



Cherie Blair calls on PM

UNB, Dhaka

British attorney and former first lady Cherie Blair called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhavan in the city yesterday.

They discussed wide range of issues particularly women empowerment and their smooth access to quality education.

She said the government is contemplating to provide food for the students especially in the rural areas.

Sheikh Hasina and Cherie Blair also exchanged views over raising funds for the Asian University for Women.

Cherie Blair highly appreciated Sheikh Hasina's sincerity for establishing women's rights in all sectors of society.

She also thanked the prime minister for her cooperation in establishing the specialized university for women.

Hasina assured Cherie Blair of providing all kinds of assistance for further development of the university.



Malaysian First Lady meets Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

First Lady of Malaysia Datin Paduka Rosmah Mansor met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday on the sideline of the three-day symposium at Bangabandhu International Conference Center in the city.

Hasina and Mansor discussed various issues of bilateral interest as well as regional development and empowerment of women, said Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

First Lady Rosmah Mansor praised Hasina for her contribution to establishing women's rights.



Night temperature may rise slightly

UNB, Dhaka

Mild to moderate cold wave is sweeping over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Mymensingh, Tangail, Kusthia and it may continue in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

There is no cold wave in other places of the country, Met office said.

Night temperature may rise slightly over the country.

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere over the country during midnight till morning.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:37pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43am.

Country's highest temperature 28.1 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and lowest 06.5 degrees at Ishurdi.

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	24.8	12.0	64	40
Chittagong	26.9	12.3	79	76
Rajshahi	23.1	0.77	91	59
Rangpur	19.7	100	92	81
Khulna	25.4	13.5	77	53
Barisal	26.4	11.5	78	74

Saarc fails to reach goal

Say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saarc countries have failed to live up to the main purpose of the South Asian platform, speakers told a press conference yesterday.

Civil society members, academia, and development and women rights activists from South Asian countries participated in the conference.

People's Saarc organised it at the Jatiya Press Club in the city marking the two-day international seminar "Envisioning new South Asia: People's perspective" held on January 18-19 in Dhaka.

The speakers said regional unity can be a good beginning to find solutions and alternatives to common problems in this region.

Sarba Raj Khadka from Nepal said Saarc failed to meet its objectives totally; Saarc and its secretariat were playing

Regional unity can be a good beginning to find solutions and alternatives to common problems in this region

ineffective role and all they did was to arrange a 'picnic' every two years.

The participants also expressed their concern over climate change, regional conflicts, militancy, religious extremism, rising sectarian and terrorist violence, and existing poverty in South Asia.

Although Safta (South Asian Free Trade Area) has been in place since the 1980s, formal trade within the region is

still negligible, they said.

Intra-regional trade can be a vehicle for pro-poor and equitable growth, only when such trade includes equitable growth both within the region and between countries, they added.

Jiten Babu Desai from India said South Asian governments need to cut military expenses and ensure labour rights.

The speakers said climate change is the critical issue throughout the region with coastal and mountainous communities facing the greatest threat.

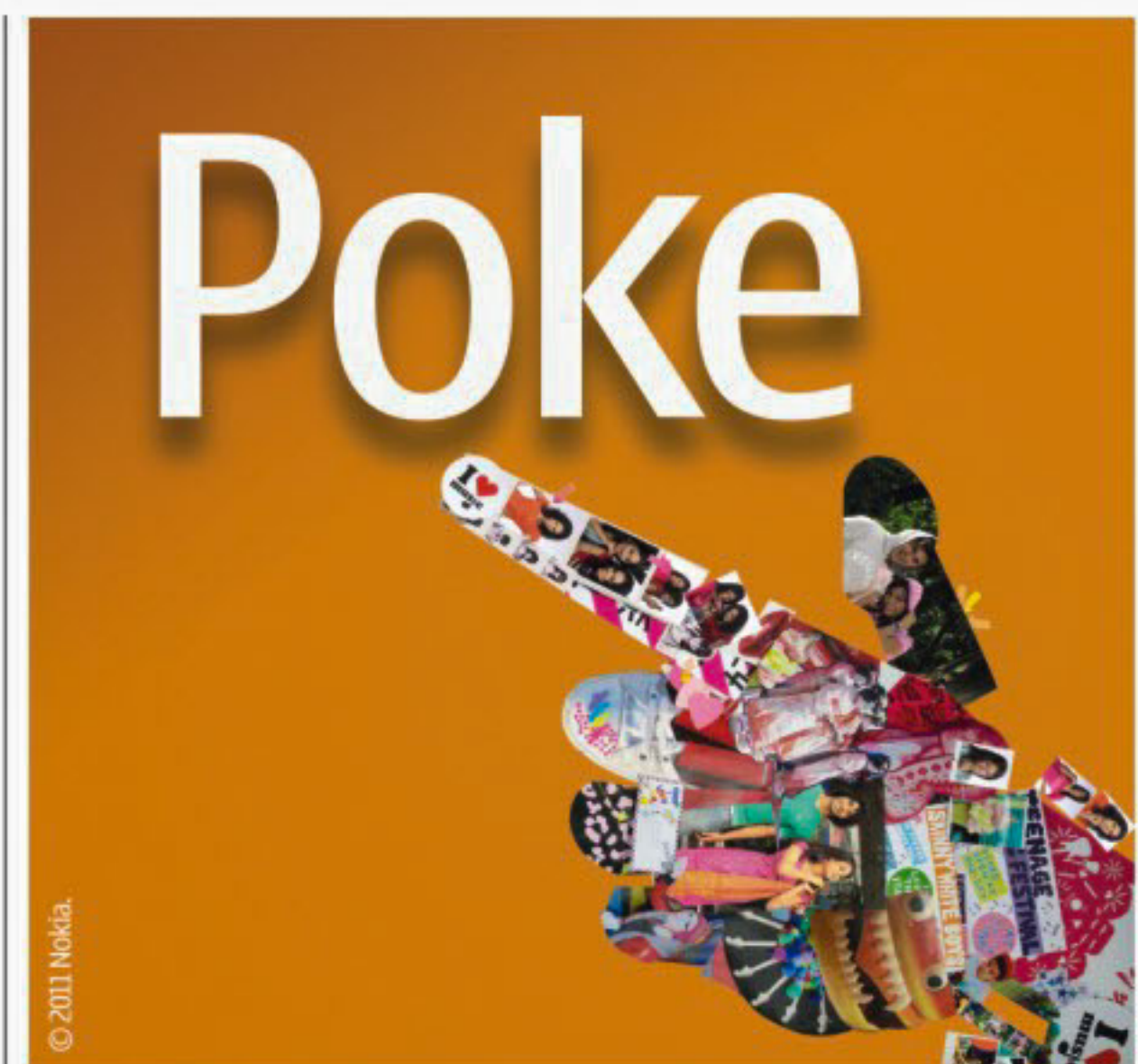
Climate justice is closely linked with the more fundamental question of poverty, deprivation, and skewed development, they added.

