

Multidimensional policy a must to address monga Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A multidimensional policy approach can help alleviate poverty as well as address monga, a near-famine situation in the northern region of the country, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

"We need to be determined to have a multidimensional policy approach. It is possible to solve the problems considering the nature and reasons behind monga. If it is possible, we will also be able to eliminate poverty from

Bangladesh," said Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) Chairman Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud.

The seminar on monga was organised by Institute of Microfinance (InM) and PKSF.

Finance, Planning and Commerce Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam and Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock Adviser CS Karim were also present at the seminar.

Prof Mahmud said 20 percent people in the monga-hit areas either sold out their assets or made

a contract in advance to sell their labour. He also recommended framing a permanent policy to stop river erosion.

Prof Mahmud, referring to cyclone Sidr and Monga, said a mixed policy is necessary.

"We don't want to see micro-credit as agricultural credit," he said, adding that there was a distinction between loan and relief.

"We should not forget that a culture of repaying loans has been created in micro-finance sector," he added.

But the finance adviser said that credit can be taken as relief in situations that are beyond human control.

He added that the intensity of monga was much less than that of the previous year and the extent of migration also shrunk due to collective efforts.

"We cannot address monga with temporary programmes. A permanent solution is needed to come out of the problem. I think, collective effort can give us the solution," said Agriculture Adviser CS Karim.

CJ unveils cover of SC Digest

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin yesterday formally unveiled the cover of a book titled "The Bangladesh Supreme Court Digest" containing important decisions of the apex court.

After a lapse of long 16 years, the Supreme Court took the initiative to publish its yearly digest, the function was held.

Judges of the Appellate Division, Supreme Court Bar Association President Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam and secretary AM Amin Uddin were present at the function at the judges' lounge.

Lawyers believe the Digest will be useful for right reference to the decisions of the Appellate Division for the judges, including the subordinate courts, practicing lawyers, academics and legal researchers.

Later, replying to a question about his evaluation of the functioning of the judiciary after separation from the executive fetters two months ago, Chief Justice Amin said he will not like to say anything on this so early.

About a separate secretariat for the apex court following the judiciary separation, he said the matter is under consideration while work on this is going on.



Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin unveils the cover of the book 'The Bangladesh Supreme Court Digest' at the Judges' Lounge at Supreme Court in the city yesterday.

APHR urges govt to lift emergency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Association for the Protection of Human Rights (APHR) yesterday urged the caretaker government to withdraw the state of emergency immediately in order to ensure democratic rights of the countrymen.

Lifting of emergency is also needed to create an atmosphere conducive to a free, fair and neutral election, APHR Chairman Prof Dr Md Mostafa Chowdhury and General Secretary Md Rezaul Karim Khan Reza said in a statement.

"If the emergency is not lifted, fear and anxiety would be created in the minds of people and they would not be able to enjoy democratic rights properly, they added.

Welcoming the drive against corruption and terrorism, they said the government should be careful to ensure that human rights are not violated during this drive.

Obituary

Carmen Gomes, an eminent social worker, passed away on December 27 at the age of 61.

He left behind his wife, two daughters, a son, grandchildren and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

A member of the governing body of Saint Placid's High School, he was actively involved in several social activities, including the Parish Council, Young Men's Christian Association and Saint Vincent D'Paul.

Sohurun Nesa

Sohurun Nesa, mother of Alhaj Ismail Hossain, a central leader of Jatiya Party (Ershad), passed away due to old-age complications at her Maniknagar residence on Tuesday at the age of 70, says a press release.

She left behind her husband, six sons, five daughters, grandchildren and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

She was buried at Azimpur graveyard.

Death anniversary

Today is the 3rd death anniversary of Md Suja-Ud Daula, a former member of parliament and renowned pharmacist and industrialist, says a press release.

He was also a chairman of the then Eastern Mercantile Bank (now Pubali Bank).

A milad mahfil and Qurankhwani will be held at his residence and at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard.

Azizul Huq Chowdhury

Today is the eighth death anniversary of Azizul Huq Chowdhury, general manager of Petrobangla, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at the mosque at his home village at Bariadhala in Sitakundu, Chittagong after Juma prayers tomorrow.

Qurankhwani will also be held at his residence in Dhaka and food will be distributed among the destitute. Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the milad mahfil.

Qulkhwani

BSS, Dhaka

Qulkhwani of Advocate Ozair Farooq, former President of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), will be held today after Asr prayers at his Kalabagan residence, family sources said.

