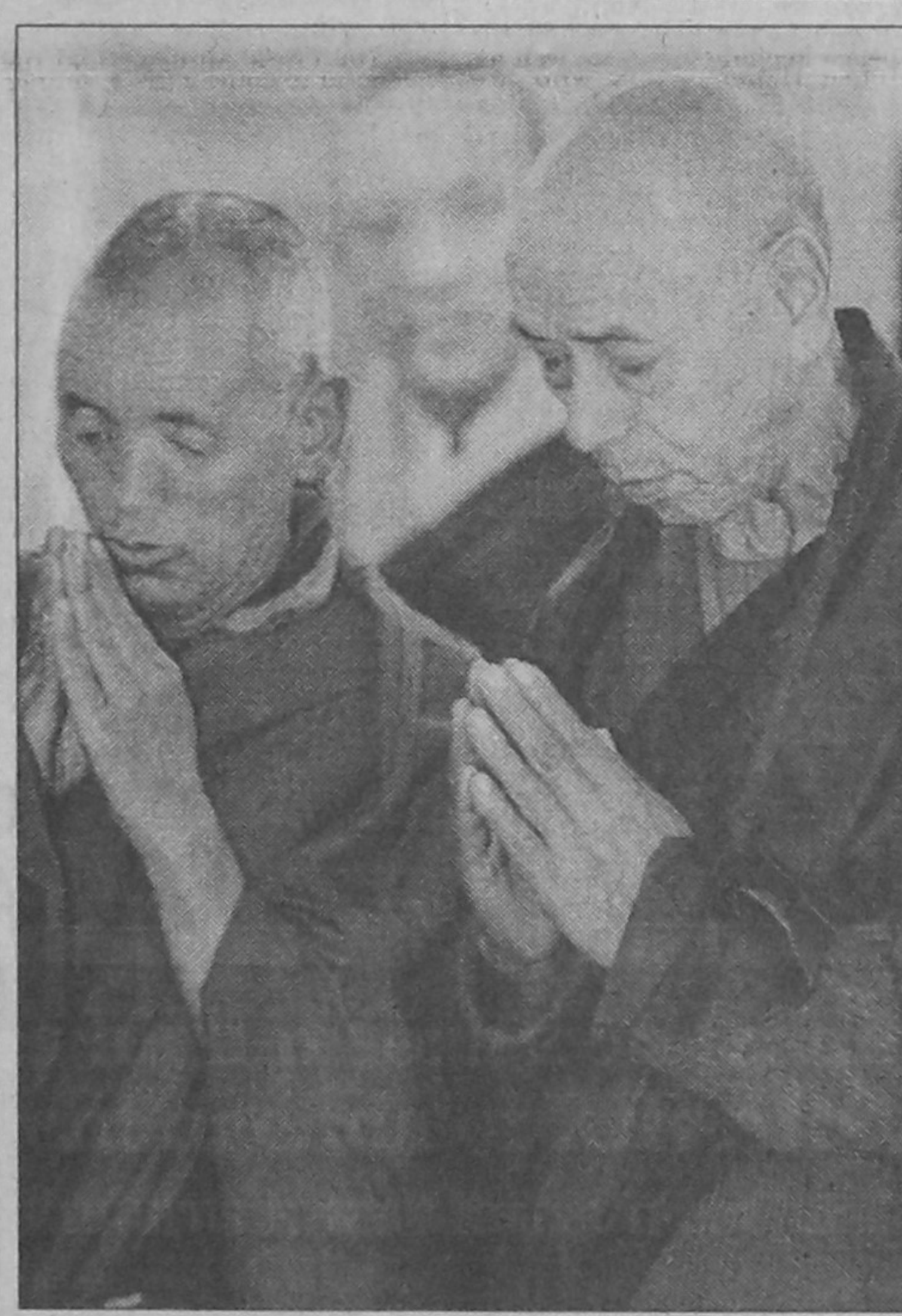
Apollo Hospitals Group of India, one of the largest health care provider in South Asia, will manage the Hospital.

