

What's on today....

Photography exhibition: Institute of Fine Arts (IFA) of Dhaka University in association with Japanese Embassy in Bangladesh will organise a photo exhibition by Kijuro Yahagi, a Japanese photographer. Venue: Zainul Gallery, IFA. Time: 10:00 am.

Nat'l Rabindra Sangeet Festival: A reception will be accorded to dance director Rahija Khanam on the 3rd day of the 11th National Rabindra Sangeet Festival. Organiser: Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha. It will be followed by a cultural show. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium. Time: 6:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Nat'l Rabindra Sangeet Festival: A reception will be accorded to Ustad Akhtar Sadmani on the last day of the 11th National Rabindra Sangeet Festival. Organiser: Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha. It will be followed by a cultural show. 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 Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country in next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

According to Met Office, night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 29.9 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and the lowest of 9.4 degrees at Srirangal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:42 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:41 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	27.2	15.1	57	44
Chittagong	28.8	15.0	77	66
Rajshahi	27.3	11.9	84	60
Khulna	29.0	12.4	72	—
Barisal	28.5	12.0	79	—
Sylhet	26.8	13.5	79	50
Cox's Bazar	29.9	16.2	73	60

HERE and THERE

NSU

North South University (NSU) welcomed the freshmen of MBA programme of spring semester 2000 at its campus on Wednesday, says a press release.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof Hafiz G A Siddiqi said NSU School of Business is committed to increasing the supply of high skilled professionals in the country by providing a world-class MBA programmes. The programme is designed to serve the national and international market, he said.

NSU Foundation Chairman M A Kashem attended the orientation programme as chief guest.

Dr Shamsul Haque, Director MBA Programme introduced the faculty members to the students.

Workshop on 'Gender & Electronic Media'

The Policy Leadership and Advocacy Project of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs organised a workshop on Gender and Electronic Media yesterday, says a press release.

The State Minister for the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Professor Zinnatun Nessa Talukdar was the chief guest at the meeting chaired by Secretary Prof Tahmina Chowdhury.

Expressing the importance of the electronic media the State Minister said that the electronic media could play a vital role to raise consciousness of people in relation to oppression of women.

The Secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs urged for a comprehensive broadcasting policy to ensure gender sensitivity for radio and television. She expressed the need to communicate mes-

sages of mainstreaming gender equality in regular programmes of the electronic media. It will enhance our struggle for women development, she added.

The four papers presented at the workshop were Women and Television, Women and Radio, Women and Advertisement and Mass media and core group exercises by Mohammad Jahangir, Iskender Ali, Dr Getlaria Nasrin and Maleka Begum respectively.

In the open discussion participants were asked for creative and practical help towards mainstreaming gender equality.

BCSIR seminar

A seminar on Korean Experience in Science and Technology Development was held in the seminar room of the Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST), BCSIR yesterday, says a press release.

Woo Geun Song from ESCAP, Bangkok delivered a lecture at the seminar attended by Minister for Science and Technology Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan PSC (Retd) and Dr Md Moshuzaman, Chairman BCSIR. Scientists and technologists from different research institutions including BCSIR took part in the seminar.

Song in his paper said that two main factors worked behind development of science and technology in Korea. One is venture capital supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology, and the other is incubator. He said that Korean government spends 5 per cent of GDP for the development of the sector.

In his speech, the Minister for Science and Technology urged the scientists to develop process for application in the industries.

Govt clarifies

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prove various terms and conditions of the services and living standard of the registered private primary teachers.

The statement made it very clear that the government would continue to support the primary teachers so that they could render their professional responsibilities properly.

The government hoped that the teachers would try to understand the positive steps of the government taken for their welfare and would not be influenced or confused by any irrational advice.

The statement said previously the registered private primary school teachers used to get government grant of Tk 525 at the rate of 50 per cent, Tk 615 at the rate of 62 per cent and Tk 745 at the rate of 71 per cent of the pay in the scale of Tk 1050 (fixed).

It said as per the National Pay Scale 1997 and incremental pay of the government primary school teachers, the government grant portion has also been enhanced proportionately for the registered private primary school teachers.

It said since July, 1997 they receive Tk 812.50, Tk 1007.50 and Tk 1153.75 respectively.