Advocate Farooq passed away due to a cardiac arrest on December 30.

He was laid to eternal rest at his family graveyard at Chakhill in Noakhali.

AH Syed Sadequr Rahman

BSS, Dhaka

Qulkhwani of A H Syed Sadequr Rahman, former managing director of Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (FDC) will be held tomorrow after Asr prayers at Baitul Aman mosque at Dhanmondi in the city.

He passed away due to old age complications on December 30.

He was the general secretary of All India Students Muslim League in forties and council member of All India Muslim League.

He also served the Daily Azad as chief reporter from 1945 to 1949 in Kolkata, India.



Finance, Planning and Commerce Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam addresses a national seminar on monga at PKSf auditorium in the city yesterday.

Biman measures to send Saudi-bound people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has taken special measures to send stranded Bangladeshi workers to Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia, by arranging additional flights, Biman sources said.

Biman, the national flag carrier, yesterday assured the Saudi Arabia-bound Bangladeshi workers of managing tickets and therefore requested to contact the offices of Biman Bangladesh Airlines in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet.

"Biman Bangladesh Airlines has

taken measures to ensure the return of Saudi-bound Bangladeshi workers who could not manage tickets from other Middle East-bound airlines," Biman Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Dr MA Momen told The Daily Star last night.

"We have arranged additional flights and if needed we would defer departure of normal passengers, bound for Saudi Arabia," another Biman high official said.

Meanwhile, several hundreds of Saudi-bound Bangladeshi workers were seen struggling to get their tickets confirmed by the Saudi Arabian Airlines in front of Hotel

Sonargaon at Karwan Bazar in the city.

It could not be confirmed, however, if such delay for confirming tickets was the reason behind lack of seats.

Many of them said they would lose their jobs if they fail to join their work within a week.

According to an official of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, around 1 lakh workers are ready to fly to Malaysia, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Earlier in September, thousands of workers had to postpone their scheduled travel amid flight shortages leading the government to follow open sky policy.

CITY SWEEPER COLONY Families return to building that develops cracks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All the 40 families of a four-storey building in the city's Ganakuli Sweeper Colony, which developed cracks in its walls, returned to their homes yesterday following assurances from Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) authorities.

On Tuesday night, about 2,000 people of the 40 families vacated the building as they spotted cracks in the walls and floors in six rooms on the ground floor.

Soon after the incident, DCC officials and engineers rushed to the spot and inspected the cracks.

DCC Chief Engineer Col Ashfaqul Islam told The Daily Star, "The soil on which the building stands has become weak due to various reasons. As a result, cracks have developed in the walls."

"We have told all the residents to go back to their homes as there is no possibility of developing more cracks," he said, adding that the building needs repair but there is no need to demolish the building.

Chanda Rani, a resident of the building, said, "In the early hours of Tuesday, I woke up hearing firecracker-like sound and soon found several cracks in walls and floors."

A DCC engineer, preferring anonymity, said the building was constructed on a ground, which was earlier used as rubbish dump, and this might have been a reason for the incident.

Hasina Shams Foundation stands by Sidr victims

The Hasina Shams Foundation distributed winter clothes among the Sidr victims at Charbhadrashan, Sadarpur and Boalmari upazilas in Faridpur recently, says a press release.

Muhammad Shams-ul Haque, chairman, Shams Group, conducted the relief operation.

Hasina Shams, co-chairman of the Foundation, inaugurated the relief operation programmes by handing over the clothes to Sadarpur UNO Nasiruddin Ahmed.

The Foundation also distributed winter clothes, including blankets, shawls, jackets and sweaters, among the Sidr-affected people in Piazkhal and Meerkandi at Nagarkanda upazila in the district.

AK Azad, a noted businessman, and Samar Kundu accompanied the relief distribution team.

DU QUESTION LEAKAGE Probe body meets

DU CORRESPONDENT

The committee formed to investigate the question leakage in the masters' final examinations 2005 under the department of political science at Dhaka University held its first meeting yesterday.

The meeting decided to seek information from teachers and students of the department and others concerned about the issue, meeting sources said.

The meeting requested all concerned to provide any information or documents to the committee at the office of the examination controller at 3:00pm on January 7.

The committee was formed on December 29 after questions of comprehensive course of MSS examinations 2005 leaked.

Four shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people were shot in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Armed criminals shot three people in the city's Shantinagar Post Office Gali area in the afternoon.

