

First ever wedding festival opens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day wedding festival, the first of its kind, began at the Spectra Convention Centre in Gulshan in the city yesterday.

Eminent social reformist Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed inaugurated the unique festival accompanied by celebrity film actress Kabari Sarwar. A cultural programme followed the inauguration.

Khan M Aftab Uddin, chairman of Spectra Group and celebrities Abdun Noor Tushar and Munira Memi were present.

The Spectra Group organised the highly decorated festival in which 19 different establishments including matchmakers, jewellers, saree-makers, wedding card printers, flower sellers and banks participated.

Thousands of people attended

the festival started at 3:00pm, enjoying specially decorated stalls displaying their products.

On the occasion, Khan Brothers, an exclusive saree manufacturing house, displayed exquisite and best design of bridal silk, katan and schiffon sarees offering a 20 percent discount on the products.

Other participants with display stalls include New Joroa House, Graphical Eco, Ekeban, Dreamland, Dulhan, Dressidel, Rado, Spectra Tours and Travels and Jaikon.

Sponsor of the event, the HSBC, a Hong Kong-Shanghai based bank, has initiated a personal instalment loan scheme for their clients as support for wedding and related issues.

The festival continues today from morning until 6:00 in the afternoon.



Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan sees Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong off at Zia International Airport in the city yesterday.

Justice Sobhan, ASK win Jahanara Imam Memorial Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice KM Sobhan and Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), a human rights organisation, have been selected for Jahanara Imam Memorial Award-2004.

The Ekattarer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee will present the awards to the winners at a ceremony today on the occasion of 10th death anniversary of Jahanara Imam.

The ceremony will be held at the Women's Voluntary Association auditorium in the city at 4:00pm.

Human rights activist advocate Sultana Kamal will deliver the Jahanara Imam Memorial Lecture at the programme.

President of the advisory board of Nirmul Committee Prof. Kabir Chowdhury will preside over the programme. Prof. Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, Prof. Muntasir Mamun, Prof. Ajoy Roy, ASK Director Dr Hamida Hossain and journalist and writer Sharier Kabir will take part in the discussion.

The Nirmul Committee will also place wreaths at the memorial to Jahanara Imam at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur at 8:00am today to mark her death anniversary.

Over 1,700 held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,711 people, including four listed criminals, on various charges during their ongoing countrywide drive in last 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday.

They also recovered four firearms and 106 rounds of bullet and filed four cases against four people under the Arms Act, said a police headquarters release.



Manzur Elahi, Raquibuddin elected DUAA president, secy gen

Syed Manzur Elahi, former advisor of caretaker governments and chairman of Apex group, and Raquibuddin Ahmed, founder secretary general of Salimullah Hall Alumni Association, have been elected president and secretary general of Dhaka University Alumni Association (DUAA) for 2004-06, says a press release.

The 29-member executive committee was elected unanimously at the annual general meeting of the association on Thursday. Outgoing President of the association AMA Muhith presided over the meeting.

AF Shahed Ali, Prof. Farida Banu and Omor Faruk Bhuiyan were elected vice presidents and Prof. Nurul Islam, provost of Salimullah Hall, was made treasurer.

The executive committee members include former finance minister AMA Muhith, former ILO director Abdullah Hossain Siddiqi, former advisor of caretaker government Abdul Mueed Chowdhury, agriculture secretary ASM Abdul Halim, shipping secretary Ismail Jobiulla, DU Treasurer Prof. Rashidul Hasan, FEMA Chairperson Munira Khan and Vice-Chancellor of Stamford University Dr Ferroz Hannan.

Other members are Prof. Monwara Begum, Selina Khaleque, Shamsad Begum, Kazi Gulshan Nahar, Ferdous Ara, Mohammed Ali, Asaf Khan, Abbasuddin Ahmed, AKD Deen Mohammed Khan, Md Mahbubuzzaman, Abul Kashem Chowdhury, Dewan Rashidul Hasan, Ziaur Rahman Khan and Md Sadequ Alam Khan.

