

What's on today.....

Annual general meeting: The AGM of Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum will be held. The executive for (2000-2001) will also be elected. Venue: Dhaka Ahsania Mission auditorium. Time: 9:00 am.

..... and tomorrow

Cultural programme: Kendriyo Kanchi Kanchar Mela will hold a cultural programme to mark the 7th birth anniversary of Rokonuzzaman Khan Dadabhai. Venue: Mela premises at 37/A Segun Bagicha. Time: 4:30 pm.

Seminar: A seminar on "Grassroot Mass Organisation versus Fundamentalism: Brahmanbaria perspective. Venue: Sufia Kamal auditorium of National Museum. Time: 5:00 pm.

ICSBA seminar: The 18th seminar of the International Centre for Study of Bengal Aft (ICSBA) will be held. Venue: Library hall of centre, House No 32 E, Road 17A, Banani. Time: 5:00 pm.

Seminar: Cyber College of Bangladesh will hold a seminar on "Java - the Programming Language of the Future." Venue: College premises, House No 38/1, Rd No 6 (new), Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 5:00 pm-7:00 pm.

Weather

Dry weather likely

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at the regions of Mymensingh and Sylhet in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country during the period. Met Office said predicting slight rise of day temperature across the country.

The country's highest temperature 37.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and the lowest 20.2 degree Celsius at Syedpur.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6.18 pm and rises on Sunday at 5.43 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

| City/Town | Temperature in Celsius | | Humidity in percentage | |
|-------------|------------------------|------|------------------------|---------|
| | Max | Min | Morning | Evening |
| Dhaka | 33.7 | 26.0 | 73 | 59 |
| Chittagong | 32.0 | 23.5 | 74 | 80 |
| Rajshahi | 37.2 | 24.5 | 80 | 51 |
| Khulna | 32.5 | 25.0 | 82 | - |
| Barisal | 32.6 | 24.5 | 76 | 71 |
| Sylhet | 30.7 | 21.3 | 84 | 77 |
| Cox's Bazar | 32.6 | 24.4 | 73 | 80 |

Saleha begins a new life

Saleha Akhter, an orphan, who was brought up in Tejgaon Shishu Paribar run by the Social Welfare Directorate, was married to a small trader at a formal function in the city yesterday, an official handout said, reports BSS.

State Minister for Social Welfare Dr Mozammel Hussain attended the function and wished the happy life of the newly-wed couple. He said the present government had undertaken all possible measures to rehabilitate the distressed and orphan children of the country.

He said the government would continue to implement these measures for proper education, training and rehabilitation of such distressed and orphan children in the Government Shishu Sadans orphanage throughout the country.

The function was also attended by senior officials of the ministry and departments under it.

Saleha's husband Sirajul Huq Chowdhury is a small trader living in Tejgaon. Officials of the Social Welfare Department gave necessary furniture and a sewing machine to Saleha, one of the 79 such girls of Tejgaon Shishu Paribar so far rehabilitated through marriage under the supervision of this organisation, the handout said.

Minor girl violated

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Apr 7: A 10-year-old girl was violated by two persons at Chandrapur village of Dera thana under Sunamganj district last Monday. Both the accused had been absconding, police sources informed.

Police said that the victim while returning to her home from the fair at Noagaon at about 7 pm came under attack of two persons named Nazrul Islam and Abdus Salam. They stood on the way of the minor girl and took her to a nearby quiet place. They raped her there and left her. She was given first aid immediately. The victim was sent to the Sunamganj District Hospital for Forensic Test today.

A case in this connection had been lodged under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, police said. Police officials had visited the village.



Carmen Z Lamagna, vice-chancellor of Ama International University, Bangladesh (AIUB) and pro-vice-chancellor of Dr T Hossain inaugurating a blood donation programme in observance of the World Health Day on the university campus on Wednesday. One hundred twenty bags of blood was collected from the enthusiastic students, faculty members and officers of the university. The programme was held in collaboration with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

