

3 JCD men sent to jail for extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

An activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), who was sentenced to 14



Abu Sayeed's anniversary of birth today

Today is the 82nd anniversary of birth of late president Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, says a press release.

Justice Chowdhury is one of the leading organisers of the War of Liberation. He was elected chairman of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in 1985. After Vijay Luxmi Pundit of India and Sir Jafarullah Khan of Pakistan, he was the third personality from the sub-continent to lead this prestigious forum of UN.

Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury National Memorial Council will distribute stipends among meritorious students soon.

years rigorous imprisonment in an arms case and had been on bail, was arrested along with two accomplices when they went to collect toll from a cinema hall manager in the city.

Later, they were sent to jail custody after being produced before the Magistrate's court on Thursday afternoon.

Police said Jahidul Islam Shiplu, Rajib and another JCD activist went to the manager of Nandita Cinema Hall and demanded Tk 30,000 as toll.

As the manager refused to pay, they ransacked the furniture and other valuables of his office.

Sources said some 20 JCD leaders pressed the police for their release and threatened them with serious consequences.

2 killed in road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Sabujbagh and Gulshan area of the city yesterday.

Kamruzzaman Tapu, a 14-year-old factory worker, died when a speeding bus knocked him down on the Bishwa road at Bashabo at around 12.30pm.

Police seized the bus, but the driver managed to escape.

In another incident, Abdul Jalil, 35, was hit by a speeding bus at Gulshan Avenue at around 10.30am.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died at around 12.00noon.



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina visited injured party leader Monjur Morshed Khan Labu at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. Monjur, general secretary of Sonadanga thana AL, was severely injured when assailants hurled three bombs at him in Khulna on Thursday.

Move to introduce second tea auction market falls through

NURUL ALAM, Chittagong

Move to introduce another international tea auction market outside Chittagong reportedly fell through in the face of opposition

by the tea growers and traders.

The state-owned Bangladesh Tea Board (BTB) dropped the idea of holding another international tea auction at Srimongal in Sylhet, after a Board meeting rejected the proposal recently, meeting sources said.

The meeting decided to continue to hold the international tea auction only in Chittagong having all infrastructural facilities and other logistics.

The tea auction is held in Agrabad commercial area on each Tuesday, a tradition that dates back to the British period.

The BTB placed the idea on the agenda of the official meeting after the commerce ministry forwarded the proposal of a trade association in Sylhet in this regard.

The meeting was attended by tea growers, traders, representatives of tea broker houses and officials of the Board. And all of them opposed the idea as the country supplies only two percent of the world demand.

The participants argued that all international tea auction markets in the world are located in the port cities offering quick shipment facilities, sources said.

They said the tea auctions should be held only in Chittagong as it has all infrastructural facilities, including port, customs houses, warehouses and tea broker houses. The associations of tea growers and traders are also based in the port city, they added.

"The proposal was rejected in the official meeting as Srimongal do not have required

infrastructural facilities although most tea gardens are located in Sylhet region," BTB Deputy Director (trade) Shah Alam told The Daily Star.

"We need to raise tea production and develop other logistics to facilitate its export. Otherwise, it will be difficult to keep operating another auction market," he added.

Bangladesh has 156 tea gardens and over 80 percent of them are in Sylhet region because of favourable climatic conditions and suitable locations for tea plantation.

The country produces on an average 55 million kilograms of tea a year, of which 40 million kg are needed to meet the domestic demand and the rest are exported.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Eskandar Ahmed Chowdhury of Rotary Club of Agrabad died at his village home at Betagi in Rangunia, Chittagong, in the early hours of yesterday.

Founder of Rotary Betagi Union High School, he is survived by his Japanese wife and two sons.

Eskander Ahmad went to Japan in 1965 for study under Yoneyama Scholarship. After completion of his studies, he joined the Bengali Service of NHK (Radio Japan).

As the founder president of Bangladesh Society in Japan, Eskander played an active role in mobilising Japanese public opinion in favour of the Liberation War in 1971.

With the cooperation of Rotary Club of Agrabad, the Japanese Rotarians helped construct three two-storied buildings and an auditorium for his school.

