

Road accident kills 5 in Gaibandha

UNB, Gaibandha

Five people, three of a family, were killed and 12 others injured when a tempo collided with a fish-laden truck near Boithakhali bridge on Dhaka-Dinajpur highway yesterday. Three of the deceased were identified as tempo passenger Narayan, 50, and his sons Anil, 30, and Lablu, 26. The truck driver fled the scene with his vehicle.

DU tense as JCD factions clash on campus

DU CORRESPONDENT

Tension gripped the Dhaka University campus yesterday when activists of two factions of ruling BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) were locked in clashes at two dormitories.

The clashes left two persons injured. They are Iqbal a resident student of Ziaur Rahman Hall and Afaz, a former student of the university. Iqbal is a supporter of 'Laltu Group'.

Campus sources said, the clash ensued when some activists belonging to 'Asad Group' beat their rival Iqbal at Ziaur Rahman Hall at about noon and drove him out.

To retaliate, some supporters of 'Laltu Group' rushed to Zahurul Haq Hall, beat some activists of 'Asad Group' and ousted them from the hall.

Afaz, a former student of the university and belonging to Asad Group, was also beaten.

Later, senior leaders of JCD went to both the halls and rehabilitated the ousted students.

New 10-taka polymer notes without portrait of Bangabandhu

UNB, Dhaka

Design of the ten-taka polymer notes now in circulation has been changed, dropping the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The notes in new design will be initially issued from Bangladesh Bank's Motijheel office today and later from other offices of the central bank.

All other ten-taka currency notes, now in the market, will also remain valid, a central bank announcement said yesterday.

The reddish polymer notes, SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

More changes in admin

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday brought more changes in the administration giving transfer orders to three army officers and 12 joint-secretary-level officials.

Two of the officials have been made officer on special duty (OSD), according to an Establishment Ministry notification.

Of the OSDs, Murari Mohan Dutta was joint secretary in the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and was waiting to join as a member of the Tax Appellate Commission as per a previous transfer order.

Dhiraj Malakar, also a joint secretary-level official, was director general of the Directorate of Non-normal Education before he was made OSD in the Establishment SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Cabinet to discuss draft PSA repeal bill today

Law to control acid throwing also on agenda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A draft bill for repeal of the controversial Public Safety Act (PSA) will be on top of the agenda at today's Cabinet meeting, official sources said.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will preside over the meeting.

After Cabinet approval, the bill will be placed before the Jatiya Sangsad in its session beginning on January 31.

The Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs prepared the draft bill as per instruction of the Prime Minister and everything is set for repeal of the PSA, the sources said.

The PSA was introduced in February 2000 by the then Awami League government amid street protests by the BNP-led opposition alliance. Other political parties, human rights organisations, civil society leaders and professional bodies had also

protested introduction of the "suppressive black" law.

The then President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed had also declined to assent to the law because it had no provision for bail of persons arrested under it. Later, the law was amended providing for bail and the President assented to it.

Repeal of the PSA and some other "draconian" laws were among the main election pledges of BNP.

Repeal of the PSA would subsequently lead to dismissal of the cases filed under it, now pending with courts.

Another bill styled the Vested Property (Amendment) Law 2001 has also been included in the agenda for the Cabinet meeting, the sources said.

Formulation of a law to control use of acid and setting up of special tribunal for speedy trial of acid throwers may also be discussed at the meeting.

Shoppers suffer on dearth of polybag alternatives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People have overwhelmingly rejected use of polythene bags in the city, but unavailability of proper replacements in the markets is causing difficulties for shoppers.

Sellers at groceries and other shops, at kitchen markets and even roadside vendors refuse to give polythene bags to shoppers with the merchandise. At places, even customers were seen rejecting polythene bags when vendors tried to hand over items in those.

But for shoppers it has not been easy to get an environment friendly bag in the market. The low quality and less spacious jute bags now available in markets are being sold at between Tk 8 and Tk 12, depending on the size. The Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation has fixed prices of the same bags at between Tk 3 and Tk 6.50, sources said.

Since the ban of polthene bags from January 1, BJMC has sold nearly 700, 000 jute bags in the city markets and is likely to market more bags. Moreover, more durable

polythene bags, useable for longer period, will soon be available in the market.

Some innovative traders have developed carrier bags made of mosquito net and other materials. Some of these items are now available in various markets.

The price of old newspaper also jumped from Tk 4 to Tk 12 per kilogram in the last few days as those are quite handy for fruit, vegetable and grocery sellers.

At Mohammadpur kitchen SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



Bangladesh A top-scorer Mehrab Hossain takes to the sky only to be caught by Shadab Kabir (not in the picture) at square leg. (For details see Page 13)

Double-murder at Mohammadpur Parents still wait for justice

ABUL KALAM AZAD

The parents of Syed Ashraf Hossain Jewel and Syed Mohammad Rivel demand punishment to the killers of their sons even more than 19 months after the double-murder.

Family members of the victims are passing days in a state of insecurity, as the killer and his associates have threatened them with death over the last few months.

The prime accused in the sensational double-murder case, Kamal Pasha, who went into hiding after the cold-blooded murders, is at large in Mohammadpur area, they alleged.

Jewel, 27, and Rivel, 24, sons of Amjad Hossain, a senior journalist and former editor of the monthly Detective, a law-enforcement agencies' monthly publication, were killed with 15 minutes apart on May

5, 2000. According to newspaper reports, Kamal Pasha, an FIR-listed accused in many criminal cases, including murder, went to the residence of Amjad Hossain in a hijacked car in the early hours of the day and called Jewel.

