

Another team to go on Everest expedition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four members of Bangladesh Everest Team-1 will receive training from the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute of India to climb the Everest, the highest peak in the world.

Mountain Dew, a soft drink, is sponsoring the training.

"In last 50 years, 1200 mountaineers had conquered the Everest but there was no Bangladeshi among them. We want to materialise our dream of conquering the Everest," said Inam ul Haq at a press conference in the city yesterday.

Inam ul Haq, organiser of Bangladesh Everest Team-1 and the first Bangladeshi who visited Antarctica, the coldest continent of the world, said, "One has to receive training on mountaineering before climbing the mountain peak like the Everest."

"Members of Bangladesh team had been tracking in the

Himalayas alongside their training on mountain climbing for last few years," said Sirajul Haq Sagar, one of the members of the team.

"The training at Himalayan Mountaineering Institute will help increase our skills and confidence to achieve the success," said Sadia Sultana Shampa, the only female member of Bangladesh team.

Shampa expressed her firm confidence that Bangladesh flag will be hoisted on the Everest in near future.

Musa Ibrahim and Shamsul Alam Babu, two other members of the team, also expressed their firm determination to conquer the Everest.

Another member Muntasir Mamun Imran, who had received training from Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, described his experience at the press conference.

UK to provide support for development

UNB, London

Queen Elizabeth has assured that the UK will provide all-out assistance and cooperation towards further socio-economic development of Bangladesh.

The assurance came when Bangladesh High Commissioner to

the United Kingdom AH Mofazzal Karim presented his credential to Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace on Thursday.

He also conveyed to the Queen the greetings of President Iajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the people of Bangladesh.

During a brief conversation, the Queen expressed her happiness over the progress Bangladesh has made in poverty alleviation, women empowerment and mass education, including female education.

She was particularly happy to learn that women were present in good numbers in the administration, army and police and that they are also working as pilots of transcontinental aircraft as well.

The Queen also expressed her happiness at the economic and social development so far achieved by Bangladesh.

Trader robbed of Tk 3.5 lakh in N'ganj

UNB, Narayanganj

A garment trader was robbed of Tk 3.50 lakh at Quyumpur in Fatulla on Thursday.

Witnesses said a gang of about 10 muggers also took away a licensed pistol and a cell phone from Monir Hossain, 40, after tying him up.

They also cut his cheek with a razor.

Monir went to Peer Quasem Re-rolling Mills at Quyumpur to realise his dues from the mill owner.

Body of housewife recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of a housewife who allegedly committed suicide at her Pallabi residence in the city on Thursday afternoon.

The body of Afroza Begum, 23, was found hanging from the ceiling.

Md Ali, husband of the victim, rented a house at 5/Kha Doaripara, Pallabi on February 24.

The following day, one Champa showed up claiming herself as the wife of Ali.

Sources said Afroza committed suicide out of frustration.

AUD (unnatural death) case was filed with Pallabi Police Station.

Ali is absconding since the incident.

JSD urges EC to ensure congenial atmosphere for Kushtia by-polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) yesterday urged the Election Commission (EC) to ensure congenial atmosphere for by-election at Kushtia-1 constituency scheduled to be held tomorrow.

In a joint statement, JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu and General Secretary Syed Jafar Sazzad alleged that the local administration has been working in favour of the ruling alliance candidate.

The JSD leaders urged the EC to take punitive action against those unscrupulous officials who have violated their neutrality.

They also called for ensuring peaceful atmosphere so that the voters can exercise their voting rights independently.

Odhikar, a human rights organisation, will monitor the by-election



PHOTO: STAR

Leaders of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad exchange views with the lawyers on resistance to violence against women at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday.

Increase subsidy to agriculture: Minister

UNB, Dhaka

Agriculture Minister MK Anwar yesterday urged reversal of the current negative flow of agriculture credits for a "second green revolution" in the country as a means to arrest poverty and hunger as per the millennium development goal.

"It has to be changed," he told UNB on his arrival at the Zia International Airport after attending FAO-sponsored two conferences in Bangkok that took stock of agriculture development in the Asia-Pacific region and in Bangladesh in particular.

He said recovery of loans gained momentum as compared to disbursement. According to official figure, the allocation for farm credits gradually came down as low as Tk 2,400 crore in the fiscal 2002-03 from its peak at Tk 3,150 crore in 1998-99.

The then government had substantially increased the allocation considering the flood damage in 1998. Before that the allocation averaged around Tk 2,000 crore.

"It's not possible to achieve the goal with the current trend of agriculture loans for last few years. We should also increase subsidy," said

the minister.

The current budget for the fiscal 2003-04 earmarked Tk 100 crore for agriculture subsidy.

He said the UN agency-sponsored meets attended by the development partners agreed on the urgency of subsidising the sector of least developed countries (LDCs) as the developed and developing countries both have been doing so.

Replying to a question, he said subsidy is not contradictory to the WTO rules as it allows developing countries to provide subsidy, to the tune of 10 per cent of government expenditure of a country, to agriculture.

The WTO rules allowed five percent subsidy for the developed countries while there was no binding for the LDCs.

Deviating from the set rules, many developed and developing countries provide much higher subsidies to their respective agriculture, with Japan giving the highest 200 percent. By contrast, Bangladesh provides less than half percent.

"Why our economy will not be able to afford substantial subsidy if we get 20 percent returns by investing 10 percent," argued the minister,

replying to another question if the small economy could afford the farm aid.