The statement pointed out that as per the commitment of

the Prime Minister, the grant rates were enhanced again from 50 per cent to 60 per cent, from 62 per cent to 70 per cent and from 71 per cent to 80 per cent since July 1999.

Accordingly, a teacher now gets per month a grant at the rate of Tk 975, Tk 1137.50 and Tk 1300 respectively in the scale of Tk 1625 (fixed), the statement said, adding that grants were transferred to the accounts of the teachers through four commercial banks with the approval of the Thana Education Officer.

It pointed out that those teachers used to get only Tk 500 per month as grant from January 1, 1991 to December 1994. The government, it said, has to spend about Tk 28 crore annually because of the enhancement of the grants while expenditure was about Tk 96 crore in fiscal 1998-99 for the registered private primary school. A total of Tk 125 crore has been earmarked for this head in the current fiscal, it added.

The statement said, at the directives of the prime minister, the age bar of 45 years to enroll in the Certificate-in-Education at Primary Training Institute was raised to 50 years.

The government has taken different measures including creation of a welfare trust and recruitment of additional teachers.

The statement said all those measures reflected the total sympathy of the government towards registered private primary school teachers.

It observed that if on the basis of only the demands or the movement, and without any post, thousands were given appointments in government service without any competitive examination, then the appointment system in the country would collapse and it would show disrespect to the transparent appointment process.

Kishoreganj comes under digital phone network Sunday

All analogue telephones of Kishoreganj district will be converted into digital telephones on Sunday with the installation of digital telephone exchange, reports UNB.

The 1200-line digital exchange goes into operation at zero hour Sunday, said a press release yesterday.

After the conversion, all three-digit telephone numbers of the district will be turned into five-digit number by beginning with '55' before the old number. For example, the old number '300 will now be 55300'.

BFUW general meeting today

The general committee meeting of Bangladesh Federation of University Women (BFUW) will be held at the Business and Professional Women Club auditorium at New Bailey Rd at 3:30 pm today.

The date of the meeting was inadvertently published as Thursday in the yesterday's issue of the newspaper. The error is regretted.

Agitating QU students go on hunger strike

By DU Correspondent

The agitating students of Queens University (QU) started a fast-unto-death programme on the campus yesterday to press for their 21-point demand which including appointment of a vice-chancellor on President's recommendation.

The students under the banner of 'Queens University Chhatra Sangram Parishad' have been agitating on the campus for the last few days to protest against "irregularities and corruption" at QU.

The students vowed to continue their agitation until their demands are met, said a press release.

One crushed to death in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, Jan 27: A female NGO worker was crushed under the wheels of a truck at Kakoshia in Sadar thana here today, reports UNB.

Hospital sources said Rina Dutta, 35, field worker of Coordinated Family Development Programme, was hit by a speeding truck from behind while she was crossing road at about 2:30 pm.

She was first taken to a local hospital and succumbed to her injuries on way to Dhaka.



Model Watch presents a fashion show at Sonargaon Hotel in the city. The event was held yesterday as part of Dhaka International Leather Fair 2000. —Star photo

SA lift plate

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ended in the 33rd over, leaving Bangladesh at 113 for seven.

Mahfuz Kabir was the other double-digit scorer with 14. Although the batting never came to grips with the situation, the bowling, spearheaded by left-arm seamer Bikash Ranjan Das, did a commendable job in containing the South Africans to a reasonable total after the eventual champions won the toss.

Bikash, who bowled well throughout the tournament, captured three wickets giving away 43 runs in his 10 overs. Leg-spinner Mosaddek Hossain, who also had a happy hunting in the competition, took two for 39.

South African opener Smith laid the foundations of a fighting total with a power-packed 51 off only 62 balls punctuated with half a dozen fours. Trott with patient 80-ball 41 was the other notable run-getter.

With this win South Africa emerged as unbeaten champions. For Bangladesh it was their second defeat in the meet. The lost to India in their opening match of the 16-team meet, that eventually denied them a place in the eight-team Cup race.

Colombo blast kills 10

COLOMBO, Jan 27: A powerful parcel bomb ripped through a post office in northern Sri Lanka today, killing 10 people and wounding more than 70 others, including several policemen and soldiers, military officials said, reports AFP.

The blast, triggered by a timing device, destroyed the post office located opposite the police station in the town of Vavuniya, 160 miles (260 kilometres) north of Colombo, officials said.

