



Devout Hindus offer prayers after taking a dip in the Old Brahmaputra at Langalbandh in Narayanganj yesterday on the occasion of Astami Snan, a religious festival. Devotees from home and abroad thronged there in thousands on the auspicious day.

350 houses, shops gutted at Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

A devastating fire burnt 350 houses and shops into ashes at Ruma upazila bazar and a nearby village on Sunday night.

According to an initial estimate, properties worth around Tk 5 crore were damaged in the fire.

The affected people are living under the open sky.

Eyewitnesses said the fire originated from a makeshift house of one Bidhan Chandra Karmakar at about 2:00am and soon engulfed the entire market and the village.

Members of the army, police and locals joined hands to bring the fire under control after struggling for five hours.

Two fire service vehicles from

Bandarban moved towards Ruma Bazar but they had to stay four kilometres away from the bazar as

Buddha Purnima observance body

Bangladesh Buddhist Federation has formed a committee to celebrate Buddha Purnima, a major religious festival of the Buddhists, on May 3, says a press release.

The Shuva Buddha Purnima Observance Committee 2004 was formed at a meeting on Saturday, with Federation President ML Barua in the chair.

Paritosh Barua and Rahul Barua have been made chairman and secretary general of the committee. Palash Barua will act as finance secretary.

there was no bridge over the Shankhariver.

Officials of the district and upazila administration have visited the spot while the army provided medical treatment and distributed cooked food among the affected people.

A similar fire broke out two years ago in the same market and nearby Adivasi village located 50 kilometres away from the district headquarters.

The ill-fated poor people could rebuild their houses only a few days ago.

Although there had been frequent incidents of fire at Lamar Kumari, Boangchhari, Naikhangchhari and Ruma, none of these upazilas has its own fire service station.

Husband stabs wife to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A husband stabbed his wife to death and made an abortive attempt to commit suicide by stabbing himself at Nayabazar in Kotwali thana in the early hours of yesterday.

Police said Ali Agjar Mridha, a day labourer, stabbed his wife Shahnaz Begum Maya, 26, inside their Baghassa Lane house after midnight. Then he stabbed in his abdomen in a bid to kill himself.

Being informed, Kotwali police rushed to the spot and took the

injured couple to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at about 1:45am where the doctors declared Shahnaz dead. She suffered six fatal stabs in the chest and abdomen.

Agjar is undergoing treatment at the DMCH under police custody.

He said he killed his wife, a mother of one daughter and one son, after being failed to prevent her from maintaining an extra-marital relation with a neighbour.

But Abdus Salam, a cousin of the victim, termed the allegation as baseless.

PIARU MURDER

Amjad, Imran on 2-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Dhanmondi Sporting Club Vice President Amjad Hossain Mian and his brother Imran Hossain, arrested on Saturday on charge of killing Khairul Anwar Piaru, were placed on a two-day remand for interrogation yesterday.

Piaru, President of Dhanmondi Club, was murdered on February 29 on the club premises.

Dhanmondi police produced

Amjad and Imran before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka at 2:00 pm with a prayer for a ten-day remand. But, the court granted two-day remand for them.

In the prayer, police said earlier four witnesses in the case gave judicial statements to a magistrate and mentioned the names of Amjad and Imran for their alleged involvement in the killing.

So, it needs intensive interrogation of the two to determine all involved in the killing.



Saarc festival

The inaugural ceremony of the second Saarc Cultural Festival 2004 will be held with Foreign Minister M Moshed Khan as chief guest. Venue: Osmani Memorial auditorium. Time: 7:00pm.

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen an Indian film titled 'Bandit Queen' (1994). Venue: Society auditorium, 21 /C Jigatola. Time: 6:30pm.

Symposium

The opening ceremony of a two-day symposium titled 'Poverty and Population', organised by the population sciences department of Dhaka University, will be held with Vice Chancellor S M A Faiz as chief guest. Venue: Auditorium of the Academy for Planning and Development, Nikhet. Time: 10:30am.

General meeting

A general meeting of Jalalabad Association, Dhaka will be held. Venue: Barc auditorium, Farmgate. Time: 4:00pm.

Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of a book titled 'Ganodabi' authored by Advocate M A K Golam Mohiuddin will be held. Venue: Seminar room of the Central Public Library, Shahbagh. Time: 4:30pm.

Launching ceremony

Bengal Cosmetics Limited organises the launching ceremony of Adidas Toiletries Range. Venue: Samarkand Restaurant, Gulistan. Time: 7:30pm.

