



PHOTO: STAR

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan speaks at the inaugural function of the Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD) conference at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh auditorium yesterday.

Govt agencies can directly advertise in newspapers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

High Court (HC) division of the Supreme Court has lifted an injunction imposed 16 months ago, allowing government entities to directly put their advertisements in newspapers...

A government handout yesterday said the HC on March 7 quashed the injunction and other rules on the issue. On May 29, 2003 the Prime Minister's Office issued a circular stating that placing advertisements on tender notices should comply with Rule 21 of the Public Procurement Regulation (PPR) that makes provision for direct advertisements in newspapers.

Following a petition challenging the circular, the HC on November 2,

Appeal to call off March 27 hartal

Dhaka Pastors Fellowship in a statement yesterday requested the opposition political parties to call off March 27 hartal as the Easter Sunday falls on the day, says a press release.

Dhaka Pastors Fellowship issued the statement on behalf of the Christian Community of Bangladesh.

The Easter Sunday is a very important religious celebration of the Christian Community, the statement said. The members of the Christian community attend Church worship services at different places of the city and also thousands of them attend the Easter Sunrise Service organised by Dhaka Pastors Fellowship in front of the National Assembly Building.

City road named after AK Khondaker

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) yesterday named the road from Mohakhali Jalkhabar to Gulshan 1 after AK Khondaker Bir Uttam for his glorious role in the War of Liberation.

AK Khondaker himself uncovered the name-plate of the road at a ceremony, says a press release.

Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, MP was present as the chief guest while State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Prof Rezaul Karim was the special guest.

Chairman of the Muktijoddha Sangsad Kabir Ahmed Khan and DCC chief executive officer Alamgir Hossain were present.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Comilla and Noakhali till 6.00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged day temperature.

Highest temperature 36.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 18.4 degree Celsius at Sylhet. The sun sets in the capital at 6:10pm today and rises at 6:01am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

'Raise agri production thru' applied research'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister MK Anwar yesterday stressed the need for reaching all facilities to the doorsteps of the farmers to help increase overall agricultural production.

He laid emphasis on applied research and said the yield gap between the plots of scientists and farmers should be minimised.

The agriculture minister was speaking at the inaugural session of a two-day workshop on 'Dissemination of Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) Concept' organised by the Department of Agriculture Extension in the city.

State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhrul Islam said despite many limitations, the country will have to face the challenges of ensuring food security and reducing poverty to half by 2015.

Japanese Ambassador Matsushiro Horiguchi said agricultural and rural development can play a vital role in reducing poverty in Bangladesh.

Regional SPFS Coordinator Dr Shin Imai presented the keynote paper on 'SPFS Concept and Approach in Asia.'

Obituary



Freedom fighter Major Md Rafiqul Islam PSC (ret'd) passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Birdem Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 59.

Rafiqul Islam left behind his wife, one son and a daughter, says a press release.

His Quikhwani will be held at his residence at Subasto Rupayan Housing Complex at Mohakhali after Asr prayers on March 23.

Abdul Latif

Abdul Latif, a freedom fighter and superintendent of the central office of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), passed away due to old-age complications at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) in the city yesterday at the age of 78.

He left behind his wife, three sons and two daughters, says a press release.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in a condolence message expressed her condolence at his death.

Rashida Begum

Rashida Begum, former teacher of Dowlatpur Muhasin Girls High School of Khulna, passed away due to a cardiac arrest on Friday at the age of 75, says a press release.

She left behind her seven sons and four daughters.



Chander Hat executives

Saiful Alam and Shah Alamgir have been elected president and general secretary of Chander Hat at the closing session of its two-day fourth national council at the Bangladesh Shishu Kalyan Parishad in the city, says a press release.

Founding director of the organisation Rafiqul Haque Dadu Bhuiyan announced the new committee for the 2005-2008 on Saturday.

Other office-bearers are Vice-presidents Mohammad Abdul Kafi and Mazharul Islam Bulbul, Joint General Secretaries Shamim Pervez and Farazi Ahmed Sayeed, Organising Secretary Advocate Masud Hussain, Assistant Organising Secretary Masud Pervez and Finance Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

Meanwhile, 11-member national presidium committee with Mohammad Zakaria Pintu as chairman and 10-member advisory committee have also been formed.

Fundamentalist forces threaten political stability

Speakers tell discussion

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said the rise of fundamentalist forces under different names across the country is the main threat to social harmony, public security, political stability, and the development of the country.

They said the communal forces under the shelter of the BNP-Jamaat coalition government are consolidating their strength day by day, and they have been trying to turn the country into a 'communal country'.

The discussion on 'Bangabandhu, Secularism and Contemporary Bangladesh' was organised by the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of the opposition Awami League (AL) to mark the 85th birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the National Press Club in the city.

Speaking as chief guest, AL presidium member Advocate Zillur Rahman MP said former president Ziaur Rahman allowed religion-based politics in the country through an amendment of the constitution, and he withdrew the word 'secularism' from the constitution that paved the way for communalism to enter into the politics of the country.

