

Govt mulls amendment to Newspaper Act

Sircar tells BFUJ council

BSS, Dhaka

Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Barrister Jamir Uddin Sircar yesterday said the government is contemplating an amendment to the Newspaper Act to help protect the trend of objective journalism through upholding the national policies.

He was addressing the 12th biennial council of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) as the chief guest at Jatiya Press Club (JPC) in the city.

"Freedom of the media will be guaranteed if democracy can function without any interruption," he said, adding that free press does not mean that the journalists can write whatever they like.

He said the journalist community has always been active to safeguard the country's hard-earned independence and sovereignty side by side with its culture and heritage.

"Journalists across the globe always command respect of all, because they wake up the people

through their pens," he said.

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam as the special guest also addressed the function with BFUJ President Gias Kamal Chowdhury in the chair. JPC president Riaz Uddin Ahmed, General Secretary Shawkat Mahmud and BFUJ Secretary General Ruhul Amin Gazi also addressed the function.

Besides, Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) President Elahi Newaj Khan, Chittagong Metropolitan Journalists' Union President Shamsul Haque Haidari, Khulna Metropolitan Journalists' Union President Anisuzzaman, Bogra Journalists' Union President Mir Sazzad Ali Santosh, Jessore Journalists' Union President Mahidul Islam Mantu, Rajshahi Journalists' Union President Nazib Wadud, Federal Union of Press Workers Federation President Fazole Imam and Bangladesh Press Workers Federation President Matjur Rahman Talukder spoke on the occasion.

Jamir Uddin Sircar said the

independence of Bangladesh was achieved through the joint efforts of all including journalists, politicians and intellectuals. After the independence, he said, the then ruling party has ruined freedom of the media by closing all but four newspapers.

He laid emphasis upon people's voting rights and elected government for national integrity and economic progress and said democracy would prevail if the people's representatives could be elected only through polls.

The Information Minister said the present government is tolerant and liberal about newspapers. "The nation expects more objective news flow from the media," he said.

In this respect, Shamsul Islam stressed the need for preventing yellow journalism for the sake of upholding freedom of the press and the journalist community in the country.

College student stabbed to death in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Miscreants stabbed a student to death yesterday evening at the United Nations Park near Panchlaish Police Station in Chittagong.

The dead identified as Utpal Barua, 18, son of SK Barua of city's Amirbagh area, was a first year student of Chittagong Metropolitan Commerce College.

Although actual motive behind the murder couldn't be ascertained, police and sources suspect that Utpal might have been killed following enmity with some of his friends.

Witnesses and police said Utpal came to the park at around 5:30pm with a female student after attending coaching class at Katalganj Residential Area, which is just around 100 yards off the park.

About seven to eight youths also arrived at the park after few minutes and they soon were locked in a heated altercation with Utpal and the girl. At one stage, the gang stabbed Utpal indiscriminately and left the scene, leaving him in a pool of blood.

Locals rushed Utpal to the emergency of Chittagong Medical College Hospital where the on-duty doctors pronounced him dead.



PHOTO: STAR

Rickshaw-Van pullers-Owners Oikya Parishad stages a demonstration at Mukhtangan in the city yesterday in protest against theft of rickshaws.

SEMINAR ON GENDER EQUALITY

Specific allocation for women in next budget demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the need for specific allocation for women's development in the next budget and demanded direct election of women in the reserved seats for women in the parliament to ensure women empowerment in politics.

They were speaking at a three-day seminar on 'Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights', organised by Nagorik Uddyog (NGO) at the city's Women's Voluntary Association (WVA) auditorium, to mark the International Women's Day on March 8.

Referring the budget procedure as confidential, Arifur Rahman of Manusher Jonnyo (NGO) said, "There is an infrastructure gap in the procedure of budget and thus women become victim of discrimination in budget allocation."

Presenting the keynote paper on 'The role of state in women

empowerment: Budget' at the second session of the inaugural day, Rahman explained how women empowerment mechanism in political, social and economic sectors would take place.

Altaf Parvej, an author and researcher, suggested that citizens needed to pay income tax regularly to increase allocation for women in budget.

