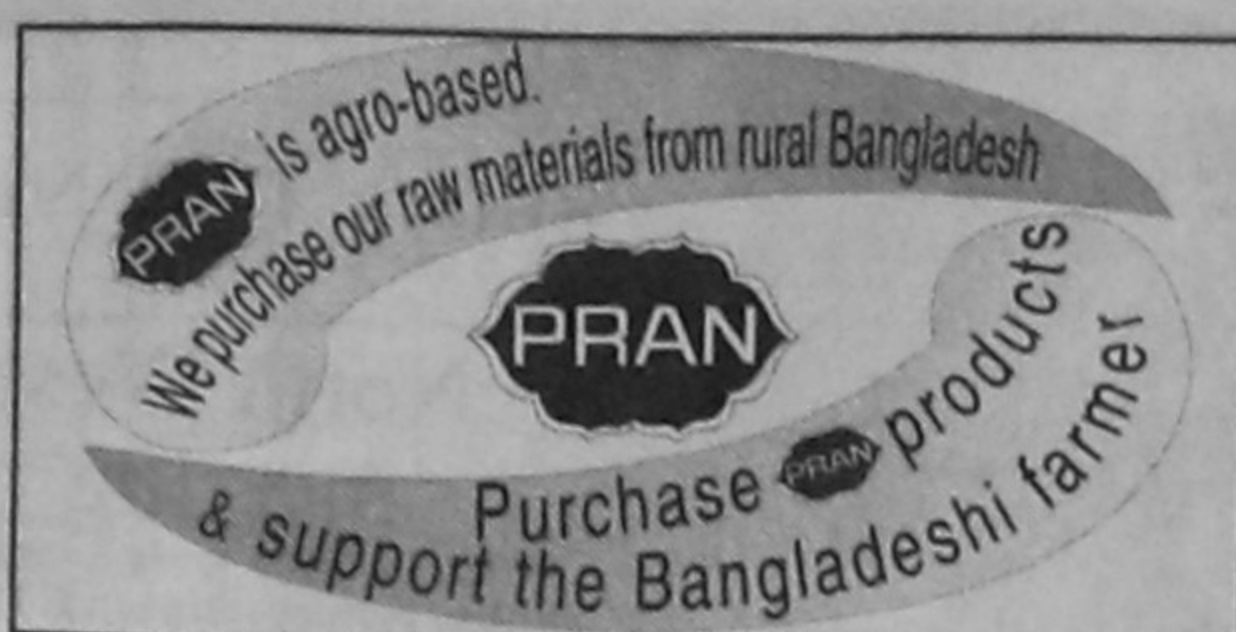


The Daily Star



VOL. X NO. 168 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA SATURDAY, JULY 8, 2000

3rd Millennium

ASHAR 24, 1407 BS

RABIUS SAANI 5, 1421 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE : TAKA 6.00

Bus carrying pilgrims falls into ditch in Sylhet: 4 killed, 25-hurt

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, July 7: At least four people were killed and 25 others injured in a road accident on Sylhet-Tamabil Road this morning.

The injured were admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Police and witnesses said, a passenger bus (Comilla Na-05-0131) was on its way to the major of Hajrat Shahporan (RA) from the major of Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) in the town at about 9:30 am.

The bus came to Sylhet last night from Devidwar upazila of Comilla with about 35 people for visiting the majors of Hajrat Shahporan (RA) and Shahjalal (RA).

The vehicle met with the accident about one kilometre off the Shahporan major and near the BADC Farm when the driver lost his control over it. The vehicle skidded off the road and fell into a ditch.

Of the dead, three were identified as Chandu Miah, 38, Shaifque Miah, 32 and Jamal Hossain, 30. The identity of another young man aged about 20 could not be known.

Chittagong Two killed in landslide, 2 drown

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 7: Two girls were killed and five others injured in a landslide at Sher Shah Colony adjacent to Kunja Chhaya Residential Area under Bayejid thana here this morning.

The dead were identified as Sheuli Akhter, 10, and Shukhedra Akhter, 13.

