

Driver vanishes with Tk 30 lakh in Comilla

BDNEWS, Comilla

Osman Gani, the driver of steel merchant Hajji Md Shams, ran away with Tk 30 lakh in Comilla.

Police said the driver allegedly fled with the said amount of money while the merchant was having his lunch at Nurjahan Hotel in Comilla on his way to Chittagong from Dhaka.

Md Shams filed a case with Comilla Kotwali police station in this connection.

Republican King in Congressional Bangladesh Caucus

UNB, Dhaka

US Congressman Peter King, an influential Republican from New York, has formally announced his decision to join the Congressional Bangladesh Caucus.

King also expressed his intention to become the Republican co-chairman of the caucus.

The decision was declared at a meeting with Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA Shamsur Mubin Chowdhury on Wednesday, officials said in Dhaka yesterday.

Congressman Peter King assured the ambassador of his full support to the Trade Act of 2005, a bill that has been placed before the Congress to allow duty-free access of readymade garments and other products from Bangladesh to the US market.

He also expressed his strong resolve to help Bangladesh on all issues in the US Congress.

With the joining of Congressman Peter King, the membership of Congressional Bangladesh Caucus stands at 26.

SUTRAPUR TRIPLE MURDER Trial begins

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Trial of the Sutrapur Triple Murder case began yesterday in the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1, Dhaka with deposition of the complainant.

Sufia Khatun, complainant of the case, burst into tears and got fainted several times in the dock of the tribunal while she was giving her deposition before it.

She told the court that she appeared before it for seeking justice for killing her husband, son and their driver.

The atmosphere of the courtroom became gloomy when she was describing about the gruesome killings for grabbing their hosiery market and Tk 5 lakh by a Jubo Dal leader.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin recorded statement of the complainant for about two hours.

Later, the defence lawyers started cross-examination of the complainant on behalf of the fugitives Jubo Dal leader Rafiqul Islam Kaji, his brother Mohammad Sirajul Islam, Moloy Sarker, Bhutto alias Abu Taleb, Kazi Noor Quayum, Kalam alias 'Narsingdi' Kalam, Mohammad Mintoo and Nizam.

The court then fixed tomorrow for next hearing of the case. Sufia will be cross-examined again.

Trade with India thru' Bhomra port resumes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Saikhira

Export-import between Bangladesh and India through Bhomra land port resumed yesterday as the Indian clearing and forwarding agents (C&F) called off their strike after 48 hours.

The Indian port users went on the strike on Tuesday protesting the killing of an Indian woman by the BSF on their border, thinking her a Bangladeshi national.

A BSF man gunned down the woman along the barbed wire fencing inside the Indian territory at Ghojadanga opposite to Bhomra land port in the afternoon.

Foundation of condom plant laid in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The foundation stone of the country's first condom manufacturing plant was laid at Ghatatala under Phulata upazila of the district yesterday.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khanzakar Mosharraf Hossain laid the foundation.

Essential Drugs Company Limited will set up the plant at a cost of Tk 38 crore.

Being established on seven acres of land, the plant is expected to produce 150 million pieces of condom annually.

Around 200 people will be employed when it goes into commercial production by July next year.

Discriminatory provisions still exist in laws

Chief Justice tells judicial colloquium on 'Justice for Women through Muslim Family law'

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain yesterday said though the constitution of the country provides equality before the law and upholds the spirit of equal rights for men and women, some discriminatory provisions still exist in the laws.

"We may remove those discrepancies by bringing some changes in our legal arena. At the same time we should have clear understanding about Islamic laws through intensive research works about social aspects of the status of women and related Shariah rules," he said at the opening of a three-day judicial colloquium on 'Justice for Women through Muslim Family Law' at the British Council auditorium.

The colloquium has been organised by the British Council in cooperation with the British High Commission, Chief Justice's office and Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

The Chief Justice said since the modern culture is influenced by some wrong attitudes and notions,

there exist many disparities between men and women.

"To get rid of such a situation, we have no other alternative but to understand true spirit and meaning of Islamic rules on important issues like gender equality and status of women," he said.