ISD human chain

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal will form a human chain demanding the mass rejection of the coalition government. Venue: Motijheel. Time: 5:00pm.

NDF conference

The opening ceremony of a two-day conference of the National Democratic Front (NDF) will be held. Venue: Dhaka District Sports Association auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

BPP discussion

Bangladesh Progressive Party (BPP)

organises a discussion and cultural function to mark the Independence Day. Venue: Muktagang. Time: 3:00pm.

Jamaat meeting

Dhaka city unit of Jamaat-e-Islami organises a public meeting with Amir of the party and Industries Minister Maulana Matur Rahman Nazami as chief guest. Venue: Paltan Maidan. Time: 3:00pm.



Spring festival

Katha Lalitkala Academy organises a cultural programme under the banner of 'Spring Festival'. The programme includes discussion, musical soiree and drama. Venue: Kendrio Kachi Kanchar Mela auditorium, Segun Bagicha. Time: 5:00pm.

Discussion

Freedom Fighters Council will hold a discussion to mark the Independence Day with City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka as chief guest. Venue: National Press Club auditorium. Time: 5:00pm.

Reception

Purnima Basar will accord a reception to the freedom fighters and hold a cultural function marking the Independence Day. Venue: Vaskar Novera auditorium of the National Museum. Time: 4:00pm.

Workshop

A training workshop on 'Gender-sensitive reporting', organised jointly by the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) and the Policy Leadership and Advocacy for Gender Equality (PLAGE), will be held. Venue: DRU auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Database inauguration

The inauguration of the 'Database-web on Insurance' will be held. Venue: The University Campus, 33 Topkhana Road. Time: 3:30pm.

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'Alive' (1992). Venue: Society auditorium, 21 /C Jigatola. Time: 6:30pm.



Dhaka Reporters Unity and Mass-line Media Centre jointly organised a roundtable, Risks in Journalism, at the CIRDap auditorium in the city yesterday. From left are Mizanur Rahman Shelly, MMC Executive Director Kamrul Hasan Manju, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, DRU President Alamgir Hossain, AP bureau chief Farid Hossain and Editor of the New Age Enayetullah Khan.

Syed Ahmed passes away

BSS, Dhaka

Former cabinet secretary and alternate director of Bangladesh in the World Bank Syed Ahmed died at Bamrungrad Hospital in Bangkok yesterday morning.

Syed Ahmed, a member of Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), served the government of Bangladesh in various capacities including secretary of the ministries of information and health.

He left behind his wife, two sons, one daughter and host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Shibir cadres ransack IU treasurer's car

IU CORRESPONDENT

Islami Chhatra Shibir cadres yesterday ransacked the car of the treasurer on the campus of the Islamic University (IU) demanding his immediate removal.

They also staged demonstration to protest alleged corruption of Prof Mosharruf Hossain.

But the activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (Momin group) protested the move and brought out a counter procession on the campus.

Meanwhile, the siege programme demanding the removal of Vice-Chancellor Prof Mustafizur Rahman and Treasurer Prof Mosharruf Hossain continued yesterday.

Death of 11 KU students SFD probe body submits report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Sundarban Forest Division (SFD) Probe Committee submitted its report on 'Kotka sea beach tragedy' to the conservator of forest on March 28.

The three-member probe committee has blamed Khulna University authorities for the 'Kotka sea beach tragedy' that had claimed lives of eleven students on March 13.

The KU authorities were aware of Sundarban excursion of 70 students of Architecture discipline as SFD received a list of picnickers and six teachers, the probe committee in its report said. Besides, KU authorities paid requisite money for hiring 'ML Shuvoraj' for carrying the students to Sundarbans and Kotka. But none of six teachers accompanied the students, probe body report said.

The SFD probe committee report said KU authorities intentionally avoided their responsibility to guide the students during the trip.



Sylhet Division Development Action Council forms a human chain at Muktagang in the city yesterday protesting increasing crimes and widespread corruption.



Lions Clubs International organised a seminar on 'District governor's call: Be harmonised, serve humanity' at Sheraton Hotel recently. Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan attended the seminar as chief guest. Lions District Governor AK Gulam Kibria is also seen.

2 listed criminals get life term

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A tribunal in Dhaka on Sunday sentenced two listed criminals to life term rigorous imprisonment for possessing illegal firearms.

Judge Sheikh Jahangir Hussain of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-2 gave the verdict in absence of the two convicts.

