in N'ganj

factory

15 injured as

boiler explodes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Fifteen workers were injured as a boiler exploded at an export-oriented garment

factory at Uttar Masdair at

The injured were sent to

Sources said the boiler at

The injured were identified

as Taslima, 20, Mazeda, 30,

Enamul, 30, Jalaluddin, 30,

Masuda, 32, Amena, 30.

Rekha, 20, Masud, 28, Dahlia.

22, Mamata, 23, Nargis, 22,

Mitu, 18, Mita, 18, Faruk, 28

It is assumed that the acci-

The authorities said the

loss is estimated at about Tk 40

dent originated from electrical

the dyeing section at Nixe

Knitwear exploded with a big

Fatullah in the district.

different hospitals.

bang in the morning.

and Enamul, 20.

short circuit.

Ensure

for the poor.

Hospital (DMCH).

healthcare

for the poor:

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health minister

Health Minister Dr AFM Ruhul

Haque yesterday called on

medical professionals to

perform their duties sincerely

to ensure healthcare services

Having access to proper

healthcare is a right of the

poor, he said while visiting

Dhaka Medical College and

The minister visited differ-

ent departments of the hospi-

tal before addressing doctors,

"There is a shortage of

KHULNA WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

Pro-AL contractors prevent others to drop tenders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Corporation (KCC).

crore and 36 lakh, includes pipe fittings Corporation. and pipe supply.

mated Tk 72 lakh and the cost for pipe supply at Tk 62 lakh, according to a source found that only six tenders were works. at KCC's Water Works department.

On January 13, the last date for drop-Chatra League leaders took position in front of the KCC Water Works Department office at 10:30am. They did not allow other contractors to drop tenders in the tender box and took away all the tender

Hope rights activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As more women were elected

to parliament this year, they

would help create more

opportunities for the devel-

opment of women, rights

activists said at a daylong

They said this at the work-

shop on 'Direct participation

of women and expectations

from the women representa-

tives in 9th parliamentary

elections for empowerment

of women' supported by

Manusher Jonno Foundation

at Biam auditorium in the

Bangladesh Manobadhikar

Bastobayan Sangstha

President Dr Mizanur

BCL, Chhatra

Moitree clash

At least 10 people were injured

in a string of clashes between

the activists of Bangladesh

Chhatra League (BCL) and

Chhatra Moitree on Rajshahi

Polytechnic Institute (RPI)

said the clash ensued when

Chhatra Moitree put up their

party banner removing a BCL

one in front of the administra-

tive building at around 8:30pm.

removed the Moitree banner

and chased its activists on the

spread, supporters of both the

groups organised themselves

separately and were engaged

in an hour-long clash. BCL

activists took position behind

the Shaheed Minar area while

Moitree men in front of the

Moitree used bricks, bamboo

and iron rods during the clash.

As the situation deteriorated, a

huge number of police rushed

to the spot and brought the

activists of both the organisa-

tions locked horns again. They

also staged separate demon-

strations on the campus pro-

But after one hour, the

situation under control.

testing the incident.

Both the groups of BCL and

institute main gate.

As the news of the clash

campus.

Later, BCL activists

Police and campus sources

campus on Friday night.

at Rajshahi

Polytech

RU CORRESPONDENT

Presided over by

workshop yesterday.

city.

tractors alleged.

Women MPs to ensure

development of women

women from the representa-

tives in the 9th parliament is

to materialise the election

manifesto of Awami League

include materialisation of

Development Policy 2008 for

ensuring rights of women,

execution of Cedaw conven-

tion, turning the Citizenship

(amendment) Ordinance into

an act, amending Hindu

family law which would

include registration as a

condition of marriage, spe-

cific law related to divorce

and inheritance law for a

married woman without

child to ensure her right to

an act or any structure is not

possible without the change

successfully at different

sectors nowadays, TV actress

Rokeya Prachi called on the

media to highlight the strong

and positive personality of

women besides highlighting

their pathos. This would help

the society take its positive

The speakers said family

stance for women.

Dr Shelly said, "Changing

As women are working

her father's property.

of our attitude."

for their empowerment.

