

'Conspiracy delays formation of wage board'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmochari Oikya Parishad (SSKOP), a forum of all journalists and workers union, yesterday said formation of the Sixth Wage Board is being delayed due to a 'conspiracy' by the newspaper owners.

In a statement, the parishad said due to opposition of the owners, the information ministry is dillydallying to form the board even after the five months into the decision taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by the prime minister.

The parishad statement came as the Newspapers Owners Association of Bangladesh (Noab) and Bangladesh Sangbadipatra Parishad (BSP) issued a joint statement on Monday demanding that the wage board be kept free from pressure.

"Wage board is not imposed by the government as it is formed in accordance with the law adopted by the Jatiya Sangsad in 1974," said the statement.

According to the verdict of the High Court, the government would form the wage board and fix the terms of reference, it added.

The parishad said after being defeated in the litigation, the BSP and Noab are now hatching 'conspiracy' against the formation of the Sixth Wage Board.

The journalists unions associated with the parishad are Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, Dhaka Union of Journalists, Bangladesh Federal Union of Newspapers Press Workers, and Bangladesh Newspapers Employees Federation.

The signatories to the statement included Gias Kamal Chowdhury, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Fazle Imam, Ruhul Amin Gazi, Motiur Rahman Talukder, Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, Abul Hashem, Khairul Islam, Altaf Mahmud, Elahi Newaz Khan, Shah Alamgir and Sarder Farid Ahmed.

Lawyers to continue movement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Supreme Court lawyers at a meeting yesterday reaffirmed the determination to continue their movement for safeguarding the judiciary.

The meeting was organised by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) for exchanging views with the editors of different dailies on the ongoing movement of the lawyers.

The movement of the lawyers must be continued to restore the image of the judiciary, said Bangladesh Bar Council Vice-chairman Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam.

He expressed deep concern over the 'politicisation' of all the organs of the state including judiciary.

"Our movement is aimed at separating the judiciary from the executive, not to hampering the judicial activities," said Ozaer Faruque, former SCBA president.

The government wants to establish a judicial system which will be run at its direction, alleged Barrister Shafique Ahmed, another former SCBA president.

There is no alternative but to ensure the freedom of the judiciary for establishing rule of law, he viewed.

"The country is now badly affected by a democratic fascism and everything here is legalised by law," said Jugantor Editor Abed Khan.

He underlined the role of the civil society to restore stability in the country.

"The image of the judiciary cannot be upheld by recruiting judges on political consideration or filing cases of contempt of court," said Bangladesh Observer Editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury.

SCBA President Mahbubey Alam sought the assistance of all to make the grand rally of lawyers on July 29 a success.

Presided over by SCBA Secretary Enayetur Rahim, the meeting was also addressed by Advisory Editor of Amar Desh Ataus Samad, Prothom Alo Joint Editor Abdul Qayum, Bhorer Kagoj acting editor Shyamol Dutta, Executive Editor of Aker Kagoj Kazi Nabil Ahmed, former SCBA president Abdul Baset Majumder and former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru.

Husband kills wife for dowry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man yesterday allegedly killed his wife at his Kazipara residence in the city for dowry and hung her body to show it as a suicide.

Police arrested victim's husband Israfil and his mother Momtaz Begum from their residence in this connection.

Police recovered the body of Panna Akhtar, 20, wife of Mohammad Israfil, hanging from the ceiling at a garage at East Kazipara yesterday noon.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Israfil demanded dowry from Panna after she got married to Israfil two and a half years ago, Victim's brother Apple Mahmud said. Panna lodged a GD (general diary) with the local police station three months ago for torturing her, he added.

Israfil started pressing her harder for dowry when she gave birth to a dead child some six months ago," he said.

WORK ON INTER-DIST BUS TERMINALS COMPLETE

Discontent over flaws in renovation work

ABDUL KADER

Three newly renovated inter-district bus terminals in the city are going to open in the next seven days amid dissatisfaction among many with the flaws in renovation work.

The renovation work of the three terminals -- Sayedabad, Mohakhali and Gabtoli -- has finished recently one year behind the schedule, but the flaws in the work has irked the private terminal operators as well as transport service providers.

They said the quality of work was not up to the mark and the contractors have deviated from the original design to some extent.

When contacted, DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said, "At first, I came to know that some works have been left unfinished. Later, I found that everything was done according to the project proposal."

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has fixed the dates for inauguration of the three terminals. The Sayedabad bus terminal is scheduled to open on July 21 while Mohakhali terminal on July 24 and Gabtoli terminal on July 26, sources said.

