

ASHUGANJ-MANOHARDI GAS PIPELINE 'Drive against illegal land occupants saves Tk 23 cr'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT Chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on energy...

delayed by a year because of the Chinese contractor's failure. The project was supposed to be completed in 2004...

hug number of people have erected illegal structures just to make extra cash. 'A section of officials were involved in the corruption. But upon seeing the video I identified the people who had erected these illegal structures...

Bangla Bhai's letter to Netrakona SP?

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

The Netrakona superintendent of police (SP) has received a letter purportedly from JMB leader Siddikur Rahaman Bangla Bhai asking him to arrest three persons 'involved' in the August 17 and December 8 bomb blasts in Mymensingh and Netrakona last year.

If police fail to arrest them, there will be bomb attacks in Dhaka and Mymensingh, Bangla Bhai was quoted as saying in the letter.

The three are Lal Mia from Chandpur, Rafiqul Islam Kazi and his uncle Abul Kashem from Tarakanda in Mymensingh. They are activists of the outlawed militant outfit, it said.

Reports about the militant kingpin's letter created panic among people in the district town. Sources said the JMB leader in his letter mentioned that the three persons had taken Tk 5 lakh, explosives, revolvers and other fire arms from him for the bomb blasts in Mymensingh and Netrakona on August 17.

Rafiqul was the key man behind those blasts and he is now preparing for bomb attacks in Mymensingh and Dhaka, the letter said. When contacted, SP Ali Hossen Fakir said he received a letter in the name of Bangla Bhai but it is yet to be confirmed who sent it. The letter was posted from Kamapur Post Office in Dhaka.

Aziz Sarkar reappointed Rab director general

UNB, Dhaka

MA Aziz Sarkar has been reappointed Director General of the anti-crime elite force Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on contract, cancelling his LPR.

An official notification issued by the Ministry of Establishment yesterday said the Leave Preparatory to Retirement (LPR) of Sarkar was cancelled for re-assigning him.

'MA Aziz Sarkar has been reappointed DG of Rab for the next one year, with effect from today, following a presidential order,' it said.

Mizan Chy's death condoled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday condoned the death of Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, a veteran politician and former prime minister of the country.

Speaker Barrister Jamir Uddin Sircar, Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui, Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Information Minister M Shamsul Islam and City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka expressed deep shock at the death of the elderly politician. In separate press releases, they said in his death the country has lost a veteran politician.

They also prayed for the salvation of the departed soul. Awami League (AL) President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina visited the house of late Mizanur Rahman and expressed sympathy for the members of the bereaved family.

She said Mizanur Rahman performed his duty with courage and fortitude during the liberation war. His death is irreparable loss for the nation, she added.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad, JP (Manju) Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju and Secretary General Shahidul Islam, Chairman of Bangladesh Jatiya Party Nazir Rahman and Secretary General Saifur Rahman and JSD leader ASM Abdur Rob also condoled the death.

Leaders of Communist Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Workers' Party of Bangladesh, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, 11Party, Islami Oikyo Jote and Jatiya Samajtantrik Sramik Jote also expressed shock at the death of Mizan Chowdhury.

President of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association Mahbubey Alam and General Secretary Enayetur Rahim also condoled the death of elderly parliamentarian and a veteran organiser of the liberation war.

Bangladesh-Bharat Friendship Society and Sonali Bank Employees Union prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia speaks at the divisional grand rally of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) at the outer stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Saraswati Puja today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saraswati Puja will be celebrated across the country, particularly in educational institutions, today with the Hindu students seeking blessings from the goddess of learning and eloquence.

In the capital, the puja will be held at Jagannath Hall, Samsunahar Hall, Rokeya Hall and Kuwait Moitri Hall of Dhaka University, Dhakeswari temple, Siddheswari temple, Dhaka College, Eden College, Ramkrishna Mission and in other areas such as Tanti Bazar, Shankhari Bazar, Bangla Bazar, Mahakhali and Farm Gate.

Students from over 30 departments of Dhaka University have set up attractive puja mandaps separately on the premises of the Jagannath Hall to celebrate the festival. The puja will start at 7.30am.

KIBRIA MURDER

Fair investigation demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asma Kibria, wife of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria, yesterday called for a fair investigation into Kibria murder case to bring the perpetrators of the killing to justice.

The real killers will go unpunished unless an impartial investigation is ensured, she said at the 'Blue for Peace' programme at the Science Laboratory intersection in the city.

