

What's on today.....

BAIRA AGM: Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) will hold its 15th annual general meeting. Venue: Winter Garden of Hotel Sheraton. Time: 11 am.

Open discussion: Bangladesh Anti-Drug Federation of NGOs will inaugurate the South East Asian Anti Drug Flame and will hold an open discussion. Venue: Dhaka University premises. Time: 4 pm.

BCPS lectures: Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons will hold two lectures on "Surgery for SAARC countries" and "Rheumatological Emergencies." Venue: BCPS auditorium, Mohakhali. Time: 11:00 am and 12:10 pm.

Discussion meeting: Court Reporters Association will hold a discussion meeting on "Human Rights and Court Reporting." Venue: Dhaka Bar Association auditorium. Time: 3:30 pm.

Roundtable discussion: Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) will hold a roundtable discussion on "What Next After the International Conference on Bangladesh Environment" (ICBEN). Venue: BUP auditorium, House No 33, Road No 4, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 4 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Premiere of Bihanga: The Premiere of 'Bihanga', a feature film produced by the Centre for Rehabilitation of Paralyzed (CRP) and directed by Abdullah Al Mamun, will be held. Chief guest: State Minister for Planning Dr Mubshir Khan Alamgir. Venue: House No: 8, Road No: 62, Gulshan. Time: 6 pm.

Weather

Dry weather likely

Weather may remain mainly dry over the country in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions and the river basins of the country during night/morning, Met office said.

Night temperature may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country in next 12 hours and further in next two days.

The country's highest temperature 29.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and the lowest 12.7 degree Celsius at Rajshahi.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5.49 pm and rises on Thursday at 6.36 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	25.3	17.0	78	47
Chittagong	27.5	16.2	90	72
Rajshahi	25.0	12.7	95	60
Khulna	27.0	16.6	86	63
Barisal	27.0	16.4	83	77
Sylhet	26.7	15.8	88	58
Cox's Bazar	29.3	16.8	68	72

President urged

From page 1
all opposition parties, professional bodies, human rights organisations and others have strongly protested the new law.

She also suggested the President to examine the PSA again and hoped that he would not assent to it. "You were a judge and held the highest post in the judiciary".

Quoting press reports Khaleda Zia said that the President could not examine the PSA Bill because it was placed before him as Money Bill and his signature was taken hurriedly.

The government and the Speaker took his (President's) signature with an ill-motive.

The Leader of the Opposition urged the ruling Awami League to scrap the Act immediately and resign from it. "If you (AL) do so, we will not call hartal, barricade and strike any more," she said.

The opposition will start non-cooperation movement along with hartal and barricade if the government starts implementation of the PSA, she warned.

The BNP Chairperson said immediate resignation of the AL government is the only option to restore peace, stability and ensure security of the people and the country.

"Law and order situation will improve overnight if this

Massive security

From page 1

ing the operation would not mention the specific timing of the crackdown but said that massive hunt for criminals may begin sometime next month.

Some other officials, however, said that the operation in the capital would be similar to those carried out in the southern region of the country and would take off shortly after the Public Safety Act is gazetted. The strength of police in the city will be raised with additional staff from different areas of the country prior to the operation, said a source when his attention was drawn to the fact that it would be a very difficult job for the understaffed DMP.

Besides, the armed police Battalion may also be asked to come to the aid of the DMP during the crackdown, the sources said.

At present, the DMP has strength of about 16,800 people, the source said. About 4,000 people during the operation may increase the strength of police in the city, sources said.

The number of police auxiliaries deployed in the capital has already been raised, the sources said adding that the deployment may be further extended prior to the operation.

Termining Clinton's visit to the country as great honour for the people, an official said that the police and law enforcing personnel would have to make this tour a success from the security point of view.

Obituary

Azizul Islam Mukul, the former general secretary of Bangladesh Amateur Anglers Association died on February 7 in the morning, says a press release.

The association condoled the death of its ex-secretary expressed deep sympathy for the members of his bereaved family.

Obituary

Azizul Islam Mukul, the former general secretary of Bangladesh Amateur Anglers Association died on February 7 in the morning, says a press release.

