

WORLD TOURISM DAY TODAY

Call for private investment in tourism

UNB, Dhaka

The World Tourism Day will be observed in the country today as elsewhere across the globe with a call for private investment in the tourism sector to exploit its untapped potentials.

This year the theme of the Day is 'Tourism - Celebrating Diversity'.

To observe the Day, different government and socio-cultural organisations have chalked out various programmes, including rallies, debating competition and discussions.

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), the only government body promoting tourism, will bring out a colourful rally from the TSC in the city at about 10:00am in association with Dhaka University Tourists Society.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Quader, Tourism

Secretary Hedayetullah Al-Mamun and Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique will lead the rally.

The BPC in cooperation with Tour Operators of Bangladesh will hold a seminar at a city hotel to mark the day.

National dailies will bring out supplements while radio and television channels will air special programmes highlighting significance of the day.

Meanwhile, President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued separate messages on the occasion.

In his message, President Zillur described tourism as a very potential sector of the country and said its development is possible through attractive presentation of its elements and resources both at home and abroad.

He urged the private investors to come forward to supplement the government efforts in promoting the sector.

Sheikh Hasina in her message said Bangladesh can emerge as one of the best tourism destinations in South Asia utilising its immense potentials.

She hoped that it would be possible to implement the chatter of change initiated by her government alongside building 'Golden Bangla' as dreamt by Bangabandhu through developing the country's multidimensional tourism sector.

Staff correspondent in Chittagong adds: A weeklong programme marking the 'World Tourism Day' begun at Hotel Agrabad in Chittagong yesterday.

The hotel authorities chalked out different programmes -- drawing and

essay competition for school students, and colourful procession.

The hotel also offered discount on room fares and food items on the occasion.

HM Hakim Ali, chief executive officer of Hotel Agrabad, at a press conference in Chittagong yesterday urged the government to develop different spectacular sites in the port land for expansion of tourism.

He said Cox's Bazar, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Foy's Lake, Patenga Sea Beach, War Cemetery and others places could be turned into important tourist zones.

He also expressed resentment over absence of proper security measures and facilities in many of these spots.

NM Shahed Chowdhury, deputy director of the hotel, read a written statement at the press conference.



OIC Secretary General Prof Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Friday.

Plan to conduct study on open pit coal mining

UNB, Dhaka

Energy Ministry has initiated a move to carry out a study on social and environmental impact of coal mining, particularly of open pit mining.

"We have already moved for the study in compliance with the prime minister's directive. We're hopeful of completing the study by next month," Energy Secretary

Mohammad Mohsin told UNB yesterday.

The energy ministry on September 16 made a presentation before Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on a draft coal policy.

The draft suggested open pit mining as a better option for extracting coal from different coalfields across the country, including the Phulbari Coal Mine.

After the presentation, the prime minister had directed the ministry to conduct a study to determine the social and environmental impact of open pit mining. Petrobangla was asked to appoint an expert to conduct the study. It is now under process, said an official.

Framing the coal policy has been a long pending issue that evoked debate on determin-

ing the method for extracting coal from the mines.

Bangladesh has 7 coal-mines with estimated total reserves of 2.5 billion tons.

A section of experts argued in favour of underground mining as it has very little social and environmental impacts. Others recommended open pit mining as it ensures about 85 percent output.

British company Asia Energy had signed an agreement with the government for extracting coals at Phulbari through open pit method, which was strongly opposed by the locals arguing it will leave an adverse impact on their livelihood.

This led to a clash when 9 people were killed in police firing in 1996.

Since then fate of the coal mining agreement remained undecided.

Bangla Phone finally starts ringing

FROM PAGE 1

Bangla Phone by issuing notices of cancellation of its licence using various pretexts. The telecom watchdog also put pressure on Bangla Phone's large clients not to use the company's network.

In February 2008, it cancelled the company's nationwide Domestic Data Communication Service Provider (DDCSP) licence and leasing permit.

Officially, BTRC accused Bangla Phone of "illegally" subleasing of its optical fibre network. Its optical fibre network now stands at 3,600 kilometres covering Cox's Bazar to Dhaka and up to Sylhet.

