

'Myanmar to uphold democracy road map'

9,000 prisoners to walk free

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar vowed yesterday to keep to its promised "road map" to democracy as Southeast Asian officials here cautiously welcomed the military regime's planned release of thousands of prisoners as a sign of progress.

Myanmar Foreign Minister Nyan Win told a briefing with the world's media here for a Southeast Asian leaders' summit that last month's dismissal of premier Khin Nyunt would not affect the regime's reform plans.

The former premier had outlined the "road map" in August 2003 in response to international condemnation of the detention of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the lack of democratic reforms in the isolated regime.

It had been feared that his dismissal and replacement by military hardliner Soe Win would disrupt the plan, which is supposed to end with multi-party elections but has been dismissed as a sham by the United States and Europe.

But Nyan Win stressed the leadership change would not affect the country's foreign and domestic

policy.

"The answer is clear, there will be no changes," he said. "Our objectives and priorities will remain the same as before."

"Individuals may come and go, but national policies will remain the same. The changes in the cabinet are but normal and mean that the torch has been passed on to a new generation," he said.

"We will continue to work ceaselessly to ensure the success of the seven-step road map," he said.

Noting that Khin Nyunt had been credited with the reform plan, he said the commitment to move towards democracy was a "collective decision" by the ruling junta.

Concern about the slow pace of reform in Myanmar was expected to be a key topic for leaders at the 10-nation Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit starting Monday although there was little prospect of public censure because of the body's policy of non-interference in the affairs of member nations.

Asean leaders will be joined at the summit by Australia, China, India, South Korea, Japan and New Zealand.

Myanmar's Prime Minister Soe Win arrives in Laos today and is expected to brief his fellow leaders on developments, including the junta's decision to release 9,000 prisoners, among them political detainees.

The 9,248 Myanmar jail inmates promised freedom under the military regime's mass release programme was set to be out by last night but with only 40 political dissidents among them, according to the opposition and a senior prison official.

"Everybody that we said would be released will be released tonight," Zaw Win, prison department director-general, told reporters at the gates of Insein jail on the outskirts of Yangon.

"We have already released the first batch of 3,937."

He said inmates were being released from 41 prisons nationwide although reporters at Insein, the country's biggest jail, saw only about 1,000 released there on Friday.

The regime said through state media Thursday it would free 5,311 prisoners on top of the 3,937 planned releases announced a week earlier, taking the total to 9,248.

Ban on night viewing of Taj goes

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Next time, you visit Agra, you will be treated to the splendour of the Taj Mahal, the 17th century monument of love of a Mughal emperor for his wife, in a moonlit night.

India's Supreme Court on Thursday lifted a 20-year ban on night viewing of the Taj Mahal with some conditions.

A three-member bench of the apex court said the permission to watch the monument on moonlit nights is initially being given for three months.

The court said only 400 people would be allowed to visit the Taj Mahal between 2030 hours and 0030 hours every night five times a month the full moon night and two nights prior and two nights after the full moon night.

The court made it clear that none, however high he might be, would be permitted to go to the red sand stone platform for night-viewing of the Taj without purchasing a ticket.

Even the VIPs would have to get off from their cars 500 metres away from the Taj and battery-operated vehicles alone would be to carry viewers who would be allowed to carry only still camera and binoculars after a thorough check, said the bench comprising Justice Ruma Pal, Justice S B Sinha and Justice S H Kapadia.



Nepalese political activists chant slogans during a demonstration in Kathmandu yesterday. The demonstrators gathered to demand the restoration of democracy and the sovereign rights of the people.

Musharraf to seek Palestine, Kashmir solutions on tour

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf said he would press for progress in key conflicts affecting Muslims as he left yesterday for talks with Western leaders as well as his first visit to Latin America.

He will meet with US President George W. Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and French President Jacques Chirac on the second leg of his 12-day tour, the first part of which will see him visit Brazil, Argentina and Mexico.

Musharraf's encounter with Bush, expected on December 4, is his first since the US leader's re-election.

"The main subject that I would like to discuss when I meet President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Chirac... is (that) the resolution of political disputes must start," he said before leaving for Brasilia.

