

Clean Dhaka concert postponed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today's "Clean Dhaka Concert with Bollywood Queen and AJ", scheduled to be organised by Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) and Antar Showbiz at Bangabandhu National Stadium, has been postponed for an indefinite period apparently for a lack of preparation.

The concert aimed at urging to ensure a cleaner Dhaka and supporting cleanup workers.

DSCC Mayor Sayeed Khokon told The Daily Star last night that the postponement came at the request of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner, who informed them that they were not prepared due to a shortage of time. Khokon claimed that the organisers had nearly completed their preparations.

"It has been found that there is not enough preparation for the concert to be held, so we have requested the organiser to arrange the event with full preparation," said DMP Deputy Commissioner (media) Maruf Hossain Sarder.

NEWS IN brief

South Korea donates 30 computers to DU library

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Korean Embassy yesterday provided 30 desktop computers for the cyber centre of the central library at Dhaka University to help improve the information and educational environment of it.

Korean Ambassador AHN Seong-doo formally handed over the computers to DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique at a ceremony.

The VC thanked the Korean government and the ambassador.

Kafil Ctg Bar Assoc president, Jahed gen secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Kafil Uddin Chowdhury and SM Jahed Biru have been elected president and general secretary respectively of the Chittagong District Bar Association (CDBA) yesterday.

In the CDBA election held on Wednesday, BNP-Jamaat backed Ainjibi Oikya Parishad secured 10 posts including the president post and Awami League backed Sammilita Ainjibi Shamannay Parishad secured seven posts. Pro-left leaning parties Samomana Ainjibi Sangsad bagged two posts including that of general secretary.

4-day debate festival starts at JU

JU CORRESPONDENT

A four-day debate festival began at Jahangirnagar University yesterday.

Sarkar o Rajniti Bitorko Mancha in association with JU Debate Organisation organised the festival where 32 teams from 12 universities participate.

Farzana Islam, the JU vice chancellor, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, and Bashir Ahmed, chairman of government and politics department, are expected to attend the concluding ceremony. A seminar on higher education in USA will be held on that day.

US embassy closed on Sunday

CITY DSEK

The US Embassy will remain closed on Sunday to celebrate President's Day, an American holiday.

The closure includes the Consular Section and the American Center with the Archer K Blood American Center Library and the Education USA Student Advising Center.

Emergency services for American citizens will be available. Please call 5566-2000 and ask for the duty officer.

Two crude bombs found at RU

RU CORRESPONDENT

Two crude bombs were found at Rajshahi University yesterday morning.

Locals said a worker of a tea stall at the university's Tukitaki Chattar saw the crude bombs beside a tree and informed police. Later, police rushed there and neutralised the bombs.

RU Proctor Prof Tarikul Hasan said miscreants might have kept the crude bombs there to create panic among students.

North expels S Koreans

FROM PAGE 20

since North Korea carried out a nuclear test last month and a long-range rocket launch on Sunday.

Seoul had announced on Wednesday it was closing down operations at Kaesong, and the North said it would now experience the "disastrous and painful consequences" of its action.

By shutting Kaesong, the South had destroyed the "last lifeline" of North-South relations and made a "dangerous declaration of war," the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea (CPRK) said in a statement.

Relations between the two Koreas have always been volatile, but analysts said the current situation risked turning into a full-blown crisis.

"Now we can say that all strings between the Koreans have been cut and that there are no more buffers," said Ko Yoo-Hwan, a professor of North Korean Studies at Dongguk University in Seoul.

"An escalation of tensions is inevitable, and I see further trouble ahead with Kaesong and the issues of seized assets, especially if North Korea militarises the zone," Ko said.

All South Koreans were ordered to leave Kaesong by 5:00 pm Pyongyang time and told they could take nothing but their personal possessions.

The North also said it had ordered a "complete freeze of all assets," including raw materials, products and equipment.

The owners of the South Korean companies in Kaesong had sent more than 100 empty trucks into the North yesterday morning in the hope of bringing out as much as they could.

