

US likely to ease restrictions on visa

BSS, Gazipur

The United States is likely to ease restrictions on visa soon for bright students and scholars of developing countries like Bangladesh to make room for intellectual mingling as well as sharing of knowledge-based technological resources.

"Of course we are aware of the visa-related issues which affect the students and researchers and we are reviewing the process," Ambassador David A. Gross, US Department of State's Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy, said while exchanging views with faculty members at Islamic University of Technology (IUT) of IUT campus at Gazipur yesterday.

Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Fazle lahi moderated the discussion.

US State Department's Director for International Telecommunications and Information Policy for Asia Andrew G

Hyde, Director of the American Centre in Dhaka Jonathan Cebra, Economic Officer of the US mission in Dhaka Ms Barbara S Keary and faculty members of the university were present.

Referring to current US foreign policy doctrine, Ambassador Gross said Dr Condoleezza Rice, the new Secretary of State, has indicated her intention to continue dialogue with the rest of the world. He said the USA should not engage itself in a monologue.

The US envoy said wireless communications and the Internet in Bangladesh have connected isolated villages creating chance to operate on a global scale. He, however, admitted that "it is true that the global information highway can be a path for less desirable things that pose additional challenges to governments and societies."

Talking on democracy, he said Bangladeshis have fought hard and shed blood for the right to vote and to be governed democratically. The ambassador said as a fellow democracy we seek to work with Bangladesh and all nations that value freedom. Quoting US President Bush, he said "division among free nations is a primary goal of freedom's enemies".

Gross said disease and poverty have the potential to destabilise nations and regions. He cautioned that "corruption can sap the foundations of democracy."

BCDJC function postponed

Bangladesh Centre for Development, Journalism and Communication (BCDJC) has postponed the 'Award Giving Ceremony 2003' for women in journalism, scheduled for today, says a press release.

The revised date will be

HABIGANJ GRENADE ATTACK Resignation of govt demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Left Democratic Front yesterday demanded immediate resignation of the government blaming it for the January 27 grenade attack on an Awami League rally in Habiganj.

They also called on all to launch a tough anti-government agitation unitedly to safeguard the countrymen from such heinous attacks.

They were speaking at a rally at Muktagong in the city protesting the killing of former finance minister SAMS Kibria in the grenade attack and the price spiral of diesel, kerosene, gas, fertiliser and other essentials.

The leaders said the Jamaat-Shibir cadres, protected by the government, are virtually running the country and killing one free-thinker after another without any resistance.

The bomb attacks on rallies and functions of different political and cultural organisations continued unabated as the government has turned a blind eye to earlier attacks, they said.

Kibria is the latest victim of a conspiracy hatched by a group protected by the government, said Ruhin Hossain Prince, convenor of the front.

Bimal Biswas of the Workers Party, Muzahidul Islam Selim of the Communist Party of Bangladesh and Dilip Barua of Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal also spoke.

18 shops gutted in Khulna fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Eighteen shops at Sher-e-Bangla Market of Terokheda upazila in the district were gutted in a fire on Monday midnight.

Loss of properties had been estimated at over TK 1 crore.

The fire was brought under control after a four-hour fight by firefighters of Khulna Fire Service.

According to police and eyewitnesses, the fire originated from an electric short circuit at about 2:15am.



PHOTO: STAR

A visitor at a stall at Ekushey Book Fair at the Bangla Academy in the city yesterday.



FEJB seminar

Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) organises a seminar on 'Cultural and biological diversity of wetlands: There is wealth in wetland diversity- don't lose it' with Environment and Forest Minister Tariqul Islam as chief guest. Venue: FEJB Conference room, Segun Bagicha. Time: 2:45pm.

Auditorium. Time: 3:30pm.

DCC discussion

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) will hold a discussion on the disposal of harmful wastes of different city hospitals with Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka as chief guest. Venue: Nagar Bhaban. Time: 3:00pm.

Hamdord discussion

Hamdord Laboratories Bangladesh organises a discussion in memory of Hakim Hafez Azizul Islam, a noted Unani physician and scientist, with Industries Minister Matur Rahman Nizami as chief guest. Venue: Hotel Sundarban. Time: 10:00am.

Jica seminar

Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) will hold a seminar on Draft Final Report on Feasibility Study of Padma Bridge with Communications Minister Nazmul Huda as chief guest. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 9:00am.

Discussion

Islami Insurance Bangladesh Limited will hold a discussion on the 'Role of Islami insurance in the Islamic economy' with Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed as chief guest. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 6:00pm.

Roundtable

National Foundation for Disabled Development organises a roundtable on the 'Role of the family towards the disabled' with Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid as chief guest. Venue: Cirdap Auditorium, Topkhana Road. Time: 11:00am.

JP discussion

Jatiya Chhatra Samaj organises a discussion to mark its 15th founding anniversary with Jatiya Party (Manju) Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju as chief guest. Venue: National Press Club

Anonnyia rally

Anonnyia, a fortnightly magazine for women, will hold a rally to protest the killing of Shah AMS Kibria, a noted economist and former finance minister. Venue: Muktagong. Time: 3:00pm.



Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of 'Minar Samagra' will be held with Information Minister M Shamsul Islam as chief guest. Venue: VIP Lounge of the National Press Club. Time: 10:30am.

Film show

The High Commission of India will screen a film titled 'Pinjar'. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, House-25,

Obituary

UNB, Dhaka



Khondokar Abdul Majid, chairman of Khadim Shoes and Khadim Industries, breathed his last here early yesterday at the age of 82.

Born in 1923 at Kazipara of Brahmanbaria district, Majid lived in Kolkata from 1930 to 1952.

In 1953, he relocated his business to Dhaka and was running his establishments till his death. Majid left behind his wife, two sons, four daughters, 14 grand children and two great grand daughters to mourn his death.

