

Central lab to test water quality opens

BONEWS, Dhaka

The central laboratory of the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE) established with Japanese grant to examine quality of drinking water was inaugurated at Mohakhali in the city yesterday.

The laboratory was set up to strengthen the capacity of examining water quality with special emphasis on arsenic contamination analysis and mitigation of arsenic related diseases.

It will also act as the coordinator of 10 zonal laboratories across the country and organise a national water quality monitoring and surveillance system.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan opened the laboratory.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Bhuiyan thanked the Japanese government for promoting better health services in Bangladesh.

He also renewed his government's commitment to ensuring adequate healthcare facilities for the people.

"We have given due importance to arsenic-related diseases, which affected mainly the poor people," he said.

"Establishment of the laboratory is one of the steps we have taken in line with our pledges to eliminate arsenic problem," the minister said. Japanese Ambassador Matsushiro Horiguchi told the function that the people can be 'water poor' if clean and safe water is not available to them during the hours of need.

So, water quality and rights, groundwater quality and sound environmental management for safe water supply are of crucial importance to any country, he said.

The ambassador mentioned the findings of a survey conducted in 270 villages of Bangladesh that found over 7,000 arsenicosis patients.

He said there are 37 districts across the country having arsenic in groundwater. About 30 million people live in these districts and 90 per cent of them live in rural areas.

Resident Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Akio Arai also addressed the function, chaired by Chief Engineer of DPHE Khorshed Alam.

JCD, BCL clash in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Three people were injured when the supporters of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) clashed on the Khulna MM City College campus yesterday.

The injured were identified as BCL activists Amitabh Das and Tarikul Islam and JCD activist GM Palash. They were admitted to Khulna General Hospital.

The clash took place over teasing of girl students at a cultural function at the collage auditorium, police said.

Rab nabs two muggers in Ctg

BSS, Chittagong

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two alleged hijackers from the city on Monday, Rab sources said.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab team raided Kotwali area at 7:00pm last night and picked up Mohammad Shahraj of Sarandhi village under Hatia upazila, for his alleged involvement in mugging.

Following his confession, the Rab team conducted a drive at Kazir Dewry and rounded up his accomplice Mohammad Jafar, the sources said.

Ibrahim Kamal Murder 'PWD officers loot valuables worth Tk 15 lakh from Kamal's quarters'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of slain assistant secretary Ibrahim Kamal yesterday alleged that some dishonest officers of Public Works Department (PWD) in connivance with Ramna police looted almost all furniture and valuables worth Tk 15 lakh from his official quarters last month.

The quarters at Bailey Road Officers' Colony has been in the custody of police since Kamal, younger brother of former chief election commissioner MA Syed and a lifelong bachelor, was stabbed to death near Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital in the city by unknown assailants on November 21, 2004, they said.

They also filed a case with Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka on April 5 against three officials of the Directorate of the Government Accommodation -- Yusuf, Abul Kashem and Monir Hossain -- and Anisul Islam, sub-

inspector of Ramna Police Station, accusing them of involvement in the looting incident that took place on March 14.

At a press conference at the National Press Club, the family members of Kamal demanded arrest of the officers.

"Without informing us, the government officers in connivance with Ramna police broke the lock on the door of the quarters and looted almost all of the goods on March 14 while the investigation of the murder case is going on," said Engineer Abul Kashem, elder brother of Kamal.

He also said that he filed the case with the CMM's Court after Ramna police refused to register it.

Kashem's wife Bilkis Banu and daughter Parma Shahrin and their lawyer Advocate Kamruzzaman Mahboob were present at the press conference.



Karmajibi Nari forms a human chain at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting police assault on journalists in Chittagong.

4 kidnapped teenagers rescued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday rescued four abducted teenagers including two girls and captured two abductors from city's Sayedabad bus terminal.

On information, personnel of Rab-10 rushed to Sayedabad in the early morning yesterday and arrested Mitail Paribahan driver Diplob, 28 and supervisor Salim, 30, who kidnapped Sonia Akhtar, 15, Tania Akhtar, 15, Jewel Rana, 17 and Sabuj Ahmed Mahbub, 19, all from Munshiganj district.

Abductors confined the four teenagers on a bus of Mitail Paribahan when they were returning from Sylhet after a tour and demanded Tk two lakh as ransom from their parents.

Later parents informed Rab-10 and Rab rescued the teenagers. A case was filed with Demra Police Station in this regard.

WATER RESOURCES MINISTRY Project taken to ensure good governance

BSS, Dhaka

The Water Resources Ministry has initiated a System Management Unit (SMU) programme, a one-stop service for establishing good governance and ensuring transparency in the ministry, bringing all the water management installations under computer network.

The project 'Modernisation of the Ministry of Water Resources Financial Management Capacity (MMWRFCM)' is being implemented with the financial assistance of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) at an estimated cost of Tk 21 crore.

Abdus Salam FCA, team leader of the project, told BSS that the project will assist in further improving the financial management capacity in the Water Resources Ministry's four institutions -- Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Water Resources Planning Organisation (WARPO), River Research Institute (RRI) and Joint Rivers Commission (JRC).

