

What's on today . . . .

**Sales conference:** Eskayef Bangladesh Limited will hold its Annual Marketing and Sales Conference. Venue: Ball Room of Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 9:00am.

**Reception:** Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) will accord a reception to US Senator Paul Simun. Venue: IUB Campus No 6 at Bashundhara. Time: 10:30 am.

**DUJ meeting:** Dhaka Union of Journalists will hold a meeting of its executive committee. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00 am.

**Rally:** The Civil Society for Women's Empowerment will hold a rally in support for its demand for immediate arrest of all fatwabaj. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 2.30pm.

**Discussion meeting:** Muktiyoddha Samannay Parishad will hold a discussion meeting on "Razakarmukta Parliament Chai" (A Razakar free parliament wanted). Venue: VIP Lounge of National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

**Opinion exchange meet:** Sammilita Muktiyoddha Front (SMF) will hold an opinion exchange meeting with leaders of different professions. Venue: TSC cafeteria on DU campus. Time: 3.00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

**Discussion:** A discussion in observance of Homecoming Day of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be held. Venue : Auditorium of Engineer Institution. Time : 3 pm.

**Rally:** Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote will hold a rally in observation of Bangabandhu's Homecoming Day. Venue: From Ramna Park Gate to National Press Club. Time: 11:30am.

**FEMA:** A meeting of Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) national committee will be held. Venue: FEMA National Secretariat, House No 9, Rd No 17, Block C Banani. Time: 4:00 pm.Sales conference: Eskayef Bangladesh Limited will hold its Annual Marketing and Sales Conference. Venue: Ball Room of Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 9:00am.

Weather

Dry weather likely

Weather may remain dry over the country during next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Mild cold wave may continue over northern and central parts of the country and the regions of Satkhira and Rangamati during the period, Met Office said.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country, it added.

Little rise in night temperature is expected over the country, Met Office predicted.

The country's highest temperature 26.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar, Sitakunda and Mongla and the lowest 06.1 degree at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:29 pm and rises on Wednesday at 6.43 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	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	23.4	11.3	66	52
Chittagong	25.5	10.3	85	65
Rajshahi	23.2	08.5	82	69
Khulna	25.0	09.6	87	74
Barisal	25.0	08.6	97	79
Sylhet	24.5	10.4	66	69
Cox's Bazar	26.0	12.2	71	67

Land deed or death

From page 1

Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Rangpur Mozammel Hossain said he was not aware of what had happened in Panea.

"If there was a murder, the police must have taken punitive measures," he said. "The problem between the landless and the influential landowners always existed in the country."

He cited several similar cases where local landowners drove away the landless farmers even after he had handed over the khas land to them.

Superintendent of Police Naim Ahmed said he had visited Panea following the incident and his forces were doing their best to apprehend the culprits. He added that the police were waiting for the autopsy report.

"We will submit the charge sheet against the culprits within ten days after receiving the autopsy report," Ahmed said. "The belated report has put brakes on the process of justice."

Once the charge sheet was framed, he said, the accused persons would surrender at the court of justice rather than leading the life of outlaws forever.

Only one out of the 39 accused has so far been arrested, the officer-in-charge of Pirganj thana confirmed, adding that the culprits might have fled to neighbouring districts.

The thana nirbahi officer (TNO) of Pirganj said about 2,000 landless peasants from Panea had submitted a memorandum to his office on November 5 following the incidents of November 3.

Local people have demanded that the government immediately rehabilitate the landless farmers and direct the local administration to monitor implementation of the ongoing scheme.

In Panea village, at least six more similar cases involving those of landless peasants have remained unresolved for years. Local people fear more clashes if the farmers claim the land they have been allotted under the government scheme.

BDR, Nasaka trade fire

From page 1

towards Teknaf in the country's south-east. The Myanmar territory across the border is known as Boatfari Khaal.

The Myanmar forces agreed to sit at a flag meeting around 4.30 pm. At the company-level meeting at Palangkhali, the Myanmar side assented to keep construction of the embankment suspended.

