

What's on today.....

Prothom Alo roundtable: The daily Prothom Alo will hold a roundtable conference on "Armed Forces of Bangladesh and Defence Principles." Venue: Hotel Sheraton top of the park auditorium. Time: 10.00 am-5.00 pm.

Manipuri dance drama: A Manipuri dance drama will be held in aid of the disabled. The Green Disabled Foundation of Sylhet has organised the event in association with the British Council. Venue: British Council Auditorium. Time: 7.30 pm. Tickets are available at British Council, Sagar Publishers and Video Connection.

Seminar: Programme to Motivate, Train and Employ Female Teachers in Rural Secondary Schools (PROMOTE) organises a one-day national gender seminar. Venue: Hotel Purbani International. Time: 9.30 am-5.00 pm.

National conference: The 5th national conference of Bangladesh Khetmajur Samity will be held. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar premises. Time: 11.00 am.

CPD dialogue: Centre for Policy Dialogue will hold a dialogue on "Poverty Alleviation Strategy: National Priorities and Donors' Perspectives." Chief guest: State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir. Venue: CIRDAF auditorium, Chameli House, Tophkhana Road. Time: 2.00 pm-5.00 pm.

Publication ceremony: Liberation War, Bangabandhu and Bangladesh Research Institute of National University will hold the publication ceremony of "Liberation War and Bangladesh." Venue: Kabi Sufia Kamal auditorium, National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 4.00 pm.

IUBAT seminar: International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) will hold a seminar on "Strategy on Road Network Maintenance Highways and City Roads." Venue: Room no 105, IUBAT, House No 135, Road no 9/A, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 5.00 pm.

Meeting: A meeting of Masteeda Surja Sen Parishad will be held. Venue: Hasan Films (1st floor), BMA Bhaban, Tophkhana Road. Time: 5.00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Inauguration: The Dhanmondi branch of Futurekids Gateway will be inaugurated. Venue: House no 60/C, Rd no 16 new, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 11.00 am.

Weather

Temperature unlikely to change
Rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty wind may occur at one or two places over Chittagong, Barisal and Dhaka divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 am today, reports UNB.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country during the period while day temperature may remain nearly unchanged across the country, Met Office said.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 36.6 degree Celsius at Rajshahi and the lowest 19.8 degree Celsius at Sitakunda.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:15 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:50 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	32.1	23.0	76	56
Chittagong	32.5	22.0	80	74
Rajshahi	36.6	22.4	78	52
Khulna	33.6	21.8	78	69
Barisal	33.0	21.5	88	74
Sylhet	32.5	21.3	88	74
Cox's Bazar	31.5	21.4	66	80

HERE and THERE

Joi Bangla Sangskriti Jote
Joi Bangla Sangskriti Jote yesterday held a children's painting competition in observance of the 80th birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports BSS.

The competition held at the premises of the Institute of Arts and Crafts of the Dhaka University was open to all.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad inaugurated the competition which was participated by a large number of children of different age groups.

Geeta Sangha
A 21-member executive committee of Sree Sree Geeta Sangha for the year 2000-2001 was elected at its annual general meeting yesterday, reports BSS.

The office-bearers of the committee are: president - Rati Ranjan Ukil; vice-presidents - Pabitra Ranjan Sarker and Monmohan Talukder; general secretary - Madhusudan Dastider; assistant general secretary - Satya Charan Saha; finance secretary - Dulal Chandra Lala; organising secretary - Badal Kumar Bhowmik; asst organizing secretary -

Congratulations
Sunil Chandra Das, publicity secretary - Goutam Golder; asst publicity secretary - Adhir Kumar Chakraborty; religious and cultural secretary - Sudhir Kumar Saha; office secretary - Paritosh Kumar Nandi; asst office secretary - Nibaran Chandra Dutta; co-ordination secretary - Kanai Kanti Mandal; asst co-ordination secretary - Shyamol Kumar Chakraborty; women affairs secretary - Momata Dutta; social welfare secretary - Priya Ranjan Dey; education secretary - Dharendra Kumar Roy; library secretary - Santosh Narayan Saha; asst library secretary - Jawhar Lal Saha; and sports and youth secretary - Ranjit Kumar Bhat-tacherjee.

Plea to clear dues of Litmond Garments workers
By Staff Correspondent
Leaders of Bangladesh Bohumukhi Sramojibi O Hawker Samity yesterday called upon the authorities of Litmond Garments to clear all dues including salary and overtime of the garment workers.