Justice Mudassir said the discriminatory situation has been changing through reducing gender gap and putting women in the mainstream of the national development process.

"Women are now coming out of their houses to protect their rights and to secure their position in the society. In the legal profession and all branches of the judiciary, number of women has been increasing gradually. Now any aggrieved women can easily turn to a family court to assert her rights regarding divorce, maintenance and custody for her children," he said.

The Chief Justice also said in order to provide relief to the women at minimum cost and time sufficient number of family courts are functioning all over the country. He urged all for having a correct understanding of the Holy Quran and

Sunnah.

Our DU correspondent adds: Speaking at the inaugural session, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed assured proper implementation of law to ensure justice in the society.

He said the role of judiciary would be enhanced to monitoring and supervising the implementation of the judgements.

British High Commissioner in Dhaka Anwar Choudhury assured more co-operation from his government to uphold the rights of women through easy access to justice.

State Minister for Law Barrister Shahjahan Omar laid emphasis on the introduction of uniform legal system for all Muslims countries.

British academic Prof Werner F Menski presented a paper giving an overview of the legal system in Asia and Africa.

British Council Director Dr June Rollinson also spoke at the opening session.

Judges and legal experts from Bangladesh, the United Kingdom and some Muslim countries are taking part in the colloquium.

NON-COMPLIANCE WITH BUILDING CODES Moderate earthquake to cause 30 pc city bldgs to collapse

Buet teacher says at workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Non-compliance with building codes makes Dhaka one of the most vulnerable cities in the world in the event of a moderate or major earthquake, experts said at a workshop in the city yesterday.

The fact that Dhaka has become highly vulnerable to earthquake disaster is due to non-compliance with the building codes, said Brac University (BU) Vice-Chancellor Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury at the workshop on 'Building Code and Earthquake Disaster Management'.

Organised by BU, the workshop was sponsored by Oxfam GB and Dip ECHO at the Brac Centre.

Although Bangladesh framed a comprehensive building code named Bangladesh National Building Codes (BNBC) in 1993, unfortunately we have not yet been able to make it mandatory, he said.

Dhaka and Tehran are two highly vulnerable cities in the event of earthquake. Non-compliance with building codes, soil condition and lack of preparedness make Dhaka so vulnerable, said the country representative of Oxfam GB, Anil P Tambay.

The scale of possible disaster is so huge. But the loss of lives and properties could be reduced significantly making the BNBC mandatory for building construction, he said.

"To avoid catastrophes in case of future earthquake, I should emphasise the government's priority for strictly enforcing the provisions of BNBC immediately," said Food and Disaster Management Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf while speaking as chief guest at the workshop.

"More earth shaking does not necessarily kill people but consequent collapse of the buildings and structures cause huge human casualties, said Dr Mehedi Ahmed Ansari of Buet.

"A moderate earthquake will cause Dhaka's 30 per cent buildings to collapse," he said.

Rajuk Chief Engineer M Emdadul Islam said that building construction without soil investigation and treatment, improper design, absence of quality control of materials and overloading of building beyond its designed capacity have been few of the reasons behind the collapses or structural failures during last one decade.

"Our primary assumption regarding the Savar tragedy is that the building had been constructed without soil treatment and had shortcomings in its design," he said.

Rajuk is ill-equipped and inefficient with untrained human resources in monitoring urban planning effectively, said its chairman Shahid Alam adding that it should shift from development activities to its role of planning and development control.

Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division (AFD) Major General Mostafa Reza Noor said the capital city has been divided into eight sectors according to AFD's contingency plan in the case of a disaster.

The UN in its International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) report has recently indicated that Dhaka is a city with very high risk of damage to earthquake disasters as most buildings have less tolerance to any mild to severe earthquakes.

Dhaka Wasa MD ANH Akhtar Hossain, Rehab President Dr Toufiq M Seraj, and Md Idris Mia of Roads and Highways Division, among others, spoke at the workshop.



