tele-health

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Japan-Bangladesh Friendship

Hospital (JBFH) yesterday said it will provide tele-health

services for patients round the

and national polls, says a press

Anyone having health

troubles may dial 10600 from

land or mobile phones to get

medical consultation from its

network (PSTN) operator

Public switched telephone

JBFH Chairman Dr Jonaid

Shafiq, Managing Director Dr

Sardar A Nayeem, Director

Mahbubul Alam Babu and

Shafiq took the decision at a

specialised doctors.

provide the services.

release.

JBFH to provide

DEMOCRACY DAY

Hasina, Khaleda call for strengthening democracy

Bss. Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in separate messages yesterday called for concerted efforts to democracy in the country. strengthen democracy.

In a message on the eve of the 'Democracy Day', Hasina said "We must take a fresh vow on this day to free our nation from the clutches of the evil forces to establish the peoples' right to vote occasion of the 'Democracy Day'. and help establish democracy in the country."

freed democracy by forcing the autocratic ruler to step down through a mass-upsurge after relentless struggle, the message said.

Hasina said the victory of Bengali nation has started by forcing the Pakistani occupation forces to surrender after a ninth month bloody War of Liberation in 1971.

In collaboration with a handful of killers, she said, the defeated forces had imposed autocratic rule over the nation by killing the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975.

Since 1975, Hasina said, the subsequent governments had established terrorism, lootings, all evil attempts. corruption in society to serve their purpose.

including Shaheed Noor Hossain, Selim,

Delwar, Moyezuddin, Dr Milon, Jehad, Fattah and Titas, the AL president expressed her gratitude and paid tributes to the memories of the martyrs for their sacrifices in restoring

Hasina also urged all democracy-loving people to be united to uphold democracy.

In another message, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia greeted the countrymen on the

She said, "December 6 is an extraordinary day On December 6, 1990, she said, the people had in our national history. The new journey of democracy began on this very day in 1990 with the end of an autocratic rule following long nine years of movements and struggles."

Khaleda recalled with profound respect the contribution of the martyrs who made supreme sacrifices in the democratic movement and

prayed for eternal peace of their departed souls. On this occasion, she urged all to work unitedly for democracy and national development.

Though democracy was freed in 1990, it is not yet danger-free, she said, adding that all would have to make pledge afresh to safeguard the country's independence and sovereignty, foiling

In a separate message, BNP Secretary General Recalling the contribution of martyrs, Khondaker Delwar Hossain also greeted the people on the occasion of the 'Democracy Day'.

Oil prices fall to \$42

FROM PAGE 1

employment report could reemphasise the focus on bad economic news and resultant lower demand for energy.

The key November nonfarm payrolls and unemployment report is expected to show the loss of 325,000 jobs in the United States, the world's largest economy and biggest energy consumer.

The US, European Union, Japan and other economies are already in recession, and investors are worried about an increasingly marked decline in demand among the industrialised countries, and a slowdown in emerging countries such as China.

Oil prices have fallen by more than two thirds since reaching record high points above 147 dollars in July, pulled

weighs on demand.

there was no "floor" for the duction. price of oil.

began the week sharply lower would be made when they next Petroleum Exporting December 17. Countries (Opec) decided at a weekend meeting against output twice this year by a total cutting production, preferring to wait until December before reducing crude prices but fears remain that a

The cartel's secretary demandforenergy. general, Abdalla Salem El-Badri, said on Monday that agreed in September and Opec would decide on a "major" output cut next month if the oil market were deemed to this month as concern be deteriorating.

Opec, which pumps 40 sion.

down by a widening global percent of the world's crude, economic slowdown that met in Cairo on Saturday to assess the state of the oil mar-Opec president Chakib ket but held off from making Khelil said on Wednesday that any decision on cutting pro-

Instead, energy ministers Oil prices meanwhile decided that any output move after the Organization of meet in Oran, Algeria on

Opec has already slashed of two million barrels per day (bpd) in response to plunging global recession will drain

The Opec production cuts October failed to stop prices sliding under 50 dollars earlier mounted about a global reces-

語語 ほどうしょし 【星层 医安克氏医安克氏氏管对抗性性病性 CEC tells of problems

contest the polls. But many other defaulters who did not file such writ petitions will remain out of the electoral race, he told a roundtable on 'Ninth Parliamentary Election and Our Mass Media'

The Election Commission (EC) and the central bank now have to think of such a situation seriously, the CEC said at the roundtable organised by Mass Communication and Journalism Alumni Association of Dhaka University and held at the DU Senate Bhaban.

