

What's on today....

Seminar: Bangladesh National Atomic Energy Commission and Society of Nuclear Medicine, Bangladesh will hold a national seminar on "Congenital Hypothyroidism". Chief guest: Minister for Science and Technology Lt Gen Mohammad Noor Uddin Khan PSC. Venue: Auditorium of Atomic Energy Centre, 4 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Ramna. Time: 9:00 am.

Presentation of UNICEF report: Unicef Bangladesh has organised a session on 'Highlights of report for Unicef on Child Labour in the bidi sector'. Presenter: Dr T Blanchet. Venue: JPC conference room, 6th floor, Unicef. Time: 10 am.

CPD dialogue: On State of Governance and Budget Responses 2000, organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan will make the keynote presentation. Venue: CIRAP auditorium, 17, Topkhana Road. Time: 2 pm.

CPD dialogue: The 2nd session of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) on 'State of Governance and Budget Responses 2000' will be held. Chief guest: Minister for Finance Shah AMS Kibria. Venue: CIRAP auditorium, 17, Topkhana Road. Time: 2:00 pm-6:00 pm.

CAB discussion meet: Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) is holding a post budget discussion meeting. Venue: VIP lounge of Jatiya Press Club. Time: 4:00 pm.

Handing over ceremony: The original manuscripts of the very popular programme "Chorompatra" broadcast from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra will be formally handed over to the National Museum. Chief guest: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Venue: Main auditorium of National Museum, Shahbag. Time: 5:00 pm.

Satyajit Ray Retrospective: Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen *Aparajita* (The Unvanquished). Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, Rd No 2, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 6:15 pm.

Folk Music Festival 2000: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy begins the 4-day long Folk Music Festival 2000 which will be participated by leading artists of the country. Venue: Shawkat Osman Memorial auditorium of Begum Sufia Kamal Library Directorate (Public Library Auditorium), Shahbag. Time: 7:00 pm.

PIB workshop: Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) will inaugurate a weeklong workshop on 'Reporting on Gender Issues'. Chief guest: State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed.

..... and tomorrow

Discussion: Darul Ihsan University will hold a discussion on Eid-e-Miladunnabi. Venue: University premises, House No 21, Road No 9/A (New), Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 5:00 pm.

Satyajit Ray Retrospective: Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen a documentary 'Ziya Mohyeddin Discusses The World of Apu' which will be followed by *Apu Sanghar* (The World of Apu). Venue: Indian High Commission Auditorium, Road No 2, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 6:15 pm.

Folk Music Festival 2000: An evening of different folk songs will be presented on the 2nd day of the folk festival. Venue: Shawkat Osman Memorial auditorium of Begum Sufia Kamal Library Directorate (Public Library auditorium), Shahbag. Time: 7:00 pm.

Weather

Thundershowers likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Khulna divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderately heavy falls at places over Chittagong and Sylhet divisions is also expected during the period. Met office said, adding day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 35.6 degree Celsius at Sayedpur and the lowest 23.8 degree Celsius at Dhaka.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6.48 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.12 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	34.2	23.8
Chittagong	33.0	24.6
Rajshahi	34.7	25.7
Khulna	35.4	25.4
Barisal	34.0	25.0
Sylhet	35.0	26.4
Cox's Bazar	33.0	26.0
	Morning	Evening
	80	63
	78	79
	75	74
	86	69
	81	78
	78	73
	78	98

HERE and THERE

Krishibid Institution of Bangladesh

A 30-member committee of Krishibid Institution of Bangladesh Agricultural University unit has been elected unopposed recently, reports UNB.

Mohammad Momtazur Rahman and Dr Abdul Khayer were elected as its president and general secretary respectively while Dr M Sayedur Rahman and Dr Mohammad Mojibur Rahman vice presidents.

Dr G M Mojibur Rahman has been made assistant general secretary, Mohammad Azharul Haq social welfare secretary, Mohammad Niaz Uddin Pasha

sports and cultural secretary and Dr Mohammad Solaiman Ali Fakir treasurer.

The other office-bearers elected are members and counselors, said a press release.

NKSC

By DU Correspondent

Prof. Syed Ahmed Khan of Department of Sociology of the Dhaka University has been appointed as Director of newly formed Nazmul Karim Study Centre (NKSC) of the department, says a press release.

The appointment was made in a recent meeting of DU Syndicate for three years. Prof Ahmed will hold the post in addition to his normal duties at the department.