The convicts are Mizanur Rahman alias Mizan and Zishan Ahmed alias Zishan.

Earlier, the prosecution and defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 9 out of 21 prosecution witnesses.

The prosecution story in brief is that

Sabujbagh Police arrested Zishan on December 12, 1998 and on the basis of Zishan's confession, police recovered two foreign revolvers loaded with two rounds from Mizan's residence at 246 East Rampura in the city.

Later, police filed an arms case with Sabujbagh thana the same day and arrested Mizan from his residence.

But the two went into hiding after they were released on bail.

The investigation officer of the case pressed charges against the two on November 26, 1999 and the court framed charges against them on January 12, 2000.

AAA executive council election held

The annual general meeting and elections to the executive council of the American Alumni Association (AAA) were held at a restaurant in Gulshan on Saturday, says a press release.

Former Inspector General of Police Dr M Enamul Huq, Deputy Registrar, IUB Syed Almas Kabir, JSI-Bangladesh Consultant Ayesha Dastgir and Prof Akhtar Sultana of Dhaka University were re-elected.

Quazi M Ahmed (Executive Director, Murphy McCann Consulting Group) was also elected to the Executive Council.

Karl Friz, Press & Cultural Attache, US Embassy and ex-officio member of the Executive Council, AAA was also present at the meeting. New Life members were awarded crests.

AAA is an association of graduates of American colleges and universities in Bangladesh.

Strike at educational instts Apr 12

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student front of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, has called a strike at all educational institutions for April 12 to press home its demands for immediate arrest of and punishment to Delwar Hossain Saidee, a Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker.

The student organisation accused Saidee of inciting February 27 attack on prominent writer Humayun Azad.

At a press conference on the Dhaka university campus yesterday, the BCL also demanded an end to repression on opposition activists, ban on religion-based politics and removal of 'distorted history of the War of Liberation from the textbooks.

It will stage demonstrations tomorrow and form human chain in Dhaka on April 11 in the run-up to the strike.

The BCL will also submit memorandums to the deputy commissioners across the country and stage a week-long demonstrations from April 5 to 11 at all educational institutions.

The Awami League-backed BCL also announced similar programmes to press home the demands.

Both the student organisations took out separate processions on the campus yesterday demanding immediate arrest of Saidee.

Addressing a rally, the AL-backed BCL accused Saidee of inciting the attack on the writer.

Terming him a 'war criminal' and collaborator of the Pakistani occupation forces, the BCL leaders said Saidee must be brought to justice.

Police, meanwhile, intercepted the procession of the ISD-backed BCL by putting up a barricade in front of the Central Public Library as it was marching towards the office of ATN Bangla, a private satellite TV channel, to protest the airing of Saidee's programme on the Independence Day.

Being prevented, the BCL leaders held a rally there and demanded an immediate ban on all programmes of Saidee on ATN Bangla.



Serve The People organised a discussion to mark the second death anniversary of its founding vice-president Syed Md Habibur Huq at the WVA auditorium in Dhanmondi recently.



Rehab executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Toufiq M Seraj and engineer Mahmudul Hasan have been reelected president and general secretary of the Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (Rehab) for 2004-2005.

The new 21-member executive committee of the association was elected on March 28.

Other office-bearers are Abdul Awal - senior vice-president; SM Anwar Hossain - vice-president and M Saiful Islam - treasurer;

The members are Md Akramuzzaman, Abu Sufian, Tanvirul Haq Prabal, Nashid Islam, ASM Saikhul Islam, Rezaul Karim Khan, Iftekhar A Khan, AFM Zahangir, Sultana Saheda Islam, Md Ashraf Haq, Rabul Haq, Chowdhury Zaki Reza, Enamul Haq, Syed Sirajul Haq, Syed M Akhter and Md GR Nasir.

Nat'l Rabindra Sangeet confce begins tomorrow

BSS, Faridpur

The three-day National Rabindra Sangeet Conference and the 23rd annual session of its national committee will begin at Kabi Jasimuddin Hall here tomorrow.

About 150 Tagore sangeet artists and 100 delegates of the National Tagore Sangeet Committee will attend the conference.

Music specialist Dr Karunamony Goswami will inaugurate the conference as chief guest.

Death anniversary

Today is the 33rd death anniversary of Lt. Col. Dr ANM Jahangir who was martyred in the War of Liberation, says a press release.

Offering prayers at his graveyard in Comilla Cantonment and distribution of food among the destitute are among the programmes taken up on the occasion.