



Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka for London Tuesday night on a 10-day tour of Europe and USA.

JUTA begins indefinite strike

JU CORRESPONDENT

Most of the classes at Jahangirnagar University (JU) were not held yesterday, the first day of an indefinite teachers' strike called by the JU Teachers' Association (JUTA).

Around 25 classes out of nearly 400 were held as a faction of the teachers supporting the present JU administration took classes.

Final examinations and tutorials were held as JUTA kept those out of the purview of the strike.

When contacted, JUTA President Amin Mohammad Ali said, "The strike call was successful. Only a few

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15 chargesheeted in Chhabi Rani assault case

UNB, Bagerhat

Police yesterday submitted chargesheet to the court against 15 people, mostly ruling party activists, for sexual and physical assault on Chhabi Rani Mondal, 27.

Three of the accused Tayeb Noor, Humayun Kabir Himu and Abdul Wahab Sheikh have already been taken into police custody.

The other accused persons have gone into hiding. They are Kazi Abul Bashar, Mustafa Kamal Sheikh, Ilias Farazi, Emdadul Huq, Bazlur Rahman Polash, Jamal Shikari, Kamal Shikari, Mahmud Hasan Siddar, Mostafizur Rahman, Mannan, Zinnat and Altaf Hossain.

Chhabi Rani of village Orabunia in Rampal upazila filed a case stating that she was forcibly taken to the local BNP office on the evening of August 21 and assaulted by ruling party activists.

Chhabi Rani, however, expressed dissatisfaction saying that some of the main accused had not been mentioned in the chargesheet.

Climate confce on

Call renewed to implement Kyoto protocol

ABDUL JALIL BHUIYAN, New Delhi

The Eighth Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-8) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) began in New Delhi yesterday with a call for all countries to implement the Kyoto protocol on global warming before it gets too late.

"We must bring into force the protocol without delay," said TR Baalu, India's environment minister, who was appointed Wednesday as president of the conference.

"The rise in temperature is already beginning to affect physical and biological systems," Baalu told some 4,000 delegates from 170 nations, including Bangladesh.

"Frequent floods and droughts are having serious impacts. Depleted moisture combined with heat stress is projected to reduce the global yield of major foodgrains," he added.

Baalu said the impact of climate change would be felt most in developing countries, as global warming would aggravate poverty and increase hunger through a rise in food prices.

"But developed countries are required also to demonstrate their lead role in modifying longer-term emission trends, and in this respect they are committed specifically to adopt mitigation policies and measures," Baalu said. "Those with the least resources have the least capacity to adapt and are the most vulnerable."

The ten-day two-week conference in New Delhi will discuss the implementation of the 1997 Kyoto protocol on global warming. Senior environmental officials are due to join in the talks here next week. The agreement is opposed by US President George W. Bush, who leads the world's largest national polluter.

Mohamed Elyazghi, the outgoing president of the convention, urged all nations to sign up for the Kyoto protocol.

"Those countries who have already joined the protocol have already shown the way and we urge all parties to jump on the train which is already moving," Elyazghi told the conference.

One of the most complex environmental treaties ever attempted, Kyoto requires industrialised countries —

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PM's directive Keep prices of essentials stable during Ramadan

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday directed the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to keep the prices of essentials stable and within the buying capacity of common people during the month of Ramadan.

As per directive of the Prime Minister, the Food Ministry yesterday decided to sell one lakh tonnes of wheat and 50,000 tonnes of rice in the open market through OMS (open market sale).

Wheat will be sold at Tk 8 per kg and rice at Tk 12.50 per kg, Food Secretary Khairuzzaman Chowdhury informed newsmen following the PM's instructions.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presiding over the ECNEC meeting at NEC conference room in the city yesterday.

Yann Martel wins Booker Prize for 'Life of Pi'



Yann Martel shows a copy of his novel 'Life of Pi' at the Booker Prize dinner at British Museum in London on Tuesday.