The injured are Julee Akhter, 11, Nasrin, 8, Shikha, 7, Jesmin, 8, and Pervin Akhter, 7. They were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Witnesses said the incident occurred at around 9:30 am when some girls were collecting black clays from hill. Suddenly a big chunk of hill collapsed on them resulting in death of two on the spot and injuring five others, they said.

Meanwhile, in another incident, two children drowned in a pond belonging to A K Khan here at around noon today. The identity of the two could not be known till writing this report at 7:30 pm.

All activities of JCD central, DU units suspended

By DU Correspondent

All activities of central and Dhaka University units of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student front of BNP, have been suspended.

A press release said last night that the decision that comes into effect immediately was taken as per directive of BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia.

Inside Today

Article

New Group Dynamics in Future Bangladesh Elections

By M Rashiduzzaman
Page 4

Business

Policy support can ensure 'brown revolution' in leather sector
Japan faces pressure from peers at today's G7 meet
Pages 8 & 9

July	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
July 8		6:50pm
July 9	5:18 am	

Prayer Timings

July 8		
Fajr	Azhan	Jamaat
5:45	4:45	
Zohr	1:00	1:30
Asr	5:00	5:15
Maghrib	6:50	6:55
Esha	8:15	8:45

Source: Islamic Foundation



All at standstill: Rising water levels in low-lying areas around the city have halted work at many places. Seen in the picture is a brick kiln at Gabtoli lying under water. — Star photo

Female army officers to be in command positions by 2002

By M Anwarul Haq

The nearly 1,00,000 strong Bangladesh Army will induct female officers in its active ranks shortly.

The first duly recruited women cadet officers are expected to undergo a two-year extensive training beginning in December this year. They will join the 47th BMA long course at the Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) at Bhatyari in Chittagong.

The first female army officers will be in command positions by December, 2002, sources concerned said.

The Adjutant General's Branch of Army Headquarters in an announcement says, "The government has decided to induct women in the army. With a view to giving commission to the female candidates in Bangladesh Army, selection activities will commence soon."

It could not be known how many women cadet officers would be selected for the BMA long course. Up to 150 cadets can attend the course. Recruitment

for the long courses are usually made twice a year.

The sources however said the number of female cadets in the first batch would depend on the response received.

Physical training for female cadets at the BMA will be slightly different from their male counterparts but all basic courses will be the same.

In the past, recruitment of female officers in the Army was restricted to the Army Medical Corps. But the recruitment this time would open up a new front for women officers who could be posted in different 'active branches' as commissioned officers. However, they would not join the 'fighting services' but are mainly expected to be placed in 'staff positions,' the signal corps and other 'static jobs'.

Later, women officers are expected to be recruited for Education and Engineering Corps in the Army, one source said.

No decision has been taken as yet to recruit non-commissioned women Armed Forces

Personnel.

The decision to induct female officers has been taken in the light of growing consciousness regarding gender equality worldwide. Bangladesh would be the third country in South Asia after India and Sri Lanka to induct female officers. However, the number of female officers in the Army Medical Corps in Bangladesh is quite significant and nearly every third Medical Corps officer is a female physician.

The requirements for potential women army officers have been fixed on the basis of a new criteria. They must have a minimum height of five feet and minimum weight of 90 pounds. Their normal chest size is to be 28 inches and in expanded form 30 inches. The applicants will have to be HSC passed in the second division or possess a Senior Cambridge certificate. The qualifying officers must be unmarried. It was not known how long they have to remain single.

Meanwhile, PDB yesterday generated 2625 megawatt of power against the countrywide requirement of 2650 megawatt.

PDB chief admits failure to stop system loss

By Staff Correspondent

The power situation in the country slightly improved yesterday as most of the major power generating units were in operation and the demand for power was less than normal since the day was a weekly holiday, sources concerned said.

PDB chairman Brig M A Malek while talking with the BBC yesterday said loadshedding during peak hours can not be controlled unless the system loss due to illegal connections is stopped. There is huge misuse of power in some sectors, he said.

PDB chairman admitted that it is definitely the failure of PDB, DESA and all others concerned to stop this system loss and misuse.

No positive change is possible in this sector unless the system loss is stopped. M A Malek replied when asked about the government's promise to bring a major change in power sector.