Impress Telefilm and World View Foundation has signed a contract recently under which Channel-1 and Young Asia Television (YAT) will exchange television programmes.



Ishrat Noor Ali of Tripleyes Technologies who finished first in Open For All Web Page Design Contest at the Electro Computer Days: 2000 arranged by the Association of Computer and Electronic Students (ACES) of BUET receiving the prize from the BUET Prof Chowdhury Mofizur Rahman yesterday. BUET Vice-Chancellor Dr Noor Uddin Ahmed and Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury are also seen in the picture. Grameen Cybernet received the second prize.

— Star photo

Hasina declares Joypurhat as illiteracy free

JOYPURHAT, June 17: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday declared Joypurhat district as illiteracy free, reports BSS.

The announcement of the prime minister was made at a huge public meeting at the local stadium here. It was a yet another step forward in implementing her government's aim to free the country from the curse of illiteracy by the year 2006.

Joypurhat thus became the fifth district of the country after Lalmonirhat, Magura, Chuadanga and Gazipur to become an illiteracy free district of the country.

The public meeting, organised by district Awami League to mark the historic day, was presided over by Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil, who is also the minister in charge of the district.



Obituary

Dr M Bazlur Rahman former Chairman of Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) died on June 16. He was 78, says a press release.

He is survived by two sons and many relatives to mourn his death.

Rahman was buried at Banani graveyard after his *namaz-e-janaza* at Gulshan Mosque on the same day.

A *doa mahfil* will be held at his sister's house at House No 34, Road No 64 of Gulshan after *Asr* prayers today, the release added.

'There is no terrorist on DU campus'

By DU Correspondent

Dhaka University authorities at an emergency meeting of its Provost Standing Committee yesterday claimed that there is no outsider or terrorist on the campus now.

They said that the campus is now favorable for education and is almost terrorism-free, following authorities measures taken against it.

They contradicted a report published in a national daily yesterday and alleged that some newspapers are publishing fake, fabricated, baseless and motivated reports to disgrace the image of the university.

Presiding over the meeting, Vice-Chancellor A K Azad Chowdhury said, "we will immediately book any killer or criminal" on the campus, if there is still any."

The VC requested all quarters to inform the university authorities if any troublemaker is found on the campus or at any hall.

The Pro-VC, Treasurer, Hall Provosts and Proctor of the university were present at the meeting.

Qulkhwani



at his residence at House No 9, Road No 14, Gulshan 1, says a press release.

Abdur Rahman, founder of Swantex Ltd, died of a cerebral hemorrhage.

He is survived by his wife, four sons, grandchildren and relatives to mourn his death.

BNP: Soul searching

From page 1

Selfish face came to public view. Our largest opposition party showed that nothing else attracted it except POWER. It was NOT interested in playing the role that voters had given it in the '96 election- which was to serve the people by being in the opposition. BNP completely failed to understand that in the parliamentary system, being in the opposition is a great source of power and an extraordinary opportunity to the serve the people. It is a training ground for being a better ruling party next time around. Cleverly used, the powers vested in the opposition, especially in the Leader of the Opposition, is of enormous value and at times can be used to keep the government on its toes. But NO, what interested BNP was ONLY to be in power. And thus the birth of the "Oust government now" slogan. Frankly every time I heard this slogan, I felt insulted as a voter — for it is not up to the BNP or anybody else but ONLY up to us, the VOTERS, to change a government. Only the military "ousts" governments, and not a party that professes to believe in democracy. In democracy ONLY VOTERS change a government, and that is done when the opposition party or parties are able to convince the people to vote for them, instead of the ruling party. Thus this slogan appeared to us -the voters - to be fundamentally inappropriate and undemocratic. It was selfish in character, destructive in method and confrontational in tactics. It set the tone for all subsequent BNP policies, which led to more such destructive moves.

A natural corollary of the "oust government" stance was the continuous boycott of the parliament. This in our view was BNP's biggest mistake. By refusing to use the enormous power and prestige of the parliamentary opposition and by continuously boycotting the parliament, the BNP literally gave the ruling party a free ride. Unopposed the government turned the Sangsad into a plaything and legitimised their every action. If the government is guilty of abusing its majority within the House, the opposition is more guilty of 'abandoning' the public in general and its voters in particular by leaving the House. Opposition's claim that it was not given the opportunity to speak or participate in the workings of the parliament is at best a lame excuse and at worst betrayal of a sacred trust. A visiting European parliamentary group told this writer that an MP would never get elected by the constituents if he or she were to boycott the parliament. The voters will never trust this person again, as he/she will be judged unreliable and as a betrayer of their trust. The main point of our piece today is to make a strong plea to our biggest opposition party to see and judge what its politics has earned them so far.