Leaders from different women and social organisations including Mukta Shishu O Nari Sramik Forum, Bachte Shikho Nari, Karitas, Jubo Nagorik Jote, Agrani Shangstha and Bangladesh Krishak Federation took part in programme with Prof Dr Meghna Guho Thakurota, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, in the chair.

Earlier, at the first session, Fawjia Khandaker Iva, a freelance consultant, presented a keynote paper on 'Violence against Women by Family, Society and State and Gender Equity'.

Fawjia pointed out gender discrimination begins at the family and thus women's development is hindered from the very beginning.

She said women need to be educated and self-reliant to ensure gender equity in the society. She emphasised that present laws should be strictly enforced and Convention on Elimination of All Sorts of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) should be fully ratified as soon as possible.

Sultana Kamal of Ain O Shalish Kendra presided over the programme while Umme Salma of WVA and Zakir Hossain, chief executive officer of Nagorik Uddyog addressed.

The seminar will end tomorrow with discussions on 'Women Empowerment on the Perspective of Millennium Development Goals and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)' and 'HIV/ Aids: A gender based discussion'.

Khaleda goes to Nandail today

BSS, Mymensingh

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is expected to visit Nandail upazila in the district today.

During the visit, she will inaugurate a 17-kilometer-long Nandail-Dewanganj Road. Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has completed the road at a cost of Tk 6.20 crore, financed by Bangladesh and Japan.

About one lakh people of Achargaon, Sherpur and Kharua unions will directly benefit from the road. It has also established a direct road link with Gaffargaon and Hossainpur upazilas of Kishoreganj district.

The Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of upgradation of Nandail Upazila Health Complex from 31 to 50-seat. She will also inaugurate a two-storied modern Dakbungalov built at a cost of Tk 32 lakh 37 thousand by Mymensingh Zila Parishad.

Khaleda Zia will address a huge public meeting to be organised by Upazila BNP at Shaheed Smriti Model College ground at 4:00pm. Ministers, MPs, leaders of BNP and high officials will attend the programmes.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina speaks at a seminar on the March 7 historic address of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the auditorium of Institution of Diploma Engineers in the city yesterday.

DU 'GHA' UNIT Interview of students from Mar 12

DU CORRESPONDENT

Interview of the students who became successful in the admission test under 'Gha' unit of Dhaka University will be held as per merit list from March 12 to 16.

The interview will take place at the office of the dean of social science faculty at the Arts Building, said a DU press release.

The interview will continue until the seats at the departments/institutes are filled.

The students have been asked to bring original mark sheets of SSC and HSC examinations, admit card of admission test and two copies passport-sized attested photographs during the interview.

Asian Art Exhibition begins today

BSS, Dhaka

The 12th Biennial Asian Art Exhibition begins at the Osmani Memorial Hall heretoday.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is expected to inaugurate the exhibition as the chief guest.

A total of 250 paintings of 177 artists from 32 countries, including 194 works of 152 artists of Bangladesh, will be on display at the 27-day Asian art exhibition.

At a press conference at the Chitrashala Bhaban of Shilpakala Academy yesterday, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman gave an overview of arrangements of the exhibition.

The exhibition will take place at the Jatiya Chitrashala of Shilpakala Academy, Osmani Memorial Hall and Bangladesh National Museum. Cultural Secretary ATM Ataur Rahman, Director General of Shilpakala Academy Ahmed Nazir, Director General of National Museum Prof Mahmudul Haque, Joint Secretary of Cultural Ministry Abdur Razzak and Additional Principal Information Officer Sanat Kumar Biswas were present at the conference, among others.

Three paintings, selected by a jury board, will get best awards. Each award carries a cash of Taka one lakh, while some art works will garner honorary prizes.

Selima Rahman said the first Asian exhibition was held in 1981 which was inaugurated by President Ziaur Rahman.

From then on the exhibition is held as a cultural festival for Asian artists.

Separate fare structure for CNG bus soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will sit with the CNG bus operators soon to introduce a separate fare structure for such bus service, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda said at a seminar yesterday.

Presently, passengers of CNG buses pay the same fare charged by diesel- and petrol-run buses although the price of CNG is much less than fuel oil.

The government had not fixed the fare for CNG buses separately to promote the use of compressed natural gas (CNG), said the minister.

