

EKUSHEY BOOK FAIR

40 per cent stalls selling pirated books

KAMRUL HASAN KHAN

Nearly 40 per cent of 255 publication houses taking part in the Amar Ekushey Book Fair have been selling pirated books and books of other publication houses not to flout the rules and regulations of the fair, but to no avail.

The month-long book fair began on the Bangla Academy premises in the city on February 1, commemorating the Language Movement of 1952.

Every year, the authorities warn the publication houses not to flout the rules and regulations of the fair, but to no avail.

Earlier, Member-Secretary of Amar Ekushey Book Fair Bazlur Rahim told The Daily Star that this year's fair would be free from irregularities and political influence as it is being held in a changed political scenario.

A number of renowned publishers, however, alleged that the Bangla Academy authorities are largely responsible for such irregularities, as many publication houses that do not qualify for the fair get stalls every year.

According to the rules and regulations, publication houses

having at least 15 new publications in one year will qualify to get stalls in the fair.

Osman Gani, the publisher of Agamee Prakashani, said the rules and regulations regarding allocation of stalls and sale of books are being flouted every year.

Halim Azad, a senior journalist who is covering the event for many years, said sale of pirated books and books of other publication houses by a number of stalls has undermined the spirit of the fair, but the authorities are yet to address the issue successfully.

Osman Gani said some officials of the Bangla Academy are responsible for the irregularities as they allocate stalls to unqualified publication houses. They should be identified and action should be taken against them, he added.

On Friday, a vigilance team led by acting Director General of Bangla Academy Maniul Hasan launched a drive and found out that some 23 stalls were violating the rules by displaying and selling pirated books, books without copyright and books of other publication houses. The next day, the team also found that 18 more

stalls were violating the rules.

The team seized all the books of these stalls and sent letters warning 41 publication houses not to flout the rules.

Mainul Hasan disclosed this at a press briefing at the Academy office yesterday.

"These stalls have been given two days' time to comply with the rules. If they fail, we will take stern action against them," he said.

"I will not tolerate anybody trying to make a huge profit in the name of Amar Ekushey," the acting DG said.

The book fair saw the arrival of 52 new titles on various subjects yesterday, according to the fair information centre.

The sale of books also picked up as a large number of visitors thronged the book fair.

As part of the Ekushey programmes, the Bangla Academy held a discussion on 'Subject of Bangla Play: Feature and its changes', with Mantajuddin Ahmed in the chair.

A cultural function was also held in the evening.

SEDITION CASE

Five lawyers appear before CMM's court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Five lawyers, out of eight accused in a sedition case, appeared before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, yesterday.

Supreme Court (SC) keeper Rafiqul Islam filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station against eight lawyers, including eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain, on charges of vandalism that took place on the Supreme Court (SC) premises on November 30 last year.

The five lawyers who appeared before the court yesterday are Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Barrister Amir-Ul Islam, former SCBA vice-president advocate Subrata Chowdhury, and advocates Sheikh Awsafur Rahman, Subrata Saha and Mohammad Khasruzzaman.

Dr Kamal was absent in the court yesterday as the High Court (HC) had earlier directed the law enforcement agencies not to arrest or harass him in connection with the case.

Lawyers of two other accused -- former SCBA president Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud and Barrister Tania Amir -- submitted a time petition before the court yesterday.

The vandalism on the SC premises took place after the chief justice stayed the proceedings of three writ petitions minutes before a HC bench was about to issue a rule on a writ challenging the legality of the president's takeover as chief adviser to the caretaker government.

Leaders of the 14-party alliance and other political parties filed the writ petitions that also challenged the chief adviser's activities and the announcement of the election schedule.

'Revise decision to privatise public banks'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Workers Party yesterday expressed concern over the decision of the caretaker government (CG) to turn the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs)--Sonali, Janata and Agrani--into public limited companies.

In a statement, President of the party Khondokar Ali Abbas and General Secretary Saiful Haque said a neutral and non-partisan government cannot take the responsibility to implement the agendas of World Bank (WB).