Bacchu Bhuiyan and Delwar Hossain, President and General Secretary respectively of the samity alleged that the management of the garment did not pay salary and overtime bill of its workers for the last three months.

The workers are passing their days in misery following the non-payment of salary, the leaders alleged.

The leaders urged to pay salary and overtime bills with in April 2 as promised by the Chairman of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

Call for empowerment of women
Jatiya Party lawmaker Tasminia Hossain has called for effective empowerment of women for the betterment of nation saying it was needed not to compete with men but to ensure their contribution to society, reports BSS.

Speaking at a seminar on women empowerment at Kallhatt of Tangal on Thursday she said the social system caused the disparity between men and women and this must be removed.

"Only the combined efforts of men and women can build a prosperous and happy country," she said.

Women and Children Affairs Ministry organised the seminar also joined, among others, by former MP Laila Siddiqui. Lokpal TNO Shaheen Reza chaired the function.

From RU Correspondent
Md Shariful Islam has stood first class first in the MSS examination '97 of Library and Information Science (LISc) department (held in 1999) of Rajshahi University.

He is the first student of the department to achieve first class in the masters exam since the inception of the department.

He secured a total of 67.6% marks, highest in the Social Science faculty of the university in the same session. He had also obtained first class first in his honours finals in 1995.

Shariful Islam is the second son of Abdur Rahim Mondol and Monjuara Begum of Salungu village under Mitlapukur thana of Rangpur district.

Role of police in the Liberation War

Some 14,000 out of the 35,000 policemen in the country quit their duties after the start of the Liberation War in 1971, prompting the Pakistani military junta to bring in some 5,000 police from Punjab, a recent publication of the police says, reports BSS.

Over 10,000 Bangalee policemen took part indirect war against the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators on different fronts across the country in the nine-month long war in 1971.

Of them, over 2000, including five senior police officers, sacrificed their lives, says the publication, "Muktijuddhey Bangladesh Police" (Police in Liberation War).

Senior officers who died in the war included the then deputy inspector general (DIG) of Rajshahi Range Mamun Mahmud, superintendent of police (SP) of Rajshahi Shah Abdul Majid, SP of Chittagong Shamsul Haque, SP of Comilla Munshi Kabir Uddin and additional SP of Barisal Golam Hossain.

Eight police officials were accorded gallantry awards for their courageous role on the front. Three of them were honoured with "Bir Bikram", two "Bir Protik" awards, while three others received appreciation letters from the chief of the MuktiBahini, the publication added.

The then SDPO of Jhenidah, Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, constable Abdul Mannan and constable Towhid Ali received the 'Bir Bikram' awards.

Both the constables died in frontal fight. Constables Mohammad Solaiman and Nazim Uddin were awarded 'Bir Protik' and constables Shawkot Hossain, Noor Mostafa and Hamdul Haque received appreciation letters from the 'Muktibahini' chief.

Senior police officials played vital roles in different sectors in the Liberation War. Of them, the then principal of Sarda Police Academy with the status of DIG served as the inspector general of police and home secretary of the historic Mujibnagar government while R I Chowdhury served as the SP of Calcutta embassy during the war.

The then SP of Chittagong Hill Tracts Bazul Rahman, SP of Pabna Chowdhury Abdul Gaffar, SP of Dinajpur S M A Hashem, vice principal of the Police Academy at Sarda S K Chowdhury, SDPO Jhenidah Mahbub Uddin Ahmed and SDPO Kishoreganj A K R Q M Mottalib also played vital roles in the war.

The Pakistani military junta was forced to recruit 15,000 policemen during the war to run the administration as a good number of policemen had quit their stations to join the war, a top police official said.

Former IGP Abdul Khaleque says: "The contribution of police forces to the Liberation War is unforgettable."

"The fight between the police and occupation Pakistani army on the night on March 25 at Rajarbagh Police Line was the first armed resistance against the invaders in the country," he told BSS.



Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee (R) meets with Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit at a ceremonial welcome at the Presidential palace yesterday. Ecevit is on a landmark two-day official visit to India. —AFP photo

Turkish PM begins India visit

NEW DELHI, Mar 31: Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit began a landmark visit to India today by stressing the common problem of trans-border terrorism facing Ankara and New Delhi, reports AFP.

Ecevit's three-day visit, the first by a Turkish premier to India in 14 years and his own first trip to a country which he once described as "one of the places I want to see most," started with a formal welcome at the presidential palace.