MMR Osmani



Engineer MMR Osmani, retired director of Bangladesh Rural Development Board, died at Shikder Medical College Hospital in the city on

January 28 at the age of 62, says a press release.

He is survived by his wife, two daughters and grandchildren.

His qulhwani will be held at 154/1 Monipuri Para, 5D Sheltech Monihar Apartment, Tejgaon after Asr prayers today. Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the qul.

Eid festival at Fantasy Kingdom

Fantasy Kingdom has organised a week-long festival on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, says a press release.

The programmes include acrobat, fire eating and Fantasy dance show.

The theme park also offers exciting new rides such as bumper car, magic carpet and giant flume.

Right to form trade union in EPZs demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF) yesterday demanded the right to form trade union in the export processing zones (EPZs) of the country.

The NGWF leaders also called for fixing the wages of EPZ workers keeping consistency with the existing market price.

They raised the demands at the inaugural session of a two-day national conference of the federation at the National Press Club auditorium yesterday.

Speaking at the conference, eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain said it is the basic right of the workers to bargain with their employers collectively.

"The constitution of the country has guaranteed everybody to form organisation to express their opinion and demand," he added.

Dr Kamal said the bar on EPZ workers to form trade union violates the constitution. It is also a shame for the country as workers are struggling here to establish their constitutional rights, he



Dr Kamal Hossain speaking at the inaugural function of the national conference of the National Garment Workers Federation

added.

"It is not the trade union, rather the wrong policy of the government is responsible for the closure of state-owned mills and factories," Dr Kamal noted.

"When the lawmakers are enjoying all benefits, then why

should the workers be deprived of their rights," asked Dr Kamal, adding that only a handful of plunderers are looting the country keeping the majority of the people as hostage.

Shirin Akhter, president of Karmajibi Nari, said industrial workers have to be given sufficient wages as they are earning valuable foreign exchanges for the country.

She supported the demand of the workers to form trade union in the EPZs.

Shirin also alleged that female workers are still being subjected to harassment at their workplace.

Shafiqur Rahman Majumder, a leader of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, said the government is violating the convention of International Labour Organisation by barring the workers from forming trade union in EPZs.

He regretted that 18 lakh garment workers are not getting Eid bonus.

The inaugural session was also addressed by Advocate Abed Raza and NGWF General Secretary Amirul Hoque Amin.

Shahjalal shrine blast

No progress in investigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

No progress has been made in the investigation of the bomb blast that took place in the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) even after two weeks of the incident.

Law enforcers could neither find any clue nor identify the persons responsible for the bomb explosion that killed five people and injured 50 others.

Police did not get any information from the six people arrested in connection with the incident, sources said.

They have been sent to jail custody from the magistrate's court at the end of their remand.

The enquiry committee, formed on the following day of the incident, also failed to make any head-

way though it was given a 10-day extension which ended yesterday.

When contacted, officials declined to say any thing about the fate of the investigations.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country till 6pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during morning.

Night temperature may rise slightly over Rajshahi division and may remain nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country, Met office said.

Highest temperature 28.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and the lowest 7.6 degree at Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:44pm today and rises at 6:40am 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	26.0	15.3	61	39
Chittagong	28.0	12.2	68	47
Rajshahi	25.2	11.6	77	59
Khulna	26.0	12.0	78	59
Barisal	26.8	10.6	74	66
Sylhet	27.0	12.9	68	39
Cox's Bazar	27.5	13.5	58	58

DHAKA TODAY

Premiere show

The premiere show of the film titled "Bachelor" by Mostofa Sarwar Farooki will be held. Venue: Balaka Cinemal Hall. Time: 5.00pm.

Arts exhibition

The 11th biennial Asian Arts Exhibition, organised by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, ends. Venues: Osmani Memorial auditorium, National Museum and Shilpakala Art Gallery. Time: 11.00am to 7.00pm.

Rotary Central

Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club, Shahbagh. Time: 1.30pm.

Rotary North West

Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka North West will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club, Shahbagh. Time: 5.30pm.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Trade fair

The concluding ceremony of Dhaka International Trade Fair will be held with Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain as chief guest. Venue: Fair premises, Sher-Bangla Nagar. Time: 10.30am.