Privatising the main institutions of banking is a political decision that should not be taken by interim government, they said.

The political government only could take such decisions, they said adding that such decisions could make the CG controversial.

The leaders said current problems in banking system can be resolved by taking necessary measures, not by privatising them.

They also urged the CG to hold back from the decision to privatise the public banks.

An advisory council meeting at the Chief Adviser's Office on Saturday gave the seal of approval to the draft Memorandum and Articles of Association, meaning autonomous boards of directors instead of the finance ministry would run the three banks.

DAM project to protect HR of poor children, women

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) is going to launch a project to safeguard the rights of children and women from poor and ultra-poor families, says a press release.

The two-year project entitled 'Action to Safeguard Human Rights of the Indigents (Ashroy)' will initially be implemented at 51 villages in Dhaka, Narsingdi, Jessore and Satkhira with the assistance from the European Union.

This was disclosed at an orientation meeting held in the Mission Bhaban at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday. Shahidullah Khan, director of the Human Rights and Social Justice Division of DAM, gave a multimedia presentation on various aspects of the project.

Kazi Rafiqul Alam, president and chief executive, M Ehsanur Rahman, deputy executive director, Shafigul Islam, director (programmes), and Advocate Shirin Nahar, assistant director, were present at the meeting.

Under the project, various activities will be undertaken to raise awareness about human rights, empower the poor to resist human rights violations, train local people and members of the local administration and law enforcement agencies and operate 'one stop service centre' for the poor.



A mobile court led by Magistrate Rokon-ud-Dowla seizes date-expired powder milk, tomato sauce, Pringles chips and other commodities from a warehouse at Baridhara in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Why ETV not be allowed to restore operation

HC rules on govt

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued a rule upon the government to explain why it should not be directed to allow the Ekushey Television (ETV) to restore its operation through its satellite and terrestrial facilities from the state-run Bangladesh Television.

The court also issued a rule upon Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to show cause why it should not be directed to allocate ETV a frequency for airing its programme.

Responding to a petition filed by ETV Chairman Abdus Salam, challenging the non-response of the BTRC for allocating frequency, a division bench comprising Justice Syed M Dastagir Husain and Justice Mamnoon Rahman passed the orders.

"The rule is made returnable in three weeks," the court order said. ETV, country's first private sector TV channel with terrestrial facility, launched its telecast in April 1999 during the Awami League rule. But it was shut down following a Supreme Court judgment on August 29, 2002 that declared ETV licence illegal.

Later the ETV, under its changed ownership, made an attempt to get fresh licence. On refusal, ETV took shelter of the higher court and won the legal battle.

DU ADMISSION TEST

Results of Kha unit published

DU CORRESPONDENT

Results of Kha unit admission test under the arts faculty of Dhaka University (DU) for the session 2006-07 were published yesterday, said a press release.

Of the total 18500 applicants, 4428 have come out successfully for 2400 seats.

The viva voc of the passed applicants will begin on March 3 at room no 1001 of Dean's Office at Arts Building.

The candidates must bring with them admit card of the admission test, marks sheets of SSC and HSC or equivalent exams and two copies of passport-sized colour photographs during the viva.

To know the details about the results and viva voc, applicants are directed to see notice boards at Arts Building or log on to www.univdhaka.edu

The viva will be held according to merit list.

The viva of the applicants holding positions from 1-600 will be held on March 3, 601-1200 on March 4, 1201-1800 on March 5, 1801-2400 on March 6 and 2401-2600 on March 7.

Applicants holding merit positions from 2601-4428 can get admission in Arabic, Persian and Urdu, Sanskrit and Pali and Theatre and Music departments subject to vacant seats and qualifications.

The viva of the applicants for Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit and Pali departments will be held on March 8.

The viva for Theatre and Music Department will be held on March 10 and 11.

