

BIRD FLU Over 1000 chickens buried in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Over 1000 broiler chickens smuggled from India were buried here yesterday on suspicion that they were affected by bird flu.

Acting on a secret information, BDR Jawans recovered the chickens from Bharashimla village under Kaliganj upazila while being smuggled from India to Bangladesh in the early morning of January 17, BDR sources said.

The smugglers managed to flee leaving the chickens, said Shitalapur Nazimganj BDR Company Commander Subedar Mosharraf Hossain.

The BDR and local administration took the decision to bury the smuggled chickens at a meeting held at Kaliganj upazila Nirbahi officer's office on Wednesday.

When contacted, GM Nur Islam, president of the district poultry traders association, alleged that a group of smugglers are smuggling bird flu-affected chickens from India with the help of a section of unpunished law enforcers.

City dwellers face acute gas crisis

Production in two wells of Titas gas field suspended, low pressure of gas from Sangu gas field

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gas crisis took a turn for the worse in many areas of the city over the last few days due to suspension of production in two wells of Titas gas field and low pressure of gas from Sangu gas field.

The city is now facing a daily shortfall of 62 million cubic feet gas, sources said.

Residents of Mirpur, Tejgaon, Malibagh, Khilgaon and Tongi are the worst sufferers as gas pressure slumps down to a level where no stove can be kept burning.

A resident of Mirpur said they had to wait for cooking until midnight when the gas pressure becomes normal.

Low pressure in the gas pipeline has also forced at least 25 CNG refuelling stations to stop their service.

A staff of a CNG station said gas pressure remains low from 8:00am to

2:30pm daily and the same problem reappears in the evening.

Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury yesterday told reporters that the situation would start improving from tomorrow. The crisis would be resolved at the beginning of the next month, he hoped.

27 fugitive convicts among 1,968 arrested

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested some 1,968 people, including 27 fugitive convicts, from across the country on various charges in the last 12 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday.

During the drive, the law-enforcers also seized 15 firearms, six other weapons and 36 bullets, said a police headquarters release.

Joy selected as Young Global Leader for 2007

Sajeeb Wazed Joy, son of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, has been selected as a Young Global Leader for the year 2007 as an Information Technology (IT) specialist by the World Economic Forum, says a press release.

The forum released the names of 250 young leaders, including Joy, grandson of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, at its central office in Geneva, Switzerland, on January 16.

Every year this honour is bestowed upon top 250 young leaders of the world to recognise and acknowledge their professional accomplishments, their commitment to society and their potentials to contribute to shaping the future of the world.

Drawn from a pool of over 4,000 candidates, the Young Global Leaders nominated in 2007 have been chosen by a selection committee of 34 eminent international media leaders chaired by Queen Rania Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The Young Global Leaders 2007 include 125 business leaders, as well as leaders from governments, academia, media and society at large from nearly 70 countries.

Alexander Doghla, a British MP, Stiffany Harsheth, US representative of House, Paul Rayan, US congressman, Joyel Cuplan, deputy chief of staff of White House, Omar Abdullah, MP of India, Omar Ayub Khan, state minister for Finance Ministry of Pakistan, Arne Brodin, CEO of Bank of Moscow, Bhikram Chandra, managing editor of India based television NDTV, Ardian Fenty, newly elected mayor of Washington DC, have also been selected.

The 250 members of Forum of Young Global Leaders will meet at an annual conference at Dalian in China from September 4 to September 6 this year.

GOLD SMUGGLING CASE Ershad's lawyers complete arguments

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Defence lawyers of former president and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday completed the arguments in connection with the gold smuggling case implicated him 16 years ago.

After completion of the arguments from the defence, Judge Mohammad SM Mujibur Rahman of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court fixed January 22 for hearing on it from the prosecution.

The judge passed the order following a time petition by the prosecution saying that Additional Public Prosecutor Golam Mostafa Khan was sick and he could not take part in the hearing.

