

News

What's on today...

Seminar: A seminar of 'Role of an Actuary' organised by Bangladesh Insurance Academy...

Meeting: A joint meeting of the Executive Committee and Advisory Committee of Bangladesh Environmental Journalists Association...

NSU seminar: The Department of Computer Science of North South University (NSU) will hold a seminar on E-commerce...

Reception: Bangladesh National Personality Research Centre and Sher-e-Bangla National Smriti Sangsad will jointly accord a reception to Rajmohan Gandhi...

Annual general meeting: The annual general meeting (AGM) of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association will be held...

Reception: Al-Annin Journalists' Foundation will accord a reception to noted personalities for their contribution in different fields...

..... and tomorrow

CESTI lecture: Centre for Scientific and Technological Information (CESTI) of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka will hold a scientific lecture session on 'Minilugucagon'...

Exhibition: Bangladesh Photo Journalists' Association will hold an exhibition and competition of photography titled 'Rupashi Bangla'...

Weather

Dry weather likely

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely over the regions of Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions 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, Me office said.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 36.8 degree Celsius at Rajshahi and the lowest 20.0 degree Celsius at Srirampur.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6.19 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.39 am.

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

Table with columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening)

HERE and THERE

Lion Club of Dhaka Agrani

Lion Mohammad Jamaluddin Hossain and Sarwar Alam were elected president and secretary respectively of the Lion Club of Dhaka Agrani for the year of 2000-2001, reports BSS.

The election was held at the annual general meeting of the club on Monday. A 13-member executive committee was also elected.

Former District Governor of the District 315, B1, Bangladesh, Advocate MA Salam Talukder chaired the meeting.

NSU-USIS

A discussion meeting on 'Higher Education in the United States' was held at the North South University campus yesterday. The meeting was presented by United States Information Services (USIS).

Kathleen Kisting Alam, USIS Regional Educational Coordinator for South Asia Region and Shaheen Khan, Educational Advisor of the USIS, spoke at meeting.

The speakers at the meeting said that it is complicated, un-

Death anniversary of AL leader Mohiuddin today

The third death anniversary of Mohiuddin Ahmed, a veteran Awami League leader and a close associate of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, will be observed in the city and in greater Barisal district today, reports BSS.

The late leader, who was senior vice president of Awami League during its revival after the killing of Bangabandhu, also served as the acting president of the party.

Besides Mohiuddin Ahmed Jatya Smriti Sangsad, several other organisations based in Dhaka and greater Barisal have arranged different programmes to observe the day.

The programmes include laying of wreaths at his grave, milad mahfil and discussion meeting on the life and activities of late Ahmed.

Vice-chairman of CONCOP elected

A meeting of newly-elected executive committee of consultative committee of public enterprises (CONCOP) was held Monday in a local hotel in the city, says a press release.

The executive committee unanimously elected A F M S Zaman, Chairman, Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation as Vice-Chairman of the committee.

familiar and expensive process to go to USA for higher studies and over 3000 accredited colleges and universities there vary in terms of quality, competitiveness, size, character and cost.

RMCOSA

The old students of Rajshahi Medical College at a meeting decided to form Rajshahi Medical College Old Students Association (RMCOSA), reports BSS.

All old students of the college have been requested to attend the next meeting to be held at Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) Bhaban at 4 pm on April 19 to form an ad-hoc committee.

Presided over by Professor (Dr) Anwarul Islam, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Dr AKM Fazlul Huq, Dr M Abdul Awal, Dr Gulzar Hossain, Dr Abdullah Al-Mamun, Dr Lalla Arjuman Banu, Dr Shaifur Rahman, Dr KM Masudur Rahman, Dr Susen Kuram Saha, Dr Nazimuddin, Dr Chitta Ranjan Das, Dr Mostafizur Rahman, Dr M Khairul Anam.

Two stroke

work) and Coalition of Environmental NGOs (CEN) jointly organised the ICEN on January 14-15 at BUET.

The declaration noted that although Bangladesh's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions is insignificant, it will still be severely affected by climate change, resulting in uncertainties in weather pattern.

"It is recommended that Bangladesh plays an active role and be a vigilant participant in negotiations and reviews of various international conventions and protocols."

The declaration expressed concern over unplanned urbanisation and said that proper implementation of development plans for cities and towns should be ensured.

