

## News

## What's on today....

**Memorial meeting:** Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Parishad will hold a memorial meeting on Commander Manik Chowdhury. A doa mahfil will also be held. Venue: Parishad Central office premises, 53, DIT Extension Road, Naya Paltan. Time: 4:00 pm.

**National workshop:** Bangladesh Water Development Board's Consolidation and Strengthening of Flood Forecasting and Working Services will hold the 2nd National Workshop on improved Flood Warning Dissemination. Venue: Hotel Abakash, Mohakhali. Time: 4:00 pm.

**Lecture:** Robert Pledge, Curator of Chobi Mela will deliver a lecture on 'Retrospective of 20 years photojournalism.' During the lecture, a slideshow will illustrate the last 20 years of major world events. After the lecture, he will animate a round table. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 7 pm.

## ..... and tomorrow .....

**National flower exhibition:** A five-day long national flower exhibition will begin as part of the Dhaka International Trade Fair 2001. Organiser: Export Promotion Bureau. Venue: Trade Fair premises at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Time: 9 am to 8 pm daily.

**BDA lottery:** The prize giving ceremony of the Bangladesh Diabetic Association Lottery 2000 will be held. Chief guest: Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria. Venue: Association auditorium, (2nd floor), 122, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Shahbagh. Time: 2:30 pm.

**Film show:** Alliance Francaise de Dhaka will screen documentaries on film makers and directors Claire Denis and Alain Resnais at 10:30 am while 'The Couple of the year II' will be screened at 6 pm. Venue: Alliance auditorium.

**Annual conference:** The 12th annual conference and general meeting of the Bangladesh Cancer Society will be held. Chief guest: Minister for Health and Family Welfare Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim. Venue: Sasakawa auditorium of ICDDR,B, Mohakhali. Time: 9 am.

**Discussion:** Swadesh Chinta Shangha will hold a discussion meeting on a book 'Bangaleer Mostikha O Tahar Opababbar' by Acharya Profulla Chandra Roy. Keynote speaker: Prof Monsur Musa. Venue: Residence of late Prof Ahmad Sharif. Time: 10 am.

## Weather

## Dry weather likely

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

Moderate fog may occur over northern to central parts and the river basins of the country during late night and early morning, Met Office said.

The country's highest temperature 27.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar & Teknaf and the lowest 07.5 degree at Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:30 pm and rises on Friday at 6:44 am.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in Percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	23.0	14.0	63	43
Chittagong	26.0	12.5	84	73
Rajshahi	23.4	9.2	69	67
Khulna	24.0	13.2	70	68
Barisal	23.5	12.0	89	91
Sylhet	24.6	10.8	76	46
Cox's Bazar	27.0	15.5	73	72

## Discontent in BNP

From Page 1 following pressure from the party and hardliners in BNP.

The sources said leaders of the three other parties of the four party opposition alliance prefer addressing joint rally as strength of their parties in the city has "drastically reduced".

They said Khaleda Zia was interested in a separate party programme and advised the leaders to arrange a public meeting of BNP alone.

The city BNP declared the programme. But she was later "compelled" to advise party leaders to invite chiefs of three other parties to address the rally.

They said names of chiefs of the three parties were included in the poster after the design and plate were readied at the printing press.

The mainstream party leaders had argued that BNP did not need support of any party to hold a public meeting and that leaders of other parties should not be invited to address a meeting organised by BNP alone.

But she accepted the proposal of the hardliners and design of the poster was changed, the sources said.

Earlier, meeting of the Central Liaison Committee yesterday discussed fresh programmes, particularly the hartal programme.

A CLC member said the hartal may be called between 15 and 20 of this month.

## Women's reserved seats

From Page 1 intangible as far as the ruling party's plan for election is concerned.

In her letter, the BNP chief also supported the popular demand for a change in the mode of election of MPs from women's quota and an increase in the number of such lawmakers. But, she did not elaborate on the two points.

BNP Secretary-General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told The Daily Star Tuesday that his party was yet to finalise details on the two issues. "We'll do it in time in consultation with other parties."

To another question, Bhuiyan said BNP along with other parties would make fresh arrangements to have reserved seats for women in the next parliament if the existing provision is lapsed.

Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Law Suranjit Sengupta criticised BNP for "acting against the move for protection of the reserved seats".

