

Tobacco ban law goes to cabinet May 10



Ban on ads, smoking in public places proposed

NAIMUL HAQ

A proposed law banning smoking in open places and public transports is likely to be placed before the cabinet for its approval on May 10, health ministry sources said.

Health Minister Dr Khandoker Mosharaf Hossain has expressed 'tremendous interest' to see that the law gets enacted before he goes to an international meeting on tobacco in Geneva, Switzerland on May 15.

"It is very important that we have the law approved prior to our

attending the meeting on ratifying the framework convention on tobacco control," said Health Secretary AFM Sarwar Kamal.

"I am very hopeful that the law would be passed soon. The draft law was returned twice by the cabinet division for corrections. This time I am confident (that the law would be finalised)," Kamal said.

The law styled 'Tobacco Control Law' also proposes banning advertisement of tobacco products in public places or in print and electronic media, leaflets or in any

document.

It would strictly control sale, distribution and consumption of any tobacco products, and any person violating the law would be fined or imprisoned.

Cigarette packets must display pictures of diseased tissue or organ damaged from consumption of tobacco products. Warnings in Bangla and English languages about the possible outcomes of smoking such as cancer of the lung, throat and oral cavity would also be

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Bangladesh 5th on CPJ list of worst places for journalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has tagged Bangladesh as the world's fifth worst place to be a journalist.

The New York-based media watchdog that released a list of 10 worst places for journalists marking World Press Freedom Day on Monday says the list represents the full range of current threats to press freedom.

"Crime, corruption, and lawlessness make Bangladesh the most violent country for journalists in Asia," the CPJ repeats. CPJ Executive Director Ann Cooper, visiting Dhaka on March 5, made the same observation.

Bangladesh was placed next to Iraq, Cuba, Zimbabwe and Turkmenistan, while China, Eritrea,

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A woman mourns over the bodies of two female garment workers killed yesterday in a stampede triggered by a fire in a Mirpur building housing garment factories.

Garment factory stampede kills 7 workers, hurts 50

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven female garment workers were killed and 50 others injured in a stampede as hundreds of workers panicked over a fire nearby tried to rush out of the building housing six garment factories at Mirpur in the capital on Monday.

The tragic incident followed a fire from an electric transformer blast near the seven-storied Misco Super Market building that houses the garment factories, witnesses said.

"As people outside the building raised alarm that a fire has broken out, workers of all six garment factories got panicked and made a des-

perate bid to move out through the narrow staircase. This led to the deaths and injuries in stampede," said Bulbuli Begum of Shifa Apparels, one of the factories.

Some workers suffered injuries as they jumped off the verandahs as the gate of the staircase was closed, witnesses said.

Two workers -- Moyna Akhter of Shifa Apparels and Monira Begum of Omega Sweaters -- died on the spot.

Some 20 others lying unconscious near the locked collapsible gate on the ground floor of the building were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and local clinics.

Five of them -- Amena Begum, Khadiza Begum, Parveen Akhter and Begum of Shifa Apparels and Rina Akhter of Omega Sweaters -- were declared dead on arrival at the DMCH.

The injured workers are from all the six factories -- Peerless Garments, Medier Garments, Surma Apparels, Festive Garments, Shifa Apparels and Omega Sweaters.

Some locals said the trolley transformer of Dhaka Electric Supply Company (DESCO) exploded at about 10:00am, causing a fire that spread to garment by-products piled up nearby.

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AL to join JS next month to save membership

Anti-govt agitation runs out of steam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) lawmakers will join the budget session of parliament next month to save their membership, as they are moving closer to their 90-day absence from the Jatiya Sangsad.

The latest development in opposition politics came after the much-

hyped April 30 deadline for unseating the government fell flat, dimming the possibility of tough street agitation in the months ahead.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina told the private news agency, UNB, that she asked her party lawmakers to join parliament before expiry of the absence limit. The

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BNP mulls closing down Hawa Bhaban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling BNP policymakers are thinking of closing down 'Hawa Bhaban' and axing some ministers among a series of steps to boost its image and avert political crisis like the one over opposition Awami League's (AL) April 30 deadline.