It also said that Dhaka is growing fast without attention to the environmental concerns. "The Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP) should be implemented, properly reviewed and regularly updated. Zoning recommended in DMDP and Bangladesh National Building Code must be enforced. Open spaces, rivers, drainage channels and water bodies must be protected adequately," the declaration said.

It was also recommended that Dhaka Cantonment and BDR Headquarters in Peelkhana be shifted on outskirts of Dhaka and the areas thus vacated and used properly.

A.M.A. Muhi of POROSH was also present at the press conference.

President assents to Public Safety (Amend) Bill

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday assented to Public Safety (Special Provision) (Amendment) Bill 2000 adopted in the 7th National Parliament, reports BSS.

The President also gave assent to the Forest (Amendment) Bill 2000, Environment Court Bill 2000 and Bangladesh Environment Protection (Amendment) Bill 2000.

Haji Selim

The MP and his accomplices attacked four Ansars, who were deployed at a nearby piece of land of Golam Rasul, tied them and handed them over to Fatulla police, alleging that they were involved in the robbery.

Police arrested Rashid, an Ansar commander, but released the other three. Rashid was placed on a two-day remand yesterday. The rest four, who were arrested yesterday as suspects in the robbery, are Ali Noor, Sobhan, Jahangir and Humayun, police said.

Our Narayanjanj correspondent quoting ASP Atiqur Rahman reports that the case was handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department yesterday. Fatulla thana, however, could not confirm it till late last night.

Admitting that case should be filed under Public Safety Act against those who blocked the road, the officer-in-charge of Fatulla told the Daily Star last night that they were inquiring whether traffic movement was disrupted due to traffic jam or blockade.

The OC also admitted that the ruling party lawmaker was around when the road blockade took place but refused to make any comment on his involvement in it.

All trading centres of Munsikhola remained closed yesterday, demanding security of traders of the locality.

Besides, Pagla Cement Traders Association held a press conference at Munsikhola yesterday where journalists from Dhaka were taken by the MP. However, local journalists were not invited.

Haji Selim denied at the press conference that Monday's incident had anything to do with his dispute with Golam Rasul over a piece of land.

Khabiruddin Mollah, president of the association, demanded that a permanent police camp be established in Munsikhola area to restore law and order there.

The High Court issued a rule on the government and the chairman of the BSS (Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha) board of directors to show cause why the appointment of Haroon Habib as managing director and chief editor of BSS should not be declared illegal and void, reports UNB.

The rule was made returnable in two weeks. The next date for a hearing was set for April 30.

The Division Bench, comprising Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury and Justice Mozammel Hossain, issued the rule upon a writ filed by ASM Habibullah, chief news editor of BSS, on behalf of senior journalists of the state run news agency, challenging the appointment of a junior hand as managing director and chief editor on lien.

Barrister Maudud Ahmed, appearing on behalf of the petitioner, submitted that Haroon Habib, special correspondent of BSS, was appointed managing director and chief editor on a 2-year contract ahead of 17 senior staff.

Ahmed said the appointment was in violation of Rule 2 and 14 of the BSS Service Rules. There is no provision to appoint an employee on contract for a limited period in the same organisation on lien. The question of lien arises only when there is an inter-departmental agreement with another department of the government regarding the employment of an employee on a temporary basis.

Secretaries of information and establishment and chairman of the board of directors have been made respondents to the rule.

Obituary: Mohammad Cherag Ali Hawlader a noted businessman and father of medical correspondent of the Daily Prothom Alo Nazrul Islam died on Tuesday. He was 75, says a press.

He left behind four sons and two daughters.

All was suffering from cancer. He was buried at a graveyard in Barisal town.

PIB workshop concludes

A two-day workshop on "Problems and Prospects of National (district) Pages" of the daily newspapers, organised by the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) concluded in the city yesterday.

Twenty-three journalists from Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal and Bogra took part in the workshop held at the PIB auditorium at 3 Circuit House Road.

On the inaugural day Sudhangshu Shekhar Roy, Instructor of PIB placed a study report on the National Pages of some dailies published from Dhaka city. A discussion followed on his report.

'Gandhiji encouraged us to lead a non-communal life'

Rajmohan visits ashram named after the Mahatma

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam, back from Noakhali

It was an emotional moment for the elderly people at Srirampur in Noakhali when they met Rajmohan Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi's grandson on Monday evening.

