

What's on today . . . .

**BEJA workshop:** Bangladesh Environmental Journalists Association (BEJA) will hold a workshop on "Air Pollution in Dhaka City." Chief guest: Minister for Environment and Forest Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10.00 am.

**Opening ceremony:** The Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts will be opened. It will be a part of a multi-purpose art and cultural organisation 'Bengal Shilpalaya'. Noted educationist Dr Anisuzzaman will formally launch the 'Bengal Shilpalaya'. Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, House No 275/F, Road No 27 (old), Dhanmondi. Time: 6 pm.

**Roundtable discussion:** A roundtable discussion on 'Role of Press Council in Upholding Press Freedom and Protecting Individual Rights' will be held. Organiser: Bangladesh Press Council. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10.30 am.

**DRU meeting:** A meeting of the executive committee of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) will be held. Venue: DRU premises, 8/4-A Tophkhana Road, Segunbagicha. Time: 1.00 pm.

**Roundtable:** Khan Foundation will hold a pre-Paris roundtable titled "People's Perception of Foreign Aid in Bangladesh". Chief guest: State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir. Venue: Democracy auditorium of the Foundation.

**Photography exhibition:** A week-long photography exhibition titled "Australia-Portraying a Nation" begins. Chief Guest: State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader. Venue: Shilpakala Academy. Time: 5.00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

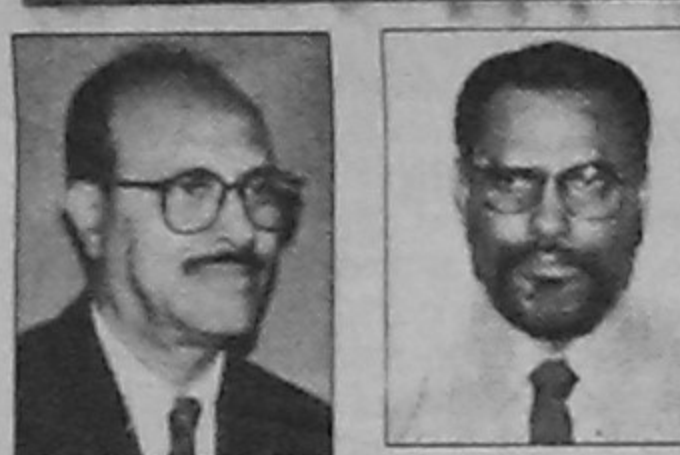
**Nurun Nahar Samad Natya Padak '99:** The Nurun Nahar Samad Natya Padak '99 will be given out at a ceremony. Chief guest: Minister for Post and Telecommunications Mohammad Nasim. Venue: Mahila Samity auditorium, Bailey Road. Time: 5.00 pm.

Weather

**Temperature may rise**  
Rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty wind is likely over the regions of Sylhet and weather may remain dry elsewhere over the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.  
Slight rise in day temperature is expected across the country during the period, the Met Office said.  
Yesterday's highest temperature of 39.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest 20.0 degree Celsius at Dinajpur.  
The sun sets in the capital today at 6.16 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.46 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       | 34.5                   | 24.8 | 75                     | 65      |
| Chittagong  | 32.0                   | 23.4 | 69                     | 77      |
| Rajshahi    | 38.3                   | 24.7 | 73                     | 36      |
| Khulna      | 36.0                   | 25.4 | 75                     | 36      |
| Barisal     | 34.0                   | 24.3 | 80                     | 76      |
| Sylhet      | 33.0                   | 21.6 | 80                     | 62      |
| Cox's Bazar | 32.5                   | 24.4 | 78                     | 80      |

HERE and THERE



**Medical Legal Society of Bangladesh**  
By Staff Correspondent  
Prof Dr AKM Samsul Islam and Dr Mizanur Rahman have been elected unopposed president and general secretary of Medical Legal Society of Bangladesh respectively.  
Motlul Ahmed and Professor Asraful Alam were elected as vice president while TC Das

as the treasurer of the association.  
Mohammed Nurul Islam was elected as joint secretary while Dr Mostyak Rahim as organising secretary of the association.  
**CPJ**  
Golam Tahabbur of AFP and MD Mozammel Huq of UNB have been made acting convener and member secretary of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), reports UNB.  
The decision was taken at a meeting of CPJ at the National Press Club yesterday with its convener Ataus Samad in the chair.  
Saleem Samad was made co-ordinator of the committee.  
The meeting also recalled the contribution of late Hassan Sayeed, who was a founder member of CPJ, said a press release.