"I think both the Palestinian dispute and the Kashmir dispute are absolutely ripe for resolution and we have to resolve them."

"That will bring considerable stability into the world."

Musharraf said he advocated a strategy under which the Muslim

world should encourage moderation while the West must focus on settling political disputes affecting Muslims.

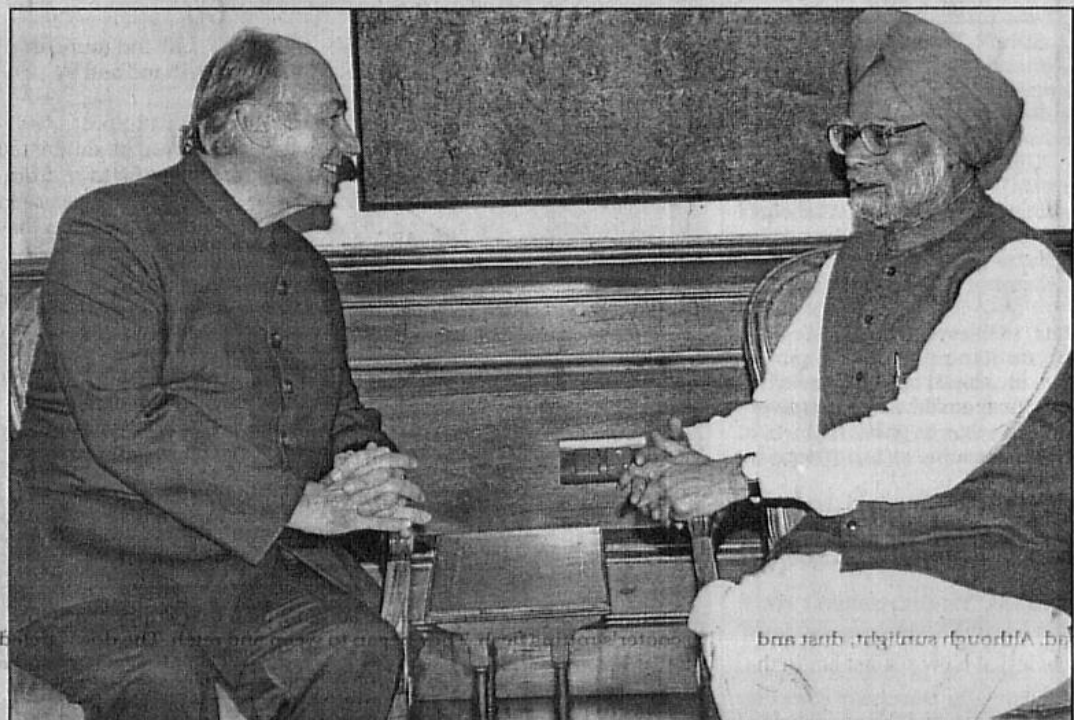
Musharraf, an army general who grabbed power in a bloodless coup five years ago, has earned Western acclaim because of Pakistan's pivotal role in the fight against terrorism as a key ally of the United States.

Pakistan has deployed more than 70,000 troops on the border with Afghanistan and has captured some 600 Al-Qaeda figures including several key operatives, though the network's leader Osama bin Laden remains at large.

Musharraf last month publicly floated alternative ways to deal with the decades-old dispute over Kashmir, which is divided between Pakistan and its south Asian neighbour India.

Since Bush's re-election and the death of Yasser Arafat he has highlighted the Palestinian issue, saying last week that it must be a top priority for the US if terrorism is to be defeated.

Meanwhile, the three-nation visit to Latin America is the first by a Pakistani leader and Musharraf told reporters he would seek to boost commercial ties with the region.



Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (R) speaks with the Prince Aga Khan (L) during a meeting in New Delhi Thursday. The Aga Khan is in India on an eight day visit during which he will present the Aga Khan award for architecture.

Curfew clamped on Lankan town

Tigers honour war dead

AFP, Colombo

A curfew was slapped on north-eastern Sri Lanka yesterday as pro-government activists clashed with Tiger rebels commemorating 17,800 comrades killed fighting government forces, police said.