They said three soldiers and a constable were among those killed while another 20 security personnel among those who were wounded in the bomb attack during the morning rush hour.

The security personnel were at the post office to send money to their homes in the south of the country after having just received their monthly pay packets, officials said.

The victims were rushed to the main hospital in Vavuniya and several were transferred to a health facility at the town of Anuradhapura, further south, doctors said adding that 30 people were critically wounded.

Two tough laws

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ers feel that law and order could not be maintained without such a law as the Opposition was trying to create anarchy in the name of agitation.

The BNP government enacted a similar law called Anti-Terrorism Act for two years in 1993. But the public safety act, which the AL is likely to pass during the current session of Parliament, has no such time frame.

Besides Nasim, Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru placed another important bill seeking replacement of the Woman and Child Repression (Prevention) Act, 1995, which had long been discussed.

Both the bills were sent to the parliamentary standing committees on respective ministries for scrutiny. The committees have been asked to report back to the House at the earliest possible time, against the usual two-weeks time.

Introduction of the two bills was not there on the Order of the Day. Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury granted special permissions sought by both the ministers.

Placing government bills on the Private Members' Day yesterday was also a departure from the usual practice in the House, as bills and resolutions moved by non-minister MPs are generally dealt with on that day.

The bill provides for the setting up of a one-member special tribunal for trial of the accused. Judicial department officials of the rank of a district judge will head such tribunals, each for one or more districts.

According to the bill, trial within a case should be completed within 90 days from the date of preparation of a case. If the trial is not completed within the stipulated time, the trial period would be extended by 30 days. But the judge should record the reasons for such a delay in the proceedings.

Hearing in a case will go on non-stop, but it can be adjourned for a maximum period of 15 days for the sake of justice.

All offences under the proposed law are non-bailable, but the tribunal will enjoy the authority to grant bail to an accused, provided the trial is not completed within the stipulated 90 days.

In such a case, the tribunal will suspend trial and send a reference to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in the next 15 days, citing reasons for non-completion of the trial. The Appellate Division will then order resumption of trial, which should be completed in another 90 days.

Lawyer of a plaintiff will be deemed as the public prosecutor. Investigation into a case should be completed in 30 days from the day of gathering information about the crime or from the day of the magistrate's order for investigation. However, the tribunal will have the

authority to grant a maximum time of 15 days, provided the investigating officer can convince the court about the closure of extension.

Unlike other courts, the tribunal will accept audio and video records and still pictures as evidences in the process of trial.

The convicts shall have the right to move for appeal in the Appellate Division of the High Court against the verdict or any other order of the special tribunal.

Piloting the bill, the home minister said that the existing laws were not adequate to deal with certain serious crimes like extortion, hijacking, bomb hurling and snatching of tender papers which have become a social menace.

Adequate legal provisions to free the society from such crimes had been a long-felt demand of the peace-loving people, he said, inviting the Opposition lawmakers, especially those of BNP, to return to the House and put forward their valuable suggestions to such an important bill.

Objective of the bill said that the existing laws in the country were not adequate to curb the aforesaid crimes of serious nature. Besides, it added, such crimes were not clearly defined in any of the existing laws, which was creating various complications in the legal procedures.

As a result, it said, criminals arrested on charge of such crimes used to get released through the loopholes of the existing laws. Moreover, the existing judicial procedures take a long time and involve huge expenditure to dispose off such cases, it added.

"It has become a need of the hour to enact laws to ensure quicker disposition of trials of criminals, accused in such crimes, disrupting peace in the public life, and also for improvement of law and order in the country."

The proposed law will not be applicable for any of the listed crimes committed before it is enacted. The law will come into effect from the date the government decides through a gazette notification.

Tangail comes under digital phone service

TANGAIL, Jan 27: A 3100-line Auto-digital Telephone Exchange started its functioning in Tangail today, reports BSS.

Of the lines, 3000 are for Tangail town and the other 100 lines for local loop for mobile telephones outside Tangail town, officials sources said.

With the onset of the new digital telephone system, the line will now be operated in five digits by using '5' at the beginning of previous four digit numbers.

Leather fair

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lengthy process of judicial delivery.

She hoped the new law, if enacted, would protect human rights and ensure public security, a commitment of her government.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, Industries Minister Toifal Ahmed and Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil also spoke on the occasion.