Sources said that 16 tender schedules der schedules were sold. A syndicate of contractors aligned with were sold for pipe fitting and 10 tender Awami League has prevented others from schedules for pipe supply work from the dropping tenders for the work of a water offices of Khulna divisional commissupply project under Khulna City sioner, Khulna Metropolitan Police, Public Health and Engineering and The project work, involving Tk one accounts section of Khulna City

The cost for pipe fittings was esti- 3:00 pm in the office of Chief Engineer (acting) Nazmul Islam on the day, it was cate with a view to grabbing the project dropped.

ping tenders, a group of Jubo League and of KCC Water Works Department Md Abdul Aziz, however, said tenders were dropped in a peaceful manner. "I am not aware of any syndicates trying to manipulate the dropping of tenders," he added.

schedules from them instead, the con- Islam has expressed doubts as only six

Rahman Shelly, its Executive orientation is the vital factor

Director Alena Khan said, "Any to determine social attitude

legal bar to women can be towards man and woman

eliminated now, because the with a call to get rid of the

grand alliance has formed the discriminatory attitude

Presenting a keynote aware of their rights and

paper, Coordinator of the responsibilities, but lack of

organisation Md Omar Faruk awareness of the rest of the

said that the expectation of society acts as a curse for

Other expectations and Asif Akbar and Secretary

National Women sation Nurul Islam Khan also

Many women are now

those aware women, they

Begum, journalist Farida

Yasmin, singers Fakir Alamgir

General of the rights organi-

Programmes to

mark Zia's birth

Bangladesh Nationalist Party

(BNP) and its associate organi-

sations have drawn up a

weeklong programme to mark

the 73rd birth anniversary of

late president Ziaur Rahman,

founder of the party, tomorrow.

Zia along with the party leaders

will place wreaths at the mazar

hoisted at its headquarters in

the Naya Paltan area. A milad

mahfil will also be held seek-

ing peace of the departed soul.

the Engineers' Institute audi-

torium today.

A discussion will be held at

of Ziaur Rahman at Zia Udyan.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda

The party flag would be

spoke at the workshop.

anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIG (police) Fatema

government with two-third towards a girl and a boy.

tenders were dropped, although 26 ten-

METROPOLITAN/NEWS

"However, I did not get any complaints that the contractors were prevented from dropping their tenders," he added.

Some contractors, requesting anonymity, said General Secretary of Khulna Sadar Awami League Saiful Islam, Ward councillor Ali Akbar Tipu, Chatra League But after opening the tender box at leader Abdul Kalam Azad and Jubo League leader Abu Hanif formed a syndi-

When contacted, Saiful Islam said only When contacted, Executive Engineer six tenders were dropped, as other contractors did not qualify for the work.

"I believe that quality of any syndicated work can be excellent," he observed.

Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque was But the Acting Chief Engineer Nazmul not available for comments despite repeated attempts.

Artistes demands

discipline at Bafa

A group of cultural activists yes

terday called on the government

to take necessary steps to restore

discipline at Bulbul Lalitkala

Reporters' Unity, Bafa Principal

Razia Khanom said the academy

has become a centre of anti-

cultural activities due to anomalies

and dominance of people from

outside cultural arena over the

invaluable contribution to the

cultural arena by producing

numerous talented performers

since its inception in 1955, but it is

now on the verge of destruction

due to mismanagement by its

carrying out academic and

administrative activities of Bafa

Committee to Resist Conspiracy

against Bafa, said a number of

academy members were termi-

nated from their services and

some others given forced leave,

hampering normal activities of

lawyer Faruque Ahmed, singer

controversial members from the

committee, formation of a con-

vening committee and steps to

ensure security of students and

Rajshahi Collegiate

Rajshahi Collegiate School,

one of the oldest schools in

the subcontinent, will cele-

brate its 180th anniversary

with a two-day programme

Marshal (retd) AK Khandaker

will attend the inaugural

session of the celebrations as

the chief guest. Over 100

eminent personalities, who

were students of the school,

are expected to attend the

established in 1828, are

requested to register their

names over phone

(01711269431 and

01716471877) or online

through the website --

www.rcspcs.org.bd -- for

joining the celebrations.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Obituary

Ex-students of the school,

Planning Minister Air vice

on January 23 and 24.