"Over the last decade we have suffered, using traditional financial management procedures in the Water Resources Ministry, whereas SMU will usher in a new chapter in maintaining modern financial management, covering the whole water resources secretariat," he added.

The team leader said the project would equip the Water Resources Ministry with full computerised applications in a bid to better administrative management like provident fund, pension, employees, loan as well as audit observations.

"The main objective of the project is to bring the entire ministry under computer network in a framework for establishing good governance, which could be replicated successfully in other ministries and all of their supportive institutions," said project director AKM Jashim Uddin.

Democracy Festival held in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Fourth Democracy Festival was observed in Khulna yesterday with a call to work together for establishing a peaceful society.

Arranged by non-government organisation (NGO) Rupanar, the festival held at the Zia Hall was inaugurated by Additional Divisional Commissioner (ADC) Md Farhad Uddin yesterday.

Democracy Programme Specialist of USAID Mission in Bangladesh H M Nazrul Islam, Editor of The Daily Tribune Begum Ferdousi Ali and Chief Executive of Rupanar Swapan Guha attended the inaugural function as special guests.

Presided over by joint convener of the Festival Preparation Committee Monoranjan Mondol, the inaugural function was addressed by chairperson of Khulna Citizens' Forum freedom fighter Shaikh Abdul Kayyum. The ADC in his speech underscored the need for creating awareness among people for strengthening democratic system. He also stressed the need to institutionalise democracy for making local government bodies stronger.

Begum Ferdousi also stressed the need for strengthening local government bodies for welfare of the people. She lauded Rupanar for holding Democracy Festival.

500 phensidyl bottles seized in Jessore

UNB, Jessore

BDR personnel seized 500 bottles of smuggled Indian phensidyl from Bhaverbar village in Benapole on Monday.

Acting on a tip-off, a BDR team raided the village and recovered the bottles from separate places.

However, none was arrested in this connection. The bottles of phensidyl were deposited to Narcotics Control Department and a case was filed.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia addresses a huge public meeting on Singra Court premises in Natore yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

4 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least four people were killed and 25 others injured in separate road accidents in three districts yesterday.

Our Kishoreganj correspondent reports: Two people were killed and 20 others injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Kishoreganj highway at Nandola area of Kishoreganj Sadar upazila yesterday.

One of the two dead was identified as Mohammed Rony, 35, son of Abdul Mannan of Rongar Kona village under Kishoreganj sadar upazila while identity of another could not be known immediately, hospital sources said.

The accident occurred when a Kishoreganj bound passenger bus fell into a roadside ditch while giving side to a truck coming from the opposite direction.

Of the injured, 11 were admitted to Kishoreganj Sadar Hospital. They are Harun, 25, Kalu Mia, 28, of

Baulai, Kishoreganj, Ismay Jahan, 3, of Islampur, Dhaka, Suruj Mia, 22, of Kishoreganj, Parsu Mia, 35, of Bajitpur, Shahabuddin, 58, Nurjahan, 5, Rohma, 22, Abul Kashem, 29, of Pakundia and Alal, 30, of Kishoreganj, hospital sources said.

A correspondent from Lalmonirhat added: A madrasa student was killed and four others were injured in two separate road accidents at Teesta Bazar and Airport road in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila yesterday.

Local people blockaded the road, as a result

The road communications with Lalmonirhat, Kurigram and Rangpur and other parts of the country were disrupted for two hours from 2:00pm.

The dead was identified as Mohammad Milon, 9, son of Abdus Sobhan of Teesta Bazar and student of a local madrasa. A Rangpur bound passenger bus from

Lalmonirhat hit Milon at Teesta Bazar when he was collecting money from the passers-by for construction of a local mosque. He died in the spot.

Another accident took place at the airport road when a Patgram bound passenger bus from Rangpur hit a truck, leaving four people injured.

Our Staff Correspondent from Khulna adds: One person was killed and another severely injured in a road accident at KD Ghosh Road under Khulna Police Station yesterday.

The dead was identified as Siddiqui Rahman, 30. Injured Asmaul Molla, 38, is undergoing treatment at Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH).

The accident occurred when a truck collided head-on with a motorcycle leaving Siddiqui Rahman dead on the spot.

Police seized the truck but could not arrest its driver.

50 injured as farmers clash in B'baria

UNB, Brahmanbaria

About 50 people were injured in a clash between two groups of farmers over irrigating croplands at Bareura village in Sarail yesterday.

Both the groups used lethal weapons during the two-hour fight that erupted at about 7:00am, witnesses said.

Eight of the injured were taken to Sadar Hospital while two to Sarail Hospital.

Traffic at Bareura point on Dhaka-Sylhet highway was disrupted for nearly half an hour due to the clash.

Receiving information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

UPA welcomes new students

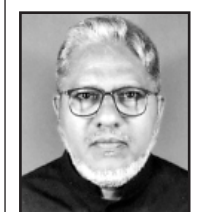
The University of Asia Pacific (UAP) yesterday welcomed its newly enrolled students of Fall 2006 at the Russian Cultural Centre auditorium, says a press release.