(From right) Col (Retd) Nuruzzaman, Maj Gen (Retd) KM Safiullah, Maj Gen (Retd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury and Maj Gen (Retd) Moinal Hossain Chowdhury are at a meeting to conole the death of Indian army legend Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, commander of the joint command of the Allied Forces of India and Bangladesh during the War of Liberation of Bangladesh. Retired Armed Forces' Officers Welfare Association (RAOWA) organised the meeting.

Wasa plans more drives to clean canals

ABDUL KADER

The Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) yesterday ended the city's canal cleaning drive, saying the remainder of the massive excavation, designed to bring back the flow of water in the city's canals, would not be possible this year.

Wasa Managing Director ANH Akhtar Hossain, talking to The Daily Star by telephone yesterday said, "We are partly starting excavation this year and we have a plan to undertake a massive excavation programme next year to save the canals permanently."

Wasa officials said they will need a long-term plan to finish the excavation, and are concentrating their

current efforts instead on cleaning blockages by evicting illegal structures and undertaking small-scale excavations to ensure minimum drainage flow.

The Wasa authority started the canal cleaning drive on March 29 by demolishing illegal encroachments, such as bamboo-made thatches and makeshift shops, on a branch canal of the Kalyanpur canal. Their efforts continued until May 5, when the Wasa eviction team evicted some bamboo-made houses on the box culvert of the Khilgaon-Basabo canal.

Wasa had earlier conducted a drive in the Kalyanpur main canal and branch canals, the Begunbari canal, the Mohakhali canal, the

Zirani canal in Rampura, the Kataras canal in Mohammadpur, the Ramchandrapur canal in Mohammadpur, the Ibrahimpur canal and a cross-dam barrier on the Gulshan-Banani Lake.

A meeting of the canal recovering committee, held on February 9, headed by the managing director of Dhaka Wasa, selected the aforesaid canals on priority basis.

The decision to demolish illegal structures from the city canals in and around the capital for smooth functioning of the drainage system was taken in an inter-ministerial meeting by the Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) and Cooperative Ministry in February this year.



Commuters experience a huge traffic congestion yesterday as the Tophkana Road was blocked all day to facilitate the BMA election.

10 killed, 40 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least 10 people were killed and 40 others injured in separate road accidents in Comilla, Jamalpur and Rangpur yesterday.

UNB adds, Four people were killed and 30 others injured when a bus crashed into a roadside tree on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway at Dhanaitari in Comilla municipal areayesterday.

Police and witnesses said the Chittagong-bound bus from Chandpur hit the roadside tree at about 1:15pm as its driver lost control over the steering, killing three

Aurora was a sincere friend in need of Bangladesh'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, commander of Bangladesh-India Allied Forces at the final stage of the Liberation War in 1971, was a 'sincere friend in need of Bangladesh', speakers said at a condolence meeting yesterday.

They expressed resentment that Bangladesh has failed to pay state honour, betraying a lack of sense of gratitude, to the late general who oversaw the surrender of Pakistani occupation forces in Dhaka in 1971.

The Indian army legend passed away in New Delhi on April 30.

The condolence meeting was organised by Retired Armed Forces' Officers Welfare Association (RAOWA) on Raowa Club premises in the capital.

Recalling Aurora's immense contribution to the country's Liberation War in 1971, the speakers asserted that under his dynamic leadership, the allied forces ultimately achieved military victory.

A large number of freedom fighters and sector and battalion commanders attended the meet.

They praised Aurora's leadership, particularly in maintaining discipline and law and order immediately after the surrender of Pakistani forces.

"The nation will never forget Aurora, who played a vital role in achieving the country's independence," said Maj Gen (retd) Safiullah, Bir Uttam.

He also expressed his sympathy to the bereaved family of Aurora and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Maj Gen (retd) Ainuddin, Bir Pratik, Maj Gen (retd) Kabir, Brig Gen (retd) Aminul Haque, Bir Uttam, Brig Gen (retd) Abdul Matin, Col (retd) Kazi Nuruzzaman, Col (retd) Gaffar, Group Capt (retd) Alam, Maj (retd) Ziauddin and Maj (retd) Ahsanullah, among others, addressed the meet.

