



PHOTO: AFP

Ronaldo rules the world

AFP, Madrid

Brazil and Real Madrid striker Ronaldo won the 2002 FIFA World Player of the Year award here on Tuesday. Ronaldo becomes the first player to win the award three times, having previously won in 1996 and 1997. He won 59 first place votes from the 148 national team coaches who voted, and a total of 357 points.

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Joint forces arrest 14 more listed criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint forces rounded up 104 people, including 14 listed criminals, and seized 16 firearms across the country during the last 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday.

The latest arrests push the number of people rounded up since Operation Clean Heart began on October 17 to 9,323. The joint forces have so far seized 1,672 firearms and 28,508 rounds of ammunition.

In the capital, a former vice-president of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) was arrested from his old town residence early Tuesday morning.

A team of army, paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and police raided the Aga Masih Lane residence of Dr Badiuzzaman Bhuiyan at around 3:30am and recovered a foreign-made revolver.

Dr Badiuzzaman was arrested and taken to an army camp for interrogation before being handed to the Kotwali police yesterday.

In Khulna, the joint forces arrested a former ameer of the Paikgachha upazila unit of Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Tuesday evening. Moinuddin Dafadar was later handed to police after interrogation.

The Jamaat leader had allegedly threatened the officer-in-charge of the local police station and the upazila nirbahi officer not to arrest his partmen.

Moinuddin, headmaster of the Paikgachha High School, has recently been relieved as ameer of local Jamaat unit on the charge of anti-party activities.

In Barisal, the joint forces yesterday arrested president of the Hijla thana unit of the Jatiya Party (Ershad) Anwar Hossain Dulal, writes our correspondent.

Also yesterday, a local activist of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Shahidul Islam Lalon was arrested.

Acting on his information, the joint forces later seized one rifle, two revolvers and four rounds of bullet from his residence.

Earlier on Monday, the joint forces recovered a powerful homemade bomb from Fair Health Clinic at Kalibari Road.

Shefali, an employee of the clinic, saw the bomb wrapped in papers on the third floor of the building and notified the authorities.

Later, the troops came to the clinic, took the explosive weighing around half a kilogram and defused it at Dapdapia on the outskirts of town.

The joint forces also arrested eight people, including two suspected criminals, at different parts of the town on Monday.

In Rajbari, the joint forces picked up three suspected terrorists with three firearms and ammunition at different parts of the district yesterday, writes our correspondent.

Our Pabna correspondent reports that the joint forces arrested three people including a former union parishad chairman.

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PHOTO: STAR

Police club newsmen in front of the Jatiya Press Club when they tried to take out a procession yesterday in protest at indiscriminate arrest of and repression on journalists across the country (Story on page 1).

Young and wilted

Study finds most children, mothers critically underweight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prevalence of underweight, stunting and wasting in children and mothers in Bangladesh is still very high, serious and even critical, if WHO criteria are considered, recent findings made public at a conference yesterday showed.

The findings of a 12-year study - Nutritional Surveillance Project (NSP) - presented at the ICDDR, B show that anaemia is a serious problem in children and a moderate problem in non-pregnant mothers.

Furthermore, the surveys in 12 upazilas conducted during the last 12 years, show that the rural population and up to one-half of urban slum residents have an energy intake of less than 1805 kcal/person/day - an indicator of extreme poverty.

The report presented at the centre yesterday morning by sev-

eral researchers from UK, USA and Bangladesh says that about 24 million people in Bangladesh, or 24 per cent of the rural population, have an energy intake of less than 1805 kcal/person/day.

It also says that Bangladesh has the highest prevalence of child underweight in the world except North Korea and seven other countries.

The findings revealed that between 1991 and 2001, there was a steady decline in stunting from 71 per cent to 50 per cent and underweight from 71 per cent to 57 per cent among the children aged 6-59 months.

Although the findings were encouraging, the report says, the rate of improvements during the 1990s was far below the goals of 1990 World Summit for Children. The prevalence of child stunting and

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8 foreign firms vie for BTTB mobile scheme

STAR REPORT

Eight foreign companies have dropped bids for the mobile phone project of the state-owned Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) for providing 2.5 lakh phones across the country, BTTB officials said.

The companies are Germany's Siemens, Swedish Ericsson, American Motorola Inc, Canadian Netas-Nortel and Chinese ZTE Corporation, China Machinery and Equipment Import and Export Corporation (CMEC), Huawei Technology and China Putian.