It is our belief that if an objective and dispassionate judgement is made then it will be realised that much of the last four years has been wasted. Whatever public support BNP enjoys today it is MORE because of the oppressive politics of the government rather than due to any positive politics of the opposition.

Time has come to consider how the BNP can most effectively use the time that is left before the next election - which is roughly a year - to win the hearts and minds of the voters. Our strong suggestion is that BNP should reclaim its rightful place as the largest ever opposition inside the parliament. We see the following benefits if it does.

1. Bring far greater accountability and transparency of all government actions;
2. Tell the people what opposition's ideas and suggestions are in running the country better;
3. Restore the centrality of the parliament in our politics which it has lost ever since the opposition has been boycotting the House;
4. Bring about a positive trend in our politics which this country clearly needs to move forward;
5. Convince the world and especially our development partners that we are capable of responsible politics, at least of being a responsible opposition in spite of provocation by the government;
6. Build an image among the people that BNP is willing to serve the people in any capacity

which voters give them.

We would like to put forward the concrete suggestion that immediately after rejoining the parliament the BNP should demand a debate on the law and order situation to be followed by one on corruption. This will give the BNP a chance to put before the House, and through the House before the public, all the concerns of the people with facts and evidence. Some very good standing Committee reports have been prepared. BNP should demand debates on those reports in the House. These debates will greatly help the cause of good governance and the opposition will gain considerable public support and sympathy for taking this constructive line. There are many issues that need to be discussed before the next election; especially how to ensure that it is free and fair. There are important electoral reforms that need to be carried out; including the issue of expeditious handling of cases referred to the Election Tribunal. Issues concerning the new voters' list also requires public debate. In other words a full and constructive agenda awaits the opposition if it goes back to the parliament. We are confident that such a move by the opposition will earn public respect and support for it.

There is neither logic nor any astute political thinking that prevents the BNP from going back to the House. What may hold it back is its stubbornness and the fear of the so-called loss of face for what will be a political turn about. This is but a small price to pay for a world of public support that is bound to come BNP's way when politics will take such a constructive turn.

Return to the parliament for the love of our people, for the love of democracy and for your own political gain.

Feni clash

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Denying the charge, BCL vice-president Jahiruddin said the clash was ensued as his activists came under attack by JCD supporters on way to a meeting at Bhuiyar Hat.

A tense situation is prevailing in the area despite police patrol.

Terminal

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Installation of a private container port near Chittagong port and staged demonstrations.

Meanwhile, the on-going re-negotiation between the government and the SSA has angered the alliance leaders and they have decided to hold a meeting on Sunday for taking action programmes to stop the process, alliance sources said.

Convener of the alliance Mahfuzur Rahman Khan told this correspondent that they would continue the movement to resist installation of the container port near Chittagong port.

"We are determined to halt all activities of Chittagong port if the government signs any agreement with SSA for setting up of a container port here," Khan said.

"The interests of Chittagong port will be destroyed if a private container port is allowed to operate here," he claimed.

WRIP talks

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cess by signing a Letter of Intent (LOI) earlier this year.

The government meanwhile asked BAPEX to submit a development plan again for the Shahbazzur gas field. This field was discovered by BAPEX in late '95. BAPEX had submitted two development plans in '96, which were rejected as those lacked any justification of the investments.

Initially, Unocal had proposed in '96 a joint venture with BAPEX for development of the Shahbazzur gas field but the government did not pay attention to that.

10 PBCP members held with arms

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, June 17: Dinnuria thana police arrested on Friday 10 members of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party from Shalpur and Mikhimul villages. They also recovered a foreign revolver, a shutter gun and two live cartridges from their possession.

Strong monetary policy needed

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Kibria said Bangladesh had a long period of over five per cent growth. In the last four years, the growth was around 5.5 per cent according to the old series and 5.1 per cent based on the new series. Bangladesh never had witnessed such sustained growth rate.

"But most importantly, this was a non-inflationary growth, which is the dream of any finance minister," he said. "By any international standard, inflation rate is very satisfactory."

"We also had four years of steady agriculture growth. Isn't it a contribution of government policy? Money has not been syphoned out from the agriculture sector. Rather, we injected fresh credit. The volume of agriculture credit has enabled farmers to buy inputs, which were made duty-free in the budget. We also ensured uninterrupted power supply for farmers at night. We had reduced corruption in agriculture credit disbursement. We have set an example of governance."

