

News

What's on today....

British Film Week 2000: 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: Gyan 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: Gonoshasthaya Nagar Bhawan, House No 14/E, Road No 6, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 5.30 pm.

..... and tomorrow

DRU talk: Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) presents BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan as part of its ongoing series 'Meet the Reporters'. Bhuiyan will deliver a talk on 'State of Politics in Bangladesh' and participate in a question and answer session. Venue: DRU auditorium, 8/4-A, Topkhana Road, Segun Bagicha. Time: 10.55 am.

Meeting: A meeting of Bangladesh Awami Juba League will be held. Venue: Paltan Maidan. Time: 3.00 pm.

British Film Week 2000: Gregory's Girls and with or without you will be screened on the second day at the week-long film show. Venue: British Council auditorium, Fuller Road. Time: 4.30 pm and 7.00 pm respectively.

Uttam Kumar Retrospective: Zahir Raihan Film Society in association with Information and Cultural Wing of the Indian High Commission begins a month-long festival to pay tribute to legendary Bengali Actor Uttam Kumar. On the first day of the festival Uttam Kumar starrer 'Chiralkhana' will be screened. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, Road no 2, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 6.15 pm.

Weather

Thundershowers likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over the country with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places 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 34.0 degree Celsius at Srimangal and the lowest 23.6 degree Celsius at Khulna.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6.46 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.24 am.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.3	24.0	96	78
Chittagong	31.5	24.5	77	78
Rajshahi	30.2	26.2	82	87
Khulna	27.3	23.6	99	92
Barisal	30.5	24.5	94	85
Sylhet	32.5	24.7	74	67
Cox's Bazar	30.2	24.2	85	82

HERE and THERE

Training course for court officials

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru yesterday stressed the need for monitoring situation in and around the court, saying that the sacred premises of court should not be the place of harassment of the people who come for justice, reports UNB.

He was addressing as chief guest the inaugural function of a training course for the administrative officials of lower courts and tribunals, organised by the Judicial Administration Training Institute.

Matin felt the need for modern case management and technology to ensure speedy trial and justice.

Some 45 trainees from the

district judge courts across the country are taking part in the course. Director General of the Institute Justice Md Badruzzaman and Director Hasan Shahid Ferdous also spoke at the function.

BACI

The 39th executive committee meeting of Bangladesh Association of Construction Industry (BACI) was held at its office in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Presided over by association president Aminul Islam, the meeting discussed the association's future action plan.

Aminul Islam of PBL and Zahir Hossain of MAH Ltd were elected president and vice president respectively of the association recently.

Dengue fever
BNP secy gen blasts govt

SUNAMGANJ, July 22: A BNP Secretary Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday alleged that the entire state mechanism was so busy with 'repressing' the opposition that the government was even careless about the grave consequences of dengue fever, reports BSS.

The government will not be able to avert its downfall by resorting to such repression, he said while addressing a meeting of the central BNP leaders of Dhaka metropolis at the Minto Road residence of Leader of the Opposition.

The only aim of the ruling party, he alleged, was to plunder national wealth and enjoy the benefits of power.

Air Mauritius office opens in city

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladeshi travelers can now get tickets in Dhaka to fly Air Mauritius for various international destinations.

Air Mauritius, the national flag carrier of Mauritius, has recently opened an office in Dhaka, says a press release.

Renaissance Aviation Services Ltd, a sister concern of MGH Group, was appointed General Sales Agent (GSA) of the airlines, manager of the aviation company, Zahid Hossain said in a statement.

There are non-stop flights three times a week from Dhaka, twice a week from Singapore, once a week from Kuala Lumpur and Dubai. Bangladeshi travelers can smoothly fly from any of its gateway points with the complete package arrangement of Air Mauritius Dhaka, said the source.

Dhaka office would arrange for tickets, visa, hotel accommodation and other necessary facilities, the press release added.

With this, the total number of arrested persons in this connection rose to four.

Policeman killed in road accident

SUNAMGANJ, July 22: A policeman was killed in a road accident at Gabindapur on Sunamganj-Sylhet road this afternoon, reports UNB.

Mobarik Hossain, 34, who was coming to his office by a motorcycle, died on the spot when a minibus from opposite direction hit him.

Police seized the minibus and arrested its driver, Haris Ali.

Gopalganj bomb

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its construction so that none could put any harmful material near the rostrum or within a certain area.

However, in this case, the security was lacking, they said. Investigations are on to fix the responsibility, sources said.

Meanwhile, Army explosive experts at Jessoro cantonment are learnt to be working on analysing the composition of the cylinder shaped device.

The possible effect from its explosion can not be said with out determining the type and composition of the device, the official said.

"The device has neither been exploded nor defused", an Army official said. Army engineers are trying to determine the chemical composition of the explosive contained in the drum made with cast iron. Normally, such a cast iron work is not done in foundries in the country, one source said.

Army explosive experts yesterday re-checked the meeting venue with metal detectors and sniffer dog squads.

Meanwhile police said that five special teams were investigating the plot to kill the Prime Minister. One more person was arrested yesterday morning from a village under Kotalipara thana for alleged involvement in Dhaka, said the source.

With this, the total number of arrested persons in this connection rose to four.

Shibir activists

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CID police was assigned to investigate the sensational case.

Salahuddin was handed over to CID police in the afternoon. He will be interrogated tonight, CID police said.

CID team could not trace the driver of the seized microbus used in the Bahadarpur incident yet. But CID police picked up brother-in-law of the driver to help arrest him.