During the hearing on arguments, Advocate Sheikh Serajul Islam said Ershad's name was not in the first information report (FIR) filed on July 17, 1990. But his name was included in the supplementary charge sheet on August 31, 1991, even though there were no specific allegations against him.

Moreover, eight prosecution witnesses, including the complainant and the investigation officer (IO) of the case, said nothing about Ershad's involvement with the incident during the trial. So, Ershad should be acquitted of the charges brought against him, Seraj said.

Ershad along with his party leaders and activists appeared before the court at 10:15am.

A team of customs officials held four people, including two foreign nationals at Zia International Airport on July 17, 1990, when they were attempting to smuggle around 3.6 kgs of gold worth about Tk 2.5 crore into Bangladesh, the prosecution said.

A smuggling case was filed against the four -- Bernhard Rudiger of Germany, David Anthony Chalmers Chaker of England, the then manager of the Zia International Airport Major (Retd) Ashraf Uddin Sekender and Abu Taher, a security guard of the airport with the Cantonment Police Station the same day.

During investigation, the IO found evidence of Ershad's involvement in the smuggling and his name was included in the charge sheet on August 31, 1991.

Rudiger, Chalmers Chaker, Ashraf and Taher were convicted and sent to prison on different terms on May 14, 1992.

The trial against Ershad did not start due to a stay order from the High Court (HC).

Ershad was acquitted and discharged of four graft cases in August and September last year after his announcement to join the four-party alliance.

Another Dhaka court on Wednesday freed from serving out the sentence given by the HC on December 14 last year in connection with the Japanese boat purchase case.



PHOTO: PID

President Iajuddin Ahmed administers the oath of office to Dr Chowdhury Sajjadul Karim and Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury as advisers to the caretaker government at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

Decentralisation of education administration a must

Says Quadri

Bss, Dhaka

Adviser Ayub Quadri yesterday emphasised the need for decentralisation of the education administration to bring dynamism in the country's education system.

He was exchanging views with the senior officials of the education ministry and departments and autonomous organisations under the ministry at his secretariat office.

The adviser also holds the portfolios of the primary education, mass education and cultural ministry.

Ayub Quadri stressed on the need for growing use of technology in coordinating the work of different ministries and agencies. He also asked the officials to discharge their responsibilities on priority basis while implementing projects and running the management.

Education Secretary Mamtazul Islam, Chairman of University Grants Commission Prof M Asaduzzaman and Additional Secretary of the education ministry Ashraf Maqbul were also present in the meeting.

Director general of the department of secondary and higher secondary education, technical education boards, chairman of NCTB and chairman of different education boards also attended the meeting.

Rajuk evicts lake grabbers

FROM PAGE 1

down the boundary walls of Partex Holdings' office, Chairman of Partex Group MA Hashem came out of his office along with a number of his employees. Police beat up one of the employees as he forcibly tried to prevent the Rajuk officials and the magistrate from doing their duty.

However, following talks between the magistrate and MA Hashem, the magistrate called off the Rajuk demolition workers.

When asked why the sudden retreat, Magistrate Emdadul Dasgupta told The Daily Star, "We have done what we wanted to do."

MA Hashem, in a statement last night, said he had filed two petitions with the High Court regarding the temporary structures on his land after the Rajuk sent a notice to them asking for the removal of the "unauthorised structure". The court

EMBANKMENT ISSUE BDR-BSF meet ends without result

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

A company level flag meeting between the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) on the issue of renovation of an embankment ended without any positive outcome yesterday.

The meeting was held at noman's-land in Ghona bordering area in Sadar upazila but failed to reach a decision regarding the embankment from Baikari to Ghona.

The BDR had taken initiatives several times to renovate the embankment, but the BSF halted the renovation work. The embankment was damaged at different points during the last rainy season.

The meeting was convened after the BDR sent a letter asking BSF to sit across the table to peacefully resolve the issue through discussion.

At the meeting, the BSF members said they could not take any decision without prior permission of the higher authorities.

The BDR men then asked the BSF to hold another meeting soon after consultation with its higher authorities.

