



Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka removes a poster from a wall while he was visiting different areas of the city yesterday to see the progress of the DCC's clean-up drive.

South Asia stares at looming water crisis

REUTERS, New Delhi

It has been 10 years since farmer Bhairu Singh saw water in the well on his rocky patch of land in western India.

Experts say things aren't going to get any better for Singh and millions of farmers in South Asia who have been grappling with crippling droughts in some areas and devastating floods in others for some years now.

The reason? Global warming caused by increasing greenhouse gas emissions from burning of fossil fuels.

According to UN estimates, about 2.3 billion people in about 50 nations will be saddled with severe water shortages by 2020 because of global warming.

For Singh, headman of Batheda Kala village in the desert state of Rajasthan, finding water is a daily struggle.

"We've been facing a drought for years. Our wells have dried up, our crops have withered away and our cattle, too, have died over time," he said.

"Even though it rained a bit this year, it wasn't enough to make up for all those years," he added.

The growing water crisis will only be aggravated by the melting of mountain glaciers across the world, which experts say can account for as much as 95 percent of water in river networks.

According to some estimates, the

Himalayan glaciers -- which are the lifeblood of fresh water for many South Asian rivers such as the Ganga and Brahmaputra on which millions depend -- have already receded considerably in the past decade.

"Himalayan glaciers are shrinking because of climate change. This may result in acute water shortage not only in Nepal but in India and Bangladesh during the dry season and may cause flooding in the wet season," Arun Bhakta Shrestha, a hydrologist for the Nepal government, told Reuters.

According to a report by the United Nations Environment Programme, global warming would cause more than 40 Himalayan glacial lakes to burst in the next few years, causing floods and killing thousands of people.

What's worse, with world temperatures expected to increase by between 1.4 and 5.8 degrees Celsius by 2100 and sea levels to rise between 3-1/2 and 35 inches, small islands such as the Maldives and many in the Caribbean and South Pacific are in danger of drowning.

"The biggest dangers of climate change are the adverse impacts on agriculture, particularly for farmers dependent on rain-fed agriculture," Rajendra Pachauri, chairman of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), said.

DROUGHT AND FLOODS
Already, the impact of climate

change is evident in the soaring summer temperatures in South Asia, which go up to 122 degrees Fahrenheit, and the erratic nature of the monsoon, one of the world's most widely watched phenomena.

Add to this growing populations and greater demand from agriculture, cities and industry, and the result is a rapid fall in water availability.

The per capita availability of water in India has fallen to 66,000 cubic feet from 141,000 cubic feet two decades ago. Experts say it could dip to below 35,000 cubic feet in 20 years.

APPOINTMENT AT DUET HC order to maintain status quo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

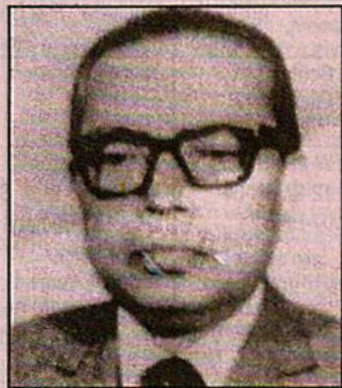
The High Court has issued an order to maintain status quo on the appointment of three teachers at Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology (Duet).

A High Court bench comprising Justice Shah Abu Naim Mominur Rahman and Justice Moimul Islam Chowdhury gave the order on November 27.

The Duet authorities appointed three teachers as assistant professors on February 17 this year. But the authorities stayed the appointment on March 3 when the teachers went to join the university.

Two appointed teachers -- Dr Sushanta Kumar Saha and Mohammad Moniruzzaman -- filed separate writ petitions against the stay order of the authorities.

The High Court also issued a rule nisi on four respondents in the writ petition filed by Sushanta Kumar Saha. The respondents include the vice chancellor and the registrar of the Duet.



Death anniversary

Today is the 13th death anniversary of S M Shafiqul Azam, the doyen of civil service and a former minister, says a press release.

A former chief secretary of the then East Pakistan, he served as a cabinet secretary and minister for jute, commerce and industry and energy and mineral resources after the independence.

S M Shafiqul Azam Memorial Committee has organised elaborate programmes to mark the day. Special programmes will also be held at Dr S M Muhammadul Haque Government Primary School and Shazadi Latifa Khatun Furkania Madrasa at his village home in Chittagong. Prayers will be offered at his graveyard.

Abdullah Hil Baqui
The 33rd death anniversary of Abdullah Hil Baqui, Bir Pratik, will be observed today, says a press release.

Baqui, commander of Baqui unit of North in Dhaka city, embraced martyrdom in an encounter with the Pakistani occupation forces during the Liberation War in 1971.

A doa mahfil will be held at his father's residence, Baqui Bhaban, after Asr prayers today.

