

VISAS OF 55,000 WORKERS

Malaysia assures Bangladesh of all cooperation

UNB, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian Minister for International Trade and Industry Mohd Yassin of his government's all possible cooperation regarding visas of 55,000 Bangladeshi workers.

The assurance came on Friday when Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, now in Kuala Lumpur to attend a three-day general assembly of Malaysia's ruling party, met

Yassin, the next deputy prime minister of Malaysia.

Dipu Moni also called on Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi and handed over a letter of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Badawi, reported BSS.

The foreign minister informed Yassin about the current status of Bangladeshi workers and said they usually work in the sectors where Malaysian workers normally do

not work, said an official release. "So, there should not be any misconception regarding loss of jobs," the release added.

When the foreign minister requested him for reconsidering the Malaysian government's decision, Yassin assured her of all possible cooperation in this regard.

Dipu Moni also urged the Malaysian minister to make efforts to increase investment in Bangladesh.

In response, Yassin said,

Ensure enjoyable educational atmosphere for children
Speakers say at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ensuring safe and enjoyable educational atmosphere is a must for proper mental growth of children, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

Participation of children in the events that shape their life is also necessary for a better future and parents and teachers should listen to what children have to say, they said.

Mass-line Media Centre (MMC) and Plan Bangladesh organised the seminar titled 'Safe and enjoyable education: Things we can do' at the Shishu Academy as part of the Jatiya Shishu Mela under their project Agami.

Speaking as the chief guest, Mahibul Alam, former adviser to the caretaker government, called for proper utilisation of the government funds for schools and improvement of basic amenities in schools.

"Most schools do not provide safe drinking water, sanitation, a library or even

proper seating arrangements. It is not possible to create congenial educational atmosphere without these basic elements," he said.

Edward Thomas Espy, country director of Plan Bangladesh, said that education is not a wish, it is a basic necessity. Success of a country depends on quality education.

Children's participation in all walks of life is also important, he said.

Children should have the opportunity to participate in the events that determine their future and to deal with issues that affect and shape their life, he said.

Prof Mehtab Khanom, psychology department, Dhaka University, said the character of a child starts developing at the age of 5 to 7. So, learning in schools should be more creative and enjoyable.

"Teacher and student ratio is very appalling in our schools. Moreover, teachers are economically deprived in

our society. In the circumstances, it is not possible for them to provide quality education," he said.

"Most violence against children takes place at home. Children must feel safe in their own home. Moreover corporal punishment should be abolished from schools. It creates fear in young minds," she pointed out.

Upama Dasgupta, coordinator of Agami, presented the keynote paper at the seminar moderated by Qamru Hassan Manju, executive director of MMC.

Hamida Ali, former principal of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, Tasik Ahmed, additional vice-president (transmission) of ATN Bangla, and Amirul Islam, senior programme manager of Channeli, also spoke.

Members of the Children Communication Unit (CCU) from across the country also took part in the seminar and shared their views on safe school.

DEATHS OF BDR MEN

Independent probe demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of lawyers, human rights activists and professionals yesterday demanded an independent enquiry into the deaths of six BDR men during the investigation into the mutiny by BDR jawans.

"At least 6 BDR personnel have died in mysterious circumstances, causing public anxiety and concern regarding investigation process. The mention of blood clots in the inquest report of Lance Naik Mobarak Hossain who died on March 22 points to the use of inhuman torture during interrogation," they said in a joint statement.

"The use of torture during the interrogation process is not only a violation of human rights, it is also illegal and a punishable offence, as Bangladesh is a state party to the Convention Against Torture," said the statement.

The eminent citizens also called for proper investigation into the BDR mutiny and a fair and transparent trial.

"As the BDR is under the ministry of home affairs, not the ministry of defence, it is logical to expect that the trial of BDR personnel will take place in an ordinary criminal court," they said and called for holding the trial in a speedy trial court or a special tribunal.

