

What's on today . . . .

**Film show:** Zahir Raihan Film Society has organised a week-long film screening session for children to mark its 15 years in film society movement. Seven films 'Hook', 'Mouse Thunt', 'Flubber', 'Baby's Day Out', 'Home Alone', 'Short Circuit' and Indian film 'Uranchoo' will be screened at the session. Steven Spielberg's 'Hook' will be screened today. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, Road No-2, Dhanmondi. Time: 5 pm.

**Eid reunion and discussion:** Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangshad Mirpur Thana Command has organised a discussion meeting and Eid reunion programme. Chief guest: Principal Abdul Ahad Chowdhury, Chairman, Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangsad Central Command Council. Venue: Mirpur Upashahar Government Primary School premises, Section-1, Mirpur. Time: 2:30 pm.

**Seminar:** Bangladesh Computer Samity will hold a seminar on "information security." Venue: Hotel Sheraton's Ballroom. Time 9:30 am.

**BNWLA Workshop:** Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) will hold a training workshop on "Prevention of Trafficking of Women and Children and Legal Steps." Venue: Women's Affairs Directorate, 37/3, Eskaton Garden Road. Time: 10:00 am-4:00 pm.

**Discussion meeting:** Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance will hold a discussion meeting in observance of its first founding anniversary. It will be followed by cultural programme. Venue: Sculptor Novera Hall, National Museum. Time: 4:30 pm.

**Education conference:** Dhaka University will hold an educational conference titled "Education in Aid of Human Welfare." Venue: TSC auditorium, DU campus.

..... and tomorrow

**Conference:** The biennial conference-2001 of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Muktijoddha Dal Dhaka Metropolitan Unit will be held. Chief guest: BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia. Venue: Engineers' Institute Auditorium. Time: 2 pm.

**Film show:** Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen 'Mouse Hunt' by Gore Verbinski as part of its week-long film session for children. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, Road No-2, Dhanmondi. Time: 5 PM.

Weather

Cold wave may continue

The moderate cold wave sweeping over northern and central parts and mild cold wave at places over southern part of the country may continue for another 12 hours, Met Office said, reports UNB.

Dry weather may continue over the country during next 12 hours till 6 pm today it said forecasting little change in night temperature.

The country's highest temperature 26.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and the lowest 05.3 degree at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:31 pm and rises on Sunday at 6:44 am.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in Percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	22.2	12.2
Chittagong	25.0	09.0
Rajshahi	22.4	06.5
Khulna	24.0	08.2
Barisal	23.5	07.5
Sylhet	23.7	10.0
Cox's Bazar	26.0	13.0

DSE threatens

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system the weightings among different parameters are same as those used by the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) where one of the participating vendors of CDBL was a prime contractor.

"We also fail to understand why CDBL is presently negotiating with only one of the two shortlisted bidders with a much higher quote."

About user fee, DSE chairman said CDBL had formulated its own fee and deposit schedule for its users and considered these fees unrealistic.

He said any such fee structure needs approval of regulatory authority. "If this has not been done, we feel the fees shown in the business plan are misleading and can create serious problems in the successful implementation of the CDS."

The DSE chairman also noted with concern that some important positions of the CDBL had been filled without following proper recruitment procedures of the country like newspaper advertisement.

"We feel that CDBL should be an organisation of total trust which can be ensured by transparency in all respects," he said.

He said he hoped that CDBL chairman AKM Shamsuddin would address the issues immediately before proceeding further with the selection process of CDS.

"If the issues are not addressed to our satisfaction, we may have to rethink our participation in the proposed CDS in the interest of the capital market," he said in the protest note.

Jubo League leader

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sioner of Ward No 99.

Police and witnesses said a gang of five attacked Taleb in front of Ronada Pharmacy while he was returning home after offering Juma prayers at a local mosque.

The gang encircled Taleb, shot him point blank and fled the scene.

He was shot in the head and shoulder.

Hearing the gunshots, local people came out of their houses and found Taleb lying in a pool of blood in front of the pharmacy. They informed Tejgaon thana police about the matter.

