

What's on today . . .

**Premiere show:** A premiere show of Bangla feature film 'Kuhelika Chharye' (Beyond the Haze) will be held. Venue: German Cultural Centre, Road No 8, Dhamondi. Time: 7 pm.

**Award giving ceremony:** The award giving ceremony of National Education Week 2000 will be held. Chief guest: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Venue: Osmani Memorial Hall. Time: 11 am.

**Publication ceremony:** A book 'Botkanya Sashabda Furush' by poet Russel Asheki will be launched. Venue: Bangla Academy. Time: 5.30 pm.

and tomorrow

**World newspaper exhibition:** The time of the New Millennium World Newspaper Exhibition has been extended for two more days. Venue: National Museum, Shahbagh. It will remain open from 3 pm to 7.30 pm on Friday and from 9.30 am to 5 pm on Saturday.

**Drawing competition:** Padatik Natya Sangsad organises a drawing competition for the children to mark the Ekushey February. Venue: Shishu Academy. Time: 10 am.

**Discussion on PSA:** Bangladesh Manobadhikar Samonny Parishad Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh has organised a discussion on 'Public Safety Act and Human Rights'. Venue: Gano Unnayan Granthagar auditorium. Time: 3.30 pm.

**Workshop:** A two-day regional workshop on 'Settlement of the Urban Poor: Challenges for the new Millennium,' will begin. Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP) and ADAB will jointly organise the regional workshop. Venue: CIRDAF auditorium, Chameli House, 17, Tophkhana Road.

**Confee on N-disarmament:** The three-day International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament in South and Southeast Asia will begin. Organisers: Community Development Library and FOCUS on the Global South. Venue: Hotel Purbani. Time: 9 am.

**Mass rally:** USC Canada-Bangladesh in collaboration with Adolescent Development Forum-Bangladesh organises a mass rally to mark the Adolescent Day. Route: Shahbagh National Museum to Jatiya Press Club. Time: 9 am.

**IUBAT workshop:** International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) is organising a 3-day workshop on 'Economic Management' in collaboration with the Canadian Consortium of Management Schools (CCMS) and Dalhousie University, Canada. Venue: IUBAT campus, Dhamondi.

Weather

Night temperature may rise

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

Night temperature may rise slightly over the country, said Met office.

The country's highest temperature 29.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf, Cox's Bazar and Sitakunda and the lowest 8.9 degree Celsius at Srimangal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5.54 pm and rises tomorrow at 6.30 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	
Dhaka	25.2	13.5	58
Chittagong	28.8	13.0	53
Rajshahi	24.7	8.8	68
Khulna	26.5	10.4	65
Barisal	26.2	9.0	69
Sylhet	27.8	13.5	75
Cox's Bazar	29.0	16.0	64



The first death anniversary of Kazi Aref Ahmed, a pioneer of the progressive democratic movement, was observed yesterday. Members of Kazi Aref Parishad placing wreath at the portrait of the late leader. — Star photo

Punishment to killers of Kazi Aref demanded

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University unit of JSD-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Kazi Aref Parishad (KAP) yesterday brought out separate processions on the campus marking the first death anniversary of Kazi Aref Ahmed.

Five JSD leaders including Kazi Aref Ahmed, Lokman and Eakub were killed on this day in 1999 at Kalidaspur in Kush-tia while a bomb exploded at a rally.

BCL brought out the procession wearing black badges and paraded through the campus. Following the procession it also held a rally in front of Madhu's Canteen.

Addressing the rally BCL leaders blamed the government for 'delay of the trial process of Kazi Aref Ahmed murder case. They also demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to Kazi Aref's killers.

The BCL leaders also threatened a student movement if the killers are not punished immediately.

Among others, Emran Al Amin, Munir Ahmed Leni, Aminul Azim Boni, Golam Shamim and Joyanta Kar Akash addressed the rally.

Besides, KAP brought out a procession with a black banner from the Teachers and Students Centre (TSC) in the afternoon.

It also chanted slogans against religious fanatics, fundamentalists and anti-liberal forces.

