

● What's on today ●

Concluding ceremony: The concluding function of Millennium Get-together organised by Dhaka Medical College Alumni Trust will be held. Venue: Shaheed Dr Milon Auditorium, Dhaka Medical College premises. Time: 4pm.

Chief guest: Khaleda Zia, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson.

Lottery draw: The draw of lottery of Rangoli Sarees will be held. Venue: Bishal Centre at Moghbazar. Time: 10am.

Discussion: Jatiya Nagorik Forum will hold a discussion meeting on Past, Present and Future of Democracy in Bangladesh. Venue: Jatiya Press Club auditorium. Time: 10 am. Chief guest: Former Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf.

Weather

Cold wave may continue

Dry weather is likely to prevail over the country during next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

The moderate cold wave sweeping over the northern and central parts of the country may continue for another 24 hours, said Met office.

Little chance in night temperature is expected over the country, it said.

The country's highest temperature 30.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and the lowest 08.5 degree at Chuadanga.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:27 pm and rises on Sunday at 6:43 am.

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

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	20.5	12.8	76	60
Chittagong	24.6	12.0	73	73
Rajshahi	19.1	09.3	83	76
Khulna	22.8	09.2	89	--
Barisal	23.0	09.4	89	78
Sylhet	20.5	13.0	100	68

BNP urges President

From Page 1
cles in the city following the High Court judgement in the Bangabandhu murder case but not a single case under PSA was filed against them.

Referring to AL's election pledge to cancel all black laws and establish rule of law, the BNP leader said that instead of doing those, AL was enacting new black laws to remain in power. 'If BNP returns to power, it will cancel all black laws including the PSA.'

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said the case against Morshed Khan and his son on charge of looting Tk 45,000 from a shop is 'unbelievable and politically motivated'. It was not aware of any reciprocal pullback by India.

The Pakistani withdrawal was announced on December 20 immediately after India's four-week extension of a

ceasefire to militants fighting against its rule in Kashmir in a peace gesture.

Kashmir is split between India and Pakistan, which both claim the Himalayan territory and have fought two wars and a bitter border conflict over it since their independence from Britain in 1947.

Qureshi said India's reported willingness to allow leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference (APHC), Kashmir's main separatist alliance, to visit Pakistan was an 'encouraging sign.'

The APHC delegation is expected to visit Islamabad later this month, amid optimism here that their talks would facilitate the start of a meaningful process

Megawati

From Page 1
stressed the need for setting up an effective joint commission for strengthening existing cooperation.

Seeking enhanced trade with Dhaka, the Indonesian Vice-President said the last three years' two-way trade clearly demonstrated a rapid increase in its value.

Deadlock

From Page 1
of C&F Association at Hilly, told the news agency that importers would be able to recoup their financial losses if the government exempted some customs duties on their perishable goods.

Big shots

From Page 1
Prime Minister said import duties on essential drugs and medical equipment were either reduced or withdrawn for improving the standard of treatment in the country.

Referring to appointment of new doctors and increasing infrastructure facilities in the health sector, Hasina said a new unit of Dhaka Medical College with 600 beds would be set up and a dormitory for 200 female medical students constructed to meet the growing demands. She also mentioned the establishment of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman Medical University at Shahbagh.

Hasina said the government also took steps to send trained nurses to foreign countries where the demand is high.

Hasina assured that the government would provide fund to the Alumni Trust if it takes up good projects for the benefit of poor and meritorious students, library and research works.

Later the Prime Minister opened a unit of National Blood Transfusion Services under Safe Blood Transfusion Programme at Dhaka Medical College and went round its different sections.

Further details: astro-n.com and www.skypub.com.

3 die as merchant ship capsizes in Adriatic

ANCONA, Italy, Jan 5: Three men died and one was missing when a Croatian merchant ship capsized Friday in the Adriatic Sea after its 150-ton cargo of marble shifted, reports AP.

The accident took place about 50 kilometers (about 30 miles) off the Ancona, a port city in central Italy, said coast guard Capt Edoardo Orrera.

He said search-and-rescue teams were on the scene but chances of finding the missing man were slim.

The other member of the five-person crew of the Nautika 74 survived and is in good condition, Orrera said.

He said the crew was believed to be Croatian.

The Nautika 74 was bringing the marble from the Croatian port of Split to Italy.

Europe, Africa to enjoy first total lunar eclipse of year

PARIS, Jan 5: Europe and Africa will have front row seats next Tuesday to enjoy the first total lunar eclipse of 2001, when the Moon could be turned reddish, astronomers say, reports AFP.

The phenomenon occurs when the Earth passes directly between the Sun and the Moon, casting a curved shadow that creeps slowly across the face of its airless satellite.

Partial eclipse will start at 00:42 BST, followed by totality at 1:50 BST, which is due to last 62 minutes. The process then goes into reverse, ending at 3:59 BST.

The shadow is initially black but turns a dull orange and sometimes a deep red because the Earth's atmosphere filters out all sunlight colours except for those tints in the spectrum. The depth of colour depends mainly on the state of dust pollution in the upper atmosphere caused by volcanic eruptions.

The timing of the eclipse means that skywatchers throughout Europe and Africa are best-placed to enjoy it, although Australia and Japan will catch the start of it and states in northeastern United States and Canada can see the end.

2001 is touted as a good year for eclipses around the world.

Total billing goes to a total eclipse of the Sun, visible in a narrow band across southern

Joint body for cooperation

From Page 1
has been made the focal point of all national activities.

At the meeting, Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr Alwi Shihab, Secretary to the Vice-President Bambang Kesowo, Charge d'Affaires of Indonesia Kushidana assisted Megawati, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abu Hasan Chowdhury, PM's Principal Secretary Dr SA Samad, Foreign Secretary CM Shafi Sami and Press Secretary Jawadul Karim aided Sheikh Hasina.

Sheikh Hasina later hosted a dinner in honor of Megawati at Ganobabha last night.

Megawati's spouse, Taufiq Kiemas, two sons Rizki Pratama and Prananda their spouses Dewi Pratama and Nancy Prananda, daughter Puan Maharam and son-in-law Hapsoro, Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr Alwi Shihab and other members of the entourage joined the dinner.

From host side, prime minister's daughter, Saima Hossain Putul, son-in-law Mashrur Hossain, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abu Hasan Chowdhury, Principal Secretary Dr SA Samad, Foreign Secretary CM Shafi Sami, Press Secretary Jawadul Karim and other high officials were present.

Earlier Megawati was accorded a red carpet reception when she arrived here yesterday on a three-day official visit.

Sheikh Hasina received Megawati, daughter of Indonesia's founding father Soekarno, at the tarmac of Zia International Airport (ZIA).

Hasina said the government also took steps to send trained nurses to foreign countries where the demand is high.

Hasina assured that the government would provide fund to the Alumni Trust if it takes up good projects for the benefit of poor and meritorious students, library and research works.

Later the Prime Minister opened a unit of National Blood Transfusion Services under Safe Blood Transfusion Programme at Dhaka Medical College and went round its different sections.

Further details: astro-n.com and www.skypub.com.

Devotees offering Juma prayers at Tongi yesterday ahead of the Bishwas Ijtema that opens at the venue today.

The Indonesian Vice-

President was given a guard of honour by a contingent drawn from the three services as national anthems of the two countries were played.

She was then taken to the presentation line and introduced to members of the cabinet, diplomats, and high civil and military officials.

Hasina and Megawati exchanged pleasantries at the VVIP lounge. Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Finance Minister SAMS Kibria, Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abu Hasan Chowdhury were present.

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