

DV-99 winners allegedly harassed at US mission

Many of the DV-99 winners from Bangladesh are allegedly being harassed at the US embassy's consular section and losing both their money and chances of going to America, reports UNB.

Immigration Advisory Council, a body of immigration lawyers, brought the allegations at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

"At least two thousand of the DV-99 winners were refused visas on the plea of some minor mistakes and they lost about Tk 32 crore," said Advocate Abdulla Faruque, Chief Adviser of the Council.

Some of the victims were present in the news conference and narrated their woes. They appealed to US President Bill Clinton and the embassy here to give them another chance to clarify their faults.

A poor family of three members had to incur a huge financial loss of over Tk 90,000, including US dollar 335.30 in visa-processing fees.

"After visa refusal for minor mistakes, none of the applicants did get their money back," said one of the broken-hearts. Over 7,000 Bangladeshis

have own DV-99 and about 4,000 faced interview for visa so far, almost half of whom were turned back for some mistakes, newsmen were told.

Meanwhile, in an application to the US President, the Immigration Bar Association of Bangladesh has alleged that the applicants were declared disqualified after payment of the processing fees.

It named a couple of consular officers at the US mission who were "jointly axing applicants for minor mistakes — if spelling of names or the signature of the applicants varies or if the city of birth is not the same as that of entry form or if the dates of birth of the children don't match into with the entry form — though information about the discrepancy is already brought to knowledge of the National Visa Centre."

"These poor applicants are driven out of the embassy and their money is confiscated," says the petition.

"We also informed our urge in writing to the US embassy here and are waiting for their reply," said Advocate Abdulla Faruque.

IODEB urges PM to allot flats, not plots

By Staff Correspondent
The Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh (IODEB) welcoming the Prime Minister's decision to cancel plot allotment in Baridhara, Banani and Uttara urged her to allot flats instead.

In a press release yesterday IODEB said that residential plot allotment in the city should permanently be forbidden and instead residential flats should be allotted.

The release also said, the city has limited space. So the government should plan not on 'horizontal mobility' but on 'vertical mobility' by allotting residential flats.

IODEB made the request at the concluding day of its two-day monthly meeting at city's Kakrail area yesterday.

Razzak visits DND dam repair work

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak yesterday visited Dhaka-Narayanganj Dam (DND) to see the progress of the repair and construction work of the dam damaged by the last year's devastating floods, reports BSS.

The minister directed the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), which is implementing the project, to take all precautionary measures to protect the DND from any possible flood this year.

He said the government would not tolerate any irregularities in the repair and construction work to protect the projects.

Habibur Rahman Mollah, MP, and senior officials of the BWDB were present.

Later the minister visited the sluice gates of the Water Development Board at Rampura.



A view of the city BNP protest rally at Purana Paltan yesterday.

— Star photo

Five hurt in city

By Staff Correspondent

Five people, including two women, were injured in two separate incidents in the city yesterday.

The injured were identified as Mostafa, 26, Summi, 16, Sajat Ali, 35, his wife Ilora Begum, 25, and Jamir Miah, 45.

The first incident took place at Tikatuli in the city's Shutrapur area when Mostafa, a cable operator, was returning from his shop around 4 pm. A gang of four led by Amin and Momen stopped his rickshaw and demanded his valuables.

When Mostafa refused, the gang stabbed on his hand and belly and snatched away Tk 26,000 which he collected from his client as rent.

Mostafa was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with critical injuries.

When contacted Shutrapur thana, the duty officer said that they didn't hear anything and none had gone to file any complaint in this connection.

In the second incident, Summi was shot at Commissioner Road in the city's Shyampr area at about 12.30 pm yesterday.

Summi, was moving to her sister's residence at Jurain by rickshaw, when she reached Commissioner Road, two rival groups traded gun shots and she received injuries in hand and head.

Duty officer of Shyampr thana last night said that police visited the girl at the DMCH and she is improving.

The last incident took place at Sultai in the city's Badda area when a gang of miscreants led by Anwar and Kabir attacked at the residence of Sajat Ali with lethal weapons around 2 pm yesterday.

The function would be organised with a view to winning all the 25 seats to the Dhaka University senate by the GOP nominated panel, a press release said yesterday.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the GOP yesterday at the Bar Council Bhawan with its Convenor Advocate Syed Ahmed in the chair.

The meeting urged all like-minded people and well-wishers of the panel to attend the function in time, the release added.

