

Army man 'tortures' 2 fish traders

OUR CORRESPONDENT

An army captain allegedly bashed up two fish trader brothers at Ramnagar in Rupsha upazila on Tuesday.

A team of joint forces led by Captain Iqbal picked up Al Amin Khan and Ripon Khan from their residence at 2:00am, victims' father Nazrul Islam Khan alleged.

They lost sense due to heavy torture at a camp. They were handed over to Rupsha Police Station at noon and police sent them to a hospital, Nazrul added.

However, despite repeated attempts Captain Iqbal could not be contacted for his comment.

AL team goes to monga-hit areas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) sent a team to northern districts yesterday to distribute relief among thousands of people stalked by a severe monga (famine-like situation).

The team comprising Mukul Bose, Akhtaruzzaman, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed, Faruque Khan, Dr Abdur Razzak, Nazma Rahman, Abdul Latif Siddiqui, Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantu, ASMA Amin, AFM Bahauddin Nasim, SM Kamal Hossain, Iqbalur Rahim and Tipu Munshi will reach Rangpur first. The team will split into three units and assess gravity of the situation and visit Gangachhara of Rangpur, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat, the most affected areas.

Meanwhile, the AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil in a statement on Tuesday criticised the government's failure in controlling the monga.

"Thousands of people of northern districts are starving in monga but the government's effort to distribute food and other essentials among them is insufficient", he said adding, "At least 200 people have died in the famine".

He further alleged that ruling BNP's leaders are selling Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) cards in open market.

He also urged the AL and its front organisation leaders to stand by the affected people of northern districts.



PHOTO: STAR

Jago Bangladesh Garments Sramik Federation observes a token hunger strike at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding salaries and Eid bonus.

Promotion of investment discussed
Morshed Khan holds meetings with Singaporean PM, FM

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan called on Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and his counterpart Prof S Jayakumar yesterday, says a message received here from Singapore.

During the meeting with Prof Jayakumar, bilateral issues of mutual concerns for both the countries were discussed.

Morshed proposed an arrangement for regular annual consultations between the two ministries of foreign affairs at the ministerial/permanent secretary level.

Jayakumar agreed such consultations arrangement. It was decided that the modalities would be framed in further

consultation between the officials of the two ministries.

Considering the existing quantum of private sector investment in Bangladesh from Singapore and its positive trend, they felt the need to sign an agreement on the promotion and protection of investment.

Both the foreign ministers expressed satisfaction over the volume of bilateral trade between the two countries that reached 1.4 billion Singaporean dollar.

In this context, Morshed Khan requested his Singaporean counterpart to extend more facilities to Bangladesh's exportable products including vegetables.

During the meeting, Morshed sought more facilities for Bangladesh's export items including vegetables to ensure market access in Singapore.

Seeking cooperation in IT sector to help develop human resources, he also referred to the existing visa regime introduced by the Singapore government. He

requested Prof. Jayakumar to reduce the time limit of processing visa for genuine visitors from Bangladesh.

Prof. Jayakumar shared Morshed's view and assured him that he would discuss the matter with the relevant department to ease the visa regime, particularly the time limit.

Morshed thanked the Singapore government for its support for a successful bid of the Bangladesh membership in ECOSOC. Both the foreign ministers exchanged views on regional and international issues of common concern.

They also expressed identical views to fight terrorism and emphasised the need for exchanging information in this regard to ensure peace and security in the region.

Earlier, Morshed Khan extended his invitation to Prof. Jayakumar to visit Bangladesh. He accepted the invitation.

During his meeting with Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, he lauded the

success of Singapore in socio-economic development.

He apprised Goh Chok Tong of different policies and programmes of Bangladesh government.

The FM reminded the Singapore PM of the invitation extended to him by Khaleda Zia.

Goh Chok Tong told Morshed Khan that his visit to Bangladesh is very much in his agenda. He is expected to visit Bangladesh next year at a mutually convenient time, he added.

He requested the FM to convey his best regards to Khaleda Zia. The Singapore PM appreciated the "Look East Policy" being pursued by the government of Bangladesh.

They also discussed regional and international issues of common interest.

713 foreigners still in jail after serving terms

Cabinet committee on jail reforms told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 713 foreigners are still languishing in jails although they have already served their jail terms.

In addition, 734 foreigners are in the jails -- 258 of them are convicts and the rest are under-trial prisoners.

The figures were revealed at the eighth meeting of the cabinet committee on jail reforms yesterday. Law Minister Moudud Ahmed presided over the meeting.

The Foreign Office has been asked to take initiatives to send the foreign prisoners who have completed their sentences to their countries, meeting sources said.

After the meeting, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed told the journalists that the government has started acquiring 200 acres of land at Tegharia in Keraniganj to relocate the Dhaka Central Jail.

The relocation of the jail would be completed during the tenure of the present government, he said.

The project concept paper will be prepared within the next three months and it will be placed before the Executive Committee for National Economic Council (Ecne) for approval.