When Rivel, an HSC student, came out, Pasha asked him to get on the car. After a few minutes of the drive, the car pulled out at the Kisholoy School, only 300 yards off the residence of former Awami League MP Alhaj Mockbul Hossain.

When Rivel got down from the car to buy cigarettes, Pasha shot him dead at about 7:40am and came back to the house. Again, he called out Jewel, a field worker of Proshika, to 'an urgent need'. He was taken to the Lalmatia Power Supply Office close-by and was gunned down at about 8:00am.

Jewel and Rivel were the second and the fourth respectively among five brothers and one sister.

Amjad Hossain filed a murder case with Mohammadpur Police Station accusing Pasha of the killing.

Police arrested Mahub, driver of the car, in an abnormal condition and placed him on a remand for interrogation. Later, he had been detained in jail.

After the incidents, Kamal Pasha, SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

AL meeting discusses hartal preparations

UNB, Dhaka

A meeting of Awami League and its front organisations yesterday discussed the preparations to make the January 9 hartal a total success.

Chaired by party's acting president Abdus Samad Azad, the meeting expressed deep concern over deterioration of country's law and order.

Awami League organised the meeting at its Central office as part of the preparation of the hartal called to protest the price hike of fuel, electricity and gas.

Party general secretary Zillur Rahman, SAMS Kibria, Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Suranjeet Sen Gupta, Matia Chowdhury, Obaidul Quader, Abdul Mannan, Dr Mostofa Jalal Mohiuddin, Mukul Bose and Ahsanullah Master attended the meeting.

Adv Kazi Iqbal Hossain, Harun-ar-Rashid Howlader, Ajay Kar Khokon and former student leaders Abdur Rahman, Ashim Kumar Ukil, Ahmad Hossain, BM Mozammel, Shafi Ahmed, SM Kamal Hossain and Ishaq Ali Khan Panna were also present.

Citizens protest caging of wild birds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Wild birds myna and munia have almost disappeared from forests of Bangladesh due to their indiscriminate catching for over thirty years now.

Stating this, speakers at a citizens' rally in the city yesterday demanded ban on keeping wild birds as pet as well as their sale.

The Bangladesh Environment Movement organized the rally near Kataban mosque in Elephant Road area as part of its 'Save the Birds' programme.

Catching and sale of pet birds is legal as those can procreate inside cage. But keeping wild birds as pet and their sale is totally illegal and harmful, they said.

Existence of wild birds is very important for maintenance of biodiversity. Their disappearance will have a very bad effect on the environment, they said.

The Kataban market is the city's biggest centre for sale of not only pet birds and animals but also wild animals and birds. The wild animals and birds are sold there illegally.

The speakers said bird traders as well as customers should know the difference between pet birds and wild birds and desist from trading and purchasing those.

They said as myna, munia have almost disappeared from the country, the traders now depend on smuggling of these birds from India.

Presided over by Enam-ul Haq, the rally was also addressed by general secretary of Bangladesh Environment Movement Abu Naser Khan, co-ordinator of CUP Abu Raihan Al Beruni.

Mild tremor jolts Ctg city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mild tremor jolted the port city and its adjoining areas at noon yesterday.

No casualty was, however, reported.

The magnitude of the tremor that shook the city at 12.26 pm was 3.04 on Richter Scale as recorded at the country's lone Observatory Centre in the city's Ambagan area, sources concerned said.

The epicenter of the earthquake was about 90-km from Chittagong, they said.

Proposed HRC Cabinet Committee discusses draft bill provisions

UNB, Dhaka

The Cabinet Committee on the proposed National Human Rights Commission (HRC) at a meeting here yesterday discussed different provisions of a draft bill for it.

The meeting, chaired by Law Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed, focussed on the Human Rights Commissions of Nepal, India and Sri Lanka in order to prepare a bill for the HRC proposed for Bangladesh.

Members of the Cabinet Committee Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Barrister Nazmul Huda, MK Anwar, Barrister Aminul Haq and M Shamsul Islam attended the meeting at the auditorium of the Cabinet Division, said an official handout.



Road transport workers yesterday took to the street to protest the recent government clampdown on vehicles more than 20 years old in the city.

A unique New Year's gift for burn victims

STAR REPORT

It was a unique way of showing how doctors and nurses care for the poor.

On New Year's Day, a team of surgeons from Dhaka went to the Nawabganj Thana Health Complex (THC) to operate on some selected patients with defects on their lips and burn contractures.

Led by Dr Samanta Lal Sen, a team of anaesthetists and plastic surgeons arrived at the health complex and was greeted by the local people, most of them cannot afford such costly operations.

Seven children had been operated on their cleft lips, while two children -- aged between nine and ten -- underwent scar and

contracture operations.

In collaboration with Unicef-funded Emergency Obstetric Care project and sponsored by Opsonin and Spaandan Bangladesh, the plastic surgery camp operated for more than eight hours straight.

"There was tremendous enthusiasm among the locals, including THC doctors, nurses and of course, my coordinating team members," said Prof Khalilur Rahman, who along with Brigadier General Nazmul Huda, helped coordinate the camp activities, including transport services and clean-ups.

"I believe it is not difficult to organise such camps at least once a month at health centres. The surgeries are simple and the costs involved are not too high. If we desire, we can really help the poor this way," said Prof Rahman.

Most of the patients had no money to pay for drugs and small registration fees, but their financial inability did not deprive them of the surgical facilities.

Opsonin, a local pharmaceutical company, contributed adequate drugs to the camp, and Spaandan Bangladesh, a voluntary organisation SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



An 11-month-old baby with hair-lip defect recovers after he was operated upon at Nawabganj Thana Health Complex for free on the New Year's Day.