School founding

anniversary

UNB, Dhaka

programme.

Karim Hasan Khan also spoke.

Noted singer Abdul Jabbar,

They demanded removal of

using muscle power, she added.

A vested quarter has been

Razia, also convenor of the

She said Bafa had made

previous years.

present committee.

theinstitution.

At a press conference at Dhaka

Academy of Fine Arts (Bafa).

steps to restore

700 juveniles involved in crimes in city

A huge contingent of police was deployed on the Jagannath University campus following a clash

between two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

Says DMP commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Metropolitan Police Naim days. Ahmed yesterday said around 700 juvenile criminals are involved in different crimes in added. the city and a social initiative of the problem.

conference in the city's DB

police high-ups expressed grave concern over the rise of criminal activities by juveniles ing him in the city's Badda phone and SIM cards from in the city.

Most of these juveniles posses firearms, they added.

Detective Branch (DB) of snatching case and seized two arrested seven other muggers ously injured.

lets from their possession in Arif, Sabuj and Mofiz of Badda

pistols and five round of bul- Farid, Emran, Russell, Masum

juvenile criminals, they

should be launched to get rid arrested accused Al-Amin, 22, from Badda area on January Alatunnesa School. He was speaking at a press 15 and seized a cellphone, which he along with his at DB office that he called accomplices snatched from seven others over cellphone At the press conference, the Mostafa Kamal, 27, a sales and told them to come to the representative of spoton that day and snatched Grameenphone, after shoot- the bag containing cash, cell area on January 11.

They said members of 95000 from his possession. According to his confes-

Commissioner of Dhaka separate drives in the last two area and seized two pistols and five round bullets from Most of the arrestees were Arifand Emran's possession. DB police said Emran was a

student of class ten at Badda DB police said they School while Sabuj is a class eight student in the city's

Al-Amin told The Daily Star Golam Mostafa Kamal when They also snatched cash he came out from Maa and scratch cards worth Tk Telecom at Moinarbagh of

nurses and employees at the conference room. Badda. As Mostafa resisted, they manpower and resources at Police arrested eight in a sional statement, DB police opened fire, leaving him serithe rural level healthcare

facilities. So, we need to think

carefully about how to ensure best utilisation of limited

Canadian cops open probe

The company also enjoyed

unusual favours from Mosharraf who forced Petrobangla to pay Niko resources USS 4 million illegally to Niko till April 2005 for purchase of gas from Feni marginal field, and without fixing a price or any purchase agreement.

As per the agreement, this money was supposed to go to Bapex but did not. At that time fire at the blown out Tengratila gas field was still burning. NIKO'S IRREGULARITIES

The joint venture agreement (JVA) between Niko and Bapex was done in violation of government policy, constitution and against the opinions of the government's own energy experts.

To favour Niko, the then the JVA. BNP led alliance government took away three gas fields of Feni, Kamta and Chhatak from two gas companies of Petrobangla -- without paying them any compensation.

These fields were placed under Bapex so that Niko could have access to them through the joint venture.

Among these fields, Chhatak is divided in two parts -- the east and west parts. The eastern part remains unexplored but the government handed it to Niko showing it as a "marginal gas field" in gross violation of rules.

The unsolicited agreement undermined Petrobangla's constitutional role as the state's supervisor of oil, gas and mineral resources. While all oil and gas contracts are signed between Petrobangla and the contractors, Petrobangla was

sion of the inert gas and urea

dust is a "normal matter" for all

design-based problems low and

under the allowable percent-

village, The Daily Star corre-

spondent had difficulty breath-

ing as the smell of the urea dust

and ammonia-mixed gas was

overwhelming. The correspon-

Most of the trees in the vil-

lages have already died and the

water of the ponds there has

dent's eyes started to burn.

"We are trying to keep the

During a visit to Kandapara

fertiliser factories in the world.

not a signatory to the JVA. The country's law does not such a deal.

The bid for the JVA with in the government's evaluation during the second round block bidding in 1997 -- began in understanding (FoU) between crete casing. Bapex and Niko in the year.

some high ups of the past Awami League government pushed the bid amidst strong opposition from Petrobangla while barrister Moudud Ahmed acted as Niko's adviser.