Trincomalee, 260km north-east of the capital Colombo, was put under indefinite curfew after police fired teargas to disperse a mob by the Marxist JVP, or People's Liberation Front, an official said.

"They wanted to march to an area where Tiger sympathisers were having a meeting," a senior officer said when contacted by telephone. "We dispersed the mob and declared curfew to prevent any violence."

The police move came as the defence ministry accused the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

(LTTE) of breaking an Oslo-arranged truce and opening fire at security forces at Veppankulam, in the island's north, on Thursday.

"The gunfire missed the target and hit a bus injuring two passengers," the ministry said. It also accused the Tigers of raising their flag in areas held by government forces in violation of the truce.

The LTTE denied opening fire and in turn accused the military of shooting civilians, injuring two. Similar clashes have erupted across the north and east since the LTTE launched the "heroes' week" remembrance last Sunday.

"The LTTE vehemently condemns these types of activities of the Sri Lanka armed forces that may tend to create a totally undesirable confrontational situation," the group warned, referring to the skirmishes.

Man breaks into school dormitory, knifes 8 to death in China

AP, Beijing

A man with a knife broke into a high school dormitory and killed eight students in the deadliest of a series of knife attacks at Chinese schools in recent months, the government said yesterday.

Police were searching for the man following the attack late Thursday at the No. 2 High School in the city of Ruzhou, which also injured four students, the official Xinhua News Agency said. It didn't give a possible motive but said police believe they know the man's appearance.

The attacker broke into the dormitory at 11:45 p.m. and "chopped eight people to death and four to injury," Xinhua said. It had said earlier that the attack in central China took place Friday morning.

Iran fully committed to nuke freeze

REUTERS, Vienna

Iran will honor its pledge to the EU to freeze its uranium enrichment program, which could be used to make nuclear weapons, Tehran's chief delegate to the United Nations nuclear watchdog said yesterday.

"We are fully committed to a suspension of enrichment and related activities," Hossein Mousavian told Reuters on the second day of an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board meeting devoted to Iran and South Korea's nuclear violations.

Enrichment is a process of purifying uranium for use as fuel in power plants or, when very highly enriched, in weapons.

But the ink on the hard-won EU-Iran suspension accord - which Tehran accepted to escape a report to the UN Security Council and possibly economic sanctions - was barely dry when Tehran threatened to wreck it with a demand to exempt some 20 enrichment centrifuges for

research purposes.

Mousavian said the EU deal did not cover centrifuge research and development but Iran would not use the exemption to enrich uranium. "They (the EU) are concerned it would be used for enrichment... Definitely we are not going to use it for enrichment."

Western diplomats in Vienna said the request to amend the terms of the freeze infuriated not only the European Union but also Washington, which despite Iranian denials has long accused Tehran of trying to build an atomic bomb.

IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei told reporters he hoped Tehran would rethink the idea once there was an agreement on the text of a draft IAEA resolution on Iran's nuclear programme.

Some Western diplomats said they thought Iran was using the requested exemption as a bargaining chip, and would drop it if the final resolution was soft enough on Tehran.

UN panel urges Britain to publish findings of Iraq torture probes

AFP, United Nations

The UN's anti-torture panel has urged Britain to publish the findings of investigations into alleged cases of torture by British forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to a report obtained by AFP Thursday.

Britain should also "as a matter of urgency" review "potentially indefinite detention" of foreign suspects allowed under the 2001 Anti-Terrorism Act, the UN Committee against Torture said in draft conclusions on Britain's respect for international anti-torture rules.

It called on London to report back on those issues and other concerns within a year.

British officials told the Committee during a public hearing last week that a total of 17 cases involving allegations of torture and

mistreatment by soldiers in Iraq had been investigated.

Eight cases were dropped after no crime was established while eight others are still being investigated or evaluated and one has been put for trial.

Britain "should make public the result of all investigations into alleged conduct by its forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, particularly those that reveal possible actions in breach of the Convention," the panel said.

It also called for an "independent review of the conclusions where appropriate."

Britain has said that courts-martial would be public but declined to give details to the panel of allegations which were unfounded, while other cases were still subject to legal proceedings.

