

## What's on today.....

**Painting exhibition:** Saju Art Gallery begins a month-long exhibition of 150 local and foreign artists' works. Venue: Saju Art Gallery, DCC North Super Market, 2nd Circle, Gulshan. Time: 10.00 am-8.30 pm.

**Discussion meeting:** Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) in collaboration with Study and Research Group (SRG) of Manabik Sahajya Sangstha (MSS) will hold a meeting on 'Present Political Impasse'. Venue: Seminar room of IDB Bhaban E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani, Agargaon. Time: 10.00 am.

**Memorial meeting:** Bangladesh Foundation for the Handicapped and Social Development Association will hold a memorial meet on late poetess Begum Sufia Kamal. Venue: Kalyani auditorium, 12 New Circular Road, West Mallbagh. Time: 10.30 am.

**Cultural programme:** The annual cultural programme of East West University will be held. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 5.00 pm.

**Film show:** Chalachitram Film Society will screen 'The Wall' (Turkish) as part of the 3rd programme of its series 'A Tribute to the Great Filmmakers of the Century: A Selection of Films'. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka auditorium. Time: 6.30 pm.

**Computer art exhibition:** The computer galaxy and design circle brings a computer art and graphics design exhibition. Venue: Cafeteria of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka.

**Launching ceremony:** The launching ceremony of a book *Decades and Management of Water Resources: Lessons from Two Decades of Early Implementation Projects, Bangladesh* will be held. Organisers: The Environment and GIS Support Project for Water Sector Planning (EGIS). Venue: CIRDP auditorium. Time: 4.00 pm.

**Roundtable:** A roundtable discussion on 'Separation of Judiciary from the Executive' will be held. Organiser: Centre for Democratic Awareness. Venue: National Press Club.

## ..... and tomorrow

**Film show:** Chalachitram Film Society will screen *Madame Bovary* (France) on the 3rd day of its 3rd programme on the series 'A Tribute to the Great Filmmakers of the Century: A Selection of Films'. Venue: Auditorium of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 6.30 pm.

## Weather

### Light rain likely

Light rain or drizzle may occur at one or two places over Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions and weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country with partly cloudy sky over Khulna division in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Night temperature may rise slightly over the country during the period, according to Met Office.

The country's highest temperature 30.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and the lowest 8.7 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:51 pm and rises on Sunday at 6:33 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	25.6	15.2	54	47
Chittagong	28.7	15.5	64	50
Rajshahi	24.5	12.6	80	83
Barisal	27.0	13.6	70	67
Sylhet	25.7	11.8	68	48
Cox's Bazar	30.2	18.0	74	42

### Immediate hearing of Bangabandhu's trial judgement demanded

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote yesterday brought out a procession and held a rally in the city demanding immediate hearing of the judgement of Bangabandhu murder trial, reports BSS.

The procession was brought out from the first gate of Ramna Park and paraded different city streets. Eminent film directors, producers, actors and actresses including Dr Enamul Haque, Alamgir Kumkum, Advocate Tarana Halim, Falguni Hamid, Khairul Alam Sabuj, Dany Sidak, Dilara Yasmin and Jahangir Alam, among others, participated in the procession.

The speakers at the rally said that the killers of '71 and '75 are making conspiracies against the nation and the state. The BNP-led opposition is trying to save the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, they said.

They called upon the freedom fighters, pro-liberation and progressive forces to forge greater unity against the defeated forces of 1971.

### Clarification

Nasreen Khundker, Member of the National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC), yesterday sent a clarification regarding a news item titled 'MCCIs to pay rise suggested by NWPC published in The Daily Star Thursday'.

The clarification said: 'The first paragraph of this news item quotes some wrong figures. The recommendations on wages of workers of public sector enterprises (PSEs) is to increase the same from Tk 950 to Tk 1550, and not as stated.'

Some clarification is needed on the terms of reference of NWPC 1998. The wages recommendations were to be made taking into account the capacity of the enterprises, to pay the 'minimum cost of living', income of comparable groups etc, and not just paying capacity, the clarification added.

### French film-maker Roger Vadim dies

PARIS, Feb 11: Roger Vadim, the French director whose wives Brigitte Bardot and Jane Fonda starred in his films, died of cancer Friday aged 72, his entourage said, reports AFP.