The association condoled the death of its ex-secretary expressed deep sympathy for the members of his bereaved family.

Obituary

Azizul Islam Mukul, the former general secretary of Bangladesh Amateur Anglers Association died on February 7 in the morning, says a press release.

The association condoled the death of its ex-secretary expressed deep sympathy for the members of his bereaved family.



Artistes of Kranti Shilpi Goshti presenting songs at a musical session organised by the Sammilito Sangskritik Jote yesterday at Central Shaheed Minar. — Star photo

Need for National Agriculture Policy underscored

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a seminar yesterday underscored the need for a National Agriculture Policy for development of the huge potentiality of the sector to make it vibrant for its contribution in the economy.

Experts said that there is a great potentiality for development of selected agro-based industries in the country by using agricultural raw materials including fish, vegetables, fruits, flowers in view of growing demand for such products in international market.

They were addressing a seminar titled "Development of high-value added and export oriented business sector: Agro-based industries" jointly organised by Dhaka Chambers of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) and Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), an organisation affiliated with the US Chamber of Commerce, Washington. Former DCCI President M H Rahman was in the chair.

Prof Salahuddin Ahmed of North South University (NSU) presented the key-note paper on the issue while president of DCCI Aftab-ul Islam spoke on the occasion as the chief guest.

Prof Salahuddin Ahmed in his key-note paper also discussed prevailing problems and remedies of the country's agro-based industries.

According to his paper there are over 7,500 rural primary assembly markets in the country most of which suffer from inadequate space, absence of basic facilities and amenities and lack of satisfactory transportation facilities.

He identified post harvest loss as one of the major obstacles in the sector.

The amount of post-harvest losses of fruits and vegetables has been reported to be between 5-25 per cent in developed countries and 20-50 per cent in developing countries," he said.

The post-harvest loss occurs, as developed countries are yet to develop appropriate technology to minimise it, he said.

He said: BARI is in an advantageous position to develop post-harvest technology while technological support may be

obtained from the Food Science & Technology.

He said it has wide backward and forward linkage and great export possibilities. There are 62 agro-processing units in the country registered with its apex body Bangladesh Agro-Processors Association (BAPA).

DCCI President Aftab-ul-Islam stressed for the need for research and development of the agro-based industries in the country and manpower engaged in this sector.

The DCCI president said the country needs to expand its export market of agro-based products. So we need to identify the market abroad and disseminate product information among non-Bangladeshis to attract their interest as agro-based products are still largely consumed by Bangladeshis working abroad.

He termed agriculture to be the biggest private sector operation in Bangladesh, which contributed 35 per cent in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

He said agro-based industries including fruits and veg-

etable processing and canning have been declared as thrust sectors in the Industrial Policy in 1999.

Speakers expressed concern over non-availability of foreign direct investment in the sector and said the sector needs foreign investment to grow rapidly.

Experts sought co-operation from the Board of Investment (BOI) and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) for its growth.

Discussions recommended are as follows: introduction of a national agriculture policy, development of manpower and suitable varieties, development of post harvest technology, research for development of the sector, incentives for development of food processing industries, waiving of import restrictions or import of duty free chemical and raw materials for the sector, establishment of new industries, strong collaboration between public and private sector, standardising packaging, separate cargo house at Zia International Airport to handle fresh products.



President of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) Aftab ul Islam speaking at a seminar on "High-Value-Added and Export Oriented Agro-based Industries" jointly organised by the DCCI and the DCCI-CIPE, ERRA Project yesterday at the DCCI auditorium. Session chairman and director, DCCI, M H Rahman, DCCI senior vice-president AM Mubash-Shar, vice-president Mohammad Golam Mustafa and keynote speaker Prof. Salahuddin Ahmad of North South University (NSU) also seen.

Chhaya Rani was delighted in getting opportunity to tell success story to queen Sophia

SREEPUR, Feb 8: Chhaya Rani was delighted in getting the opportunity of telling her success story to Queen of Spain Sophia, reports UNB.

Rani got the rare opportunity at a gathering of Grameen Bank stakeholders at the office of the Chinashu Kania Landless Women Association in Bhawal Rajbari branch of the bank.

