

## What's on today....

**Seminar:** Mass-Line Media Centre (MMC) organises a seminar on 'Life and struggle of the sea-bound fishermen'. Venue: MMC office, Mohammadpur. Time: 3:00 pm.

**Drama:** Bangla Theatre presents 'Manush' as part of Mamunur Rashid Retrospective. The drama will follow a reception to dramatist and actor Mamunur Rashid. Venue: Mohila Samity auditorium. Time: 5:00 pm.

**Book publication ceremony:** The Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) will launch its book 'Leather Industry: Environmental Pollution and Mitigation Measures'. It will be followed by a seminar on environmental pollution in leather industry. Venue: Women's Voluntary Association, Dhanmondi. Time: 2:30 pm.

**Workshop:** A two-day national workshop on 'Impact of Globalisation on Bangladesh' will begin. BISS has organised the workshop in collaboration with Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung (FNSL), Germany. Venue: BISS auditorium, 1/46 Elephant Road. Time: 9:30 am.

**Film show:** Zahir Raihan Film Society organises contemporary Indian Film Session. Film: Kichhu Sanglap Kichhu Pralap (Dialogue and Delirium). Venue: Indian High Commission Auditorium, House 25, Road 2, Dhanmondi. Time: 6:00 pm.

**Reunion:** Central Women's University will hold a reunion for teachers, guardians and students. Venue: University campus. Time: 4:00 pm.

**Publication ceremony:** Two books, 'Jananetri Sheikh Hasina' and 'Sheikh Hasina — Prime Minister of Bangladesh', by Sirajuddin Ahmed will be launched. Chief guest: Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu. National professor Kabir Chowdhury will preside. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4 pm.

**Seminar:** Jatiya Granthakendra will hold a seminar on 'International Mother Language Day: our gain and our responsibility'. Venue: Conference room of Jatiya Granthakendra. Time: 10:00 am.

**Exhibition:** The concluding ceremony of the exhibition of a sculpture titled 'Right of Mother Tongue: From Ekushey to the World' will be held. Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Time: 5:00 pm.

**Roundtable discussion:** Working for Better Life (WBL) with financial assistance from Norwegian government will hold a roundtable discussion on 'Prevention of Drug Addiction'. Venue: Menartek High School.

## ..... and tomorrow

**Drama:** Subachan Natya Sangsad presents 'Rastha Banam' as part of Mamunur Rashid Retrospective. Venue: Mohila Samity Auditorium. Time: 7 pm.

**Discussion:** BISS organises a discussion on 'Assessing the Development of Democracy'. Key speaker: Prof Dr De-Id Beetham, Director, Centre for Democratisation Studies, University of Leeds, UK. Prof Shamsul Huda Harun, Department of Political Science, Dhaka University, will preside. Venue: BISS Auditorium, 1/46 Elephant Road. Time: 3:00 pm.

## Weather

### Temperature may rise

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

Night temperature may rise over the country during the period. Met Office predicted.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 30.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and the lowest of 9.3 degree Celsius at Sirimangol.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:01 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:21 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 27.8 15.3 40 30

Chittagong 29.0 14.6 40 45

Rajshahi 28.0 10.5 62 46

Khulna 30.0 14.4 72 63

Barisal 29.2 13.5 53 63

Sylhet 27.8 13.0 46 35

Cox's Bazar 30.6 16.2 54 36

## HERE and THERE

### BCL

By DU Correspondent

The three-day-long extended meeting of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of ruling party, ended yesterday.

The meeting decided to set up schools at every thanas to eradicate illiteracy and to strengthen BCL activities in rural, urban, college and madrasa units.

The meeting was presided over by Bahadur Bepari while the members of different BCL executive body participated the meeting.

Meanwhile, the BCL yesterday brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus, observing 'Shaheed Salim-Delwar Day'.

To mark the day, they placed wreath at the martyrs' monument to pay homage to the martyrs, who were killed in anti-autocratic movement during Ershad regime.

### SSA

By Staff Correspondent

Sammilito Samajik Andolon (SSA), submitted a memorandum to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on Sunday last for holding of free and fair election.

A group of SSA leaders including Tareq Ali, Pankaj Bhattacharya, Rawshan Jahan

Shathi, Bidhan Krishna Sen, Syed Anwarul Huq and Ajoy Roy handed over the memorandum to the acting CEC that included a seven points recommendation.