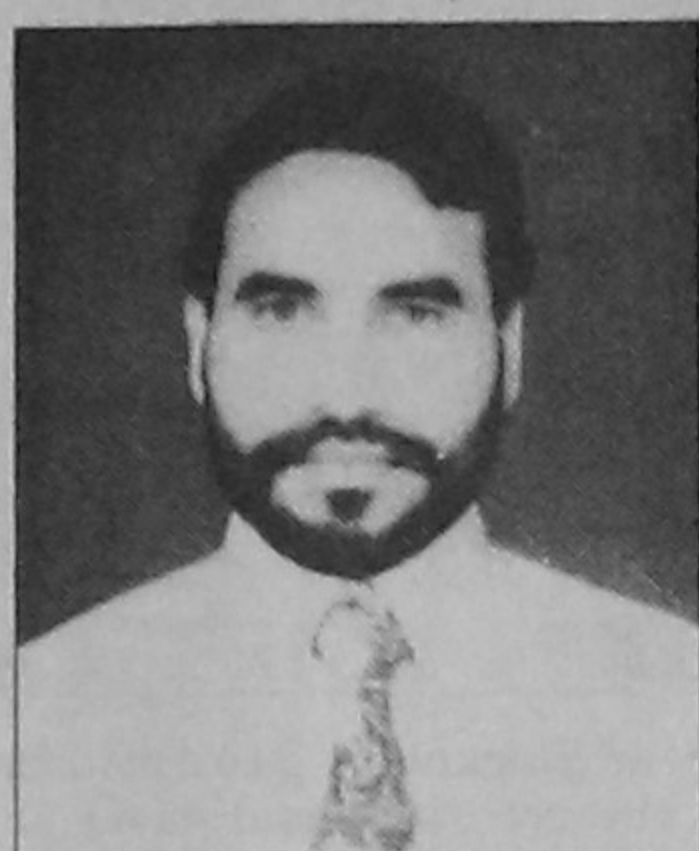
Congratulations



Jahangirnagar University conferred PhD degree on M Mujibur Rahman, Senior Chemist of Geological Survey of Bangladesh, for his research work on "Geochemical Investigation of Organic and Mineral Matter in Different Coal Samples in Bangladesh," recently, says a JU press release.

His research coordinator was Professor M Abdul Hye of Chemistry Department, JU.

Dr Rahman obtained MSc and BSc (Honours) degree from Bangladesh Applied Chemistry Department of Dhaka University.



M Tariqul Islam, Senior Scientific officer of Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA), obtained PhD degree from the University of Agricultural Science, Vienna, under a scholarship programme of Austrian government, says a press release.

The subject of his thesis paper was "Plant-water relation studies in diverse rice cultivation under Bangladesh climatic condition."

He completed his MSC (AG) in Crop Botany 1988 from Bangladesh Agricultural University.



Lukna Yeasmeen of Dhaka University secured first class first in General History Department under B group in MA examination held in 1999, says a press release.

She also stood first in her Honours course. Lukna is eager to go for higher studies on general history.

She is the daughter of Mostafizur Rahman of Bridge Road, Gaibandha.

Dewanbag Darbar Sharif damaged

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 7: At least two houses of Dewanbag Darbar Sharif the 'Heritage' of Dewanbagi Peer were gutted in a fire set by some unidentified miscreants in the early hours of Thursday.

Arsenic

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tients suffering from cancer that we don't know about," said Quazi Quamruzzaman, chairman of the hospital trust.

Despite the emergency declared in 1996, the government hasn't addressed the issue of treatment for cancer patients. There is no referral hospital where patients can get relief from their pain.

"Yes, I understand that the problem is very extensive but in absence of available remedial measurement we can do nothing to help the sufferers," said Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, minister of health and family welfare, when contacted Monday night. "We depend on preventive measures, such as awareness programmes, to motivate people not to drink contaminated water."

"We are also providing alternative sources of water wherever possible. But in the meantime, we have requested World Bank, WHO and other relevant agencies to extend further help to address this top priority issue."

The maximum permissible level of arsenic drinking water in Bangladesh is 0.05 milligrams per litre, or 50 parts per million.

The latest study shows 59 of 64 districts are affected by naturally occurring arsenic contamination in groundwater. The most severely affected districts are in southern Bangladesh. Officials are painting wells red and green to distinguish contaminated water sources from safe sources.

Residential Conference 2000: Dhaka, Bangladesh 7-9 April 2000



Carlo Ravizza, President of Rotary International addressing the Presidential Conference 2000: Dhaka of Rotary International, the biggest gathering of the Rotarians which began at a city hotel yesterday. (From left) Chief Justice Latifur Rahman, who attended the function as the chief guest while noted economist and Managing Director of Grameen Bank Dr Muhammad Yunus, keynote speaker also seen on the dais. — Star photo



Hundreds of passengers were stranded on the road between Dhaka and Savar yesterday after road links were cut off by transport workers. The workers were protesting the arrest of one of their leaders. — Star photo

Hasina: Popular govt

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it is quite the other way... we can claim that our government has proved to be the most competent and popular government after '75."