Although there had been a rush to

leave after the expulsion order came, Kang said the North Korean officials had been quite reasonable.

"They didn't give us a hard time because we've known each other for a long while," he said, reserving his anger for the South Korean government's original decision to close Kaesong operations.

"We had to leave our finished products untouched and we will have to provide financial compensation to our buyers. I feel terrible," he said.

Despite the ban on removing anything beyond personal belongings, a few trucks that managed to cross the border earlier in the day had managed to bring out more materials.

Defending its decision to halt operations at Kaesong, Seoul said North Korea had been using the hundreds of millions of dollars in hard-currency that it earned from the complex to fund its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes.

The move was slammed as "utterly incomprehensible" by the Kaesong company owners who said their businesses were being destroyed by politics.

Born out of the "sunshine" reconciliation policy of the late 1990s, Kaesong opened in 2004 and proved remarkably resilient, riding out repeated crises that ended every other facet of inter-Korean cooperation.

The United States signalled its own unilateral moves against North Korea, with the US Senate on Wednesday unanimously adopting a bill expanding existing sanctions.

US scientists detect

FROM PAGE 1

The international team doing the research says the detection of these gravitational waves will usher in a new era for astronomy. It is the culmination of decades of search and could ultimately offer a window on the Big Bang, reports the BBC.

Being able to detect gravitational waves enables astronomers finally to probe what they call "dark Universe", the majority part of the cosmos that is invisible to the light telescopes in use today.

The research, by the Ligo Collaboration, has been accepted for publication in the journal Physical Review Letters. The collaboration operates a number of labs around the world that fire lasers through long tunnels, trying to sense ripples in the fabric of spacetime, the concept of time and space fused together.

For the detection, the idea is to split a high-powered laser beam and send separate light paths down two long vacuum tunnels that are arranged in an L-shaped configuration. The two paths are bounced back and forth by mirrors, before eventually returning to their starting point. The beam is then reconstructed and sent to detectors. If gravitational waves have passed through the lab, the light paths will have been ever so slightly offset, and this will be evident in the analysis. The approach is called laser interferometry.

When gravitational waves pass through the Earth, the space and time Earth occupies should alternately stretch and squeeze, like a pair of stockings. The Advanced Ligo interferometers have been searching for this stretching and squeezing for over a decade, gradually improving the sensitivity of their equipment. The expectation was that their experiments would need to detect disturbances no bigger than a fraction of the width of a proton, the particle that makes up the nucleus of all atoms.

The Ligo laser interferometers in Hanford, in Washington, and Livingston, in Louisiana, were only recently refurbished and had just come back online when they sensed the signal from the collision on September 14.

Prof Karsten Danzmann, from the Max Planck Institute for Gravitational Physics and Leibniz University in Hannover, Germany, said the detection was one of the most important developments in science since the discovery of the Higgs particle, and on par with the determination of the structure of DNA.

"There is a Nobel Prize in it ... there is no doubt," he told the BBC.

Prof Stephen Hawking, an expert on black holes, speaking to the BBC said he believed that the detection marked a moment in scientific history.

"Gravitational waves provide a completely new way at looking at the Universe. The ability to detect them has the potential to revolutionise astronomy. This discovery is the first detection of a black hole binary system and the first observation of black holes merging," he said.

"Apart from testing [Albert Einstein's theory of] General Relativity, we could hope to see black holes through the history of the Universe. We may even see relics of the very early Universe during the Big Bang at some of the most extreme energies possible."

Not only will they be able to investigate black holes and strange objects known as neutron stars (giant suns that have collapsed to the size of cities), they should also be able to "look" much deeper into the Universe and thus farther back in time. It may even be possible eventually to sense the moment of the Big Bang.

"Gravitational waves go through

everything. They are hardly affected by what they pass through, and that means that they are perfect messengers," said Prof Bernard Schutz, from Cardiff University, UK.