Ansar, VDP members urged to perform duties sincerely

SHAPIPUR, Gazipur, Feb 16: Home, Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim today called upon the members of ansar and Village Defence Party (VDP) to discharge their duties with utmost sincerity so that the rural people can enjoy the newly enacted Public Safety Act (PSA), reports BSS.

The present government has enacted the act with an aim to ensure safety in public life, he said while addressing high officials of ansar at its academy here.

Nasim laid emphasis that on curbing terrorism in the country with an iron hand saying the law and order of the country has to be improved to face the challenges of the new 21st century.

Lauding the role of ansar and VDP to curb terrorism, he said, the members of the two agencies along with police and BDR had played an important role in curbing terrorism in the North-Western region of the country.

He said peace has also been established in the country's hilly region.

He called upon them to work relentlessly for the development of the rural poor. "You can play a vital role alongside your regular duties for the economic development of rural people," he added.

'Common people initiated Language Movement'

Language Movement veteran Abdul Matin was all praise for the role of common people in the Language Movement as, he thought, they actually initiated the struggle against the Pakistani rulers' subtle but evil designs to impose Urdu as the state language ignoring Bangla, the language of the majority, reports BSS.

"The urge for seeing Bangla in its rightful place first came from the common people, not from the political elements or others," he told the agency recently in an exclusive interview at his Zigatola residence here.

Tracing the genesis of the historic February 21, Matin, popularly known as 'Bhasha Matin' for his glorious contribution to the Language Movement, said, in fact, the movement for Bangla language started in late November of 1947, just three months after the formation of the religion-based state Pakistan.

He recalled that from late November of 1947, the then central government of Pakistan silently started using Urdu on the tickets of railway and postal services, though Bangla was being used on those tickets since the British regime. "This incident immediately caused agitation among the people and they reacted spontaneously," he said.

Matin substantiated his statement by citing an example of the period (November 1947) when he was doing his graduation in Dhaka University.

"I was passing through the Nilkhet-Palashi Barrack area to reach the university when I heard the slogan 'Rastra Bhasha Bangla Chai' (We demand Bangla as state language) from a gathering from the lawn between the two barracks. It attracted by attention. Then I saw several rallies in the area, where speakers were addressing gatherings of about 100 to 200 people, criticising the use of Urdu on such tickets. I witnessed similar scenes on the university campus."

Matin, who was the convener of the Dhaka University Rastra Bhasha Sangram Parishad, said: "There was confusion among the politicians. Even we, the student community, were in a dilemma over what slogans to raise. But the slogan which became the guideline of the whole movement 'Rastra Bhasha Bangla Chai' had already been chosen by the people."

Asked about the role of the politicians in the movement, he said during that period (before

1949) Muslim League was in the front line of national politics. Awami League was not formed (Awami Muslim League was formed in 1949) and the Communist Party was in its nascent stage in the province. So the leaders of Muslim League and Chhatra League led the Language Movement. He lauded the role of Kamruddin Ahmed, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Oli Ahsan, Abul Hashem, Mohammad Toha and Shamsul Haque for their active role in the movement.

He was critical about the role of the then East Pakistan intellectuals, saying that majority of them could not reach a decision on the language debate till 1950. He said they had fought against the repression of Pakistani rulers but only a few teachers of Dhaka University actually shared the pangs of the turbulent days of the Language Movement. He mentioned the names of some teachers including Mozaffar Ahmed Chowdhury, Munir Chowdhury and Ajit Guha who joined hands with their heroic students.

Recalling the experience of picketing in support of the strikes on the campus, he mentioned the role of a German teacher of the Law Department, who initially opposed the demand of the student leaders not to hold class during strike hours but later he agreed to the demand.

"When I requested Dr Dum not to give classes, he said he was not with politics. Then I told him that if the German people had protested, Hitler would not have dared to act like that. So if we fail to put up resistance now, the Pakistani rulers will move towards Hitler's direction."

The heavily-built professor said: "Really, we have done a great mistake," and told his students that he would not give his classes during hartals.

Praising the important role of women students, Matin said at that period only 20 to 25 female students were in the Dhaka University campus but they played a vital role in raising funds to help continue the movement.

