

## What's on today....

**Cultural evening:** Surobani presents an evening of Rabindranath Sangeet "Badal Meghe Madol Baje". Venue: Indian High Commission Cultural Centre auditorium, 765 Satmasjid Road, Dharmamandi. Time: 7:15 pm.

**Painting exhibition:** The 3rd solo painting exhibition of artist Mohammad Fakhrul Islam will be inaugurated. Venue: Zainul Gallery, Fine Arts Institute, Dhaka University. Time: 5:00 pm.

**Sylhet Division Development Parishad rally:** The Parishad will hold a rally demanding steps to protect the people from dengue infection. Venue: Topkhana Road. Time: 5 pm.

**Seminar:** On "Green Energy Revolution Ahead: Potentials for Bangladesh", organised by the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh. Venue: IEB mini hall. Time: 4 pm.

**Officers' Club AGM:** The 32nd annual general meeting of the Officers' Club of Dhaka will be held. Venue: Club premises. Time: 5 pm.

## ..... and tomorrow

**British film show:** Two films will be screened as part of the 'British Film Week', organised by the British Council and Lever Brothers Bangladesh Ltd. The films are 'With or Without you' at 4:30 pm and 'Notting Hill' at 7 pm. Venue: British Council auditorium.

**Andrei Tarkovsky retrospective:** 'Nostalgia' and 'The Sacrifice' by Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky will be screened. Zahir Raihan Film Society has organised the event. Venue: German cultural centre. Time: 5 pm.

**Dress exhibition:** Kay Kraft has organised a three-day exhibition. The inaugural ceremony will be held at 4 pm. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 4 pm to 8 pm daily.

**Scientific seminar:** On "Importance Of Zinc For Child Health", jointly organised by Bangladesh Institute Of Child Health, Dhaka Shishu Hospital and Medical Services Department of Orion Laboratories Ltd. Venue: Dhaka Shishu Hospital auditorium. Time: 11 am.

**Seminar:** 'Health for All' will hold a seminar on "Eyesight for All and Eye Tests". Speaker: Prof. Altaf Hossain. Venue: Gonoshasthya Nagar Bhaban, House No 14/E, Road No 6, Dharmamandi R/A. Time: 5:30 pm.

## Weather

### Thundershowers likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Dhaka, Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions and at many places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over Chittagong, Khulna and Barisal divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 34.2 degree Celsius at Sylhet and the lowest 24.0 degree Celsius at Chittagong and Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:47 pm and rises on Sunday at 5:24 am.

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.7	25.7	88	81
Chittagong	30.2	24.0	85	87
Rajshahi	32.8	26.0	86	88
Khulna	28.0	24.2	100	100
Barisal	28.0	24.5	92	90
Sylhet	34.2	24.0	79	84
Cox's Bazar	27.0	24.3	99	96

## HERE and THERE

### Reuters Foundation workshop ends

A five-day training workshop on journalism under the auspices of Reuters Foundation ended in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

Twelve journalists, having experience of at least three years, took part in the workshop conducted by Gill Tudor and Nick Louth of Reuters Foundation.

At the concluding ceremony, Gill Tudor gave away certificates among the participants. Reuters Dhaka Bureau Chief Anis Ahmed was present on the occasion.

### Sirajganj embankment threatened

Strong current and whirlpool in the Jamuna (Brahmaputra) have severely threatened the two-year old two-kilometre Sirajganj town protection embankment despite recession of the water level of the river at all points, officials said today, reports BSS.

Reports from Sirajganj said residents of the town fear that Tk 3.75 crore embankment will collapse at several vulnerable areas including its hard point threatened by the current and whirlpool caused by excessive flow in the past several days.

Officials said that the strong current has been constantly hitting the hard point of the embankment threatening its launching approach.

The embankment was faced with similar problem last year and authorities had to undertake emergency measures to save the structure as well as the town.

Meanwhile, Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) has said that rivers of the country's four basins — the Brahmaputra, Ganges, Meghna and South Eastern Hill Basin — registered recession at most points and were likely to fall further in the next two days.

### Milad mahfil

Local people yesterday arranged a milad mahfil and feeding of the destitute after Juma prayers at East Nakhla in the city in memory of Badrul Alam Biplob, who was gunned down by terrorists on July 4, reports BSS.