Vadim, whose real name was Roger Plémiannikov, launched his first wife Bardot in 'And God Created Woman' in 1956. Fonda starred in his sultry 1968 movie 'Barbarella'. He had been married to his fifth wife, French actress Marie-France Barrault, since 1990, and died leaving four children, one of them with film star Catherine Deneuve.

### Scientific confce on health research begins in city

By Staff Correspondent

A three-day annual scientific conference (ASCON) of ICDDR,B was inaugurated yesterday. The conference like every year will focus on 'Health System Research: Meeting the Needs of Population in Transition'.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Prof M Amanullah inaugurated the event as the chief guest at the Centre for Health and Population Research in Mohakhali in the evening.

Participants from about 500 delegates from around the globe including USA, UK, India, Australia and Canada are attending the ninth conference.

International expert Dr Timothy Evans, head of Health Division of Rockefeller Institute, New York, USA will deliver keynote speech on equity challenges for public health in the context of globalisation today.

Orville Adams, another expert from Geneva (WHO), will deliver his keynote paper tomorrow on health system performance assessment and improving service delivery.

Both the papers are expected to give a picture on the global perspective on the theme of this year's ASCON.

In total 51 scientific papers focusing on problems of health, population, and development from a multi-disciplinary perspective will be presented by national and international academic institutions.

ICDDR,B has made significant contributions through sharing of the centre's research activities to strengthen the national health system. Despite recent progress in healthcare, Bangladesh still faces many challenges in order to improve the health status of the population such as reducing health inequalities, improving the quality of healthcare and to increase the efficiency and sustainability of service delivery.

This year the centre has also received contributions related to health policy and planning, organisation of service delivery, community perspectives on healthcare and stakeholders' participation, case management of specific diseases, delivery of specific services, health needs of specific populations such as the urban poor and adolescents, sex workers, mechanism to improve disease surveillance and health financing strategies.

### Poet Shamsur Rahman leaves for S'pore Feb 14

Ailing poet Shamsur Rahman leaves city for Singapore on February 14 for treatment, reports UNB.

The elderly poet had earlier received treatment at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore for heart and lung ailments.

Meanwhile, a press release of Ghatik Dalal Nirmul Committee said yesterday that in his absence, Shahinur Kabir will be its acting president.

### Scouts Rover Moot ends

GAZIPUR, Feb 11: A six-day 15th Rover Moot of Bangladesh Scouts concluded yesterday at Bahadurpur under Sadar Thana of the district, reports BSS.

We have also presented the issue of our recognition before the Pakistani leadership. The talks are continuing with Pakistan and they are reviewing it," he said late on Thursday.

"It is our demand to the rest of the Islamic world that they should politically help us and recognise our independent government," he said.

So far, only Afghanistan, itself recognised by just three countries, has recognised Chechnya.

Yandarbiev dismissed suggestions he wanted to form a government in exile and that he was in Pakistan and Afghanistan to recruit volunteers to fight against the Russian forces.

"We have no plans to form a government in exile... As far as

A total of 1149 persons were arrested and 11 illegal weapons, 24 bullets and five explosives were seized on the 295th day of the countrywide combing operation by police, Bangladesh Rifles and Ansar forces, reports BSS.

They arrested 443 persons on various charges from different parts of the country, including the four metropolitan areas, and seized the arms and ammunition and explosives. They also arrested 703 wanted accused and two listed terrorists during the drive.

A total of 141 persons, including 35 warrantees, were arrested from Dhaka metropolitan area and four illegal weapons and six bullets seized from them while 27 persons, including six wanted accused, from arrested Chittagong metropolitan area.

A total of 16 people, including two wanted accused, were held from Khulna metropolitan area while 11, including six wanted persons, from Rajshahi metropolitan area.

Besides, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police arrested two people from the city during the operation. A total of 260 persons, including 186 wanted accused, were arrested from Dhaka range with one weapon and seven bullets while 184, including 137 wanted persons, were held from Chittagong range with two illegal weapons and one bullet.

A total of 258 persons, including 183 warrantees, were held from Rajshahi range with three explosives, four weapons and 10 bullets while 147, including 92 wanted persons, were arrested from Khulna range. A total of 47 persons, including 32 warrantees, were held from Barisal range while 53, including 26 wanted persons, from Sylhet range.



BNP leader Sadek Hossain Khoka, MP, addressing a Liaison Committee Meeting at the Minto Road official residence of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament yesterday.

—Star photo

## Nails are reliable bio-markers in diagnosis of arsenic intoxication, study shows

Nails can be used as a more reliable bio-marker in diagnosis of chronic arsenic intoxication, reports UNB.

According to a research study, urine samples may also be a guideline to ascertain whether a person is still consuming arsenic contaminated water or not.

The research aimed at identifying the bio-chemical markers of arsenicism, a state of chronic arsenic contamination, to aid diagnosis, treatment and prognosis, was carried out at Biochemistry Department of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

Head of the department Prof Mohammad Suhrah Ali, now a member of Public Service Commission, and his associates carried out the 10-month-long study from July 1998 to April 1999.

The study was a modified replica of earlier studies, to compare and contrast among three different bio-markers — hair, nail and urine — of arsenicism from drinking water.

Blood arsenic is not considered as a good indicator because it is cleared within a few hours of absorption.

Arsenic concentration in urine of an unexposed person

ranges from 0.01-0.05 milligram/litre, in hair usually below 1 mg/kg and in blood 0.0015-0.0025 mg/litre.

Groundwater in different areas of 44 districts, out of 64 in the country, is affected by arsenic.

In the study, samples were collected from Halkop, Moghbar, Nilkanda, Charalal of Sonargaon, Narayanganj, Nobabganj of Rajshahi and Daudkandi of Comilla, which have already been declared arsenic contaminated areas.

A total of 30 subjects were included in the study categorized in two groups — Withdrawal group (Group-I): Subjects who had arranged more or less safe drinking water and Exposed group (Group-II): Subjects who were consuming more or less arsenic contaminated water.

Some 13 subjects were studied under group I while 17 in the group 2. Among 30 subjects, 9 were female and rest male with age limit from 18 to 70 years and mean age of 31.8 years.

Mean arsenic content of nail was 4.94 mg/kg in withdrawal group and 7.85 mg/kg in exposure group. On the other hand mean arsenic content of hair were 2.29 mg/kg in withdrawal group and 3.73 mg/kg in exposure group.

But in withdrawal group, urine samples were negative for arsenic in 8 subjects and positive for 5 subjects. In exposure group urine sample were negative for arsenic in three subjects and positive for 14 subjects.

Urine samples showing positive for arsenic were significantly higher in exposure group than withdrawal one.

The researchers opined that findings indicate that hair or nail sample can't dictate whether the person is still consuming arsenic contaminated water or not but urine samples can do so.

They have also found a strong correlation between arsenic in hair and arsenic in nail indicating that nail samples can be on alternative to hair sample in the diagnosis of chronic arsenicism.

Suhrah and his associates also found that when all the subjects in the study is considered as a single group the mean arsenic content in nail samples was 6.47 mg/kg which was greater than that of hair samples which was 3.15 mg/kg.

The difference was statistically significant indicating that nail sample may be more reliable in the diagnosis of chronic arsenicism.

## Top Chechen official demands recognition by Muslim world

KARACHI, Feb 11: A top Chechen official said on a visit to Pakistan he wants the Muslim world to recognise the breakaway Russian republic of Chechnya, but added he was not recruiting fighters or trying to form a government in exile, reports Reuters.

Zelimkhan Yandarbiev, a representative of Chechen leader Aslan Maskhadov, said in an interview with Reuters that he had visited six Islamic countries seeking support.

We have also presented the issue of our recognition before the Pakistani leadership. The talks are continuing with Pakistan and they are reviewing it," he said late on Thursday.

"It is our demand to the rest of the Islamic world that they should politically help us and recognise our independent government," he said.

So far, only Afghanistan, itself recognised by just three countries, has recognised Chechnya.

Yandarbiev dismissed suggestions he wanted to form a government in exile and that he was in Pakistan and Afghanistan to recruit volunteers to fight against the Russian forces.

"We have no plans to form a government in exile... As far as

volunteers are concerned, we do not require them at the moment but if somebody wants to go and fight in Chechnya, it's up to them," he said.

Russia on Wednesday criticised Pakistan for allowing Yandarbiev to visit. Moscow had earlier accused Pakistan of allowing extremist Islamic groups to operate from its territory.

Pakistan rejected the accusations and accused Moscow of "gross interference" in its internal affairs.

Yandarbiev, acting Chechen president between the death of separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev in April 1996 and an election in January 1997 won by Maskhadov, was in the Afghan capital Kabul last month to open an embassy.