He said: "On February 22, 1952, we had no money for printing the posters. Then I went to Rokeya Hall to meet Rokeya, a resident of the dormitory who hailed from Bogra. When I requested her to collect money from the Palashi area, she was a bit hesitant as she had never collected money from public. I requested her again

and she agreed to raise funds. The surprise was waiting for me. In the evening the evening the girl gave me about 25 thousands taka."

Abdul Matin was not satisfied with the mere recognition of Bangla by the UNESCO as he thought that Bangla had not yet been introduced in all spheres of our national life. He showed this correspondent an invitation card, printed in English, for the wedding of his friend's son, and sarcastically said: "So here we stand despite the recognition of Bangla by the UNESCO."

"See, UNESCO has recognised our Language Movement but my friend, a political leader, invited me in English to attend one of the most important events of his family."

UNESCO's recognition means little for Matin as he has dedicated his life to establishing the right of the common mass. He thinks the UNESCO is an organisation of the imperialists.

"No one could be successful to resist the status of Bangla, which Bernard Shaw termed as the only language that can spell every spoken word correctly, appropriately," he observed.

ICDDR,B fund-raising programme tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) will hold a fund raising dinner tomorrow with a slogan 'We are saving lives.'

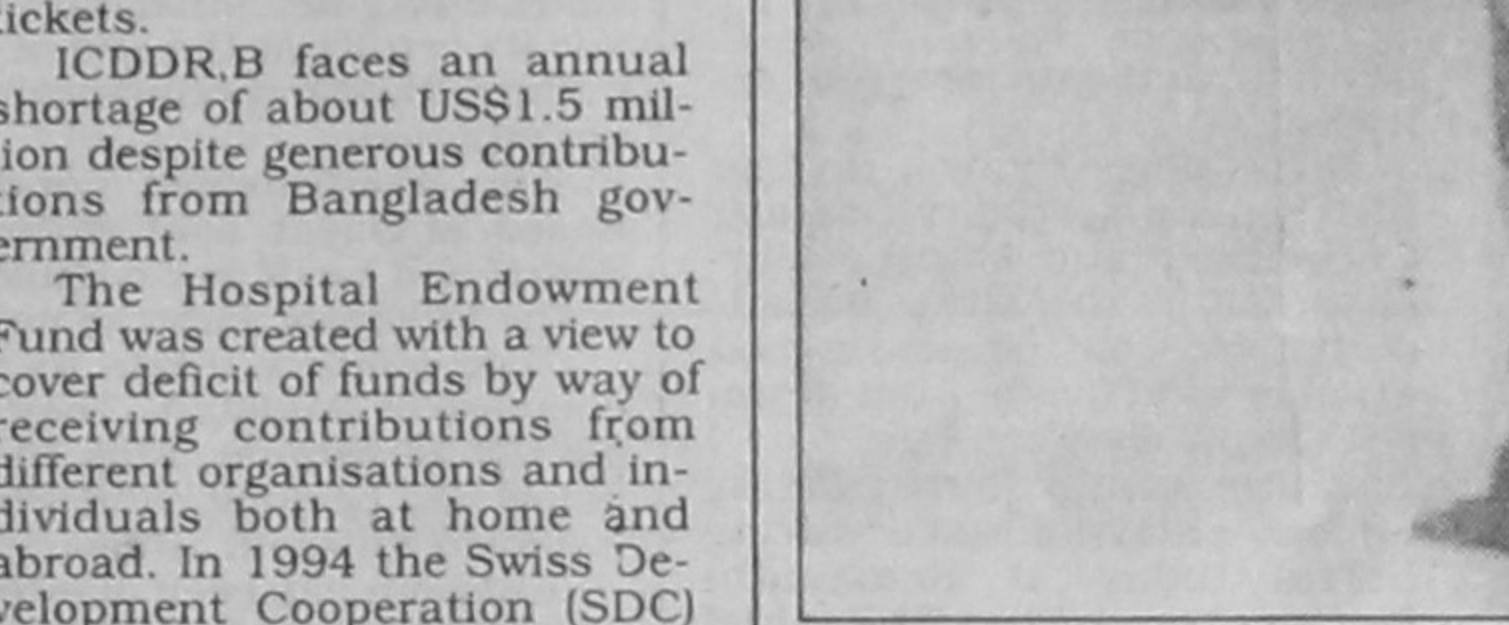
The dinner for the Hospital Endowment Fund will be held at Hotel Sheraton and will feature live music, raffle draw and prizes will include airlines tickets.