Initiated by Asma Kibria, the 'Blue for Peace' programme is being held every Thursday to demand trial of the killers of Kibria and others who died in bomb and grenade attacks across the country.

'We have no trust in the present investigation into the Kibria killing case as it was carried out to save the real killers,' Asma said.

The government has brought a night guard, a driver and local BNP leader Qaiyum under the focus of the investigation, but the masterminds still remain free, she added.

'We have appealed to the United Nations to carry out a probe and also requested US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca during her visit to Bangladesh last week to help get the support from the US and the UN members to the UN investigation,' Asma said.

She also vowed to continue the peaceful protest programme unless the real killers are brought to justice.

Family members of Kibria, members of civil society and common people joined the 'Blue for Peace' programme.

Kibria, also an Awami League leader, was killed in a grenade attack at Boiddyerbazar in Habiganj on January 27 last year.

3 Khulna JMB cadres sent to Dhaka for joint interrogation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

JMB Ehsar Hanif Munshi, 23, his father Iddris Ali Munshi and younger brother Yunus Munshi were sent to Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) in Dhaka on Wednesday evening.

They were arrested on January 26 from Shannashi village under Morrelganj upazila of Bagerhat district and taken on remand for 10 days for interrogation.

During interrogation Hanif Munshi identified him as an eshar of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh and confessed to his direct involvement in August 17 serial bomb blasts at Khilgaon in the capital.

He also gave very important information about different networks of JMB across the country and his close link with Abdur Rahman, Bangla Bhai and Ataur Rahman Sunni.

Hanif Munshi told interrogators that his father Iddris Munshi and younger brother Yunus Munshi are also JMB cadres.

JU students assault former teacher

JU CORRESPONDENT

A group of students of Department of Business Administration yesterday assaulted a former teacher on the Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus.

Tanvir Ahmad Siddiqui, who was suspended in November last year from the department for his indecent behaviour with girl students, was beaten up by the students at university Prantik gates, said a witness and friend of Tanvir preferring anonymity.

The students stopped him at Gate No-1 and forcibly took him to Prantik Gate when he was returning home after attending the convocation.

Tanvir was rushed to Rabeya clinic from where he was sent to Dhaka.

DU English dept get-together now on March 3

The annual get-together of Dhaka University English Department Alumni will now be held on March 3 at 3:30pm at the Department of English, Arts Faculty Building, Dhaka University, instead of February 3 at the TSC owing to unavoidable circumstances, says a press release.



Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Society takes out a procession in the city yesterday marking the World Wetlands Day.

Raise awareness about wetland protection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

World Wetlands Day 2006 was observed in the country yesterday with a call to raise awareness about conservation and proper use of wetlands for poverty reduction.

The theme of the day is 'Wetlands and water -- supporting life, sustaining livelihoods'.

Different organisations marked the day with seminars, discussions, rallies and art competitions in the capital.

Speakers at a seminar said most people are not aware about wetland values.

They said the lack of awareness, mismanagement, absence of a policy, lack of coordination among the ministries concerned and lax enforcement of laws are some factors causing degradation of wetlands.

State Minister for Water Resources Goutam Chakraborty said filling of wetlands and other water bodies for the purpose of food production to meet the increasing demand is leading to an ecological imbalance in the country.

He said the country is rich in water resources as it has many rivers, wetlands and various types of water bodies, but those are on the verge of severe degradation due to lack of awareness.

The state minister also said that he will take necessary steps to observe the day at national level from the next year.

Prof Md Inamul Haque, director general of Bangladesh Haor & Wetland Development Board, said there are 43,980 square km of water bodies in the country.

Presenting a keynote paper, Dr Akhtarul Islam, a professor of Shahjalal Science and Technology University, said rural people can change their socio-economic condition through proper utilisation of wetlands.

The Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Society organised the seminar at the National Press Club in the city.

It also organised an art competition for children at Ramna Park.

Obituary

Md Junab Ali, former advocate of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association, passed away at the National Heart Foundation in the city on Wednesday, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, five sons, three daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was buried at his village home at Matlab in Chandpur yesterday.

WEATHER TODAY Dry weather likely UNB, Dhaka Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today. Light fog may also occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said in a forecast.



Dr AR Mallick's anniversary of death tomorrow

The 9th death anniversary of Dr AR Mallick, eminent educationist and former finance minister, will be observed tomorrow, says a press release.

