

Bangladesh Business Awards tonight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Business Awards 2000 will be given tonight at a gala ceremony at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in the city, says a press release.

Finance Minister S A M S Kibria will hand over the awards.

The Daily Star and the DHL Worldwide Express have introduced the annual awards in three categories: Business Person of the Year, Outstanding Woman in Business and Enterprise of the Year to recognise contribution of the business community towards the country's development.

Through these awards, the

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With no peace deal Barak appears sure to face defeat

Column: Spotlight on Asia
By Muslehuddin Ahmad

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Anniversary: In the wings of poetry: and Book review: A guide to our politicians

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Feb 3		5.46 pm
Feb 4	6-38 am	

Prayer Timings

February 3

	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	5-30	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-015	4-30
Maghrib	5-45	5-50
Esha	7-25	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina purchased a set of books from Ekushey Book Fair after inaugurating the month-long fair on Bangla Academy premises yesterday.

'Uphold dignity of mother tongue'

PM opens Ekushey Book Fair

BSS, UNB DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon all, including the teachers, academics and cultural personalities to intensify their efforts to acquire knowledge in mother tongue and uphold its dignity and prestige.

Inaugurating the historic "Amar

Ekushey Grantha Mela 2001" on the Bangla Academy premises in the afternoon, the Prime Minister said that without mother tongue, pursuit of knowledge and wisdom could never be complete.

She said that the people of the country have established their mother tongue 'Bangla' as state

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Ershad's party meeting at coronary care unit!

ZAYEDUL AHSAN

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad took advantage of his illness to hold a meeting of the party presidium Thursday evening at the Coronary Care Unit (CCU) of the National Institute of Cardio-vascular Diseases (NICVD) in the city.

The former president, jailed in a graft case, was shifted to the hospital from Dhaka Central Jail in the afternoon on the same day.

JP sources said Ershad asked his senior party colleagues to free him from the prison by any means. "You arrange the money (fine) anyhow for my release. I will refund it later," a JP leader quoted Ershad as saying at the meeting.

Ershad held the meeting attended by nine of the presidium members

present in the city before intelligence agencies and police made the CCU off-limit for visitors.

Immediately after the meeting, the Home Ministry sought explanation for this from the jail authorities under whose custody Ershad is at the hospital.

In the two-hour meeting, Ershad asked the leaders to resolve all intra-party feuds and work as per directives from party Secretary General Nazim Rahman Manjur.

Ershad also asked them to maintain unity of the four-party opposition alliance, some leaders present at the meeting told this correspondent.

Meanwhile, the JP presidium at a meeting last night discussed Ershad's directives from the hospital and US visit of his wife Raushan Ershad, party

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Nagorik Andolon to hold grand rally today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Oikkyabaddha Nagorik Andolon (United Civil Society Movement) will hold its scheduled 'grand rally' at the National Parade Ground in the city this morning despite a dawn to dusk hartal called by a section of Islamic scholars and thinkers.

The rally is aimed at strengthening democracy, ensuring good governance, poverty alleviation and empowerment of women, organisers said.

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Islamic scholars call hartal in city today

UNB, DHAKA

A rally of Islamic scholars yesterday called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the city today demanding scrapping of government registration of NGOs, banning their political activities and protesting attack on Islamic activists.

The rally of Olema-Mashaikh (Islamic scholars) at Paltan Maidan in the city also announced a month-long programme for February. The programme includes a countrywide day-long hartal on Feb 28 to press their six-point demand including cancellation of a High Court verdict

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Engrs reject recommendations for using groundwater

Report dubbed detrimental to nat'l interests

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Engineers have reacted sharply to a Draft Development Strategy (DDS) on use of surface and groundwater, prepared by a foreign consultant under a nine-million-dollar project of the National Water Resources Management.

The voluminous report that has recommended use of groundwater together with water stored on land after monsoon and soil moisture to meet the country's demands negates dependence on the Ganges and other rivers except the Brahmaputra.

Prepared by Mot Halcrow, the DDS said, "Groundwater together with water stored on land after the monsoon and soil moisture is expected to be adequate to meet all dry season demands within areas overlying the resource."

The demands also include "full irrigation on all suitable land, except for parts of the south western and small areas in the northwest, southeast and eastern hill regions." The report advocated continued monitoring.