AL concerned over state of economy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A joint meeting of two sub-committees of the main opposition Awami League yesterday discussed in details the pros and cons of the national budget for 2004-05 fiscal and expressed deep concern at the current state of economy in the country.

The meeting laid emphasis on the protection of people's interests and local industries stopping harassment of VAT (Value Added Tax) payers, introducing transpar-

ent taxation system, and non-issuance of SROs (statutory regulatory orders) for introducing new taxes.

Shah A M S Kibria, former finance minister, presided over the joint meeting of the sub-committees on industries and commerce, and finance and planning.

Faruk Khan MP, Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, Ali Ashraf, Mustafa Kamal, Mohammad Tajul Islam, Prof Ashraf uddin and Liton Shaha were present at the meeting.



Bikalpa Dhara candidate for Dhaka-10 by-polls Major (ret.) Abdul Mannan speaks during a campaign at Siddeswari yesterday while former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury looks on.

Youth stabbed to death in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A youth was stabbed to death by unknown assailants at Srikol village in Ataikula, Pabna, on Thursday night.

Police recovered the body of Amjad Hossain, 26, son of Moyenuddin Shiekh, yesterday morning and sent it to Pabna General Hospital for autopsy.

Amjad was sitting in a chair at a shop near his house when a gang of about 25 armed criminals appeared there and took him to a place nearby where they stabbed him indiscriminately, police said.

The gang also slaughtered him to confirm his death.

Samsul Ali Sheikh, brother of Amjad, filed a murder case with Ataikula thana yesterday.

Businessman killed in Sylhet road accident

UNB, Sylhet

A businessman was killed and four other people were injured in a road accident on Sylhet-Dhaka highway near Nazirbazar in Sylhet on Thursday night.

The dead was identified as Arfan Ali alias Lal Miah, 65, of village Saru Ala in Bishwanath upazila.

Witnesses said the accident took place at about 9:00pm when the vehicle in which Arfan and four others were travelling hit a standing truck.

MA Hashem new NSUF chairman



MA Hashem MP, chairman of Partex Group, has been elected chairman of the board of governors of the North South University Foundation (NSUF) and the managing committee of the university, says a press release.

A founder life member of the foundation, he was elected chairman unanimously at the annual general meeting of the foundation on Thursday.

The NSUF is the founder of the North South University, the first private university in Bangladesh.



Information Minister M Shamsul Islam inaugurated the Sree Sree Shri Temple at Nabaganj in the city yesterday.

WFWP celebrates founding anniversary

celebrates founding anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), Bangladesh celebrated its 10th founding anniversary yesterday.

The main aim of the federation is to strengthen family by arranging parents' day and holding seminar and other activities.

The federation organised a discussion at a city hotel to celebrate the day.

Speaking as main speaker at the discussion, Vice-Chancellor of South East University Prof M Shamsheer Ali said there are some preconceived notions both at home and abroad about women that they will perform only household works.

"But that is not true, there is no such work that women cannot do," he added.

Shamsheer said women should be empowered through education including moral education that comes from family.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Khulna and Barisal divisions in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

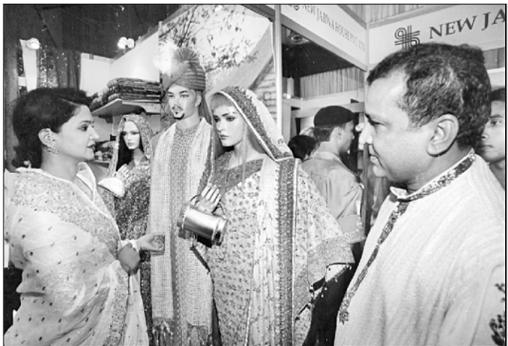
Moderately heavy falls is also likely at places over Chittagong, Sylhet, Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions, Met Office said, adding that slight rise in day temperature is expected over the country.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 36 degree Celsius was recorded at Satkhira and the lowest of 22.5 degrees at Ishwardi.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:14am 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	31.4	23.0	77	80
Chittagong	27.8	24.0	82	82
Rajshahi	34.5	23.0	92	72
Khulna	34.5	28.3	83	77



Dance artiste Shamim Ara Nipa visits a stall at the wedding festival at the Spectra Convention Centre in the city yesterday.

