

'Invest more in IT sector to boost development'

BSS, Dhaka

Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas yesterday called for more investment in the information technology (IT) sector to accelerate the development process in the greater interest of nationaleconomy.

"There are immense prospects of the IT-based industries in the country and we should properly utilise all available facilities at home and abroad to ensure our further progress," he said while addressing as chief guest the launching ceremony of Megatech Computer and Communication Limited (MCCL).

President of Bangladesh Computer Samity SM Iqbal attended the ceremony as special guest.

With chairman of MCCL Abdullah Al Mahmud in the chair, the ceremony was held at its head office at Dhanmondi. It was also addressed by MCCL's Managing Director SK Musa and Director Morshed Hassan Khan.

Mirza Abbas said the government attached the highest priority to proper utilisation of IT to face

the challenges of globalisation.

"If we can ensure appropriate utilisation of computer in the country, it would help change our fortune in the days to come," he added.

The MCCL executives said their organisation would deal with data entry and hardware sales and servicing. It would also provide training on IT to develop human resources.

Tarun Dal member stabbed to death in Khulna

UNB, Khulna

A young man was stabbed to death by unidentified assailants at Gallamari in the city yesterday evening.

The victim, Baratul Islam Liton, 27, was a member of the city unit of Jatiyatabadi Tarun Dal.

Police said Liton came under attack at about 6:30pm while he was attending a meeting in front of a local office of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

He was rushed to Khulna Surgical Clinic, but the doctors declared him dead on arrival.

No-ono was arrested in connection with the killing till 8:45pm yesterday.

Jasim Palli Mela begins

UNB, Faridpur

A fortnight-long fair, 'Jasim Palli Mela', began at Ambikapur here on Thursday.

Disaster Management and Relief Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf inaugurated the fair, organised by Jasimuddin Foundation on the occasion of the 101st birth anniversary of poet Jasimuddin.

Chaired by Deputy Commissioner Jalal Ahmed, the function was addressed by poet's wife Begum Momtaz Jasimuddin and educationists, journalists and representatives of different organisations.

Various socio-cultural organisations have also organised fortnight-long programmes, marking the birth anniversary of the poet.

About 70 stalls have been set up in the fair showcasing handicrafts, toys and winter cakes and various kinds of cosmetic, according to a PID handout.

'Friends' stab drug peddler to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Friends allegedly stabbed to death Jahangir Hossain, 30, a delinquent, at Shantinagar in the city last night.

Witnesses said Jahangir was standing in front of Shantinagar Plaza at 7:30pm when his four friends went there. They allegedly stabbed him in the chest, hands and head and left him lying on the footpath.

Locals rushed Jahangir to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Ramna police said Jahangir, a Phensidyl peddler, was arrested three years ago and was freed two and a half months back.

No one was arrested till filing of this report at 10:00pm.



PHOTO: STAR

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina consoles family members of Captain Md Rafiq, one of the 15 army officers killed in Benin plane crash, at their Uttara residence in the city yesterday.

Nasa probe heads for close encounter with comet

REUTERS, Pasadena, Calif.

After a five-year voyage of two billion miles Nasa's spacecraft Stardust is finally nearing the climax of its mission -- a close encounter with a comet to grab dust samples that could yield clues to the origins of the solar system.

Scientists at Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory said that the space probe was scheduled on Friday to plunge into the 'tail' of gas and debris spewing from the comet Wild 2, passing within 188 miles of the streaking chunk of rock and ice.

The spacecraft will reach speeds of nearly 14,000 miles per hour as it snaps pictures, gathers data and scoops up dust particles destined to be the first cometary samples returned to Earth for study.

"We are literally collecting preserved samples of the building blocks of our solar system and our Earth and even ourselves," said Donald Brownlee, a University of Washington astronomer who is the mission's chief scientist. "They've

been preserved for the age of the solar system out there at low temperature and are basically in a pristine state."

The historic "fly-by" will take place 242 million miles from Earth, with passage through the most intense hailstorm of particles inside the Wild 2's coma lasting about eight minutes.

At that point, debris will be pelting the bookcase-sized spacecraft at six times the speed of a bullet, but the probe's solar panels and sophisticated instruments will be shielded by two specially designed bumpers at the front of the spacecraft, NASA scientists said.

Tiny bits of matter 10 to 330 microns in diameter, up to three times the width of a human hair, will be collected in the spacecraft's "cometary catcher's mitt," a tennis racket-shaped panel lined with a super-fluffy material called aerogel, consisting of pure silicon dioxide and 99.8 percent air.