BDR Bhomra Company Commander Nayek Subedar Abu Taher led the BDR team while BSF Gobra Company Commander Inspector Panashar led the BSF side at the meeting.

2 factories gutted in city, Tongi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three fires occurred in and around the city yesterday damaging two factories and a private house.

A devastating fire broke out at Dhaka Tobacco Factory at Pubail in Tongi destroying materials and machineries, said local sources.

Originating from a short circuit at around 3:30pm on the third floor of a building, the fire soon engulfed other floors.

On information seven fire fighting units rushed to the spot but failed to bring the blaze under control till 9:00pm.

A plastic factory in Mirpur Industrial area was gutted in fire caused by electric shot circuit.

The fire at Abco Products started at around 3:50am and lasted for one hour.

Fire fighting units from Mirpur and Mohammadpur rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze after frantic efforts.

The third fire occurred in a house at Tejgunipara at around 6:00pm.

Sources said the fire originating from an electric short circuit was brought under control soon.

No report of injury was however received from anywhere.

ASK hails move to separate judiciary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a legal aid and human rights organisation, yesterday hailed the caretaker government for taking the initiative to separate the judiciary from the executive.

In a statement, it also hoped that necessary steps would be taken so that the judiciary can act as an independent body without any unwarranted interference from the executive.

It said although the constitution calls for the separation of the judiciary, elected governments did not take any effective steps in this regard. Rather, attempts were made to interfere in the judiciary by means of executive power, it added.

Promulgation of four sets of fresh rules is a major step towards an independent judiciary, the ASK said, adding that but mere separation of the two important organs (executive and judiciary) of the state is not enough. At the same time, appointment of competent persons in the judiciary should be given priority.

The statement said the caretaker government has taken a bold step to separate the judiciary, but it is the responsibility of the next elected government to make the move effective and successful.

Democracy in Bangladesh will be strengthened further through the completion of the process of separating the judiciary, it added.

EC not thinking

FROM PAGE 20

Justice Mahfuzur Rahman told newsmen at his office in the evening when asked what the EC is thinking about the prevailing situation.

Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain on Wednesday said the caretaker government was giving the highest priority to reconstitution of the EC.

He observed reconstituting the EC is a difficult job as the government cannot sack or remove the CEC or the election commissioners constitutionally. "We desire they will resign voluntarily... How long we can keep them on leave. This is really a crisis."

Asked if any discussion took place among the election commissioners about reconstitution of the EC, Election Commissioner Saiful Alam said no meeting or decision was held as a follow-up.

"I'm not yet officially informed about it, so don't want to make any comment," another Election Commissioner, Mahmud Hasan Mansur, replied as the reporters sought his reaction to the law and information adviser's oblique advice.

He declined to make any comment as to what the election commissioners would do if the caretaker government requested them to go.

"Both you and I know how a constitutional institution runs," Mansur replied about whether the matter of their resignation depends on the EC or caretaker government.

He informed that the EC yesterday held a brief meeting wherein the issues of internal administration were discussed.

Earlier in the morning, sources said EC Secretary M Abdur Rashid Sarker and Additional Secretary Mohammad Jokoria met the law adviser and handed him the full sheets of the EC's previous voter ID card project.

Babar sues

FROM PAGE 20

Golam Sarwar, Publisher advocate Salma Islam, News Editor Arun Kumar Dey, former news editor Ahmed Faruque Hasan, Chief Reporter Mahmud Hassan and former chief reporter Rafiqul Islam Ratan.

In his complaint, Babar said the daily ran a news item on November 6 last year saying he started grabbing lands within a week of his getting charge of the home ministry.

The report said he hatched conspiracy to allot the lands of Jamuna Builders in the name of police society, according to the complainant.

Babar said the newspaper also ran two reports titled 'Iman Ali of Savar fell victim to the revenge of Babar' on November 9 and 'Babar: Mr ten percent' on January 15 this year.

The news items were false, fabricated and concocted, said the complainant adding these were done to tarnish his image in the political arena and in the society.

