

Police action on women protested

DU CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-cultural and women organisations yesterday protested police action and harassment on women during political activities.

They demanded end to all kinds of violence and punishment to the responsible policemen for committing atrocities in the country.

Leaders under the banner of Sammilita Nari Mancha made the comments at a rally at Dowel Chhatter of Dhaka University (DU).

Shirin Akhtar, president of Karmajibi Nari and coordinator of Sammilita Nari Mancha, presided over the rally, while Duta General Secretary Prof Dr Anwar Hossain, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote General Secretary Golam Quddus, Mahfuza Alam, Dr Wazedul Islam and others spoke at the rally.

Shirin Akhtar said police have been committing repression and harassing women political activists when they are participating in the political activities.

Later, a 12-member representative team met the Inspector General of Police (IGP) at his office and submitted a memorandum.

The IGP Khodabox Chowdhury told the representative team to send specific allegation and evidence on the issue and assured them to take necessary steps.

Shirin said they would continue their movement until their demands are met.

Formulate nat'l policy on child labour

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday called for formulation of a national policy on child labour immediately with a view to keeping children out of hazardous jobs and providing education for them for a better livelihood.

Over the years much efforts have been taken to eliminate child labour and many programmes were developed in the process, but almost all the efforts have failed due to absence of a concrete national policy, they said.

Ministry of Labour and Employment and Save the Children Sweden-Denmark jointly organised the workshop on 'Formulation of National Labour Policy: Bangladesh Perspective' at Bangladesh Institute of Administrative Management (Biam) auditorium in the city to consult with the stakeholders and to enrich the draft policy prepared recently.

The draft policy aims to eliminate child labour from formal and

informal sectors in the long term, the speakers said.

There are 250 million economically active children aged between five and 14 in developing countries and 120 million of them work on full-time basis, said Moinal Kabir, a consultant, while presenting the draft policy.

The child labour in Asia accounts for 60 percent of economically active children, he added.

The speakers recommended arranging quality alternative education for child workers, ensuring community participation and mobilisation and adopting a coordinated strategy involving different stakeholders and governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Secretary to the labour and employment ministry Ashfaque Hamid was present as the chief guest and Country Representative of Save the Children Sweden-Denmark Olof Risberg was the special guest.

Joint Secretary Dr Nurun Nabi chaired the session.

Rab officer, Air Force member commit suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An officer of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and a member of the Air Force allegedly committed suicide in separate incidents in the city within a span of seven hours.

Mahbub Alam, 35, a sub-inspector (SI) of Rab-11, was found hanging with a muffler from the window grille in a bathroom at his house at Banasree at around 1:30am yesterday.

Relatives suspect that Alam, who had also directed two films, committed suicide due to family feuds.

In another incident, LAC Ariful Islam Arif, 22, of the Air Force allegedly shot himself dead at his office at Kurmitola on Tuesday.

Arif was found lying with bullet injuries in his abdomen on the verandah of the distribution section of Air Force Kurmitola Office at 7:00pm. He was on duty when the incident happened.

He was rushed to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) but the doctors declared him dead.

The motive behind the suicide could not be known.

Miscreants set fire to train in Khulna

UNB, Khulna

Unknown miscreants set fire to two compartments of a train waiting at Khulna station yard last night, 90 minutes before it was scheduled to leave for Dhaka.

There was no passenger in the Sundarban Express during the incident at about 9:00pm. One of the chain of compartments was damaged totally while another partially, railway officials said. They estimated the damage at Tk one crore.

Four units of the Fire Brigade rushed to the spot and extinguished the flame.

Railway officials suspect it might be an act of sabotage by the miscreants. Police were investigating into the incident.

Hasina discusses political situation with Russian envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Newly appointed Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh Gennady P Trotsenko made a courtesy call on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday.

During an hour-long meeting, they discussed the bilateral relations and current political situation in the country.



Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A distressed woman has sought financial assistance for her treatment as she has been suffering from various complicated diseases for the last six years.

Flora Akter, 30, who hails from Jhalakathi, has a tumour in her abdomen and is suffering from liver and kidney ailments.

One of her kidneys has already been damaged as she could not continue treatment for want of money.

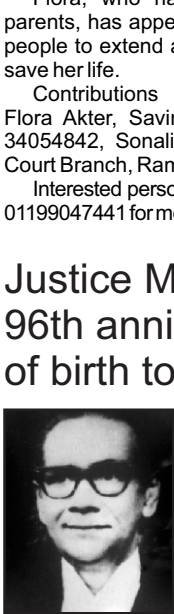
Doctors said she needs proper treatment immediately. Otherwise, the other kidney could also be damaged. But it is not possible for Flora to afford further treatment, which involves a huge amount of money.