Social Welfare Alumni Assoc reunion

The annual reunion of former students of the Institute of Social Welfare and Research of the Dhaka University will be held on February 18 at Ramna Restaurant in the city.

All the former students along with their spouses and children have been invited to join the annual gathering.

Interested alumni of the institute are requested to confirm their bookings by February 10. For details, contact Abdus Shahid Mahmood, General Secretary, Social Welfare Alumni Association. (Phone: 9116184 and 9121679) or ASM Atkur Rahman, Associate Professor (Phone: 8612792).



Tibetan Buddhist monks perform a prayer during a function yesterday in New Delhi to welcome the 17th Karmapa, Ugyen Trinley Dorje (background photo), who arrived in India on January 5 after fleeing Tibet. The Dalai Lama has urged the Indian government to allow the 14-year-old Karmapa Lama to stay in India. — AFP photo

War time atrocities haunt Japan in new century

TOKYO, Jan 24: The spectre of war-time atrocities threatens to haunt Japan well into the new century, analysts said today, after denials of the Nanjing massacre triggered fury in China, reports AFP.

China delivered a verbal onslaught against Japan after a nationalist forum in Osaka on Sunday which was addressed by an academic who disputes whether the 1937 massacre by Japanese troops took place.

"Unless Japan faces the facts of the past and acts sincerely to victims, it will never see a real thaw between Japan and its neighbours," said Tokyo's Hitotsubashi University Asian history professor Hiroshi Tanaka.

Since Japan has failed to take full responsibility for its war conduct, it still has a bill to pay in hand," said Tanaka.

About 250 people turned up at the Osaka International Peace Centre in western Japan on Sunday for a symposium entitled: "The Verification of the Rape of Nanjing: The Biggest Lie of the 20th Century."

There, they heard Shuzo Higashinaka insist that "there is

no proof of large-scale rape and murder by the Japanese army when it entered Nanjing in December 1937."

Higashinaka claimed the toll was "certainly not the 200,000 or 300,000 figure mentioned in Japanese textbooks or by Chinese and Western historians," according to the Japan Times.

Analysts said such statements only prolonged the friction between Japan and its former enemies in Asia.

"I hope progress will be made step by step, but we cannot be optimistic, considering the current situation such as the conference on Sunday," said Tanaka of Hitotsubashi University.

"There is a wide gap between Japanese people and Asian people over the past war. Some Japanese easily say there was no Nanjing massacre, but how would they feel if someone said there was no atomic bombing in Hiroshima?"

Lankan air chief calls on president

Air Marshal J Weerakkody, Commander of Sri Lanka Air Force, paid a courtesy call on President Justice Shabubuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban, reports BSS.

Welcoming the distinguished guest, President Shabubuddin Ahmed who is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, said that the existing bond of cooperation between the two countries specially in the field of training of Armed Forces personnel will continue to grow.

He also conveyed, through the commander of Sri Lanka Air Force, his good wishes to President Chandrika Kumaratunga Bandemayake.

Air Marshal Weerakkody expressed his gratitude to the honourable president for the nice hospitality, accorded to him during his visit here.

Chief of Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed and Secretary to the President Mohammad Ismail Hossain were present.

Earlier, the Sri Lanka Air Force Commander visited the Shikha Anirban (the Eternal Flame) at the Dhaka Cantonment. He placed a floral wreath at the memorable and paid homage to the members of the armed forces martyred during the war of liberation in 1971.

Business house employee robbed

By Staff Correspondent

A gang of muggers robbed an employee of a business house of Tk 2,500, a cell phone, a wrist watch and other valuables from near the Kakrail church in the city yesterday.

The victim was identified as Shah Alam Chowdhury, an assistant manager of Azim Group. The incident took place at about 7 pm when he was returning to his Farm Gate residence from his Kakrail office by an autorickshaw.

As the vehicle reached the Kakrail church, the driver stopped it on the pretext of cleaning the plug, police said quoting a FIR.

Suddenly three people appeared on the scene and got inside the vehicle. They also asked the driver to drive on, witnesses said.