ICDDR,B faces an annual shortage of about US\$1.5 million despite generous contributions from Bangladesh government.

The Hospital Endowment Fund was created with a view to cover deficit of funds by way of receiving contributions from different organisations and individuals both at home and abroad. In 1994 the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) contributed US\$3 million for the fund.

The hospital provides treatment for about 300 people everyday suffering from diarrhoea. Apart from its medical services, the centre is a major health service centre that has come up with such research resultants as the life-saving Oral Dehydration Solution (ORS).

The centre has urged all people to come forward and attend the dinner, fixed at Tk 1500 per plate, to raise funds that will be invested to save thousands of lives.



Passers-by run for cover as police lobbed tear gas shells to disperse a BNP procession at Bijoy Nagar area in the city yesterday. (Right) JASSAS joint secretary MA Malek was wounded when a tear gas shell hit him in the face just below the left eye. — Star photo

Shamsul Huda Chowdhury buried

Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, a former Speaker, veteran politician and parliamentarian was laid to eternal rest at the family graveyard at Siddiq Bazar yesterday by the grave of his wife Begum Laila Arjumand Banu, reports BSS.

Chowdhury, also a broadcaster and debator-ator, breathed his last on Tuesday of old age complications at his Eskaton Garden residence. He was 80.

His *namaz-e-janaza* was held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after the Zohr prayers yesterday.

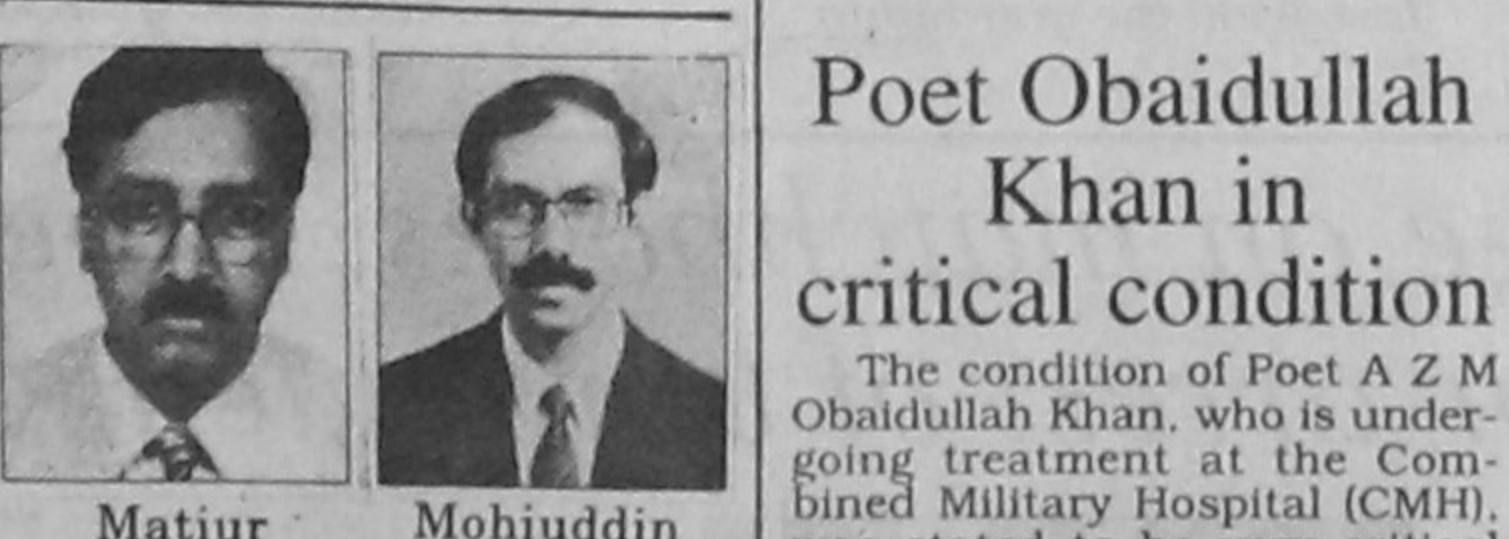
Later his body was taken to Muktagachha in Mymensingh, his village home.

