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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN
Dancers perform at a function at the Institute of Fine Arts in the capital yesterday, marking nabanna utsab (the traditional festival of rice harvest) organised by Jatiya Nabanna Utsab UjJapan Parishad.

Twin attacks kill 30 in Baghdad

Attack on Mosul provincial HQ: 6 killed, GI, 8 others die in violence

AP, AFP, Baghdad

Insurgents launched two major attacks yesterday against a Shia mosque and a police station in Baghdad, killing 30 people, including at least 16 police officers, the deadliest insurgent attacks in weeks. Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Sunni rebel group, al-

Quaeda in Iraq, claimed responsibility for the attacks. The claim, which appeared on an Islamic Web site, could not immediately be verified. "The destructive effect that such operations has on the morale of the enemy inside and on its countries and people abroad is clear," the claims said. The attacks occurred in the west-

ern Amil district and in the Sunni Muslim stronghold of Azamiyah, where police said a car bomb exploded during a clash between Iraqi government security forces and armed rebels near a Shia mosque called Hameed al-Najar. Witnesses said the mosque suffered some damage, including shattered windows. SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Pethidine plight for patients

Tk 6.40 an ampoule shoots up to Tk 500

NAIMUL HAQ

Crisis of pethidine, the most common drug used for tranquillising patients during and after surgery, has pushed its retail price per ampoule from Tk 6.40 to as high as Tk 500, adding to the sufferings of patients.

"Due to scarcity of pethidine even in the drug wholesale markets at Mitford and Chankherpool, an ampoule now costs between Tk 280 and 500," said a wholesaler at Mitford, adding that some hoarders have stockpiled pethidine to fetch huge profit which may further aggravate the situation.

Husband of a patient now being treated at a city hospital said he had to procure two ampoules of pethidine from a clinic worker at Tk 320 apiece after failing to get it at the Mitford wholesale drug market. SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

No down payment needed to reschedule RMG stock-lot loans

MONJUR MAHMUD

With only 27 days left to the post-multifibre arrangement (MFA) era, the central bank has allowed the export-oriented readymade garment (RMG) units to reschedule their loans defaulted due to stock lots without requiring to make any down payment.

Bangladesh Bank has issued a circular in this regard recently informing all commercial banks that they can thus reschedule such default loans of RMG factories on condition that the exporters make

repayment when the lots are sold. Previously, exporters had to make 15 percent down payment for rescheduling loans up to Tk 1 crore, 10 percent (but not less than Tk 15 lakh) for Tk 1 crore to Tk 5 crore and 5 percent (but not less than Tk 50 lakh) for more than Tk 5 crore.

Many view the move as a major incentive for the apparel sector, which will be exposed to international competition as the MFA ceases as from January 1. "As we have only less than a month left to enter the open market

Ensure equal rights for the disabled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 13th International Day of Disabled Persons was observed yesterday in the capital and elsewhere in the country with a renewed commitment to ensure equal rights and privileges for the disabled.

Many factors including violence, road accidents, natural calamities and malnutrition are pushing up the number of handicapped people in the country, speakers noted addressing a colourful rally organised to mark the day on Manik Mian Avenue in the capital.

Referring to this year's theme of the day -- Nothing about Us without Us, they also emphasised the need for consulting the disabled people before any measure for their treatment is taken.

The social welfare ministry, Social Service Department, National Foundation of Disabled Development and National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled jointly organised the colourful rally in which hundreds of people including the disabled participated.

Carrying banners, festoons and placards the participants, some of them riding in some colourfully decorated horsecars, marched through different parts of the city in time to an orchestra.

Addressing a gathering prior to the procession in front of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, Ali Ahsan Mohammed Mujahid, minister for social welfare, said as the chief guest that an estimated 1.40 crore or 10 percent of the population in the country are disabled. He, however, claimed disability caused by malnutrition and lack of medical facility is gradually decreasing.