Meanwhile, Dhaka CID police was asked to raid different places to arrest driver Babul Hossain.

Road mishap
Minor girl killed in Jhalakathi

JHALAKATHI, July 22: An eight-year-old schoolgirl was killed in a road accident on Jhalakathi-Bhandaia road at Baghri in Rajapur upazila here today, reports UNB.

Police said Nastima, a class II student of Baghri Government Primary School, was run over by a Jhalakathi-bound bus from Bhandaia while going to the school. She was the daughter of day labourer Abdus Salam.

The driver of the bus fled with his vehicle. Police sent the body to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Death anniversary

The first death anniversary of noted homoeopath Dr M Nurul Islam will be observed today, says a press release.

A milad mafill will be held after Asr prayers today at his residence at 33/C, Road No 6, Banani (near ABC Tower) to mark the occasion.

Dr Islam was the chairman of the Homeopathic Board of Bangladesh. He also wrote two popular books on homeopathy.



The 8th installation ceremony of the Rotary Club of Sonargaon Dhaka was held at Hotel Purbani International on Friday. Club president Rtn Quazi Rownaq Hossain and the newly elected board are seen with District Governor Rtn. Hasan Maniruzzaman at the function.

Roundtable on port problems

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those even at lesser price if those are not delivered in time, and as port problems delay shipment, we are compelled to send goods by air which is very expensive."

It also suggested construction of a new Chittagong-Dhaka six-lane express way to facilitate transportation of containers by road and also establishment of a separate truck parking zone to remove congestion.

They also recommended implementation of the river-side ICD project at Narayanganj.

Long term suggestions

The long term suggestions include construction of New Mooring Terminal under a crash programme. This will facilitate six feeder vessels to anchor, discharge and load at a time through gantry cranes.

As an alternative, Mongla port should be developed along with all infrastructures including the proposed Padma Bridge.

Officials hold port hostage

The participants said Chittagong Port Authority does not have enough power and it is controlled by a group of officials.

Around 50 mid-level officials hold the Chittagong Port hostage. They extract huge illegal money and have been maintaining a lavish life style, the speakers said.

These fifty officers are enough to destroy the sea port and kill the whole economy of the country," said Salauddin Kader Chowdhury MP.

He suggested privatisation of port services phase by phase. "We can start privatisation with some handling equipment," he said bulk handling should also be separated.

Moshred Khan MP also said that the existing facilities at the port should be expanded.

He suggested that the Chittagong Steel Mills premises could be used for this purpose.

The Opposition lawmaker found contradiction among ruling party men regarding establishing a private port. "The Prime Minister is saying that there would be a private port. On the other hand Chittagong Mayor is saying there would not be any private port. So I do not understand who is powerful," he said.

Chowdhury, however, disagreed with the concept of deep sea port at the moment because, according to him, it would not be possible in Bangladesh within short time.

Demand for port autonomy

Chairman of Chittagong Port Commodore Golam Rabban said although the Port Authority is supposed to be autonomous, in reality it has to rely on the ministry for decisions, which delay port operations.

He said various development projects of the port progress slowly due to delayed government decision and bureaucracy. As a result, the port's cargo handling capacity is affected.

"If we can not address the problems in the existing port why should we have another port?" he posed the question.

"If we have another port the problem will only shift there".

A K Azad, President of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Bangladesh Forest E Cookson mentioned the port is becoming very costly as the turnaround time of a container vessel is increasing. It requires about 10 days now against six days earlier.

He said cargo handling can be quickened significantly just by improving the management, which will not require any additional cost.

Captain Saifur Rahman, President of Cargo Agents of Bangladesh, said the existing security at the port is not satisfactory.

we recommended that the container terminal be operated by the private sector. This was not materialised."

"We are now waiting for reforms called by the government to pave the way for the private sector," the ADB official said.

President of Truck Owners Association AK Akhter Hossain also called for leaving equipment handling to the private sector.

Mongla Port can take burden of Ctg port

Chairman of Mongla Port Authority Commodore K M Ahmed said making Mongla port easily accessible by developing the Mongla-Maowadha road could take the burden off the Chittagong port.

Come to a consensus

President of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association Kazi Shahnewaj called for a consensus between the ruling and the Opposition parties to keep the ports out of strike.

Opposition lawmaker Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said Chittagong port problems reflect lack of good governance.

Salauddin Kader Chowdhury MP called for representation of stakeholders in the management of Chittagong port.

Moshred Khan MP said that in a pre-licensing period, Chittagong port was managed by a trust, which ensured accountability and efficiency. This can be introduced, he suggested.

Demand for computerisation and faster handling

Whatever computerisation at Chittagong Port, done 10 years back, is now being used basically for word processing purposes, DCCI President Attaul Islam said.

Moazzam Hossein, Editor of the Financial Express, said computerisation did not take place because it would stop rent-seeking by officials at a rate of US\$ 200 per container.

The CPA Chairman admitted that computerisation at the port was progressing at a snail's pace.

In his keynote paper, Lutfi M Ayub said it requires 42 signatures to get a consignment cleared at the port, making the whole procedure cumbersome and time-consuming.

His point was supported by Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury MP and Salauddin Kader Chowdhury MP, who said such lengthy process is taking hefty tolls on businessmen.

Deen Mohammad Khan also stressed the need for simplification of the process.

In this regard, Shipping Secretary Sohel Ahmed Chowdhury said instructions were given two years back to reduce the number of forms, but it was not implemented.

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