M K Ghandi had spent four months in the riot torn Noakhali between 1946 and 1947, preaching peace among the people in the area.

Rajmohan Gandhi's visit to the Gandhi Ashram at Noakhali was organised by Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung and Proshikha.

Jharna Dhora Chowdhury, Secretary of the Gandhi Ashram Trust, received Rajmohan Gandhi and his wife Usha at the Gandhi Ashram at Srirampur which the couple visited on Monday evening. Rajmohan talked to the officials of the Ashram about the ongoing activities of the organisation.

"I am happy to see that both the Muslim and the Hindus are working together" he said while addressing the people at the ashram, calling upon them to keep up the good work for the deprived and poor people.

"I also wish to thank all those who helped my grandfather during his stay in the region," Rajmohan said.

Usha, Rajmohan's wife said that the visit to the ashram would remain as an important event in her memory.

Earlier when the Gandhi couple arrived at Srirampur hundreds of people of different ages greeted them. When he visited the Rajbari premises at Srirampur several elderly people gathered there and told him that they have had the privilege to work with his great grandfather.

"Gandhiji encouraged us to lead a simple and non-communal life," he said.

Rajmohan said that he himself was only 12 and studying at

Delhi at the time his grandfather M K Gandhi came to Noakhali.

The elderly people, from both the Hindu and Muslim community recalled how they would crowd around the Mahatma in the early morning to hear his preaching of non-violence and harmony. They said both the Holy Quran and Gita were read out at the tin shed house where Gandhi used to pray.

Abul Kalam Bhuiyan, now an octogenarian, recalled that Nehru had also visited the village after Mahatma's arrival here.

It is the third visit of Rajmohan Gandhi to Bangladesh but his first to the Noakhali ashram named after his grandfather. When asked why it had taken him so long to make the visit that people had been looking forward to, Rajmohan said "Better late than never."



Brotee, a non-government organisation held the screening of a documentary "Arsenic Alert" followed by a discussion on arsenic mitigation in the city yesterday.

Govt policy of testing tubewells not working, researchers say

By Staff Correspondent

Researchers at a press conference yesterday differed with the government's existing policy of testing tubewells to identify arsenic contaminated wells.

Quoting statistics taken from local United Nations agencies and the World Bank office here, the researchers said that million of people are at risk while one out of every ten affected people face death due to drinking of the poisonous heavy metal, arsenic, in tubewell water.

Addressing journalists at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium Sharmin Murshid, chief executive of Brotee said, "We have tested enough wells. It is time we pay attention to give relief to the sufferers by offering them alternative sources of drinking water starting with the most severely affected areas."

Kais Choudhury, also speaking on the occasion of screening of a documentary "Arsenic Alert" said, "What we have witnessed is worse than Bhopal and Chernobyl. The pictures are more horrifying considering the fact just how many people are at still risk. During research in small areas of Barisal we have also found people suffering from arsenic cancer."

Choudhury continued, "We have found plenty of tubewells sealed off with red paint, but the users have not been given any alternative sources of drinking water."

Humayun Q Choudhury of Plasma Plus, also Brotee's chief scientific advisor, said, "The field kits used to test tubewell water to detect presence of arsenic have no validation. The kits are in the centre of arsenic business which has attracted attention of many local trade houses and some of the overseas manufacturers are simply conducting assessments through use of the field kits."

Sharmin and her colleagues repeated their call for providing immediate relief to the sufferers, adding that policy makers with stake holders must decide the best options for alternative sources of water for villagers before it is too late.

Brotee, a centre for people's participation, training and research has been working in 16 villages on groundwater arsenic contamination. An independent research organisation, it is helping villagers to address the crisis and has been holding meetings with policy makers to mobilise the issues that remains unresolved even today.

12,313 students get pry scholarship

Some 12,313 students have got primary scholarship. Of them, 2,305 got the scholarship of talentpool and 10,008 general, reports UNB.

Farhana Khanam Keya of Vidyamaye Government Girls High School, Mymensingh topped the list of successful candidates. A total of 335,745 students took part in the scholarship exam-99 from six divisions.

She secured 384 marks with the percentage 96 in the exam held December 19-20 last year, said an announcement of the Primary and Mass Education Division of the Education Ministry yesterday.

Jawana Anwar Zulfia of Tamalata Government Primary School in Kishoreganj and Tasmin Akhter Jahan of Rangpur Government Girls High School jointly secured the second position.

