



Non-Government Primary School teachers formed a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday demanding implementation of their 21-point demand including nationalisation of their service.

Cooking fire blamed for air pollution

AP, Washington

Home heating and cooking fires in India and Southeast Asia, fueled by wood, dung and farming wastes, pump tons of pollution into air, contributing to the staining of almost 4 million square miles of the atmosphere above the Indian Ocean, a study shows.

An international research effort, the Indian Ocean Experiment, found that although Europe and North America still lead the world in per capita release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, Asia is catching up.

"The nature of the pollution (from Asia) deviates from that in Europe and North America," the researchers in a study appearing Friday in the journal Science.

Instead of fossil fuels as the major source of pollution, as is the case in Europe and North America, much of the pollution from India and Southeast Asia comes from biofuels that can be collected in forest and

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300 Bangladeshis go on rampage in Kolkata jail demanding deportation

AFP, Kolkata

More than 300 Bangladeshi prisoners went on the rampage in a jail in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal to demand they be sent back home, prison officials said yesterday.

Two policemen were injured as the inmates hurled stones and smashed up furniture in the jail superintendent's office during the riot on Thursday at Bongaon jail, said Biswanath Chowdhury, Prisons Minister for West Bengal.

"We are concerned about the incident. We have requested the federal Home Ministry take up the issue with the Bangladesh government for the deportation of these prisoners," he said.

Chowdhury said most of the Bangladeshis were arrested and put behind bars for illegally crossing the Indo-Bangladesh border. Some were arrested on charges of smuggling.

Trouble began at the Bongaon Jail at Parganas on the Bangladesh

border when the prisoners occupied the superintendent's office and disconnected phone lines.

The prisoners also hurled stones at the vehicles of the local district administrator and police superintendent, who had rushed to the jail to deal with the violence.

A total of 155 prisoners had been released after a trial at a district court but they had been turned back by Bangladeshi guards at the border, said Chowdhury.

"The Bangladeshi prisoners, including 40 women and 59 children, have been agitating for over a month demanding deportation to their country. The women have been on hunger strike since Monday," the minister said.

Smuggled goods Worth Tk 5 cr Seized from Trucks in Gazipur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A team of Customs Intelligence seized three truckloads of smuggled Indian Saris, fabrics, readymade garments, ball point pens, cosmetics and others accessories worth over Tk 5 crore from Chandra intersection at Kaliakoir in Gazipur early yesterday.

Three trucks carrying the goods arrived at Chandra between 2 am and 4 am yesterday. But when the customs officials, who were waiting there following a tip-off, signalled the drivers to stop, they sped away. As the customs team gave chase, the

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Violence may erupt any time Political parties fanning factionalism among Mongla workers

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

Frequent piracy, pilferage, persistent labour unrest, growing factional politics and corruption in port administration are destroying Mongla Port slowly.

The deteriorating situation has prompted speculations that International Maritime Port Association may declare the port an 'Exclusion Zone'.

It is alleged that a section of political leaders of various parties are fanning factionalism among port workers, employees and others to meet their political ends and make money through illegal means. Two groups 'locals' and 'non-locals' are vying for leadership and domination in the port township and it is apprehended that violence may erupt any time.

As the situation is worsening with every passing day, residents of the

area are getting alarmed.

Some aging non-political persons said factional politics is being pursued with ulterior motives. People hailing from Rampal and Mongla upazilas are termed 'locals' and those from the rest of the country are termed 'non-locals'. The 'locals' are allegedly trying to dominate the 'non-locals' in all matters concerning trade and commerce.

In such situation, people from other districts who settled at Mongla long ago and are doing various business do not like to be branded as non-locals and they are preparing themselves to put an end to this for their 'survival', sources in the area pointed out.

In December last, such factionalism led to violence, claiming lives of four dock workers and creating a deadlock in cargo handling. The port was crippled for some days, affecting the national economy.