### Mongla Port Sramik Sangha

BAGERHAT, July 21: The biennial general election of the 21-member executive council of Mongla Port Sramik Sangha was held here Thursday, reports UNB.

Shahjahan Shikari and Mostafizur Rahman were elected as president and general secretary respectively.

Shahjahan bagged 2,457 votes while his nearest rival Khalilur Rahman 2,073 and Mostafiz got 2,667 votes while his rival Sirajul Islam, 2,484 votes.

A total of 5,127 voters, out of 5,521, cast their votes in the polls.

### Internet facility at JU

From JU Correspondent. Jahangirnagar University (JU) added Internet facility to its list of facilities Thursday with the logging in to the information superhighway.

Vice Chancellor of the university Prof Abdul Bayes inaugurated the Internet connection at the 'Computer and Information Technology Institute' in the morning.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Prof Abdul Bayes said since development activities including education, research, business, industry and culture depend on Internet to a great extent, Jahangirnagar University has brightened its possibilities of survival in the competitive age of information technology.



Minister for Agriculture Motia Chowdhury inaugurated an exhibition of *Satranji*, local traditional carpets, at La Galerie, the new multi-purpose hall of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka in the city yesterday.

## Northeastern dists threatened with desertification

### Most of the rivers, canals silt up

SYLHET, July 21: Country's northeastern districts have been under threat of rapid desertification due to continued silting of rivers, haors, canals and croplands in the region, reports UNB.

Sands carried by floodwaters from across the border have silted up most of the rivers, canals and haors of the region, hampering agricultural activities.

Inhabitants of six upazilas in Sunamganj district are the worst victims of silting.

Some 80,000 acres of land in Sadar, Tahripur, Biswambahar, Dharampasha, Duarabazar and Chhatak have virtually turned into deserts as those are covered with sands.

Agriculture officials said hundreds of tons of sands enter the country through river Mogai in Sunamganj and Biswambahar, Maharam in Tahripur, Chilai and Khasiama in Durabazar, Sumeshwari in Dharampasha. Over

20,000 acres of land on the vicinity of Kharchar haor in the district have gone under 5-6 feet sand.

Some 40,000 acres of land in Tahripur and Biswambahar upazilas have also been threatened with desertification, wrecking the livelihoods of over 50,000 people.

Thousands of acres of farmland in Moulvibazar have also been submerged with sands coming down from Tripura and Assam through the rivers Manu, Dholai and Juri.

The silts carried by floodwaters have also covered the arable lands in Kamaiganj, Kulara, Rajnagar and Baralekha upazilas of the district.

Sands coming through rivers Surma and Kushiara have also covered arable lands in Comaniganj, Goainhat, Jointapur, Kanaighat and Zakiganj upazilas of Sylhet district.

Situated at the foot of Khasia mountain, Comaniganj upazila of the district is entirely

dependent on rivers Dholai and Plain for farming. But the two rivers are slowly going to die due to massive siltation, affecting agricultural works in the upazila.

Most of the rivers in the region burst their banks during monsoon and dry up well before the winter, disrupting movement of river traffic.

To overcome the problem, Water Development Board (Sunamganj circle) had sent a proposal to Water Resources Ministry for dredging 70,000 cubic feet of silt in 10 rivers of the district. But its proposal appears to have fallen into deaf ears.

Sylhet Water Development Board has also taken up a Tk 41 crore project to dredge river Paim in Comaniganj, but this project profile too remained shelved.

Besides, the board had sent another project proposal, "Current River Development project", involving Tk 38 crore, to the Ministry. But action on this proposal is too slow.



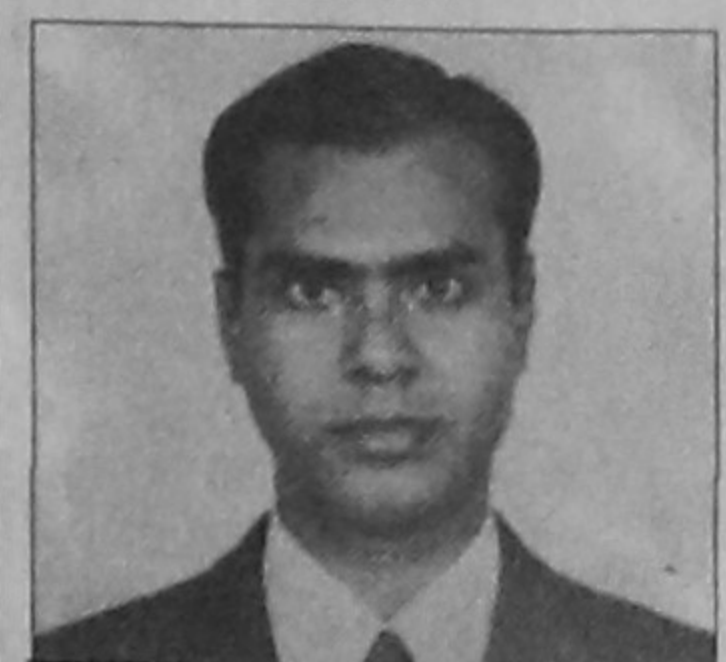
Gallery Chitrak, a centre of fine arts, was inaugurated in the city yesterday with the opening of a 15-day-long painting exhibition of new and old artists.