Foreign Ministry and Home Ministry officials said they were monitoring the situation.

The Myanmar embassy in Dhaka was "yet to receive any feedback from our headquarters," said a senior official when contacted at 4.30pm.

"We want to have a border-line of peace and tranquillity with our neighbours including Bangladesh," he, however, added.

According to reports, a BDR patrol detected ongoing construction of an embankment on the Naf on the Myanmar side of the border on January 4. The embankment, being erected within 100 yards of the zero line, is against Bangladesh's interests, as it might lead to diversion of the river flow, causing flooding and erosion in her territory. A large number of shrimp farms would be destroyed, if the embankment were built.

The BDR immediately asked for a flag meeting but the Myanmar forces did not respond. Later, the Bangladesh border forces also proposed a battalion-level meeting. Nasaka

Fatwa

From page 12

uttering the word 'talak'.

The moulvis and a section of village leaders prevailed and threatened to isolate the couple from the society.

Some of the village leaders who are aware of the High Court's recent verdict against fatwa on 'talak' counseled Haq to consult lawyers.

He along with Shahida came to Nilphamari on January 7 and discussed the matter with some lawyers. On their suggestion, they went to the office of a Notary Public. There Haq and Shahida signed an accord making solemn pledge that there had been no divorce and that they wanted to live together as husband and wife.

The document was certified by the Notary Public and the couple is quite happy with the solution.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took part in the Akheri Munajat at Biswaha Itjema yesterday. Lakhs of devotees attended the final prayers yesterday at Tongi. --PID photo



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia and senior presidium member of Jatiya Party Begum Roushan Ershad participating in the Akheri Munajat at Bishwa Itjema. --Star photo

10 Maoist rebels shot dead in Jharkhand

RANCHI (India), Jan 8: Indian paramilitary police have shot dead 10 left-wing guerrillas, while losing one of their own men, in a fierce gunbattle in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand, police said today, reports AFP.

A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) patrol raided Semry Banjary village in the Garhwa district of Jharkhand on Sunday after a tip-off that Maoist rebels belonging to the People's War Group (PWG) were hiding in the village.

"There was an encounter and the security forces recovery four bodies from the scene of the gunbattle. But the rebels escaped with the other dead bodies," said Jharkhand director general of police TP Sinha.

"Four civilians, including two women were injured in the shoot-out."

One CRPF member was also killed.

The state of Jharkhand was created in November carved out of 18 of neighbouring Bihar state's 51 districts.

Reza Emdad

From page 1

inquiry is investigating the crash.

Mohsin's body has been kept at the mortuary of CMH. He would be laid to rest after the return of his elder brother from Germany.

He has left behind his wife and a daughter.

Nepalese FM

From page 1

ter of Sri Lanka recently visited New Delhi on this issue of SAARC and he informed Kathmandu of India's position about the summit.

The Nepalese Foreign Minister, however, stress should be given on activities of SAARC and holding meetings at official, secretary and ministerial levels before the summit.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Nepal Cyril Sikdar, Nepalese Ambassador in Dhaka Madhu Raman Acharya and senior officials of the Foreign Ministry were present at the airport.

DB office murder

From page 1

thana on March 26, 1999.

All the accused inspector Ziaul Ahsan, Havidler Billal, constable Abdur Rouf and captain manager Anwar Hossain were present at the court yesterday.

Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Quamrul Islam appeared for the state while Advocate ABM Sharfuddin Khan Mukul and Mahbub Ahmed for the accused.

Vested Bill

From page 1

presided over the Cabinet meeting that also approved a proposal of the Home Ministry based on the Public Administration Reform Committee recommendation for simplification of issuing passports.

Forced retirement

From page 1

Sattar".

Another member, expelled BNP leader Maj (Retd) Akhteruzzaman said the then army chief had taken advantage of the situation following the killing of Ziaur Rahman and out of vengeance, sacked freedom-fighter officers.