Mysterious death of college teacher

From Our Correspondent  
RAJSHAHI, Apr 3: A teacher of Rajshahi Mohanagar College reportedly committed suicide this evening at her residence at Sagarpara in the city. She was identified as Anita Rani Roy, wife of Bankim Chandra.  
Family sources said that she suddenly fell sick at about 7 pm. She was taken to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where she died after a few minutes.  
Rajpara thana suspects it a case of unnatural death. A UD case was filed in this connection. The body was sent to RMCH morgue for autopsy.

Hearing of Rubel Murder Case today

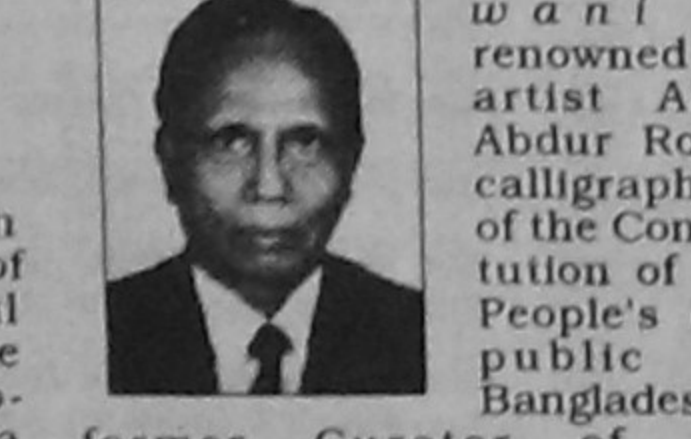
By Court Correspondent  
Hearing of the Rubel Murder case will be held today.  
It was scheduled for yesterday but could not be held since the metropolitan sessions judge trying the case was on leave.  
Shamim Reza Rubel, 24, a BBA student of Independent University, was picked up by a team of Detective Branch of Police from near his residence on July 23, 1998 and was subsequently tortured to death in custody the same day.  
Regarding business transactions and corruption, the report said the business community in Bangladesh confronts numerous costly government-imposed rules and obstacles that encourage corruption. Low-level officials can extort payoffs from businesses because the rules are opaque and give them significant discretion. As a result, even regulations with valid justification are circumvented and the system discourages investment.  
With official procurement amounting to about US\$ 3 billion per year and bribes to win such contracts allegedly running to 10-15 per cent of their value, the public treasury could be losing between US\$300 million and \$450 million a year, the WB estimated.  
It suggested that reducing the role of government in the economy would shrink opportunities for bribes.  
The WB said that the government should ensure that the banks are insulated from political interference, particularly in the appointment of management and boards of NCBs.  
"Corruption that involves large-scale contracts, award of concessions, and operation and privatisation of public firms rob Bangladesh of hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Extensive corruption, political influence and pressure from trade unions reportedly operate within various organisations. Officials at all levels are tempted to take advantage of weak institutional capacity to collude with private sector bidders and contractors, amassing vast illegal incomes in the bar-

Obituary



**Death anniversary of Dr Abul Quasem today**  
The 1st death anniversary of Dr (Cap) Abul Quasem will be observed today, says a press release.  
A *Khatme Quran* will be held at Katalang Boro Masjid under Panchalish thana on the occasion. A *midah mahfil* will also be held after Asr prayers at Panchalish area at the deceased's house.

Qulqhwani



The *qulqhwani* of renowned artist AKM Akbar Hossain will be held today after Asr prayers at House no-290, Lane-4, DOHS (Baridhara), says a press release.  
Rouf died Saturday afternoon at the age of 66 at ICCDR, B in the city.



The *namaz-e-janaza* of Ahram Khaer Bishal, youngest son of businessman Abul Khaer Litu, was held at Gulshan Azad Mosque yesterday and (R) relatives crying over the dead body of Bishal.