"The information carried on the gravitational wave is exactly the same as when the system sent it out; and that is unusual in astronomy. We can't see light from whole regions of our own galaxy because of the dust that is in the way, and we can't see the early part of the Big Bang because the Universe was opaque to light earlier than a certain time.

"With gravitational waves, we do expect eventually to see the Big Bang itself," he told the BBC.

In addition, the study of gravitational waves may ultimately help scientists in their quest to solve some of the biggest problems in physics, such as the unification of forces, linking quantum theory with gravity.

Einstein himself actually thought a detection might be beyond the reach of technology.

His theory of General Relativity suggests that objects such as stars and planets can warp space around them -- in the same way that a billiard ball creates a dip when placed on a thin, stretched, rubber sheet.

Gravity is a consequence of that distortion. Objects will be attracted to the warped space in the same way that a pea will fall in to the dip created by the billiard ball.

Einstein predicted that if the gravity in an area was changed suddenly, by an exploding star per say, waves of gravitational energy would ripple across the Universe at light speed, stretching and squeezing space as they travelled.

Protecting

FROM PAGE 20

Forest Secretary Kamal Uddin Ahmed and USAID Mission Director Janina Jaruzelski, US Ambassador Marcia Bernicat expressed her faith in the strength of Bangladeshi youths to reverse the situation for tigers and conserve the country's national symbol.

The campaign will engage youths in social media activities to spread its messages. The hastag #iStandForTigers was uploaded on Facebook at the ceremony.

Zahir Uddin Ahmed, conservator of forest, Khulna circle, talked about the four-year project that began in 2014 to end in June 2018.

He said his department had introduced a technology-based patrolling mechanism that led to the arrest of 206 criminals for poaching and other illegal activities in the western zone of the mangrove forest.

The monitoring mechanism is being used in 12 other tiger-ranged countries, he said, adding that tigers could not be saved without improving the forest management.

Another method called camera trapping will be used from October to collect data about tigers in the forest and determine their number, said the chief forest conservator, Yunus Ali.

In this method, remotely activated camera is used to capture wild animals on film.

Explaining the relationship between Bengal tigers and the ecosystem of the Sundarbans, Janina Jaruzelski pointed out the importance of saving the forest that protects Bangladesh from cyclones and provides livelihood to some 35 lakh people.

Dr Karl Wurster, deputy director economic growth and environment and energy team leader, USAID Bangladesh, and Gary Collins, chief of party, Bagh Activity, also spoke at the programme moderated by Md Anwarul Islam, chief executive, WildTeam.

Tusk to hold EU talks on 'very fragile' Brexit deal

AFP, Brussels

EU president Donald Tusk said Wednesday he had cleared his schedule to hold urgent meetings with leaders including Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande to push for a deal to keep Britain in the bloc at a summit next week.

The former Polish premier set out his proposals for a deal with British Prime Minister David Cameron last week on EU reforms, but there is opposition to several parts in a number of EU countries.

"I am confident that this is a balanced and solid proposal and I hope to finalise it next week in the European Council. However let me be clear, this is a very fragile political process," Tusk told reporters at the European Parliament.

"Therefore I have decided to cancel all my obligations and will hold a number of meetings with EU leaders and with the European Parliament in order to help reach an agreement," he added.

"Next week I will visit several capitals to meet EU leaders and discuss my proposal."

Tusk said he would meet German Chancellor Merkel, French President Hollande, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel, as well as the President of Romania and the Czech Prime Minister, who currently heads the "Visegrad Group" of eastern European states.

He will also meet the European Parliament head Martin Schulz, whose institution, the only directly-elected body in the EU, would have to approve many of the key features of the British deal.

"The aim of my consultations is to secure a broad political support for my proposal," he said.

Tusk would meet Michel in Brussels yesterday and was expected to travel to Paris, Berlin, Prague and Bucharest on Monday and Tuesday next week while the date of the trip to Athens was yet to be confirmed, European sources told AFP.