The BTRC during the caretaker government rule further argued that Bangla Phone did not serve individual subscribers with phone lines. This was true as the company only focused on developing network for bulk customers like other phone companies. It only had 26 individual subscribers. Again, the base became handicapped as the company could no longer provide the necessary equipment to customers since mid-2007, as BTRC stopped issuing no objection certificates (NOC) to the company for release of any imported equipment from customs.

The unofficial reason for this 'hostility', according to

sources, had been linked with the Bangla Phone's owner Amjad H Khan's purchase of majority share of controversial phone company World Tel.

The BTRC, under the past caretaker and BNP-lead alliance governments had sided with Nayeem Mehtab Chowdhury, who claimed to have owned the majority shares. The then BTRC chairman sided with Nayeem, although a Rab investigation accused him of being involved with several financial scams and sent him to jail in early 2008. He is now out on bail.

The then BTRC chairman had opted for arbitrarily slapping financial penalty on the mobile phone and other PSTN companies for illegally using VoIP for call termination. But he tried his best to cancel Bangla Phone's PSTN licence till his last day in the office.

After the Awami League government assumed power, the then BTRC chairman's resignation re-opened Bangla Phone's avenue for scrutiny. The new BTRC chairman at a meeting with the Bangla Phone chief in April-May assured him of justice.

Bangla Phone chief Amjad H Khan told The Daily Star, "It took BTRC some time to review the legal documents before issuing us with permit for leasing or sharing of EI, optical fibre, duct and other telecom installations in early

August. We are happy that BTRC has finally changed its stance."

Amjad, whose successful experience of setting up and running a phone network company in the US prompted him to return to Bangladesh, adds he is now expecting BTRC to reissue him with equipment and frequency permissions, which would enable him to launch the company's activities in full swing.

"We are now going back to our customers and reclaim business," he said. For instance, Bangla Phone resumed its services to its old customer Teletalk and it is in the process of opening business with other licensed telecos.

The company subsequently withdrew cases challenging various decisions of BTRC as a fresh start. On the other hand, before reissuing the permit for sharing of its network, BTRC fined Bangla Phone Tk 2 lakh for violation of terms and condition of its PSTN licence by leasing out its network.

Bangla Phone believes building the network does not go against the terms and conditions of the PSTN licence issued to it in 2004. A High Court verdict, based on a writ against BTRC's show-cause notices of 2007 and 2008, last year substantiated Bangla Phone's claim.

Under-trial prisoner dies in Faridpur

UNB, Faridpur

An under-trial prisoner died at Sadar General Hospital on Friday.

Jail sources said prisoner Aslam Bepari, 35, was rushed to hospital from the district jail at about 9:00am when he complained of acute chest pain. Later, he died of a cardiac arrest at the hospital at about 2:00pm.

Aslam's relatives alleged that he died due to torture in the jail.

Death anniversary

BSS, Dhaka

Today is the 25th death anniversary of Shaheed Moyeuddin, an organiser of the Liberation

War and former vice-chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

A former lawmaker and central Awami League leader, he was a close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

AL and its front organisations and his family member have taken up elaborate programmes to mark the day.