Hasina said the problem is with the two main opposition parties — BNP and JP — who were created by military dictators. "These parties feel comfortable in power. They feel suffocated when out of power," she said. That they were toppled by the people through mass movements.

Referring to her offer for dialogue, she said the opposition declined to sit and settle the problems through discussion despite her repeated initiatives.

Hasina said the country would reap another bumper IRRI-BORO harvest this year after bumper production for three consecutive years. At present the food reserve is 17 to 18 lakh metric tons.

About government's social-sector development schemes, she said 40 per cent of ADP had been allocated in the social sector to improve economic sta-

tus of the poor people and women in rural areas. She mentioned schemes for housing, employment and empowerment of women.

Presided over by New England Awami League president Matur Rahman, the reception function was also addressed by state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, US AL general secretary Abdus Salam and former Chhatra League president Enamul Haq Shamim.

Meanwhile Sheikh Hasina arrived in Lynchburg in Virginia on Thursday from Boston to receive the prestigious Pearl S. Buck award for her vision, courage and achievements in political, economic and humanitarian fields.

Randolph MaCon Women's College will hand her the laurels at a special ceremony in her honour on the college campus on April 8.

The Governor of Virginia has declared the day as "Sheikh Hasina Day" through a proclamation as a mark of respect to the Bangladesh leader, the organisers said.

Betting: Cronje & co

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cricketers from India and Pakistan.

Four years ago, former Indian all-rounder Manoj Prabhakar accused an unnamed teammate of offering him 25,000 dollars to play badly in a one-day match in Sri Lanka in 1993.

But the Indian cricket board's internal inquiry, conducted by former Indian chief justice Yashwant Chandrachud, absolved the players of any wrongdoing after Prabhakar declined to reveal the teammate's identity.

Three Australian players, Shane Warne, Mark Waugh and Tim May, accused former Pakistani captain Salim Malik of offering them bribes to lose the Karachi Test in 1994.

Malik denied the charge, but last year Waugh and Warne admitted taking money from an Indian bookmaker to supply information on weather and pitch conditions.

Pak blasts

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unidentified assailants in Karachi today in suspected sectarian violence, police said.

Wiqar Naqvi, 52, who was additional secretary general of the Shiite political party Tehrik-e Jafaria Pakistan (TJP), was attacked while he was dropping his daughter, a medical student, from a car at the Medicare Hospital in city's eastern Bahadurabad area.

Police beefed up security as tension gripped the city following the incident.

Armed men opened fire at Naqvi's car and killed him, his teenage son and driver. They fled from the scene, leaving behind the dead in a pool of blood, police said.

Naqvi's panic-stricken daughter stood in shock near the bodies of her father and brother, while dozens of residents and police arrived at the scene, witnesses said.

Senior Superintendent of Police Bashir Memon said it might be an attempted car snatching. "But we cannot rule out terrorism and a sectarian aspect in the matter," he said.

Guardians

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Police on Thursday morning resorted to lathicharge twice to disperse the agitating students of the college. The students say that their participation in the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) exam which begins April 27 has become uncertain due to negligence and lapses of the college management.

At least 20 students were injured, some of them seriously, in the police action.

"We urge the government to take necessary steps so that these students can appear in the exam," Abul Khayer Miah, one of the parents said, adding that they strongly condemned the behaviour of the college authorities and demanded exemplary punishment to those involved.

The guardians will meet on Sunday in front of the Kamalapur Railway Jama Mosque at 9 am and brought out a procession.

BDR firing

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turned violent after BDR seized five fish-carrying trucks from India and arrested their drivers and helpers at Chapainawabganj checkpoint at about 1 pm.

BDR seized the trucks saying that each truck contained 12 tons of fish, eight tons more than the quantity written in the LCs.

Protesting the BDR action, truck workers surrounded the BDR men and threw bricks on them at about 4 pm.

"BDR fired on the mob and charged baton to disperse the agitating truck workers," one of the witnesses said at the hospital here.

The injured were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Gas crisis

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phant Road and parts of Dhanmondi.

City dwellers from many areas complained low pressure of gas since Thursday night.

Advertisements were published in inside pages of newspapers failing to catch attention of the readers.