A nine-member delegation from the Institute for Study and Development of Legal System (ISDLS), San Francisco, USA called on Barrister Mainul Hossain, newly elected President of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association at Ittefaq Bhaban yesterday. The team includes, Judge A. Wallace Tashima, US Court of Appeals, Judge Jeremy Fogel, US District Court for the Northern District of California, Judge J Clifford Wallace US Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, Sr Circuit Judge, Chief Judge Meritus, Stephen A Mayo, Executive Director, Institute for the Study and Development of Legal Systems, Jeff Banchoer, Attorney (Civil Litigation), Robert A. Goodin, Founding Partner, Goodin, MacBride, Squeri, Ritchie & Day, Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jillani, Lahore High Court, Ijaz Qutab, Additional Registrar of Lahore High Court. John Kincannon, Director, USIS was also present during the discussion.

WB: Elimination of corruption

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they will gain popularity by confronting corruption straightforwardsly can not only show themselves responsive to deepening dissatisfaction, they can also enlist respected non-governmental organisations and independent media in a measured search for feasible solutions," it said.  
"What is needed is not a partisan witch-hunt, but a national debate that succeeds in identifying the most ubiquitous and damaging forms of corruption and the actions that can reduce the magnitude of the problem," the WB observed.  
Political parties in Bangladesh tend to be 'leader centered,' relatively undemocratic in their organisation and functions and heavily dependent on the self-interested financial support of major business houses and large labour unions, the WB said.  
"Both expect their contributions to be repaid either in the form of policy favours or contracts. As labour union members exact tolls in the transport sector, for example, various student unions and youth fronts linked to the parties also collect extensive tolls from business houses, retail shops, and public works activities on campus and off."  
Not only are spending ceilings routinely ignored in elections, many observers allege that parties violate the Election Commission's code of conduct by funding local development projects and indirectly buying votes from touts who promise to deliver their followers.  
Such invisible payments appear to absorb 60-70 per cent of election expenses, the report said.  
As for law enforcement, the report said the public at large has grown fearful and suspicious of police, seeing them as predators, not protectors. Poor career prospects and below-subsistence salary levels induce many police officials to become corrupt.  
Officials stressed after an emergency Cabinet meeting that Obuchi's illness would not bring any change in policy. Obuchi's ruling party continues to be firmly in control.  
Taichi Sakaiya, head of Japan's Economic Planning Agency, said economic policies remained solid.  
"It is not possible that (Obuchi's illness) will have an impact on economic policies," he said.  
But concerns were raised that Obuchi's absence could hinder Japan's ability to host the G-8 summit of the world's leading industrialized countries this summer. It could also intensify jockeying for power ahead of parliamentary elections, which must be held before October.  
Along with the shock of Obuchi's sudden illness, many Japanese were expressing anger at the government's failure to disclose the crisis sooner.  
Obuchi's illness was not announced until 22 hours after he was admitted to the hospital. Aoki's initial announcement Sunday night lasted only four minutes, and he refused to provide details on what had happened to Obuchi.

Ctg: joint rally

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also brought out in the evening. Preparations have been made for arrival of opposition supporters at the meeting from Chittagong Hill Tracts, Cox's Bazar and other areas, sources in the parties said. They are expecting huge crowds from far flung areas.  
Unconfirmed reports said, about Tk 10 lakh is being spent for the public meeting.  
A special squad of volunteers has been formed to ring the dias during the rally to check entry of any unwanted person, the sources said.  
Ershad arrived here this evening from Dhaka by road while Khaleeda Zia, Golam Azam and Moulana Azizul Hoq will arrive by Biman flights tomorrow. They are expected to return to the capital the same day, the sources said.  
The public meeting will be started at 2 pm.  
BSS adds from Chittagong: Tomorrow's joint meeting will be first occasion for the four opposition leaders to appear on one platform outside the capital.  
Earlier, the four leaders addressed a joint public meeting at Paltan Maidan in Dhaka on February 13 last for the first time to boost the BNP-led opposition movement against the government.  
President of city BNP and convener of the All-Party Action Committee Meer Nasir along with other members of the committee is busy giving final touches to the preparations for peacefully holding the joint public meeting. The committee met a number of times to review the preparations.  
At the meeting, Begum Zia may announce a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on April 6 or 9 to press the opposition demand for resignation of the government and hand-over of power to a caretaker administration to pave way for general elections. Alliance sources said.  
She is also scheduled to announce programmes for joint public meetings at Sylhet, Khulna, Rajshahi and Barisal, the sources said.