Outlaw leader killed in 'crossfire'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

A regional leader of outlawed Biplobi Communist Party (BCP) was killed in 'crossfire' between police and his cohorts at Jagannathpur village under Sadar upazila in the district early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Kamal alias Chara Kamal, 28, of West Lahini under Sadar upazila and an accused in at least seven cases including two for murder.

A police team of Mirpur Police Station arrested Kamal from a hideout at Mirpur upazila on Saturday at about 6:00pm and handed over to Sadar police at night.

During the interrogation, Kamal admitted his involvement with the outfit and gave away information about firearms hidden at Jagannathpur.

The BCP cadres opened fire on police after the law enforcement agency reached Jagannathpur bridge to recover firearms at about 3.30am. Police retaliated with fire resulting in an hour-long gun battle with the BCP cadres.

According to police, Kamal got caught in 'crossfire' and died on the spot as he tried to escape from police van during the shootout.

Police could not recover any firearms, sources said.

PROMOTION OF GOODWILL

Saarc Car Rally kicks off Mar 15

BSS, Dhaka

Saarc Car Rally-2007 will be flagged off ceremonially at a function in Cox's Bazar Stadium on March 15.

The rally, a motor expedition, is aimed at strengthening people to people contact, promote goodwill among Saarc nations and enhance economic cooperation. It has been planned also to demonstrate cultural and geographical diversities of member countries of the regional grouping, an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told BSS yesterday.

Chief adviser of the caretaker government Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, Adviser for Communications and Civil Aviation Ministry Maj Gen (Retd) M A Matin and Adviser for Foreign Affairs Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury are expected to attend the inaugural function of the rally.

Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh in his speech during the 13th Saarc Summit proposed the car rally saying, "If we wish the next 20 years of Saarc to be different, we should take the first decision to reconnect the countries of the sub-continent on the one hand and then reconnect the sub-continent to the larger Asian neighbourhood on the other."

He also recalled the experience of the Indian-ASEAN car rally in 2004.

Subsequently, foreign ministers of Saarc member states endorsed the proposal for organising the Saarc Car Rally.

The car rally is expected to have bearing on areas like trade, tourism and culture. It is planned as a media and business event to highlight Saarc objectives and also act as a certain raiser to the 14th Saarc Summit to be held in New Delhi on April 3-4, 2007, the source said.

The routes have been selected to highlight the places of major tourist attractions of the member countries and possibilities of trade by road.

The cars to be participated in the rally would leave Bangladesh via Burimar (Lalmonirhat) on March 18 covering 1,323 kilometres before entering Bhutan through India. The rally will leave Bhutan for Nepal through India, where from it would start for Pakistan through Uttar Pradesh in India.

The participants of the rally are expected to travel Afghanistan, from where they would return to India via Pakistan. They will be received by the Summit leaders of Saarc in New Delhi on April 3-4.

Later, the participants of the car

rally would leave for Mumbai, where from they would enter Colombo by sea.

Sri Lankan president is likely to declare formal end of the rally, from where the participants will visit the Maldives by ferry.

PROPERTIES DAMAGED 7 BCL activists sued at JU

JU CORRESPONDENT

The authorities of Jahangirnagar University (JU) have filed a case against seven Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists for their involvement in damaging property of Moulana Bhasani Hall during an intra-party feud on Saturday night.

The university authorities was compelled to take the action in the wake of deteriorating law and order situation on the campus as the intra-party feud among the activists of BCL has reached its peak over the control of different dormitories, sources said.

The accused are BCL President Sohel Parvez, General Secretary Mahmud Naser Jony, Joint Secretary Zahid Parvez Pulok, Chisty, Sagar, Samon and Sujon.

Panic gripped the students on Saturday night as activists of different BCL factions wrangled over establishing supremacy at Moulana Bhasani hall.

No casualties, however, was reported during the incident.

The incident occurred after a group of BCL activists led by Habib, vice-president of BCL, ousted a junior activist loyal to Jony and Pulok group from the hall at 10:00pm.

As the news spread, some BCL activists led by Pulok haunted for Habib, forcing the BCL leaders to sit in a meeting at the guest room at 11:00pm to settle the issue.