Rahimafrooz CNG, a concern of Rahimafrooz (Bangladesh) Limited, organised the seminar on 'CNG: The Future Fuel' in the city to improve understanding of CNG performance in vehicles, including technological advances and safety issues.

Prof Dr M Shamsheer Ali, vice-chancellor of Southeast University, Diego Lolato, president of Italy-based Lo-gas s.r.l, and Feroz Rahim, group CEO of Rahimafrooz, also spoke at the seminar.

Diego Lolato, who came to Bangladesh a week ago on the occasion of a free car check-up programme at Rahimafrooz CNG conversation centre, presented a keynote paper at the seminar.

CNG-run vehicles are gaining popularity across the world in the wake of surge in prices of fuel oil, he said.

In the 50s, only Italy used the CNG technology while at present over 35 countries have now been using it because of low cost of the

natural gas, he added.

Prof M Shamsheer Ali said the energy sector is now facing various problems. But if the government had invited the private sector to work in the energy sector, it would have been much different than what it is today, he added.

He also urged the government to ensure access to natural gas for the rural people.

Group Chairman of Rahimafrooz Bangladesh Afroz Rahim and Director Niaz Rahim were also present at the seminar.

Property worth Tk 50 lakh gutted in N'ganj

BDNEWS, Narayanganj

Property worth about Tk 50 lakh was gutted in fire at the Islamia Board Mills in Pagla Chitashal area of Fatulla yesterday afternoon.

The fire fighters of Narayanganj, Hajiganj, Postagola and Sadarghat Fire Brigade units brought the fire under control after an hour-long struggle.

Fire Brigade sources said the fire originated from a gas generator of the mill at about 3:00pm. The fire spread quickly as huge inflammable materials were kept in the Mill.

The fire fighters had to struggle hard to douse the flame.

Islamia Board Mill authorities said property worth about Tk 50 lakh was gutted in the fire.



Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Alauddin Sagor, a driver who has been suffering from Hepatitis B, appeals for financial assistance for his treatment.

Sagor, who lives at Khilkhet in Dhaka with his wife and one son, now could not work to earn a living due to his illness.

Doctors said his condition has been deteriorating. To save his life, he needs proper treatment, which involves about Tk 2.5 lakh.

He has appealed to the generous people to extend a helping hand to save his life.

Contributions can be sent to the following account: Account No.-2434014678, IFIC Bank, Uttara Branch, Dhaka.

Interested persons can also contact him over mobile phone No.-0188101394.

New book launched

A book titled 'Obak Alir Nishidhho Pollee O Onnanno Katha', written by retired civil servant Mahbubur Rahman, was launched at the Novera Auditorium of the National Museum in the city recently, says a press release.

Prof Anisuzzaman chaired the function conducted by Dr Arifa Rahman, Head of the English Department, Presidency University, Dhaka.

Prof Zubaida Gulshan Ara, Prof Qazi Madina, writer Rashid Haider and noted journalist and columnist Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury took part in discussion on the book.

The book, among other things, describes in a humorous way the bureaucratic methods of work, and also highlights how the Westminster type of neutral administrative structure has gradually degenerated into its present form, the press release added.

'Women's issues yet to get proper treatment in media'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although media is playing an important role in creating awareness about gender inequality, issues concerning women are yet to get proper and positive treatment in it, said the speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They said women are mainly presented in entertainment sectors and there is also a tendency to present them more when they become victims of any mishaps.

The discussion was organised by Gender in Media Forum at CIRDAP auditorium in the city yesterday to mark the International Women's Day on March 8.

At the discussion, Prof Geeti Ara Nasrin of Dhaka University presented a media monitoring report prepared on February 16, 2005.

The report was prepared on the basis of news and other stories of six national dailies, three television channels and one radio on that day.

The Media Monitoring Programme was conducted in 101 countries including Bangladesh by World Association for Christian Communication (WACC).

The National Monitoring Report revealed the discriminations that the women are facing while working in both print and electronic media.

Of the total news presenters, 83 percent was female, but of the total reporters, their percentage was only 18, said the report.

"Mass media is the place to find out and depict the inequalities in the society and make people aware to remove them," Prof Geeti Ara said, adding, a change is taking place in the society, but it is not clearly reflected in media.

"More women should have to be involved with media and take the challenge to work better," said Professor of Nari Sangbadik Kendra Nasimun Ara Huq Minu.

