

## News

## 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 Malibagh. 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 begins a computer art and graphics design exhibition. Venue: Cafeteria of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka.

**Launching ceremony:** The launching ceremony of a book 'Planning 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: CIRDAP 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 Kumuk, Advocate Tarana Halim, Falguni Hamid, Khairul Alam Sabuj, Dany Sidak, Dilara Yasmin and Jahanjir 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 'MCCI's no 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.

A spokesman for the New York Police Department said the man was only slightly injured in the blast that took place at the corner of Wall Street and Water Street around 4:40 a.m. (1540 GMT).

The bomb was placed at the foot of a building belonging to Barclay's Bank some 300 meters from the New York Stock Exchange, according to caretakers of the building.

The blast blew out a ground floor window in the building and obliterated a public trash bin at the scene. It appeared that the blast was not very powerful, since the windows of nearby buildings were not broken.

Police cordoned off the area and bomb squad officers were checking for other explosive devices. Police said they had no suspects in the case.

The New York Stock exchange on Wall Street opened for trading at 9:30 a.m. as usual.

Barclay's to Dresdner Bank and JP Morgan were arrested by the building, CNBC reported.

## Scientific conference 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.

Head of the department Prof Mohammad Suhrawardi Ali, now a member of Public Service Commission, and his associates carried out the 10-month-long study from July 1994 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 arsenic 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



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.

In the study, samples were collected from Hatkopa, Moghazar, Nilkanda, Charalab of Sonargaon, Narayanganj, Nobabganj of Raishahi and Daudkandi of Comilla, which have already been declared arsenic contaminated areas.

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.

A total of 30 subjects were included in the study categorised in two groups — Withdrawal group (Group-II): Subjects who had arranged more or less safe drinking water and Exposed group (Group-III): 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 was 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 sample can be an alternative to hair sample in the diagnosis of chronic arsenicism.

They also found that when all the subjects in the study is considered as a single group, 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.

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