

Sreepur Village founding anniversary tomorrow

BSS, Sreepur, Gazipur

The 15th founding anniversary of Sreepur Village will be celebrated tomorrow.

The 10-acre village is situated at 40 miles north of Dhaka.

The village has its own school and mosque built by the funds raised by its founder Pat Kerr MBE, a former British Airways cabin steward.

She left the job to concentrate her efforts on the care of orphan children and destitute women.

The village provides a safe and secure home for those whose disturbed lives do not permit them to live independently.

It is now run by local Directors Dr Ahmed and Hoque

To mark the occasion, 580 resident children, staff and VIP guests will be served with winning dishes from the International Chef of the Year Competition cooked by Edinburgh chef and entrepreneur Tommy Miah.

Pat invited Tommy to cater for the event as he is associated with the orphanage for many years and raised funds for the charity that spends 94 percent of its funds in Sreepur.

4 arrested with 888 bottles of phensidyl

UNB, Sirajganj

Four alleged drug traders were arrested along with 888 bottles of Indian phensidyl syrup from a bus at Chandaikona Bazar on Dhaka-Bogra highway in Raiganj thana early Wednesday.

The arrestees are Abul Kalam, Arman Ali, Sultan Ahmed and Rabiu Islam of Panchagarh district.



PHOTO: STAR

A policeman search a taxicab near Palashi intersection in the city yesterday as security has been tightened at various points to curb crimes.

Europe joins race to put man on Mars

REUTERS, London

A European could step out onto the surface of Mars within three decades, under European Space Agency (ESA) plans spelled out on Tuesday.

The plans are more precise than the broad US goals of sending a man back to the moon by 2020 and to Mars by 2030, revealed last month by President Bush.

"We think it is technically feasible to have a manned mission to the moon between 2020 and 2025 and then to Mars between 2030 and 2035," said Franco Ongaro, project manager of the ESA's fledgling Aurora space exploration programme.

"We need to go back to the moon before we can go to Mars," he told an audience of space scientists, academics and industrialists.

"None of the people who worked on the Apollo programme are around now. We need to learn how to walk before we can run," he added.

Ongaro denied there was open competition with the US space agency Nasa, and said he expected the Americans, Europeans and Russians -- all of whom have Martian goals -- to be in contact with each other.

Under ESA plans, there will be a mission in 2007 to test a vehicle that can withstand far higher re-entry speeds than currently experienced by those returning from the moon.

This will be followed two years later by ExoMars, a robot mission to Mars in search of life -- past and present -- and in 2014 by a mission to bring Martian material back to earth.

Colin Pillinger, the chief scientist behind the missing Beagle 2 Mars probe that was supposed to land on the planet on Christmas day but was never heard from, said it was crucial to find out if there was life there before a human arrives.

"You can sterilize a robot. But you cannot do the same to an astronaut. Inevitably a human will introduce microbes to the planet...and contaminate it," he told the meeting.

Having established whether there is or was life on Mars and proved the landing, take-off and re-entry technology, ESA then plans within a decade to send a manned mission to the moon to test new life-support systems.

It will also look closely at the physiological and psychological aspects of long duration space missions -- a worthwhile round trip Mars would take nearly four years.

By 2026 the manned mission to the Red Planet will be nearly ready -- with a final robot mission to replicate the trip and test all the technologies -- followed in 2030 by a cargo mission carrying supplies ahead of the manned shot.

Then, if everything goes according to plan, in 2033 the ESA's manned Mars shot will take off.

"This is a roadmap, a plan and plans change. But this is the most exciting space adventure," Ongaro

Robbers loot cash, valuables from bus passengers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Armed robbers looted cash and other valuables worth Tk 40 lakhs from the passengers of a night coach on Dhaka-Kalapara route on Wednesday morning.

Police and passengers said the Kalapara-bound night coach of Sakura Paribahan (No-423) left Saidabad bus terminal in Dhaka at 9.00pm on Tuesday with about 36 passengers on board.

When the coach crossed the Arial Khan River at Mawa Ghat at about 3.00am, a gang of robbers boarded the coach in the guise of passengers.

Soon they took over the control of the coach and started looting.

They also injured 11 passengers by beating and stabbing them.

The robbers decamped with the booty after leaving the coach at a place under Madaripur district.

The coach reached Kalapara on Wednesday noon and injured passengers were given treatment at Kalapara, Amtali and Patuakhali hospitals.

Two killed in N'ganj road accidents

UNB, Narayanganj

Two people were killed and five others injured in separate road accidents on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in Bandar thana on Wednesday.

A truck crashed into a taxicab at Dewanbagh, killing a 50-year old passenger of the taxicab and injuring five others at around 2.00pm. The dead could not be identified.

In another accident 65-year-old Khodejia Khatun died when a truck knocked her down as she was crossing the road at Langolbandi in the afternoon.

Police recovered the bodies and sent those to hospital morgue.

Cloning doctor says first attempt fails

REUTERS, Chicago

A Kentucky fertility expert who announced last month that he had transferred a cloned human embryo into a woman said on Wednesday the pregnancy had failed, but promised to make more attempts.

"The next time that we announce anything ... we would have a pregnancy. That's another milestone," said Panos Zavos said in a telephone interview from his Lexington, Kentucky, clinic.