A police van from Tejgaon thana took Taleb to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Local people said, Taleb might have been killed by his rivals.

Other sources said Taleb was involved in toll collection in Karwan Bazar area and rivalry with party activists over establishing supremacy in the area might be the cause of his tragic death.

Police said Taleb was an FIR-named accused in several cases including terrorism and extortion in Tejgaon area.

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report at 7:40 last night.

Business ventures

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observed.

WEA President Rokeya Rahman, Maleka Begum and Neelufar Karim also spoke on the occasion.

Women entrepreneurs from the city and different parts of the country took part in discussions divided into three working sessions. They called for more government assistance to women entrepreneurs for prosperity of the nation.

The workshop adopted a series of recommendations including introduction of special loan for women entrepreneurs and opening of a capital and market information cell and a data bank.

The recommendations also include setting up of an Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI) to train women entrepreneurs and giving bank loans on EDI certificates.

They demanded security of women entrepreneurs and accommodation facility in women's hostels for women coming to the capital for business trips.

Loadshedding

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resumed production and the other would resume in March. Combined Cycle Power Plant of Fenchuganj is yet to start generation.

Overhauling of the 150 mw third unit of Ashuganj power plant is likely to start this month at a cost of more than Tk 100 crore and it will take at least seven months, the sources said.

Meanwhile, negotiation is on with German donor KfW for financing overhauling of the fourth and fifth Ashuganj units, each with a generation capacity of 150 mw. A total of Tk 450 crore is needed for the overhauling.

PDB is still to go for overhauling of the 210 mw 4th unit of Ghorashal plant as some major units are under maintenance work. Machinery for the overhauling has already arrived, an official said.



A big hole on the middle of a road in city's Nilkhet area goes uncared by the authorities concerned. As a result any mishap may occur at any time. -- Star photo

Flow of Afghan refugees into Pakistan jumps three-fold: UNHCR

UN calls emergency meeting of donors

GENEVA, Jan 12 : The flow of Afghan refugees arriving in neighbouring Pakistan has jumped three-fold over the last three days, the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said on Friday, reports AFP.

About 750 people have been arriving daily from Afghanistan since Tuesday at a refugee camp in the north west of Pakistan, UNHCR spokesman Kris Janowski said.

The refugees, who are mostly women and children, are fleeing the conflict in Afghanistan pitting the opposition Northern Alliance, and the worst drought in living memory, he said.

"Most of the people coming out are from minorities which traditionally support the Northern Alliance and flee the Taliban advance," Janowski told reporters.

More than 60,000 new Afghan refugees fled to Pakistan in the last four months of last year and three quarters are from minority groups mainly Tajiks and Uzbeks, UNHCR has said. Some 25 percent are ethnic Pashtuns.

The Geneva-based agency began on Tuesday to move 18,000 refugees in the Jalozai transit camp, near the north-western border town of Peshawar, to a better equipped camp about 24 kilometres (15 miles) away.

"It is feared that many more refugees from fighting in northern Afghanistan may be on their way as well as people fleeing the effects of the worst drought in living memory," Janowski said.

UNHCR said as many as 40,000 more refugees, in addition to the 60,000 new arrivals known to the UN agency, may have entered Pakistan unmonitored.

Janowski said there was still no word from the Tajik government, which the UN agency has called upon to accept some 10,000 Afghans stuck for weeks on string of islands on the river Pyandj bordering the two countries.

"Our position is still the same, we think these people should be allowed in," he said.

Meanwhile, UN Coordinator for Afghanistan Eric de Mul has called an emergency meeting of donors and asked for an immediate response to funding appeals amid a devastating drought which has raised fears of famine, a UN statement said Friday.

It said the situation in Afghanistan, crippled by drought and more than two decades of war, was "rapidly deteriorating" with more than half a million people -- or some 2.6 percent of the population -- internally displaced.

The UN's consolidated appeal for Afghanistan this year totals 229 million dollars for some 332 projects including mine clearing, drought relief, refugee assistance and drug control.

De Mul specifically called on donors to provide 3.5 million dollars for non-food items such as shelters, blankets and clothing, 3.2 million to food for work programmes and 600,000 for seeds.