The muggers then rubbed a liquid substance on the passenger's eyes and snatched the valuables from him.

When the autorickshaw reached near the over-bridge in Ramna Park area, the gang pushed him down and sped away.

Queens University students' protest continues

By Staff Correspondent

Students of Queens University brought out a procession in Gulshan and Banani areas in the city yesterday to press their 21-point demand which included stopping conspiracy to oust Vice-Chancellor.

The students are agitating under the banner of "Queens University Chhatra Sangram Parishad". They vowed to continue their movement until a Vice-Chancellor approved by the President is appointed.

The students alleged that the chairperson of the university was trying to assume absolute control over the administration.

Freedom fighter Hiron dead

KHULNA, Jan 24: Mahbubul Alam Hiron, a freedom fighter and local Awami League leader, died of cardiac arrest here Sunday night, reports UNB.

Hiron was also the general secretary of Mongla Port Users Coordination Committee.

He fell sick after his dinner and was immediately taken to a clinic. He died there at about 9.30 pm.

Several hundred people rushed to his house on hearing the death news. Leaders of different political parties and businessmen of the port city have expressed deep shock at his death.

Political advisor to the Prime Minister Dr SA Malek in a condolence message expressed shock at the death of Hiron. He conveyed his sympathy to the bereaved family members and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

The namaj-e-janaza of Hiron was held at the Circuit House premises after Asr prayers. He was later buried at Tufpara graveyard.

Obituary

Mohammad Abdul Matin, an educationist, died of a cardiac arrest in the United States recently. He was 52, reports BSS.

His body was flown in yesterday morning and his namaj-e-janaza held at Tikutuly Mosque. He was later buried at his village home in Myemensingh.

He is survived by his wife, two daughters and a son.

Matin's kulkhuani will be held at 27/23 KM Das Lane, Tikutuly after Asr prayers on January 28.

Sufia Amin, an expatriate Bangladeshi singer in the USA died of cancer in Washington on Sunday. She was 60, reports BSS.

A well-known radio and television artist, Sufia was associated with a number of socio-cultural organisations. She left behind her husband, two daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

6 killed, 13 hurt in road accidents

At least six people were killed and 13 were injured in separate road accidents in Narsingdi, Gazipur and Chittagong yesterday, reports BSS.

Four people were killed and at least three others injured in a road accident yesterday morning at Moujal bus stand under Raipura thana on Dhaka-Gazipur highway in Narsingdi.

Police said the accident occurred when the driver of a Dhaka-bound passenger bus coming from Kishoregonj lost control of the vehicle and knocked down rickshaws standing on the road. Two rickshawpullers died on the spot and two passersby succumbed to their injuries on way to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital and DMCH.

The dead were identified as rickshawpullers Montaj Uddin, 55, and Afzar Uddin, 35, and passersby Joyanal Abedin, 60, and Billal Miah, 26.

The injured were admitted to Bhalraj Hospital.

The bodies were sent to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Another report from Gazipur adds, Ashfaq Hossain Chisti, Scientific Officer of Jessore Agriculture Research Centre,

was killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Gazipur road near Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI) yesterday.

Police said Chisti, 32, who came to take training at BARI, was killed when a speedy bus crushed him in front of the BARI while he was walking down the road.

The body of Chisti, the father of a minor girl, was sent to Gazipur Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

A case was filed at Gazipur Sadar Court in this connection. Meanwhile, one person was killed and ten others were injured, three of them seriously, when an overloaded jeep skidded off the road and plunged into a ditch at Khankhabad under Banskhali Thana, 30 miles off Chittagong yesterday.

Police sources said, the jeep was going to Bashirullah Mia Bazar from Tairdip Ferry Ghat. The accident occurred as the driver lost control over the vehicle.

Abu Taleb, 30, one of the passengers of the jeep, died on the spot. Three seriously injured people including a woman were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Exams: Students submit memo to DU VC

By DU Correspondent

A section of students of Dhaka University yesterday submitted a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor demanding cancellation of the examinations held on October 13 and 14 amid students' strike and holding of fresh examinations.