They were identified as water supplier Belal Hossain, 30, rickshaw-puller Abul Kashem and security guard Rashidul Islam, 31.

Witnesses said the criminals sprayed bullets from a white private car on Belal when he was reading a newspaper at about 3:00pm.

Hearing his scream, pedestrians

chased the private car. But the criminals sped away firing gunshots, leaving Kashem and Rashidul injured.

The injured were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Talking to reporters at DMCH, Belal said Shamim, a local extortionist in Maghbazar area, demanded Tk 10,000 from him few days ago but he refused to pay.

Ramna police said none was arrested in this connection.

In another incident, carpenter Md Suman received bullet wounds as unidentified criminals shot him at Gulbagh at around 7:00pm.



Foreign Adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury and Agriculture Adviser CS Karim hold a meeting with the envoys of China, Morocco, Saudia Arabia and the United Arab Emirates at Foreign Ministry in the city yesterday.

N Korea still undecided on giving up nukes

AFP, Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il has still not decided whether to give up his nuclear weapons despite a disarmament pledge under an international deal, a senior analyst said yesterday.

Nam Sung-Wook, a North Korea expert at Korea University who advises President-elect Lee Myung-Bak, said he expects Pyongyang to stall on the disarmament deal after missing a year-end deadline.

"National Defence Commission Chairman Kim Jong-Il seems not to have made a decision yet to abandon nuclear weapons," Nam told SBS radio.

Pyongyang will "drag its feet in

negotiations with the US over what it can get in return, probably until late February," he added.

Lee, who has promised a firmer line with North Korea, takes office on February 25.

The following day, in what Nam described as an "unprecedentedly friendly event" between the two countries, the New York Philharmonic is to perform in Pyongyang.

Nam declined to elaborate to AFP on his remarks.

Under a landmark six-nation agreement the North was supposed to have disabled its main atomic plants and declared all its nuclear programmes by December 31, in return for one million tons of fuel oil or equivalent energy aid

and diplomatic benefits.

But the year-end deadline slipped, with the North yet to complete the disabling work and no signs of an upcoming declaration.

The United States, Japan and South Korea -- members of the negotiations along with Russia, China and the North itself -- expressed disappointment at the missed deadline.

President-elect Lee, of the conservative opposition Grand National Party, says he will link future aid to North Korea more closely to progress in nuclear disarmament.

Nam described the communist state's New Year policy message as "positive" in that it lacked its usual criticism of Lee's party.

Tributes paid to Chittaranjan

BSS, New York

Speakers at a memorial meeting held in New York branch office of Muktaadhara yesterday paid rich tributes to late Chittaranjan Saha, founder of Muktaadhara and Puthighar, publishing houses of progressive and creative works.

Prof Ali Anwar, Dr Joyti Prokash Dutta, Bishwajit Shaha, Hasan Ferdous, Purabi Dutta and Shams Al-Mobin took part in the discussion meeting.

Recalling his contribution in the publishing industry of Bangladesh, the speakers observed that the death of Chittaranjan has created an irreparable vacuum in the publishing sector.

They conveyed their heartfelt sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Israel does not expect war with Iran: Peres

AFP, Berlin

Israeli President Shimon Peres said he did not believe a war with Iran would be necessary but called for the end of the current government in Tehran, in an interview published yesterday.

Peres told the German daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was dangerous for Israel and the region but that other means could be used to contain the threat.

"I do not think that a war with Iran is necessary," he said when asked if he supported a military strike against

the country.

"Ahmadinejad can be deposed by other means. Sanctions have revealed themselves to be a very effective instrument. Sanctions, not war, did away with North Korea's nuclear weapons."

He said he did not believe the Iranian people wanted to destroy Israel or develop nuclear arms.

"The majority is not ready to trade Allah and Mohammed for enriched uranium. Those that, like Iran, threaten the future of humanity have no future themselves. We will survive Ahmadinejad."

WEATHER TODAY logo with sun and cloud icons.

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said, adding that night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 28.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar, Sitakundu and Teknaf and lowest 09.4 degrees Celsius at Jessore.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:24pm today and rises at 6:42am tomorrow.

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

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

DHAKA TODAY logo.