Mystic crocodiles draw thousands of devotees

AFP, Karachi

Crocodiles with huge teeth-filled mouths lie in the sand and slap their snouts on the edge of sulfur springs, greeting worshippers who journey to the Mango Pir shrine on the outskirts of Pakistan's volatile port city Karachi.

It is one of thousands of Sufi shrines in this Islamic republic, where millions of devotees set out on pilgrimages, from all corners of the country, to pray, chant, dance, sing, occasionally smoke hashish, and seek healing.

Sufism is the most artistic, liberal strand of Islam, embracing song and dance as expressions of love for God.

The 700-year old Mango Pir shrine, 25 kilometers (15 miles) southwest of the city centre, is believed to be the resting place of a Hindu bandit who tried to rob the caravan of Baba Farid Shakar Ganj, a 13th century Sufi saint.

According to local legend, Mango Pir converted from Hinduism to Islam when he realised his sin, and in reward Ganj

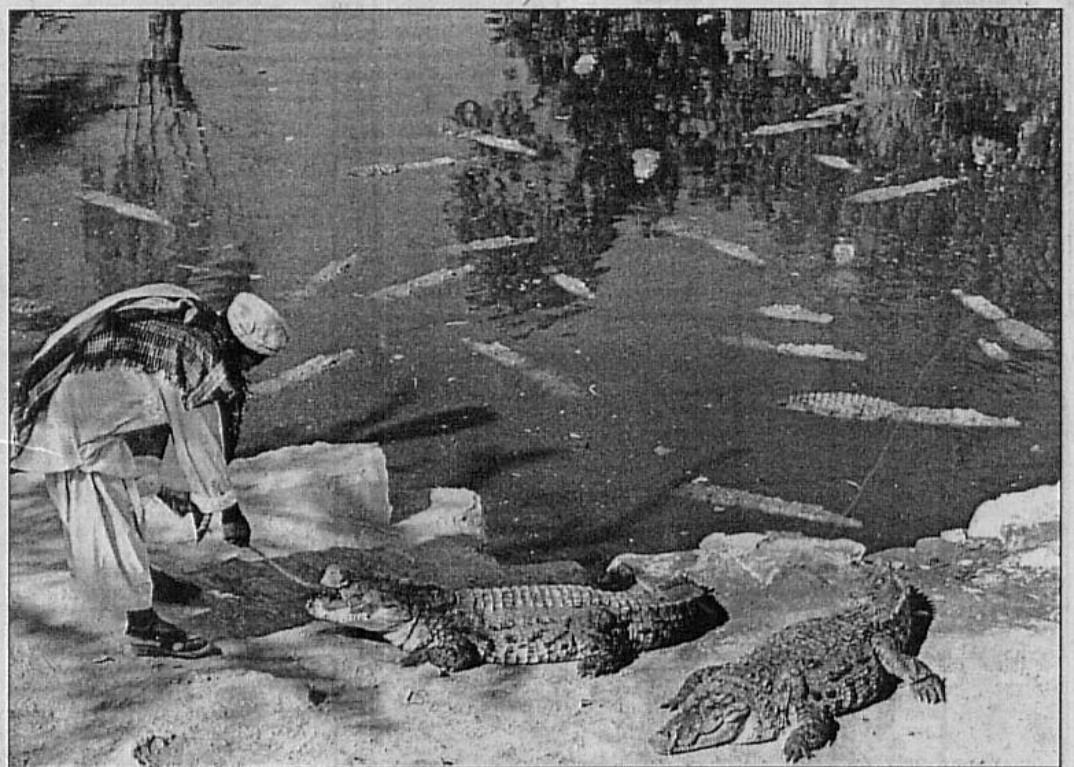
gave him lice which grew into crocodiles.

The compound surrounding his shrine swarms with some 150 crocodiles. Devotees regard the deadly reptiles as sacred, and potential fulfillers of their most fervent wishes.