Prof M Asaduzzaman, chairman, UGC, was as chief guest while Ragib Ali, chairman, UAP Foundation was the special guest of the ceremony.

Welcoming the students, the UGC chairman hoped that the students would be able to receive quality education at UAP under the leadership of the university authorities and guidance of teachers.

Prof Abdul Matin Patwari, vice-chancellor of UAP, Prof MR Kabir, pro vice-chancellor of UAP and Air Codre (td) Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury, registrar, UAP were also present at the ceremony.

Obituary



Hafez Sufi Yousof, an eminent social worker and philanthropist, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at his residence in Mohammadpur on Sunday evening at the age of 62, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, a son and four daughters to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Salimullah Road Jame Masjid after Zohr prayers today and he will be buried at Kalsi graveyard in Mipur Section 12.

His qulqhwani will be held at his 13/4 Salimullah Road residence after Asr prayers and at Salimullah Road Jame Masjid after Juma prayers on April 21.



Newly appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to Iran M Shameem Ahsan called on Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad following presentation of his credentials recently.

'Nepali king must act to defuse standoff'

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's king must act quickly to defuse an increasingly volatile standoff in the insurgency-hit country after nearly two weeks of crippling anti-royal protests, analysts say.

A general strike called by opposi-

tion parties has closed the capital and sent prices soaring and, despite a government clampdown, massive protests against King Gyanendra have mushroomed across the troubled nation with at least five killed.

King Gyanendra, who grabbed total control after sacking the government 14 months ago, now faces stark choices, warned a senior Western diplomat who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"Our message is that you don't have a lot of time, you have to move and you have to talk to the (political) parties," the diplomat said.

"I think the situation is getting more and more precarious. The king has to engage the parties in open honest dialogue leading to the restoration of democracy," the senior diplomat told AFP.

In a message for Nepalese New Year last week the king again asked political parties to enter dialogue and reiterated an offer to

hold national elections as soon as possible.

His speech was dismissed by the political parties, who vowed to continue their protests until full democracy is restored and the king's power curtailed.

They have called for a mass rally to be held in the capital Thursday, marking the start of a third week of the strike.

The current protest movement is bigger than the 1990 democracy movement that first signalled the end of direct royal rule in Nepal, noted Japanese journalist Kiyoko Ogura who has lived in the kingdom for 13 years and written a book on the democracy movement.

But she saw no indication that the king would back down.

"I don't think that the king will step back, he will continue to keep his position. The only thing I can see is more confrontation," Ogura told AFP.

ATTACK ON JURNOS DU Journalism Dept to stage protest today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Department of Mass Communication and Journalism of Dhaka University (DU) will bring out a procession and stage a sit-in protesting police atrocities on journalists and photojournalists at Chittagong Divisional Stadium on April 16.

Chair of the department Prof Dr Golam Rahman called upon all to participate in the programme, which will begin at 11:00am at the foot of Aparajeo Bangla.

Meanwhile, Dhaka University Journalists' Association (Dujja) yesterday condemned the April 16 police attack on journalists during the second test match between Bangladesh-Australia series.

Dujja members brought out a procession that paraded through different roads of campus.

After the procession, they held a rally at the foot of Aparajeo Bangla, where Dujja Presidents Mustak Ahmed Masud and Kazi Saifuddin Avi, General Secretary Imamul Haq Shamim, Sujon Mehedi, Mahabubur Rahman and Sheikh Adnan Fahad spoke.



Chittagong Press Club President Abu Sufiyan speaks at a meeting at the Press Club in the port city yesterday protesting police assault on journalists.

PHOTO: STAR



Dr Utpol Kumar Sarker speaks at a press conference on International Education Exhibition 2006 organised by SSBCL at National Press Club in the city yesterday.

WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

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

Highest temperature 33.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and lowest 20.5 degree Celsius at Sayedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:22pm today and rises at 5:33am 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	27.8	22.3	87	65
Chittagong	33.5	23.7	79	80
Rajshahi	30.2	21.2	95	60
Khulna	29.0	23.4	94	66
Barisal	29.6	21.5	95	93
Sylhet	26.9	21.2	93	78
Cox's Bazar	32.5	24.0	67	86

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable

Consumer Rights Movement, Bangladesh organises a roundtable discussion on 'Protection of consumer rights: Role of the media, entrepreneurs and government'. Venue: Heritage Cultural Institute, Dhanmondi. Time: 11:00am.

Workshop

Action on Disability and Development (ADD) organises a workshop on 'Rights of indigenous disabled women and children'. Venue: Biam Bhaban. Time: 10:00am.

Roundtable

Panjeri Shikha Sangbad organises a roundtable on 'Development of public relations profession in Bangladesh: Problems and potentials'. Venue: Jatiya Scout Bhaban. Time: 7:00pm.

Reception

A reception will be given to Ustab Azizul Islam with Abdus Salam Pintu, deputy minister for information, as chief guest. Venue: National Museum. Time: 6:00pm.