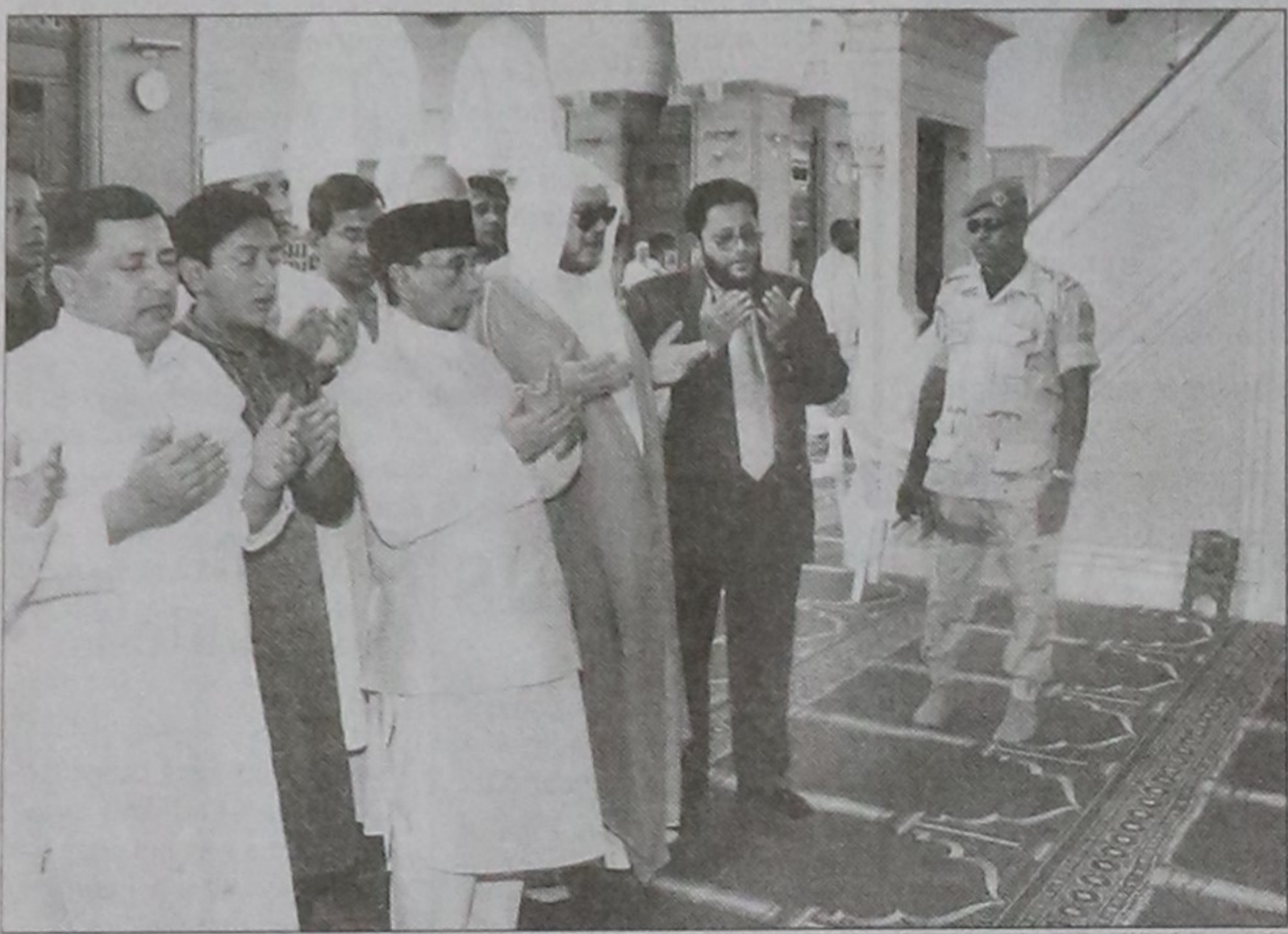
The programmes include placing wreaths and offering fateha at Banani Graveyard at 9:00am. A milad mahfil will be held at Shaheed Moyeuddin Auditorium of Bangladesh Family Planning Association at Naya Paltan after Asr prayers today.

Milad mahfil and memorial meeting will also be held on Noapara Moyeuddin Adarsha High School premises in Kaliganj upazila and in Jamalpur.

Faria Lara

Today is the 11th death anniversary of Faria Lara, who was killed in a plane crash on September 27, 1998, says a press release.

Her family members have urged all to pray for the salvation of her departed soul.



President Zillur Rahman and his family members offer Fateha at Masjid-e-Kubba in Madina on Friday night. (Story on Page 5)

Mohiuddin blames Babu for attack on Ctg rally

AL lawmaker refutes allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong city Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury blamed local AL lawmaker Akhteruzzaman Chowdhury Babu for Friday's attack on his public meeting at Charpathar Ghata on the other side of the river Karnaphuli.

Mohiuddin, also the president of Chittagong city Awami League, made the allegation at a press briefing at his Chashma Hill residence yesterday afternoon.

He also accused Akhteruzzaman of warning him against holding any public meeting in his constituency.

However, Akhteruzzaman, the president of Chittagong north district AL and a lawmaker from Chittagong-12 constituency, refuted all the allegations.

In the press briefing, Mayor Mohiuddin said a gazette notification was issued during the previous AL government to bring five unions -- Charpathar Ghata, Charlamna, Baro Uthan, Shikolbaha and Jaldi -- of Chittagong-12 constituency under the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC). But the process was caught up in legal complexities.