Meanwhile, PDB yesterday generated 2625 megawatt of power against the countrywide requirement of 2650 megawatt.

See page 11 col 8

Bushra murder case Kader questioned, his sister-in-law held

By Staff Correspondent

The Detective Branch of police yesterday questioned Abdul Kader, a ruling party leader of Hajipara area in the city, for eight hours in connection with the murder of college student Bushra Islam Phool, 18.

Bushra, only daughter of a retired police officer, was killed in her bedroom at their residence at Hajipara late Saturday night.

Kader, was called at the DB office at about noon. He will be questioned today also.

The DB also arrested Kaniz Fatema Hena, 24, sister-in-law of Abdul Kader, late Thursday night.

She was called at the DB office Thursday evening and was shown arrested as, during interrogation, her statement was 'incoherent' with that of housemaid Sufia, arrested earlier, DB sources said yesterday.

Hena lived in the same house where Bushra was killed.

Sufia told the investigators

earlier that Kader had closed the main gate of the house when four hitherto unknown persons left the house after meeting him on the night of the murder. But Hena said the door was closed by Sufia. Sufia denied this, the investigators said.

The sources said that the housemaid gave some sensational information regarding the murder, but they declined to disclose those for the sake of investigation. They hoped clue to the murder could be found in a day or two.

They said information gathered by the investigators suggest that Kader had closed the main gate of the house after the four persons left.

Hena was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court yesterday. The court placed him on three days' remand.

Kader told the investigators that he was not aware of the

See page 11 col 7

300 under trial prisoners detained for years

By Mizan Ali

At least 300 under trial prisoners are detained in different jails in the country for over five years as their cases are yet to be readied in courts, official sources said yesterday.

Among them, five are women and 60-65 are convicted in one case but awaiting trial in another case, the sources said.

Charges against them include theft, rioting, cheating, murder etc.

The delay is due to various reasons including lack of adequate judges, non-appearance of complainants, witnesses and co-accused persons, infrequent visit to jails by district judges and inspection boards comprising the elite in the respective areas.

There should be close monitoring of pending cases and more jail visits to improve the situation, the officials noted.

The prisoners are being produced in courts and taken back to jails with no progress in the trial, they said. There is an instance in which an under-trial

prisoner was produced in court 88 times in the last five years. The minimum number of appearance by each of the 300 prisoners is 22 times, they said.

One such accused produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka recently told this correspondent that it was his 74th appearance.

The trial is not progressing as other co-accused persons in the case are absconding and the witnesses are not appearing, he said.

Often, many of the magistrates are given protocol and administrative duties, delaying trial.

The number of under-trial prisoners in jails increased in the last five years while that of convicted decreased during the period.

The ratio of convicted and under trial prisoners in jails was 25:75 in 1970s, 40:60 in the 80s, 38:62 in the first half of 90s and 26:74 in the second half, the sources said.

No division, so no higher studies

Tale of 42600 students who got 'referred' in SSC exams

By Staff Correspondent

Over 42 thousand students who passed the SSC examination this year with 'special pass' status are facing uncertainty as regards pursuing higher studies.

These students, many of whom got over 600 marks in last year's SSC examination but failed in one subject, appeared this year as 'referred' candidates. As a rule for long, such candidates are not placed in any 'division'.

Many such students told this correspondent that their future has become uncertain as they can not even appear at test for admission to any good college.

According to sources in education boards, the number of such students who got 'special pass' status this year is 42,595 or 11.16 per cent of the total. Of them, 11,224 were under Dhaka

Board, 7738 under Jessore Board, 8329 under Comilla Board, 2776 under Chittagong Board and 12528 under Rajshahi Board.

Principal of a reputed private college in Dhaka told The Daily Star that only students who obtained 'first division' with good marks would be eligible for admission test in his college.

When contacted, Chairman of Dhaka Board Dr. ATM Sharifullah ruled out any possibility of giving 'division' to those who passed SSC examination appearing as 'referred' candidates.

He, however, agreed with the correspondent that there is logic for giving them 'division'.

Replying to a question he

See page 11 col 7

Magura BNP unit expels Majidul Haq, 4 others

MAGURA, July 7: District BNP has expelled former minister Majidul Haq and four others on charges of anti-party activities, reports UNB.