Khaleda turns country into 'death valley': AL

UNB, Dhaka

The Awami League (AL) leadership has rejected Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's statement in Patuakhali on Thursday that her government inherited corruption and terrorism from the previous AL regime.

"This false statement proves that she has failed to run the government and taken a recourse to political deceit and dishonesty to shift the liability of her failure and incompetence on others," said AL acting president Zillur Rahman and acting general secretary Obaidul Kader in a joint statement yesterday.

They alleged that Khaleda has turned Bangladesh into a "death valley" after assuming the office through "vote rigging."

They said a minister himself admitted in parliament that more than 9,000 people had so far been killed.

The AL leaders observed that the grim incidents like August 21 ge-

nade attack on Sheikh Hasina's rally, bomb blasts in Sylhet injuring the British High Commissioner and "rise of communalism" had tarnished the image of the country abroad.

Zillur Rahman and Obaidul Kader said the killings in custody and the government's arguments in favour of extra-judicial killing proved that the alliance rulers had no faith in the rule of law.

They said international human rights organisations have "branded Bangladesh as a country of human rights violation" because of the "politics of killing" pursued by the government.

Stop retrenchment of workers, Sramik Jote demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Jote yesterday called on the government to reopen the mills and factories and stop retrenchment of workers.

They also demanded introduction of minimum national wage for the garment workers and steps to protect their rights.

Workers in the third world countries like Bangladesh are now passing a critical time due to trade liberalisation, said Jote President Shirin Akhter at a rally at Muktangan in the city.

She called on the workers to unite to rebuild the movement of 'One factory - One Union' to realise their demands.

Jote General Secretary Nur Khan Liton and Joint Secretary Quazi Siddique Rahman also spoke.

The Sramik Jote will observe 'Labour - Employee Demand Day' on December 19.

Cotton godown gutted in Narsingdi

UNB, Narsingdi

A cotton godown of Pakiza Spinning Mills was gutted in a devastating fire at Bhagirampur in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The fire, which started at about 9:30 am, destroyed about 500 bales of cotton, mill sources said. The loss was estimated at about Tk 50 lakh.

Fire fighters from Narsingdi, Ghorashal, Bhairab and Demra brought the blaze under control after a struggle for one and a half hours.

A fire fighter was also injured while extinguishing the blaze.



LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan speaks at the representatives' conference of Sonali Bank Employees Association in the city yesterday.

WEATHER TODAY

Temperature may fall

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country and light to moderate fog may occur in the early morning during the next 12 hours till 6.00pm today.

Night temperature may fall slightly during the period, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 31.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and the lowest of 12.5 degrees at Srimgang.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm today and rises at 6:27am 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	29.0	15.9	66	53
Chittagong	30.2	17.3	59	58
Rajshahi	28.4	15.7	62	62
Khulna	28.5	16.2	77	67
Barisal	28.6	15.0	87	93
Sylhet	30.5	16.6	67	64
Cox's Bazar	31.2	17.2	68	--

International Day of Disability - 2004



Saidul Huq, executive director of Blind Education Rehabilitation Development Organisation, speaks at a discussion in the city yesterday marking the International Day of Disabled Persons.



Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Jote stages a demonstration in the city yesterday demanding reopening of closed mills and factories.

Garment worker with burn injuries dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman severely burnt by her husband on November 26 died at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) yesterday after struggling for eight days.

Garment worker Alo Begum, 22, the second wife of Abdul Majid Miah of 207/3/3 East Rasulbagh in Lalbagh said her husband poured kerosene and set fire on her when she was preparing to go to her work.

IBA graduation ceremony held

UNB, Dhaka

The Dhaka University authorities yesterday distributed certificates among the passing out MBA and BBA students of the Institute of Business Administration (IBA).

The Graduation Ceremony-2004 for the 8th BBA batch and 38th MBA batch was held at the TSC Auditorium of Dhaka University.

Forty-five students received BBA certificates and 109 MBA certificates.

Vice Chancellor Prof. SMA Faiz attended the ceremony as chief guest.

Mahbubur Rahman, director of International Chamber of Commerce, Bangladesh, was present as special guest while Iftekhar Gani Chowdhury, director of IBA, presided over the ceremony.



Obituary

Mosammat Jashimunnisa Khan, mother of Mohammad Atiqullah Khan Masud, editor of the daily Janakantha, died of old age complications at the Combined Military Hospital in the city last night at the age of 88, says a press release.

She left behind eight sons and daughters and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

She will be buried at Old Banani Graveyard after a namaj-e-janaza at Dhaka Cantonment Central Mosque after Zohr prayers today.

Jashimunnisa was the wife of late Mohammad Dabir Uddin Khan of Medinimondol village of Louhajang thana in Munshiganj district.