The deadline for dropping bids expired yesterday.

Technical offer of the bids was opened yesterday at the BTTB's international procurement office at Gulshan in presence of the bidders.

Financial offer would be opened after evaluation of the technical offer by a committee to be formed soon, the officials said.

The time limit for dropping bids was extended twice for upgrading some technical details in the tender papers and due to requests from leading telecom vendors. The previous deadlines were November 10 and November 25.

The mobile phone project, covering the entire country, would be financed through floating of telecom bonds worth Tk 594 crore. Tender was floated on August 17 for its implementation on a turnkey basis.

The tender was for supply of equipment and implementation of the project with "high-tech and futuristic mobile virtual private network (MVPN), general packet radio service (GPRS), wireless application protocol (WAP), short

message service, and intelligent network (IN)," an official mentioned.

The BTTB held a pre-bid meeting in September. Participants included representatives from French telecommunication vendor Alcatel, Germany's Siemens, Swedish Ericsson, American Motorola Inc, Chinese ZTE Corporation, Korea Telecom and China Machinery and Equipment Import and Export Corporation (CMEC).

Bangladesh now has some 6,50,000 fixed-line phones operated by the BTTB. Four private operators are now providing some 10,50,000 cellular phones under foreign joint ventures through GSM and code division multiple access (CDMA) services.

The BTTB mobile network is likely to end a monopoly of the private sector in this field.

Myanmar PM given hearty send-off

UNB, Dhaka

Myanmar Prime Minister Senior General Than Shwe left Dhaka for Yangon yesterday concluding a two-day visit to Bangladesh, which yielded broad agreements for boosting economic cooperation between the two countries.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia saw off her Myanmar counterpart at the VVIP tarmac of the Zia International Airport.

A special flight of Myanmar Airways International (MAI) took off at about 3:25pm carrying the Myanmar premier and his entourage back home.

Four jets of the Bangladesh Air Force escorted the Myanmar VVIP flight up to Bangladesh airspace.

A smartly turned-out contingent drawn from the three services of the armed forces gave guard of honour to Than Shwe at the VVIP tarmac

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Ports put on high alert for missing Indian ships

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Seventeen inland river ports of the country have been put on "high alert" and asked to trace out "high cost" two Indian cargo ships that have gone missing since entering Bangladesh waters in August.

The ships - MV Mina and MV Malon - entered through the Angliara naval checkpoint at Koyra upazila on August 13 and August 23 respectively with permission from the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) head office in Dhaka.

They were supposed to anchor at the Mongla port with what they said rice from India.

However, till yesterday, they neither reached the Mongla port nor

could be traced despite search by police and other government agencies, sources said.

According to the deputy director of Khulna divisional office of BIWTA, all the police stations under whose jurisdiction the 17 inland ports are have been informed about the missing ships and ordered to seize those and detain the crew.

Neither the BIWTA nor the Mongla Port Authority could say what kind of cargo the Indian ships carried. The cargo ships were permitted to enter into Bangladesh territorial waters as they said that they were carrying rice, sources in Khulna BIWTA said.

Sources said that documents relating to the agreement between

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Tinni murder Piyal's bail petition rejected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The District and Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday rejected the bail petition of Shafkat Hossain Piyal, husband of murdered model and actress Tania Mahbub Tinni.

Judge (vacation) Mohammad Fazlur Karim passed the order upon an appeal submitted by defence lawyers.

The lawyers appealed to the court for Piyal's bail on November 28 after the First Class Magistrate's Court, Dhaka had rejected the same on November 24.

Piyal was placed on a fresh one-day police remand on December 14 for interrogation. After completion of the remand, police produced him before the court the following day. However, inspector Fazlur Rahman of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) opposed his bail saying that in that case Piyal might go into hiding.

Sources said the CID will record the judicial statement of Bina, housemaid of Tinni, next week. Bina and another housemaid Shefali have been kept under safe custody

