

What's on today . . .

**Launching ceremony:** The launching ceremony of a training programme for LAS under the EMS project implemented by World Bank under the Sustainable Environment Management Programme, will be held. The programme is executed by Ministry of Environment and Forestry and funded by the United Nations Development Programme. Venue: BETS centre, House No 55, Rd No 4/A, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 9:00 am.

**Inauguration:** The Dhanmondi branch of FutureReids Gateway will be inaugurated. Venue: House no 60/C, Rd no 16 new, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 11:00 am.

**Discussion meeting:** Shefaul Mulk Hakem Habibur-Rahman Foundation in association with the National Museum will hold a discussion meeting on occasion of the 119th birth anniversary of Yunani medical scientist Shefaul Mulk Hakem Habibur Rahman. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 5:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

**BSM national conference:** The 1st national conference and scientific session of Bangladesh Society of Medicine (BSM) will be held. Venue: Winter Garden of Hotel Sheraton. Time: 9:30 am.

Weather

Temp unlikely to change

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged across the country, Met Office said.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 39.6 degree Celsius at Rajshahi and the lowest 20.0 degree Celsius at Teknaf.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:15 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:49 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	33.5	23.6
Chittagong	30.6	20.4
Rajshahi	37.6	23.0
Khulna	34.6	23.4
Barisal	33.6	22.3
Sylhet	31.4	23.0
Cox's Bazar	31.7	21.5

HERE and THERE



**Sandhani Eye Donation Assoc**

The election to the new executive committee of Sandhani National Eye Donation Association was held at its biennial meeting yesterday, says a press release.

Ruhul Amin Muzumdar and Dr Joyal Abedin were elected the president and secretary general of the committee respectively.

Others elected to the committee include Dr A H Saidur Rahman, Nawajiz Ali Khan, Dr Abul Kalam Azad (vice-presidents), Dr Babul Chandra de Shishir (joint secretary general), Prof Chowdhury Humayun Kabir, Engineer Khandaqar Mezbah Uddin Ahmed, Dr Tosaddiq Hossain Siddiqi Jamal, Dr Md Moirul Islam Khan, Dr Raihan Rabbani, Monsur Ahmed, Shahidul Islam, Dr Kamruzzaman Antu, Dr Noor Alam Siddiq Munna, Dr Kanul Shah, Dr Kripadhan Chakravorty and Dr Mamunur Rashid (members).

**BWFHR**

The first national conference of Bangladesh Workers Forum for Human Rights (BWFHR) was held yesterday, says a press release.

Slate Minister for Textiles AKM Jahangir Hossain was the chief guest at the conference.



Deputy Commissioner of Comilla Chowdhury Golam Mowla as chief guest handing over the AB Bank Gold Medal to Abu Musa Mohammad Fakhrul Islam Khan, Superintendent of Police, Comilla in appreciation of Comilla Police Department's remarkable effort in promptly recovering a handsome amount of money of Arab Bangladesh Bank Limited, Comilla Branch. The deputy managing directors of Arab Bangladesh Bank Limited C M Koyes Sami and Abu Hanif Khan looking on.

**Imported silk yarn being smuggled out to India**

BENAPOLE, Apr 1: Silk yarn worth of millions of taka is being smuggled out to neighbouring India through Benapole and Putakhali borders, reports UNB.

The smugglers, who generally use Jessore-Benapole road as safety route, in connivance with the members of the law enforcing agency, have long been sending the imported item from China out of the country.

The minister said that workers are the people falling victim to violation of human rights in the country. If people are made more aware of human rights issues, he said, it will be easier to prevent violation of it.

**Sree Sree Geeta Sangha**

A 21-member executive committee of Sree Sree Geeta Sangha for the year 2000-2001, have been elected uncontested at the annual general meeting of the Sangha on Friday, says a press release.

Following are the new office bearers of the Sangha: president — Rati Ranjan Ukil, vice president — Pabitra Ranjan Sarker and Mono Moham Talukder, general secretary — Madhu Sudan Dastider Asstt general secretary — Satya Charan Saha, finance secretary — Dulal Chandra Lala, organising secretary — Advocate Badal Kumar Bhowmik, Asstt organising secretary — Sunil Chandra Das, publicity secretary — Goutam Bhdha Goldar, Asstt. Publicity Secretary — Adhir Kumar Chakraborty, religion and cultural secretary — Sudhir Kumar Saha, office secretary — Paritosh Kumar Nandi, Asstt office secretary — Nibaran Chandra Dutta, co-ordination secretary — Kamal Kanti Mandal, Asstt co-ordination secretary — Shyamol Kumar Chakraborty, women affairs secretary — Moma Dutta, social welfare secretary — Priya Ranjan Dey, education secretary — Dharendra Kumar Roy, library secretary — Santosh Narayan Saha, Asstt library secretary — Jawhar Lala Saha, sports and youth secretary — Ranjit Kumar Bhat-tacharjee.