However the AL government could not finalise or sign The BNP government

completed what the AL had AKM Mosharraf Hossain

and the leaders of the Hawa Bhaban began to push the deal and in October 2003, Mosharraf approved the deal on behalf of the prime minister.

They even dropped the option of 'Swiss Challenge' from the JVA as drafted during the AL government. The Swiss Challenge would have at least given Bapex the option to seek matching or better offers from other oil companies.

Niko-Bapex found a small gas reserve in the Feni gas field in 2004 and it started selling 20 million cubic feet per day (mmcfd) to 40 mmcfd gas to Petrobangla from October '04.

Being a very small company that entirely depends on hired contractors for all the works,

Tengratila area under Christak allow other companies to sign east led to the first blow-out in January 2005.

The government formed Niko -- a company disqualified three committees after this chapter and investigators told The Daily Star that Niko did not take proper safety measures, 1999 during the Awami League drilling up to depths of 800 (AL) government's tenure metres through the well which which okayed a framework of had only 300 metres of con-

Although these reports The energy secretary and depicted the irregularities and mistakes in Niko's operation, the government took no action against it. Niko proceeded slowly in

the Tengratila remedial works. On June 17, 2005 the company once again proved its incompetence through the second After this phase, the then

energy ministry adviser Mahmudur Rahman punished two Bapex officials but left Niko untouched.

Once again three committees were formed -- two to find out the cause of the blowout and assessment of damage and another to find out how the Niko agreement had been signed -- magnifying Awami League government's role.

All the reports filed by these committees showed faults in Niko's operations. Still the then government did not take any action against Niko.

The government on June 17, 2008 filed a damage suit at a Dhaka Court against Niko claiming Tk 746.50 crore as compensation for destroying properties and gas reserves in and around the Tengratilla Gas Field in Chhatak-2.

resources and manpower," he Niko's faulty drilling in the

Ensuring better treatment facilities in rural areas would help reduce pressure on the specialised hospitals, thereby improving the quality of treatment in those hospitals, he

The minister also said that the people have trust in DMCH. So, the hospital would face continuous pressure, he said and called on the authorities to ensure proper treatment of the patients.

Health Secretary AMM Nasiruddin, Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) Prof M Abul Faiz, Director of the hospital Brig Gen Abdus Shaheed Khan and Principal Prof Deen Mohammad were also present.

Death anniversary METRO DESK



anniversary of Fazlul Haque, a former director at the health ministry, says a press release.

On the occasion, doa mahfil will be held at his residence at Dhaka after Johr prayers and at Saheb Bazar Bara Masjid Complex and Pachani Eidgah Jame Masjid in Rajshahi after Asr prayers.

Relatives, friends and wellwishers have been requested to attend the doa mahfil.

Industrial pollution chokes people

Syeduzzaman Chowdhury, a retired



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

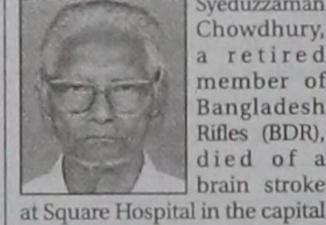
Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country having chances of light rain or drizzle at one or two places over the regions of Noakhali, Comilla and Sylhet in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the country during mid night till morning, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged night temperature over the country. Highest temperature 28.8 degrees Celsius was recorded

yesterday at Ramgamati and lowest 9.7 degrees 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:

Temperature in City/Town Humidityin Celsius percentage Morning Max Min Evening 27.0 13.7 Dhaka 13.2 25.4 Chittagong 26.7 13.3 Rajshahi 74 15.4 26.8 Khulna 27.3 82 13.4 Barisal 28.5 14.8 Sylhet 13.5 28.2 Cox's Bazar



at Square Hospital in the capital on January 10 at the age of 75. He left behind his wife, three sons, two daughters and

anumber of well-wishers. He was buried at Maijpara

village in Kalkini, Madaripur.

Sehrun Nesa METRO DESK

8:00am today.

Sehrun Nesa, wife of late leader Alhaj M Nasim Khan of Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC), passed way at Islami Bank Community Hospital in Rangpur yesterday at the age of 69, says a press release.