They also brought out a procession on the campus to press the demand.

Bangladesh Chhatra Federation (BCF), a left leaning student organisation also brought out a procession and held a rally on the campus in support of the demands.

Speakers at the rally also urged the university authorities to introduce a 'code of conduct' for students so, that incidents like assault on a woman during New Year's celebrations at TSC do not occur again.



Actress Sarah Jessica Parker reacts after winning a Golden Globe award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series-Comedy for her role in "Sex and the City" at the 57th Annual Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, California Sunday. — AFP photo

JS quorum

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galleries requesting the reporters to meet Treasury Bench Whip Mostafa Rashidi Suja at the Lobby No. 4. Only five reporters available at the two press galleries obliged.

Suja expressed dissatisfaction over newspaper reports about the quorum problem that was delaying the start of business these days.

"But delay in starting the business was there even when the BNP lawmakers were in the House. The record of getting late in business was even worse those days," said the Whip.

"We used to report those delays, too," quipped a reporter.

Suja then said the prime minister wanted a list of reporters present in the press galleries. When he got it, he offered the reporters tea and said the PM would talk to the reporters about the issue later. But the prime minister did not.

Legal Bill

From page 1

the House on January 31, 1999 and was later sent to the Standing Committee on the Law Ministry for scrutiny. The committee placed its recommendations on Sunday.

The House passed the bill unanimously with lawmakers of major opposition parties staying away from parliament. No member moved any motions for amendment or for soliciting public opinion to the bill.

Cricket

From page 1

Bangladesh, winners of the plate in South Africa two years ago, will start as obvious favourites, having won four matches in a row.

They defeated Holland, archrivals Kenya, Namibia and Test babes Zimbabwe to top Group One.

Israeli dealer implicated in illegal arms export to Iran

By DU Correspondent

TOKYO, Jan 24: An Israeli arms dealer has been implicated in the illegal export of RPG-7 anti-tank rocket launcher parts from Japan to Iran, a newspaper said here today, reports AFP.

The Japanese firm Sun Beam K.K., which allegedly exported the weapons, copied the sighting equipment from an Israeli model bought from an Israeli arms dealer, said Yomiuri Shimbun.

"Israeli authorities appear to be concerned that Iran, a potential threat to the country, obtained data on military equipment from an Israeli arms dealer via Japan," said the report, quoting an informed source.

Police declined to confirm the story. "We know there is such a report, but we cannot comment on the case now," a Tokyo metropolitan police spokesman said.

Emajuddin

From page 1

was charged in the case filed by the Bureau of Anti Corruption in September last year. The Special Court Judge, Fazlul Karim, fixed February 28 for cross examination of prosecution witnesses.

When the charges were framed in the court, Prof Ahmed was present on the dock.

The court did not pass any order regarding the charge framed against him for misuse of money, which said Prof Ahmed had spent Tk 18,216 unlawfully during his visits to Canada and Sri Lanka.

The court, however, did not accept the charges against Prof Ahmed regarding 'abuse of power'.

The prosecution also proposed framing of charges against Prof Ahmed for unlawfully appointing his son in law ASM Atkur Rahman as an Associate Professor at the university. The court turned down the proposal.

Food output

From page 1

ticularly after the devastating floods in 1998 which forced import of 3.46 million tonnes of food grains by the private sector, besides the public sector.

Food Ministry officials said last year's Boro production was very high because of extensive cultivation as farmers tried to recover flood losses. Agriculture Ministry officials told The Daily Star that the total area of Boro cultivation this year will remain around last year's.

Biswa Ijtema

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devotees. Extra beds would be arranged at the Tongi hospital and a number of medical camps would be set up at the Ijtema venue. Besides, mobile medical teams would operate.

The Ijtema will end on January 31 with akheri munajat.

Cabinet

From page 1

in the FIR. As a result, even innocent aged relatives of the prime accused do not get bail before the investigation is over. The proposed change will relieve such people from undue