Pilgrims journeying to Mango Pir make offerings not to the buried there, but to the scaly creatures. "We have been serving these crocodiles for seven centuries and many generations. My forefathers were the followers of Mango Pir, who assigned them this task," Mohammad Sajjad Barfat, caretaker of the crocodile's sanctuary, told AFP.

Wildlife experts are unsure how the crocodiles came to be there. Some believe they may be traced back to a time when the area was a swamp.

"The area may have been a wetland some time in history and that could be the only explanation of their presence at such an isolated place," said World Conservation Union (IUCN) researcher Tahir Qureshi.



This picture taken on November 11 shows a Pakistani crocodile keeper (L) feeding a crocodile at the 700-year old Mango Pir Shrine, some 25km southwest of Karachi. Crocodiles with huge teeth-filled mouths lie in the sand and slap their snouts on the edge of sulfur springs, greeting worshippers who journey to the Mango Pir shrine on the outskirts of the southern Pakistani city.

বাংলাদেশ উন্মুক্ত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

গাজীপুর-১৭০৫

ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সার্টিফিকেট-ইন-পিসিকালচার এন্ড ফিস প্রসেসিং (সিপিএফপি)

প্রোগ্রাম জানুয়ারী-জুন, ২০০৫ (০৫১) টার্ম

বাংলাদেশ উন্মুক্ত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় (বাউবি) এর ক্রু অর এগ্রিকালচার এন্ড রুর্যাল ডিভেলপমেন্ট পরিচালিত সার্টিফিকেট-ইন-পিসিকালচার এন্ড ফিস প্রসেসিং (সিপিএফপি) প্রোগ্রামে সীমিত সংখ্যক আসনে ২০০৫ সালের জানুয়ারি-জুন (০৫১) টার্মে ভর্তি ইচ্ছুক প্রার্থীদের নিকট থেকে নির্ধারিত ফরমে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। আগামী ০১/১২/২০০৪ থেকে ২৩/১২/২০০৪ তারিখ পর্যন্ত বাউবি নির্ধারিত জনতা ব্যাংকের শাখায় ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকা জমা দিয়ে নিম্নলিখিত আঞ্চলিক কেন্দ্র ও কো-অর্ডিনেটিং অফিস থেকে শনিবার ও রবিবার ব্যতীত সপ্তাহের অন্যান্য দিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে শিক্ষার্থী নির্দেশিকা ও ভর্তি ফরম সংগ্রহ এবং জমা দেয়া যাবে। ব্যাংকের ঠিকানা সংশ্লিষ্ট আঞ্চলিক কেন্দ্র/কো-অর্ডিনেটিং অফিস হতে পাওয়া যাবে।

আঞ্চলিক কেন্দ্রের ঠিকানা	স্থানীয় কেন্দ্রের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ডিউটোরিয়াল কেন্দ্রের নাম
আঞ্চলিক কেন্দ্র--চট্টগ্রাম সিআরবি রোড, স্টেডিয়াম সংলগ্ন, চট্টগ্রাম। ফোন-০৩১/৬১৯৬৩৩	কক্সবাজার কো-অর্ডিনেটিং অফিস, সার্টিফাইড হাউস রোড (২য় তলা), জেলা পরিষদ ভবন, কক্সবাজার।	বাংলাদেশ মাংস গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট, সামুদ্রিক মাংস ও প্রযুক্তি কেন্দ্র, কক্সবাজার।
আঞ্চলিক কেন্দ্র--বগুড়া বিখরোড, বানানী, বগুড়া-৫৮০০ ফোন-০৫১/৭২৯৯৪		যুব প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র, রেলগেট, পুরাতন বগুড়া, বগুড়া।
আঞ্চলিক কেন্দ্র--কুমিল্লা ঢাকা-চট্টগ্রাম ট্রাঙ্ক রোড, নোয়াপাড়া, দুর্গাপুর, কুমিল্লা। ফোন-০৮১/৭৭৫৫৭	লক্ষীপুর কো-অর্ডিনেটিং অফিস, উপজেলা পরিষদ ভবন, লক্ষীপুর। ফেনী কো-অর্ডিনেটিং অফিস, রাজাকারী নীঘির পশ্চিম পাড়, ফেনী	ক) মৎস্য প্রজনন ও প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র, রায়পুর, লক্ষীপুর। খ) যুব প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র, ফুলপাড়া, ফেনী।
আঞ্চলিক কেন্দ্র--যশোর উপ-শহর, যশোর। ফোন-০৮২১/৭৩২৫০		যুব প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র, কিসমত, নওয়াপাড়া, মাছড়া রোড, যশোর।