Obituary



a press release.

He had been suffering from brain cancer since the last four months. He left behind his wife, two sons, two daughters and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

His Quikhwani will be held at his own residence at Bagan Bilash, Road no. 1, Adabar Baitul Aman Housing Estate in the city after the Asr prayers on Sunday.



PHOTO: STAR

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad along with his lawyer and party men comes out of the judge's court in the city yesterday after the hearing in the gold smuggling case.

Robbers loot goods worth Tk 3 lakh, kill 1 at Fatikchhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A villager was killed and another injured when a gang of robbers were decamping with the booties at Fatikchhari upazila in the district in the early hours of yesterday.

The robbers numbering 10 to 12 entered a house at South Sundarpur village at around 2:00am and made the inmates hostage at gunpoint.

They looted cash and valuables worth over Tk 3 lakh, sources said.

As the robbers came out of the house, the family members raised hue and cry for help.

The villagers rushed to the spot and managed to encircle the robbers from all sides.

At one stage the robbers began to open fire indiscriminately leaving one person dead on the spot and another injured.

The victim was identified as Kabir Munshi while the injured was admitted into Chittagong Medical College and Hospital (CMCH).

In a raid at Baraiarhat bus station under the upazila at around 8:00am, police arrested three people Zafar, Manik and Nurul Huda in this connection.

Police also recovered two one-barrel guns and two choppers from their possession.

A case was filed with Fatikchhari Police Station in this connection.

Outlaw gunned down in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

Members of the outlawed Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF) gunned down one of their rivals belonging to outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML)-Janajuddho faction in the district on Wednesday night.

The dead was identified as Saidul Islam, son of Abu Bakar at Aria village under Daulatpur upazila.

Police said a gang of three riding on a motorcycle came to a tea stall at Eidgah para where Saidul was watching TV news at about 10:00pm.

The gang threw two bombs on the tea stall, dispersed the people and picked up Saidul at gunpoint.

They took Saidul to a nearby field and shot him dead on the spot.

Immediately after the killing, Shimul Biswas, general secretary of GMF central committee, phoned local journalists and claimed responsibility for the killing, saying Saidul was a 'wicked person' involved in various 'anti-social' activities in the area.

On information, a police team led by the superintendent of police (SP) went to the spot at about 11:30pm, recovered the body and sent it to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

According to police, Saidul, a cadre of PBCP-ML, surrendered to law enforcement agency under general amnesty declared in 1999.

But after being released in 2003, Saidul again started criminal activities joining PBCP-ML, Janajuddho.

He was an accused in two murder cases.

WEATHER T O D A Y

Severe cold over Srimongal may continue

UNB, Dhaka

Weather will remain dry 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 till morning, Met Office said.

It said severe cold over Srimongal region and mild to moderate cold wave over Rajshahi division and the regions of Mymensingh, Tangail, Faridpur, Jessore, Barisal, Feni and Rangamati may continue.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

Highest temperature 29.1 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and lowest 4.8 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:35pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature	Humidity in in celsius	
percentage	Max	Min	Morning Evening
Dhaka	24.8	10.8	58 33
Chittagong	29.1	12.1	56 38
Rajshahi	24.0	9.2	86 58
Khulna	25.1	11.0	82 69
Barisal	25.5	9.0	95 69
Sylhet	26.0	9.9	63 42
Cox's Bazar	27.0	14.8	58 53

DHAKA T O D A Y

Trade show

The inaugural ceremony of 6th International Garments and Textile Machinery Trade Show titled 'Garmentech Bangladesh' will be held. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 10:30am.

Discussion

Shikkhak Karmachari Oikya Jote will hold a discussion titled 'Teacher and National Teachers' Day'. Venue: Mirpur University College. Time: 3:00pm.

Condolence meeting

Greater Khulna Development Co-ordination Action Committee will hold a condolence meeting to pay tribute to its founding president Late Abu Muhammad Ferdous. Venue: Hotel Sundarban. Time: 4:00pm.