Professor Rehman Sobhan, chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) speaking at a dialogue on 'Poverty Alleviation Strategy: National Priorities and Donors' Perspective' at CIRDAP auditorium in the city yesterday. — Star photo

PM implementing election pledges, says Samad Azad

SUNAMGANJ, Apr 1: Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad said here today that the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had been implementing its election pledges one by one to bring about a positive change in the rural Bangladesh, thus bringing smiles on the faces of teeming millions, reports BSS.

Addressing a series of meetings in Jagannathpur and Dirai thana under the district, he said the present government was implementing scores of development projects in all key fields including education, health and communications sectors to improve the life of common man.

The meetings took place in connection with laying of foundation stone of installing regulators on Boail and Boail canals and inauguration of a newly constructed government high school at Panchagram.

Khoka deplors raising private forces

City BNP and All Party Action Committee chief Sadeq Hossain Khoka MP deplored that the government started raising private forces, including Mujib Bahini, to eliminate the opposition to perpetuate its power, reports UNB.

He said this while addressing a meeting of party leaders of various wards of Mirpur who came to meet him at his office today (Saturday). The team was led by BNP convenor of Ward No. 11 Kauser Ahmad.

The city opposition chief resolved that the conspiracy of the government would be resisted "at any cost."

"The government is trying to hang onto power by means of state terrorism," a party press release quoted him as saying.

He reminded the government that in the past "autocrats like Ayub, Yahya and Mujib" could not stay in power taking recourse to repression and killing of their opponents.

Ershad accused of misappropriating Tk 52 crore of Pathakoli Trust

CHITTAGONG, Apr 1: Jatiya Party (Mizan-Manju) that announced former President HM Ershad 'persona non grata' in Chittagong today accused him of misappropriating Tk 52 crore of the Pathakoli Trust, reports UNB.

Addressing a rally of street urchins in front of the Press Club this afternoon, president of JP (M-M) Chittagong city Haidar Ali Chowdhury demanded accounts of the fund of the Trust.

The party had announced Ershad 'persona non grata' in Chittagong from a rally here on March 29.

Demanding accounts of the Trust Haidar vowed that Ershad would not be allowed to enter into the port city unless he submitted the account.

The rally was followed by a procession of the street urchins who were called 'Pathakolis' by Ershad during his regime.



Artists present a Manipuri dance item at a Manipuri cultural show organised by the Green Disabled Foundation of Sylhet in association with the British Council at the latter's auditorium yesterday. — Star photo

Special incentives for dev of industries at village level

**Tofail tells rally**

MUNSHIGANJ, Apr 1: Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed said, the present government has declared special incentives and facilities to set up industries at town and village level, reports BSS.

Easy loan, duty free machinery import, tax holiday etc, are the major incentives provided to the entrepreneurs, he said adding that the government will set up industrial estates at each upazila in phases. He said, all infrastructural facilities will be provided to the estates so that entrepreneurs can set up local raw material based industries.

The minister was addressing a public meeting at the Balur Math in Munshiganj town.

Presided over by the district Awami League president Md Mohiuddin Ahmed, the meeting was also addressed by the general secretary of district Awami League Lutfur Rahman, former MP Abdul Karim Bepari and Segupta Yasmin MP.

The minister said, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina believes in equal development of all parts of the country. He said, the aim of the government is to develop the villages. He said, there are many small and cottage industries in this area. He asked the entrepreneurs to concentrate on producing quality products so that they can contribute to increase the export earnings.

He said, it will help create new employment and the workers will get better wages. He said, opposition parties are betraying with their elites as they are not attending the parliament for the development of the people.

Earlier, the minister presided over the district development coordination committee meeting at the conference room of the district administration. The meeting was attended by the district chiefs of all government departments, social elite, president of district Awami League Mohiuddin Ahmed, Segupta Yasmin MP, REB chairman Brigadier Malek.

The meeting also took stock of the progress of on-going development projects being implemented in the district by various government agencies. LGED is implementing 69 projects at a cost of Taka 41 crore. The projects include construction of road, bridge, culvert and earth work. Besides, Public Works Department is spending taka 16 crore for setting up physical infrastructure in the district. While R and H Department is utilising about taka 4 crore to implement 10 projects.

Addressing the meeting, the minister said, the rural people are happy as the farmers have got bumper crops. Poor senior citizens, destitute women and widows are getting monthly allowance and foodgrains. He said, the government has given emphasis to the overall development of the rural people as they are the backbone of the nation.