The signatories to the statement are Shireen Haq, and

Rahnuma Ahmed, Prof Anu Mohammad, Dr Shahiddeen Malik, Khushi Kabir, Kamal Lohani, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, Prof Perween Hasan, Prof Firdous Azim, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Zakir Hossain, Samia Afrin, Shahidul Alam, Maheen Sultan, Rina Roy, Lamia Karim, Shaheen Anam, Saydia Gulruk, Nahar Ahmed, Zakir Kibria, Sayeed Ferdous, Mirza Taslima Sultan, Sayema Khatun, Sadaf Noor, Nasrin Khandaker, Tarek Omar Chowdhury, Bashirul Haq, Shipra Deori, Habibun Nessa and Mozammel Huq.

Zillur undergoes medical check-up

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman had a medical check-up at Green Life Hospital at Green Road in the city yesterday.

Vice Chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) and also ENT specialist Prof Dr Pran Gopal Dutta and Prof Dr M Shamsul Alam, chairman of Department of Conservative Dentistry and Endodontics of the same university examined the president.

President's personal physician Brig Gen M Sayedur Rahman was also present.

The use of torture during the interrogation process is not only a violation of human rights, it is also illegal and a punishable offence, as Bangladesh is a state party to the Convention Against Torture," said the statement.

The eminent citizens also called for proper investigation into the BDR mutiny and a fair and transparent trial.

"As the BDR is under the ministry of home affairs, not the ministry of defence, it is logical to expect that the trial of BDR personnel will take place in an ordinary criminal court," they said and called for holding the trial in a speedy trial court or a special tribunal.

The signatories to the statement are Shireen Haq, and

Rahnuma Ahmed, Prof Anu Mohammad, Dr Shahiddeen Malik, Khushi Kabir, Kamal Lohani, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, Prof Perween Hasan, Prof Firdous Azim, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Zakir Hossain, Samia Afrin, Shahidul Alam, Maheen Sultan, Rina Roy, Lamia Karim, Shaheen Anam, Saydia Gulruk, Nahar Ahmed, Zakir Kibria, Sayeed Ferdous, Mirza Taslima Sultan, Sayema Khatun, Sadaf Noor, Nasrin Khandaker, Tarek Omar Chowdhury, Bashirul Haq, Shipra Deori, Habibun Nessa and Mozammel Huq.

Zillur undergoes medical check-up

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman had a medical check-up at Green Life Hospital at Green Road in the city yesterday.

Vice Chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) and also ENT specialist Prof Dr Pran Gopal Dutta and Prof Dr M Shamsul Alam, chairman of Department of Conservative Dentistry and Endodontics of the same university examined the president.

President's personal physician Brig Gen M Sayedur Rahman was also present.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

WFP, UNICEF and Institute of Public Health Nutrition jointly organise a seminar on 'Presentation of preliminary results on household food security and nutrition assessment: Impacts of changing food prices'. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 9:30am.

Workshop

Department of Environment and Waste Concern jointly organise a workshop on 'RETA 6361: Managing hazardous waste'. Venue: Spectra Convention Centre. Time: 9:30am.

Seminar

Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) organises a seminar on earthen housing for sustainable development in Bangladesh. Venue: IEB conference room. Time: 5:00pm.

Poetry recitation

Bangabandhu Abritt Parishad organises a recitation and cultural programme marking the birth anniversary of Bangabandhu. Venue: TSC auditorium. Time: 5:00pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thunderstorms accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind may occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:14pm today and rises at 5:53am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 35.2 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 15.7 degrees Celsius at Srimongol.