The officers given forced retirement are Brig Abu Sayed Matuiul Hannan Shah, Brig A K M Azizul Islam, Brig Giasuddin Ahmed Chowdhury Bir Bikram, Brig Abu Jaffar Md Aminul Haque Bir Uttam, Col Md Bazul Gani Bir Pratik, Lt Col Mohammad Abdul Mannan Bir Bikram, Lt Col ASM Enamul Haq, Lt Col Mohd Zainul Abedin, Maj Manzoor Ahmed BP, Maj Waker Hassan BP, Maj Md Abdul Jalil, Maj Md Asaduzzaman, Capt Jahirul Haque Khan BP, Maj Rafiqul Islam, Maj Md Abdus Salam, Maj A K M Rezaul Islam BB, Capt S A M Abdul Hai, Lt Mohd Abdul Quasem and Capt Mazharul Haque.

The meeting was attended by, among others, ruling party lawmaker Col (retd) Faruk Khan, Defence Secretary Edris Ali and other senior officials were present.

Call to help protect intellectual property rights

A three-day national workshop on 'Intellectual Property Rights: Science and Technology Perspectives' began in the city yesterday with a call to amend and develop the country's existing Patents and Designs Act (PDC), copyright and trademark laws to ensure protection of patents of the intellectual properties, reports BSS.

The minister said the scientists and technologists would get inspiration if their patents are registered and they would feel encouraged to invent new ideas. He said the patents of the agricultural invention should be registered as intellectual rights.

Laying emphasis on enactment of copyright law, he said the law should be introduced for the protection of software in the IT-based modern world. A copyright law, which is being framed, would help check piracy in the country's software industry.

The minister said that the

existing trademark laws of the country should be amended for protecting the service marks especially in the IT related business. He also laid emphasis on creating awareness among the scientists, researchers, lawyers, students and others linked with the Intellectual Property Rights.

The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam said the scientists and the inventors have to patent their ideas, as it is the main property of the inventors. Others might steal the ideas if these are not patented in time, he said.

He said many of the ideas of the people of developing countries are being stolen by developed countries. In this context, he gave an example of "Basmati Rice" and said its patent was stolen and named as "Texmati Rice" in a developed country.

Anam also emphasised the need for increasing allocation for the Science and Technology

Ministry to promote scientific activities in the country.

Placing emphasis on creating awareness among the scientists, and inventors about the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Science and Technology Secretary Fazlur Rahman lamented that to a lack of awareness the full credit of invention of radio went to Marconi as he had registered the patent of his work before scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose.

Four technical papers were presented at the workshop yesterday. At least 90 participants from different universities and business organisations, including information technologists, journalists and four experts of Delhi-based NAM Science and Technology Centre have been participating in the workshop.

Women must particapate

From page 1

"Democracy means tolerance, democracy means accommodation," Paul said. "For the practice of democracy, both the government and the opposition should come forward and accommodate each other's views," he added.

Reading out from her paper on Women, Democracy and Electoral Process, Farah Kabir said education is the precondition for empowerment of women, which is essential for democracy to flourish.

She said limited access of the majority of women to the public sphere restricted their ability to influence, oppose or change the policies that affect them.

"Women comprise half the world's population, yet laws are still being formulated, drafted, passed and implemented almost exclusively by men."

She said that discriminatory practices relating to the division of labour and the roles and responsibilities ascribed to women by the society have marginalised women in politics.

"Moreover, women were discriminated economically, regionally and through the laws drafted over the years."

She said despite constitutional provisions, women's participation in all spheres of life is a far cry. She urged the civil society, women activists and others

concerned to come forward and do their best to empower women.

Saima Serazi placed another keynote paper at another session chaired by Tasmina Hossain, MP. Ayesha Khanam and Prof. Shawkat Ara Hussain also addressed this session.

Presided over by Dr Hameeda Hossain, the session on Violence against Women, Violation of Human Rights was addressed by Samia Jamal and Safia Azim.

