

News

What's on today

GUP seminar: Gono Unnayan Prochesta (GUP) will hold a seminar on "Soybean 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 two-day long Rabindra Sangeet Festival. On the first day today 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 6:42 pm 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 Sylhet 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:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
Dhaka	27.0	60
Chittagong	28.2	75
Rajshahi	21.0	88
Khulna	26.7	54
Barisal	26.5	77
Sylhet	25.2	73
Cox's Bazar	28.2	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's Repression Prevention Act.

Fire at Bata factory: 14 injured

By Staff Correspondent

A big fire at Bata shoe factory in Tongi partially damaged its chemical section yesterday afternoon.

The medical section of the factory said 14 people were given first aid after the incident. Of them three were injured seriously and they might be admitted to hospital. But the factory officials said there was no injury.

Some fire brigade personnel also received burn injuries while dousing the fire.

Witnesses said the fire originated after sparks from a welding machine being used for repairing the factory wall fell on the pile of sacks containing sensitive chemicals.

It immediately spread to the factory wall and other areas. Several hundred panicky factory employees started running every directions for an escape.

A large section of the factory walls and roofs were burnt to ashes.

The damage could not be assessed immediately. Bata officials who were present during the fire refused to make any comment about losses of the factory.

Electrician shot in city

By Staff Correspondent

An electrician was shot by muggers while he was working in an under-construction building at Sonargaon Road in Dhamondi area in the city yesterday.

The victim was identified as Lablu, 22, son of Belal Matobbar.

The incident took place at about 3 pm. The gang opened fire indiscriminately when contractor Mahbub refused to pay them. Lablu sustained bullet injuries in his head. He was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

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 Keishabpur thana tomorrow.

Education 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 Hadiuzzaman, 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.

Vanki 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.

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 Ramma 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 Atikur Rahman, Associate Professor (Phone: 8612792).

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.

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.

Social Welfare Alumni Assoc reunion

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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 "highly successful" and 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.

The association has two other organs, the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORB) 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 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.

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.

Replies 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.

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Lankan air chief calls on president

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

Welcoming the distinguished guest, President Shahabuddin 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 Bandaranayake.

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 Antranik (the Eternal Flame) at the Dhaka Cantonment. He placed a floral wreath at the memorial 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 Kakrakhil 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 Kakrakhil office by an autorickshaw.

As the vehicle reached the Kakrakhil church, the driver stopped it on the pretext of cleaning the plug, police said quoting 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-bride 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 the 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 Parisad". 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 business men 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 namaz-e-Janaza of Hiron was held at the Circuit House premises after Asr prayers. He was later buried at Tuptara 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 namaz-e-Janaza held at Tiktakul Mosque. He was later buried at his village home in Mymensingh.

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

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

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?

Japan's wartime actions in China have been a constant source of friction between the two countries.

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.

Unless Japan faces reality, it will never see a real thaw between Japan and its neighbours," said Tokyo's Hitotsubashi University 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.