Representatives from different organisations and countries including Afghanistan, India, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Pakistan took part in the news conference.



Some devotees are busy cooking lunch on the field of Biswa Ijtema, a large congregation of world's Muslims. The Ijtema begins today on the bank of Turag River in Tongi.

PHOTO: STAR



LIBERATION WAR Zillur for true history

BSS, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday urged the eminent researchers, historians and scholars to present the country's glorious and correct history of the War of Liberation before young generation.

He said this while inaugurating the diamond jubilee celebration of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh at Osmani Memorial Auditorium here.

President of Bangladesh Asiatic Society Prof Sirajul Islam presided over the function while Prof Sugata Bose from Harvard University, Society's General Secretary Prof Mahfuza Khanam and convener of the diamond jubilee celebration program Prof Sharif Uddin Ahmed also spoke.



Obituary

METRO DESK



A J M Mahfujul Haque, a former assistant commissioner,

passed away at his residence at Barhatta in Netrokona yesterday due to old age complications at the age of 84, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, two sons, two daughters and grand children.

He was father-in-law of ASA president Md Shafiqul Haque Chowdhury.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for the departed soul.

Mossadek Hossain

METRO DESK

Mossadek Hossain, a former Pubali Bank official, and father of cultural activist Tosaddek Hossain Manna, passed away at Chittagong National Heart Hospital yesterday due to old age complications at the age of 66, says a press release.

He left behind his two sons, one daughter and grandchildren. He was also an award-winning photographer.

Milad mahfil

METRO DESK

A milad mahfil for Kazi Atahar Ali will be held at House No-49, Road No-11, Block-H, Banani, after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Atahar Ali passed away on January 10 at the age of 89.

HABIGANJ, B'BARIA BY-POLLS 4 accused now candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four candidates out of nine in Habiganj-1 and Brahmanbaria-3 by-polls slated for January 27 are accused in different cases.

Of them, one is accused in a murder case while others in different civil cases, said a report of Shushashoner Jonney Nagorik (Shujan).

Shujan made the disclosure at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

Of the nine candidates, seven are businessmen, one is a farmer and another a lawyer, the report said.

Of them, two candidates own moveable and immovable properties worth between Tk 1 crore and Tk 10 crore, two between Tk 15 lakh and Tk 25 lakh, one between Tk 50 lakh and Tk 1 crore, one between Tk 5 lakh and 15 lakh and the rest three own properties below Tk 5 lakh.

Among them, two have loan liabilities while two others have taxable incomes worth Tk 3 lakh or more per annum.

Addressing the press conference, Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumder said, "We have prepared the report after scrutinising the information submitted to the election commission by the candidates."

2 'muggers' wounded in gunfight with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two alleged muggers suffered bullet injuries while 'exchanging' fire with a patrol team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Badda in the city last night.

Shamsur Rahman, 22, and Mohammad Israfil, 20, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) after being shot on the legs.

Rab-1 personnel said they fired shots at a gang of three to four muggers who were preparing for snatching at Merul Badda around 11:30pm.

Rab members, however, did not allow any reporters to talk with the alleged muggers to know their version in this regard.

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