Qulkhwan of Chowdhury will be held tomorrow after Asr prayers at his 7, Eskaton Garden residence, family sources said.

Khaleda condoles death

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has condoled the death of former Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury.

In a message, she prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed her sympathy to the bereaved family members.



New BAMOS committee

A 13-member executive committee of Bangladesh Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (BAMOS) has been elected with Dr Matiur Rahman Mollah and Dr Mohiuddin Ahmed as president and secretary general respectively, says a press release.

The election and general meeting of the association was held at YBL Centre in the city on February 11.

Other members of the committee are Dr S M Iqbal Shaheed — Vice-president; Dr Rafiq Ahmed Bhuiyan — joint secretary; Dr Md Nurul Amin — treasurer; Dr Obaidur Rahman Chowdhury — organising secretary; Dr Khandaker Altaf Hossain — social welfare secretary; and Dr Badrul Alam — education secretary.

And the members are Prof Md Rezaul Haq, Dr Nasir Uddin, Dr A T M Saiful Islam, Dr Mosharrar Hossain Khandaker and Dr Samiul Alam Biantu.

Lobby for Clinton's visit

Bangladesh pays nothing while India, Pakistan spend huge sum

WASHINGTON, Feb 16: When India and Pakistan spend huge sums to hire influential Americans, including former lawmakers, to lobby for their respective countries in the US political power-houses, like the White House and the Capitol Hill, Bangladesh pays not a farthing to promote her interests, according to US media reports, says BSS.

They said spending by these countries have become noticeable in recent days as President Clinton prepares himself for a historic visit to the Sub-continent. Clinton is to visit India on March 20 and arrive Bangladesh on March 25. Till now there is no official word about his visit to Pakistan.

While Bangladesh is not spending any money for President Clinton's visit, the first by any American President, India and Pakistan are spending millions of dollars, diplomatic circles in the US capital were quoted as saying.

India and Pakistan, the world's newest nuclear powers and rivals in the region, have brought their battles to Washington by marshalling highly-paid lobbyists to get better of the other in their pursuit of President Clinton's visit to South Asia in March.

According to the prestigious US daily The New York Times, New Delhi and Islamabad together spend more than one hundred thousand dollars per month to buy the Administration's influence in their favour.

The daily in a report published on February 13 wrote: "In the case of India and Pakistan and Mr Clinton's travels, each side has already begun to lobby the White House, the State Department and the Congress."

The paper also said that the depth and breadth of lobbying by individual countries has grown in recent years and foreign governments are now paying out tens of thousands of dollars a month.

Referring to the role of the US lobbyists to ensure visit of the US president to India and Pakistan, the paper on Sunday gave a graphic detail of how the two countries are engaged in the fight to maintain supremacy over the other by securing the service of popular and influential former US Congressmen.

The story of influence peddling by the two neighbours, who are apparently at war to undo the other at all fronts, including the diplomatic arena, is in contrast with Bangladesh Prime Minister's pursuit of a pragmatic and principled foreign policy designed to achieve regional and global peace.

The diplomatic circles strongly feel that Bangladesh, by continuing its efforts to project the country as a model for democracy, peace and socio-economic development to the outside world, can attain a place of honour in the community of nations.

The paper said India is paying several thousand dollars per month for the lobbying services of two former Senate Majority Leaders, one Democrat and the other Republican, and to a former governor of Texas.

Pakistan's amount is lesser that it is shelling out a month to a former Democratic Congressman and to a former Clinton Special Counsel, the NYT added.

It wrote that despite the efforts of the two neighbours to build caucus in the US Administration for their respective countries, India is far advanced with more than 100 members. By contrast, Pakistan caucus had never more than a dozen or so members.

Ekata Express derailed

MYMENSINGH, Feb 16: The Dhaka-bound inter-city 'Ekata Express' derailed near Gafarganj station early yesterday disrupting rail communications in Dhaka-Mymensingh route for about five hours, reports UNB.