Highly placed sources said BNP hierarchy has plans to take five major steps including trimming the

jumbo council of ministers, sacking ministers facing allegations of corruption and barring relatives of 'several ministers' from sealing big business deals and closure of Hawa Bhaban.

Measures to bring AL back to parliament and an organisational revamp with special moves to resolve intra-party conflicts are the other steps.

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Nipah virus no threat to visitors US expert says

UNB, Faridpur

A US physician, now in the capital with a team of experts working to combat possible threat of viral disease Nipah, said the virus does not pose threat to any visitor.

Dr Michael Bell, chief of Epidemiology, Centre for Disease Control, Atlanta, USA told the news agency on Monday that the disease might strike any part of the globe anytime.

The virus affected Faridpur pockets do not pose threat to anyone visiting the area or passing through the affected area, he said.

When his attention was drawn to

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Blistering heat to continue a few more days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

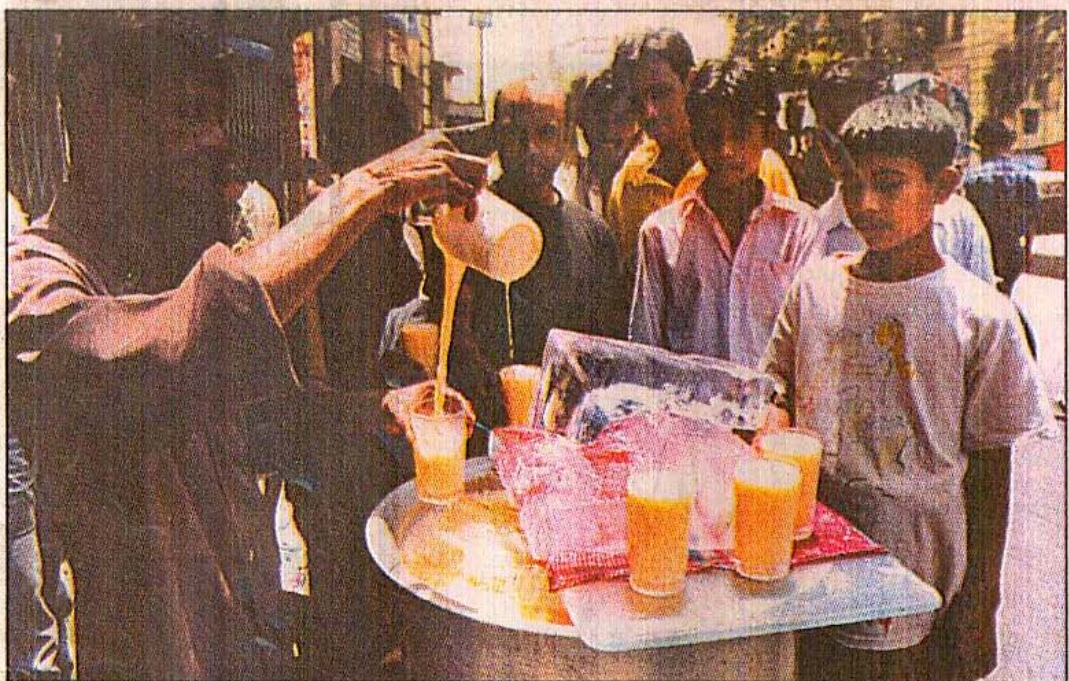
An intense heat wave is currently sweeping the country with temperatures hovering around the scorching 40 degrees Celsius mark, making it difficult to carry out normal activities in the intolerably hot weather.

Weather forecasts say the blistering heat is likely to continue for a few more days until monsoon rains arrive.

"We think the heat wave will stay for a few more days before letting up," said Arzumand Habib, deputy director of the Met office.

During that time, the Met office says, the heat wave is likely to spread in more areas of Khulna, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Chittagong and Barisal divisions. Only Sylhet has experienced a little rainfall during these hot and humid days.

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A roadside vendor prepares sherbet as customers wait for a sip of the icy drink they hope will provide relief from the blistering heat that has currently gripped the capital and elsewhere in the country.