His qulkhani will be held at his residence at House 94, Road 11/A (old 21), Dhanmondi after Asr prayers on Friday.

Jahera Khatoon Choudhury



Jahera Khatoon Choudhury, wife of late Abdus Sattar Choudhury, died on January 22 at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital in the city at the age of 82, says a press release.

She is survived by three sons and a daughter to mourn her death.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the first death anniversary of Prof. Reza-e-Karim, chairman of the Department of Islamic History and Culture of Dhaka University.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at 19/A Lake Circus, Kalabagan after Magrib prayers today.

Relatives and admirers are requested to the milad and pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of Reazuddin Ahmed, executive engineer of the then EPWAPDA, will be held at his residence at CEN (F)5, Road No. 104, Gulshan-2 after magrib prayers today, says a press release.

Reazuddin succumbed to his injuries on January 30. He was injured in a road accident on January 24.

He was buried at the Banani graveyard in the city after namaz-e-ajanaza at Gulshan Azad Mosque.

He left behind his wife, one son and one daughter to mourn his death.

Relatives and friends have been requested to attend the qulkhwani and pray for the departed soul.

Qurankhwani

13th BCS Administration Welfare Forum arranges a Qurankhwani and milad mahfil at the BCS Administration Academy new building at Shahbagh in the city after Asr prayers today in memory of its member Md Rafiqul Islam, says a press release.

Rafiqul Islam, senior assistant secretary of health ministry, died in a road accident at Kalyanpur in the city on January 29.

8 killed, 68 injured in road, train accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight people were killed and 68 others injured in road and train accidents in Comilla, Rajshahi and Bogra districts yesterday.

Of them, three people were killed and 50 others injured in a collision between a Dhaka-bound bus and a minibus in Puthia, Rajshahi.

Portuguese envoy presents credentials

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed stressed the need for mutual exchange of experiences in the field of agriculture and other development sectors between Bangladesh and Portugal.

The President said this when new Ambassador of Portugal Joaquim Jose Lemos Ferreira Marques met him at Bangabhaban to present his credentials.

Welcoming Marques, Iajuddin recalled the cordial bilateral relations between the two countries and reaffirmed Bangladesh's determination to further consolidate and develop relations with Portugal.

He also stressed much on cooperation in the field of trade and commerce that will benefit both the nations.

The dead were identified as Dr Afzal Hossain, 45, of Taherpur, Abdur Rahim, 30, and Khotemon Biwi, 60, of Puthia upazila, police and hospital sources said.

The condition of six injured passengers, out of 40 admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, was stated to be critical.

The coach of Kafi Paribahan and the minibus coming from Taherpur collided head-on at Kapasia in the morning, leaving Dr Afzal dead on the spot. Two others died in the hospital, witnesses said.

Protesting the accident, an angry mob put up a barricade on the highway for one hour. Later, police brought the situation under control.

Drivers and helpers of both the buses fled away.

Our Comilla Correspondent adds: Three people, including a woman, were killed on the spot and 15 others seriously injured in a head-on collision between a passenger bus and a tempo on the highway at Chandina yesterday.

The accident took place when a Companyganj-bound passenger bus of Jhatika Paribahan from Dhaka collided with a tempo coming from the opposite direction near Purbasha petrol pump.

Meanwhile, two people were killed and three others injured when a train dashed a tractor at Shihirpur rail crossing of Sonatola Upazila in Bogra district.

Four bombs recovered at Mirpur: 4 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday recovered four bombs from Mirpur and arrested four people in this connection.

Tipped off, a team of Rab-4 found the bombs with narrow containers in a blue bag from a drain at Courtbari area some 150 yards behind Parbat cinema near Gabtali embankment at 1:30pm.

They also found four bottles of local liquor.

Rab explosive experts defused the bombs.

Rab members in an immediate raid arrested Mohammad Zafar, 25, Abdul Jabbar, 50, Khalil, 38, and Jahagir, 32, from Courtbari area half an hour into the recovery.

Body of girl recovered from pond at Raozan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chtg

Police recovered body of a five-year-old girl from a pond at a village in Raozan upazila of the district on Monday.

They suspect that the girl, who had been missing since Friday, was strangled to death after abduction.

Aklima Khatun Tania hailed from village Shahpara in Urkirchar union under Raozan and was a student of Urkirchar Kindergarten School. She was the daughter of Akhtar Shah, an expatriate in Qatar.

Police so far have arrested 14 people including a domestic help in this connection.

Sources said the domestic help Amena Begum and her brother Faruk on Friday morning took Tania out of the house on the pretext of showing her a parrot. Amena then handed over the girl to Harun, a member of the gang, which took her to a deserted place about two km off Tania's house.

Tania's mother Sabina Akhtar Mina and relatives had no idea till yesterday noon about the girl's whereabouts. In the afternoon, they searched the family pond fearing that Tania might have drowned but found nothing.

The villagers on suspicion caught Amena and Faruk and others from different parts of the village and handed them over to police.

Tania's uncle Nasir Shah lodged a murder case with the Raozan Police Station.

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country, having chances of light rain or thundershowers at places over Rajshahi, Sylhet and Dhaka divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia and Comilla till 6:00pm today.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office forecast, predicting light to moderate fog in the morning.

Highest temperature 31.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangamati and lowest 13.5 degree Celsius at Srimongol.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:46pm today and rises at 6:39am tomorrow.

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	25.3	17.8	65	71
Chittagong	30.9	16.2	67	45
Rajshahi	20.4	16.2	85	79
Khulna	24.5	16.5	69	79
Barisal	26.8	15.0	79	80
Sylhet	23.8	17.4	88	82
Cox's Bazar	30.5	16.6	64	61