Railway sources said one compartment of the train went out of the track at about 5 am near the outer signal. Nobody was hurt in the mishap.

The rail communication resumed after a relief train salvaged the bogie at 10 am.

Inter-city Jamuna, the Commuter and Number 8 down train remained stranded at Mymensingh station for about five hours.

Road mishap Tempo helper killed in city

A tempo helper was killed in a road accident near Mirpur Sony cinema hall yesterday morning, reports BSS.

Police said the accident took place at about 10 am while Alamgir (14), a tempo helper fell on the ground from his running tempo. He was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the attending doctor declared him dead.

His body was sent to the morgue of DMCH for autopsy.

Poet Obaidullah Khan in critical condition

The condition of Poet A Z M Obaidullah Khan, who is undergoing treatment at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH), was stated to be very critical last night, family and hospital sources said, reports BSS.

Former minister, civil servant and a reputed UN executive, Khan was admitted to CMH yesterday following a diagnosis of Fulminant Hepatitis and intensive intra-cerebral hemorrhage. Khan, who went into a deep coma earlier, was being operated upon for brain hemorrhage by Col Nuruzzaman.

Family members of Khan sought blessings of all for his early recovery.

Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury, Agriculture Adviser to Prime Minister M Anisuzzaman and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr SA Samad visited Mr Khan at the CMH and inquired after his treatment.

Qulkhwani

The qulkhwani of Abeda Khatun, wife of late advocate Syed Ahmed Bhuiyan, will be held tomorrow at 4.30 pm at her son's residence at House No 4, Rd No 7, Mirpur 11, says a press release.

Friends and relatives have been requested to attend the qulkhwani and pray for her departed soul.



National Professor Kabir Chowdhury inaugurated the three-day Ekushey February and International Mother Language Day programme of the Dhaka University yesterday. — Star photo

Int'l Mother Language Day programme in Shariatpur

By DU Correspondent

A seven-day programme to observe International Mother Language Day begins at Naris Government College ground in Shariatpur tomorrow.

"International Mother Language Day Uddhapan (Uddhapan 2000) programme in Shariatpur, chanted out the programme in commemoration of the martyrs of the Language Movement.

Colonel (Ret) Shawkat Ali MP will inaugurate the function in the afternoon while Bhasha Shaikh Gazul Haq, Dr Tazul Islam, Begum Mazeda Shawkat Ali and actor Pijush Bandopadhyai will be the chief discussants at the programme.

Earlier, a 135-member Uddhapan Parishad with Principal of Naris Government College, Abul Kalam Azad its convenor was formed to observe the day in a befitting manner and Jue respect.

**Bangladeshi wins King Faisal Int'l Prize**

RIYADH, Feb 16: A Bangladeshi scholar has won the King Faisal International Prize for Islamic studies while the other winners of this year's awards included Sudanese and Egyptian writers and three US scientists, reports Reuters.

The prizes, first awarded in 1979, are considered the most prestigious in the Arab world. Each prize is worth 200,000 dollar.

Professor Mohammad Mohar Ali from Bangladesh won the award for his four-volume history of Muslims in Bengal, the official Saudi Press Agency reported late on Tuesday.

The literature prize was won jointly by Professor Abdullah el-Tayeb of Sudan and Egypt's Izzudin Ismael Abd al-Ghani.

The science award went jointly to Harvard University's professor Edward Osborne Wilson for his work in biology and John Carag Venter of the Institute for Genomic Research for his work on genes. Both men are from the United States.

The medicine prize went to the University of California's Professor Cynthia Jane Kenyon, who is also from the United States, for her research on the process of aging.

The prize for services to Islam was awarded to Al-Azhar mosque in Egypt. The Mosque in Cairo is a centre for Islamic study.

Padatik Natya Sangsad Housewife

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Padatik Natya Sangsad, a theatre group has organised a drawing competition and day-long programmes to mark the International Mother Language Day, says a press release.

The drawing competition for the children will be held at the Shishu Academy on February 18 and the day-long programmes at the Fine Arts Institute on February 21.