REUTERS, London

Canadian writer Yann Martel on Tuesday ran out a narrow winner of the Booker Prize, one of the world's most prestigious literary awards, for "Life of Pi," his quirky fable about a boy's survival after a shipwreck.

"I feel like I am in the arms of a beautiful woman," said the overjoyed Montreal novelist after landing the coveted prize. "I am overwhelmed, delighted and honoured," he told reporters.

Martel, who gave his acceptance speech in both English and French, was the hottest favourite in the 34-year history of the renowned prize after organisers mistakenly put out his name as the winner last week when doing a test run on their website.

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2 more tremors jolt port city

CU CORRESPONDENT

Two earthquakes including a moderate one jolted the port city of Chittagong Tuesday within a span of seven hours.

These were the seventh and eighth tremors of the month in the port city while the 39th and 40th of the current year.

The first of Tuesday's tremors measuring 4.35 on the Richter Scale shook the city and adjoining areas at 3:44:28pm and lasted 22 seconds. Its epicentre was some 203 kilometres off the country's lone seismic observatory at Ambagan in the port city.

After seven hours at 11:33:14pm, another tremor measuring 5.12 on the Richter Scale jolted the port city and lasted 31 seconds.

According to sources at the seismic observatory, the second tremor was moderately strong and originated approximately 293 kilometres off the observatory.

Police sergeant, bus driver hurt in Gulistan blasts

UNB, Dhaka

Two people received splinter wounds when unidentified miscreants hurled several bombs in the city's Gulistan area yesterday evening.

The injured were identified as police sergeant Mosharrar Hossain and minibus driver Delwar Hossain.

Delwar was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while Mosharrar to Razarbag Police Hospital.

Police sources said some unidentified miscreants exploded at least three bombs in the capital's Golap Shah Mazar area at about 7:30pm.

Crackers hurled at Speaker's car

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified people hurled crackers at the vehicle of Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar at the Sonargaon crossing last night.

The crackers however did not hit the vehicle and the Speaker escaped unhurt.

The incident took place when he was returning from the parliament. As soon as his car reached the Sonargaon crossing at about 7:15pm, the crackers were hurled.

Journalist Aziz Misir dead

UNB, Dhaka

Elderly journalist, playwright and litterateur Aziz Misir died of cancer at a city clinic early yesterday. He was 73.

He left behind three sons, a daughter and a host of relatives, friends and admirers to mourn his death.

Three namaz-e-janazas of the deceased were held at Manavzamin office, Jatiya Press club and Baitul

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Judgement in Shipu murder case Oct 31

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, yesterday fixed October 31 for judgement in the sensational Shipu murder case.

Judge Mohammad Sirajul Islam fixed the date after completion of argument.

Earlier, the court recorded statements of 23 out of 30 prosecution witnesses.

Iftakher Ahmed Shipu, 38, a mobile phone trader at UAE Market in the city's Banani area, was shot dead on the night of May 24, 2000.

Istiaque Ahmed, victim's younger brother, filed a murder case with Gulshan thana accusing three people including Jewel, son of former Awami League lawmaker Kamal Ahmed Majumder on May 25.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case submitted a charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM's) Court, Dhaka against six people, including Jewel on October 2, 2000.

In the charge sheet, 30 people



Iftakher Ahmed Shipu

were shown as prosecution witnesses.

The court framed charges against the accused on October 23 last year.

The trial of the case began on January 28 this year.

Accused Kazi Sharif Ahmed Saikat and Joy Hasib are now in jail custody while Kazi Arif Ahmed Sagar

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College girl murder in Magura

Zahida was gangraped before being strangled?

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

The sensational case regarding murder of college girl Zahida has taken a new turn as DB investigators now suspect that she was gangraped before being strangled.

The investigators have sent the victim's clothes to the CID in Dhaka for chemical test.

"Although the inquest report and the post-mortem report did not say that she was raped before being strangled, we have sent the clothes for chemical test out of suspicion",

investigation officer Inspector Sheikh Zillur Rahman told this correspondent yesterday.