"Turkey has suffered a great deal on account of terrorism sponsored from outside the country. But we are not disheartened," he told reporters after he was welcomed by his Indian counterpart Atal Behari Vajpayee.

"Just like India we are determined to deal with terrorism without deviating from democracy and human rights," he said.

He struck a personal note, saying: "It has always been my dream to visit India. In my childhood I was deeply impressed by Indian culture and literature. This is a very great nation."

Ecevit and his wife Rahasana then went on to Rajhat, the mausoleum of India's independence hero Mahatma Gandhi, where he offered a wreath and wrote a glowing tribute to the apostle of peace and non-violence.

"It is my great honour to submit on behalf of the Turkish nation the genuine feelings of admiration and sincere respect my people always carried for the exemplary life and great work of Mahatma Gandhi," he said in the visitors' book.

"Those who desire peace in the world will cherish forever the memory of this great philosopher, mentor and statesman."

'Steps taken to collect blood from remote areas'

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Prof Dr M Amanullah yesterday emphasized the need for raising the level of health consciousness for building a industrious nation, reports BSS.

Inaugurating a painting exhibition of the age group of eight to 16 on the occasion of 'Children Health Day-2000' at Shishu Academy, Prof Amanullah said low literacy and ignorance are the causes of low level of health consciousness.

Referring to the theme of the day 'I shall donate safe blood to save life', Prof Amanullah said the government has taken necessary steps to collect blood from remote areas that will meet 90 per cent demand of blood.

The state minister appreciated the children for their paintings. About 500 including 30 retarded children participated in the competition.

National Programme Officer of the World Health Organization (WHO) Brig (Retd) QMS Hafiz, Line Director of BCC Unit Md Akhtaruzzaman, Director of the Primary Health Care Dr Zakir Hossain and Chief of the Health Education Khandkar Mahfuzul Haq accompanied the state minister.

Steps taken to collect blood from remote areas

Bangladesh Political Science Samity restructured
By Staff Correspondent
A group of professors of Political Science held a meeting yesterday at TSC in Dhaka University and claimed that they have restructured the Bangladesh Political Science Samity.

Presided over by Prof Shaiful Huda Haroon, the meeting formed a 101-member national council preparatory committee with Prof Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir as convenor and Prof Abul Fazal Haque, Prof Mohammad Junaid and Dr Harunor-Rashid as joint convenors.

The meeting also formed a steering committee and different sub-committees to hold the national council.

Amu visits ailing AL leaders

Awami League presidium member and Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu yesterday visited ailing Awami League leaders Altaf Hossain Golondaj, MP, and Jhenidah district Awami League president Ayub Hossain at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, reports BSS.

He stayed sometime by the side of the ailing party leaders and inquired about their conditions.

Social welfare secretary of Awami League Mukul Bose was with the minister during the visit.

Directive to raise number of fruit-bearing trees

CHITTAGONG, Mar 31: Minister for Environment and Forest Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury yesterday gave directive to the forest officers to take immediate steps to increase the number of fruit-bearing trees across the country to help protect the birds population the number of which is alarmingly dwindling, reports BSS.

The minister gave this directive while visiting a forest nursery at Hathazari here. She requested the officers and employees of the nursery to plant more indigenous species of fruit-bearing trees along with trees for wood.

"The number of birds in Bangladesh is falling rapidly as the number of fruit bearing trees in different parts of the country has decreased," she observed.

She said Tetul, Shimul, Bot, Polish, Peara, Aam (Mango), Kathal (Jack Fruit), Khejur (Date), Gab, Dumur, Kadam, Bel, Lebu, Ata and Sharifa trees should be planted in a bigger way in the forest nurseries for distribution among local people.

The minister suggested to plant spicy trees to save valuable foreign currency. She said the nurseries should plant of Telpata, Daruchini, Lobongo, Golmarich and Elach.

She planted a sapling during the visit. Chief conservator of forest Mohammad Golam Habib and other officers were present during the visit.

30 injured in Manikganj clash

MANIKGANJ, Mar 31: At least 30 people were injured as two rival groups clashed over establishing supremacy in a local bazar today, reports UNB.

Police said the clash took place at the Municipal Kutcha Bazar in the evening between supporters of merchants association leader Kabirul Alam and cooperatives society leader Hajee Abdus Sattar.