The recommendation included: The points that political parties would have to send the audit statement of their accounts to participate in the election, electoral laws should be amended so that the corrupt and defunct persons can not participate, election rules should be implemented two months before the polls, election rules should be implemented at all levels and publicity of election rules should continue all round the year.

### Ekushey Book Fair

By Staff Correspondent

A discussion meeting on 'Our Publication: Writer, Publisher and Book' was held at the Ekushey Bol Mela Mancha in the afternoon yesterday.

President of Bangla Academy Professor Anisuzzaman presided over the discussion meeting while Moinuddin Ahmed, Prof Syed Monjurul Islam, Mafidul Huq and Sajjad Sharif took part in the discussion, said a press release.

Dr Syed Anwar Hossain, the Director General of the academy, delivered the welcome speech at the discussion meeting, it added.

## Anti-hartal processions in city

Leaders and workers of Bangladesh Awami League and its front organisations marched through different city streets yesterday protesting the dawn-to-dusk hartal, called by the four-party opposition alliance, reports BSS.

The marchers called upon the people to become more active against the anti-development activities like hartal.

Dhaka City Awami League brought out a procession from the central office of Bangladesh Awami League which terminated at the same venue after parading the main streets of the city including Tophkhana Road.

At a post-procession rally at Muktangan here, the city Awami League leaders described the opposition alliance as the 'unity of evil forces' and said that the four parties have joined hands just to 'grab' the state power by any means.

"Both BNP and the autocratic Jatiya Party had made people's life miserable when they were in power," State Min-

ister for Shipping and General Secretary of Dhaka city Awami League Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya told the rally. "They are still trying to keep the people hostage by calling frequent hartals in the name of so-called democratic movement," he said.

Bangladesh Awami League brought out an anti-hartal procession and marched through the streets of Fulbaria, Gulistan, Tophkhana, Press Club, Noor-Hossain Square, Muktangan and GPO.

The processionists chanted slogans against the main opposition party BNP for its anti-state role and unholy alliance with the anti-liberation and fundamentalist force Jamaat-e-Islami and the autocratic Jatiya Party.

Bangladesh Krishak League also brought out a similar procession in the city and paraded important avenues. Motahar Hossain Mollah led the procession which ended at Bangabandhu Avenue.

## Tributes paid to language martyrs

CALCUTTA, Feb 28: Eminent litterateur Annada Shankar Roy has said UNESCO's recognition of February 21 as the International Mother Language Day is a great honour to all Bangla-speaking people both in Bangladesh and India, reports BSS.

"Bangla has reached all the corners of the globe after UNESCO's recognition," he said, adding that all the Bangla-speaking people have got international significance, 48 years after the heroic sons of the soil embraced martyrdom for the cause of their mother tongue.

Roy was speaking at a discussion in the auditorium of West Bengal Bangla Academy here yesterday. Bangladesh Sammilita Sangskritik Jote in cooperation with Bangladesh Mission in Calcutta and Bangladeshi students studying in West Bengal organised the discussion in observance of the International Mother Language Day.

Jote President Ramendu Majumdar, Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta Humayun Kabir, West Bengal MLA and noted singer Ajit Punkey, Mission official Sarwar Alam and Jote leaders Hasan Arif, Afzal Hussain, Ahkam Ullah and Manjural Islam took part in the discussion.

Vice-Chairman of West Bengal Education State Council and Former Vice-Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University Dr Pabitra Sarkar presided over the discussion while Jote leader Shahadat Hossain Nipu conducted it.

A large number of Bangladeshi students participated in the programme.

## Four bridges to be built on Barisal-Kuakata road

PATUAKHALI, Feb 28: The government plans to construct four bridges on Barisal-Patuakhali-Kuakata road to make road communication to southern region, particularly the Kuakata sea beach, easier, reports UNB.

Officials said a feasibility study was being conducted to construct the bridges over Lebukhali Paira, Andamanik, Sonatoli and Khaprabhangha rivers.

The study is expected to be completed by March next. Upon construction of the proposed bridges, it will take only two hours to reach Kuakata from Barisal by road.



## Obituary

By Staff Correspondent

Rokeya Firoz, widow of A M Firoz, former Chief Engineer of PDB, died of cardiac failure at Suhrawardy Hospital on Monday afternoon. She was 55. Elder sister of Shehab Ahmed, Chief Reporter of The Daily Star, she left behind one son and a daughter, four brothers, mother and a host of relations and friends to mourn her death.