There was no press release from the authorities to the news agencies and newspapers except the advertisements in last few days.

WASA also informed people about suspension of water supply on Friday in Maghbazar area. Many residents in Malibagh area have been complaining about the supply of water for several days now.

However, gas supply, except the northern parts of the city, including old Dhaka, became normal after the authorities completed its modification and other necessary works in the Tejgaon Town Bordering Station to relieve the people from low pressure.

Meanwhile, our staff correspondent reports, sources at Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA) said last night that load shedding was 92 megawatt in its command areas yesterday. The amount of load shedding had been above 200 megawatt for about a week.

The transformer of Tongi grid 50/75 MVA sub-station that went from out of order Wednesday night causing power crisis in Uttara and Gulshan, resumed yesterday.

Power Development Board sources said last night that they generated 2467 megawatt of power yesterday against a demand of 2550 megawatt.

Congress, Trinamool

From Page 12

Despite its anti-BJP posture, the Congress central leadership has apparently given the green signal for Khan Choudhury to go ahead with alliance talks with Trinamool Congress.

"Do you think I am a fool to talk to Mamata without the permission of Sonia Gandhi. We have hundred per cent blessings of Sonia Gandhi," Choudhury claimed soon after his meeting with the Congress president.

Congress high command's officials spokesman Ajit Jogi told reporters that Khan Choudhury is a senior leader of the party and can have discussions with anybody.

The political grapevine has it that Sonia Gandhi might be trying to wean Mamata Banerjee away from BJP. But the Trinamool leader herself has made it abundantly clear more than once that she would not leave the BJP-led alliance. "I cannot betray our alliance for another," said Mamata.

Why this sudden talk of alliance between Trinamool Congress and Khan Choudhury and his followers in West Bengal?

Political analysts here say that Trinamool Congress and the Congress faction led by Khan Choudhury need each other in the emerging political scenario in West Bengal.

For, if the alliance materialises, the backing of Khan Choudhury will help the Trinamool Congress in seeking to woo the minority voters in the

state who might have been reeled by its alliance with the BJP. Trinamool sources said analysts say.

On the other hand, Khan Choudhury and his supporters seem to have accepted the political reality that Trinamool Congress is fast emerging as the credible opposition to the left front, if not an alternative at this juncture. The political space created by Congress' rout in 1998 and 1999 general elections have gone to Trinamool Congress and BJP in West Bengal.

The Congress high command now faces the daunting task of striking a balance between the real politics in West Bengal and ideological imperatives at the national level.

The left leaders are, however, dismissive of any threat to their rule in West Bengal in the event of a "grand alliance" between Trinamool Congress and Congress.

CPI (M) general secretary Harkishan Singh Sarjeet said the left performance in recent assembly by-elections and the "massive response" to the March 25 rally of the left front in Calcutta gave enough indications which way the wind is blowing.

The left parties are skeptical about the alliance taking shape, mainly for two reasons: (1) they hope Congress central leadership will finally shoot down Khan Choudhury's initiative, and (2) Congress will not allow itself to be in the role of a second fiddle to Trinamool Congress in West Bengal.

Cricket carnival

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have the proven devastating qualities of Mark Waugh and Adam Gilchrist in the opening slot, which is no-less.

If the Asian XI has the privilege of having a middle-order comprising Ganguly, Aravinda de Silva and Ajay Jadeja, their opponents can always come up with the combined genius of Jacques Kallis, Andy Flower, and Michael Bevan.

A slight edge that the World XI may enjoy is in the all-round department when they have the best in Chris Cairns with Zulu bomb-shell Lance Klusener and Neil Johnson. Abdur Razzak and Robin Singh will have an uphill task to match that trio.

Akram will spearhead the Asian bowling attack that include Chaminda Vaas, Muttiah Muralitharan and Anil Kumble. Franklyn Rose and Nantie Hayward will give the World XI bowling the new-ball burst. The experience English duo of Andrew Caddick and Phil Tufnell will give more edge.

"This is a very important cricket match because we are here to promote cricket. Both sides have got world beaters. Being captain and a player, I'm looking forward to the match. I think we are going to have a serious cricket match tomorrow," said Akram, while talking to reporters yesterday.

"I would like to echo Wasim's sentiment. We have got so many individuals here in a game where nobody would like not to do well. I think everybody would be very competitive," said Chris Cairns, the vice-captain of Rest of the World.