Another session on 'Building Bases for Economic Empowerment of Women' was held in the afternoon.

Protest against beauty pageant in Kolkata

KOLKATA, Jan 8: Growing protests against beauty pageants in India have spread to the eastern city of Kolkata in West Bengal, reports AFP.

Around 500 activists belonging to the cultural wing of the state's ruling Communist Party of India (Marxist) protested Sunday evening outside the venue of the "Kolkata Queen-2001 Contest."

The group shouted slogans against the commercialisation of women and burnt a Miss World effigy.

"Pageants like this concentrate on physical beauty alone and treat women as a commodity. We are against it," a spokesman for the demonstrators, Emanul Haque said.

Last month, authorities in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, the home state of the reigning Miss World Priyanka Chopra, officially banned all beauty pageants and contests.

The Calcutta demonstrators attracted a large crowd by staging a 15-minute street-play, which attacked not only beauty pageants but also "condom ads and alcohol companies."

Organisers of Sunday's beauty pageant and fashion show reacted with surprise at the demonstration.

Dense fog in Delhi: Flights cancelled

NEW DELHI, Jan 8: International and domestic flights to and from New Delhi were cancelled today as dense fog covered the Indian capital, reports AFP.

"The visibility fell below 100 metres at about 3:26 am (2156 GMT Sunday) in the morning. We are still waiting for the fog to clear," a spokesman of the Airports Authority of India told the news agency.

No planes had been able to take off or land at the airport since the fog descended.

Meanwhile, six more people died of hypothermia in Bihar on Sunday as a biting cold wave tightened its grip across large parts of the country.

All the six people died in Bihar's Vaishali district, where 14 more have perished in the past 10 days.

The cold-related death toll across Bihar has reached 72 so far, the UNI news agency said, adding temperatures in parts of the impoverished state were just above freezing.

Officials from Punjab state on Sunday reported the first cold-related death in the food-rich northern province.

In the adjoining state of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, a total of 39 such deaths have been reported since the onset of the cold weather late last month.

Temperatures have dropped to freezing in parts of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan

in the coldest conditions to hit the region in several years.

Most of the victims were homeless people, officials said, adding all schools and colleges in Uttar Pradesh have been shut until Tuesday.

Humayun Zahir

From page 1

Earlier, the case was transferred to two courts for disposal. But one of the courts felt embarrassed to give the judgement.

Humayun Zahir, a leading businessman, was murdered by a group of assailants on the premises of his Dhanmondi residence on April 8, 1993.

Zahirul Haq Khan, father-in-law of Humayun Zahir filed a murder case with Dhanmondi thana against one Fazlur Rahman Tannoy the same day.

The investigation officer of the case submitted a chargesheet to the CMM's Court Dhaka against seven people including Akhteruzzaman Chowdhury Babu.

Akhteruzzaman Chowdhury Babu and Abdul Matin are now on bail. They were granted ad-interim bail by the High Court Division of the Supreme Court in 1997.

Fazlur Rahman Tonmoy, Kaiser and Alam are now in the custody while Headayatul Islam Bulu and Tawhidul Alam are at large.

Bangladeshi to head Amnesty

From page 1

than a million members and national sections in 54 countries, including Bangladesh.

Irene is learnt to have a wide range of field experience, extensive knowledge of the international community and a deep commitment to human rights.

Amnesty International in a memo said, "We are confident that she will bring the leadership and direction needed by our movement."

An official announcement is due to be made shortly by the AI from London.

**Profile of Irene Khan**

Irene has worked with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees since 1980. Her professional experience has covered a wide range of func-

tions and operations at UNHCR Headquarters and in the field. Her work at the UNHCR has focused on the protection of the rights of refugees and displaced persons, and on issues relating to human rights, humanitarian law and refugee law.

Irene is the Deputy Director of Protection with UNHCR and is based in Geneva. She was the UNHCR Emergency Co-ordinator for the Republic of Macedonia in 1999, where she was responsible for the implementation of the Humanitarian Evacuation Programme.