The minister said, compared to other countries, people in Bangladesh have better family lives, a situation that reduces the number of cases of mental disability. "We face fewer number of suicides and divorces that lead to insanity," he added. SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

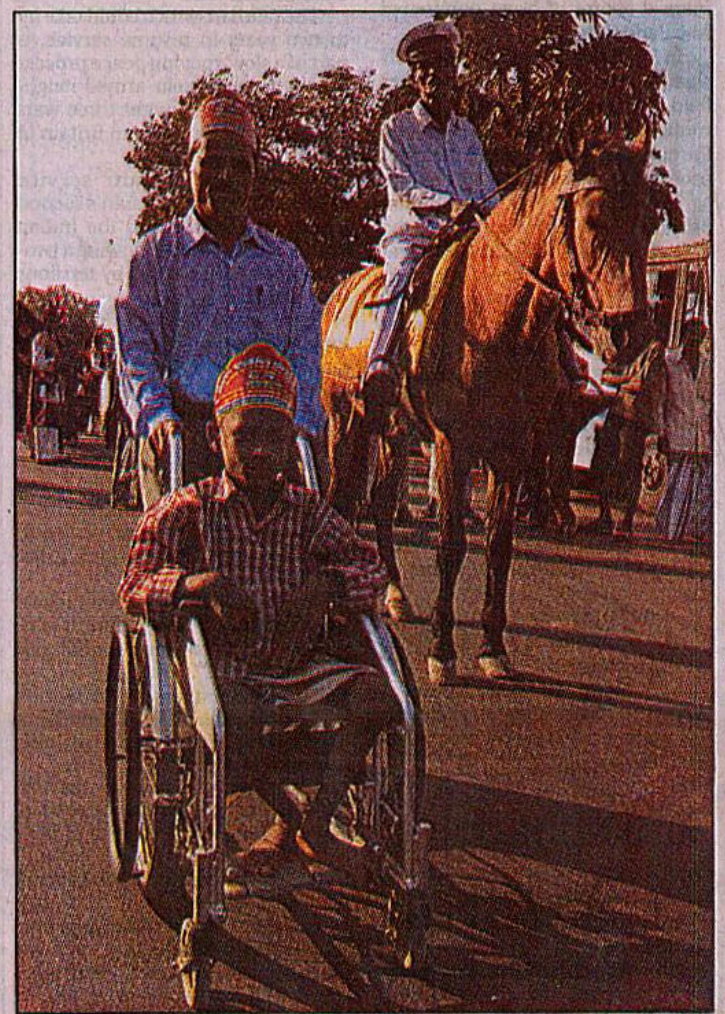


PHOTO: STAFF
A physically challenged boy sets off for procession from Manik Mian Avenue yesterday marking International Day of the Disabled Persons.

The able disabled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Physical handicap could not deter Tanvir, a boy with his lower part paralysed, or Sumi, a girl blind since birth, from their educational pursuits.

Tanvir, a Class X student of Sillmoon Abdul Halim Master High School in Tongi, has shown outstanding brilliance throughout his schooling.

He was born without any blemish but suffered complete paralysis at the age of six. "His whole body

paralysed due to a severe side effect of the third polio vaccine administered to him," said Tanvir's father Motiur Rahman. Motiur, who runs a small business, said three persons have to help his son to reach his school or in other physical activities.

"After initial treatments, Tanvir regained sensitivity in the upper part of his body but the lower part remains paralysed as we could not continue the treatment due to severe financial crisis," Motiur said. SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

'Myanmar launches crackdown on Indian militant camps'

AFP, Guwahati

Myanmar has launched a major military operation to evict Indian separatists from its soil, sparking heavy fighting in the thick jungles in the north of that country, a rebel leader said yesterday.

Kughalo Mulaonu, a leader of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) which is fighting for a tribal homeland in India's northeastern state of Nagaland, said pitched battles had been fought in the past few days.

At least three brigades (about 10,000 personnel) are involved in the operation in military-run Myanmar, he said. "We have lost at least five to six

mobile camps since the offensive began," Mulaonu told AFP by telephone from Kohima, the Nagaland state capital.