GOP reunion July 19

Ganotantrik Oikya Parishad (GOP), an organisation of the pro-liberation minded Registered Graduate of Dhaka University, will organise a reunion at 4.30 pm on July 19 at Teachers and Students Centre (TSC) of the university, reports BSS.

The injured was identified as Dr Rafiqul Islam who was admitted to a local clinic with stab wounds in his abdomen, according to his relatives.

A gang of about six dacoits got inside the residence after ringing the calling bell at about 4 pm.

When Dr Rafiqul Islam tried to resist them, the robbers stabbed him in his abdomen and left the house with Tk 2.5 lakh in cash, gold ornaments and other valuables.

Mohammadpur police said last night that they have heard about the incident and officials visited the spot.

No case was filed till filing of this report.

JCD procession in city

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of the main opposition BNP, will hold processions in the city demanding withdrawal of cases against its leaders, reports UNB.

JCD will bring out procession today in every ward and on July 20 in every thana demanding withdrawal of what they said false cases against BNP Dhaka City convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka, MP, Nazimuddin Alam, MP, JCD general secretary Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu and other JCD leaders and workers, said a press release.

First class 2nd in M Pharm

Hamim Zahir, a Bangladeshi student, has stood first class second in the M Pharm examination of Delhi University under the session 1998-99, says a press release.

She also obtained first class second position in the B Pharm examination from the same university.

Hamim leaves for Australia on July 20 to attend Sidney University for Ph.D. degree.

Hamim is the eldest daughter of Ms Shamim Zahir and Zahurul Haq, photo Editor of the Daily Janakantha.

'Trial of Col Taher was anti-constitutional'

Speakers at a meeting yesterday termed Col Taher's execution "brutal killing in a mock trial" and demanded fresh trial to prove all the doings under martial law were illegal, reports BSS.

The "so-called" trial of Col Abu Taher was anti-constitutional and against the rule of law, said eminent lawyers at a discussion meeting on the issue.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) organised the meeting at the National Sports Council Auditorium ahead of the death anniversary of Col Taher, hanged on July 21, 1976 in Dhaka Central Jail during military rule following a political topsy-turvy.

JSD President and Fisheries and Livestock Minister ASM Abdur Rab presided over the meeting addressed among others, by Advocate Gaziul Haq, Supreme Court Bar Association president Barrister Shafiq Ahmed, JSD general secretary Hasanul Haq Inu and party leader Nur Alam Ziku.

Advocate Gaziul Haq, one of the lawyers who had moved for Col Taher at the martial law court, said the trial did not take place properly and could be challenged under the existing law of the land.

"We could not present different aspects of the case before the court... we wanted to know why Taher and others were convicted," he said. "We searched for the motives of the case, but failed."

"We could not dig out the quarters behind the case, whether there was any local or international conspiracy," he told the function, adding people also remained in the dark about the motifs of Bangabandhu killing.

Barrister Shafiq said Col Taher was killed as per a design in the name of trial. "The reason was not mentioned while the martial law was declared. There is no provision in the constitution for declaring martial law."

The gang attacked the house at Sultai in the city's Badda area when a gang of miscreants led by Anwar and Kabir attacked at the residence of Sajat Ali with lethal weapons around 2 pm yesterday.

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The meeting urged all like-minded people and well-wishers of the panel to attend the function in time, the release added.

Call for expediting CHT development

RANGAMATI, July 16: Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Kalparanjan Chakma, today instructed all the departmental heads of the district to expedite development activities properly, reports BSS.

He also advised the local departmental heads to utilise the fund properly in the public interest. He was exchanging views with them in a review meeting held this evening at the local circuit house.

Chairman of Rangamati Hill District Council Ching Kew Roza and Deputy Commissioner of the district, Shah Alam were, among others, attending the meeting.

The minister urged the Power Development Board (PDB) authorities to bring Zirachhara and Belaichhara thanas under electric supply network.

Chakma today visited Boradam, a tribal hamlet, surrounded by Kaptai Lake, in sadar thana of the district and the venue where the heads of development missions in Bangladesh led by Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria would likely to exchange views with the tribal people living there on July 22.

The minister is scheduled to hold an exclusive meeting with Chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council Jyotiindra Bodhipriya Larma alias Shantu Larma at the local circuit house tomorrow (July 17).

JASAS, cultural front of BNP, will hold a rally at Muktaga in the city today protesting false cases filed against BNP leaders including Sadek Hosain Khoka, reports BSS.

Central leaders of BNP and JASAS will address the rally, said a press release.