They were charged with creating leadership conflict and filing 'false' cases against party leaders and activists.

An emergency meeting of the district committee with its president Adv Ahmad Hossain in the chair took the decision today.

The expelled BNP men are Majidul Haq, his brother Manju Siddique, nephew Munir Shafiqul and Ashraf Hossain and Abu Sayed.

Seven local party leaders and activists were sentenced to five years rigorous imprisonment in a case filed by Munir Shafiqul under the Public Safety Act.

"All district-unit leaders unanimously took the decision as the expelled persons under the leadership of Majidul Haq and long been involved in anti-party activities and creating chaos in the party," said the district BNP chief.

USGS to train local experts to assess gas reserves

By Sharier Khan

Petrobangla is preparing a list of six or seven experts who will participate in a training organised by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and help conduct its study on Bangladesh's gas resource.

The USGS, which has been working on assessing gas resource in Bangladesh for the last one year, offered the training programme to have best possible local participation in the study so that it becomes acceptable to all, sources concerned said.

The study scheduled to be completed by the end of October this year is expected to help the government take vital decisions regarding future investment in gas sector and re-consider whether Bangladesh should allow pipeline export of gas.

The gas resource study would be based on all existing seismic and drilling data as well as an analysis of geological structure

of the country that scientifically indicates how much oil and gas the country might have.

The USGS sought names of geologists, geophysicists and geochemists having good records of activities in the past five to 10 years. The experts should have thorough knowledge of the geology of 'Bengal basin'. The six or seven member team, once selected, would go to Houston, US, and receive training on the USGS methodology to assess gas resources on a broad basis.

"The Energy Ministry had started the selection process quite seriously and sought names of persons who were relevant for such a study," said one source. "But ultimately, some irrelevant people were incorporated in this mission just to make them happy. If these people are sent, it will not help the study."

Another source said that a

list with names of mid level to senior officials of Petrobangla has already been finalised and it will now be sent to the USGS headquarters. The team was earlier scheduled to leave for Houston on July 9 but it would now take some time more.

The study has become important in the context of recent demands of international oil companies (IOCs) working in Bangladesh to allow them access to a bigger gas market in India. Leading IOCs including European oil giant Shell and US oil company Unocal have been arguing that Bangladesh's own gas market is not expanding fast enough to allow them to invest more in exploring oil and gas.

The demands of the IOCs were being backed by the World Bank as well as the governments of some countries including the US. They argue that

See page 11 col 8

Flash flood in Kurigram

KURIGRAM, July 7: Low-lying areas of the district went under water due to flash flood triggered by heavy downpour and onrush of hill waters from upper catchment, reports UNB.

About 34,000 people of some 7,000 families have been marooned by flood waters as rivers flowing through the district recorded sharp rise in last 24 hours till 6 am today.

Besides, erosion by the rivers took serious turn rendering 675 people of 135 families homeless.

Flood Protection Embankments constructed by Water Development Board (WDB) at Ulupur and Sadar upazilas are under serious threat.

According to Water Development Board, the Dharla registered rise by 44cm at Ferryghat point and was flowing 5 cm above danger level at the point.

The Brahmaputra recorded rise by 16cm at Chilmari while the Dudhkumari by 21 cm at Noonkhawa and the Teesta by 39cm at Kaunia and 11cm at Dalia.

Rainfall may increase

By Special Correspondent

A dull monsoon got reactivated after a lull of nearly a week as moderate to heavy rains were reported from most areas of the country yesterday.

The rainfall may increase during the next 48 hours beginning at 6 p.m. today and continue for five days, the Meteorological Department said.

The rains relieved people of the sweltering heat that had made life difficult in the city and elsewhere in the country.

The hot and humid weather in monsoon period since June 1 was due to a low that brewed in the West-Central Bay.

A typhoon gaining strength before taking off in the South-Western Pacific also cast its spell on the situation, a senior meteorologist said.

The low in the Bay sucked away the southerly moisture, preventing clouds from bursting into showers, he added.

Out of its 35 stations, rains were recorded only in two on June 3, three on July 4 and five on July 5, the Met office said.