She will be buried after arrival of her son Abu Raftat Fahim Mohammad who is in Toronto, Canada. Her body had been kept at BIRDEM mortuary after namaj-e-janaza at her residence at 63, Laboratory road yesterday evening.

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Rehana Ahmed, wife of Dr Kazi Mesbahuddin Ahmed, minister (Economic), Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, died of brain hemorrhage on February 24. She was 48, reports BSS.

She was the second daughter of late Shamsuzzaman of village Mautail in Dhaka district. She left behind her husband, mother, brothers and sisters. Rehana was the second of the seven brothers and sisters.

Her body will arrive in Dhaka on March 2 by a Bangladesh Biman flight from New York and will be taken to her parents' residence at House No: 26, Road No: 14, Sector 3, Uttara Model Town.

She will be buried at the family graveyard at Mautail in the afternoon. Reports from Washington said a pall of gloom descended in the Bangladesh mission and also among the Bangladesh community there on the sudden demise of Rehana Ahmed.



Awami League activists brought out an anti-hartal procession in the city yesterday.

— Star photo



BNP activists brought out a procession in support of the hartal in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

## Fresh programme

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countrywide Demonstration Day on March 11.

The BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote and some other smaller parties will organise joint public meeting and bring out mass processions in all city, district and thana headquarters on the Demonstration Day. In Dhaka, the alliance will hold its programme at Paltan Maidan.

Briefing newsmen, Shamsul Islam said a Martial Law-like situation is prevailing in the country since the enactment of the "black and repressive" PSA which the government is using solely for meeting its political ends.

He said although the government it will not to abuse the PSA but in reality it is using the law against the opposition leaders and activists to suppress the current one-point movement.

The BNP leader strongly condemned the prime minister for her comment about the president at the programme, "Desh-bashir Mukhomukhi," aired in BTV.

"She (Hasina) didn't appear before the countrymen... she appeared before a box, which people do not open because it has been turned into a propaganda box of the ruling party. The programme was purely a stage managed drama and she told lie," said Islam.

He demanded immediate abolition of the PSA and resignation of the government. He congratulated the countrymen for observing the hartal spontaneously. Islam alleged that the ruling party and the police attacked opposition pickets in different parts of the country that left unspecified number of people wounded.

Speaking at the briefing, JP leader Kazi Firoz Rashid said the conflict between Bangabha-

ban and Ganobhaban has created a suffocating situation in the country. He blamed the prime minister for her efforts to make the President controversial.

He said the US State Department Report 1999 is a clear document of the government's repression on opposition, violation of human rights and undemocratic activities.

## Bandh in Assam today protesting minister's killing

GUWAHATI, Feb 28: The ruling Assam Gana Parishad yesterday called a 12-hour Assam bandh tomorrow in protest against killing of FWD and Forest Minister Nagen Sarma and four others by the banned ULFA militants near Narbari town earlier in the day, reports PTI.

The ULFA ultras detonated a powerful improvised explosive device (IED) at Bahjani village, five km away from Narbari town, under the vehicle of the minister killing him and four others on the spot, according to official sources here.

Meanwhile, the Assam government has declared holiday today to mourn the death of Forest and FWD Minister Nagen Sarma who was killed in a bomb blast along with four others in Narbari district yesterday.

As a mark of respect to the departed souls, all government and semi-government offices would remain closed today, an official spokesman said.

All government run institutions including schools and colleges would also remain closed, he said.

## Science congress begins in Calcutta

CALCUTTA, Feb 28:

Bangladesh sought greater co-operation from India in scientific and technical research to strengthen the sub-continent's joint output in this area, reports PTI.

The two countries, with similar problems of arsenic contamination and environmental pollution, can work wonders in science and technology if the flow of research is facilitated both ways, Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner Humayun Kabir said.

Speaking at the Seventh State Science and Technology Congress jointly organised by the West Bengal Government and Science Association of Bengal to mark the National Science Day, Kabir said both the countries were linked with a common language and researchers could amply benefit from this.

West Bengal Power Minister Mrinal Bandopadhyay said both the countries have a strong base in biological sciences and information technology research and these could be further harnessed to benefit them.