Leading scientists have expressed skepticism about Zavos' claims, and he has yet to produce any scientific evidence to support them.

Some scientists said Zavos, who has been saying since May 2002 that he was ready to create a human clone, was seeking publicity rather than advancing science.

Zavos would not detail what had gone wrong in the case of a 35-year-old woman whose egg was infused with her husband's DNA, but said only between 20 percent and 30 percent of in vitro fertilisation procedures produce pregnancies.

"The odds are not in his favor."

Twins born from 12-yr-old frozen embryos

REUTERS, Jerusalem

An Israeli woman has given birth to healthy twins from embryos fertilised 12 years earlier, in what doctors said Wednesday was the first successful implantation of embryos frozen for so long.

The twin boy and girl were born nine months ago, said Doctor Ariel Revel of the Hadassah Hospital's in-vitro-fertilisation unit. Their 39-year-old mother gave birth to twins 12 years ago from the same batch of frozen embryos.

"This is the longest recorded time," said Revel. He said according to medical literature, the previous record was a successful birth from an embryo frozen for seven years.

"The implication is that the length

of time that embryos are frozen is not crucial and probably there is no more damage happening during the many years they are frozen," Revel told Reuters.

He said medical teams may be posed with ethical questions in the future if much older women asked to be impregnated with embryos frozen decades before, he said.

"If it's 13 years, it could be more and maybe we could see patients coming back to us at an older age, and then it raises all sorts of ethical and social questions," he said.

In Britain, embryos are stored for five years, but that period can be extended for an additional five years if a doctor confirms the couple have significantly impaired fertility.

Obituary



Morad Ali, a Tagore song exponent, died of a cardiac arrest at his residence in the city on February 2 at the age of 62, says a press release.

Vice-principal of Bulbul Lalitkala Academy, he was also the founder of Drubatan, an organisation dedicated to Tagore song.

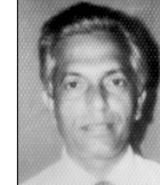
He is survived by his wife, one daughter and one son.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Galimpur village under Nawabganj thana.

His quirk will be held at his residence at 26/B Eastern Housing, Bijoynagar after Asr prayers today.

Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha, People's Theatre Association and Lok Natyadal have expressed deep shock at the death of Morad Ali.

Wali Ullah



Wali Ullah, an educationist and social worker of Comilla, died of a cardiac arrest at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Disease on January 31 at the age of 62, says a press release.

He was a former headmaster of Bangladesh Navy High School.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and two daughters.

Basir Uddin Ahmed

BSS, Dhaka

Basir Uddin Ahmed (Badsha Miah), president of Maksudpur union unit of BNP under Dohar upazila and a renowned social worker, died of old-age complications at his residence yesterday at the age of 91, family sources said.

He left behind his wife, nine sons and daughters. He was the maternal uncle of Communications Minister Nazmul Huda.

Ahmed was also the chairman of Maksudpur union for 20 years.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Shaheenpur village.

Rashida Khatun



Rashida Khatun, wife of late Haji Ahmed Hossain, died in the city on February 3 at the age of 82, says a press release.

She is survived by nine sons, four daughters and a number of grandchildren.

Her quirk will be held at her residence after Juma prayers today.

Dr Monzurul Haque

Dr Md Monzurul Haque, a junior specialist at ENT hospital of the Society for Assistance to Hearing Impaired Children (Sahic), died at his residence at Rauzan, Chittagong, on February 2, says a press release.

The officials and employees of the Sahic held a condolence meeting in his memory yesterday and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

897 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested a total of 897 people during their ongoing nationwide drive in last 24 hours till 6.00am yesterday.

They also recovered seven firearms and 14 rounds of bullets and filed four cases against eight people.

Smog-gobbling paint cleans city air

AFP, Paris

European scientists have devised a paint that soaks up nitrogen oxide gases emitted by vehicle exhausts, a pollution source that can cause smog and respiratory problems.

The substance, Ecopaint, will go on sale next month and, when painted on the side of buildings, should be able to soak up nitrogen oxides (NOx) for five years until its novel coating is exhausted, New Scientist says.

The secret lies in spherical nanoparticles of titanium dioxide and calcium carbonate that are just 30 nanometres (30 billionths of a metre) across, mixed into a silicon-based polymer, polysiloxane.

The particles are so tiny that the paint is clear, and pigment can be added to make the desired colour.

The polysiloxane is relatively porous, and lets the NOx gases diffuse through it, so that they adhere to the particles of titanium dioxide.

dioxide.

The particles absorb ultraviolet radiation from sunlight, and the energy from this converts NOx in a chemical reaction to nitric acid, which is neutralised by the calcium carbonate, an alkaline.

That produces "harmless quantities" of carbon dioxide, water and calcium nitrate, which wash away, the article, which is published in next Saturday's issue of New Scientist says.

The product was invented by a British company, Millennium Chemicals, under a European Union-funded programme to help improve air quality in cities.

An experiment conducted with a similar catalytic coating, which was painted on a stretch of road in Milan, Italy, in 2000, reduced levels of NOx at street level by 60 percent, and residents reported they found it noticeably easier to breathe.