"Since summer last year, about 470,000 people have left their homes and most of these families are internally displaced inside Afghanistan," de Mul's office said in a statement issued in neighbouring Pakistan.

"This total represents only new internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 2000/2001 and does not include at least 100,000 old IDPs from 1999."

Nepali Congress discusses plan to protect democracy

KATHMANDU, Jan 12 : The ruling Nepali Congress today discussed strategies to protect multi-party democracy in the Himalayan kingdom ahead of its 10th convention, party officials said, reports AFP.

Nepal's multi-party system was installed after a bloody pro-democracy uprising in 1990, which claimed 500 lives and overturned 30 years of absolute rule by the monarchy.

Deputy Prime Minister and MP Ram Chandra Paudel presented policy papers reviewing economic and political developments over the past 10 years, NC party spokesman Narahari Acharya told reporters.

The policy paper will be presented at the Congress's 10th convention to be held on Friday, January 19, in Pokhara, 225 km west of Kathmandu.

More than 1,460 elected delegates representing 75 districts will attend, Acharya said.

But amid a rift in the party, three influential leaders former premier Sher Bahadur Deuba, as well as Khum Bahadur Khadha and Bijaya Kumar Gachhedar were absent from the party's central working committee.

The meeting followed a failed attempt by Deuba and 56 dissident MPs to file a motion of non-confidence in Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala.

Deuba is hoping to clinch the presidency of the party from Koirala at the convention, and has launched a nationwide tour to muster support.

Other dissidents are calling for Koirala to give up one of his two posts -- either the party presidency or the premiership.

Koirala has said he will introduce a unity package to resolve the rift, but it was not certain if it was presented to the meeting, Acharya said.



Water Resources Minister of India Arjun Charan Shethi called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Ganobhaban yesterday. -- PID photo

Dacoit jailed for 10 years in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 12: A notorious dacoit Asgar Ali Biswas was sentenced to ten years rigorous imprisonment in a case recorded under Arms Act with Koira thana of Khulna district.

The judgement was delivered on Thursday by Abdul Quddus Mia, Judge of the Special Tribunal No. 3, Khulna.

The prosecution story in brief is that Koira thana police recovered five home-made guns, one pistol, one shutter gun and one pipegun from Asgar's house on the night of June 11, 1999.

Police arrested Asgar Ali and his daughter Begum from their house at village Hadda under Koira thana the same night.

The court acquitted Begum as her guilt was not proved.

Senior lawyers

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After the oath-taking, the agitating lawyers decided not to attend proceedings in the SC from tomorrow.

The five-member team of lawyers led by Ishtiaque Ahmed continued its efforts to resolve the problem. It included Dr Kamal Hossain, Dr M Zahir, MA Malek and Mainul Hossain.

The team's meeting with leaders of the rival groups of lawyers yesterday morning was attended by Barrister Amirul Islam, Barrister Shafik Ahmed, Ozair Faruq and Sudhangshu Shekhar Halder from the pro-government side. From the rival side, it was attended by Barrister Maudud Ahmed, Barrister Najmul Huda, Abdur Rob Choudhury, Khandaker Mahbub Hossain and Barrister Rabeya Bhuiya.

They will have another meeting today after meeting President.

Dr M Zahir said last night that they are trying to evolve a common stand, rising above partisan interests, to uphold the dignity of the court.

Sources close to the negotiators claimed that the Chief Justice had agreed to the formula. Barrister Mainul Hossain, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, told newsmen that the CJ assured them of doing his best to resolve the crisis.

Road accident

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case was filed with Tejgaon police station in this regard. Police seized the bus and arrested the driver.

In another road accident in Mirpur, a minibus hit an auto-rickshaw on Darus Salam road at about 6:45pm, killing two passengers. The identities of the victims were known immediately.

The bodies were sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

An officer of Mirpur police was yet to come back from the accident spot at the time of filing of this report.

Land mine blasts

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point' this morning.

Panic-stricken Bangladeshi villagers are fleeing their homes.