"We are professionals. We are not here to go out there to play an exhibition match. We are going to play a proper one-day game," Akram added. About his three openers, Tendulkar, Jayasuriya and Ganguly, Akram said: "I think this is the best possible selection. Some body has to bat at number three."

Asked whether his team has been weakened by the absence of West Indies superstars Brian

Lara and Courtney Walsh, Cairns said: "I think when you lose two quality players like them, I would be stupid to say no because they are such wonderful players. I think the guys coming in place of them will step up a gear because here is an opportunity to showcase your skill on the world stage. I think everybody will try to make up for the loss of those two great players."

Cairns brushed aside the possibilities of having problems with the pitches here, saying he and his teammates have had reasonable experience playing in the subcontinent.

"I disagree with that view. We have had several tours to this part of the world. I think we are quite accustomed to the conditions on offer."

When one reporter asked who he thinks is going to win today, a witty Cairns replied:

However, Akram was more diplomatic. "It will be a great game of cricket. Let the best team win. Let's enjoy the skills of the world class players. We are playing in one of the best cricket playing cities in the world."

SQUADS

ASIA XI: Wasim Akram (captain) (Pakistan), Sanath Jayasuriya (vice-captain) (Sri Lanka), Saurav Ganguly (India), Sachin Tendulkar (India), Aravinda de Silva (Sri Lanka), Ajay Jadeja (India), Robin Singh (India), Moin Khan (Pakistan), Anil Kumble (India), Muttiah Muralitharan (Sri Lanka), Chaminda Vaas (Sri Lanka) and Abdur Razzak (Pakistan).

WORLD XI: Mark Waugh (captain) (Australia), Chris Cairns (vice-captain) (New Zealand), Andy Flower (Zimbabwe), Michael Bevan (Australia), Neil Johnson (Zimbabwe), Adam Gilchrist (Australia), Jacques Kallis (South Africa), Lance Klusener (South Africa), Phil Tufnell (England), Franklyn Rose (West Indies), Nantie Hayward (South Africa) and Andrew Caddick (England).

Chinese fighters

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more Chinese F-7 MBs. Now the Chinese offer is for F-7 MGs.

The BAF only last month completed the induction and started operational use of eight Russian MIG-29 multi-role fighters. The half squadron of MIG-29s has a price tag of 124 million US dollars, inclusive of aircraft hardware, primary armaments and ammunition, training, transportation and technical services. It has also consumable parts and spares for over one and a half years, taking into consideration intensive training needs.

The Russian MIGs have been acquired with a 30 per cent down payment on a nine-year payment schedule. The remaining 70 per cent will have been paid in seven financial years from 2001.

The BAF now has a fleet strength of four squadrons of fighters and two squadrons of helicopters. The present fighter fleet comprise two squadrons of Chinese F-7 MBs, one squadron of Chinese A-5 III ground attack aircraft, half squadron of Czech manufactured L-39 jets and half squadron of MIG-29s. Besides, there are one squadron (12) of US made Bell helicopters and one squadron of Mi-17 helicopters.

Transport workers

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leader was not released within 72 hours.

Meanwhile BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has strongly protested the arrest of BNP leader Kafiluddin Ahmed and demanded his immediate and unconditional release.

In a statement yesterday, she said the arrest of Savar thana BNP general secretary and leader of the truck drivers was part of repression on political opponents.

Ex-MP gets 4 years RI for corruption

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Dhaka Divisional Special Judge Court Thursday convicted former Jatiya Parishad member Enamul Huq Jondome on corruption charges and sentenced him to four years rigorous imprisonment. The former MP has also been fined Taka ten lakh, reports BSS.

Judge Mohammad Fazlul Karim also convicted Nurul Islam, the personal assistant of the MP and sentenced him two years rigorous imprisonment in the same case. Nurul Amin has also been fined Taka five lakh for the same charges.

Both the accused were absent before the court during the pronouncement of judgement. The judgement was handed down in absence of both convicts.

Rotarians

From Page 12

"We have to improve our economy to improve quality of life and women should be given preference in this regard."

Earlier, Rotary International President Carlo Ravizza said they are going to set new strategy for future Rotary service.

Rotarians from nine countries are attending the conference with the slogan, "Improving the quality of life in the 21st century."

M. Ozair Farooq, governor, Rotary District 3280, AAM Mohsin, member, conference committee from Pakistan and Gemunu Gunatilleke, member, conference committee from Sri Lanka and MA Awwal, member conference committee also spoke on the occasion.