Queen Sophia joined the gathering this morning (Tuesday) as the guest of the Grameen Bank chief Mohammad Yunus, the worldwide acclaimed micro-credit man.

Spanish Secretary of State for International Affairs Fernando Villalonga was also present at the gathering of the Grameen account holder women. The Queen is in Bangladesh on a three-day visit.

Narrating her story, Chhaya Rani told the Queen that she was Grameen Bank and its micro-credit programme that changed her life from a poor wife of poor husband to raise a well off family.

Her parents arranged matrimony at a very early age because they wanted to see their daughter getting two square meals. But, there was no change of luck at her husband's hut.

"Sixteen years back when I came to know Grameen activities I rushed. My husband gave me permission to join the activities of the Grameen Bank to form an association of distressed women of the area. Both of us were determined to work hard to improve our living condition."

Chhaya Rani borrowed Tk 2500 as her first loan from the bank and started the struggle to step forward. "I bought milking cow with the loan money. I used to save money selling milk and finance my husband doing small business side by side to return the loan out of profit."

Later she sold the cow and the calf at Tk 5000. She expanded her capital to Tk 10,000 adding another Tk 5000 borrowing from the bank. It took four years to pay back the loan. But by that time she took few other loans like general, seasonal and housing. Now she is on her 16th loan.

"Now I am owner of four small houses, one shop where I invested Tk one lakh and I have also bought some agricultural land. I have passed through a long time of serious hardship. Now, I am well off," said a proud Chhaya Rani.

Queen Sophia was impressed

by her story and cheered her with a long hand.

The Queen asked if she faced any problem Chhaya Rani replied, "Yes, I faced but I managed to overcome. Once I had to finance my husband's appendicitis operation that cost us about Tk 40,000."

Grameen Bank chief Prof Yunus also praised the struggling woman saying: "Over the 16 year period she borrowed about Tk 2.5 lakh and now she is owner of property worth over Tk 8 lakh."

Chhaya Rani is one of many women who took loans from the Grameen Bank and succeeded in improving their life style. Present among them at the function were Mahmuda, Joya Rani, Sahera Begum who also narrated their stories of success to the Queen.

Later, the Queen enjoyed a cultural function, performed by three groups of kids, the offspring of the Grameen stakeholders.

She also enjoyed a musical stick-up by a group of villagers, the husbands and sons of the Grameen Bank members.

Queen Sophia later visited nearby houses of the members of the Grameen Bank.



Visitors at the Ekushey Boi Mela at Bangla Academy premises yesterday. — Star photo

Rivals shoot Jubo League activist in city

By Staff Correspondent

A Jubo League activist was shot by his rivals at Noyatola under Ramna thana in the city on Monday night, hospital sources said.

Reserve police, deployed at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), and security men at the DMCH took injured Ripon and his accomplices into their custody when they refused to register name of the injured at the hospital. They created chaos at the emergency ward of the hospital, the sources added.

Ripon was released after about half an hour when former Jubo League leader Liakat and his group went to hospital and asked police to release Ripon.

Youngone

From page 1

one hour and cancelled the refreshment break. This means the workers are completely exhausted by the time they finish the seven-hour stretch between noon and 7 pm.

The workers also said the factory slows down at this time of year so the staff have been given Friday and Saturday off. However, this time counts against the staff's earned leave rather than their casual leave. This policy spoils the worker's sick and casual leave, said the workers.

The Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority has remained mysteriously silent on the issue, despite the workers' concerns.

DEOs

From page 1

referred the file to the Finance Division of the Finance Ministry in November 1998 with its recommendation. But it made an observation: It is the Finance Division that can make a decision on changing a pay-scale.

The file eventually went to the Cabinet Committee headed by the Finance Minister for approval.

Yesterday's meeting was attended by, among others, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Cabinet Secretary, Finance Secretary and the Secretary of the Election Commission Secretariat.

The association of the DEOs has, however, been demanding to upgrade the position to grade-V to which belong to the district level agriculture officers, livestock officers, fisheries officers, executive engineers (LEGED) and deputy directors (Education).

Tough fight

From page 1

week and handed over a letter from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to President Mohammad Khatami seeking support for Bangladesh's candidature.