Villagers said a series of land mines planted by Myanmar border forces Nasaka in the zero line of the border exploded near border pillar number 47 and 48 in the last three days.

BDR jawans requested the woodcutters and local people not to go near border pillars as Nasaka continued to plant land mines along the border.

Our correspondent from Bandarban reports, Nasaka imposed curfew along 20-kilometre bordering areas on their side on January 10.

The curfew was imposed in the backdrop of massing of troops along Myanmar border. BDR and Nasaka exchanged fire on January 18 over construction of a dam over river Naf by Nasaka.

BDR sources said, a flag meeting between the two sides will be held on January 14 at Ulubonia, Cox's Bazar.

Japanese business team

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The delegation will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina tomorrow ahead of a luncheon hosted in honour of them by the Board of Investment (BOI).

Later, they would have a meeting with the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

On Monday, they will first go to Savar EPZ and later fly to Chittagong to see the CEPZ and meet business leaders of the port city in their quest of business interests.

IT experts

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ing under CEC's protection".

He said the "illegal" appointment should be cancelled immediately.

Asked whether they (the three commissioners) would take any fresh move for cancellation of the appointment, Moshtaq said they would think again.

The Chief Election Commissioner was not available for comment.

Indian Army chief favours extension of Kashmir truce

NEW DELHI, Jan 12 : Indian Army Chief General S. Padmanabhan today said militancy had waned in trouble spots including Kashmir, and that he personally favoured the extension of a unilateral government ceasefire there, reports AFP.

Padmanabhan told reporters that the insurgency situation across India had improved remarkably in the recent past.

"A lot has happened in these past three months," he said. "There is less fighting and more talking."

The army chief said insurgency had decreased in the north-eastern states of Nagaland and Assam, while underlining that the real success story was in Kashmir, where a Muslim separatist drive has claimed more than 34,000 lives since 1989.

The Indian army, following instructions from Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, suspended operations against militant groups in Kashmir on November 27 for the holy Islamic month of Ramadan.

The ceasefire has since been extended until January 26.

Padmanabhan said he personally favoured a further extension of the Kashmir ceasefire but added that New Delhi would take the final decision.

"If it is a good thing, it should continue," he said.

The army chief said firing by Pakistani troops along the disputed Kashmir frontier had "quietened down" and "infiltration from the other side has definitely decreased."

He said some Pakistan-based rebel outfits such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed were still carrying out attacks in Kashmir, the cause of two wars and a 1999 border conflict between India and Pakistan.

"The foreign militant is the one who wants to fight," he said. "The home-grown militant is sick and tired of fighting."

Although the ceasefire has been marred by some dastardly attacks, Padmanabhan said: "Today a Kashmiri is out on the streets till 10:30 pm ... he is genuinely a more relaxed person."

"There is a lot of political activity which might lead to a peace process," he said, recalling a proposed visit to Pakistan by Indian Kashmir's leading separatist forum for talks aimed at resolving the 50-year-old dispute.

The general said Pakistan had reduced its troops slightly along the Kashmir frontier after the initial ceasefire but stressed the reduction was not significant.

"No frontline troops have gone. They have pulled back some general forces and others who had come to give training ... We have also done a fair amount of pruning. At the moment it is like cheese paring."

Clinton's tenure

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Earlier, about 1,000 Palestinians in Hebron marched in support of demands that Palestinian refugees be given the right to return to former homes in what is now Israel. "No peace without the return of refugees," one banner read. The fate of nearly four million refugees and their descendants is a key sticking point in the negotiations.

At a chronic friction point, a traffic circle outside the West Bank town of Ramallah, several hundred Palestinians threw stones at Israeli soldiers. However, for the first time in weeks, there was no exchange of fire at the spot.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat consulted with his negotiators Friday and spoke by phone to leaders of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Morocco.

Israel radio said Arafat was to hold talks Saturday evening with Israel's former prime minister, Shimon Peres. However, Palestinian officials said such a meeting has not been arranged.

Peres and Arafat shared the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize with then-Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for launching peace talks.

In the negotiating session in the night from Thursday to Friday, no progress was made, Israeli and Palestinian participants said.

Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo said Palestinians repeated positions already rejected by Israel: Israel must withdraw from all of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Arab section of Jerusalem, including a disputed holy site, and recognise the refugees right of return.

Much time was spent discussing "Israeli provocation and crimes against our people," Abed Rabbo said. The Palestinians are not interested in a quick agreement "that ignores any of our rights," he said.

Israeli Cabinet Minister Amnon Lipkin-Shahak said no progress was made at the meeting. Lipkin-Shahak, one of the Israeli negotiators, said it was devoted to a beginning of a discussion over both sides reservations about ideas Clinton raised to solve the remaining issues.

"There is much more to talk about, because the positions are not close to each other," Lipkin-Shahak told Israel radio. He said "there is no chance of achieving an agreement in the time remaining." The most that could be expected would be a document that lists the items where agreement can be reached, but "that isn't easy, either," he said.

Another brick kiln

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ment of Environment (DoE).

When the brick kiln owner started to install the kiln in December last year, villagers moved to court in Munshiganj and obtained an injunction against its operation.

But after hearing of the case on December 20, the court vacated the injunction on the basis of the DC's 'permission' without taking into consideration that the DC had no authority to issue such a 'permission'.

"This was the first case of this sort in Mushiganj and nobody knew how to handle it," said a villager at Mashurgaon.

Meanwhile, the Department of Environment has just completed its own investigation. In a letter, the DoE asked the DC of Munshiganj to cancel the 'permission' and stop operation of the kiln.

Talking to this correspondent, Bulon, manager of the kiln, said, " They (villagers) have lost all cases in the court. So we are sure the environment is not affected at all by the kiln".

Bulon also said that they invested Tk 15 lakh in the brick kiln by selling parental lands. "Now of I have to wind up the business, I will be totally ruined", he said.

When contacted, Munshiganj DC, Nurul Haque first said that he had issued the permission after the law came in force. But later permission was given to the Srinagar Bricks "only to prepare for installation of the kiln, not for lighting the furnace till Environmental Clearance is available".

OC of Srinagar thana SM Waliullah said police has nothing to do in this regard. "The kiln has been set up on an agricultural land. They should not have allowed a kiln on an agricultural land", he said. Waliullah said similar brick kilns have mushroomed all over the country without any monitoring.

Nurun Nahar, Headmistress of Mashurgaon Primary School, said she has been receiving complaints of eye irritation from her students since the kiln was lit.

Runa Akhtar, headmistress of another primary school in the area appealed to the authorities to stop operation of the kiln and save the villagers from health hazard, but to no effect.

Sobeda Khatun 80, Ayesha Khatun 70, Abdus Samad Molla, Abul Hossain and many other villagers said that the affect of gas coming out of the furnace is intense at night when tyre and other banned fuel are burned.

"If you stay here at night you can feel the heat. It becomes very difficult for us to breathe," said Abul Hossain.

Speaker's daughter

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Bhuiyan, Official Reporter Rehana Akhter and Stenographers Shahidul Islam and Qudrat-ul-Haq.

The delegation is scheduled to leave Dhaka for the Cambodian capital on January 20 to attend the five-day conference where parliamentarians from 22 Asian nations are likely to adopt a proposal for sustainable peace in the region and address the issue of a Human Rights Charter for the Asian nations.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the current president of the regional body, will lead another delegation from Bangladesh and hand over the presidency to the host country.

A press release issued Thursday by the Director (Public Relations) of Jatiya Sangsad said several JS staff members included in the Speaker's delegation were requested by AAPP Secretary General Qazi Monzur-

I-Movla in order to facilitate the transfer of the Secretariat to the host country. These JS staff members who worked for the AAPP Secretariat in Dhaka will help with pre-conference work in Cambodia.

The release said the Cambodian government invited Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury to present the keynote paper of the conference. His wife and daughter were separately invited by his counterpart Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

It said the members of the civil society and the press were included in the list of delegates in order to promote parliamentary education.

Meanwhile, Parliament Secretariat sources said that the Speaker's record number of at least 36 overseas tours during the last four years has sparked strong criticisms.