Speaking through an Urdu translator, Yandarbiev said Afghan's Taleban government, which controls 90 per cent of the country, had recognised Chechnya as a country.

"Mullah Mohammad Omar (the Taliban's supreme leader) assured us that recognition of Chechnya was their responsibility and if we need anything in Afghanistan, it will be given to us," he said.

Yandarbiev said the recent withdrawal of Chechen fighters

from Grozny was part of a "military strategy", adding the capital would be retaken.

"They have not been able to dampen the spirits and motivation of our Mujahideen (holy fighters)... we can fight all our lives."

Fresh from taking the Chechen capital Grozny, Russian troops are preparing for what they expect to be the final strike against remaining rebels.

But rebels have warned the Russians they will face an all-out guerrilla war of the kind that forced Moscow to abandon its previous attempt to bring the unruly region to heel in 1994-96.

Yandarbiev, who earlier spoke at a reception hosted by Pakistan's main Islamic Jamaat-e-Islami party, criticised the West for not stopping what he called Russian genocide of the Chechen people, although Russia had accepted the Chechnya government under a 1997 agreement.

"This agreement proves that Russia had accepted the independent Chechnyan government," he said after reading from the text of an accord which he said was signed by Maskhadov and former Russian president Boris Yeltsin.

### World Press Photo award goes to Dane Claus-Bjorn Larsen

THE HAGUE, Feb 11: Danish photographer Claus-Bjorn Larsen won Friday the World Press Photo award with a photograph of a group of Albanian refugees in Kosovo, contest organisers announced, reports AFP.

Larsen, of the Copenhagen daily Berlingske Tidende, took the winning black-and-white picture capturing the frightened expression of two men and one woman on April 5, 1999.

Larsen will officially receive his 15,000 florins (about 6,800 euros or dollars) prize from Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok at an April 17 ceremony in Amsterdam.

### 22 drown in western Uganda

KAMPALA, Feb 11: About 22 people drowned when their boat capsized in western Uganda's Lake Albert earlier this week, police said Friday, reports AFP.

Police spokesman John Kimera told AFP that the accident occurred on Wednesday night when the boat was travelling from Kihoro town in Hoima district to Panyamuru in Nebbi district.

The boat reportedly hit submerged metal bars as it approached the docking area at Panyamuru and overturned. Fourteen passengers survived.

Kimera said that police has sent a search team to the lake in a bid to recover the bodies of the victims. Only three bodies had so far been found, he added.

## Senator drafts legislation to rescue death row inmates

WASHINGTON, Feb 11: A senior US senator was set to unveil legislation Friday aimed at giving more tools to help wrongly convicted death row inmates prove their innocence, reports AFP.

Only 11 days after Illinois imposed a moratorium on the death penalty, Vermont Democrat Patrick Leahy is hoping to throw a lifeline to death row inmates who have been wrongly convicted.

The legislation would permit inmates awaiting execution to introduce DNA evidence in order to try to establish their innocence and it would set nationwide minimum competency standards for court-appointed defence attorneys, according to media reports.

Recent advances in DNA testing have cleared some convicted awaiting death sentences but most states ban the introduction of new DNA evidence after two years.

The legislation also includes a series of provisions to set minimum standards for defence attorneys who represent indigent defendants accused of capital crimes.

Leahy, the top-ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, is a long-standing opponent of the death penalty and has been crafting his bill since June, long before Illinois Governor George Ryan imposed a moratorium on capital punishment in his state.

Ryan imposed a moratorium on the state's death penalty on

January 31, condemning the state's "shameful" record of sentencing innocent people to death.

Ryan pledged to block any further executions until a special commission could report on why the state's criminal justice system had sent 13 innocent people to death row.

"I have grave concerns about our state's shameful record of convicting innocent people and putting them on death row," Ryan said.

### 2 killed in Kashmir as bomb explodes in market

JAMMU, India, Feb 11: Two people were killed and more than 20 people were critically injured when a bomb ripped through a crowded market here Friday, a police spokesman said, reports AFP.

The bomb exploded at about 8.00 p.m. (2030 BST) at a crowded vegetable market. We suspect the bomb was hidden inside a two-wheeler," the spokesman said.

The blast comes a day after an explosion on a train about 30 kilometres south of Jammu, which killed five people. Ten others were seriously injured.

Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, is claimed by both India and Pakistan and has been the cause of two of the three wars between the South Asian rivals.