The minister expressed the hope that the government would be able to formulate necessary policy guidelines and programme to attain sustainable development and face challenges of the twenty first century after identifying the environmental problems in Bangladesh.

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The main theme of the fair is "Plant tree and save the environment." It was inaugurated by Mayor of Chittagong City Alhaj A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury on July 7.

Organised by the Chittagong City Corporation for the third time, there are around 45 stalls with different varieties of saplings in the fair, being visited by a huge number of people from all walks of life every day.

The floriculturists, even from far flung areas of the district, are visiting the fair to collect their favourite saplings and seeds for their orchard as well as for their homestead.

A considerable number of rare saplings from home and abroad are on sale at the fair.

Fair officials said many visitors preferring rare saplings for their gardens.

Concern over PM's statement on confce centre

By Staff Correspondent
Sylhet Division Development Council has expressed deep resentment at the statement of the Prime Minister regarding establishment of a conference centre at the city's Osmany Udayan.

The Council president Advocate Abed Raja issued a statement yesterday rebutting the Prime Minister's argument of having no option for setting up such a centre in the city. He asserted that if government wishes he can search out an alternate site for the centre.

He also noted that no conscious citizen can support establishment of a centre selling the trees of Osmany Udayan.

In a separate statement Abed Raja expressed his concern at non-implementation of the runway expansion work of the Osmany International Airport despite clear announcement from the Prime Minister in that respect.

The seminar, Population is Not the Problem — Population is Its Solution, was organised by Bangladesh Employment Association and Self-Employment Finance.

Presided over by chief adviser of the organisation National professor Prof Kabir Chowdhury yesterday addressed, among others, by Whip of the Jatiya Sangsads Prof Kheda Khanom, Director General of Manpower Bureau Abul Kalam Azad and General Secretary of the organisation Prof Deen Mohammad.

Mannan said: "The government has taken initiatives to set up 11 more technical training Centres in as many greater districts."

He said that the government had decided to set up a technical training centre for women in Dhaka and five others in as many divisional headquarters.

He urged non-government organisations to come forward for this purpose.

Fifty students from different schools took part in the course.

The Minister said the present government had taken a number of measures for the protection and development of environment.

Sajeda Chowdhury said United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) has been entrusted with the task of formulating a global state of environment report with the aim of determining the latest state of global environment.

She said the report on the Bangladesh's State of Environment would be formulated on the basis of information to be collected from different government and non-government organisations.

There was "occasional and aggressive patrolling" by Pakistani troops on the Indian side of the Line of Control (LoC) that divides Kashmir. General Pervez Musharraf told the BBC in an interview on the frontier.

Musharraf, the head of the Pakistani army, said this had been done to pre-empt any possible Indian attack on Pakistan.

Pakistan has until now consistently denied Indian accusations both that its forces crossed into Indian-administered Kashmir or that they fought alongside Moslem guerrillas.

While it openly conducted artillery duels with India, it described all the fighters in Indian territory as Kashmiri freedom fighters.

India has maintained its soldiers were mainly fighting Pakistani troops.

Musharraf's admission

Ashrayan Project

350 families rehabilitated in Noakhali

NOAKHALI, July 16: Once they had endured the worst of life passing days under open sky. Now they are happy as their worst days are over. Some 350 homeless families in Sadar and Hatiya thanas have been rehabilitated in 35 barrack-like houses under Ashrayan Project. reports UNB.

"We do not demand a lot. Our basic demands are shelter and three meals a day, and we have got the shelter, so we are happy," said a member of the rehabilitated families.

Officials said 255 barrack-like houses in three thanas of the district under Ashrayan Project are being constructed for rehabilitation of homeless families.

They said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had directed them to rehabilitate the homeless people of Companyganj, Hatiya and Sadar thanas of the district through cooperatives.

The rehabilitated families in the two thanas have already formed nine cooperatives.

The officials said some 279 acres of land have been acquired for construction of 202 barrack-type houses in Sadar thana under the supervision of army.

In Hatiya thana, 46 acres of land have been acquired for constructing 46 houses while 10 acres in Companyganj thana for seven houses.

Seminar on population held

Labour and Employment Minister M A Mannan yesterday stressed the need for converting the huge population of the country into manpower, reports BSS.

The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina places emphasis on the spread of technical education side by side with general education to achieve this target," he said in a speech on the concluding day of self-employment training course in the city.

He also noted that no conscious citizen can support establishment of a centre selling the trees of Osmany Udayan.

In a separate statement Abed Raja expressed his concern at non-implementation of the runway