Dr Mallick was a professor of South Asian history at the University of Pennsylvania, USA and the founding vice-chancellor of Chittagong University where he mounted a resistance during the War of Liberation. He was the president of the Liberation Council of Intelligentsia in 1971.

The first education secretary of Bangladesh, Dr Mallick was also the first high commissioner to India and concurrently accredited as ambassador to Nepal and Bhutan in 1972. He was also elected chairman of the Asian Development Bank in 1975.

His publications include 'British Policies and the Muslims of Bengal' and 'Amar Jibon Katha O Bangladesher Mukti Sangram'.

Fatahul Islam

Today is the 9th death anniversary of Fatahul Islam, former additional director General of the postal department, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani has been arranged at his Gulshan residence in the city.

Chan Mia Sardar

Today is the 21st death anniversary of Chan Mia Sardar, father of Dhaka City Awami League Joint Secretary and former AL lawmaker Hazi Mohammad Selim, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be on the Gulshanara City Market premises at Islampur in the city after Juma prayers today.

All have been requested to attend the mahfil.



Namaz-e-janaza for former prime minister and Awami League presidium member Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury was held at the Baitul Mukarram north gate in the city yesterday.

Khulna JCD factions clash: 5 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Five people were injured in a clash between the two factions of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at KD Ghose Road on Wednesday night.

Five motorcycles were also badly damaged during the 20-minute clash.

Law enforcers have been deployed in and outside the BNP office at KD Ghose Road to avoid further clashes.

The injured -- Khulna city JCD President Masud Parvez Babu, BL College JCD President Ershad Hossain Dablu, former vice-president of Khulna Polytechnic Institute JCD Golam Mostafa, Joint Secretary of city unit of Shechchhasebak Dal Golam Mostafa and activist Sajib -- are undergoing treatment at Khulna General Hospital. They received multiple stab injuries during the clash.

Both the rival factions lodged FIRs with Khulna Police Station yesterday. But the police could not arrest anybody.

One faction is led by M Nurul Islam MP and the other by city BNP convenor Ali Asgar Lobi.

According to witnesses, the clash took place when JCD supporters loyal to Ali Asgar prevented some leaders loyal to Nurul Islam from entering the BNP office.

Injured Keraniganj Jubo League leader dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruhitpur Union Jubo League President Anwar Hossain, who was injured in an attack on Wednesday, died at a hospital in the city early yesterday.

Protesting the killing of Anwar, also a UP member, the Awami League and Jubo League called a three-day hartal that began at Ruhitpur Union in Keraniganj yesterday.

PBCP extremist demands toll from Agrani Bank manager

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An extremist of PBCP Janajuddho faction demanded Tk 10,000 in toll from Abu Zafar Shikder, manager of Kajdia branch of Agrani Bank at Rupsha upazila of Khulna district on Tuesday night.

He also threatened him with death over cell phone for non-payment of the toll.

Abu Zafar filed a general diary with Rupsha thana yesterday evening seeking security of his life.

Anwar was stabbed allegedly by the supporters of Ruhitpur UP Chairman Kamaluddin at a local bus stand at around 8:00am on Wednesday. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and later shifted to the Apollo Hospitals where he died.

The body was first taken to the Awami League central office at Bangabandhu Avenue. He was buried at his village home at Sonakanda after Maghrib prayers.

UNB adds: Awami League President Sheikh Hasina in a statement yesterday strongly protested the killing of Jubo League leader Anwar Hossain at Ruhitpur in Keraniganj.

She said the ruling party cadres are killing the opposition leaders and activists at the behest of the party high command and the murder of Anwar is the continuity of their killing spree.

'The alliance regime wants to retain power through killing, terrorism and repression. We'll have to oust this government through a united movement,' she said.

Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed her sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

DHAKA TODAY

Meeting

A meeting of the city unit of 14-party opposition combine will be held. Venue: Gono Forum Central Office, Arambagh. Time: 10.00am.

Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of a book titled 'Amader Ekattur' will be held. Venue: Nazrul Mancha, Bangla Academy. Time: 3.30pm.

Rally

Angikar Bangladesh Foundation will hold a rally to protest the construction of Tipaimukh Dam by the Indian government on the international river Barak. Venue: Doel Chatteral of Dhaka University. Time: 10.30am.

AGM

The annual general meeting of the Christian Co-operative Credit Union Ltd, Dhaka will be held. Venue: Khelaghar playground, Tejgaon. Time: 10.30am.