<input type="checkbox"/> ভর্তির নূনতম যোগ্যতা	: এসএসসি বা সমমানের পরীক্ষার উত্তীর্ণ।
<input type="checkbox"/> আবেদনপত্র সংগ্রহ ও জমা দেয়ার তারিখ	: ০১/১২/২০০৪ বৃহস্পতিবার হতে ০২/০১/২০০৫ বৃহস্পতিবার পর্যন্ত।
<input type="checkbox"/> মনোনীত প্রার্থীদের তালিকা প্রকাশ	: ০৩/০১/২০০৫ সোমবার।
<input type="checkbox"/> মূল তালিকা হতে ভর্তির তারিখ	: ০৫/০১/২০০৫ বুধবার হতে ১৭/০১/২০০৫ সোমবার পর্যন্ত।
<input type="checkbox"/> অপেক্ষমান তালিকা হতে ভর্তির তারিখ	: ২৪/০১/২০০৫ সোমবার হতে ২৭/০১/২০০৫ বৃহস্পতিবার পর্যন্ত।
<input type="checkbox"/> ডিউটোরিয়াল ক্লাস শুরু	: ২৮/০১/২০০৫ শুক্রবার।

সিপিএফপি একটি ছয় মাস মেয়াদী প্রোগ্রাম। এই প্রোগ্রামের মাধ্যমে বেকার যুবক ও উদ্যোগী মৎস্য চাষীরা জান অর্জনের মাধ্যমে মৎস্য চাষ সংক্রান্ত সমস্যার যে কোন সমাধান বুঝে পাবেন। এ প্রোগ্রামটি মৎস্য চাষ বিষয়ক যাবতীয় বিষয়ের ওপর জান লাভের পাশাপাশি দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধির মাধ্যমে বেকার যুবক ও যুব মহিলাদের যাবতীয় হতে সহায়তা করবে। প্রতিটি কেন্দ্রে সর্বোচ্চ ৫০ (পঞ্চাশ) জন করে শিক্ষার্থী ভর্তি করা হবে।

বিঃ দ্রঃ ডাকযোগে ভর্তি সংক্রান্ত কোন পত্র প্রেরণ করা হবে না। মনোনীত শিক্ষার্থীকে ব্যক্তিগত ভাবে উপস্থিতি হয়ে ভর্তি হতে হবে।

মোঃ আখতার হোসেন

পরিচালক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)

স্টুডেন্ট সার্ভিসেস বিভাগ (পশ্চিমাঞ্চল)

বাংলাদেশ উন্মুক্ত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

জিডি-৭৩৩

সিপিএফপি একটি ছয় মাস মেয়াদী প্রোগ্রাম। এই প্রোগ্রামের মাধ্যমে বেকার যুবক ও উদ্যোগী মৎস্য চাষীরা জ্ঞান অর্জনের মাধ্যমে মৎস্য চাষ সংক্রান্ত সমস্যা যে কোন সমাধান বুঝে পাবেন। এ প্রোগ্রামটি মৎস্য চাষ বিষয়ক ব্যবহারীয় বিষয়ের ওপর জ্ঞান লাভের পাশাপাশি দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধির মাধ্যমে বেকার যুবক ও যুব মহিলাদের স্বাবলম্বী হতে সহায়তা করবে। প্রতিটি কেন্দ্রে সর্বোচ্চ ৫০ (পঞ্চাশ) জন করে শিক্ষার্থী ভর্তি করা হবে।

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মোঃ আশতার হোসেন

পরিচালক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)

স্টুডেন্ট সাপোর্ট সার্ভিসেস বিভাগ (পশ্চিমাঞ্চল)

বাংলাদেশ উন্মুক্ত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

জিডি-৭৩৩