This year's Satyendra Nath Puraskar for science writing in Bengali was conferred jointly on eminent writers Amit Chakraborty for his book 'Gene and Genetic Engineering' and Shyamal Chakraborty for 'Gene, Jiban ar Cloning' (Gene, life and cloning).

The Meghnad Puraskar for NGOs popularising science went to Aurobindo Anushulan Society. All three awards consist of a citation, plaque and Rs 20,000.

Over 450 papers from scientists in West Bengal and Bangladesh will be presented at the three-day congress that began today.

## 50 hurt during hartal

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Fazlu Mian was reported to be critical.

Two rickshaw-pullers — Abul Kalam, 25, and Liton, 16 — were stabbed allegedly by the pickets near the Dhaka City Corporation office at Laxmibazar in old Dhaka at about 9 a.m.

During the shutdown, the BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote and Jagga brought out a series of separate and joint processions in different parts of the city, including Naya Paltan, Bijoyagar, Motijheel, Dhanmondi, Pallabi, Kalabagan, Banani, Gulshan, Badda, Mirpur, Mouchak and Rampara areas.

Presence of BNP activists and the number of processions were higher during this hartal.

BNP leaders Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Khandaker Mahbubuddin, ZA Khan, Abdullah Al Noman, party MPs Sadek Hossain Khoka, Amanullah Aman, Zainal Abedin Faruq, Nazimuddin Alam, Ruhul Qudus Talukder Dulul, Nadim Mostafa and Shamsul Alam Pamanik, central leaders Gafshar Chandra Roy, MA Hakim, Abus Salam and Reza Ahmed led those processions.

JP leaders Saifur Rahman, Abu Hossain Babla and Tayebur Rahman, Jamaat leaders Mohammad Kamaruzzaman and ATM Azharul Islam, IOJ leaders ARM Abdul Matin and Abdur Rab Yusuf led their respective party processions. The parties also held separate rallies.

Our Khulna Correspondent reports: Constable Ataur Rahman was severely injured in bomb blasts at Upper Jessore Road and Shantidham square at about 11 am. BDR and riot police rushed there to control the BNP picketers who damaged at least 10 rickshaws, according to eye witnesses. Police arrested Mehedi Masud, an activist of BNP for exploding crackers to

scare the pedestrians at KD Ghose Road.

UNB reports from Faridpur: At least 25 people, including two policemen, were injured in sporadic clashes between pro and anti-hartal activists during the day-long hartal in the town yesterday.

Of the injured police sub-inspector Abdu Salam, constable Bazlur Rahman, BNP leader Lital, Hossain, Jamaat leader Mohammad Khales, Krishak League leader Abdul Baten and Jubo League leader Khalilur Rahman were admitted to Faridpur General Hospital. Their condition was stated to be critical.

During the trouble both the groups chased each other and blasted bombs creating panic in the town.

District BNP office, two shops and a number of houses, including residence of district BNP organising secretary Ali Ashraf Nannu, were ransacked during the violence in Purbo Khabashpur area.

In the evening ruling Awami League and opposition BNP held separate meetings where speakers blamed each other for the violence. Tension was prevailing in the town.

In Gazipur, some unidentified men set fire to two buses parked near Anarkali Cinema Hall in Tongi at 5:30 am leaving an employee of one of the buses seriously injured.

Shanto Mia, 32, who sustained serious burn injury, was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

It is suspected that pro-hartal activists caused the fire. During the hartal, pickets damaged three shops at Harinal bazar of Sadar thana in the morning. An affected shop owner lodged case against nine activists of JCD.

Our Rajshahi Correspondent reports: The dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed here peacefully.

## N'ganj

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terrorism," and "peace is a crying need in Bangladesh," converged on the town.

The business leaders hoisted a white flag symbolising peace at the Victory Memorial.

The rally was addressed by Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturing Association president Monjurul Haq, FBCCI representative Alhaj Afzal Hossain, NCCI president Alhaj Mohammad Ayub, Bangladesh Yarn Merchants Association president Badsha Miah and Bangladesh Cloth Merchants Association president Alhaj Kasem Jamal.

NCCI president Selim Osman asked both parties to make separate lists of terrorists in order to free the country from their heinous activities. He also urged the businessmen to hand over extortionists to police whenever they de-

A written statement from Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) president Abdul Awal Mintoos was also read out at the meeting in which he called for all to discard the politics of clash, confrontation and anarchy.