The drawing competition will begin at 10 am. There will be two groups. Children under 8 will take part in 'Ka' group. Subject is open for them. Children aged between 8 and 12 will take part in 'Kha' group. For them, subject is 'flying bird'.

On February 21, Poet Shamsur Rahman will inaugurate the day-long programmes at 10 am.

Last time she left the house over such issue was 15 days back but government intervention of local MP Nasim Osman and Peer Zakir.

Sons of the victim said their father woke them up at around 7 am, saying that their mother had committed suicide and left the home. Since then he has not come back.

Police said Khokon is one of the owners of the house and has declaration of three newspapers — Jonojibon, Gonojor and Jobonchitra — which are yet to be published.

Razzak filed a case. The body was sent to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. Police was yet to trace Khokon.

Liquor tragedy

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Golam Sarwar, 40, of village Kazirbag, Fazul Haq, 33, of village Daulatpur under the Sadar thana; Gasuddin, 30, Md Miah, 27, and Jobbar, 28, of village Kazirhat under Sonagazi thana; Shahedul, 35, of Sultampur; Shahjahan, 39, of Narayanpur; Abdur Rashid, 45, of village Sindurpur; Pear Ahmed, 37, and Abdul Latif of village Dilpur under Daganbhuiyan thana; Abdul Motaleb, 45, Abul Hossain, 45, of Chagalnaya thana; Musa Miah, 35 and Abdul Kaiyum, 25, of Sonagazi thana.

All the victims took rectified spirit from shops in their localities, police said quoting local people. Some sources claimed that some of the victims had taken the rectified spirit two days back.

Sources in the district administration claimed that the toxic liquor was allegedly supplied to different shops in Feni district from 'Chowdhury Homeo Hall' at the Trunk Road in the town.

Police arrested Dr Mafizur Rahman, owner of the shop and seized seven litres of spirit, a news agency report said.

A three-member probe body headed by ADM Abul Kashem has been formed to investigate the tragedy. Two other members of the committee are Additional SP Golam Rasul and Resident Medical Officer of Feni Hospital Tobarukullah Bayezid.

Feni Sadar thana has registered an unnatural death case in this connection.

It is fourth liquor tragedy in Feni since 1985. Earlier, 12 people died at Fulgazi on December 15, 1998. In Feni town, four people died in 1997 and 10 in 1985.

President okays

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Cabinet for approval. After Cabinet approval, it would be promulgated as an ordinance.

When contacted a top official in the law ministry said six special tribunals will be set up in the six divisional headquarters of the country within the next two weeks.

The ministry has prepared a list of judges to head the tribunals and sent it to the Supreme Court for its approval, the law ministry official said.

The law ministry has also sought sanction of posts from the Ministry of Establishment and budget from the Ministry of Finance, he added.

Initially, the tribunals will accept cases from the districts where those will be set up. For example, the tribunal set up in Dhaka will initially accept cases from Dhaka district only, he said. The number of judges in these tribunals may be increased if required.

Tribunals will be set up in other districts at a later stage, he said.

Offences punishable under the PSA are mugging, extortion, demanding ransom, interference in the process of tender dropping, damaging and preventing movement of vehicles and creating terror.

Under the PSA, maximum punishment for mugging, damaging vehicles and creating terror is 10 years' rigorous imprisonment and minimum is two years.

The maximum punishment for extortion, demanding ransom, interference in tender dropping and resisting movement of vehicles is 14 years' RI and the minimum is three years.

Anyone found abusing the PSA may also be sentenced to seven years' RI with fine.

Photographs, tapes containing conversation and video films will be accepted as evidence by the special tribunals.

The government will make all necessary measures including training of police personnel so that the PSA is not misused and the special tribunals to be set up are not burdened," Home Secretary M M Reza told The Daily Star.

Asked what measures the government was planning to reduce the burden on special tribunals, the home secretary said, "Cases filed under the Act will be monitored effectively and police personnel will be given an orientation training". Preparations are being taken from that, Reza said.

Banks open

From page 1

hartal. They were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

It protested the incident saying that BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia had exempted garments factories from half-day hartal.

The BCGMEA also reiterated its demand for exempting the garments sector from the purview of hartal and urged all political parties to be sympathetic to country's export business.