Charge sheet in the case will be submitted as soon as the test result is available, he said.

Zahida Khatun, daughter of a poor farmer of Boroichara village in Sreepur upazila, was strangled at a jute field by some local youths on July 5 while she was returning home from her friend's house. Zahida appeared at the HSC examination this year in Humanities group and got 1st division. She was killed

before the results were published. A case was lodged with Sreepur police station but none of the killers could be arrested yet.

One of the alleged killers — Mamun, son of Mobarok Molla — was handed over to police by his elder brother Sazzad. Others are allegedly at large.

The local administration at a meeting on law and order on August 27 selected the case as a sensitive one and sent it to the DB (Detective Branch) police for investigation.

Rajuk razes down Fu Wang encroachment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajuk bulldozed some illegal constructions of the Fu Wang Group Limited from the Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara Lake yesterday.

Under the supervision of a magistrate, a team accompanied by police and army flattened the pillars around the lake area at plot No. CS 461 and Mouza-Bhala in Gulshan.

Top Rajuk officials said the company had illegally encroached upon the wetland claiming to have purchased it from a 'so-called private landowner'.

According to the master plan, the land is designated as wetland of the lake.

Some pillars were also found to be constructed in the middle of the lake.

Sources said Fu Wang Limited bought the wetland from one Shamim Ara Rafiq, who claimed herself to be the original owner.

Sources in the Rajuk said, when the so-called landowner had applied to the Rajuk in 1997 for land

use clearance, the then Chief of the Town Planning division, Zakir Hossain, allegedly realising 'hefty bribes' provided the clearance.

Although clearly defined in the map as a wetland of the lake, he claimed it to be otherwise.

The land-use approval was also provided to at least 12 other people, sources in Rajuk said.

Moreover, earlier, the Rajuk had also approved the construction of two high-rises in the Gulshan Lake. The files of these approvals could not be found, sources said.

A committee formed by the Ministry of Housing and Public Works is looking into the matter, said sources in the ministry.

The Wetland Protection Act, 2000 has barred any transformation of the existing structure of wetlands for other purposes.

A top official of Rajuk, preferring anonymity, said if necessary the Rajuk would get into legal battle to save the land from illegal encroachment.

Army beats up railway staff in Sylhet, Upaban delayed for 2 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Inter City Upaban Express was delayed for about two hours when some army men beat up three railway staff members after failing to buy tickets from the ticket counter here at the Sylhet Railway Station Tuesday night.

Sources said a group of army men went to the railway station at 10:00am on Tuesday and asked for 27 tickets for the Dhaka-bound Inter City Upaban Express scheduled to leave at 10:00pm. But because of scarcity of tickets due to the Shab-e-Barat holiday rush, railway officials issued only 14 tickets for First Class and Shovan Class, saying that more tickets might be available later at night.

At night, the soldiers went back to the counter and asked for the rest of the tickets. But at about 9:00pm when four tickets were returned, the staff at the counter immediately sold them to some people other than the army men.

At this, the army men became

furiously and forcibly entered the ticket booth and beat up three of the staff members there. They also entered a train compartment, forced some passengers out and occupied their seats.

Later, the passengers of the compartment informed the matter to the Station Manager, who somehow managed to convince the army men to vacate the seats.

The manager then informed the deputy commissioner, Railway officials and officials at the cantonment about the matter. Shortly afterwards, army officials reached the station and expressed sorrow for the incident. But they also expressed their concern about allegations of ticket sale on the black market. The train however left the station at 11:40pm instead of the scheduled 10:00pm.

Railway officials said army troops are supposed to buy their tickets much ahead of their journey and are not supposed to travel in the seats of civilian passengers.



Zobeida Rab passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zobeida Rab, wife of late Abdur Rab, passed away yesterday at 3:00am at the Bangladesh Medical College Hospital. She was 90.

Zobeida Rab was a patron of the hospital and had donated Tk four crore for men and women's free wards in the hospital.

Besides being a philanthropist,

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