39 Russian soldiers missing

MOSCOW, Mar 31: Fighting flared in Chechnya today on the eve of a visit there by the UN human rights chief as Russia confirmed it had lost contact with 39 soldiers caught in an ambush that killed at least four, reports AFP.

Underlining Moscow concerns, Interior Minister Vladimir Ruzhailo flew to the scene of the Chechen raid to personally investigate the ambush and direct the battles which have followed it.

"We still do not know our precise losses. We will only be able to say after checking the locale -- we will have both killed and missing in action," Ruzhailo told ORT television upon arrival in Chechnya's southern Vedeno district.

"There was shooting there again this afternoon," Ruzhailo added.

Moscow slapped a gag order on Russian media reporting from the region. A brief official military statement said only that clashes in the republic's snow-swept southeastern mountains continued.

The latest battles came just before a tour of the war-torn republic by UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson. She is to visit Ingushetia on Saturday, before travelling to Chechnya on Sunday.

The most senior Western official to visit Chechnya since the start of the six-month war, the former Irish president is due to investigate reports of atrocities and visit some of the notorious Russian-run 'filtration camps.'

"I want to reinforce the culture of human rights," Robinson said upon her arrival in Moscow. "This visit is very important."

The latest Chechen counter-attacks started Russian generals who had vowed to stomp out the last pockets of rebel resistance by the spring.

It was a vow timed to coincide with Sunday's presidential election, which saw Vladimir Putin win outright thanks to his tough stance on the rebellion.

Generals said a column of 49 interior ministry troops was surrounded by a 150-strong contingent of fighters on Wednesday while a Russian back-up team was driven off.

Tobacco control law to be enacted: Khasru

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru yesterday said the government was committed to ensuring public health by enacting tobacco control law to stop the adverse impact of tobacco, reports BSS.

"United efforts are necessary to formulate a timely law as health is the constitutional right of the people," he said while speaking at a symposium, Tobacco Control Law in Bangladesh and Recommendations, arranged by Bangladesh Cancer Society at a local hotel here as the chief guest.

Presided over by President of the Society Professor Syed Fazlul Haque, the function was also addressed by State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr M Amanullah as the special guest. Among others, language veteran Advocate Gazul Haque, Barrister Nazmul Huda, MP, and Barrister Shafiq Ahmed took part in the discussion.

Former cabinet secretary and member of the Society Mahabub-uz-Zaman presented the keynote paper at the symposium, while the address of welcome was given by its Secretary General Dr Mohammad Shadat Hossain.

Health Secretary Syed Alamgir Faruk was present on the occasion. "It is time to formulate a law to overcome the hazards of tobacco which is inflicting serious damage on young and educated workforce," he said.

"Socio-economic development of the country is necessary to stop the rot of young workforce, who resort to drugs and other social ills out of frustration," Khasru said.

"Billboards and other forms of advertisement of tobacco should be banned in the country as those allure innocent people, especially the youth, to pick up the habit of smoking, resulting in the loss of invaluable human resources," Amanullah said.

The state minister said time has come to take proper decisions for making a healthy nation to face the challenge of the 21st century.

Language veteran Gazul Haque placed emphasis on the maximum use of mass media, especially movies and television programmes, as actors and actresses can motivate the youth and juveniles from taking the 'raw materials of cancer.'

He said smoking should be prohibited in all public places, including hospitals, clinics, railway stations, launch terminals, steamers, public transport, educational institutions, cinemas and offices.

Barrister Nazmul Huda said: "As a democratic society, we have greater responsibilities to ensure the fundamental rights of individuals by formulating a tobacco prevention law based on facts and documents."

"The Health Ministry is the custodian to ensure proper healthcare of the country's individuals," Huda said, adding "we should propose legislation to make a tobacco prevention law as soon as possible, which would ensure public health."

Barrister Shafiq Ahmed said the anti-tobacco campaign should be taken at the doorsteps of the common man most of whom live in villages, and anti-tobacco topics should be included in the curricula of primary and higher secondary levels of education to create awareness about the affects of tobacco.

Warehouse gutted at Tejgaon

By Staff Correspondent
Fire gutted tin shed warehouse and adjacent office rooms of Swan Foam Company at Tejgaon in the city early hours yesterday, fire brigade sources said.

The fire originated from an electric short circuit at the warehouse, they said.

Fire brigade officials could not give details of the loss of property in the fire.

Four fire fighter units from Tejgaon and headquarters rushed to the spot and doused the fire after more than an hour.

None was hurt in the fire.

