

## Photo-printing paper worth Tk 20 lakh, 135 cellphone sets seized

CU CORRESPONDENT, CTG

Police seized photo-printing paper worth Tk 20 lakh at Nimtala of the port city on Thursday and customs officials seized a large number of smuggled cellphones at Chittagong airport yesterday.

On information, a DB team seized the paper in 101 cartons on a truck from Nimtala on Thursday night. However, the smugglers as well as the trucker managed to evade arrest. Police say the papers might have been smuggled through Chittagong port.

Meanwhile, a customs preventive team, led by SPS Hamidul Islam, at Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport recovered 135 cellphone sets worth over Tk 8 lakh from Mohammed Kafil Uddin, a passenger from Dubai around 10:30am.

Kafil brought the cellphones in his coat without declaring them. Officials handed Kafil over to Patenga police.

## Independence Festival begins

DU CORRESPONDENT

On the occasion of the 35th anniversary of independence, a three-day-long Independence Festival began in the city yesterday upholding the slogan 'wake up my country piercing darkness (Krishnapakkha ved kore jege otho swadesh amar).

Hundreds of people from all walks of life thronged the Central Shaheed Minar and Rabindra Sarobar Mancha at Dhanmondi to enjoy the festival organised by Sammilita Sangskritik Jote.

Cultural personality Foyez Ahmad inaugurated the festival at the Shaheed Minar in the afternoon.

The first day of the festival began with national anthem, placing wreaths at Shaheed Minar and releasing balloons.

A discussion was also held on this occasion.

Presided over by Jote President Nasiruddin Yusuf, the discussion was addressed by Ataur Rahman, Salahuddin Badal, jote General Secretary Golam Kuddus, Jhuna Chowdhury, Dr Mohammad Samad and Afzal Hossain.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon stages a demonstration at Shahbagh in the city yesterday demanding immediate cancellation of Phulbari Coal Project contract signed with the Asia Energy Corporation.

## Cancel deal with Asia Energy

### 16 environmental groups demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmental groups at a rally in the city yesterday demanded immediate cancellation of the Phulbari Coal Project contract signed with the Asia Energy Corporation (AEC).

Terming the contract against the

interest of the country, they said extraction of coal in open-pit system will cause damage to the environment of the whole area and will also hinder the economic activities of the area.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) organised the rally at

Shahbagh in the city where representatives of 15 environmentalist organisations including Nagorik Sanghati, Green Voice, Sheba, Sundar Jibon, Peace, Citizen Rights Movement, and The Hunger Project expressed solidarity with Bapa.

The speakers said the stand of Asia Energy is still unclear. On one hand, the energy adviser said the Asia Energy has got the contract to monitor while officials of the AEC claimed the contract was to extract coal.

According to the contract, the Asia Energy will extract coal for 30 years in an open-pit system and will export two thirds of the quantity. The company will hold the ownership during this period and Bangladesh will receive only six percent royalty of it as well as tax and duty, they said.

The speakers also demanded formulation of a strategy for an effective energy policy in cooperation with the civil society, economists and politicians.

Bapa Vice President Syed ANM Wahed presided over the rally where former vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Kazi Saleh Ahmed, Engineer Mohammad Enamul Haque, Engineer Sarder M Amin, Alamgir Kabir and Advocate Abed Reza also spoke.

## 70,000 die from TB a year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tuberculosis bacteria infect more than three lakh people and around 70,000 people die every year in the country.

Bangladesh stands at fifth position among 22 high TB prevalence countries in the world while it ranks fourth among five leading TB-prone countries in South East Asia, according to World Health Organisation.

Against this backdrop, the country yesterday observed the World TB Day.

This year, the theme of the day was 'DOTS for all and all for DOTS'. DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short Course) is an internationally-recommended TB control strategy.

To mark the day, a leading NGO Brac organised a seminar on 'TB control and social participation' at Mohakhali in the capital.

Dr Sadat Hussain, former cabinet secretary now working as adviser to Brac, presided over the seminar.

Prof Dr M Shahadat Hossain, director general of health directorate attended the seminar as chief guest while Dr Mahbub Kamal Siddiqui, director of National TB and Leprosy Control Programme, as special guest.

Dr Khurshid Alam Hyder, WHO consultant, presented a paper on global and Bangladesh TB situation.

He said one-third of the world population has been infected by TB bacteria. TB infects eight million people every year and claims two million lives yearly throughout the

world.

Project Coordinator of Gonoswasthya Kendra Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, General Manager of Bangladesh Television Ali Imam and Programme Manager of National Tuberculosis Control Programme Dr Viqarunnesa Begum also spoke.

Afsan Chowdhury, director of advocacy and human rights unit of Brac, delivered the welcome

speech.

Dr Motahar Hossain, a village doctor, Farruk Hossain, a volunteer, Ashraf Ali, a retired school teacher, Fatema Begum, a health worker, M Ziaur Rahman, a trader and Alifa Yasmin, a TB-cured girl, also spoke at the seminar.

The speakers stressed the need for increasing mass awareness programme through media cam-

paign on TB as well as accelerating social participation in controlling TB.

They also stressed the need for disseminating the information that TB is fully curable disease as people are still scared of it.

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PHOTO: STAR

Prof Muntassir Mamun, artist Hashem Khan and artistes of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra inaugurate a book fair at the DC Hill in Chittagong on the occasion of Independence Day.

## Int'l Confce of Neurosurgeons begins

UNB, Dhaka

The 3rd International Conference of neurosurgeons, organised by Bangladesh Society of Neurosurgeons, began at a city hotel yesterday.

Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan inaugurated the three-day conference, presided over by Prof Dr Rashid Uddin Ahmed, president of the Society of Neurosurgeons.

Experts from Japan, Australia, India, Pakistan, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and host Bangladesh are taking part in the conference.