From Iran, the foreign minister was due to visit Egypt. He is also expected to go to Indonesia and Malaysia to solicit their support.

One of the crucial aspects in the contest is the position of Morocco. Incumbent OIC Secretary General Azeddine Laraki is close to the royal family of Morocco. Laraki was nominated for the post by late King Hassan, who had used his influence to win the position for his country.

But neither Morocco nor Laraki has made any public announcement yet to contest again for the post.

There is provision for voting for the post of OIC Secretary General, but traditionally, voting is avoided and the decision is taken through a consensus. If OIC members insist on maintaining the tradition, it will be an easy sail for the incumbent secretary general to be re-elected for a second four-year term.

In another development, Foreign Minister of Morocco Mohammed Benaisa is due here on February 17 as a special envoy of King Mohammed VI. He will carry two letters, one for President Shahabuddin Ahmed and another for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

It is not known what the contents of the letters will be. But it cannot be ruled out that Morocco would not seek support for Laraki, the observers said.

If a consensus on the OIC Secretary General can not be reached during the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, the issue will be kept for the next OIC Summit, scheduled to be held in Qatar at the end of the year, said a senior diplomat who is acquainted with the working of the OIC.

Dhaka has to go for intensive diplomatic efforts to garner more "open support and official endorsement" by OIC members if it wants its candidate to win the race, the analysts feel.

US team

From page 1

cro-credit programme of Grameen Bank.

The team visited the Manik Mia Avenue, Trade Fair site and National Parade Square at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Bangladesh National Stadium and state guest house Jamuna at Hare Road.

The US President has a special interest in Grameen micro-credit operation which was copied in his own state in Arkansas.

The sites at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar including the sprawling Manik Mia Avenue and Bangladesh National Stadium are being considered for the site of a civic reception.

The team also visited Bangladesh and state guest house Jamuna. President Clinton is likely to stay at the guest house during his visit.

The team will leave Dhaka this morning and submit its report to the White House.

Seminar on Globalisation Policy shift a must to raise IT's share to GDP

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh to ensure its success in a globalised and competitive economy, requires a strategic shift in development focus to transform its agriculture based economy into Information Technology (IT) based one and thus dramatically increase IT's share to GDP.

This was the observation made public at a seminar yesterday on "Bangladesh's Participation in International Economy: Barriers and Strategic Actions" at CIDRAP auditorium.

Associate Professors of IBA Dr AFM Mafizul Islam and Sheikh Morshed Jahid jointly presented the keynote paper and suggested the political parties to find alternative to economically harmful programmes like hartal to sustain the country's fragile economy in tough global competition.

Focusing on the market share of the IT business of the developed and developing countries, one of the keynote speakers Mafizul Islam said, "Analysing the trend of international IT business, it is clear that in the next few years developing countries, situated mostly in Asia-Pacific region, will increase their market share substantially."

Quoting World Bank report he said developed countries covered 80 per cent of total IT business in 1990, the share came down to 76 per cent in 1995 and it would come down to 70 per cent in the year 2000.

If compared by market size, by the year 2000 developing countries will do business worth US\$ 255 billion in a global market of US\$ 850 billion," he said.

The speakers said that his was one of the sectors where

Bangladesh had an immense potentialities created by the globalisation. But lack of proper policy support, poor infrastructure facility and inadequate financial support had emerged as barriers for the country to grab its market share of the growing IT business.

They said though government had started considering steps recently to nurture this sector (IT) with 'enthusiasm', but there was hardly any practical outcome from such enthusiasm.

They suggested a change in human resource development approach — from traditional education to time-bound technical one — and a shift in policy makers' mindset from aid dependence to trade dependence to reap the benefit of globalisation.

Jointly organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA), the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) of Dhaka University and Embassy of the United States of America, the seminar was addressed by Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil as chief guest.

However, former finance minister Saifur Rahman, US ambassador John C Holzman and BILIA's honorary secretary Barrister Amirul Islam, who were scheduled to attend the seminar, did not turn up on personal ground.

Commerce Minister Jalil pointing to the various non-tariff barriers that are replacing a tariff barriers said the country need to equip itself with expertise and resources to tackle those problems and challenges.