During the meeting, Sohel Parvez pulled down the photograph of former prime minister Khaleda Zia from the guest room, triggering a chase and counter-chase between the activists of BCL and Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

The BCL activists vandalised the windowpanes of the guest room and hall office during the incident.

Earlier, the BCL activists of Meer Mosharraf Hossain Hall ousted some JCD leaders from the dormitory and tore down posters of JCD.

BCL leaders are also harassing freshers at different dormitories including Al Beruni Hall in the name of giving them seat.

1,519 more held as anti-crime drive continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army-led joint forces arrested a total of 1,519 people on different charges across the country during the last 24 hours.

Among the detainees, the military force arrested 81 while the police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) detained 1438 people, said a press release.

The military force members recovered four firearms, a few rounds of bullet and ammunition during the drive and handed the criminals over to police.

Rab and police personnel arrested 1,438 from different parts of the country. Among them, 16 are accused in arm cases, one in explosives case, 12 are convicted criminals, 706 listed criminals and

703 other criminals.

The Rab and police recovered seven pipe guns, three pistols, two revolvers, four LGs, three shutter guns, 23 explosive devices, 12 rounds of bullets and 13 weapons.

They also seized 18 motor-bikes having no legal documents and registration and lodged 141 cases in this connection.



PHOTO: STAR

A huge quantity of rotten dry chilli was found at one of the 16 godowns at Majhir Ghat in Chittagong during a raid by the members of joint forces yesterday.

Japan calls US policy in Iraq 'naive'

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's foreign minister has criticised the United States policy in Iraq as "very naive" and blamed it for spiralling unrest there, in another swipe at US tactics by the key Washington ally.

Taro Aso said late Saturday in Kyoto that the then US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld "started off the war, but the operation after the occupation was very naive."

"Because this operation did not work well, it (Iraq) is in trouble now," he said, quoted by Jiji Press.

"It became clear that the operation after a war is very important when you think about peace-building."

Aso's comments came on the day a suicide bomber blew up his Mercedes truck in a Baghdad market, killing at least 130 people and injuring hundreds, in the second deadliest attack since the US-led invasion of 2003.

They follow comments by Japanese Defence Minister Fumio Kyuma who has made a series of critical remarks about US policies, which provoked displeasure from the US State Department.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country having chances of rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Comilla and Noakhali in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderate to thick fog may occur at places over the river basins of the country during the night until morning, Met Office said in a forecast.

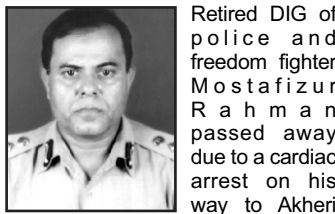
It said night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 28.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and lowest 13.0 degree Celsius at Srirongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:47pm today and rises at 6:37am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.8	18.2	90	61
Chittagong	26.5	17.2	97	81
Rajshahi	27.5	17.5	99	72
Khulna	29.3	18.0	97	85
Barisal	28.5	18.6	85	95
Sylhet	23.6	17.7	85	76
Cox's Bazar	29.5	17.5	93	--



Munajat of the Biswa Jitema yesterday at the age of 57.

Mostafiz, who joined the police service in 1973, retired after discharging his duties in "many significant posts of the police", said a DMP release.

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

His namaz-e-janaza was held on the grounds of Biswa Jitema and Razarbagh Police Lines.

He will be buried at his family graveyard in Fulbari of Dinajpur district after a janaza there today after Zohr prayers.

Inspector General of Police, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner, high officials and members of police expressed deep shock at his death.

Hasan Awrangi

UNB, Satkhira

Elderly journalist and lawyer Hasan Awrangi passed away due to old age ailments at his residence at Bharsa village in Tala upazila yesterday at the age of 86.

Awrangi left behind his two sons and five daughters to mourn his death.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at Collectorate Jame-Mosque. He will be buried at his village home.