Most of the 7000 port workers reside at Mongla township and majority of them hail from other districts. "Anti-Awami league forces dominate local politics and they are united against the ruling party forces who are inciting factionalism," a leading businessmen said.

Dock workers Hasim, Rashid Mia, Abdul Halim and Chand Mia who hail from Noakhali and many others alleged that leaders of the ruling party born and brought up in Rampal and Mongla upazilas have been "conspiring to oust" workers from other districts including also those who were born and brought up at Mongla and other places nearby but do not support them.

Canada, NZ to accept more migrants

REUTERS, Ottawa

Canada, one of the few countries in the world still accepting large number of immigrants, said on Thursday it would increase the number of people it wanted to attract over the next two years.

Immigration Minister Elinor Caplan said Canada would lift the upper target range of immigrants to 235,000 a year in 2002, from the present 225,000 a year.

"A successful immigration programme like ours is not just about numbers on a page, but rather about hard-working people and their families who come here from the world over to help build our economy, our society and our culture," she said in a statement.

Caplan said Ottawa remained committed to increasing immigration levels to approximately one per cent of the population over the long term, but that Canada's capability to absorb and integrate increased numbers would dictate the pace. Canada has a population of around 30 million people.

New Zealand

AP from Christchurch, NZ adds: Seeking to swell the ranks of its high-tech work force, the government announced yesterday it will grant visas to an extra 10,000 skilled and business migrants.

The raised intake is part of a wider government shake-up of immigration as many skilled New Zealanders leave the country to seek jobs elsewhere.

The government told business leaders at a forum in the southern city of Christchurch that the extra skilled and business migrants will be added to the current general immigration level of 38,000 a year.

Another policy change would

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Lanka swears in first Muslim woman cabinet minister

AP, Colombo

The first Muslim woman to become at Sri Lankan cabinet minister took her oath of office in Parliament yesterday, extending a tradition of female political leaders in South Asia.

Ferial Ashraff entered politics after her husband, Mohammed Ashraff, also a cabinet minister, was killed in a helicopter crash in September. She won a seat in parliamentary elections and was nominated by her party to join the coalition government.

Ashraff was appointed minister of housing and rehabilitation for the Eastern Province by Speaker Anura Bandaranaike.

Her portfolio gives her wide powers in her late husband's former constituency in eastern Digamadulla, which has a large Muslim population.

Muslims account for 1.3 million of Sri Lanka's 18.6 million population. Unlike most Sri Lankan women both the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamils Muslim women do not usually take part in politics.

Sri Lankan women account for about 40 per cent of the work force and constitute about 80 per cent of the 800,000 Sri Lankans who work overseas.



The BNP-led four-party alliance held a gayebana janaza at Baitul Mukarram Mosque premises after Juma prayers yesterday for those killed in violence at Brahmanbaria on Tuesday.

Gayebana janaza for those killed at B'baria

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP-led four party opposition alliance held a gayebana janaza on the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque premises after Juma prayers yesterday for those killed during a clash between IOJ activists and law enforcing agencies at Brahmanbaria on Tuesday.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Motin Chowdhury and Tariqul Islam, Sadek Hossain Khoka, Jatiya Party leaders Nazim Rahman Monjur, Mostafa Jamal Haider,

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25 hurt as series of tremors jolt Gujarat

AP, Bhuj

A series of earthquakes shook buildings late Thursday and early yesterday in Gujarat, where a large quake killed at least 17,000 people two weeks ago. At least 25 people were reportedly injured in the aftershocks.

Police said the injured included 15 panicked residents who jumped from the windows of their homes in Ahmadabad.

The Indian Meteorological

Department said a 5.3-magnitude quake shook the Kutch district at 10:25 pm Thursday. The epicenter was 20 kilometers northeast of Bhachau, a town of 15,000 that was badly damaged in the Jan. 26 quake, said SN Vhattachara, deputy director general of the department.

"We were preparing to go to bed. Suddenly we felt the ground under us shaking," said CV Patil, a government doctor who has been sheltering with other homeless in tents in

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