If the bill lapses, half the voters (who are women) will vote against BNP in the next elections, he told The Daily Star Tuesday.

Commenting on BNP's suggestions for a direct election and an increase in the number of MPs from women's quota, he pointed out that there was still



Protesters remove a tear gas shell fired at them by police during a demonstration in the Pakistani port city of Karachi yesterday. Several people received minor injuries and some 50 protesters were taken into custody as police used batons and tear gas to disperse hundreds of Christian minority demonstrators demanding an amendment to the country's 1985 blasphemy law to provide safeguards against alleged abuse of the legislation by Muslim extremists to

## EC declares Akhter's JS seat vacant

From Page 1 petition filed by Opposition Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain for three hours on December 11 before giving its judgement on the dispute over Akhter's membership in parliament yesterday. The verdict referred to Articles 67(1)(e) and 70(1) of the constitution that deals with vacation of a parliamentary seat.

Chief Election Commissioner M A Syed took only five minutes read out the brief verdict in presence of the three other Commissioners Abidur Rahman, Moshtaq Ahmed Chowdhury and Shafur Rahman.

In his instant reaction, Akhter termed the judgement "unjustified" and said the CEC was biased.

Ordering vacation of the seat, the four-member quasi-judicial body also asked the authorities concerned to communicate its decision to the Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad immediately.

Article 70 (1) of the Constitution says, "A person elected as a member of Parliament at an election at which he was nominated as a candidate by a political party shall vacate his seat if he resigns from the party or votes in Parliament against that party."

Article 67(1)(e) refers to Article 70 in case of vacation of seat.

The constitutional explanation of Article 70(1) also says: "If a member of Parliament a) Being present in parliament abstains from voting, or b) Abstains himself from any sitting of Parliament ignoring the direction of the party which nominated him at the election as a candidate not to do so, he shall be deemed to have voted against that party."

Having considered all the written and oral statements and in the light of relevant Constitutional provisions, it is ordered that the case is allowed on contest without costs. The seat of Major (retd) Akhteruzzaman MP elected from Kishoreganj-2 constituency in the parliament stands vacated with immediate effect under Article 67(1)(e) and Article 70(1) of the Constitution," the CEC verdict said.

Terming the judgement "unjustified," Maj Akhter told a group of journalists immediately after the verdict that the chief election commissioner had nakedly tried to prove himself neutral to the BNP high-ups.

"The judgement reflects the CEC's bias, and he will not be able to conduct the next general election in a neutral manner,"

The judgement would make the party leadership more autocratic and hence, the democratic practice may be hampered once again, he added.

When asked whether he would challenge against the EC verdict, Akhter said, "No. Even the question to participate in the by-election following the vacation of the constituency does not arise."

"I will contest the next general election if BNP nominates me for Kishoreganj-2 constituency," said Akhter.

Barrister Mahbub Uddin Khokon, the petitioner's lawyer, said there was no option for the EC other than to pass such a judgement. "The judgement will be considered as a precedence to maintain party discipline."

The Election Commission Secretariat sources said that the copy of the verdict was sent to the Speaker soon after it was delivered.

Earlier on October 11, 1999, the commission vacated seats held by Hasibur Rahman Swapan of Sirajganj-7 and Dr. Mohammad Alauddin of Rajshahi-5. Both of them were elected on BNP ticket but later joined the government of Awami League.

Official sources said, the accident occurred as the driver lost control over the vehicle.

The vehicle overturned and fell into a roadside ditch.

Of the injured, six were taken to Combined Military Hospital in Chittagong while the rest are being treated locally.

## 20 hurt as workers clash at Uttara EPZ site in Nilphamari

NILPHAMARI, Jan 10: Some 20 people were injured in a clash between two groups of labourers at under-construction Uttara EPZ site here today, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said the clash took place in the morning while some labourers were unloading bricks from a truck.

Both the groups used sharp weapons during the trouble.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. They also recovered some weapons from the spot.

In the afternoon, a section of labourers brought out a procession in the town protesting the attack and submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner.

Following the incident, additional police have been deployed in the EPZ area.

## Benapole-Petrapole goods train service from Jan 12

Goods train service between Bangladesh and India on Benapole-Petrapole route will begin on January 12, Railway sources said here last night, reports BSS.

An Indian goods train carrying 35 Indian BCX wagons will leave Petrapole for Benapole in Bangladesh at 3 pm to revive the route, which remained inoperative since 1974.