She had been suffering from asthma, kidney ailment and other old-age complications.

become discoloured and fish cannot live in them. Locals alleged that many Her namaz-e-janaza will be have been suffering from disheld at Mohammadpur eases like asthma, bronchitis, different kinds of skin diseases Geneva Camp in Dhaka at and in some cases loss of sight.

claimed.

age," he said.

Rina Begum, a housewife of repay," he said. Locals told The Daily Star that Kandarpara village, said her crops, trees, poultry, livestock three children have constantly and fish in the adjacent been suffering from diseases Kandarpara, Tarakandi, overthe years. Charpara and Dhuriarbhita Marfat Ali of the same village villages have been dying due to said three of his six brothers and

the emissions of the factory. their families have already left brain stroke | Croplands in the area have the village unable to bear the managing director (MD) of JFF Industries Corporation (BCIC) become infertile due to the pollution over the years, they village as soon as possible with mywife and children," he said. Jahirul Hassan, general Shamsher Ali of the village manager (production) of JFF, said, "I am only 40 but I cannot told The Daily Star that emis-

see clearly anymore. My hair has fallen off due to the pollution." loans from Krishi Bankhe started

a fish farm in his three ponds but fish worth around Tk 1 lakh died due to the toxic water. "I went to the factory author-

the factory, and showed them even listen to me," he said. the worst affected.

Razzak Ali, a farmer of added. Kandarpara village, said during the last boro season he cultiland by taking advance payments from buyers. His entire paddy contained no rice.

do not know how I am going to tions. How can we conduct excessive gas emission.

Most farmers in the village--Tota Miah, Joinal Abedin, Shamsher Ali, Khanu Miah, Badal Miah, Abdul Aziz, Marfat Ali and Suruj Ali--are in similar

pollution. "I will also leave the who recently retired, told The decided to compensate a num-Daily Star that the government-

run urea factory has been releasing a small amount of the purpose. The upazila ammonia-mixed inert gas and urea dust into the local environment. The allowable emission Azizul Haque, 50, of of inert gas is 50ppm (particles Kandapara said last year taking per microgram) and the JFF usually emits only 10ppm, he "Local residents are exagger-

ating the problem," he claimed.

Md Shahjahan, managing ities, including high officials of director (MD) of IFF, yesterday said only a small amount of dead fish but they would not ammonia gas is being discharged from the factory which The farmers in the area are is very normal. The claims of locals are over exaggerated, he stances the factory was closed

of environment said they do not vated boro rice on 35 bighas of have enough staff to conduct compensated for damages

such tests away from the capital. "We have only three inspec- of gas. yield was wasted, the grains of tors to cover 17 districts. The "I invested Tk 36,000. Now I any regular vehicles for inspec-

regular tests of such industries," said the official requesting anonymity.

'Maybe the industry is emitting toxic gas more than the set standard," the official said.

The situation is so grave that Mir Mozaffar Ali, former Bangladesh Chemical ber of the locals for their sufferings and allocated Tk 20 lakh for administration has already made a list of 168 people eligible for compensation but many have been left out, locals alleged.

Upazila administration sources, however, said they are yet to receive any complaint regarding affected people being left out.

Asked why the upazila administration is giving compensation despite his claims, Md Shahjahan yesterday said due to unavoidable circumfor a while and ammonia gas An official at the department discharge increases when the factory is closed. People were done by the excessive discharge

He said the factory is now government does not provide fully functional and there should not be any problem of

Discussion

White Ribbon Alliance, Bangladesh organises a discussion on 'Addressing the inequalities of accessing mental health'. Venue: Hotel Lakeshore. Time: 6:00pm. Human chain

Retrenched employees of Grameenphone will form a human chain demanding reinstatement in their jobs. Venue: In front of National Press Club. Time: 10:00am. Orientation programme

The orientation programme of

Spring 2009 semester of North

South University (NSU) will be

held. Venue: NSU Bashundhara

campus. Time: 10:00am. Discussion

BNP organises a discussion marking the 73rd birth anniversary of Ziaur Rahman. Venue: Engineers' Institute auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.



Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique takes charge of vice chancellor of Dhaka University form outgoing Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz at a simple ceremony at his office yesterday. (Story on Page 1)