Flora, who has lost both her parents, has appealed to generous people to extend a helping hand to save her life.

Contributions can be sent to Flora Akter, Savings Account No. 34054842, Sonali Bank, Supreme Court Branch, Ramna, Dhaka.

Interested persons can also call at 01199047441 for more information.

Justice Murshed's 96th anniversary of birth today



Today is the 96th birth anniversary of late Syed Mahbub Murshed, an eminent jurist and former chief justice,

says a pres release.

On this occasion, Qurankhwani and Fatehakhwani will be held at his graveyard at Banani in the city.

Syed Mahbub Murshed Memorial Committee will place wreaths at the grave.



PHOTO: STAR

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia addresses a wayside public meeting in Comilla yesterday as part of her election campaign.

1345 women repressed in six months

Says report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 1345 incidents of repression on women, including 457 incidents of murder and 226 incidents of rape, took place across the country in the period of July-December 2006.

Forty-seven women were victims of acid throwing and 74 were physically tortured during the same time, revealed a report yesterday prepared by Bangladesh Nari Progoti Sangha based on newspaper reports.

Among the incidents of repression, a total of 191 events took place due to inability and unwillingness to pay dowry, the report said.

Ninety-one were compelled to commit suicide, 27 sexually abused and 17 were victims of abuse in various ways, the report added.

Provision of blanket power to the army criticised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different human rights organisations and political parties yesterday expressed concern over provision of blanket power to the army to arrest anyone from any place without a warrant.

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) considers the power as violation of existing regulation and contradictory to the constitution.

ASK also apprehends that basic human rights of people will be threatened and urged the caretaker government (CG) to withdraw the decision of blanket power of army.

Sylhet Division Development Movement Council President Advocate Abed Reza in a statement said the CG and the Election Commission (EC) declared minimal law by issuing the magistracy power to the army.

BAU exam to be held as scheduled

Undergraduate admission test of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) for the year 2007 will be held on January 13 as scheduled earlier, says a press release.

The decision came at an urgent meeting of admission test committee with BAU Vice Chancellor Dr Mosharrar Hossain Miah in the chair.

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the court and sought bail.

Earlier on December 22, the investigation officer (IO) of the case pressed charges against 13 people including Dr Kamal, Rakan and Amir, showing 28 people as prosecution witnesses.

The other defendants obtaining bail are former Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) secretary advocate Enayetur Rahim, former SCBA vice president advocate Subrata Chowdhury, Barrister Tania Amir and advocates Sheikh Awsafur Rahman, Subrata Saha, Khairul Alam Pipul, Mohammad Khasruzzaman, Suhrawardi and Syed Mamun Mahbub.

Another accused Habibur Rahman, an outsider, did not appear before the court yesterday.

Moving the bail petition, advocate Syed Rezaur Rahman argued that all the defendants had obtained ad-interim anticipatory bail earlier from the High Court (HC) following filing of the case against them.

Moreover, the HC had granted bail to them for a period of six

5 killed in Comilla road crash

UNB, Comilla

At least five people were killed and 15 others injured when a bus skidded off the road and fell into a ditch on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Matua in Chaudhagram upazila early yesterday.

Police and witnesses the Chittagong-bound bus from Rangpur fell into the ditch after colliding with a Dhaka-bound truck from Chittagong at about 5:45am, leaving four bus passengers dead on the spot.

One of the injured died on the way to a local hospital while others were admitted to Comilla Medical College Hospital.

KERANIGANJ

Another report from Keraniganj adds: At least 50 passengers were injured when two buses collided near Dhaleswari 1st Bridge on Dhaka-Mawa road yesterday.

Witnesses said the accident took place at about 5:45pm when Dhaka-bound bus of Nagar Paribahan and Mawa-bound bus of Baishakhi Paribahan collided head-on and fell into a roadside ditch.

Of the injured, Ritu, 23, Mustafa, 25, and Shafiq, 50, and 13 others were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in critical condition.

Police seized the buses while the drivers managed to escape.

Attack on garment workers condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad yesterday condemned the attack on the workers of Padma Poly Cotton Knit Fabrics Ltd in the city by the outsiders at the instigation of the garment authorities.

At an emergency meeting at its office, the parishad leaders also demanded immediate arrest of those responsible for the attack.

They also demanded compensation for the treatment of the injured workers.

The speakers said instead of paying wages to the workers, the authorities have let loose a reign of terror on them.