### Tributes paid to Col Taher

By Staff Correspondent. Speakers at a rally yesterday paid tributes to veteran freedom fighter Col Taher for his life-long struggle to eliminate the suffering of the people.

The speakers were addressing the second session of the 18th central education camp of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD). The 24th anniversary of death of Col Taher was also observed yesterday.

Held at the auditorium of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, the meeting was addressed by BSD chief Khalequzzaman, Munibul Haider Chowdhury and Sudhansu Chakraborty.



### Congratulations

The University of Dhaka conferred M.Phil degree on Binoy Chandra Barman for his thesis entitled 'Trends in Modern Semantics: Problems and Principles of Theorisation', says a press release.

He completed research under the supervision of Dr Rajib Humayun Kabir in the department of Linguistics. Barman obtained his MA degree in English Language from the same university securing the first position in the examination of 1992.

### Police raid on BNP leader's house condemned

By Staff Correspondent. BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has strongly protested the police raid on the Dhaka residence of party's Gournadi unit leader Abul Hossain Miah.

In a statement yesterday, he said the police in the name of raid has harassed the opposition leader and his family members. Bhuiyan said though the AL activists have resorted to a reign of terror across the country, police instead of arresting them have started to harass opposition members.

He said that all leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations at Gournadi thana have become the victims of repression by the law-enforcing agencies.

Mannan Bhuiyan has asked the government to stop such harassment of opposition activists.

### Rajshahi clash

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The clash was sequel to an incident on July 19 in which BCL activist Anwar was beaten up by JCD men at Bagha High School playground.

He was admitted to the health complex and a case was filed in this connection accusing some BNP and JCD activists.

Both the groups used firearms and hand-made bombs during the clash.

JCD activists chased away the BCL activists from the college campus and later ransacked local Awami League office.

Bagha upazila Awami League president Abdus Samad filed a case accusing 24 activists of JCD including upazila JCD president Selim and general secretary Mukul under Public Safety Act (PSA).

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report at 7:30 pm today.



Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal organised a discussion on Col Abu Taher at the National Museum auditorium yesterday to mark his 24th death anniversary.

## Jubo League calls hartal at Bagerhat today

BAGERHAT, July 21: Ruling party's youth and peasant fronts have called a half-day hartal in the town tomorrow (Saturday) to protest the killing of Jubo League leader Russel, reports UNB.

Jubo League and Sramik League called the hartal following a decision taken in their joint meeting held here Thursday.

District vice-president of Jubo League Asad Sarder presided over the meeting that condemned the killing of Abu Naser Mohammad Russel.

The Awami League youth front leader was killed by armed assailants at Ranobijoy-pur in the town on July 16.

## ALWC meets July 25

A meeting of the Working Committee of Bangladesh Awami League will be held at Ganobhaban on July 25 at 7:30 pm, reports BSS.

Awami League chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting.

## Jamaat

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A senior Jamaat leader observes that the Chittagong killing and the subsequent drives against the party have hit it pretty hard and it would be very difficult to repair the damage.

Sources in the four-party opposition alliance fear that Awami League would also try to project the BNP-led alliance as "anti-Liberation forces."

A well-placed source in AL meanwhile confirmed the apprehension and said the ruling party is eager to ride on the anti-Jamaat and it will portray the combine as an axis of anti-liberation elements ahead of the next parliamentary polls. At the same time, the ruling party would continue its effort to create a rift in the alliance.

The BNP has decided to refrain from taking a stand in favour of Jamaat regarding the Chittagong incident. "It also means that Jamaat does not have a friend to stand by its side," was how a BNP leader put it.