Sajal's father in dark

From page 1

normally leads to disposal of the case.

Asked last night whether he knew that of the final report of Sajal murder case has been submitted, Shahidur Rahman, father of Sajal, said, "I have not been informed at all."

A sub-inspector of Dhanmondi thana filed a murder case with the same thana following the killing. In the FIR it was stated that Sajal was shot dead during a clash involving activists of BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and ruling Awami League near the Science Laboratory crossing.

Later, Shahidur Rahman filed a general diary (GD) a few days after the murder where he alleged that a gang of gunmen led by the MP shot his son dead.

A police official close to investigation, preferring anonymity, said police submitted the final report since there

was no witness and no evidence to support the allegation brought by Sajal's father.

Rahman, himself a lawyer, said, "Even after a year of the killing police failed to collect any witness or evidence against the culprits who killed my only son in front of so many people!"

"I doubt whether this democratic government can rule this way," he said.

Meanwhile, an elaborate programme has been taken to observe the first death anniversary of Sajal today by BNP and its front organizations and his family, family sources said.

BNP, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and other front organisations will bring out a mourning procession, offer *fateha* and place wreaths at the graveyard of Sajal.

A *milad mahfil* and *kangali bhoje* (desperate feeding) will also be held at the Dhanmondi residence of Sajal.

Mother Language Day

From page 1

Addressing the meeting, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called for observing the International Mother Language Day on February 21 at national and international level in a new perspective, projecting Bangladesh culture, heritage and the supreme sacrifice for the mother tongue.

She said the International Centre for Language, Culture and Research would be set up in Dhaka to preserve and develop around 6,000 mother tongues across the world.

With the declaration of the 21st February as the International Mother Language Day by UNESCO, she said, Bangladesh's responsibility has increased manifold to protect and preserve mother languages across the world.

Hasina said the International Mother Language Day would be observed not only in Bangladesh, but also across the world and the sacrifice of the heroic sons of Bangladesh for their mother tongue would be recalled like the historic May Day.

"The 21st February is a day of mourning as well as a day of joy," she said, adding that the great language movement of 1952 paved the way for Bangladesh's independence in 1971.

In Bangladesh, she said, the

day would be observed through extensive programmes at district, thana and union level.

Hasina said she had also instructed the ministries concerned to launch campaign abroad about the Bengali language through posters, booklets and CDs.

Education Minister ASHK Sadeq said the proposed international centre for language, culture and research would be set up in small size with domestic resource. The project profile of the centre was sent to the Planning Ministry, he said.

During the meeting, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzaq, Finance Minister SAM S Kibria and Minister Amir Hossain Amu, Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, Environment Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Language Movement hero Advocate Gaziul Huq, Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Dr AK Azad Chowdhury, Dr Anisuzzaman, Prof Rafiqul Islam, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Shamsuzzaman Sheikh, Amirul Islam, Far Rahman Riton, Md ammad Samad and BFUJ secretary general Akhtar Ahmed Khan made their suggestions.

The meeting decided to finalise the programme at the next meeting to be convened soon.

Hunger strike for whom?

From page 1

provision for holding quick trial of the offenders and assured that in no way it would be misused.

Hasina said provisions are there against filing of false case and negligence of police investigation officer. Besides, there is a provision for appeal against trial judgement.

"The law has been prepared in the interest of the country and of the people," she said, adding that people have started getting its positive impact as bomb-makers could not dare to manufacture bombs outside and turned party office into an arsenal for making the devices of destruction.

The Prime Minister said her government is the first democratic government outside the cantonment ever since the 1975 changeover was staged. "The civil society should now think whether this democracy would remain outside or be interned (in barracks) again."

Presided over by PIB chairman Halvadjudment, the function was also addressed by State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed, Information

Secretary M Akmal Hossain and Director General of PIB Dr Abdus Salam.

"We believe in the freedom of press, but freedom should not be taken as licence. It should be enjoyed with certain responsibility," she said.

Hasina said as mirror of a society, newspaper reports should be fair and objective and work as a catalyst for building society. She said any misleading and unfounded news could create a complicated situation, which does not bring good for a society.