They also urged the authorities to pay the wages of the workers and meet their other demands immediately.

The meeting was presided over by parishad Coordinator Shah Atiul Islam.

Revolutionary Garment Workers Solidarity and Samajtantrik Sramik Front also expressed shock and condemned the attack on the workers.

They demanded immediate arrest of the hoodlums and owners and compensation for the injured workers.

Meanwhile, President of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Manjurul Ansan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim have said instability persists in garment sectors for not implementing the contract signed

between the workers, owners and government.

In a joint statement yesterday, they condemned the attack and repression on the workers at Padma Poly Cotton Knit Fabrics.

The CPB leaders demanded immediate arrest of those responsible for the attack and compensation for the treatment of the injured workers.

They also called for incorporating the demands of the workers with the ongoing political agitation to strengthen it for a free and fair election.

Warm clothes distributed

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Air Force and Bangladesh Air Force Women Welfare Association (BAFWWA) have started distributing warm clothes among the cold-hit poor people in the capital and other places of the country from Tuesday.

They distributed warm clothes among cold-hit people in the adjoining areas of BAF Base Bashor on Tuesday, said an ISPR press release.

Besides, BAF and BAFWWA have been distributing warm clothes among cold-stricken people living around BAF Base Matir Rahman area at Jessore, BAF Base Paharkanchanpur area at Tangail and at BAF Unit areas of Moulvibazar, Bogra, Shamshearnagar and Lalmonirhat.

Kamal, Amir, Rakan, others get bail

months from the date or till submission of the charge sheet.

As the IO had submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, the defendants appeared before the court seeking bail, the lawyer added.

The prosecution did not oppose it during the hearing on the issue.

Meanwhile, the defence lawyers submitted another petition to exempt all the defendants from personal appearance before the court on different dates of the case.

After hearing both sides, the magistrate granted bail to them and fixed January 14 for hearing on the issue.

The court also will decide whether the charges brought against them would be accepted or not.

Barrister Omar Sadat, son-in-law of BNP leader and former minister Shahjahan Siraj, filed the criminal case with the CMM's Court on December 4 naming four lawyers and against 50 to 60 other unidentified lawyers and others for vandalising the offices of the chief justice and the attorney general, and also

for disturbing court proceedings on November 30.

Those named in the complaint are Rakanuddin Mahmud, Enayetur Rahim, Subrata Chowdhury and Sheikh Awsafur Rahman.

In his complaint, Omar Sadat said Rakan asked the accused lawyers and outsiders to vandalise the chief justice's chamber, courtrooms and other public property, and also to threaten the attorney general.

The vandalism on the SC premises took place after the chief justice stayed the proceedings of three writ petitions minutes before a HC bench was about to issue a rule on a writ challenging the legality of the president's takeover as chief adviser to the caretaker government.

Leaders of the 14-party alliance and other political parties filed the writ petitions that also challenged the chief adviser's activities and announcement of the schedule for the next general election.



PHOTO: STAR

Hundreds of poor people wait for hours in front of a business establishment at Tongi Diversion Road at Moghbazar in the city yesterday to receive warm clothes.

Education Expo begins in city today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-day-long education fair titled 'Education World Wide Expo-2007' will begin in the city today.

The Conference and Exhibition Management Services (CEMS) along with media partner The Daily Star, ATN Bangla and Radio Furty has organised the fair at Level 7 of Bashundhara City.

More than 30 universities, colleges, fashion show and service organisations from home and abroad are taking part in the fair for interview and spot admission of aspiring students.

The fair will also provide information about modern education system and career opportunities.

The students will also get guidelines for their careers from around 50 stalls which will remain open from 10:00am to 9:00pm daily.

MURDER OF BNP LEADER Family demands punishment to culprits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of a former BNP activist, allegedly killed by local extortionists, demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to the culprits.

The deceased's father Anisur Rahman, also a former ward commissioner, while speaking at a press conference at the Reporters Unity in the city yesterday, said a group of 5-6 youths called my son Mohammad Ali from his house on December 28 and shot him dead inside a building at Showarighat fish market following a business rivalry.

Terming his son innocent, Anis further said Ali was never involved in any criminal activity.

Blaming the local hoodlums Shiplu, Ashraf, Shyamol, Minto, Anis, and Ismail as the masterminds of the killing, Anis urged the concerned authorities to take necessary steps to arrest the murderers of his son without any delay.

The victim's mother Nazma Begum, wife Shammil Ali, one-year-old daughter Labia and other family members were also present at the conference.