The minister said construction of two thirds of the Kashimpur Jail in Gazipur have been completed. The jail would accommodate 1,500 inmates. A

separate jail for women prisoners will also be set up inside the Kashimpur Jail complex.

He said Tk 47 crore has been allocated for reconstruction of different jails and expansion of existing jails.

At present, there are 72,000 inmates in the country's 66 jails with a capacity of only 25,000, meeting sources said.

The Dhaka Central Jail has a capacity of 2,650 inmates, but it now holds 11,500 detainees and convicts.

The meeting also discussed setting up video linkage for conducting trials inside the jails.

The minister said a committee headed by secretary of the public works held 11 meetings to review the Jail code of 1894.

The government has also asked the authority to fill up 111 posts for Kashimpur Jail.

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, Home Secretary Mohammad Omar Farooq, and IG (Prison) Brigadier General Zillur Rahman attended the meeting.



Prize distribution ceremony

The prize distribution ceremony of the Association for Computing Machinery International Collegiate Programming Contest, Asia Region, Dhaka site, will be held. Venue: BUET Auditorium. Time: 4.10pm.

WTO-UNIDO workshop

A two-day joint WTO-UNIDO workshop on the Agreement on technical barriers to trade for Saarc LDCs will begin. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 9.15am.

Discussion

The Bangladesh Krishok Federation organises a discussion on the life and ideals of its founder-president Comrade Abdus Sattar Khan to mark his seventh death anniversary. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3.00pm.

Human chain

The Bangladesh Jubo Union, Dhaka city committee, will form a human chain demanding adequate food supply and free kitchens for the Monga affected people in northwestern region. Time: 3.00pm.

Youth Gonoforum

The Youth Gonoforum will hold a meeting to exchange views and an iftar party. Venue: Central office, 60 Purana Paltan. Time: 4.00pm.

Raozan Samity

The Raozan Samity - Dhaka will hold a discussion and an iftar party for its members. Venue: Chittagong Samity

auditorium, 32 Topkhana Road. Time: 4.00pm.



Film show

The Alliance Francaise will screen a film titled 'Nelly et M Arnaud' directed by Claude Sautet. Venue: Alliance Francaise auditorium. Time: 10.30am and 6.00pm.

World Diabetes Day

The Bangladesh Diabetic Samity organises a procession and a discussion to mark the World Diabetes Day. Venue: BIRDEM auditorium. Time: 9.30am.

Discussion

The Kishorkantha Foundation will hold a discussion and an iftar party for writers, litterateurs, poets and well-wishers. Venue: Shishu Academy auditorium. Time: 2.30pm.

Certificate award ceremony

The Anjuman Mufidul Islam will hold a certificate distribution programme and an iftar party, with Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka as chief guest. Venue: Service centre, 42 Kakrail. Time: 3.45pm.

Product launching ceremony

Osmom Corporation Limited organises a launching ceremony of Salman's, Juice Pack and Crispo Pakistani products. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 3.30pm.

FM visits Nirmal Sen in Singapore

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan visited ailing journalist Nirmal Sen now undergoing treatment at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore yesterday.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Singapore Munshi Faiz Ahmed accompanied the foreign minister during the visit, according to a message received here yesterday.

Morshed Khan inquired about the health condition of Nirmal Sen and stayed for some time there. He also wished his early recovery and directed the high commissioner to look after Nirmal Sen.

Dhaka elected Ecosoc member

BSS, New York

Bangladesh has been elected a member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council for a term of three years beginning 2004 on Tuesday.

Six candidates contested the elections and among them four elected candidates are; Bangladesh UAE Indonesia and the Republic of Korea. Bangladesh polled the second highest votes with 143 voting in her favour.

This is the most prestigious election that Bangladesh has won since her Security Council membership which expired in 2001.

WEATHER

T O D A Y

No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country today. Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the northern and central part of the country during early morning, Met Office said.

It predicted nearly unchanged night temperature over the country during the period.

Highest temperature 32.9 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and the lowest 15.8 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:14pm today and rises at 6:12am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature In Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.8	20.0	70	62
Chittagong	33.5	19.0	67	55
Rajshahi	28.4	20.5	80	90
Khulna	30.5	19.5	85	66
Barisal	30.5	19.0	94	91
Sylhet	30.8	19.2	73	71
Cox's Bazar	32.7	19.5	67	79

Appeal for help

A disabled person has appealed to the affluent section of the society for financial assistance for his treatment abroad, says a press release.

Nasir Hossain was an LLB student when he fell victim to a road accident on May 27, 2002. His left leg was amputated after four months of treatment in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

He also underwent treatment for kidney and liver ailments.

Now he needs an artificial limb and three operations in his right leg and right hand. For an artificial limb and other treatment abroad, he needs about Tk 25 lakh which he could not afford.

He appealed to the generous people to extend a helping hand for his treatment.

Contributions can be sent to the following account: Account No. 61367531, Sonali Bank, Dhaka University campus branch. His present address is C/22, Arsingate, Faridabad, Dhaka-1204. Phone: 7412595.