## Dr Alauddin laid to rest

RAJSHAH, Feb 28: State Minister for Housing and Public Works Dr Alauddin was laid to rest at his family graveyard in Charghat thana area today, reports UNB.

After his body was flown in here from Dhaka by a helicopter, a namaj-e-janaza for the late minister was held at Sahab Bazar road at 2 pm. A second prayer was held in Bagha thana in his constituency and a third one at Charghat Pilot High School.

Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu, Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil and State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Zinnatunissa Talukdar came here with the family members of the veteran parliamentarian.

Leaders of district and city Awami League and its front organisations, high officials and people of all strata of life attended the funerals.

BSS adds: Earlier in Dhaka, the namaj-e-janaza for Dr Alauddin was held at the South Plaza of Sangsad Bhavan in the morning.

Members of the Council of Ministers, Deputy Speaker, Chief Whip and Whips, MPs, political leaders and large number of admirers attended the janaza.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placed wreaths at the coffin of Dr Alauddin at the South Plaza as a mark of her last respect to her cabinet colleague and party leader.

## New Chief Nat'l Commissioner of Scouts

M Fazlur Rahman, Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology, has been made Chief National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts for next three years, says a press release.

At the 27th Annual General Meeting (Triennial) of the National Council of Bangladesh Scouts held at the National Scout Bhavan premises on February 24, the councillors recommended him for the post.

The councillors also unanimously elected Manzoor Ul Karim as president, Bangladesh Scouts, Dr Shah Mohammed Farid as Vice President, ZA Samsul Haque as Treasurer, and A K M Yunus, Mobin Ahmed Jaigirdar, Shah Alam Gazi and Altar Rahman as new councillor representatives.

## Floods SA braces for influx of refugees

JOHANNESBURG, Feb 28: South Africa is bracing for a massive influx of refugees from neighbouring Mozambique and Zimbabwe following the worst floods to hit southern Africa in 50 years, officials said, reports AFP.

With flood waters in South Africa's Northern Province beginning to subside, the Home Affairs department said the country would be obliged to accept victims of natural disasters from its neighbours, parts of which were devastated by Cyclone Eline last week.

Home Affairs spokesman Manase Makwela said in an interview published Monday in Johannesburg's Citizen newspaper that the government would appeal to international agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for assistance.

"As a signatory to various international conventions, South Africa is obliged to accept victims of natural disasters but other countries will have to play a role as well," said Makwela.

With Northern Province and Mpumalanga, the provinces bordering Zimbabwe and Mozambique respectively, still badly affected by the floods, refugees would have to be accommodated elsewhere, he said.

## First PSC

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putting pressure on the government to allow export of gas and extension of the three-year IOF to five years. They are also unwilling to compromise any exploration or drilling programme but seeking government's guarantee for sale of gas, if discovered.

Tullow-Chevron and Texaco have sought a drilling programme for Block 9. This is totally different from their original proposals.

All these proposals have been made at a time when the government has suddenly become "too keen" to sign a PSC involving a US company before or during the visit of US President Bill Clinton to Bangladesh.

"But Pangaea's spirit is totally different. It is not trying to 'twist any clause,' the source pointed out. "This is definitely the most positive negotiation we have in the Second Round Bidding."

Pangaea is a privately financed company having a very short track record. It was the lone bidder for Block 8 and was selected for the block back in mid-98. Pangaea had also proposed for Block 11.

As it was financially weak, the government had earlier asked it to bring in a big partner. It brought in European company OMV. But OMV did not stick to the Second Round Bidding for long. Now, the company has brought in a technical partner, ZYOL of China.

An official said the American company is not seeking any gas sale guarantee from Petrobangla right now.

"It says, it has proposed signing of a PSC, not a gas purchase sales agreement (GPSA). Pangaea believes that right now, the gas market is dull but it is a growing. Therefore there will be huge demands," he said.

"Pangaea also believes that in near future, PSC operations in Bangladesh would lead to discovery of so much of gas that Bangladesh would agree to export gas. Therefore, prospects for gas marketing is very bright here," the official noted.

Since there is a number of "disputed issues" concerning the Model PSCs with Unocal, Shell, Tullow-Chevron and Texaco, signing of any PSC with these companies may take some time, the sources said.