She said UNESCO has proposed to news media to allow women journalists to take the responsibility of decision taking on the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8.

Founder member of Gender in Media Forum Muhammad Jahangir, litterateur Selina Hossain, Ranjan Karmaker of Steps Towards Development, Editor of Anannya Tasmima Hossain, Editor of New Nation Mostofa Kamal Majumder and a host of women journalists were present at the discussion.



PHOTO: STAR

Citizens' Rights Movement forms a human chain at Shahbagh in the city yesterday demanding uninterrupted power supply.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country with chances of rain or thundershowers accompanied by gusty wind over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 33.9 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sandwip and lowest 12.6 degree Celsius at Srirongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:03pm today and rises at 6:17am tomorrow.

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	32.0	17.8	87	39
Chittagong	33.0	21.0	58	49
Rajshahi	32.5	16.4	72	46
Khulna	32.5	19.0	75	58
Barisal	32.2	18.4	71	71
Sylhet	31.6	17.1	61	43
Cox's Bazar	32.6	22.0	58	50

Rules bent for Zia's portrait

JU teachers, students express resentment at authorities' inaction

JU CORRESPONDENT

The Jahangirnagar University (JU) authorities have allowed the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of the ruling BNP, to paint a giant portrait of late president Ziaur Rahman on the front wall of the administrative building, causing resentment among the teachers and students.

The portrait on the wall, which was completed on Thursday, now stands testimony to the fact that the authorities, which do not allow anybody to put up posters and paint graffiti on the walls of the administrative building, have turned a blind eye to such an act by the JCD.

Many student organisations, including cultural ones, had earlier pasted posters on the wall, but the university authorities removed those few hours afterwards, saying that this was against the rule.

It took three or four days to paint the giant portrait on the left wall of the building and the name of JU JCD General Secretary Nazmul Hasan Ovi has been inscribed close to the portrait as its sponsor.

"We are also planning to paint another portrait on the right wall of the building very soon," said Rabiul Islam, organising secretary of JU JCD and a leader of a group led by JU JCD President Parvez Mallik.

"Rules are, in fact, meant only for the weak. On the other hand, it is a means to serve the interest of the ruling party as well as the university administration," regretted a student who preferred not to be named.

Nazmul Hasan Ovi said, "I have ordered to paint the portrait to show my respect to the late president."

When contacted, Vice-Chancellor Prof Khandaker Mustahidur Rahman said, "We asked everyone not to paint graffiti or paste poster, but they took no heed."

"I do not know whether there is any rule banning graffiti and painting on the wall of the administrative building," he added.

Prof Anu Muhammad said, "The portrait must be removed immediately as university is a place of free-thinking. An important place like this should not be used to promote political branding. The university authorities must be free from the influence of the JCD."

"Such portraits obviously undermine the spirit of the university and such activities are also rare in any university in foreign countries," said Prof Ajit Kumar Majumder, president of JU Teachers' Association.

Uninterrupted power supply demanded

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Citizens' Rights Movement staged a demonstration in front of the Fine Arts Institute of Dhaka University yesterday demanding uninterrupted power supply across the country.

General Secretary of the 'Nagarik Samity' Sharifuzzaman Sharif conducted the rally.

Later, speakers at a rally demanded uninterrupted power supply across the country as the state minister for Power has managed uninterrupted electricity supply in his constituency in Sirajganj.

Tushar Rahman, convener of the organisation and executive director of 'Karmakurir Foundation', read out a written statement at the rally with former information secretary and BTRC chairman Syed Marghub Morshed in the chair.

Convener of 'Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Sangram Parishad' Advocate Abed Raja, and Consumers' Association of Bangladesh (CAB) Secretary General Kazi Faruk were present.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry organises a seminar on 'WTO Agreement on Agriculture: Potentials of Agro-Processing Products of Bangladesh' with Agriculture Minister MK Anwar as chief guest. Venue: DCCI auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Discussion

Bangladesh Awami Wala League will hold a discussion on 'Islam vs alliance government' with Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil as chief guest. Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Unity. Time: 11:00am.

Award giving ceremony

The Steering Committee of the 3rd International Film Festival Bangladesh will hold the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' giving ceremony with Dhaka City Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka as