

Nor'wester hits 5 upazilas in Naogaon

BSS, Naogaon

One minor boy was killed and 25 others were injured as nor'wester lashed five upazilas of the district yesterday.

These are Sadar, Badlagachi, Manda, Raninagar and Atari upazilas.

The victim was identified as Rezaul Haque, 9, son of Mozammel Haque of village Piroldanga Dhamoihat upazilas.

The storm cause damages to kutchas houses, educational institutions, standing crops and green mangoes.

Garments factory warehouse gutted at Pallabi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fire gutted a warehouse of a garments factory at sector-7 in the city's Pallabi area yesterday morning, police and Fire Brigade officials said.

They said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at about 9.10 am and engulfed the warehouse of Knit Fashion Asia Garments Limited on the second floor of a five-storey building.

Six fire fighting units from Mirpur, Kurmitola and Mohammadpur rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze at about 12-30 pm.

The extent of damage caused by the fire could not be ascertained till filing of this report at 8 pm yesterday.

No casualty was reported as it was a holiday.

9 BNP men held at Laxmipur

UNB, Laxmipur

Police in a pre-dawn raid yesterday arrested nine BNP workers and supporters on charges of extortion and terrorism.

Meanwhile, police has taken Ramganj Awami League leader Noor Nabi Khokon on a two-day remand for interrogation. He was arrested in connection with a murder case.

Clash over khas land in Pabna: 40 injured

UNB, Pabna

At least 40 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups at village Dhokrakol in Sadar upazila yesterday.

Police and witnesses said the trouble erupted in the afternoon when the supporters of one Pramanik clashed with Sarder group over capturing khas land in the char of the river Padma.

Eight of the injured were admitted to Kumarkhali Hospital while 15 others to local clinics. Condition of the two injured was stated to be critical.

A tense situation was prevailing in the area till filing of this report at 7:30 pm.

Stolen garments accessories recovered in Ctg: 2 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detective Branch of police recovered garment accessories worth Tk one crore and arrested two persons in this connection in the city yesterday.

DB police recovered the goods from a godown at Zahur Hawkers' Market under Kotwali Thana and from East Sholoshahar area under Chadgaon thana in separate raids.

They arrested Sree Bijoy Bhushan Das, 45 and Md Ilias, 38, for keeping the stolen goods in their possession.

Stern action if any one opposes party nominee, warns Hasina

BCL asked to work for fresh mandate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought all out support from the student community to secure people's mandate for another term to 'complete the unfinished task of building a self-reliant Bangladesh.'

She reiterated that she would retire from active politics after carrying forward the nation to prosperity.

Hasina who is also President of Awami League (AL) was addressing a big gathering of leaders and workers of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing the ruling party, at the Ganabhbhan.

The Prime Minister asked the BCL rank and file to work unitedly for AL candidates in the coming general election and warned that stern action would be taken against any one opposing the party nominees.

"I want the new generation to take over leadership once I succeed in freeing the country from the curse of poverty," meeting sources quoted her as saying.

Referring to 'tremendous achievements' of her government in the last four years and 10 months, a confident Hasina said, if voted to power for one more term, her party would take the country to a new level of development.

A day after according her a grand reception in the

capital, several thousand BCL leaders and workers from district, thana and university units, led by President of the organisation Bahadur Bepari and General Secretary Ajay Kar Khokon, attended the three-hour meeting from 10 am yesterday.

The meeting is viewed quite important as the next parliamentary election is only a few months away.

Hasina asked BCL leaders and workers to spread out to all areas of the country and project the development activities of her government.

"You have to play the role of vanguard and remain vigilant against any opposition bid to rig the coming elections or vitiate a congenial atmosphere for polls," a BCL leader quoted her as saying.

The AL chief expressed confidence that the people would give her party a fresh mandate because of her government's welfare-oriented activities for them.

The BCL leaders expressed deep concern at the 'conspiracies' being hatched by different quarters against Awami League and its leaders.

They referred to 'threats' on Hasina's life and proposed enactment of a stringent law to ensure her security when she leaves office on expiry of the tenure of her government on July 13.

ASM NURUNNABI

Ecological situation is reportedly in a horrendous state as rivers in and around the Dhaka city continue to be used illegally as dumping ground for industrial waste and sewage with no regard for the necessary safety measures. As a result, not only the rivers but also their surrounding areas are being severely contaminated. Thousands of people living beside rivers like the Turag and Dhaleswari as well as the Buriganga and its three tributaries, namely, Narai, Debdholai and Balu are reportedly in grave dangers from intestinal and skin diseases. It is felt that if the situation is not brought under control on an emergency basis, an environmental catastrophe could occur, besides triggering massive outbreak of diseases.

It is reported that the waters of the three tributaries of the Buriganga river look like discarded engine oil, blackened and thickened by untreated waste dumped by WASA and numerous industries at Tejgaon. As toxic wastes continue to flow into the rivers day and night, thousands of men, women and children of the several villages under Khilgaon thana are exposed to serious health hazards. The rivers which used to be the lifelines of the vast eastern fringe of the city

DOWN TO EARTH

Polluted rivers in and around Dhaka city

only a few years back, now emit poisonous gas in the air. Boatmen, traders, farmers and others are said to have been left with no other alternative than living with these man-made hazards.

Fertility of arable lands along the rivers has reportedly dropped drastically due to the river pollution. Food production has plunged radically. Crops have suffered as the pollution, having reached into the soil, has resulted in poor harvest amounting to only a third of what used to be attained in a normal year. And the daily catch of fish in the rivers has also registered an equivalent one-third decline. The inadequacy of safe drinking water as well as water for bathing and washing is critical.