Turning to the conferences, he said the participants agreed that agriculture improvement and rural development are key to arresting poverty and hunger. So, the poor countries should subsidise their agriculture, he cited the conference recommendation as saying.

MK Anwar said the development partners assured Bangladesh of supporting its initiative under Agriculture Sector Review (ASR), a stocktaking effort by the government to reappraise the sector's development so far and mapping out future action plan.

2 former activists of Janajuddha killed

UNB, Chuadanga

Two former activists of extremist 'Janajuddha' group were killed by its armed cadres at Purondapur in Jiban Nagar upazila on Thursday night.

Police said the outlaws picked up Biplob, 32, and Iqbal, 30, from their houses at dead of night and took them to a nearby field at Purondapur.

They first shot the two and then slaughtered them.

Police recovered the bodies yesterday morning.

Biplob of Elengi and Iqbal of Gurpara village were earlier expelled from the outlawed Janajuddha for their anti-party activities, police sources said.

Obituary



Sultan Uddin Ahmed, former deputy director of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, died of a cardiac arrest at Bangladesh Medical College and Hospital yesterday at the age of 68, says a press release.

He is survived by one son, two daughters and a number of grandchildren.

His kulkhwani will be held at House-15 (new), Road-15 (new), Dhanmondi after Maghrib prayers on Monday. Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the qul.

Attack on Hasina's motorcade condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Joybangla Sangskritik Oikyajote (JSO) has condemned the attack by the BNP activists on the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina's motorcade at Charkawa ferry ghat on the opposite end of Barisal town on Thursday.

JSO President Salauddin Badal and General Secretary Sheikh Abdul Quader, in a joint statement, demanded immediate trial of the culprits responsible for the attack, said a press release.

They said the government on one hand urges the main opposition to join the parliament while on the other hand it launched attack on the opposition leaders and workers.

The JSO leaders urged all members of the jote across the country to observe today's dawn to dusk hartal called by the AL peacefully.

They also called upon the countrymen to come forward to establish peace and democracy by ousting the alliance government through mass movement.

Epilepsy is totally curable

Experts tell training course

UNB, Dhaka

Epilepsy is a disease, not a curse and it is totally curable in treatment, said the experts yesterday, revealing that some six to eight lakh people have been suffering from the disease in the country.

The experts also said many people have no idea about the disease and believe that epilepsy has no treatment, so they take recourse to traditional healers.

The diagnosis of epilepsy is not difficult if proper history is taken from the patients and close observers, they told a training course for doctors on epilepsy at Brac Centre Inn in Mohakhali yesterday.

Dhaka West Chapter of JCI Bangladesh, the Commission of Asian and Oceanian Affairs (CAOA), Epilepsy Association of Bangladesh (EAB) and Neurology Foundation, Dhaka, jointly organised the course.

Experts from Bangladesh, India, Japan, Singapore and

Malaysia delivered lectures on various aspects of the disease.

"The patient often is embarrassed to admit the disease and as a consequence they are treated like outcasts and this has social repercussions. With proper treatment and medication a patient is able to lead a normal life," said Prof MA Mannan, President of Neurology Foundation, Dhaka.

He said epilepsy accounts for one percent of the world's burden of disease, the same as breast cancer in women or lung cancer in man. It is totally curable after three to four years of continuous treatment, Prof Mannan added.


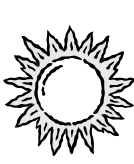
Director of the Indian Epilepsy Centre Dr Satish Jain said 0.5 to 1 percent people are suffering from the disease in India and the scenario is believed to be the same in Bangladesh.

Prof. CT Tan of University of Malaya said people have to be well aware about the disease for better treatment.



PHOTO: STAR

A boat procession was held on the Padma river at Munshiganj yesterday to raise awareness about protection of Jatka fish. State Minister for Health Mizanur Rahman Sinha led the procession.



WEATHER
T O D A Y

No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country in the next 24 hours till 6.00pm today.

Light fog may occur over the river basins in the early morning, Met office said, predicting that night temperature would remain nearly unchanged.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 33.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Chuadanga and the lowest of 15.2 degree at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6.00pm today and rises at 6:22 am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.6	18.5	64	58
Chittagong	29.5	19.6	79	71
Rajshahi	32.2	16.8	77	62
Khulna	31.8	18.2	73	48
Barisal	31.2	17.4	89	72
Sylhet	31.6	18.0	70	58
Cox's Bazar	30.0	19.6	81	83



DHAKA
T O D A Y

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'Fatal Attraction' (1987). Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Meeting

The inaugural session of the 4th general meeting of South Asia Federation of Freight Forwarders Association will be held with Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury as chief guest. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 7.00pm.

DHAKA
T O M O R R O W

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen a British film titled 'Life Less Ordinary' (1997). Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Cultural function

On the occasion of the celebration of '12 Years Service

To Humanity' by the Society for Assistance to Hearing Impaired Children (SAHIC), a cultural function will be held. Venue: NCHSC premises, Mohakhali. Time: 7.00pm.

Roundtable

The Centre for National Culture (CNC) organises a roundtable titled 'Practice of human rights in the centre of civilisation' with Education Minister Dr M Osman Farruk as chief guest. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10.00am.

Launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of a book titled 'Voices from Bangladesh' by Danish Consultant Hanne Damtoft Johansen and Tanvir Mokammel of Bangladesh. Venue: CIRDAP auditorium, Tophkana Road. Time: 3.00pm.

Discussion

A discussion on the 'Role of Bangabir General Osmani in establishing the rule of parliamentary democracy and human rights' will be held with