'Bangabandhu dreamed of a secular country, but Zia and the coalition government have made it a country of fundamentalism, extremism and criminal activities,' he said.

He urged the government to stop extra-judicial killings and not to create anarchy in the society. Dhaka University Teachers' Association President Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said tortures, killings, repression and threats have become a routine affair under the coalition government.

He urged the youth community to be aware of the 'great history of the country' as the government has been distorting it.

Prof Harun-or-Rashid, dean of social science faculty of Dhaka University, read out the keynote paper.

He said due to alarming rise of communal forces, the country has become a second Pakistan. Prof Harun urged the pro-liberation forces to be united to save the country from the grip of the communal forces.

Presided over by BCL President Liaqat Sikder, the discussion was also addressed by its General Secretary Nazul Islam Babu, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists President Iqbal Sobahan Chowdhury, Rajshahi University Teacher Prof Mahbubur Rahman, Shariful Kabir Swapan, Baki Billa, Jewel Ahmed Khan and Mostaq

HABIGANJ GRENADE ATTACK Mass signatures campaign exhibition on Mar 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of SAMS Kibria will hold an exhibition of 'mass signatures campaign' at city's Manik Mia avenue on March 31 demanding trial of the perpetrators of Habiganj grenade attack.

Kibria family already informed the Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation Sadeq Hossain regarding the exhibition and got the required permission. The exhibition will start at 4:00 pm and continue till 6:30 pm.

Mass signatures collected from across the country as well as from the USA, Australia, Sweden, England, France and few other European and Asian countries will also be put on for display.

Talking to The Daily Star, Dr Reza Kibria, son of slain Kibria, said they have plans to organise such events in major districts of the country.

Those involved in the mass signature campaign think the clothsheets containing signatures may be registered in the Guinness Book of World Records as the 'longest cloth-sheet containing signatures'. Guinness World Records is the global authority on record-breaking achievements.

On March 28, women will stage a sit-in in front of Kibria's Dhanmondi residence and sew the pieces of cloth-sheets containing mass signatures collected from home and abroad.

Meanwhile, Kibria's sisters will observe two and half hour token hunger strike wearing blue cloths in city's Shymoli as part of 'Blue for Peace' program demanding trial of the killers on March 24.



PHOTO: STAR

Chinese Ambassador Chai Xi addresses a roundtable on 'Peace, Development and Cooperation: China's foreign policy' at the Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association auditorium yesterday. On his right is former ambassador Waliur Rahman and on his left are Justice KM Sobhan and Barrister Shawkat Ali.

'1.25 lakh children die of diarrhoea a year'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 1, 25, 000 children under five die of diarrhoeal and other waterborne diseases in the country every year, said the officials of the NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation (NFDWSS) at a press conference yesterday.

They said open defecation, unsafe water and unhygienic environment are the direct causes of a number of health hazards of which children are the main victims.

The press conference was organised at a city hotel to highlight the fresh UN-declared International Decade for Action- 'Water for Life for 2005-2015' to be declared on the World Water Day tomorrow.

Highlighting the crisis of pure drinking water and sanitation that causes the outbreak of waterborne diseases, SMA Rashid, executive director of NFDWSS, said a total of Tk 50 billion is spent each year for the treatment of such diseases.

'Only 40 percent of the total population in the country are getting sanitation facilities while 65-70 percent people get safe drinking water,' he said.

Rashid said the next crucial challenges facing the health sector include excessive arsenic contamination in ground water, gradual decline of groundwater level, water logging and excessive salinity in the southern part of the country, and inadequate provision of pure water in the hilly areas.

He laid emphasis on integrated approach and community participation to reach the water and sanitation facilities at the doorsteps of the people.

The NGO Forum said arsenic contamination in ground water was widespread and a total of 322 upazilas have so far been affected. To mark the World Water Day, NFDWSS will organise a national seminar at IDB Bhaban.

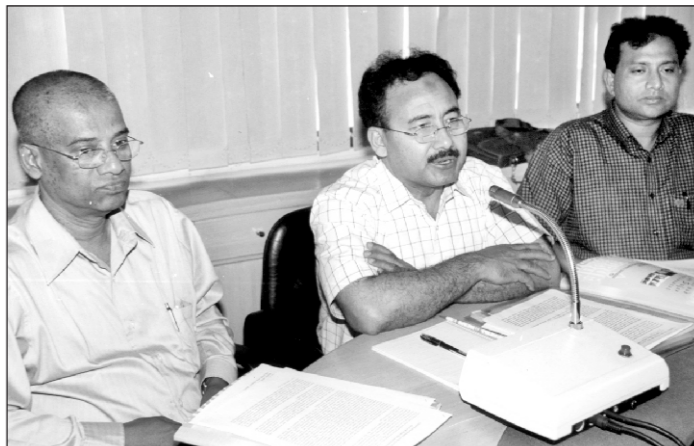


PHOTO: STAR

NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation (NFDWSS) Executive Director SMA Rashid speaks at a press conference at La Vinci Hotel in the city yesterday.

