

Create atmosphere for credible polls

Hasina asks govt

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the BNP-Jamaat alliance government to create an atmosphere conducive to a free, fair and credible election by implementing the opposition's proposals for reforms.

"Only a patriotic government, elected through a free and fair election, can solve the problems of the country," she said, adding that the alliance government has completely failed to run the country properly.

"The longer this government remains in power, the worse people's miseries will be," Awami

League president said in a statement.

Rejecting the prime minister's remark that Monday's opposition grand rally in Dhaka was 'a flop show', she said: "The prime minister is resorting to falsehood about the grand rally, as she got afraid by the uproar of people at the Paltan."

Hasina urged the people not to be misled by the prime minister's 'falsehood', saying that the prime minister was "talking gibberish as she is engaged in a conspiracy to return to power."

Criticising the government for price hike of essentials ahead of the holy Ramadan, she said the

government is "taking away money from the public by increasing the prices through syndication."

The AL chief greeted the people for observing the opposition's nationwide 'road-rail-waterways blockade' yesterday ignoring "mass arrest and repression."

She demanded immediate release of the opposition leaders and activists who were arrested during the blockade programme and withdrawal of the "false" cases against them.

The opposition leader also urged the people to make today's countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal a success.

ICT Bill 2006 passed in JS

UNB, Dhaka

The Jatiya Sangsad passed the 'Information and Communication Technology Bill, 2006' last night.

The bill provides for legitimacy and security as well as the power to formulate rules about relevant issues of information and communication technology.

Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan piloted the bill, which was passed through voice vote.

Taking part in the discussion, Awami League members Shahjahan Khan, KM Jahangir, Shamsur Rahman Sharif and Mahbubur Rahman had proposed eliciting public opinion on the bill, but their motions were rejected through voice vote.

One arrested over Duja blast

UNB, Dhaka

A youth was arrested from the Dhaka University (DU) campus yesterday in connection with Tuesday's cracker blast in front of the Dhaka University Journalists' Association (Duja) office.

Campus sources said some BCL activists caught Akhter Hossain, 19, in front of the Arts Faculty Building at about 8:00am and handed him over to police after a good beating.

BCL leaders claimed that Akhter Hossain confessed to them that he set off the cracker on Tuesday being directed by Islami Chhatra Shibir in exchange of Tk 5,000.

Akhter also confessed to the police that he was involved in the blast.

Meanwhile, Duja in a press statement alleged that the arrest of Akhter is part of a drama to divert the fact.

Duja and BCL have been at loggerheads following an attack on the university correspondents on Saturday at Modhur Canteen by BCL activists.

375 digital telephone exchanges set up in 5 yrs

BSS, Dhaka

Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haque yesterday said the government has set up 375 digital telephone exchanges in different upazila across the country.

Replying to a question from Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker Abu Sayeed Mohammad Sahadat Hossain in the Jatiya Sangsad, he, however, said process is going on to set up digital exchanges in rest of the upazila soon.

Responding to a supplementary from treasury bench member Shahiduzzaman, the minister informed the House that the country has 3.50 lakh digital telephone connection at present, which would be doubled within this year.

Replying to another question from BNP lawmaker SA Sultan, he informed the House that the T and T Board had fixed a target to earn about Tk 1903 crore in revenue in the current financial year.

Replying to another question from Awami League lawmaker Faruque Khan, the minister said the government has a plan to reduce call charges of Teletalk mobile phone.

2 injured in truck-train collision

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Two people were injured when a train collided with a truck near Dhirasram Railway Station at Bishwa Road bypass in the district yesterday.

The injured are Shabuddin, 40, the truck driver and his helper Rubel, 25.

Sources said a sand-laden truck coming from Kaligonj at Gazipur collided with a train from Kamalapur as soon as the truck got on the level crossing early in the morning.

Villagers of Dhirasram rushed to the spot hearing the bang and recovered the injured.

Shabuddin was rushed to Joydevpur Square Sheba Clinic while Rubel was admitted to a local clinic, as his injury was not severe.

The accident took place due to the absence of rail gate at Dhaka-Chittagong bypass from Naojore, Gazipur to Vulta, Narayanganj.

The bypass was not inaugurated formally although the construction work has been completed. However, innumerable vehicles ply on the route regularly.

The accident took place 660 yards south to the station, said Karim, stationmaster of Dhirasram station.

A hydraulic train from Dhaka arrived on the spot at around 8:30am and removed the crushed parts of the truck from the rail line.

The rail communication at Kamalapur-Bahadurabad Ghat rail line resumed again at 10:30am.



Seba and Green Voice form a human chain at Panthapath in the city yesterday demanding cancellation of India's river link project.

PHOTO: STAR

SOUTH ASIAN SANITATION CONFERENCE BEGINS Call for new vision of regional cooperation

ABDUL JALIL BHUYIAN from Islamabad

Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has called on the South Asian countries to forge a new vision of cooperation for social and economic development of the region.

"By pooling our energies and talents, we can lift our people out of poverty, embark them on the path of social progress and provide them with a better life," he said.

Shaukat was inaugurating the Second South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN-2) at Marriot Hotel in Islamabad yesterday.

"The holding of this conference demonstrates our commitment to find ways and means of improving sanitation facilities in our region, where about one billion people live without adequate access to such

basic facilities," he added.

Shaukat said about 600 children die every day from diarrhoea worldwide due to inadequate hygiene and sanitation and about one million people, mostly children, suffer from intestinal diseases and nutritional deficiencies.

He said experience shows that sanitation needs of the people cannot be met through government intervention alone.

"In order to improve sanitation, we need to promote greater understanding among countries, policy-makers, services providers and communities. It is extremely important to generate public awareness of sanitation issues," he added.