Haji Selim

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Referring to a resolution he moved in the House on the issue earlier, the ruling party lawmaker claimed that he then enjoyed support of other members. "I withdrew my resolution following assurance from the then health minister."  
Health and Family Welfare Minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim termed the issue a very important one but regretted that the hospitals are short of female doctors to conduct the job. Women are not interested in working in the morgue because the task is very difficult and complicated. But the government is ready to appoint female *dome* (attendant) if they are available.  
Autopsy on female bodies by female doctors are not always possible as there is an inadequate number of female doctors at forensic departments at the hospitals," the minister said.  
The government is trying to train up more women doctors on forensic to send them at district hospitals.  
But the minister's reply could not satisfy the Awami League MP who said women are available to work at the morgue. He then wanted to know if the government would appoint female doctors and female *domes* by 2001.  
"I can't guarantee. But I will publish advertisement in newspapers seeking women *domes*," the minister concluded.

US-Pak ties

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opinion would be against a proposed bid by Sharif's wife, Khulsoom, to enter politics to protest military oppression.  
"Talk to anybody in the streets of Pakistan and you will see how wrong she is," Musharraf said.  
"They have looted and plundered Pakistan's wealth. They are living in obscene opulence," he said. "We have heard about President Marcos of the Philippines, but this family puts them to shame."  
In their talks, Chuan told Musharraf that Pakistan should return to democratic rule as soon as possible, said Akapol Sorasuchart, the Thai government spokesman.  
It was a message he has heard throughout his trip, which also took him to Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei. Musharraf appears to have come away with little else than lectures on democracy, justice and diplomacy.  
Another report says, Musharraf today pledged to hold general elections to restore democracy in his country after first holding local elections in July 2001. A Thai government spokesman said.  
The spokesman said that Musharraf told the Thai PM the military government would hold local elections between December 2000 and July 2001 and schedule general elections some time after that. He gave no specifics.

Arms recovered in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent  
KHALNA, Apr 3: Khulna thana police today recovered five firearms and 51 rounds of gun cartridges from near the cattle market in between Roosevelt jety and Skid Ghat.  
None was arrested in this connection till writing of this report.  
The recovered illegal firearms are two home-made guns, one foreign six-shooter, one revolver and a pistol. OC of Khulna thana recovered the firearms and ammunition which were later deposited to 'malikhana' of Khalishpur thana.

PM please rethink

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that the moral standards of a section of judges leave much to be desired. The issue of corruption in the lower judiciary is now a genuine public concern. Several retired judges of our Supreme Court have expressed this concern. Does the PSA address that? No. So without addressing the real reasons why criminals are not being brought to book, a whole new law has been introduced which opens up many new avenues for abuse and corruption.  
The most important objection that the public had to the PSA was the potential for its abuse. Everybody arrested under this law will have to be in jail for the duration of the trial. The fundamental principle of our law is that a person is innocent till a court finds him or her guilty. That is precisely why provision exists for bail so that a person ultimately found innocent is not held in jail during the period of trial. But under the PSA, where no one can get bail during the trial, a person is assumed to be guilty before a judge finds him so. Police arrest is enough to ensure him to be in jail for 75 to 120 days. What about the person who is found NOT GUILTY at the end of the trial? He or she will have already suffered a jail term being totally innocent.  
When we raised the above objection the government answered by saying that a provision exists in the PSA for punishment of a police officer if it is proven that an innocent person was deliberately implicated in the case. This the government said would guarantee that no investigating officer or member of the law enforcement agency would abuse the law. This, the government said, was the major check against abuse. This check has now gone. In the amendments, in fact it went proposed last Sunday this provision has been withdrawn. WHY? Obviously under pressure from the police themselves. They gave clear signals to the government that if the PSA punishes the police for its wrong implementation then no police will enforce it, and as such this law will remain only in the statute books and will be of no avail to the government.  
To appease the police the government has withdrawn this particular provision. The result is that the ONLY check that existed against the abuse of the PSA has now been removed making it more dangerous to the public than it was before.  
The Law Minister said that