"We have provisions in the Representation of People Order to bar loan and bill defaulters from contesting polls. But difficulty arises in

implementing those." The CEC announced that there will be no code of conduct for the mass media to cover the coming elections as they have dropped the idea in the face of difficulties and criticisms. He left the matter to an elected government.

He assured journalists that there would be no problem for them to have access to polling centres for election coverage. "The print and electronic media will cover the election as they did in the past," he said.

Regretting the EC's limitations in implementing the electoral laws regarding

DHAKA TODAY

FBCCI organises a seminar on 'Maximizing growth for

Bangladesh: A private sector vision'. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 10:00am.

Dialogue

Seminar

South Asian Institute of Advanced Legal and Human Rights Studies, and Embassy of France in Bangladesh jointly organises a dialogue on 'National and regional institutions for the protection of human rights: Challenges for Bangladesh'. Venue: Lake Shore Hotel. Time: 9:30am.

Saarc Charter Day

The Saarc Charter Day will be observed. Venue: Brac conference room. Time: 10:00am.

Rotary Dhaka Central

The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held, Venue: Dhaka Club, Time: 1:30pm.

defaulters. Huda said contestants in the parliamentary polls are supposed to be 'role

model' in the society. should have been a mandatory criterion for political parties not to nominate such persons.

about rescheduling of the the keynote paper. elections, he said the commission has the authority to included Dean of DU social change polls schedules to sciences faculty Prof Harun-ur ensure participation of all political parties and credibility of the elections.

He ruled out uncertainty over holding of the election slated for December 29.

DU mass communication and journalism department chaired the roundtable while Rajib Meer, chairman of mass He stressed that there communication and journalism department of Chittagong University, and Sheikh Shafiul Islam, a teacher at the University of Development Reacting to criticisms Alternatives, jointly presented Speakers at the roundtable Rashid and DU Teachers Association General Secretary Prof Anwar Hossain, political leaders GM Quader, Hasanul Haque Inu, Mujahidul Islam Selim and Hannan Shah, Prof Sheikh Abdus Salam of Rahat Khan and Shirin Akhter.

LAND DISPUTE

Acid thrown on 2 farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur nals riding motorbikes hurled

Two farmers suffered severe burn injuries as criminals threw acid on them near Tota farm on Thakurgaon-Gorea highway in Sadar upazila yesterday evening over a land dispute.

The victims are Md Abdul Malek, 38, son Md Hakim Uddin, and Md Enamul Haque, 26, son of Md Erfan Ali of Boda upazila in Panchagarh.

Police sources in Thakurgaon said some crimi-

acid on them while the farmers were returning home by a motorbike at about 7:10pm.

Hearing cries of the farmers, local people rushed there and sent them to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital in a 'critical condition'.

Police and doctors suspected that the miscreants might have collected acid of battery and threw it on the farmers from behind. Backsides of the farmers were burnt partially, sources said.

No change in temperature UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 24 hours as of 6:00pm today. Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins

during early morning. Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over

the country, Met office said. Yesterday's highest temperature of 31.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and the lowest of 14.5 degree at Srimangol.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm today and rises at 6:29am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were: Temperature in Humidity in City/Town

	Celsius		percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	28.9	17.8	71	76
Chittagong	29.7	18.2	74	70
Rajshahi	28.0	16.5	90	88
Khulna	28.0	17.8	79	80
Barisal	28.8	17.5	91	87
Sylhet	29.0	18.5	71	70
Cox's Bazar	31.0	18.8	70	77

Free, fair polls will be held

METROPOLITAN/NEWS

Hopes French envoy STAFF CORRESPONDENT

French Ambassador Charley Causeret yesterday hoped that a free, fair and credible parliamentary election will be held in the country, with participation of all political

The envoy also hoped that Bangladesh will move forward with its economic progress after the polls.

The envoy said this while talking to reporters after a meeting with BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office in the evening.

During the meeting, they discussed employment, food economy and energy issues, Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury, a member of BNP's Foreign Affairs Advisory Committee, told reporters.

Causeret assured the BNP chief of his government's cooperation in achieving growth in these sectors.

Khaleda told the envoy that if democratic rule continues, the country would achieve economic progress faster.

Meanwhile, Pakistan High Commissioner Alamgir Babar also called on Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office, party sources said.

The Pakistan envoy also held a meeting with the foreign affairs advisory committee of BNP there.

Members of the committee -- former foreign secretary Shamsher M Chowdhury former ambassador Sabihuddin Ahmed and Maj Gen (retd) Fazle Akbar -- were present at the meeting.

30 win Toyota Dream Car Art Contest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Navana Group awarded 30 winners of its Toyota Dream Car Art Contest '08 at Navana-Toyota showroom at Tejgaon in the city yesterday.

Over 150 children took part in the finale of the contest, says a press release.

Noted artist Hashem Khan selected the best 30 artworks. Some more paintings, including the 30, will be sent to Toyota authorities for judgmentatinternational level.

Navana Group Director Shahedul Islam, General Manager (HR) Aminul Haque and noted artist Uttam Guha were present at the award giving ceremony.

Mehendi festival begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As part of the celebration of Eidul-Azha and 400 years of Dhaka, Dhakabashi and Swadhinata Sangsad, jointly organised a 'Mehendi Festival' and 'Zamdani Fashion Competition' at the Public Library seminar room in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Girls from different areas in the city attended the inaugural session of the festival.

The festival will continue till 'Chand-raat' (the night before the Eid day).

Nilphamari Govt High School reunion Dec 11

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Reunion of old students of Nilphamari Government High School will be held on the school premises on December 11.

Former students who are FROM PAGE 16 interested to join are requested to register with the | polls still haunt the minds of reunion celebration committee on payment of Tk 200 and submission of two passportsized photographs.

Interested persons can also call at 01820548154 01716058656, 01717061418, 01712252584, 01197118465 or 01712295690 for details.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mehedi Hasan, president of Bhaskar Nattya Dal, and press and publication secretar of the Bangladesh Pathanatak Parishad, passed away due to a cardiac arrest yesterday at the age of 38, says a press

He left behind his mother, wife, one daughter, three brothers, two sisters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.



Director (operation) Zohair Children take part in the Toyota Dream Car Art Contest '08 at Navana-Toyota showroom at Tejgaon in the city yesterday.

meeting on November 25. No help yet for Lalbagh fire victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 700 victims of Thursday's fires at Islambagh in the capital spent a night under the open sky as they after losing valuables from the houses and the three as the wooden ceilquarters.

three children were burnt Hussain, 42, who lost three of the house in the fire. He said injured in the fires that Sharmin, 5, 13-month-old members spent Thursday plastic factories, 20 ware- in-law Nasrin, 28--in one of evening he did not get any handyet.

houses and 100 houses at the fires was seen walking relieffrom anybody. Islambagh in Lalbagh area. around the spot yesterday

ties worth over Tk 4 crore while stomach. a few opportunists looted did not get any aid from any fire-fighters were busy trying like matchsticks. to put out the fires.

The fires damaged proper- afternoon with an empty

He said he could not save almost everything in the fires factories as the victims and ing of the house caught fire

Rickshaw-van puller Babul Six people including A stunned Mokbul Mialost all his belongings and alive and 10 others were his family members -- he along with his family of six gutted around 50 small nephew Emon and his sister- night out in the cold. As of last

Debris still occupies the spots and smoke was still coming out from places. Victims were seen going through the rubble to salvage whatever they could.

Locals said people wishing to stand in election usually come forward with cash, warm clothes and food in times of need but they have not extended their helping

Bangladesh polls deemed most crucial*

FROM PAGE 1

become a model of a relatively prosperous Muslim majority democracy... Or it could return to the winner-take-all obstructionist politics of previous years," he said.