Talking to this correspondent, private terminal operators and bus counter men expressed their dissatisfaction over the faulty design of passengers sheds and security boundaries, poor quality of toilet fittings and tiles, narrow space for ticket counters and poor water supply lines.

"We have sent letters to the mayor several times informing him about various faults in the design, but to no effect," said Babul Ahmed, chairman of Diba Enterprises, the private operator of Gabtoli bus terminal.

He also alleged that the design was changed time and again, but this will bring no good to the bus operators as well as passengers. In fact, nothing has been done properly, he added.

"The water supply lines are very narrow, reservoir water tank is inadequate and the boundary walls are faulty," said Moniruzzaman Chowdhury, proprietor of Panama Trading, which is operating Sayedabad and Mohakhali terminals.

There should have been bus washing ramps at the terminals, he added.

Shah Alam, a bus counter clerk in Sayedabad, said, "The designs of passenger shed and ticket counter are faulty as water leaks into the shed during rains and the ticket counters are very narrow."

However, the terminals will have a new look after the inauguration, said the private operators, bus staffers and passengers.

The Roads and Highways Department implemented the renovation work under the Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP) at a cost of Tk 44.20 crore. The World Bank (WB) has funded the project coordinated by the Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB).

Engineer Rezaul Haq of Abdul Monem Ltd said, "We have completed the work as per contract and handed over the terminals to the RHD last month."

S M Saleh Uddin, additional executive director of DTCB, said, "Ninety-nine percent work has been completed. We are satisfied with our work as we have employed good experts to implement the project."

The Sayedabad bus terminal is scheduled to open on July 21 while Mohakhali terminal on July 24 and Gabtoli terminal on July 26, said Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) sources.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka will inaugurate the Sayedabad and Mohakhali terminals while the mayor with the communications minister will open the Gabtoli terminal.



Supreme Court lawyers exchange views with the editors of national dailies at the SC Bar Association hall in the city yesterday.

SALE OF TEA GARDEN

Expat cries for recovery of money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A vested quarter, blessed by a minister, has allegedly grabbed a tea garden worth Tk 20 crore at Moulaivibazar in Sylhet, said an expatriate, who was the owner of the garden, yesterday.

Speaking at a press conference, Fazlur Rashid Khan alleged that the vested quarter forced him to sell the garden at Tk 6 crore only in November 2002.

But they forcibly occupied his tea garden paying only Tk 3.50 crore and grabbing his 875 shares worth Tk 2 crore.

"As they owe me a total of Tk 5.50 crore, I filed a case with the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka against them to realise the money."

JOURNO ASSAULT

Protest at JU continues

JU CORRESPONDENT

Journalists and activists of different cultural and student organisations yesterday at Jahangirnagar University (JU) continued to protest the Sunday's assault on a journalist on the campus by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD.)

They brought out processions on the campus holding placards and chanting slogans against the university authorities. They demanded punitive action against the JCD culprits to stop continuous repression on the students. Later, The leaders of the organisations vowed to launch tougher movement to press home their demand.

Nur Siddique, Rokibul Alam, Golam Murshed, Anindya Arif, Tora Saha and Poppy spoke at the rally held in front of the administrative building.

Vice Chancellor Prof Khandaker Mustahidur Rahman at a meeting at his office yesterday decided to take stern action against the culprits in a bid to ensure security of the students.

The protestors will form a human chain at the foot of Amar Ekushey, a sculpture, at 10:30am today and hold a seminar titled 'Terrorism on University campus: Crisis and way-out' at the language centre at 3:30pm on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the Jahangirnagar

University Teachers' Association (Juta) expressed solidarity with the programme while International Federation of Journalists, New York, Reporters Sans Frontiers and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) condemned the incident.

8 more held for illegal hill cutting in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detective Branch of Police arrested eight people on charge of illegal hill cutting and seized three trucks at Khulshi area in the city on Monday night.

This was the second move by the law enforcement agencies in less than one month against hill cutting, which has long been going on unabated in the port city.

Police arrested 20 people in this connection on June 27.

The arrestees are Saber Ahmed, 27, Syed Mir Md Shahadat Hossain, 25, Md Moynuddin, 25, Md Shahjahan, 27, Mobarak Hossain, 27, Mohammad Manik, 28, Abdul Haq, 30, and Sana Ullah, 22.

Father, son killed at Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Unidentified assailants killed a father and his son at their grocery in Lohagara upazila of the district early yesterday.