Rezaul Karim, General Manager of West Zone, Bangladesh Railway, will represent Bangladesh at the ceremony to be held at Petrapole, Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner in Kolkata, West Bengal, is likely to be present.

The decision to reopen the route was taken in 1996 and Bangladesh Government has spent about Taka 10 crore to restore the line.

The arrested were identified as Hira, Mijan and Kabir.

Two CID informer Mohammad Jahangir, 30, and Kabir Hossain, 38, were shot dead by unidentified assailants at Gobindapur in the city's Demra area at about 2:45 pm on Tuesday.

The arrested were not FIR-named accused.

Kabir's wife filed a case with Demra police station accusing 12 people.

## NATO to set up spl commission to probe uranium hazard

## Population of Serbia not in danger

Kosovo crisis.

Concerning UN complaints of NATO's failure to cooperate with investigations, Robertson said it was only due to "bureaucratic delay, which we all regret."

Robertson said that NATO's North Atlantic Council, the alliance's highest decision-making body made up of the permanent ambassadors in Brussels, had agreed to a request from Italy to provide maps of where DU ammunition had been used.

The council also decided to act as a hub for all national reports into the use of DU, and also offered assistance to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) if investigators -- currently in Kosovo -- are also sent to Bosnia.

A definitive UNEP report on Kosovo is expected in March.

US fighter jets fired some 31,000 DU rounds during the NATO air war against Yugoslavia, according to the Pentagon. Another 10,800 rounds were fired in 1994-95 in Bosnia, where many of the afflicted

peacekeepers were stationed.

Seven Italian soldiers and one aid worker, five Belgian peacekeepers, two Dutch nationals, two Spaniards, two Portuguese and a Czech have died after tours of duty in the Balkans, many from leukemia and other cancers.

## 3 held for killing CID informers

## By Staff Correspondent

Police yesterday arrested three people in connection with the killing of two CID informers on Tuesday.

The arrested were identified as Hira, Mijan and Kabir.

Two CID informer Mohammad Jahangir, 30, and Kabir Hossain, 38, were shot dead by unidentified assailants at Gobindapur in the city's Demra area at about 2:45 pm on Tuesday.

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## Two High Court judges promoted

## From Page 1

ties of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) was held at its office yesterday afternoon with its President Barrister Mainul Hosein in the chair to discuss the situation.

The meeting was attended by, among others, Barrister Syed Ishaque Ahmed, Dr. Kamal Hossain, Advocate Abdul Malek, Advocate Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Dr. M. Zahir, Barrister Nazmul Huda, Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Advocate Ayenuddin, Ataur Rahman and Zainal Abedin.

It is learnt that the meeting decided to form a new forum Supreme Council of Lawyers -- with Barrister Ishaque Ahmed as its convenor to "unite all lawyers to protect the judiciary from interference and keep its independence".

Pressed by newsmen after the meeting, Mainul Hosein said the meeting was called to "forge a greater unity among lawyers, keep them upholding partisan politics and to uphold independence of the judiciary."

He said that a meeting of the SCBA Executive Committee would be called to discuss the

situation.

In a joint statement yesterday evening, 13 senior lawyers including the former presidents and secretaries of SCBA expressed their "great concern in the manner in which the latest appointments of judges of the Appellate Division have been made."

"These appear to have been done disregarding time-honoured and established practice thus giving due respect to the views conveyed by the persons holding high constitutional office in relation to the functioning of the Supreme Court, in the course of consultation with them. Without intending any disrespect to those who have been appointed, it is a matter of regret that the manner of their appointment has raised questions of propriety, and generated controversy which could and should have been avoided, in the national interest", the statement said.

Signatories to the statement included the names of those who attended the SCBA meeting in the afternoon.

## Mission in Malaysia

## From Page 1

The detainees are being housed in eight deportation camps.

An estimated 5,000 recruiting agents and business concerns in Malaysia hire foreign workers without permit, it was learnt.

In 1998, about one lakh undocumented Bangladeshis were affected in a similar crackdown.

At that time, Malaysia had spent four million US dollars and set up 16 special squads to detect "overstaying and undocumented foreign workers". In the process, thousands of jobs were created for local people against the backdrop of an Asian currency crisis.

Some three million Bangladeshi wage earners are working in countries in the Middle