Conflict in Netrakona dist BNP

NETRAKONA, Mar 31: A serious conflict has developed in the district unit of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), centering the formation of a new committee by the party high command, reports BSS.

Local leaders and workers of the party are virtually divided into two factions -- one supporting the new committee and the other vehemently opposing it.

One of the groupings is led by Ashrafuddin Khan, the newly appointed president of Netrakona district BNP, while Advocate Abdul Koddus, former general secretary of the unit, is heading the rebel camp.

Leaders of both groups held separate press conferences in the town to air their grievances.

Khan congratulated the BNP high command for constituting the new committee and expressed the optimism that it would be able to strengthen the party in the district.

Koddus strongly condemned the decision of the high command and opined that the announcement of the new committee without holding a council session was totally undemocratic and contrary to party constitution.

Both groups later brought out processions that paraded through different streets of the town, chanting slogans in support of their stands on the committee.

Tannery wastes

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of fleshing meal annually is US dollars 0.52 million (Tk 26 million) at 80 per cent level of capacity utilisation, the pre-tax profit after paying interest and meeting cost of depreciation is projected as 46,400 US dollars (Tk 2,32 million) per year.

Dr Rao will soon present a detailed report to the government and the tanners of Hazaribagh, said an industries ministry source.

Mosquito

From Page 1
bite us during day time carry virus.

About the project, Prof Amin said they are calling it mosquito management project as their aim is to minimise mosquito menace since it is not possible to wipe out it altogether.

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Putin rejects coalition with Communists

MOSCOW, Mar 31: President-elect Vladimir Putin today rejected Communist demands to be included in Russia's next government based solely on their victory in December's parliamentary polls, reports AFP.

The Kremlin also unveiled a line-up of top economic advisors which one Western investment bank here hailed as a "dream team" of liberal luminaries.

Putin has progressed cautiously since Sunday's election victory about naming a new cabinet despite daily newspaper rumours on who might be slipping in our out of the new Kremlin chief's favour.

He had previously urged all ministers to turn a deaf ear to the speculation and continue with their jobs. Yet he broached the topic for the first time on Friday while visiting a Russian nuclear energy plant.

"It is hard to envision a coalition government, from the traditional understanding of that term," Interfax quoted Putin as saying while on a visit to the town of Snezhinsk in the Urals.

Russia's Communists, who make up the State Duma lower house of parliament's largest faction, have insisted that Putin create a cabinet that mirrors the chamber's political composition.

Putin's comment Friday marked his first public rejection of the idea.

Putin did add that his future cabinet appointments would not be based on any particular candidate's party membership.

"They must drop their party affiliation once they enter the government," Putin said.

"It is possible that the government may be made of different party members," he added. "But they all must be professional."

A coalition government was also repeatedly ruled out by Putin's predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, who fought a running battle with the Communist-led Duma.

Putin may not appoint a prime minister until after his inauguration in early May, yet he may hire and fire ministers before then.

Newspaper reports in Moscow say that Putin has been presented with at least three versions of possible ministerial appointments so far, and that he has not yet made up his mind on which plans suits him the best.

Observers currently tip First Deputy Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov, Russia's former debt write-off negotiator, as the front-runner in the race to fill the prime minister's post.

However most reports paint Kasyanov as a compromise figure who would run an interim government before being replaced by someone from Putin's inner circle later this year.

Kasyanov is seen as a close ally of the old Kremlin clique that includes the oil and aluminum baron Roman Abramovich -- an oligarch who had considerable sway in Yeltsin's Kremlin and whose authority Putin is yet to challenge in public.

Meanwhile the shape of Putin's future economic strategy took shape when the Kremlin revealed which of his competing advisors had won out in a struggle to oversee the drafting of Russia's main economic blueprint.

Putin's policy think tank now includes four figures considered to be among the most liberal in their field -- Andrei Illarionov, Oleg Vyugin, Mikhail Dmitriyev, and Sergey Shatalov.

Fighting rages in Chechnya

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JCD, BCL

From Page 12
tion of proposed Bangabandhu Hall in the fixed site demolishing Matihar Hall. But the JCD opposed it.

JCD will form a human chain in front of the central library at 11 am tomorrow to press for its 12-point demand while BCL will launch a signature campaign in support of its 14-point demand.

JCD threatened to launch a demonstration programme for an indefinite period if its demands are not met by April 6.

Meanwhile, the university authorities sought cooperation from all concerned in constructing the proposed Bangabandhu Hall.