The dead are Santosh Kanti Nath, 47, and Bandhan Kanti Nath, 21, of Nathpara in village Amtoli under Baro Hatyia union of the upazila.

"The father and son went as usual to sleep at their shop at Moghdiagir Bazar, about a kilometre from their home after midnight and locals found the two dead in the morning," police said, adding that no visible injury marks were found in their bodies except a scratch beneath the left ear of Santosh.

Police suspect that the attackers might have strangled the two to death.

Police detained day-labourer Shafiq Ahmed, 35, from the bazar suspecting involvement with the double murder and sent the dead bodies to Chittagong Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Thira sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Jamaat leader Shahabuddin Laskar Dhira, alleged mastermind of journalist Shaikh Belaluddin murder, was sent to jail yesterday on expiry of his two-day remand in outlaw Tariqul Islam Shiplu murder case.

Police produced Dhira in the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court and submitted a petition, seeking another five-day remand for the Jamaat leader in Shiplu murder case. Hearing on the remand petition will be held tomorrow.

Dhira was arrested in Dhaka on July 5 in connection with the Belal murder case. He was later sent to Khulna district jail.

During the interrogation, Dhira confessed to his involvement in the murder of Shiplu. Outlaw Shiplu was found dead at Shiromoni under Khanjahan Ali Police Station of Khulna city on June 8.

Meanwhile, Iqbal Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Khulna Police Station and investigation officer (IO) of Belal murder case, will appear before the monitoring cell of the home ministry in Dhaka today with docket of the case.

The monitoring cell will review the progress of investigation into Belal murder case with State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar in the chair.

Shabab Murshid Foundation concert tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shabab Murshid Foundation is going to organise its second fund raising concert at the STM Hall, Scholastica Uttara, in the city tomorrow.

A host of young talented bands -- Obhishaap, CCCP, FireBrand, Unwound, Decipher, Shade, Cynopsis, Blue Steel, Delude -- along with some popular bands such as Artcell, Cryptic, Fate, The Watson Brothers, DNA, Breach, Birodh, Fulbanu's Revenge, Arbovirus, Poizon, Green, Nemesis and Dethrow will perform in the concert.

The concert will start at 12.10pm and the gates will be opened at 11.30am. The ticket priced at Tk 150 will be available at the concert venue, says a press release.

The foundation was established in memory of Shabab Murshid who passed away on May 10 this year at the premature age of 15 while playing basketball in Phnom Pen, Cambodia.

This foundation, run by a group of young people who love Shabab, is dedicated to the development of sports, music and healthcare for adolescents in order to raise awareness that a certain percentage of healthy and athletic young people around the world pass away without notice and it can be pre-empted.

For further information, interested persons can visit the web site: shababmurshid.blogspot.com.

IFJ condemns attack on journos

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), a global organisation representing over 500,000 journalists worldwide, yesterday condemned the attack on journalists by political activists in Bangladesh, says a press release.

"Attacks and threats to journalists by those who do not like their views are totally unacceptable and represent a curtailment of press freedom," said IFJ President Christopher Warren, who demanded that immediate action be taken against the guilty.

According to information received by the IFJ headquarters in Brussels, cadres of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the ruling party's student wing, assaulted a journalist at Jahangirnagar University (JU) on July 17 and threatened three others with death for writing reports against them.

Around 35 JCD activists pounced upon Alamgir Swapan, staff reporter of the Janakantha, on the social science faculty premises.

The attackers led by JU unit JCD Organising Secretary Robiul Islam Robi and Tanjil, a second-year student of Botany, reportedly threatened three university correspondents with death.

Nur Siddiqui, Fuad Hossain and Emran Hossain Emron, JU correspondents of Prothom Alo, Aker Kagoj and The Daily Star, were not present at the scene.

The attack on Swapan and threats to others came soon after another JCD brutal attack on Rafiqul Islam, a correspondent of Amar Desh in Rajshahi.

Ten JCD activists entered the Durgapur Press Club on July 6, and assaulted Rafiqul, who is also president of the club. Nurul Islam, the club's general secretary, was also attacked when he tried to intervene.

Rafiqul had filed a complaint with the police after he received warnings not to report on alleged extortion by JCD cadres. Yet, no protection was offered.

The IFJ voiced its support to JU correspondents who have given a seven-day ultimatum to the vice-chancellor demanding punishment to JCD cadres involved in the incident.

"We stand in solidarity with the journalists protesting the deplorable attack. Journalists must be allowed to operate in an environment free from intimidation and those who violate this right must be immediately punished," said Warren.