Kibria also defended the budget deficit estimation as a percentage of GDP, saying that his figures were correct. The budget deficit figures of 5.8 per cent of GDP for this year and 5.9 per cent for the next year were calculated as per the IMF guideline. Contrary to what Dr Bhattacharya said, there is no such safe limit for deficit for any country, he added.

Kibria also said there is no need to worry about government borrowing as latest figures are indicating that it has decreased in recent times. Till June 10, the government borrowing from the banking system has come down from Tk 3700 crore to Tk 3385 crore.

Regarding increase in classified loans, Kibria said this happened because of implementation of an international standard of classification.

"We implemented the new system without considering the local situation," Kibria said. "I hope the Bangladesh Bank will reconsider the local context in loan classification."

Regarding industrial performance, he said the mindless liberalisation in the early 1990s had thrown thousands of industries into distress. "We have set up a committee to look into the distressed units and the committee has so far rehabilitated 1100 industries."

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud said what many may find missing in the finance minister's budget speech is a vision for the future and in particular, an outline of the tasks he is leaving for the next finance minister.

Explaining the high government borrowing, Dr Mahmud said the main underlying reason for this is that while foreign funding has been declining, we have sought to keep the size of the development budget from falling.

"The limit to which borrowing can be done depends on whether such borrowing along with net credit expansion in the private sector leads to excessive monetary expansion so as to jeopardise macroeconomic stabilisation. This year it has been possible because of somewhat stifled demand for credit from the private sector. But if there is an increase in credit demand from a revitalised private sector, then a much more proactive monetary policy will need to be pursued, in which the

Massacre

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the attackers were also injured and were taken away by their comrades.

The victims included 26 members of the Yadav Community of cattle herders, six Dalits who are at the lowest rung of India's caste hierarchy, and two people of another low caste.

Twenty-two people died immediately, and the rest died later, said intelligence officials in Patna, Bihar's capital, where they are receiving reports on the violence.

The latest massacre was the eighth major caste-related attack in the past six months in Bihar.

Though no one claimed responsibility for the massacre, an intelligence official speaking on condition of anonymity said the killers announced that they were acting in retaliation for the killing of 11 upper caste villagers on Sunday.

Earlier reports about that attack, in the village of Assar, had put the number of dead at 12, but officials said those reports were incorrect.

About 83 per cent of India's one billion people are practitioners of Hinduism, which classifies its adherents into a social hierarchy of castes.

Garments villages

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ter very soon.

He said that other industrial areas like Denra, Gazipur and Narayanganj are also in their consideration for setting up of garments villages.

Manna said around 70 bighas of land are needed for a garments village comprising at least 50 factories. There should also be access roads, better communications and other facilities like mosque, club, labour quarters and medical centre.

There are 1855 garments factories in Dhaka City Corporation area and 356 in Narayanganj pourasabha. More than 60 per cent of these are located in residential areas.

About 14 lakh workers of these factories are also living in the city and in Narayanganj in too unhygienic condition.

level of government borrowing is planned ahead instead of arising by default."

Dr Mahmud however expressed his worry about the fact that the need for borrowing has arisen in part due to decline in revenue surplus available for development spending.

"In a severely saving-constrained economy like ours, the budget's contribution to domestic saving is one of the most important yardsticks of fiscal performance and in this respect, we are moving in the wrong direction," he said.

Dr Mostafizur Rahman in his paper said it is a disquieting fact that in recent years export growth is originating from increases in the export volume index and not from increase in prices.

He said the government should consider that the structure of export is now changing with knit-readymade garments showing a steady and robust growth in recent years.

Restoration of fiscal discipline, infusing investment in the manufacturing and other modern sectors, and consolidation of achievement in the agricultural sector remain the major challenges confronting the Bangladesh economy, said Debapriya Bhattacharya.

"The investment prospect in the manufacturing sector in FY2000 has been put under pressure by the emerging trends in public finance. The current stress in macro-economic balances is emerging from fiscal deficit brought about by non-fulfilment of an extraordinary high revenue target coupled with rigid revenue expenditure structure and compulsion of having an enlarged ADP," he stated.

Debapriya said the consequent government borrowing has not only contributed to additional domestic debt servicing liabilities and squeezing of the share of private sector in domestic credit expansion, but also kept the interest rate at a high level, adversely affected cost of capital.