"If Bangladesh stumbles within the coming months, it could become a breeding ground for terrorists and groups wishing to operate in South and Southeast Asia,' Moriarty told the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, a government-funded advisory body created in 1998 to monitor religious freedom around the world and make policy recommendations to the US govern-

He said the US interest in Bangladesh revolve around and Sheikh Hasina of Awami three mutually reinforcing principles, which he referred to as the "three D's": democracy, development, and the denial of space to terrorism.

based groups" supporting and \$2 a day. influencing Bangladeshi

advantage of discontent with elections.

recent politics in the country. Both Khaleda Zia of BNP

Bangladesh, he said. Moriarty said corruption is ities "raise questions about sation.

Moriarty said he had no estimated to cost Bangladesh the fairness" of the December information about any Al- almost \$2 billion a year, food 29 elections. Qaeda links to extremist prices have risen more than Islamic groups in Bangladesh 50 percent over the past year Crowley, co-chair of the but there were "lots of accusa- and 86 percent of Bangladesh Caucus, was tions about the Pakistan- Bangladeshis live on less than

The ambassador, however, expressed optimism saying The US envoy said there that Bangladeshis "are deeply were "warning signs that committed to democracy" as extremism could take root in more than 90 percent have Bangladesh" if militants took said they plan to vote in the grinding poverty, weak gover- The ambassador's elabo-

nance and endemic corrup- rate testimony was apparently intended to commince the five Moriarty said he met major commissioners led by Felice players in this month's vote, Gaer and ensure United former prime ministers whose States' support for bitter rivalry has defined Bangladesh's bid to strengthen its democratic

process. Felice Gaer, chair of the League assured him of under- commission, said the mili- State University of New York, standing the need to improve tary's role as top government and Asif Saleh, executive the political environment in backer and the severe restrictions placed on political activ-

Congressman Joseph encouraged by the ambassador's assessment.

Crowley in his brief remark said he would do his best to ensure that the US remains committed to Bangladesh's future progress by enhancing American development assistance and helping the country (in its quest for better access to US market.
Other panelists who also

testified before the Commission were Prof Ali Riaz of Illinois State University, Prof Shapan Adnan of Singapore National University, Sochi Dastidar of director of Drishtipat, a USbased human-rights organi-

Love-soaked Nurul Islam laid to rest,

FROM PAGE 16 contingent presented a guard of honour to the valiant free-

dom fighter. Politicians, cultural personalities and activists, teachers and students gathered at the Shaheed Minar in the

morning to bid adieu to him. Nurul Islam, a nominee of the Awami League-led grand alliance for Noakhali-1 constituency in the upcoming parliamentary election, suffered burns in a mysterious fire at his Lalmatia apartment Wednesday. His only son Tamohar Islam Puchi was

burnt alive in the blaze. Nurul Islam's wife Rubi Rahman and their only daughter Moutusi Islam, who returned to Dhaka from the US in the early hours yesterday, stood in silence beside the coffin at the Shaheed Minar. They broke into tears when they saw their relatives there.

Communist Party of 4:00pm. Bangladesh, Workers' Party, tribute to the veteran politician.

to Nurul Islam.

death of its president. where his first namaj-e-janaza homage to Nurul Islam. was held after the Jum'a

Graveyard at Mirpur in the Shilpi Gosthi, Samajik coffin.

Martyred Intellectuals' Economic Association, Udichi placed floral wreaths on the