He said although Jamaat had sought support of the main opposition party for a united stand on the issue, the BNP added it to defend its position and resist the government propaganda on its own.

AL sources said prime minister and AL president Sheikh Hasina has asked party leaders and activists as well as like-minded socio-cultural organisations to intensify the campaign against the anti-liberation forces so that AL can ride on the sentiment to win the national election.

Meanwhile, Jamaat claimed that a total of 203 Jamaat and Shibir activists were arrested till Thursday in the country since the July 12 incident in Chittagong.

Besides, it said, more a large number of activists were wounded in attacks by police and Chhatra League in 20 districts including Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Laxmipur, Dinajpur, Jessore, Bagerhat, Kustia, Jhenaidah and Faridpur.

## Link Road

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to take up the plan to facilitate their business in the middle class residential areas.

But Rajuk Chairman M Azizul Haque said when completed, the Tk 30.61 crore project would greatly facilitate movement of traffic from Manik Mia Avenue and Rokeya Swarni and Panthopath areas. The project is now awaiting approval by the Planning Commission.

He said that with the construction of Bangabandhu Convention Centre near Chandrima Uddyan and the planned Secretariat in the area, traffic movement will increase manifold and Indira Road will serve as a relief for the city dwellers.

Haque mentioned that Rajabazar area has a large population but no wide road passing through it.

"We will compensate the land owners with cash or if necessary, they will have the option of getting plot at Uttara," the Chairman said.

But residents said the project would not only destroy residential character of the areas but also contribute to destruction of many architecturally important buildings there.

The plan includes acquisition of land on one side of Indira Road from Manik Mia Avenue to Boubazar and then on another side up to Panthopath. Many small plot owners will lose everything," said a resident of the area.

Another resident said the project was initiated by some 'big businessmen' planning to construct multistoried buildings in the area.

"It is quite unreasonable and difficult to understand why they should destroy the residential areas where at least three major roads are linking Panthopath with Manik Mia Avenue and other areas on the northern side," another resident said.

The Rajuk Chairman admitted that they had received "quite a few" objections from the residents but said for any development scheme, "it is quite normal." He said the land for the project would be "acquired eventually."

## 76 kg time bomb found

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help had already been constructed there.

It was learnt that the explosives planted in the ground was discovered accidentally on Thursday when a tea boy from a local stall detected some wires protruding out from the ground close to the rostrum. The tea boy informed local people who conveyed it to the local Union Council Chairman.

On receipt of information, an Army team of explosives experts was sent from the Jessore Cantonment yesterday morning. They immediately retrieved the explosive material. Police did not put a security cordon around the rostrum as a protective measure, normally done on such occasions.

Army officials, giving a description of the device said it looked like a small drum made of cast iron. The cylinder shaped container has a lid on the top, secured by welding. The device has two handles for carrying it. The device was covered with dust carbon and packed in a polythene sheet. It was filled with an anti-lifting device. The

## Spl arrangement to bring back 800 Bangladeshi workers from Malaysia

By Staff Correspondent

The government has made special arrangements to bring back the Bangladeshi workers declared 'illegal' by Malaysia.

Labour and Employment Minister Abdul Mannan told the BBC last night that the 800 'illegal' Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia will be returning home under a special arrangement. He said the special arrangement will begin in a day or two.

The minister said that these workers were declared illegal following expiry of tenure of their services in Malaysia. He added that about 1.5 lakh Bangladeshis are working in Malaysia legally at present.

The minister mentioned that the Prime Minister during her visit to Malaysia on July 30 will discuss the issue of allowing more Bangladeshis to work in Malaysia.

The minister also said that laws will be strengthened regarding export of manpower by private organisations from Bangladesh in view of widespread allegations of irregularities.

## BFTA to protest 'police attack'

Bangladesh Federation of Teachers Association (BFTA) will stage demonstration at district headquarters across the country on July 25 protesting Thursday's 'police attack' on school and college teachers at Tangail and Rajshahi, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the executive body of the federation with acting chairman Azizul Islam in the chair yesterday.

## Mass procession

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activities in the country while the police are being forced to ensure security of the AL terrorists.

The BNP Secretary General said police are not being allowed to arrest the terrorists because the terrorists are the close relatives of AL MPs, Ministers and even head of the government.