Cameron is hoping for a deal at the summit on February 18-19 so he can hold a referendum on whether Britain should stay in the EU or leave -- a so-called "Brexit" -- in June.

But several of Tusk's proposals have proved controversial in other European capitals where Britain's demands are viewed as a distraction from bigger problems like the migration crisis and eurozone debt.

Two schools

FROM PAGE 20

Little Flower School and College on Wednesday sent text messages to guardians saying that they would adjust the additional money with the tuition fees of February, said a guardian who received the message.

On February 3, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid warned of taking legal action against the private educational institutions if they fail to return within seven working days the additional money they had collected as tuition fees and registration fees for the SSC examinations.

The deadline ends on February 14.

The minister asked all the education boards to make lists of institutions failing to comply with the directives.

A number of renowned private schools in Dhaka and Chittagong suddenly hiked the monthly tuition and admission fees in January, citing teachers' demand for a pay increase after the government approved the new pay scale for civil servants.

The sudden rise in monthly tuition fees triggered outrage among guardians.

Following this, the education ministry asked the school authorities to stop collecting the increased fees until further notice.

The DHSE in an investigation found seven renowned non-government schools hiked tuition fees between 11 percent and 100 percent.

2 'outlaws' killed

FROM PAGE 20

secret meeting of the party was going on there.

Sensing their presence, the criminals opened fire on the Rab members, forcing them to retaliate that triggered the "gunfight", the Rab official said.

At one stage, Akam and Liakat were hit by bullets. The two were taken to Kushtia General Hospital where on-duty doctors declared them dead.

Rab also claimed to have recovered four firearms and 14 bullets from the spot.

According to rights body Ain o Salish Kendra, 146 people were killed in "crossfire" in 2015.

Nato steps into migrant

FROM PAGE 20

"Targeting that is the way that the greatest effect can be had ... That is the principal intent of this," Carter said.

The numbers of people fleeing war and failing states, mainly in the Middle East and North Africa, show little sign of falling, despite winter weather that makes sea crossings even more perilous.

A 3 billion euro (\$3.4 billion) deal between the EU and Turkey to stem the flows has yet to have a big impact.

BACK TO TURKEY

Germany said it would take part in the Nato mission along with Greece and Turkey, while the United States, Nato's most powerful member, said it fully supported the plan.

The alliance's so-called Standing Nato Maritime Group Two has five ships near Cyprus, led by Germany and with vessels from Canada, Italy, Greece and Turkey. Breedlove said Nato would need allies to contribute to sustain the mission over time.

Denmark is expected to offer a ship, according to a German government source. The Netherlands may also contribute.

"It is important that we now act quickly," German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen said.

Intelligence gathered about people-smugglers will be handed to Turkish coastguards to allow them to combat the traffickers more effectively, rather than having Nato act directly against the criminals, diplomats said.

Nato and the EU are eager to avoid the impression that the 28-nation military alliance is now tasked to stop refugees or treat them as a threat.

Greek and Turkish ships will remain in their respective territorial waters given sensitivities between the two countries. Any refugees saved by Nato vessels will be returned to Turkey, Greek Defence Minister Panos Kammenos said.

Snake farm awaits govt

FROM PAGE 20

thought to establish a snake farm.

With initial exposure through his job, Razzak followed up with online research. He communicated with experts to better understand the industry and further consider the merits of his dream project, which, he assessed, could make substantial profits with only modest start capital required.

After returning to Bangladesh in 2000 he began to plan. "I tried to generate government interest in allowing the initiative," says Razzak, "and finally in 2008 the livestock department issued a circular on snake farming."

Aware that snake venom is an ingredient in huge demand from medical companies for use in producing anti-venom snake bite treatments and anticipating timely government approval, Razzak started his farm in 2009, at a cost of 25 lakh, with 150 snakes of various species collected from across the country.

Today the farm boasts around 400 snakes, with Razzak having successfully bred them. He believes he could accrue at least Tk 7 crore in earnings per month selling venom, as well as creating a number of job opportunities for others, if the farm was operational. Razzak has already partially-trained some 8 staff members

for the project.