As a consequence, import faltered, leading to low collection of revenue. The fragile fiscal balance may come under increasing pressure if the emerging stress in the balance of payment situation deepens, he added.

"The current state of revenue collection suggests governance problems in tax administration process. The government failed to give full effect to the Large Taxpayers Unit (LTU) in the NBR. Moreover, weakness in implementing the declared reforms in the tax inspection system also did not allow plugging the holes of tax evasion and leakages."

Revenue expenditure, in comparison to revenue income is growing at a faster pace, thereby reducing the capacity of the government to finance development expenditure with revenue surplus."

If the current trend of mounting public domestic debt is not reversed, it might soon become unsustainable. There are reasons to feel alarmed about it if we take into account the strength and weakness of other variables of the economy. He also claimed a net outflow of resources from the agriculture sector this year as against a recovery of Tk 21.47 billion. Tk 20.1 billion was disbursed.

In contrast to the agriculture sector, growth in the manufacturing sector continues to remain depressed area as the economy as the share of the manufacturing sector continues to slide in the GDP.

Later, during the open discussion, BNP lawmaker and former state minister for planning Moyeen Khan said

26 beaten to death

From page 1

Besides, an 11-year-old girl, Urmi, was beaten to death by some miscreants in the city's Shewrapara area as a sequel to a feud involving her family.

On May 17, Kalu Mian, 20, was beaten to death allegedly by toll collectors at Devarpur near Lalkhan Bazar, Chittagangong. The toll collectors were reportedly from the local MES College.

On the same day, a mob at Latifherat in Chittagong beat to death three alleged dacoits — Forkan, Arif and Nasiruddin.

Another three alleged dacoits were beaten to death at Halishahar in Chittagong on May 16.

A five-year old domestic help, Roshana, was beaten to death allegedly by her employer at North Goran in the city on May 15. An unnatural death case was filed in this regard. The autopsy report, however, said the victim died due to assault injuries.

A gang of miscreants beat to death Shahidul Islam, 19, an electrician, at Mausumi in the old part of city on May 7.

An accused in a case, Abul Hossain Nasir, 20, was beaten to death at Eskaton on May 6 and Mafjil Islam, 20, at Natun Road under Kotwali thana in the city on May 5.

Besides, two alleged muggers — Montu, 35, and Mobarrak, 29 — were killed in mob beating in the city's Gantighar area under Sutrapur thana on May 2.

"Increasing reports of mob attacks on individuals or groups actually portray that people are gradually losing confidence in the government machinery," said Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah, Chairman of Psychology department, Dhaka University.

"The situation also reflects that the government is failing

that it was not wise to set that ambitious revenue target and impose extra burden on the low income group people.

"With a corrupt financial management system how could it be possible to achieve that high target?" the BNP lawmaker asked.

Quoting Debapriya's paper, Moyeen Khan said, total revenue collection as percentage of GDP steadily declined in last four years.

He said total revenue collection as percentage of GDP was 9.49 per cent in 1996-97, 9.38 per cent in 1997-98, which came down to 8.97 per cent in 1998-99 and 8.85 per cent in 1999-00. "If the economy is doing well then why this?" Moyeen Khan raised question.

Mentioning that the budget deficit in the next fiscal would be about Tk 18661 crore, which is about one thousand crore taka more than the revised ADP, he said this in fact portrays the actual picture of the country's economy.

He also said it is not clear why the government made an upward revision of the ADP from Tk 15500 crore to Tk 16500 against the backdrop of 50 per cent implementation rate of development programmes in first nine months.

If it is true that the government borrowing did not create any crowding out effect for the private sector, then there is enough reasons to be concerned over the private investment situation, Dr Moyeen Khan said.

He also raised question about transparency in spending the agriculture subsidy saying, "There is not a single indication in the revised budget how government spent Tk 100 crore earmarked for agri-subsidy."

Refuting the finance minister's claim that the growth rate never crossed five per cent earlier, BNP lawmaker MK Anwar said it was 5.5 per cent in 1975-76, more than seven per cent in 1978-79 and 6.6 per cent in 1989-90.

He also said losses of state owned enterprises (SOEs) have increased 16 times now than those in 1995.

Anwar also pointed out that development expenditure for agriculture has in fact declined in the revised budget, even after upward revision of ADP.

Touching upon the points raised by the BNP lawmakers, Kibria said, some people tried to create an artificial scare that government borrowing created credit crunch for the private sector just to undermine government's credibility.