Bhuiyan strongly criticised the Prime Minister's remarks and said her provocative statements and remarks will push the country towards civil war.

He said it is wise for the PM to resign immediately if she has minimum respect to democracy and rule of law.

The BNP leader asked the party leaders and activists at city and district levels to take massive procession programme and urged the countrymen to join the programme.

Presided over by city BNP President Sadek Hossain Khokha MP, it was addressed, among others, by Abdus Salam, Kazi Abul Bashar, Chowdhury Alam, Golam Morshed, Nabilul Nabi, Sajjad Chowdhury and Abdul Latif.

## Elen demands

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Ann. She sought their "immediate removal" from Jhalakati for the sake of a free and fair election.

Her late husband Zulfikar was a Jatiya Party MP loyal to the JP faction led by Anwar Hossain Manju, the communications minister of the "consensus government" of Awami League.

She has already lodged complaint against the food minister Annu with the Election Commission of violating electoral code of conduct by availing official facilities in the hustings.

## Roundtable

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ing import and export needs of our growing economy.

The day-long event, starting at 10 am, will try to address the ports' infrastructure problems, procedural problems and socio-political problems in three separate sessions, to be followed by a concluding seminar where specific recommendations will be adopted in presence of officials concerned and decision makers.

height of the device is eleven inches, diameter four inches and circumference four inches. The device was very lethal, an official said. "Four electric wires were jutting out from the sides of the cylinder shaped container, which indicates connection to electric detonators," he said.

The device is now being examined by experts in Jessore Cantonment.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who is now on a two-day trip to Gopalganj told a function at Tungipara yesterday evening, "I am not afraid of death as it is inevitable and will come when God will desire. The Almighty Allah send people to the world to perform some duties and they will not die till the work is done."

Jawadul Karim, Press Secretary to the Prime Minister, told The Daily Star last night that despite detection of the device, the Prime Minister will keep her programme at Gopalganj unchanged. She will address the scheduled rally at Sheikh Lutful Rahman Govt College at Kotlaipara this morning.

Gopalganj police, meanwhile, arrested three persons last night on charge of planting the explosive device, BSS reported.

## BNP: Zila Parishad

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with Articles 7 and 11.

Article 59 of the Constitution says only elected representatives of people will run and administer local government bodies and there is no scope for any indirect election, Moudud pointed out.

"We are not against of the Act as a whole... We are against the two specific provisions," he said.

He said in the Act, there are a number of conditions and requisite qualifications to be a Chairman, but not a single condition or qualification to be an administrator.

The Act allows a loan defaulter, a convict, or any other person to be the administrator of a Zila Parishad, he pointed out.

Moudud said the AL government had suspended Articles 59 and 60 while passing the 4th amendment to the Constitution in January 1975 to introduce one-party BKSAL system. BNP revived it after 15 years through the 12th amendment to the Constitution, he said.

If Mayor of a City Corporation, Upazila Chairman, Poursabha Chairman and UP Chairman can be elected directly, why not Zila Parishad Chairman? he asked.

Replying to a question, Moudud said Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed's verdict regarding the 8th amendment and his explanation on Article 59 in 1992 are "historical." But as President, he did not play his due role regarding the Zila Parishad Act and the Chittagong Hill Tracts agreement, Moudud said.

BNP leaders Advocate Khondaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Barrister Aminul Haq MP, Barrister Mahbubuddin Khokon and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Advocate Shaikh Ansar Ali also spoke at the press conference. BNP leaders Salahuddin Ahmed MP, Ahmed Nazir and some other lawyers were also present.

## Ctg police

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transport service three days ago at a place near CMP headquarters. But police could not arrest them.

Muggers also recently took away 10 lakh of a business house from Momin Road near Chittagong City Corporation office where police forces were present.

Police so far failed to recover the money nor arrested the culprits.

Many other incidents of mugging took place at different places of the city but most of those remained unreported, sources said.

A 'free style' mugging took place in front of Enayetbazar Women's College on Wednesday night but no police action was taken so far in this regard.

Incidents of mugging in front of DC hill near Nandankanon police camp were reported frequently.

## G-8 summit

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dress. The anger of Okinawans unhappy about America's huge military presence here. Upon his arrival today, Clinton delivered a speech to the people of Okinawa, and promised to "reduce our footprint on this island" by completing a 27-step process of consolidating US bases on the island.

"We take seriously our