A social welfare activist of the areas observed that the waters of the three tributaries of the

Buriganga river were so clean only a few years ago that the villagers even drank from it. The rivers were said to have so much fish that a large population of the area could survive on it. Today, the fishermen community has nothing left to make a living from. Most of the polluting substances pour into the rivers from the Tejgaon industrial area through the Rampura point.

Development workers on agricultural projects in the area said that the localities along the rivers face a bleak future unless something is done immediately to tackle the pollution.

Local people said they had protested against such pollution several times. They even held rallies in the area urging the authorities to act quickly to stop pollution of the rivers. Local people said the government should immediately

set up small retention points for the wastes before discharging them into the rivers. They said the retention points could be set up as an immediate remedy to the problem.

Though the Ministry of Environment has set up an Environment Court, punitive action is yet to be taken against the offenders. Factories alongside the rivers have not set up waste treatment plants despite notices in this regard already served on them.

At an open dialogue lately organised by Dhaka WASA in the city, emphasis was laid on protection of the Narai, Dev Dholai Khal and Balu river from pollution. During discussion at the open dialogue, it has been stressed that it is absolutely necessary to form a "Neighbourhood Society" to

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4 Satkhira cops suspended for 'killing' informer

UNB, Satkhira

Four policemen of Sadar thana were suspended yesterday for their alleged involvement in the killing of a police informer and negligence of duty.

The suspended policemen are SI Aslam Khan, ASI Khadiza Begum, and constables Oliar and Haider.

A three-member probe body, led by Additional Police Super Khandker Golam Farooq, in its preliminary investigation found that SI Aslam Khan was involved in the killing of informer Moslem Uddin in police custody six hours after his arrest on May 13 in a case of theft.

Three other policemen, including ASI Khadiza Begum, were found guilty of negligence of duties regarding the case.

Earlier, acting on information from Moslem, police seized 7 kg of silver while being smuggled to India. This apparently angered the local smugglers' syndicate, allegedly led by Asgar.

Following the seizure of the consignment of silver, Asgar and his relative Momin influenced the Sadar thana SI Aslam Khan and managed to get Moslem arrested on charge of theft. Moslem later died in police custody.

In its report, the investigation team suggested immediate arrest of Asgar and Momin.

2 listed terrorists held in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two listed terrorists were arrested in the city yesterday.

Pahartali thana police arrested Md Abbachh Mia, 29, from Saraipara in the early hours of yesterday. Abbachh Mia, is an accused in eight cases filed with different police stations in the city.

Mohammad Manik, a listed terrorists arrested from in front of a hotel under Bander thana with ten bullets and cartridges at 8:00 am yesterday.

2 Indians held from Jessore Cantt area

UNB, Jessore

Two Indian nationals were held from the restricted area of Jessore Cantonment yesterday.

Army personnel arrested Harilal, 50, Abdur Razzak, 42, for their suspicious movement and handed them over to police.



As the North-South Road in Nawabpur was not repaired after digging quite some time ago, even a breeze now blows dust all over, choking pedestrians and passengers alike.

Illegal immigrants in US to get more time to apply for visas

AP, Washington

About 200,000 illegal immigrants who missed a chance to apply for visas without leaving the country would get four more months to do so under a Republican-crafted bill on a fast track for a House vote.

The House plans to vote Monday evening on the legislation that some say won't provide enough time for all who seek the visas.

Rep Peter King, one of the bill's sponsors, said he would have preferred more time, but he's happy to see the bill will be considered so quickly.

The bill must be approved by a two-thirds majority of those voting.

An estimated 640,000 illegal immigrants were eligible under the Legal Immigration and Family Equity Act to apply for visas without leaving the country. The law took effect in December and expired April 30. It applied to illegal immigrants who are spouses or relatives of US citizens or legal residents or employees sponsored by employers. They had to have been in the country on Dec 21, 2000, to the eligible.

Other lawmakers were hoping to give the immigrants another six to 12 months to apply or to make the law permanent.

President George W Bush pressed for Congress to act on the issue in a letter he sent to House and Senate leaders. He said he wanted immigration policies to

strengthen families but did not say how much more time the immigrants should be given.

Brian Besanceney, a White House spokesman, said Bush is leaving that decision to Congress.

The Republican bill also would only allow couples who were married and workers hired by April 30 to apply for the visas.

Philadelphia

In a city that has lost a quarter of its population in the past 50 years, one Philadelphia leader suggests that attracting immigrants may be a solution.

Councilman James Kenney said Thursday that drawing and retaining people from outside the United States from skilled workers to students and refugees could help the city to make up for its gradual population drain.

"It's in our own selfish interests to have people come here and work, to build back neighborhoods and start businesses," Kenney said at a news conference on the roof of the Independence Seaport Museum.

"It's not the only thing we have to do," he said. "We have to deal with the tax structure and address blight in the neighborhoods, but this I think can be one of the keystones."

In the 2000 federal census, Philadelphia, the largest city in Pennsylvania, had a population of 1,517,550, a 4.3 per cent drop from 1990. Since 1950, the city's population has declined 500,000.

Khaleda to address rally at Pabna today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will address a public meeting at Pabna Islamia College ground at 3 pm today.

Local BNP has organised the meeting demanding immediate resignation of the government and protesting BSF incursion into Bangladesh territory.

Temor jolts Sumatra

AP, Jakarta

A 6.1 magnitude earthquake jolted Indonesia's Sumatra island yesterday, the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency said.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

An official said the tremor hit the central part of Sumatra at 9:05 am (0205 GMT) and was centered beneath the Indian Ocean, about 1,200 kilometers northwest of Jakarta.

Will journalist Tipu remain disabled?



The Daily Star - প্রথম আলো

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