ATTEMPTED RAPE CASE Court asks CID to submit probe report by Mar 30

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday directed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to submit an investigation report of an attempted rape case by March 30 against a deputy director (DD) in-charge of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) and his office assistant.

Judge Mohammad Shamsul Arefin of the Fifth Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression passed the order following an oral appeal of the complainant.

The CID did not submit the report though 11 consecutive dates have passed.

Earlier, the tribunal on May 12 last year instructed the CID to reinvestigate the case upon a naraj petition (no confidence) against the final report filed by Mosammat Sheuli Akhter on January 23 last year.

Airport police submitted the final report on January 11 the same year to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka and prayed for discharge of charges against the accused.

Police sought permission to file a case against the complainant as their probe found the charges false, fabricated and motivated.

Sheuli, an information assistant at the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab) at the Zia International Airport (ZIA), filed the case on November 13, 2003, five days after the alleged advances were made by DD Mostafa Faruq and his assistant Mahubb Alam.

She said they work at the same office and also discuss their family affairs sometimes. The accused would often make advances during office hours and touch her on different excuses.

At about 8:30am on November 13, Mostafa asked her to meet him at his office room. But she did not go there and was waiting at the passengers' service desk. After a while, Mostafa came there, frisked her and took her duty pass away.

Later, she went to his office at around 10:00am to get her duty pass back. Instead of returning it, the DD attempted to violate her.



PHOTO: STAR

Student Youth Movement for Resisting Plunder of Oil and Gas forms a human chain at Muktangan yesterday protesting genocide in Iraq.

DHAKA TODAY logo.

Photography exhibition

A three-day photography exhibition, organised by the Centre for Asian Arts and Cultures, will be inaugurated. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre, House-510, Road-7, Dhanmondi. Time: 5:00pm.

Art exhibition

A.O., an organisation for drug awareness, will hold an art exhibition of posters painted by school children on the theme 'Moder Garbo Moder Desh, Madok Mukto Bangladesh'. Venue: Bengal Art Gallery, Road-27, Dhanmondi.

Theatre festival

As part of the National Children's Theatre Festival organised by the People's Theatre Association, four plays will be staged. Venue: Shawkat Osman Memorial Hall, Central Public Library, Shahbagh. Time: 4:30pm.

BSCIC fair

The inaugural ceremony of a fair organised by Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation, will be held with Deputy Minister for Industries Md Abdus Salam Pintu as chief guest. Venue: BSCIC Bhaban, Motijheel. Time: 11:00am. The fair will remain open till March 26 from 10:00am to 5:00pm daily.

Founding anniversary

The first founding anniversary of Bangabandhu Abrinti Parishad will be celebrated. Venue: World Literature Centre, Bangla Motor. Time: 5:00pm.

Unesco seminar

Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco organises a seminar on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination-2005 with State Minister for Water Resources Goutam Chakraborty as chief guest. Venue: Conference Hall, BANBEIS Bhaban, Nilkhet. Time: 3:00pm.

Brac seminar

Brac University organises a seminar on 'Cosmic Strings in String Theory' with Dr Mahub Majumdar of an UK University as guest speaker. Venue: Standard Tower, Mohakhali. Time: 3:30pm.

Publication ceremony

Weekly discussion meeting of Muldhara, a forum of writers, journalists and artists, will be held. Venue: House-15, Road-7, Dhanmondi. Time: 6:30pm.

Prize giving ceremony

The prize and certificate giving ceremony of an art exhibition of posters painted by school children, organised by A.O., an organisation for drug awareness, will be held. Venue: Bengal Art Gallery, Road-27, Dhanmondi. Time: 6:00pm.

Theatre festival

As part of the National Children's Theatre Festival organised by the People's Theatre Association, five plays will be staged. Venue: Shawkat Osman Memorial Hall, Central Public Library, Shahbagh. Time: 4:30pm.

Water seminar

On the occasion of World Water Day, Bangladesh National Committee of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage organises a seminar on 'Water and life in Bangladesh'. Venue: Council Bhaban, Buet University. Time: 3:00pm.

Conference

The Network for Alternative Development of Extreme Poor organises a national conference on 'Mainstreaming the extreme poor: A challenge for the new millennium.' Food and Disaster Management Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yousuf will attend the closing function as chief guest. Venue: Biam Auditorium, New Eskaton. Time: 9:30am.

Debate competition

The history department of Dhaka University organises a friendly debate competition between the teachers and students. Earlier, certificates will be distributed among the participants of a photography workshop. Venue: R C Majumdar Arts Auditorium. Time: 11:30am.

Muldhara discussion

Weekly discussion meeting of Muldhara, a forum of writers, journalists and artists, will be held. Venue: House-15, Road-7, Dhanmondi. Time: 6:30pm.