Chehlum



Chehlum of AM Aminul Haq Chowdhury, former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank, will be held at his village home at Gazaria in Munshiganj after Juma prayers today, says a press release.

He died on March 30 at a city clinic due to kidney failure.

Friends and admirers have been requested to attend the chehlum and pray for the departed soul.

people on the spot while another died at the Comilla Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Identities of the deceased could not be known immediately.

Of the injured, 22 were taken to CMCH where the condition of 21 was stated to be critical.

Traffic movement on the busy highway was disrupted for an hour following the accident.

BSS from Jamalpur adds, three people were killed and five others injured as a Dewanganj Express Train rammmed a tempo at Dagi railway crossing at Melandah upazila yesterday morning.

The victims identified as Johura Begum, 45, wife of Mohammad Ali of village Raghunathpur in Sarishabari upazila and her granddaughter Sima, 1, daughter of Azizul and Khairun, wife of Danes Ali of village Bashnchandra under Jamalpur Sadar upazila.

Hospital and police sources said the accident occurred when they were going to a mazar at Durmut by a tempo.

The tempo went out of order on railway tracks when it reached Dagi railway crossing, about two-km

away from Melandah rail station.

The Dewanganj Express Train from Mymensingh rammmed the tempo killing two passengers on the spot while Khairun succumbed to her injuries at Jamalpur General Hospital.

Asma, 30, Rasel, 8, and Rekha, 25, were rushed to Jamalpur General Hospital in a critical condition.

Our Rangpur Correspondent adds, three children were killed and at least five people injured in separate road accidents in Rangpur yesterday.

Bilash Chandra, 4 and his sister Nimota Rani, 6, died on the spot as a Kurigram-bound bus hit a motor cycle on Rangpur-Dhaka highway at Sathbar under Mithapukur police station yesterday afternoon, police said.

Their father Nimai Chandra, who was riding the motorcycle, was rushed to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

The local people put up barricade on the highway for about two hours protesting the accident.

Meanwhile, Rakib, 5, was run over by a micro bus on Rangpur-Kurigram highway at Kounia Bazar at around 2:30pm. He died on the spot.

Ismat Jahan new envoy to Netherlands

BSS, Dhaka

The government has decided to appoint Ismat Jahan, currently a director general in the ministry of foreign affairs, as the ambassador of Bangladesh to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

A career diplomat of the 1982 batch of BCS (Foreign Affairs) cadre, Ismat Jahan had her education in the University of Dhaka with honours and masters degrees in economics.

Later, she did her MA in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Boston, USA. She was also a fellow in the school of foreign service, Georgetown University, USA.

During her diplomatic career, Jahan served in the Bangladesh permanent missions in New York and Geneva and the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi in various capacities.

Jahan, currently a DG (UN), had earlier headed the international Organisations and Multilateral Economic Affairs Wings in the ministry as director general since March 2003.

Obituary



press release.

He left behind his wife and two daughters.

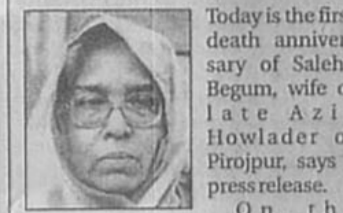
On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his in-laws' house at Lalmatia in the city after Asr prayers today.

Death anniversary



Today is the first death anniversary of Professor Dr Arshad Ali, former president of Bangladesh Botany Association and chairman of the Botany Department of Bangladesh Agriculture University, says a press release.

Saleha Begum



Today is the first death anniversary of Saleha Begum, wife of late Aziz Howlader of Pirojpur, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and quarkhwani will be held after Juma prayers at the Jame Mosque at her village home at Baramachhua, Pirojpur.

Qulqhwani

Qulqhwani of Anisa Karim, member of Advisory Council of Maulana Bhasani Parishad and former president of BTV Employees Union, will be held at her residence at 13/L Azimpur Colony in the city after Asr prayers today.

She died of kidney failure at the age of 72 on May 3 at the Birdem Hospital.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the qulqhwani.

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