During the period of previous governments, people were deprived of development but the powers improved their lots, he said. He asked the officials to identify the hindrances to development.

Govt pledge-bound to uproot terrorism

KISHOREGANJ, Apr 1: Local Government Minister Zillur Rahman today said the present government was pledge-bound to uproot the politics of arms and terrorism from the educational institutions to create an atmosphere favourable for all students, reports BSS.

In this respect, he stressed upon waging a concerted social movement of both teachers and guardians against adopting unfair means in examination halls to help the students become worthy sons of the soil in the greater interest of the nation's bright future.

The minister said the present government with a view to leading the country towards prosperity had been implementing a countrywide broad-based education programme to achieve economic emancipation and flourish democracy at the grassroots level.

He was addressing as the chief guest a freshers' reception at Zillur Rahman Women College at Bairah today. With principal of the college Prof Md Abdol Matin in the chair, the function was also addressed by Al-haj Sayed Abul Hussain MP, among others.

Zillur Rahman said the government was also implementing different epoch-making approaches for the political and economic empowerment of women and fast spread of education among them in the greater interest of the country's development.

Earlier, the minister inaugurated the new academic building of the college.

Roundtable on defence issues

From Page 1

Fraud" country and steps should be taken to change this image.

A white paper on defence should be published. The people should know how much is spent to make a general or a sepoy, he said.

"There should not be any hesitation in making a threat assessment while formulating a defence policy."

Referring to defence procurement, he alleged that the major share of "commission" is taken by the civilians although some defence personnel "may get share."

Maj Gen Jamil D Ahsan said "We have now entered a new phase in military warfare strategy where adversaries are no longer interested in territorial gains, but fight proxy wars which tie down domestic re-

sources.

"It is important to have offensive capacity in a defensive strategy."

Jamil said the people have a right to know about defence matters but a line should be drawn as to how much information could be given out. In matters of foreign policy, not all information is given out for national and security considerations.

Former Air Chief Air Vice Marshal (Rtd) Montazuddin said, "Keeping our resources in mind, we should have an effective armed forces."

Referring to purchase of MIG-29s, he said "Our adversaries will now treat us with respect."

AMA Muhith said that the country always had an ad hoc defence policy. Bangladesh and India are two democracies where there are 'no chief of defence staff to coordinate the role of the three forces.'

Maj Gen (Rtd) Ibrahim, who is Director of the Centre for Strategic and Peace Studies, said there are about 800 retired officers of the armed forces. Many of them are now contributing to civil life in various capacities. One such contribution is that they are helping to make matters of the armed forces transparent.

Defence should be based at least on three factors -- defending the frontier, acquiring strength to counter the enemy and helping the civil administration, he said. "There is no laid down defence policy, either long term or short term. There is a need to replace the existing adhocism."

Mujibul Huq said the Armed Forces have to be kept "Fighting Ready" even if there is no war for 30 years. "We required a defence policy and effective

diplomacy which is the frontline of the nation's sovereignty."

On defence and all other purchases, he said, "It is a naked fact that we are submerged in corruption. A white paper should be published."

G M Kader MP recalled that when the CHT accord was signed, the government said defence expenditure would be reduced, but the opposite happened.

Dr Muzaffar Ahmed felt that the Armed Forces 'still nurtured an elitist attitude'. He questioned the need of the military to have separate Medical College, Engineering College and specialised institutions normally run by civilians, BDR going for shopping arcades and other commercial activities. "There must be full accountability and transparency in defence expenditure."

Dr Iftekhar suggested that a non-offensive defence strategy should be adopted. "However, it should be capable of evicting the intruder."

Dr Amena Mohsin of International Relations department of Dhaka University observed that the military will continue to be a factor in Bangladesh. "All governments have been trying to appease the military. The Army will continue to be an informal political party."

She said there was a definite dissatisfaction among civilians against the Armed Forces.

She said one should not be complacent that insurgency in the CHT is over. There are 45 other minority groups in the country and they should be given adequate representation so that the adversaries across the border could not instigate them, she added.

"There is also the need to sensitise the military about gender and women issues," Amena said.

Discussants at the Roundtable expressed lot of views. Among those were that both the ruling Awami League and the BNP had pampered the Armed Forces more than the military rulers did. The political parties increased the budget of the armed forces and did not seek any accountability.

Another view was that no government, not even the democratic ones had the "confidence" to appoint a defence minister and the portfolio was always kept by the Chief Executive except for a brief period in one case.

Akhtaruzzaman MP said no political party seriously wanted a defence policy. However, in the interest of the nation, it should be done.