Both of them scored 382 or 95.5 per cent marks. The third position was also secured jointly by Inmru Kayes of Singar Model Government Primary School of Manikganj and Tamanna Sharmin Nitu of Government Model Primary School of Kishoreganj.

Both of them secured 381 marks or 95.25 per cent. The release said the number

PDB, DESA services declared essential for 6 more months

The government has declared the services of all officers and employees of Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) and Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) essential for further six months, reports BSS.

The announcement would be effective from today.

Crackdown

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have been asked to demolish all illegal structures beside the roads and highways and file cases against the toll collectors under the Public Safety Act," said Home Minister Mohammad Nasim.

He said the BDR has been asked to patrol the roads and highways to counter any attempt to obstruct the police.

Nasim said he had discussed the issue with transport worker and owner organisations.

Nasim said he would not reverse his decision, even if the transport workers went on strike.

The home minister said he agreed some law enforcers and BRTA men are involved in toll collection. "We will take action against those people. If necessary, after departmental action, they will be tried under the PSA," warned Nasim.

RU vacation

RAJSHAHI, Apr 11: Rajshahi University will remain closed for five days from tomorrow on the occasion of Bengali New Year and Holy Ashura, reports UNB.

EU help

From Page 1

and jute products. "It is unfortunate because the decision came when we were gradually regaining ground against synthetic products. But non-extension of an agreement does not mean there will be no cooperation to promote the natural fibre," the State Minister said.

Other sources said, a new cartel-like organisation with a different name and structure may come into being.

Ahmed Hossain, Chairman of Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association (BJSJA), said the IJO should exist at least as a UN organisation to promote the natural fibre. Otherwise, all achievements of IJO in promotion of jute and jute products in the last 16 years will be of no use.

The EU should extend support in this regard because jute and jute products are environment friendly, and environmental movement is getting strength in the West day by day, he said.

The IJO was established in 1984 under an agreement of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

"If members from EU do not want to remain in the IJO, the door is open for them to leave. But why they raised voice against the existence of IJO? Their behaviour is not understandable," an official said seeking anonymity.

He said it is a setback for free market economy and a boon for synthetic products, produced in European countries.

Aftabul Islam, President of Dhaka Chamber and Commerce Industries (DCCI) said the EC decision not to give a lease of life to IJO is shocking. It will affect millions of jute growers and workers of jute industries.

The decision also goes against EU's campaign for poverty alleviation as millions of poor farmers are engaged in cultivation of jute. It is also self-contradictory because they are campaigning for environmental protection but have taken a decision which will affect an environment friendly natural fibre.

"We will urge the European Community to review and reconsider the decision," he said.

The DCCI President said that the United States produced about 10,000 tonnes of jute last year.

Institute of Bankers diploma exam results

The results of the 1st and 2nd part of Banking Diploma of the Institute of Bankers, Bangladesh were announced yesterday, says a press release.

Candidates bearing the following roll numbers have passed in the respective exams.

Table with columns: Roll Number, Name, and Exam Results for various categories like BBA, BBA (Hons), BBA (Hons) (1st Part), etc.

Cronje cons cricket

From Page 1

"South Africa is still a good team but Hansie's leadership and other skills will be missed. "We have no comment on their captain -- ex-captain -- or what he's done," he added.

The captaincy for the one-day series against Australia will be taken over by vice-captain Shaun Pollock. UCB spokeswoman Bronwyn Wilkinson told AFP, adding that veteran all-rounder Dave Callaghan was being flown to Durban to replace Cronje in the squad.

She told AFP that Cronje had himself offered to withdraw from the three matches, adding that he would not play in any of them. She said he had not been fired as South Africa's captain per se, however.

Match-fixing charges have also been filed against two Indians and one of them, Delhi-based businessman Rajesh Kalra, has already been arrested, a police source said.

The other was identified as Sanjay Chawla, an Indian settled in London.

(More stories on Cronje affair on Pages 13 and 15)

Quikhwani

Quikhwani of Al-Haj Chabla Akhter Khanam will be held on Friday at her 495 Malbagh residence in the city after ASF prayers, family sources said, reports BSS.

She died at Suhrawardy Hospital on April 5. She was buried at her village home at Shibpur in Narsingdi district on Monday after arrival of her two sons from the USA.