Before going to Macedonia Irene was Head of the Centre for Documentation and Research in Geneva. From 1995 to 1998 Irene was Chief of Mission for the UNHCR office in India where

she was responsible for ensuring international protection to 200,000 refugees, while promoting refugee law with legal, human rights and academic institutions.

In 1990 Irene was appointed Senior Executive Officer in the Office of the High Commissioner where she was principal aide to the High Commissioner.

Irene's academic specialisation is in international law and human rights. She studied law at the University of Manchester and Harvard Law School. After completing her legal studies, she worked for the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva. She was a founding board member of Concern Universal.

Devotees seek divine

From page 1

not permit women in the congregation, over 5,000 women from the adjoining areas took part in the *Akheri Munajat* from various residential houses, mills and factories and roads.

All roads leading to the bank of the Turag River were teeming with countless people from all strata just before the *Akheri Munajat*.

A jimarad of foreign devotees, Maulana MA Hannan, said 4,028 foreigners from 62 countries took part in the Itjema this year. The highest number of foreign devotees came from neighbouring India.

Apart from severe cold, the devotees faced problems like toll collection, pickpocket and unhygienic environment and food in the Itjema ground. However, the hurdles could not stop the devotees from joining the Itjema.

As in the previous years, 90 couples got married without dowry at a mass wedding on the

occasion. Maulana Jobayer delivered sermons on marriage.

Some 64 people have been hospitalised having diarrhoeal and intestinal diseases and sustaining injuries.

50 organisations have provided medical treatment to the pilgrims.

Meanwhile, water for ablution was sold at Tk 5 per pot and a piece of paper to sit on the ground at Tk 1 before the *Akheri Munajat*. Poor children and hawkers supplied those.

11 pickpockets were arrested today raising the total to 35 caught during the congregation.

Large number of home-bound people following the *munajat* created chaotic situations at the rail and bus station.

Serious traffic congestions were created on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway.

Buses charged exorbitant fares to the returning people.

Trains were jam packed with passengers.

Save Lalon's shrine

From page 12

sation and development.

"If the bauls are ousted from the shrine area and replaced by such a project, it would be like cutting the roots of a tree and then watering it," he said.

Poet Shamsur Rahman, the other convenor of the committee, said that throughout the world Lalon's works are becoming popular.

"Our movement is totally cultural, not political at all. We love our culture and we do not want to destroy it," he said. "But unfortunately we have been informed that during the last Lalon festival a section of people were playing Hindi film songs at the shrine."

"Despite assurances from the authorities," Rahman added, "I was told that the Secretary of Ministry of Works and Housing has continued the construction work of the buildings."

Farida Parvin, a popular singer of Lalon songs, said that traditionally Lalon followers preferred to perform under the shade of trees, not inside luxurious buildings.

Coup bid in Ivory

From page 12

GMT) today, state radio, which had earlier gone off the air, began playing the national anthem and a man who did not identify himself read a brief statement.

"At the hour that we speak the country has undergone another page of our history. Radio and television are currently in the hands of the military," he said. "I want to reassure the population that their security is guaranteed. . . . I ask all our brothers in arms to align themselves."

N'Guessan said small groups of soldiers had attacked state broadcasting offices in downtown Abidjan, Ivory Coast's main city, and broadcasting facilities in the exclusive Cocody suburb.

Witnesses earlier said they also heard gunfire near the downtown home of Gbagbo.

Doudou said Ivorian officials

have been aware of the plot for a few days, but decided to let it go ahead to catch the plotters in the act.

The Ivorian Cabinet was to meet later today and Gbagbo was expected to address the nation.

**Slow-go food**

From page 1

experience.

A recent Consumers' Association of Bangladesh (CAB) survey shows that unlike many other essentials, price of rice has remained steady over the last two years.

Due to inflation and other factors, prices of the staple have remained stagnant, if not lowered, to the delight of urban consumers, and, to the plight of grain producers in the countryside.