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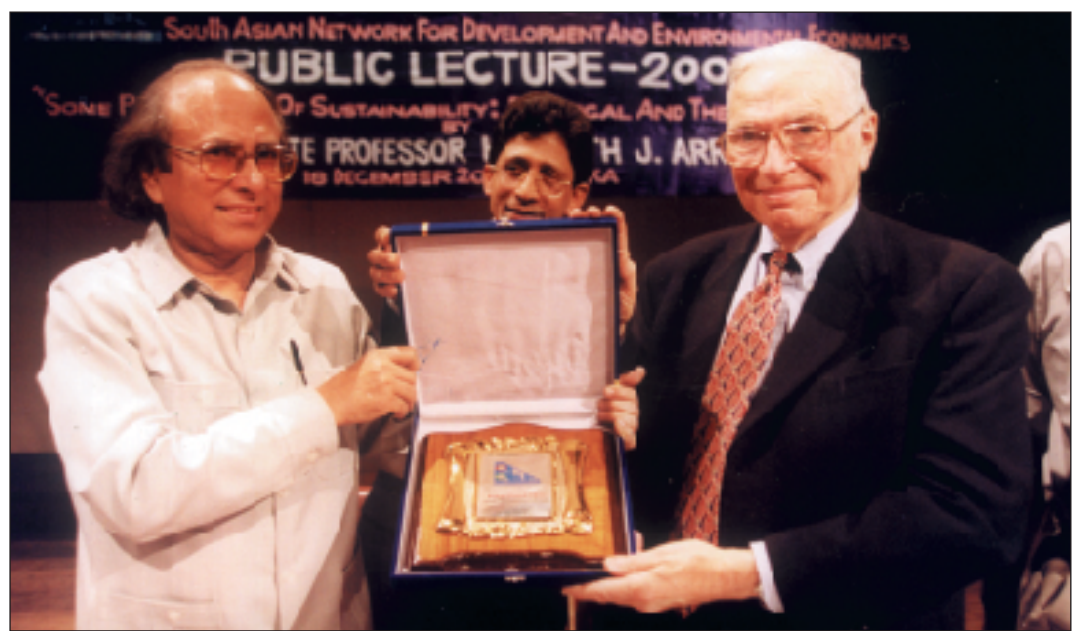


PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Economic Association President Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmed presents a crest to Nobel laureate economist Kenneth J Arrow at a function at the National Museum Auditorium in the city yesterday.

SACEPS to draw citizen's charter for SAARC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The South Asia Centre for Policy Studies (SACEPS) will finalise a Citizen's Social Charter and seek its incorporation into the SAARC programmes, in its bid to bring about a social and economic change in this region through the implementation of the Charter.

The SACEPS at its recent two-day meeting, held at the BRAC Center in Dhaka on December 12-13, presented the programmes with details of their implementation process.

The taskforce report on the Citizen's Social Charter was intensively discussed at the meeting. Justice Habibur Rahman, former chief advisor to the caretaker government, inaugurated the two-day meeting of on December 12.

Nobel laureate Amartya Sen delivered the keynote speech in the inaugural session. Dr. Kamal Hossain and

Professor Rehman Sobhan, Chairman and Executive Director of SACEPS chaired the sessions.

The Citizen's Social Charter will be placed before a major regional dialogue in Colombo early next year, according to a release issued by the Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) on Tuesday.

The release said in order to translate the SACEPS Task Force report into an instrument which will be used to make governments accountable and to identify mechanisms and strategies to empower citizens to make the charter effective, a major effort will be needed within civil society in South Asia.

This dialogue will bring together prominent society activists and advocates for rights of the deprived in the region, it added.

The regional dialogue will be designed to give high visibility and impetus to the advocacy process relating to

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Technical glitch puts Barisal off line

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A technical glitch yesterday at the microwave exchange of the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) in Barisal threw 5,000 telephone subscribers out of nationwide network.

No nationwide or international calls could be made or received for about 12 hours.

"We could only make and receive local calls," one subscriber alleged.

Engineers at the Barisal BTTB exchange told reporters that the fault was due to a connection failure between the switch room and the microwave link technically known as "tax".

Business activities with the capital and other districts were also disrupted.

The microwave connection was restored with other districts after the engineers fixed the trouble, BTTB officials said.

However, about 300 subscribers directly linked with the microwave exchange were able to make nationwide calls but remained out of the local connectivity.

Snatcher jailed under Speedy Trial Act in Ctg

BSS, Ctg

A magistrate court here yesterday sentenced a snatcher to three years imprisonment under the Speedy Trial Act.

Magistrate Mohammad Atahar Ali handed down the sentence to one Reza Hossain alias Rana for his bid to snatch a mobile phone set on October 28 in Lalkhan Bazar area.

Rana was caught by local people who later handed him over to police. Two of his accomplices fled the scene.

Green in her eyes



PHOTO: STAR

A little girl articulates in lines and colours her yearning for nature at a painting competition at the Central Shaheed Minar, organised by the Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon yesterday.