ALLEGATION OF AIDING AL Proshika chief asks BNP secy gen to show evidence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Proshika president has asked the ruling BNP secretary general to produce acceptable evidences in a week in support of the allegations that his NGO was aiding main opposition Awami League (AL) to unseat the government.

In a statement yesterday, Qazi Faruque Ahmed challenged Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, also local government, rural development and co-operatives minister, to prove the allegations Bhuiyan had made at a press conference on April 30.

Faruque however said evidences gathered by torturing and threatening Proshika staffs will not be

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BDF MEET

Anti-graft body, crime situation to top agenda

REJIAUL KARIM BYRON

The upcoming Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF) meeting will be dominated by discussion on non-economic issues like formation of the much-talked-about anti-corruption commission, government-NGO relationship, law and order and good governance.

The three-day meeting that

begins on May 8 at Dhaka will also discuss at length the proper use of foreign aid, which is often blocked due to inefficiency and failure to fulfil donor conditions.

During the 2003-04 fiscal year, only \$1.5 billion of foreign aid has been disbursed out of \$6.2 billion in the pipeline and another \$3.6 billion of donor commitment.

According to an estimate of the

Economic Relations Division (ERD), \$8.34 billion of foreign aid could be available in the next fiscal year.

At the BDF, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank will present separate reports on Bangladesh along with the country's economic updates.

Both the donors believe Bangladesh has made good

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Municipal polls start today, violence feared

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Municipal corporation elections get underway today with 37 municipalities vote on the first day amid widespread fear of violence during the staggered balloting after the government apparently turned down the Election Commission's (EC) plea for army deployment.

As many as 117 municipal corporations in 50 districts will choose their new representatives during the five-day elections ending on May 10. The fear of violence has been

further fuelled by a statement of an election observer, Brotee, yesterday that supporters of candidates in Bagerhat, Bogra and Barisal districts were heading toward confrontation.

Allegations are there that ministers and lawmakers are openly campaigning for the ruling alliance-backed candidates in Muktagachha, Trishal and Ulipur constituencies.

Canvassing officially ended 48 hours before the constituencies start voting today. The EC has also banned movement of motorcycle,

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Dhaka condemns torture on Iraqi prisoners

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday condemned the reported torture on Iraqis in prison by American and British soldiers.

"It is an appalling act and gross violation of human rights," Foreign Secretary Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury said.

He made the remarks when reporters sought his comments on the pictures, released by CBS last week, depicting horrifying treatment of Iraqi prisoners by the US and British soldiers.

JATIYA PARTY
Unity Conference

Today
5 May 2004, Wednesday, at 3 p.m.
Mahanagar Nattya Mancha
Gullistan, Dhaka.

Will be Presided by
The Founder Chairman of Jatiya Party
Former President, Pallibandhu
HUSSAIN MUHAMMAD ERSHAD

The Meeting will be addressed by
the Leaders of United Jatiya Party

ব্যাংক এশিয়া'র
১৫ তম শাখা

আশুলিয়ায়

আজ ৫ই মে ২০০৪ থেকে ব্যাংক এশিয়া'র
১৫তম শাখা কার্যক্রম শুরু করছে

চৌধুরী প্রাজা (২য় তলা), জামগড়া চৌরাস্তা, আশুলিয়া, সাভার, ঢাকায়।
ব্যাংক এশিয়া তার দক্ষ জনশক্তি ও আধুনিক যোগাযোগ নেটওয়ার্কের
মাধ্যমে আমাদের গ্রামীণ অর্থনীতিকে দেশের সার্বিক অর্থনীতির
সাথে সংযুক্ত করে সর্বোত্তম ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদান করতে প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ।
সেবায় পেশাদারিত্ব আর সুগঠিত আগামীর লক্ষ্যে এগিয়ে ব্যাংক এশিয়া।

Bank Asia

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ফোন : ৮৮০-২-৮১২৩৯৭৫, ৮১২৪৩২১, ৯১৩৭৫১২-৫ ফ্যাক্স : ৮১২৭৫৬৮ টেলিগ্রাম : ৬৪২৫৩৬ BASIA BJ