Yesterday, rains were recorded in most areas from Teknaf in the south to Rangpur in the north.

The highest rainfall of 45 mm between 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. yesterday was recorded at Patuakhali, followed by 27 mm in Dhaka city, 23 mm in Teknaf, 21 mm in Khepupara, 17 mm in Faridpur, 13 mm in Srimgangal, 12 mm in Mymensingh, 10 mm in Chandpur, 9 mm in Rangamati, 7 mm each in Sylhet and Jessore, 4 mm each over Khulna and Madaripur, 3 mm in Syedpur and 1 mm in Rangpur.

Khaleda's nephew held on charge of dacoity

COMILLA, July 7: Moham-mad Yunus alias Tenku, 20, who was arrested yesterday in connection with a dacoity at a house at Choddogram in the district was placed on a three-day remand today, reports BSS.

Police prayed for a seven-day remand, but the upazilla magistrate court allowed three-day.

"We have confirmed that he is a nephew of Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia. He is an activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD)," police said.

Two cases were registered with Choddogram police in this regard.

College student beaten to death in Barisal

BARISAL, July 7: A college student of Baria village in Wazirpur upazila here was beaten to death by his rivals over a land dispute today, reports UNB.

Family sources said Amina Khatun, mother of victim Amiruddin Pavel, 18, was also injured when she tried to resist the attackers.

They said neighbours of Pavel, a student of Shikarpur Sher-e-Bangla College, attacked him when he was fencing a disputed land this morning. The attackers also beat up Amina.

The two were rushed to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital where Pavel died at noon.

Pavel's brother Salahuddin Shipu filed a case accusing 15 people.

Bangladeshi abducted by Indians

MEHERPUR, July 7: Gunmen, demanding a ransom of Tk 1.5 lakh, kidnapped a grocer from a frontier village in Sadar upazila Wednesday night and reportedly took him to India.

See page 12 col 8



A tiger cools off in a pond at the central zoo at Jawalakhel in Kathmandu yesterday. Temperatures around the Nepalese capital were as high as 28 degrees centigrade on the hot sunny day. — AFP photo

12 Bengal tigers die at Indian zoo since June 23

NEW DELHI, July 7: A 12th Royal Bengal Tiger died today of either sleeping sickness or its antidote in a southern zoo, putting zoological parks across India on the defensive, reports AP.

A national team of veterinarians sped to Orissa to find out what has killed 12 Royal Bengal tigers since June 23 at the Nandankanan Zoo, home to India's largest collection of the rare animals.

Eight of the dead — including seven-year-old Abinash, who died today — were white tigers, members of the world's biggest collection of the specially bred type.

Some wildlife experts and

See page 11 col 8

Asian Youth Football qualifiers Hosts off to a flier

From Hasan Masood

RAJSHAHI, July 7: A late goal seven minutes from time by Maldives' Ibrahim Sagib took some of the gloss off Bangladesh's magnificent 4-1 victory here tonight.

Bangladesh may still rue the number of missed opportunities as it could come down goal difference when deciding which team will advance to the final round.

In the second match of the 32nd Asian Youth (under-19) Football Championship qualifiers, the all-red local youths put on a sterling exhibition in the first 45 minutes. Their efforts were rewarded with three quality goals by Asadur Rahman, Maksudul Alam Bulbul and Rezaul Karim Biplab.

In front of a capacity partisan crowd the home side looked very sharp from the start.

Captain Monwar Hossain had a chance to open the ac-

count in the 15th minute but his rasping shot from the top of the box hit the cross bar.

The breakthrough came three minutes later. A tremendous solo run through the left flank by Asad saw the midfielder go past four defenders before calmly slotting the ball behind an advancing Maldives keeper Mohammad Areesah.

Substitute forward Maksudul Alam doubled the score pouncing upon a lazy back pass in the 25th minute while defender Rezaul Karim made it 3-0 after ten minutes.

After the breather, Rukanuz-zaman Kanchan grabbed the fourth goal from a Tito corner in the 56th minute.

Sagib stole a consolation goal for Maldives when he beat the off-side trap.

Bangladesh will take on Nepal in their next match to-

See page 11 col 8