Commissioned in March 1998 and completed in August last year, the report recently made a strong plea for harnessing groundwater. "Nevertheless, seasonally lower water levels mean that more force-mode pumping will be required," said the report.

Among other recommendations, the DDS observed that all potential demands for groundwater from water supply, the environment, fisheries, forestry and agriculture can be met even in a dry year.

The Bangladesh Water and Power Engineering Association dubbed the report as "detrimental to national interests".

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Admn turns a deaf ear

Order to stop operation of brick kiln unheeded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Srinagar thana authorities and Munshiganj district administration have ignored an order from the Department of Environment (DOE) to stop operation of a controversial brick kiln in Srinagar and have resorted to delaying tactics, sources concerned said.

The DOE, Dhaka Division, gave the order more than a month ago and

sent a copy of it to the Deputy Commissioner's office in Munshiganj. The order was given after DOE inspectors found that the Srinagar Bricks was operating without an Environmental Clearance or a licence from the DC's office.

The Daily Star reported on January 13 that the authorities in Munshiganj had violated provisions of the Environment Conservation Act 1995 and Rules of 1997. The DC,

Nurul Haque, categorically denied that his office had given permission to light the furnace of the 4,500-capacity brick kiln.

Mysteriously, the DC brushed aside DOE's order and again asked the TNO of Srinagar to conduct an investigation and inform him whether the kiln was operating or not. Although the TNO was asked to respond within seven days, he has

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'Direct' appointment of 59

TUs at Ctg Port announce 6-hr strike on Feb 7

NURUL ALAM, CTG

Appointment of 59 employees at Chittagong Port directly by the ministry concerned angered the rank and file at the port office while the trade union bodies opposed the move, port sources said.

The trade union leaders have threatened to paralyse activities at Chittagong Port if those employees are allowed to join, CBA and port sources said.

The trade union bodies at the port already announced a six-hour work abstention from 8 am on February 7 to register their protests against such a move.

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has decided to hold a meeting with the angry trade union leaders on February 5 to break the stalemate created over the issue, port sources said.

CPA also communicated the matter to the ministry concern, port

sources said.

However, port officials concerned said that the 59 persons found surplus elsewhere, were sent to Chittagong Port for absorption by the Ministry of Establishment.

"But such a move angered the rank and file here as the Ministry of Establishment is yet to give any clearance to the port authority for filling up 1900 vacant posts, said a senior port official requesting anonymity.

Normally, the recruitment of employees is mostly done by Chittagong Port Authority on receipt of clearance from the ministry concerned, port officials said.

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Tawfiq Aziz Khan seriously ill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tawfiq Aziz Khan, Executive Editor of The Daily Star, is seriously ill. He is suffering from lung cancer, which was detected more than a month back.

His condition deteriorated in recent days. His wife and their two sons have requested relatives, friends and wellwishers to pray for his early recovery. Due to doctors' advice, visitors are highly discouraged.

Mr. Khan is one of the founding staff members of The Daily Star. He joined this newspaper as Managing Editor and later took up his present post.

Cosmetic company allegedly evades Tk 46cr revenue

STAFF REPORTER

The Customs Department has issued a notice to Aromatic Cosmetics Limited for evading Tk 46.18 crore revenue.

The notice issued from the office of the Commissioner of Customs, Dhaka North, on January 30 said the revenue was evaded between February 1, 1998 and November 28, 2000 by under-pricing products.

The notice asked the company to pay the revenue immediately and to explain within ten days why steps will not be taken against it. The case will be resolved unilaterally if the company fails to respond within the time limit, it said.

Of the total revenue evaded, Tk 13.08 crore was supplementary duty, Tk 15.90 lakh tax and Tk 32.94 crore Value Added Tax (VAT).

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Blast at rally Another CPB worker dies

UNB, DHAKA

Another CPB worker, who was injured in the bomb explosion at Paltan Maidan on January 20, succumbed to his injuries at Mohakhali Chest Disease Hospital yesterday.

With this, the death toll in the Paltan blast rose to 5.

Party sources said Bipradas Roy, 20, son of Nirod Bihari Roy of Mongla Upazila in Bagerhat district died at the hospital at noon.

A first year student of Khulna BL College, Bipradas was also a leader of the party's student front Chhatra Union, sources added.

After receiving splinter injuries in left lung, Bipradas was first admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and then shifted to Mohakhali Chest

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