"It is a war-like situation with weapons such as sub-machineguns, AK-47s, carbines, and light machine guns used by us and the enemy troops during the continuing gunbattle."

There has been no immediate confirmation of the military offensive from Myanmar although an Indian army commander said intelligence inputs indicated "something serious" was taking place inside the neighbouring country.

"We don't exactly know the details but we can sense something

BDR arrests 5 Naga rebels in Moulvibazar

UNB, Moulvibazar

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel yesterday arrested five members of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), a separatist organisation of India, at a village near Phulatala border under Kulara upazila, police said.

The BDR men also recovered some arms, ammunition and electronic devices from their possession and later handed over them to Kulara police.

The arrestees are Thakle, Winner, Ninhu, Uthroi and Nitbi. The arms, ammunition and electronic devices include one revolver, one pistol, two hand grenades, seven magazines, two radio-link sets, one walkie-talkie and one type machine.

Acting on a tip-off, BDR personnel from Phulatala border outpost nabbed the NSCN members at Khanshia village near Gazipur Reserve Forest.

They confessed to police that they are the members of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). Kulara police are quizzing the five. SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Cold waves likely from mid-Dec

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A series of cold waves with foggy weather are likely to sweep across the country from the second half of December, as the temperature is projected to dip below 10 degrees Celsius.

"The whole country is likely to witness at least two to three cold waves ranging from mild to moderate level during this winter," said Deputy Director of Dhaka Met Office Arjumand Habib.

The country's northern and central parts will witness mild to moderate cold waves while mild cold spell will sweep over other parts of the country, met office sources said.

The night temperature will fluctuate between six to ten degrees Celsius at the northern region and

the central part of the country while the temperature will remain between eight to ten degrees Celsius in other parts of the country, said Duty Forecasting Officer Sadequul Islam.

This year the wintry weather is likely to arrive earlier and the people of northern regions and rural areas are already feeling the intensity of cold.

The country's lowest temperature recorded yesterday was 12.5 degrees Celsius at Srimongol followed by 13.2 degrees at Dinajpur, 14.4 degrees at Syedpur, 14.6 degrees at Khepupara, and 14.6 degrees at Jessore while the country's highest temperature was 30.2 degrees at Cox's Bazar.

The lowest-ever temperature recorded at Dhaka Met Office was

Gaibandha road accident kills 6

3 die in Dhaka, Narsingdi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nine people were killed and 22 others injured in road accidents in Gaibandha, Narsingdi and Dhaka yesterday.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reported that a road mishap on the Bogra-Rangpur highway in Gobindaganj upazila left six people dead and 22 injured.

Police and locals said the accident took place when a Bogra bound passenger bus from Gaibandha collided with a Gaibandha bound fertiliser-laden truck at Kalitola at about 7:00am, killing four bus pas-

sengers on the spot and injuring 24 others.

Of the injured, two succumbed to their injuries on way to hospital and the rest are undergoing treatment at Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital, Rangpur Medical College Hospital and Gobindaganj Upazila Health Complex.

Four of the dead were identified as Ful Mia, 40, of village Shibpur and Shamsar Ali, 39, of village Bairy Hossainpur under Gobindaganj upazila and Suja Mia, 35, and Abdul Jalil, 42, of village Bhabanipur under Palashbari upazila. Identity of the other two could not be known.

In Narsingdi, two persons died in a road accident at Itakhola in Shibpur upazila at about 9:00am.

The dead are Ashraf Khan, ameer of Shibpur upazila unit of the Jamaat-e-Islami and A Baset, a teacher of Narsingdi Jamiya Kasemia Madrassa. Police recovered the bodies and sent them to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital for autopsy, according to the UNB. Witnesses said the two men

Prayer Timing December 4		
	Azan	Jamaat
Faiz	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

11 face corruption charges under ACC in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has brought corruption charges against a former municipal chairman, three municipal employees and seven contractors of Barisal district.

The accused are secretary for

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

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