Hotelier shot dead by extortionists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A restaurant owner was shot dead by the extortionists at Shyampur in the city yesterday.

The extortionists sprayed bullets on Zahirul Islam, 55, owner of Bappi & Rabbi Hotel and Restaurant, at Zia Smarani under Shyampur Police Station in the city yesterday morning as he refused to pay them Tk 1 lakh as toll few days ago, family members said.

Zahir was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in critical condition where he succumbed to his injuries at 8:00pm. He was shot in his abdomen, chest and back.

BODY RECOVERED

Meanwhile, police recovered body

of a man in the city yesterday.

The dead was identified as Fakhru Azam alias Shajedul Kabir, 30, a production-in-charge of a private company at Khilgaon.


His body was found in a sack with hands and legs tied at East Rampura at around 6:00am.

The victim was wearing black pant and white sweater, added the police.


Fakhru, who left the office at around 11:00am on Tuesday for Nawapara, had been missing since then.

Shamima Akhter Rosy, victim's sister, identified the body at DMCH morgue.

Family members believe that the miscreants might have killed Fakhru over business rivalry.



WEATHER TODAY



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Dry weather will prevail over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderate to thick fog may also occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere over the country during late night until morning, said Met Office.

It said mild to moderate cold wave is sweeping over Rajshahi division and the regions of Jessore, Chuadanga, Satkhira, Tangail, Faridpur, Srimongal and Khapupara and Rajshahi divisions may continue.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 27.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sandwip and lowest 07.3 degree Celsius at Jessore.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:30pm today and rises at 6:44am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in in celsius	
	percentage		Morning	Evening
Dhaka	24.5	11.6	80	70
Chittagong	26.2	12.3	100	73
Rajshahi	25.0	07.8	87	72
Khulna	24.6	10.8	88	56
Barisal	25.6	10.3	97	78
Sylhet	25.5	12.0	93	69
Cox's Bazar	26.5	14.0	70	-

Youth held with 135 bombs in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Police yesterday arrested a youth with around 135 bombs from a BNP rally at Matiranga upazila of the district.

The youth identified as Kabir, 25, is reportedly a member of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

Sources said the bombs might be brought to sabotage the meeting.

The BNP leaders at a rally warned of dire consequences if any leader or activist comes under attack by anyone.

Sources said sporadic violent incidents took place among the activists of BNP, Awami League and LDP in Khagrachhari leaving around 500 people wounded since the caretaker government took office.

Upazila BNP President Abu Yusuf Chowdhury presided over the rally, which was also addressed by Khagrachhari Poura Chairman Md Jainal Abedin, District BNP Organising Secretary Mostafizur Rahman Millat, BNP leaders Nazrul Islam, Belayet Hossain, District Jubo Dal President Abdus Salam and General Secretary Saidul Islam Babul.

Zoological Society AGM postponed

The annual general meeting and symposium of the Zoological Society of Bangladesh scheduled to be held on January 12 has been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances, says a press release.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A W Chowdhury, former additional secretary to public works ministry, passed away due to cardiac arrest at his Uttara residence in the city on January 8, says a press release.

He was buried at a graveyard at Sector No 4 after a namaz-e-janaza at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque yesterday.

His quikhwani will be held at his Uttara residence tomorrow.

Death anniversary



Today is the 5th death anniversary of former law maker Barrister AR Yusuf, says a press release.

A mild mahfil will be held at Banani graveyard and different orphanages.

Relatives and friends have been requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of Sarder Nurul Anwar, a development activist and writer, will be held at his daughter's residence on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agriculture University (BSMRAU) campus in Gazipur after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

He passed away on January 8 due to old age ailment at the age of 62.

He left behind his wife, one daughter and two sons.

He was buried at the university graveyard in Gazipur.



DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable

Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) organises a roundtable on gender and law. Venue: Institute's auditorium. Time: 2:30pm.

View exchange

Sammilita Nagorik Andolon will hold a view exchange on obstacles to credible election. Venue: Cirdap. Time: 10:00am.

Anniversary

The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organises a lecture on 'The role of Bangladesh in the emerging one-world culture' to mark the 55th founding anniversary of the Society. Venue: auditorium of the Society. Time: 4:00pm.

Blue for peace

Family of former finance minister AMS Kibria will stage a silent sit-in demanding fair trial of all killings, including that of Kibria. Venue: Opposite to Bashundhara City. Time: 4:00pm.

Education expo

Conference and Exhibition Management Services organises Education Worldwide Expo 2007, an education fair. Venue: Bashundhara City. Time: 11:00am.