Some 65 companies, 25 from abroad, are participating in the fair. Last year, only 13 foreign companies took part in the fair.

Bangladesh Finished Leather, Leathergoods and Footwear Exporters' Association (BFLFEA) and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) have jointly organised the fair.

Tannery sector fetched 165 million US dollars in 1998-99 fiscal year and is expected to earn 200 million this fiscal.

The Prime Minister recalled the state of economy she inherited three and a half years ago and mentioned her government efforts to set order and put impetus in all areas of the economy, which she said is now on a steady growth track.

She said her government recognised the private sector as the main engine of growth and offered very attractive incentives for promotion of investment and export in private sector.

She mentioned the steps already taken by her government to modernise the infrastructure of tannery industry. She cited Tk 33 crore project for renovation of Leather Technology College and Tk 8 crore project for Tannery Research Institute.

The Prime Minister called upon the tanners and exporters, especially footwear exporters, to be very careful about quality of products to compete with other exporting countries and uphold country's image abroad.

She assured the tanners of giving due consideration to the recommendations put forward by a committee to the government recently for improvement of the sector.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria said the government would consider implementation of eight-point recommendations sent to his ministry by a committee headed by a deputy governor of the central bank. He said step would also be taken to implement the budgetary pledge for 10 per cent export incentives for tannery industry.

Power policy

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on the ground that the government would chalk out every year a power sector policy statement which would clearly show the government's direction in the future.

The policy statement is now coming up as a result of the donors' pressure, one source pointed out.

Raw deal

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pany Roche marketing anti-cancer drugs in the country faces similar problem.

The company's Product Officer Md Rahatuzaman said, "We are the sole distributor of Roseron-A, a pre-filled liquid in syringe used in treating chronic blood cancer. The drug is very sensitive to temperature variation."

Recently, we found that the demand for our product was falling drastically and that a look alike smuggled version of Roseron-A was available at cheaper rates. Due to this problem, we decided to stop promoting Rocalor, our product for treating bone cancer."

Glaxowell's Product Manager Md Ismat made similar allegations.

The pharmaceutical companies made written complaints to the Drug Administration (DA) sources concerned said. "We made several complaints to DA, but no action has been taken as yet in this regard," said a senior official of Roche.

When contacted, Director-in-charge of the DA Dr M A Malek denied getting any written allegations and said, "We take action whenever we get specific allegations."

He, however, spoke of DA's limitation in raiding drug stores. "Our drug supervisors face a lot of risk, so it is not possible to raid the stores all the time."

He further said, "I have written to the Inspector General of police proposing joint raids, but I am yet to get any response."

About allegations of bribe taken by drug supervisors, he said, "I have not come across any such allegations."

APAC city unit

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ing sources said. The list with more members than suggested in the guidelines has been prepared to accommodate all opposition parties agitating against the government and to have a stronger committee, one source added.

Composition of the proposed 151-member body is: A convener from BNP and three joint convenors from JP, Jamaat and IOL. Seventy-five members from BNP, 25 from JP, 18 from Jamaat, 15 from IOL, 10 from some smaller parties and eight MPs.

The list would now be placed before BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for her approval.

Open University

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should also get their higher education there, since the traditional system still can't accept students from non-conventional educational institutions, he said.

An official with the Ministry of Education said a committee is examining the standard of Open University's SSCs and HSCs. However, he refused to say when the committee would submit its report.

'UN helped tame Timor trouble'

By Staff Correspondent

Participants at a discussion yesterday observed that the human rights violation by the Indonesian army in East Timor had declined due to speedy intervention by the United Nations.

They pointed out that internal as well as external factors influenced the internal community to take immediate steps for restoration of people's rights in the former Dutch and Portuguese colony.

Held at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), the discussion 'Lessons from the East Timor' was addressed by special representative of the UN Secretary General in East Timor and former secretary general of the Amnesty International Ian Martin as the principal speaker.

Presided over by CPD chairman Professor Rehman Sobhan, the discussion was participated, among others, by former ambassador Mohammad Mohsin, Waliur Rahman, Farooq Sobhan, Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Devis Priston, former UNHCR Director Shamsul Bari, Zeaul Haque, Kamal Uddin and Khushi Kabir.

Giving an account of the developments in East Timor, Martin said that the annexation of East Timor by the Indonesian rulers in 1975 did not get international recognition.