ICT seminar

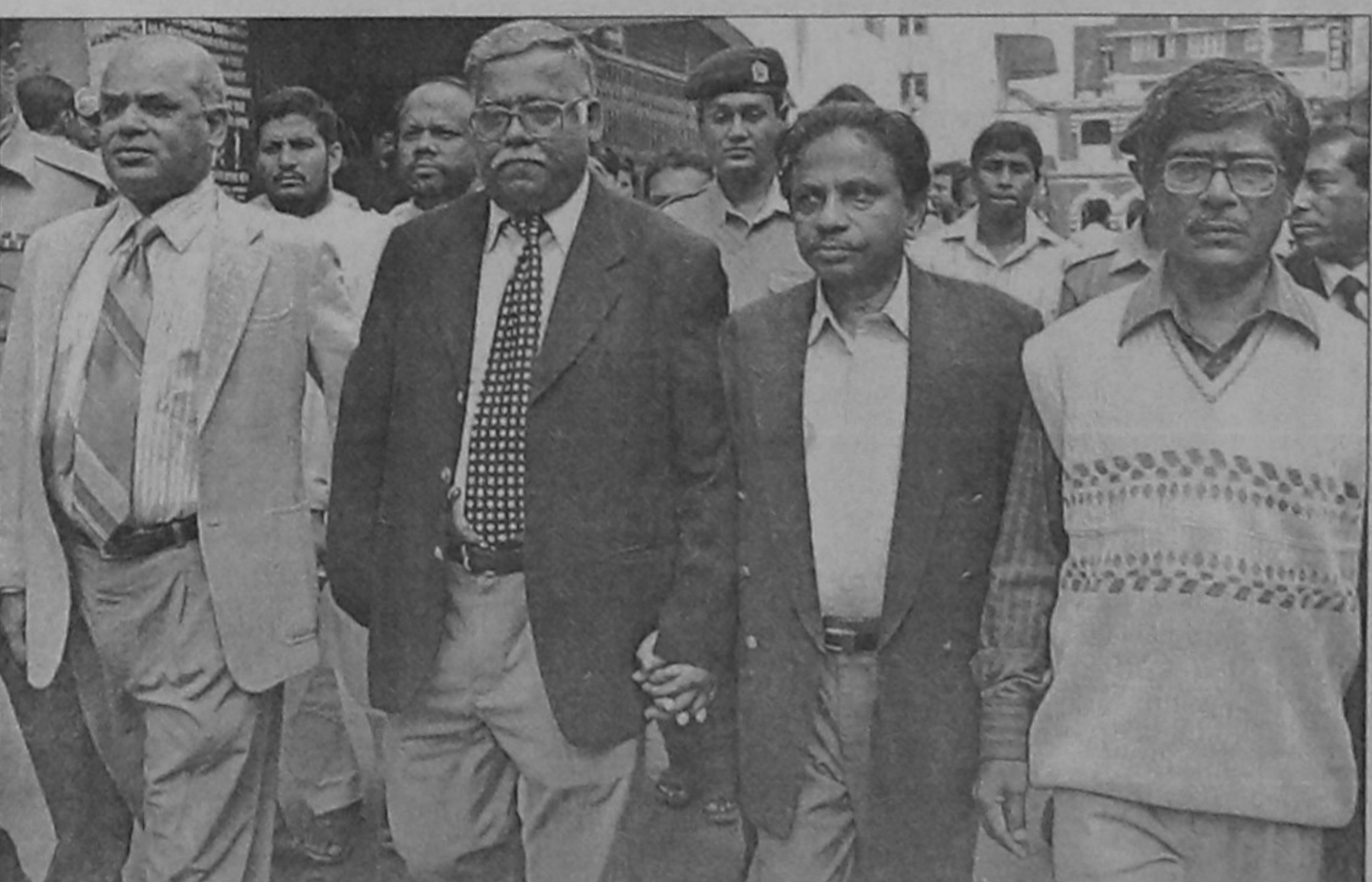
Department of Computer Science, Stamford University and Biggani.org jointly organise a seminar on Bangladesh ICT expertise in USA. Venue: Siddeswari campus auditorium, Stamford University. Time: 10:30am.

Technology transfer

Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI) will transfer technology of 'Goatpox Vaccine' to Livestock Directorate. Venue: BLRI conference room, Savar. Time: 10:00am.

Lecture

Prof Anisuzzaman of Department of Bangla, Dhaka University will deliver lecture on the occasion of 56th founding anniversary of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh. Venue: Auditorium of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh. Time: 4:00pm.



Four detained teachers of Dhaka University were produced before a court in the city yesterday.