Leaders and activists of evening after his second namaj- Protirodh Committee, various political parties includ- e-janaza on Hazaribagh Leather Muktijuddho Museum, ing Awami League (AL), BNP, Technology College Ground at Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee, Sammilito AL leaders Abdur Razzak, Sangskritik Jote, Dhaka Gono Forum, Jatiya Matia Chowdhury, BNP lead- University Teachers' Samajtantrik Dal and Liberal ers Nazrul Islam Khan and Association, Peshajibi Democratic Party paid floral Mahbubul Alam Tara, Gono Samonnoy Parishad, FBCCI, Forum President Dr Kamal BGMEA, Supreme Court Ganotantri Party Hossain, Workers' Party Ainjibi Samiti, Kendriyo Presidium members and party President Rashed Khan Olama League, Swechhasebak general secretaries led by its Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik League, Jatiya Kabita Parisad, advisory committee president Dal President Hasanul Haque Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Azizul Islam also paid homage Inu, Journalist Shahriar Kabir, Christian Oikya Parishad, former adviser to a caretaker Kendriyo Khelaghar Asar, The party announced a government Sultana Kamal, Ganotantrik Ainjibi Samiti, in the early hours on three-day mourning at the FBCCI President Annisul Huq. Karmojibi Nari, Nari Pragati businessman Abdul Awal Sangha, Muktijoddha Nurul Islam's body was Mintoo, Dhaka University Vice Sanghati Parishad, kept at Shaheed Minar until Chancellor SMA Faiz and Hazaribagh Tannery Shramik 1:00pm. His body was then Rajshahi City Corporation Trade Union, Ganotantrik brought to the Dhaka Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Bam Morcha, Monisingha University Central Mosque Liton, among others, paid Farhat Trust, Kendrio Kachikachar Asar, Bangladesh Various organisations Chhatra League, Shramik including Bangabandhu Karmachari Oikya Parishad, He was laid to rest at the Sangskritik Jote, Bangladesh and Dhaka City Awami League

EC asked to ensure safety of minority

many constituencies in 2001 the Hindus, the speakers said at a discussion on a survey report on the state of minority communities in Bangladesh organised by Sampriti Mancha at the Asiatic Society auditorium in the capital.

Such incidents have increased the sense of insecurity among minority communities before the polls, said the speakers. "We should write to the

Election Commission asking it to mark the constituencies where minorities were repressed during and after the 2001polls as 'red areas'," said Bangladesh Mahila Parishad General Secretary Ayesha Khanam.

Presenting the survey

report, journalist Ajoy Dasgupta said properties of recently. the Hindus were grabbed by respondents said the police influential people in some areas after the election vio-

lence in 2001 increasing the plained to police of violence fanatics," headded. sense of insecurity among the on them while 42.21 percent community members.

must take steps to ensure that such complaint with them. the violent incidents occurred during 2001 polls do not take place again in the upcoming said they feel that their propelection," he said, adding that a erties are under threat some of them is growing gradhuge number of Hindus were because of the Vested ually because of the influence deprived of their voting rights Properties Act. in the last election.

64.76 percent of 1,388 respondents said they were subjected Commission Chairman and to repression in the 2001 polls, former adviser to a caretaker while 38.2 percent of 1,403 government Dr Akbar Ali democracy of political parties, respondents said they feel Khan said the whole society development-oriented policy insecure for being members of gets affected when a state and structural reforms to deal Hindu community. At least 36 percent of 1,426 against any section of its

their relatives think of leaving reason, said the survey report of all regardless of gender, Only 28.1 percent of 1,388 in all spheres of life, he said.

respondents said they and population. the country for the same dream of establishing equality conducted on 1,552 Hindus religion and ethnicity. But it is Datta of National Christian

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of said police on a few occasions International Relations "The authorities concerned took actions when they lodged department of Dhaka University (DU) said the Ajoy Dasgupta said 59.5 Muslims of Bengal are basipercent of 1,440 respondents callytolerant.

But intolerance among

of petrodollar from the Middle Terming the findings East where a large number of According to the survey, about the Hindu community Bangladeshis are living now. 'sad', Regulatory Reforms He stressed the need for increasing democratic practices, strengthening internal

> makes discrimination withit. Justice Golam Rabbani, DU

professors Ajay Roy, AK Azad Bangladesh was born with a Chowdhury, Dr Neem Chandra Bhowmik, journalist Shahriar Kabir and Denis Dilip unfortunate that disparity exists Fellowship of Bangladesh spoke at the discussion mod-"We must root out the erated by DU Associate took actions when they com- vested groups that patronise Professor Robayet Ferdous.