Shaukat said the Dhaka Declaration of 2003 on Sanitation in South Asia adopted at SACOSAN-1 provided a strategic, forward-looking and pragmatic

framework for dealing with sanitation issues in developing countries like Pakistan.

Addressing the plenary session, Bangladesh delegation chief SM Jahur Islam, also secretary to Local Government Division, highlighted the achievements of the country since SACOSAN-1 and said sanitation coverage was raised from 33 percent in 2003 to 78 percent in 2006.

Representatives from Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, The Maldives, Cambodia, Bhutan, Indonesia and Afghanistan are attending the conference.

Besides, around 400 delegates from NGOs and business organisations of different countries are taking part in it.

President assents to two bills

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday assented to two bills passed in the ongoing 23rd session of parliament.

The bills are 'The State Acquisition and Tenancy (Amendment) Bill 2006' and 'The Bangladesh Shipping Cooperation (Amendment) Bill 2006, said an official release.

Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Shahana Rahman Kumkum, daughter of late journalist Nasir Uddin, died of a massive cardiac arrest at her Gulshan residence on September 18 at the age of 34.

She is survived by her husband and three daughters.

She was buried at Banani graveyard after Zohr prayers on Tuesday.

Her quikhwani will be held after Asr prayers tomorrow at her residence (House-48, Road-41, Gulshan-2).

Death anniversary



Today is the 26th death anniversary of noted dance artiste and director Gauhar Jamil, says a press release.

Founder of the Jago Art Centre, he was awarded Ekushey Padak posthumously.

A daylong Qurakhwani will be held at the Jago Art Centre on the occasion.

MS Haq

CU CORRESPONDENT



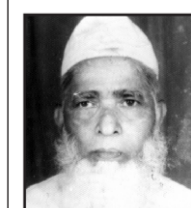
Today is the ninth death anniversary of MS Haq, former president of Bangladesh Rail Sramik Union and one of the founders of Bangladesh Trade Union Centre.

He passed away in 1997 at the age of 78.

Haq was also the vice-president of Chittagong district Unit of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, said a press release.

In observance of the day, a Qurakhwani and doa mahfil will be held at his residence after Asr prayers.

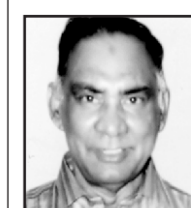
Alhaj Hafizuddin Master



The fifth death anniversary of Alhaj Hafizuddin Master, father of Advocate Mizanur Rahman, will be observed today, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurakhwani and a milad mahfil will be held at his residence at 256 Chalabond, Dhakin Khan in Dhaka.

Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of Dr MA Quasem will be held at his Pallabi residence after Asr prayers tomorrow.

Dr Quasem died of a cardiac arrest at the National Heart Foundation Hospital at Mirpur in the city on September 17 at the age of 67.

He is survived by his wife, only son and two daughters. All relatives, friends and admirers of the deceased are requested to attend the Qulkhwani to pray for salvation of the departed soul.



PHOTO: STAR

Participants at a roundtable on 'The role of freedom fighters in the current political and social crisis' organised by the Freedom Fighters People's Council at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. From right are Council Secretary General Sadek Ahmed Khan, Chairman Ishtiaq Aziz Ulfat, Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim Bir Pratik, language movement veteran Abdul Matin and Vice-chairman Shahid Bablu.

Verdict in Aug 17 bomb blast case against Sunny now on Sept 25

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judgement in the August 17 bomb blast case filed against Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) military commander Aaur Rahman Sunny and five others was not delivered yesterday, as the conducting judge was on leave.

Judge (In Charge) Monzurul Bachhid of the Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court fixed September 25 for delivery of the verdict.

The five others are Rezaul Haq alias Reza, 25, of Jamalpur, Musa alias Mustafizur Rahman, 22, of Naogaon, Habibur Rahman alias Habib, 23, Abdullah Al Shohail, 25, of Gazipur and Mohammad Sagir Hossain, 35, of Dhaka.

Of them, Musa, Habib and Sagir are on the run while the rest are in the custody.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 47 prosecution witnesses.

Detective Branch (DB) of police on November 24 last year pressed charges against the four in connection with a blast near Zia Concourse Hall at around 11:25am on August 17 last year.

DB Inspector and investigation officer (IO) Mohammad Fazlul Haq submitted the charge sheet to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka.

The IO dropped the names of former Islamic Foundation director Maulana Fariduddin Masud and Israaq Ahmad Siraji, accounts officer (part-timer) of Masud's Islahul Muslimeen Parishad of Bangladesh, and Sayeed Nizami, co-ordinator of the Parishad.

The IO said he dropped their names as the charges brought against them were found to be false, baseless and concocted.

Women's team goes on Everest Base Camp expedition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-member women's team left Dhaka yesterday on a 25-day Everest Base Camp Expedition in the Himalayans.

The members of the team are Aupar Ahmed and Salma Khan. Aupar, also a member of Bangladesh Women Cricket Team, has completed more than 20 trekking expeditions in Japan since 1993, while Salma has widespread experience of trekking in Nepal.

Bangladesh Adventure Club has organised the expedition, said a press release.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at most places over the country in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls is also likely at places during the period, Met Office said.

Day temperature may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country, it said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 32 degree Celsius was recorded at Dinajpur and the lowest of 23.6 degrees at Sandwip.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:56pm today and rises at 5:47am tomorrow.

The 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	26.4	25.2	88	95
Chittagong	25.5	24.2	96	95
Rajshahi	28.5	26.3	82	96
Khulna	27.0	25.2	94	100
Barisal	25.8	25.0	97	98
Sylhet	29.6	26.5	73	93
Cox's Bazar	26.0	24.0	93	100