## 36-hour hartal

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chairs on the dais — four for chiefs of the four component parties — one for DL President, one for Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, four for four secretaries general and another four for Dhaka city unit chiefs of the alliance.

No other leader will be allowed to stay on the dais and there will be no party flag or portrait of any leader on it.

This will be a grand show to lead the current one-point movement towards its final stage. We want to launch the final round of the oust-government movement from Paltan through a massive show down, said a top ranking BNP leader.

He said opposition politics in the country will take a new turn after Sunday's joint programme and people will participate in the street agitation more actively.

Partners of the seven-party alliance, including Jagga, DL, PNP, NDA and Zaker Party will also join the public meeting and mass procession.

Moreover, opposition backed student groups, professional bodies, socio-cultural organisations, intellectuals, journalists and others will join the meeting and procession. BNP Chairperson and Leader

of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleida Zia will announce fresh programmes from the dais on behalf of the combined opposition.

She is expected to call a countrywide 36-hour blockade hartal beginning on Feb 16.

The meeting over, the procession of the four parties will proceed one by one. Though the route of the procession is yet to be finalised, the Liaison Committee has decided that there would be a single route for all the parties.

The route of the procession may be from Paltan to Science Laboratory crossing or Bangla Motor crossing.

BNP procession led by Party Chairperson Khaleida Zia will first start from Paltan Maidan while that of JP led by Ershad, Jamaat led by Golam Azam and IOJ led by Azizul Haq will follow it.

Activists, however, will be allowed to carry banner, festoons and portraits of their respective party leaders during the procession.

Sources at the BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote said they have already instructed all their units and front organisations to ensure maximum attendance at the first ever combined programme since the alliance was formed on January 6 last year.

### BCL denies report

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of Salimullah Hall unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) have protested the news item on 'Cutting and selling of trees of the hall'.

In a rejoinder, the unit stated the news story was "baseless" and claimed it had tarnished their social image.

"The hall authorities cut some small and unnecessary trees and their branches to enhance the natural beauty of the hall compound. It was done in the presence of the House Tutors and general students of the hall," it stated.

The rejoinder, signed by Rashedul Basher Dollar, general secretary of SM Hall unit of BCL, also stated the authorities used the money from the sale of the trees for hall renovations.

They also denied their involvement in eve-teasing, extortion and kidnapping.

The provost of the hall could not be reached for comment, but House Tutor Dr M Nurul Islam said he was not present when the trees were cut. "There may have been someone else present at the moment."

"I don't know if there was any legal procedure of felling and selling trees. What I know is that the trees have been sold at a lesser price than the market rate," said Islam.

Hall unit presidents, such as Reza and Dollar, are behaving like a DC at their hall.

"He (president) does not bother to meet his hall provost, and on the contrary, the provost keeps waiting for him at the hall office."

"I know both Reza and Dollar very well and they are no exceptions to the other famous persons on the campus."

### Rejoinder

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week, and the number of days of earned leave, sick leave, and casual leave which must be given to each employee.

"Annual increments were given to all entitled workers in 1998, 1999, and have just been paid to the workers for January 2000."

"There are numerous benefits and facilities which Youngone offers, which go far beyond the required minimums of BEPZA and the laws of the land."

"Youngone is amazed that such a baseless article was allowed to be written by a reporter without prior verification with the Company."

### Book fair

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premises yesterday with Prof. Sirajul Islam Chowdhury in the chair.

Dr Hasna Begum presented the keynote paper on the theme, while Prof. Abul Kalam Fazlul Haq, Prof. Niru Chakma, Prof. Kazi Nurul Islam and Dr Prodig Kumer Ray took part in the discussions.

### Delhi hopes

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dent's visit did not mean US differences with New Delhi had been bridged.

The foreign ministry spokesman reiterated there was no place for a third party in India's disputes with Pakistan. "India and Pakistan are committed to resolving all differences. We envisage no role for a third party, he said."

Indian newspapers and analysts said today that Washington must look again at its own policy on non-proliferation before claiming the high moral ground.

"It would be in the interest of better understanding of both the US and India if President Clinton comes to Delhi fully prepared to discuss the treatment of US policy on proliferation," the Times of India said in an editorial bristling with indignation.

### Liton murder

From page 1  
this connection.

Two arrested young men identified as Sumon and Khokon denied their involvement in the murder, but gave names of those who really killed Liton in police custody with financial help from the alleged business tycoon.