Raise awareness about drug abuse: PM

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called for raising awareness at all spheres of national life about drug abuse and aggression of narcotics.

The government has already taken steps to ensure speedy trial of the crimes and offences related to drug abuse, she said, adding that stringent laws were enacted to deal with this social problem.

The prime minister urged all to extend cooperation in preventing the aggression of drug.

In a message on the eve of International Anti-Narcotics Day, Khaleda also asked the government and non-government organi-

sations to work unitedly to check drug abuse and drug trafficking.

Describing drug abuse and drug trafficking as a global problem, she said people's spontaneous participation in the anti-drug movement as well as the efforts at national, regional and international levels would greatly help free the society from the evils of drug abuse.

The prime minister termed the drug abuse a man-made physical, mental, economic and social problem hindering the process of human development.

"We must work out an effective plan immediately against drug abuse and drug trafficking to protect our present and future generations," she said.

DHAKA TODAY

Drama
Time: 2.30pm.
Brittapot, a theatre group, will stage a drama titled 'Lashghar' (morgue) directed by Mir Mehboob Alam. Venue: Mohila Samity Auditorium, New Bailey Road.

Film show
The Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'The Man Without a Face'. Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Symposium
United Nations Association of Bangladesh organises a symposium to commemorate the 58th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter. Venue: Scouts Bhaban, Kakrail. Time: 5.30pm.

Conference
Stamford University, Bangladesh organises an international conference on 'The teaching of English in Bangladesh: Problems, solutions and prospects'. Venue: Siddeswari campus of the university. Time: 9.00am.

Dutch-Bangla-Scholarship
The scholarship awarding ceremony of Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation will be held with Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman as chief guest. Venue: Osmani Memorial Auditorium. Time: 11.00am.

Destiny conference
The opening session of the business conference and award ceremony of Destiny-2000 Ltd will be held with Law Minister Moudud Ahmed as chief guest. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre, Sher-e-Banglanagar. Time: 10.00am.

Closing ceremony
The closing ceremony of Spectra's Monsoon Wedding Festival will be held. Venue: Spectra Convention Centre, Gulshan-1. Time: 6.00pm.

IFB discussion
Islamic Foundation, Bangladesh (IFB) will hold a discussion on 'Islam in solving drug addiction' with State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharruf Hossain Shahjahan as chief guest. Venue: Imam Training Academy, Uttara.

ASK discussion
Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) organises a discussion on 'Psychological counseling and its need in Asian countries including Bangladesh'. Venue: Bangladesh Institute of Management, Sobhanbagh. Time: 10.00am.

Debate workshop
Bangladesh Debate Federation organises a national workshop for the promotion of debate. Venue: IBA Auditorium of Dhaka University. Time: 9.30am.

Workshop
A workshop on 'Bangladesh: Preparation of the POPs National Implementation Plan under the Stockholm Convention' will be held with Environment and Forest Minister Tariqul Islam as chief guest. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 9.30am.

Transport workshop
The opening session of a workshop on 'Strategic Transport Plan and Mass Transit' will be held with Communications Minister Nazmul Huda as chief guest. Venue: Seminar room of LGED Bhaban, Agargaon. Time: 9.30am.

Discussion on torture
Odhikar, a human rights organisation, will hold a discussion on torture on the occasion of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Venue: House-35, Road-117, Gulshan. Time: 4.30pm.

Roundtable on torture
Global Network for the Prevention of Torture organises a roundtable on 'Freedom from Torture'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3.00pm.

Rotary Dhaka Central
Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1.30pm.

Rotary North West
Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka North West will be held. Venue: Gourmet Garden, House-24/A, Road-27 (old), Dhanmondi. Time: 7.30pm.