"Since we need to protect the interests of 13 crore people, having a powerful army surely makes sense."

Shell: Sangu

From Page 1

Shell drilled deeper in hopes of reaching 4,600 meters. In the second week of February, Shell officials said the company hoped drilling would be complete in a couple of weeks if it faced no further technical problems.

However, Shell has been compelled to abandon an expensive drilling string inside the well, said a company source.

Before Shell started drilling in South Sangu, some Petrobangla officials criticised the European oil giants choice of rig. They said the 25-year old rig was too old and weak for an operation like South Sangu. They said Shell was using the "inappropriate" rig at a higher cost, since it was purchased by its partner, Cairn.

However, Shell said the rig was refurbished and completely appropriate for South Sangu operations.

South Sangu is Shell's first operation in Bangladesh after it acquired 50 per cent of Cairn's interest, including the gas producing off-shore Sangu gas field.

Death ref

From Page 1

be heard in one court, another case of 1997 will be heard at the same time in the other court, thus breaking the serial, he said.

"It seems two serials have been arranged, one of the distant past and the other of the recent past, each competing with the other, breaking a single serial" Khan said.

"If the Cause List is examined, it will be found that some serials are also missing", he added.

Anisul Haq had earlier made attempts to raise the death reference in Bangabandhu murder case in four separate benches, but the benches refused to accept the case on different grounds.

The death reference was first taken to the Bench comprising Justice Nurul Islam and Justice Mumtazuddin Ahmed. The Bench said it was busy with motions (new cases) and even if the case is put in the list, it would probably never reach the Bench.

It was then taken to the Bench comprising Justice Ebadul Haq and Justice Sikder Makbul Haq and then to the Bench comprising Justice Ruhul Amin and Justice S K Sinha. Both the benches advised the prosecution to take the case to the Death Reference Bench.

When the case was mentioned in the Death Reference Bench comprising Justice M M Ruhul Amin and Justice Abdul Matin, they said that death references were being heard serially and that they were handling the cases arising of 1996.

Sessions Judge, Dhaka Kazi Golam Rasul in his verdict in the Bangabandhu murder case on November 8, 1998 ordered that the 15 convicted persons be executed by an open firing squad. If that is not possible for any reason, they may be hanged, the verdict said.

Of the 15, four now in Dhaka Central Jail made appeals on November 15, 1998. The remaining convicts are absconding.

Obituary

Shaheen Akhter, wife of Dr Muhammad Alamgir, an associate professor of Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT), Khulna died in a city clinic yesterday. She was 32, says a press release.

Late Shaheen, was doing her PhD after MS at Saga University in Japan.

The quikhuani of the deceased will be held tomorrow at Rahimnagar at Kachua in Chandpur district.

Mayor's remark

From Page 1

ment works in the city, said Hanif. "I am accountable to the queries of residents for all these inconsistencies."

Hanif suggested the lack of coordination and inconsistencies among different departments could be avoided if the government disbursed funds for departments such as WASA, DESA, PDB and T&T.

Hanif said the prime minister did not rule out the idea, which aims at increasing civic amenities and services to residents.

A coordination committee was formed with the mayor as co-chairman, to coordinate the work.

Hanif said that had Bangabandhu been alive, Dhaka's residents would not have been plagued with so many problems.

He alleged that an absence of vision in the previous government created problems in Dhaka. "Because of this lack of vision, people in the city suffer from water, gas and electricity problems."

He said Sheikh Hasina's government has been undertaking specific programmes to ease the sufferings of the residents.

Death anniversary of Justice Mohammad Hossain today

From Page 1

The fourteenth death anniversary of Justice Sayed Mohammad Hossain will be observed today, says a press release.

During the war of liberation in 1971 he campaigned for the independence of Bangladesh from United States and contacted the then Mujibnagar government and campaigned for our independence and mobilised opinion in favour of our liberation war.

Donors

From Page 1

Dr. Abul Barakat with the University of Dhaka's Economics Department stressed the need to formulate a home-grown approach to eliminate poverty, which the country lacked.

State Minister for Planning Dr. M. Siddiq Khan Alamgir said the country did have a holistic agenda to reduce poverty, pointing to the agenda of the fifth five year plan.

Dr. Mahbub Ullah said the policy-makers should study whether it is possible to form a home-grown strategy to eliminate poverty in the age of globalisation.

Death anniversary of Justice Mohammad Hossain today

From Page 1

The fourteenth death anniversary of Justice Sayed Mohammad Hossain will be observed today, says a press release.

During the war of liberation in 1971 he campaigned for the independence of Bangladesh from United States and contacted the then Mujibnagar government and campaigned for our independence and mobilised opinion in favour of our liberation war.