Armed robbers looted Tk 1.50 lakh from a Grameen Bank official and ornaments of women passengers of a bus at Hathazari in the district yesterday.

Witnesses said four muggers at around 2.30pm stopped a Rangamati-bound bus near Hathazari upazila sadar and started snatching valuables from passengers at gunpoint.

They stabbed Shilu Barua, a Grameen Bank official, and took away Tk 1.50 lakh from him. The gang also snatched cash and ornaments from other passengers and left the bus with the booty.

Shilu Barua, field officer of Grameen Bank's Fateyabad branch, was going to Raozan after withdrawing the amount, police said.

A case was filed with the Hathazari Police Station in this regard.

Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Khulna and Barisal divisions till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls at places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions, Met Office said predicting that day temperature might fall slightly over the country.

Highest temperature 35.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Mongla and lowest 24.0 degree Celsius at Rajshahi and Bogra.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:47pm today and rises at 5:23am 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	33.4	27.5	78	69
Chittagong	32.2	26.4	75	84
Rajshahi	33.5	24.0	94	81
Khulna	33.4	27.6	83	75
Barisal	32.4	26.8	87	94
Sylhet	27.5	24.4	96	98
Cox's Bazar	32.9	26.5	77	87



Sammilita Nari Samaj forms a human chain in front of the High Court in the city yesterday demanding cancellation of the amended Women's Development Policy.

'Cancel amended Women's Dev Policy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They said the amended policy has undermined the Bangladesh women community before the world.

The speakers said the women in the country have been playing important role in administration and other sectors as they are now more advanced than before.

But the new version of the policy would hinder women's development, equal rights and empowerment, they added.

The speakers said the government on one hand talks about women empowerment, but on the other hand it takes steps against their development.

They called for united movement of all women's organisations to establish their rights.

"The amended policy has deprived the women of their rights," said Sultana Akhtar Rubi, coordinator of Sammilita Nari Samaj.

"The government is sending the women members of Ansar-VDP to Middle East countries as domestic help by undermining their dignity," said Shima Das Shimu terming it a legal trafficking.

Rokeya Rafique Baby, Advocate Nazneen Nahar Dipu, Advocate Maleka Parveen, Rowshan Ara Rusho, Rokeya Begum and Sufia Shewle also spoke.

DHAKA TODAY

Conference

Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangsad organises a conference of the Commanders of Dhaka City Freedom Fighters. Venue: Engineers' Institution Auditorium, Ramna. Time: 9:30am.

Workshop

A national workshop on 'In-Situ Conservation of Agricultural Biodiversity in Bangladesh' under the UNDP-Global Environment Facility will be held with State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhrul Islam as chief guest. Venue: WVA Auditorium, House-20, Road-27, Dhanmondi. Time: 10.00am.

Discussion

Department of Archives and Library organises a discussion to mark the Science Book Year 2005 with State Minister for Cultural Affairs Begum Selima Rahman as chief guest. Venue: Auditorium of the archives and library department, Agargaon. Time: 4.00pm.

Seminar

A seminar on the 'Introduction of computer technology in land management in Bangladesh: Demra Revenue Circle (Pilot Project)' will be held with LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan as chief guest. Venue: Biam Auditorium, New Eskaton. Time: 11.00am.

Ashari Purnima

Bangladesh Bouddha Krishti Prachar Sangha will hold a discussion to mark the Shubha Ashari Purnima with Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri as chief guest. Venue: Dharmarajik Bouddha Mahabihar, Kamapur. Time: 4.00pm.

Film discussion

British Council organises an experience sharing meeting with filmmaker N Rashed Chowdhury who participated in the 4th Commonwealth Film Festival in Manchester. It will be followed by the screening his film titled 'Bishmwaraner Nadi' (The River Lethe). Venue: British Council Auditorium, Fuller Road. Time: 6.30pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

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Bangladeshi woman elected to world girl guides body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time, a Bangladeshi woman was elected to the world board of World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).

Rehana Banoo, national commissioner of Bangladesh Girl Guides Association, was elected at the 32nd conference of WAGGGS at Amman in Jordan in the last week, a press release said.

She was elected to the board along with 16 other women from different countries.

Earlier Rehana served the Asia Pacific Regional Committee of WAGGGS first as a member and then as the vice-chairman from 1998 to 2004.

WAGGGS is the world's largest voluntary organisation with 10 million members in 144 countries.

It has six UN teams with 24 representatives in Geneva, New York, Vienna, Paris, Rome and Nairobi.