Her other children are Mohammad Shahidullah Khan, Wing Commander (retd.) Mohammad Hamidullah Khan, Mohammad Rafiqullah Khan, Mohammad Shafiqullah Khan, Mohammad Hafiullah Khan, Suraiya Kader, Rowshan Ara Khan and Nilufar F Khan.

Dhaka, Brunei sign MoU to operate direct flight

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Brunei to operate direct flight between Dhaka and Brunei Darussalaam.

The two countries also ratified an air service agreement (ASA) in this regard, an official release said.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia during her visit to Brunei in the beginning of the current year directed the officials concerned to take step to operate direct flight between the two countries.

In absence of direct flight between the two countries, the neighbouring countries so far availed the opportunity of carrying passengers to Brunei, a very potential market for Bangladeshi workers.

High Commissioner of Brunei Darus Salaam in Dhaka Dato Paduka Haji Abdul Mokti bin Haji Mohd Doud, Bangladesh High Commissioner in Brunei MA Hakim and senior officials of the Bangladesh Civil Aviation Authority (BCAA) were present at the signing ceremony.

11 Party to hold rally Monday

UNB, Dhaka

The 11 Party will hold a rally in the city on Monday ahead of the December 11 'no-confidence human wall' programme to press for its nine-point demand.

The rally will be held at Muktangan at 4.00 pm. The 11-Party alliance took the decision at a meeting yesterday, with Samyadhi Barua (ML) General Secretary Dilip Dalua in the chair.

DHAKA TODAY

Film week

The inaugural ceremony of Asian Film Week, organised by Dhaka Film Society, will be held. On this occasion two films including 'Kandahar' (2001) made by renowned Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Makhmalbaf and another one titled 'The Apple' (1998) made by Samira Makhmalbaf will be screened. Venue: World Literature Centre, 14 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. Time: 3.00pm, 4.45pm and 7.30pm.

Children's film festival

The inauguration of 'The Children's Showcase', organised by Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies as part of its 2nd International Film Festival, will be held with Women and Children Affairs Minister Khurshid Jahan Haque as chief guest. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy Auditorium. Time: 4.00pm. The inaugural function will be followed by the screening of an Indian film titled 'Bombay Bombete' directed by Sandip Roy.

Painting exhibition

A solo exhibition of paintings by Iftekhar Uddin Ahmed will be inaugurated by French Ambassador Jacques-Andre Costilhes. Venue: Saju Art Gallery, 2nd Circle, Gulshan. Time: 4.30pm. The exhibition will remain open till December 20 from 10.00am to 8.30pm daily except Friday.

Premiere show

Goethe Institut, in collaboration with the Centre for Asian Theatre, organises the premiere show of Immanuel Kant directed by Kamaluddin Nilu. Venue: Auditorium of the Goethe Institut, Dhanmondi. Time: 5.00pm.

Seminar

The opening ceremony of a regional seminar on 'Childhood Disability' will be held with Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid as chief guest. Venue: BIAM Auditorium, New Eskaton. Time: 9.00am.

Workshop

A three-day workshop on 'Codes and standards relating to CNG' will be inaugurated by State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharraf Hossain as chief guest. Venue: IDB Bhaban, Begum Rokaya Sarani. Time: 11.30am.

Grand rally

The inaugural session of a grand rally, organised by 'We Demand Safe Road', will be held with Communications Minister Nazmul Huda as chief guest. Venue: Mohanagar Natyamancha, Gulistan. Time: 10.00am.

Conference

The closing ceremony of the biennial conference of Bangladesh Geological Society will be held. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 6.30pm.

Rotary meeting

Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka North West will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club, Shahbagh. Time: 5.30pm.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Film week

As part of the Asian Film Week, Dhaka Film Society will screen three films titled 'The Road Home' (2001), 'Hero' (2002), and 'To Live' (1994) - all made by Zhang Yimou of China. Venue: World Literature Centre, 14 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. Time: 3.00pm, 5.00pm and 7.00pm.

Children's film festival

Under 'The Children's Showcase' programme, Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies will screen four films titled 'Tiki' of Bangladesh, 'Baseball' of China, 'City of Mice' of Iran and 'Lotus Lantern' of China. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy Auditorium. Time: 10.00am, 12.00noon, 4.00pm and 5.40pm.

Award giving ceremony

The award giving ceremony of 'Life Time Achievement Award', organised by the Steering Committee of the 2nd International Film Festival Bangladesh, will be held with City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka as chief guest. Venue: National Museum Shahbagh. Time: 4.30pm.

Lecture

Goethe Institut organises a lecture on the 'Aspects of Contemporary Art in Germany' by architect Kassel Mahboob Chowdhury. Venue: Auditorium of the Goethe Institut, Dhanmondi. Time: 6.00pm.