



Tagore's death anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 64th death anniversary of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore will be observed today to flash back to a literary life spanning over 60 years. Tagore dominates the Bangla literary scene with copiousness of works: over 10,000 poems, nearly two dozen plays and play-lets, 12 novels, over 100 short stories, more than 6,000 songs and a mass of prose works on literary, social, religious, political, and other topics.

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RAPID DEPLETION OF WATER RESOURCES

Formulation of master plan for Dhaka to start in November

STAR REPORT

As a high level of ground water consumption is rapidly depleting Dhaka's water resources, the government will start formulating a master plan for Dhaka water supplies from November.

Dhaka is facing a water shortage of about 500 million litres per day (mld) over 25 percent of the existing demand. This shortage will hit 1500 mld in 2015 if no action is initiated now.

From November, the government will begin a yearlong \$1.25 million fact finding technical mission with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) that will chalk out a master plan, according to an ADB aide memo.

This plan aims not only to identify

new water resources but also to outline how to improve the city's water distribution. On the basis of its outcomes, the ADB will provide a loan in early 2007 to improve the water infrastructure of the capital.

The fact-finding mission will also recommend designs and setting up of new tubewells and rehabilitation of old ones. Besides, the ADB and the World Bank will assist the government on the institutional improvement of the Dhaka Water Supply Authority (DWASA).

According to the aide memo, Dhaka's present population of 12 million is growing at an unconfirmed annual rate of over 5 percent. DWASA estimates that it serves safe water supply to about 75 percent of the population.

An estimated 5.5 million people

receive piped water and half a million people have access to piped water via stand posts.

However, 3 million people who live in slums obtain the bulk of their water supply legally or illegally from Wasa.

About 82 percent of water comes from ground reservoirs and 18 percent from surface water. Large-scale abstraction of ground water has led to a continuous fall of the water level. To cope with this problem, Wasa continued to drill new deep tubewells, which increased from 140 in 1990 to over 400 in 2005. As a result, several wells have dried up at a much faster rate than previously experienced.

The majority of the distribution system is weak due to an intermittent water supply, leakage, and

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Cops torture Jubo League leader in Bagmara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police, allegedly influenced by a BNP man, badly tortured a Bagmara upazila Jubo League leader who is also a witness in a murder case.

Several policemen led by Sub-inspector Mizan beat up Zamil Uddin, 30, Ganipur union JL organising secretary inside the Bagmara Police Station after blindfolding him and tying his hands and legs with rope, sources said.

He was arrested from Madaripur Bazar for his suspected involvement in a case filed under Section 326 of Bangladesh Penal Code for clashing over rearing goat on August 1, police said.

But local Awami League leaders alleged that police influenced by Sultan, who is a BNP adherent "police broker", arrested him out of political vengeance.

Zamil is a witness in Marijan Biwi murder case in which the magistrate court concerned ordered for attachment of properties against the absconding accused people a month ago.

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PHOTO: STAR

Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum holds a grand rally on the Supreme Court Bar Association premises yesterday.

India, Pakistan open fresh talks on nuclear issues

AFP, New Delhi

India and Pakistan yesterday began a fresh round of talks aimed at building trust on military issues and avoiding an accidental nuclear war between the neighbouring rivals.

The two sides hope to finalise an agreement to notify each other ahead of missile tests and upgrade an existing hotline to reduce risks of nuclear accidents, an Indian foreign ministry spokesman said.

It is the third round of discussions in the so-called nuclear confidence building measures (CBMs). Previous meetings, part of a peace

process that began in January 2004, were also held in June and last December.

But analysts say the mood has changed from the heady optimism three months ago, when leaders of the two nations said the peace process, aimed at ending nearly 60 years of mutual hostility, was "irreversible."

The latest round comes after US President George W. Bush announced that the United States would resume civilian nuclear sales to India.

"Pakistan's reaction has not been very positive and that is a major

factor to be taken into account when dealing with nuclear CBMs," said Kalim Bahadur, who teaches Asian studies at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University.

"Pakistan's position also is it should have arms parity with India in spite of the vast differences in population and economies," he said.

New Delhi has rejected such proposals on the grounds Pakistan's arsenal buildup targets India specifically. India says it does not base its defence capacity on any country or threat and "does not want to be

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Karnaphuli to be dredged again

Tk 74 cr project includes bank protection wall

ABDULLAH-AL MAHMUD, Ctg

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) plans to dredge the river Karnaphuli for the third time to rid the lifeline of the port city of massive shoals resulting from man-made obstacles.

The Tk74-crore project under a Japanese Debt Cancellation Programme also includes construction of a bank protection wall to help train the river course.

Under the project, some 3.121 million cubic metres (MCM) of dredging will be done over a three-kilometre stretch of the river from the Shah Amanat Bridge in the upstream to Sadarghat in the downstream. At the same time, the bank protection work including 2.5km sheet-piling will also be done along the right bank up to the Sadarghat jetty.

The necessity of "capital dredging" was strongly felt since the construction of pillars of the Shah Amanat Bridge in 1989 had caused massive accumulation of silt, creating shoals along the three-km

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PHOTO: STAR

Massive siltation in the Karnaphuli river has created large shoals which are now being used as farmlands.

Top criminal arrested in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested one top-notch criminal in Bahodderhat area of the port city on Thursday night.

The arrestee, Mohammad Jahangir Member alias 'Daku' Jahangir, 36, is an accused in seven criminal cases. Police recovered one light gun (LG), five bullets and a cartridge from his possession.

Jahangir, also the linchpin of an inter-district band of robbers and arms smuggling syndicate, was staying in the city in connection with an arms deal, sources said.

Acting on a tip-off, the DB men raided the Bahodderhat area and nabbed the criminal.

Later, police launched a search operation at Jahangir's village home at Shikalbaha, taking him with them and recovered the LG with a cartridge.

Police said Jahangir, a perpetrator of various crimes like murder, robbery and extortion, unleashed a reign of terror over a large area under the city's Bandar and Karnaphuli police stations and in Patiya.

He was also a "most wanted" criminal in the list of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), sources said.

Russia races to save submarine crew stuck on seabed

AFP, Vladivostok

The Russian military raced against time Friday to rescue the seven crew of a small submarine trapped on the seabed after its propeller tangled in fishing nets off Russia's far eastern Kamchatka peninsula, naval officials said.

The military submarine, designed for research, rescue and intelligence operations, submerged at midday Thursday (2300 GMT Wednesday) as part of a routine exercise, with 120 hours of oxygen reserves on board, the Russian Pacific Fleet said.

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Shab-e-Meraj on Sept 1

BSS, Dhaka

The holy Shab-e-Meraj will be observed on September 1 and the counting of the month of Rajab will start tomorrow.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee at the Islamic Foundation auditorium yesterday evening with State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharref Hossain Shajahan in the chair, said a press release.

The meeting reviewed all information available from district administration, divisional and district offices of the Islamic Foundation, Meteorological Department and Sparso and decided that the month of Rajab will begin tomorrow, as the moon was not sighted anywhere in the country yesterday.