Ctg: BMA

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Dr Shahadat and Dr Jamil will be first on the panel being defeated in the polls unleashed violence in the CMCH campus.  
He refuted the allegation of rigging in the election raised by rival panel led by Dr Kaderi and Dr Siraj, saying it was baseless.  
Dr Jamil claimed that the polls were fair and held in a healthy atmosphere.  
He said some doctors were staying away from hospital duty fearing attack by rivals.

Badhan

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Fazlul Haq Russell, the prime suspect of the assault case, is a second year student of Botanical Science at the Dhaka University and a leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League, ruling party's student wing. He was arrested from a bus stand at Sherpur in Bogra district and later brought to the capital.  
Khan Mesbahul Alam Tutul, a third year student of Statistics at Dhaka University and a BCL leader of Shahidullah Hall, is another suspect in the case. He was arrested from room no 806 of the same hall.  
Both Russell and Tutul were later expelled from the university.  
Talking to The Daily Star, the investigating officer of the case said that he has collected the necessary information. He was waiting to talk to the three photojournalists who took photographs of the victim and the culprits from a close range, the official added.  
The victim filed a case with Ramna police station. But the Detective Branch took up the case later.

Future of IJO

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The sources said that even if the 15 EU members of the 25-member IJO stay away from the April 6-7 meeting, it will be able to take decisions about the future of the organisations. Attendance of one third members is required to take decisions, they said.  
IJO members account for nearly 90 per cent of exports and 40 per cent of imports of jute in international trade, according to UNCTAD.  
Launched in 1982, IJO is run by its members' contributions amounting to about one million US dollars annually. EU members contribute about 30 per cent of it.  
In recent times, there has been criticism that IJO failed to make jute competitive with cheaper and more durable synthetic materials.  
IJO Executive Director Henri L. Jansen based in Dhaka, told The Daily Star last month that IJO is not given a new lease of life, all its activities over the past 15 years would go in vain.

PM leaves

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renowned Randolph-Macon Women's College.  
Hasina will be the second head of government after former Philippines President Corazon Aquino to receive the award.  
Besides, the Mayor of Lynchburg City will present the key of the City to the Prime Minister during her sojourn there.  
The Prime Minister's trip would be another opportunity to build on the favorable impression that Americans have about Bangladesh today against the backdrop of President Clinton's "successful" visit to Dhaka on March 20.  
Her meeting with US scholars, students and members of the academia would enable her to exchange views with potential and prospect of Bangladesh as well as her vision of a new Bangladesh, the officials said.  
Prime Minister Hasina is also expected to inaugurate the new Chancery building of Bangladesh Embassy in Washington.  
State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, PM's Principal Secretary Dr SA Samad, Foreign Secretary Shafi Sami and Press Secretary Jawadul Karim are on the delegation.

PM: conflict

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sidium member told The Daily Star quoting Hasina.  
The meeting unanimously observed that the opposition parties, especially BNP, has already launched election campaign. "So we cannot afford to sit on intra-party problems," the PM told the meeting.  
The AL chief formed a two-member committee to hear the leaders of the conflicting groups in Sylhet.  
The committee members, AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman and Presidium member Abdul Monin, would hear the leaders including Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and PM's parliamentary affairs adviser Suranjit Sengupta. The committee has been asked to submit its report to the PM after her return from the US. Both Samad Azad and Suranjit Sengupta were present at the meeting.  
The Prime Minister also assigned some other leaders including Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed and Abdul Jalil to visit different districts, especially those having weaker party bases, to identify the potential party candidates for the next parliamentary polls.  
She referred to media reports about the conflicts among local party leaders in a Rangpur constituency ahead of a parliamentary by-elections and asked the leaders to look into those.  
Sajeda Chowdhury will be acting chief of the party during the absence of Hasina.  
The Presidium, a senior leader of the party leaders would hold a meeting very soon to chalk out country wide organisational tours.