A fresh move was taken to

this end after the present AL government came to power.

"We decided to hold the public meeting to make the local people aware of development that would take place after the unions are brought under the city corporation and to know about their opinions," the mayor said.

"I also invited Babu Bhai (Akhteruzzaman) at the meeting over phone as the local lawmaker," he said.

"But Babu Bhai asked me how I was going to hold a meeting there without his permission. He also told me in a threatening tone that he would see how the meeting could be held," the mayor said.

The mayor also said that he is interested to bring the unions under the city corporation and develop them since it was his electoral pledge.

Meanwhile, at his Surson Road residence in the city yesterday evening, Akhteruzzaman told reporters that the mayor's statements are false.

Denying the allegation of

threat, Akhteruzzaman said, "The mayor phoned me around 9:30pm on Thursday and invited me to attend the rally. But I expressed my inability to attend the meeting since I had some other appointments, including visiting Puja Mandaps."

"Mohiuddin Chowdhury is not my political opponent," he added.

"I made an electoral pledge to establish a separate upazila with these five unions for the development of the areas. The planning minister recently informed me that a proposal was approved in the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council in this regard," Akhteruzzaman said, adding that the prime minister also gave him assurance in this regard.

He, however, said that he would support what the local people want.

"I will also be pleased if the areas could be developed after bringing the unions under the city corporation and the local people could benefit from it," said the AL MP.

Two teenage boys killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two teenage boys were killed in two separate incidents in the city yesterday.

One of them was identified as Muhammad Russel, 16, an employee of a metal scrap shop at Jurain.

The identity of other one, aged around 18, could not be known immediately.

Officer-in-Charge of Kadamtali Police Station Kazi Ayubur Rahman said they recovered the body of Russel from a ditch by the side of Muradpur Lal Mia Sarkar Road at 4:00pm.

The body was sent to Sir Salmullah Medical College Morgue for autopsy.

Meanwhile, Tejgaon Industrial Area police recovered the body of unknown boy from Tejgaon Truck Stand in the morning.

Police said he was beaten to death by a mob accusing him of stealing battery of a truck.

GUCHHAGRAM PROJECT 10,650 families to get land by 2012: Minister

BSS, Sherpur

Land Minister Rezaul Karim Hira yesterday said the government would hand over land documents among 10,650 landless families under the 'Guchhagram project' within 2012.

The project will cover 207 spots in the country involving Tk 187 crore. So far the government implemented the project in 10 areas in the country, an official release said.

He said this while visiting 'Guchhagram project' at Dhanavanga under Nalitabari upazila where 30 homeless people are living.

"Hira assured that a multipurpose hall, a pond and loans would be provided for the inhabitants of the Guchhagram project.

Freedom fighter missing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Latif Khan, a freedom fighter and former chief officer of Trading Corporation

of Bangladesh (TCB), has been missing since September 19.

He went out of his Bakshi Bazar residence in the city around 10:00am on the day to do his personal work at Mohammadpur and Kakrail but did not return.

The last time his family members talked with him over mobile phone was 4:30pm on the day. Since then, he has not been answering mobile phone calls, despite repeated attempts.

Latif Khan, 70, was wearing a white shirt and black trousers when he went out.

A general diary has been filed with Chakbazar Police Station in this connection.

Anybody knowing about his whereabouts has been requested to call at 01711934432 to contact his family.



Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at a few places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places Dhaka, Rajshahi, and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 6:49am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 35.7 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 24.0 degrees Celsius at Rangamati.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.0	26.0	67	63
Chittagong	33.5	26.6	73	78
Rajshahi	34.0	24.9	87	77
Khulna	34.0	26.5	79	77
Barisal	34.5	26.0	77	84
Sylhet	35.7	25.0	70	74
Cox's Bazar	34.5	26.0	73	78

CCC mayor injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury sustained injuries on his left hand and waist when he fell in his bathroom at his Chashma Hill residence in the port city last evening.

He required eight stitches on the fingers of his left hand, said CCC Zonal Medical Officer Dr Mesbahuddin Ahmed.

The mayor also hurt by the waist and was now under complete rest at his residence where a team of CCC physicians were giving him treatment, he added.

The team of CCC physicians include cardiac specialist Dr Nasim Bhuiyan and orthopaedic surgeon Dr Asif among others.