But the government approval has not been forthcoming. "I applied for permission for the farm and to sell venom in 2011," he says. "To date it hasn't happened."

Patuakhali Sadar upazila livestock officer, Dr Golam Kabir, says he visited the snake farm in December 2012 and sent his report to higher authorities recommending the project's approval and for permission to sell venom to be granted.

"It's an exceptional farm," says Kabir, "I think there's a good chance it would be profitable."

While the government circular stated a decision would be made within three months of receipt of a visit report, over three years later this is yet to occur.

"Many medical companies have already inquired," says Razzak, "They want to buy venom from my farm but as I have no approval, I can't sell it."

"If the government took positive steps on snake farming, many farms could be established in Bangladesh and it could bring substantial economic benefits," he adds.

In the meantime, the 400 snakes at Razzak's farm wait to be milked commercially, to donate their venom to, ultimately, save human lives.

HC summons hospital

FROM PAGE 20

national dailies ran reports on the alleged incident yesterday.

According to the reports, a child "died" at the private hospital on February 9 but its authorities allegedly did not inform the family members about it and later demanded money from them for further treatment.

The next day, a Rapid Action Battalion mobile court claimed to have found the hospital charging for the treatment of the child, who was already dead, and violating other rules. The court fined the hospital Tk 11.5 lakh soon after.

After the raid, Mohammad Shajahan, an assistant director of the DGHS, also told reporters that the hospital was keeping the 16-month old at the ICU even a day after the child's death.

However, Prof Sardar Nayeem, chairman of the hospital, outright rejected the allegations. He claimed that the child died after the Rab team arrived there.

"My doctors even asked them [the Rab members] to have an autopsy of

the child but they did not pay any heed to that," he told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

A Rab press release said the drive, led by its Executive Magistrate Mohammad Helal Uddin, also found "inexperienced" doctors treating children, no scope for forming medical board, lack of facilities for HIV screening, inadequate number of biochemists and sale of "unregistered" drugs at the hospital.

Yesterday, the HC also asked the government to form a committee to look into an allegation of providing wrong treatment to Dr ASM Zakaria Swapan, a cancer patient, at Square Hospital in the capital.

The health secretary and the DG of the health services were asked to submit their report to the court in two months.

The same HC bench came up with the order hearing a writ petition filed jointly by Swapan, also a professor at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, a rights organisation.

Law minister

FROM PAGE 1

violated, he told The Daily Star over the phone.

He also said he would discuss the matter with Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha.

He made the comments after Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury, a retired High Court judge, appeared before the Appellate Division of the SC as a defence counsel for convicted war criminal Mir Quasem Ali on Wednesday.

The court was hearing an appeal by the Jamaat-e-Islami leader challenging his death penalty given by the International Crimes Tribunal-2.

During the hearing, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told the court that Justice Nozrul retired as a HC judge a few months ago and was still living in a government residence and using a car and gunman given by the government.

If Justice Nozrul practises (as a lawyer) in the court under the circumstances, it would be against the ethics of the judges, he said.

In reply, Justice Nozrul said he was aware of his enjoying the state privileges and claimed that he was not misusing those.

Later, he told reporters that he was practising in the apex court as per the law and the constitution.

Yesterday, Law Minister Anisul Huq also told this correspondent that Justice Nozrul should not represent a war criminal in court as long as he is enjoying the government facilities.

Earlier in the day, he told reporters at his secretariat office that the provision of death penalty under criminal laws would not be abolished, but the government would try to avoid the punishment in laws to be formulated in future.

He made the comment after a meeting with a 12-member delegation of the European Parliament and European Union.

During the meeting, the delegation had raised the issue of abolishing death penalty in the laws of Bangladesh, a law ministry official said.

BNP now

FROM PAGE 20

signal from the police, said Fakhru.

Fifteen subcommittees have been formed to make the March 19 council successful, according to a release of the party.