The aerogel has enough cushion to stop the particles without substantially altering them. After the fly-by, the collector panel will fold down into a clamshell-like capsule for a return flight to Earth aboard Stardust in two years.

The capsule will ultimately separate from the spacecraft and re-enter Earth's atmosphere for a landing in the Utah desert in January 2006, while Stardust veers back into space.

Scientists say the dust samples, containing particles gathered by the comet since its formation at the dawn of the solar system and during its own ancient interplanetary wanderings, hold clues to how the solar system, and even life on Earth, began.

"One of the mantras of our project is that we are stardust, as in the Joni Mitchell song, because the atoms in our bodies, before the Sun and solar system formed, were actually interstellar grains," Brownlee said.

'New world' link to Arctic found

BBC ONLINE

Russian scientists have found evidence of people living in Arctic Siberia during the Ice Age, who could turn out to be ancestors of the first Americans.

The 30,000-year-old site was found near America's gateway - close to the Bering Strait between Russia and Alaska.

Writing in Science journal, the authors said they found stone tools, ivory weapons and bones of butchered animals.

The artefacts are twice as old as those in Monte Verde in Chile, site of the Americas' most ancient human life find.

The site in Arctic Siberia showed that ancient hunters lived on the Yana River, not far from the Bering land bridge that then connected Asia with North America.

The scientists said that, while much of what is now Europe, Canada and the northern United States was covered in ice, the Yana area was ice free.

It was a dry flood plain, without glaciers, that was home to mammoth, horse, musk ox and other animals.

"Abundant game means lots of

food," writes Julie Brigham-Grette of the University of Massachusetts. "It was not stark tundra as one might imagine."

Daniel Mann of the University of Alaska said the evidence "makes it plausible that the first peopling of the Americas occurred prior to the last glacial maximum", about 20,000 to 25,000 years ago.

Donald Grayson, a paleoanthropologist at the University of Washington in Seattle, said the find was significant because it was far earlier than previous evidence from that part of the world.

"Until this site was reported, the earliest site in the Bering land bridge area was dated at about 11,000 years ago," he was quoted by the Associated Press news agency as saying.

"Every other site that had been thought to have been early enough to have something to do with peopling of the New World has been shown not to be so."

Gazipur JSD president dies

UNB, Gazipur

Mohammad Saru Mia, president of Gazipur district Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and editor of a local daily, the Gazir Desh, died of a cardiac arrest here early yesterday at 58.

He is survived by his wife, five daughters and three sons.

He was buried at the Poura graveyard after a namaz-e-janaza at Rajbari ground.

JSD President Noor-e-Alam Ziku and General Secretary Abdul Malek Ratan, local leaders of political and socio-cultural organisations, professionals and journalists attended the janaza.

The elderly journalist contested in the 1996 general election. He was associated with a number of social organisations.

Gazipur district press club, local leaders of different political parties, including BNP, Awami League and Jatiya Party, and socio-cultural organisations condoled the death of Saru Mia.

Death anniversary



Today is the 31st death anniversary of Sawgatul Alam Sagir, an organiser of the liberation war and Awami League leader, says a press release.

He was killed by anti-liberation forces in Mathbaria, Pirojpur, in 1973.

The Awami League, Jubo League, Chhatra League and Sagir Smriti Sangsad has taken up programmes in Mathbaria to mark the day.

Mathbaria Kalyan Samity will hold a discussion at the Scout Bhaban auditorium in Dhaka at 4.00pm on January 9.

Marzia Mahjabeen Zeba



The first death anniversary of Marzia Mahjabeen Zeba, wife of Dr Asaduzzaman Ripon, former president of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, will be observed today, says a press release.

She was the founder editor and publisher of 'Sukannya', a fortnightly magazine for the women.

Quranic mahfil will be held at her husband's residence.

Wahib Mohammad Yasir



The first death anniversary of Wahib Mohammad Yasir, son of Kalligana Upazila Awami League President SM Nazrul Islam, will be observed today, says a press release.

He was a student of chemistry department of Dhaka University.

A milad mahfil will be held at his father's residence at Dhanmondi after Maghrib prayers today.

Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Shahara Majid, former women affairs secretary of BNP, died of a cardiac arrest at a clinic in Bogra on Thursday at 61.

She is survived by her husband, two sons and a daughter.

BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday condoled the death of Shahara Majid.



Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd. has donated Tk 10 lakh to Bangladesh Cancer Society for construction of a modern cancer hospital. Photo shows Md Yeasin Ali, managing director of the bank, handing over the cheque to Prof. Sayyid Fazlul Haq, president of the cancer society, at a ceremony in the city recently.