He said new possibility began after the fall of Suharto when President Habibie made an announcement of two options — independence or autonomy — for the East Timorese.

About the future of East Timor, the special UN representative said he was not pessimistic about the relationship with Indonesia.

"It is a gradual process... it will depend on the ongoing transitional period," he added.

Replying to a question of other discussants, he said, the militiamen had no potential for further destabilisation of the situation in East Timor.

Referring to recent past history briefly, Ambassador Mohsin said Indonesia did not annex East Timor. Rather, it was the colonial Portuguese who left East Timor.

Indonesia took over East Timor as and when the Portuguese left it. Indonesia made some development activities there too, he added.

Ambassador Waliur Rahman said although Indonesia patronised violence in East Timor, Habibie should be credited for his bold step.

Shamsul Bari observed that East Timor got more attention of the international community as the cold-war was over and there was no more martial law in Indonesia.

Book Fair

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tionists and Literateurs of the country will also be present. Bangladesh Television will telecast the inaugural function live from the venue.

The Ekushey Book Fair which became a national event was first organised in 1972 as an expression of cultural renaissance. But it is only in 1978 that the fair got official patronisation. Since then the Bangla Academy has been organising the book fair on the premises every year.

Bangla Academy authorities have taken up special measures this year to maintain discipline and keep the fair free from noise. "No stalls of food or cassette will be allowed inside the fair as they create an unbearable chaos with loud speakers to woo customers," an official of the Academy said.

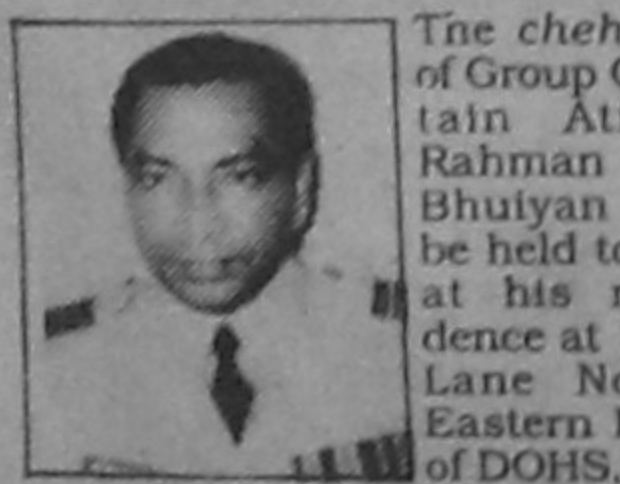
No pollution inside the fair will also be dealt with very strictly," he said adding action will be taken if any stall is found creating noise.

Mobile food shops however will be allowed beside the Suhrawardy Park opposite the Bangla Academy.

Arrangements will be made to close the road in front of the Academy free of congestion. No stalls will be allowed there," he added.

A web site will be launched for the first time this year, putting information and details of the fair on the Internet. A huge digital screen will be set up in front of the information Centre to keep visitors abreast with the events, the sources said.

Chehlum



The chehlum of Group Captain Atiqur Rahman Bhuiyan will be held today at his residence at 180, Lane No 2, Eastern Road, Dhaka.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at 4 pm.

BNP vows to block passage

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fallen victim of the Special Powers Act 1974.

He said the AL was vocal against the SPA while in opposition for long 21 years and pledged to repeal it along with separating the judiciary from the executive if and when it came to power.

But the Prime Minister, within six months of assuming power had declined to abolish the SPA, let alone doing anything about the separation of the judiciary. Instead, it is now going to introduce another black law to make their power permanent through suppressing the opposition.

He said Sheikh Mujib had introduced the SPA and BKSAL system, but could not stay in power as the people rose against it. Similarly, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif introduced the anti-terrorism law, but he has now become a victim of the same law.

Bhuiyan said it is quite possible to curb all sorts of terrorism, mugging, hijacking and other criminal activities if the existing laws are properly and neutrally executed.

He observed that the deteriorating law and order situation can be reversed if the ruling party's terrorists are arrested and if the police are allowed to discharge their duties without any interference.

"Who have lost loose terrorism at Feni, Laxmipur, Barisal and Narayanganj? Who are snatching away tenders? Who are resorting to terrorism within the Dhaka City Corporation? Who are involved in toll extortion? Who