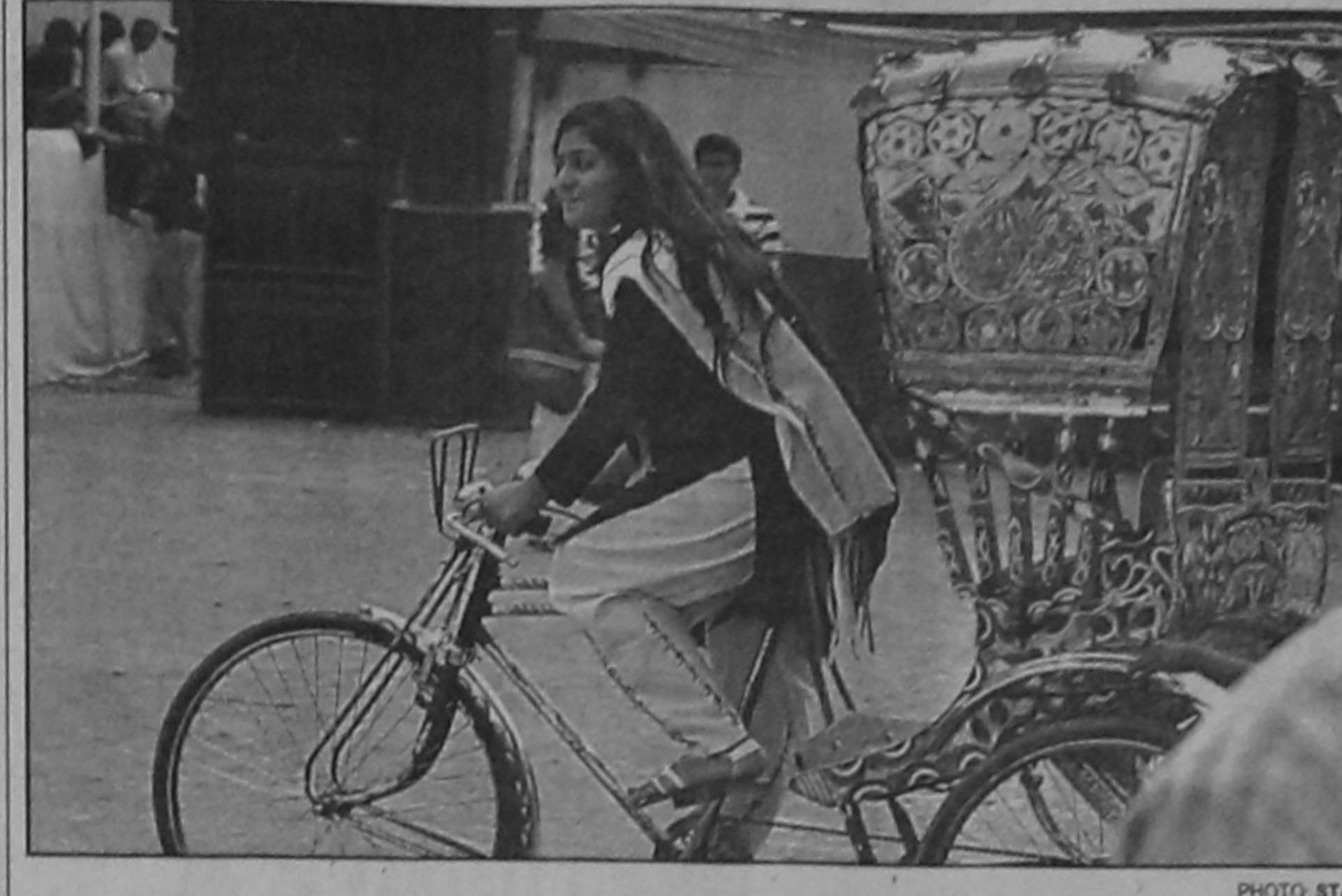
Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage		
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.4	20.6	56	47
Chittagong	30.8	20.3	67	81
Rajshahi	34.2	19.5	64	58
Khulna	33.7	21.0	79	52
Barisal	32.7	19.5	81	69
Sylhet	32.0	19.0	57	40
Cox's Bazar	32.6	23.3	72	71

Increased Malaysian investment in Bangladesh would be one of my priorities."

He also stressed the need for growing cooperation between the two countries in trade and commerce at this time of financial crisis.

Dipu Moni congratulated him on his election as the deputy leader of the ruling party and hoped that bilateral relations between the two countries would be strengthened further in the future.



A girl pulls a well-decorated rickshaw at Lalmaia New Colony ground in the city yesterday during a rickshaw festival. Bangladesh Changemakers organised the day-long event.

Buet student, brother drown in Pirojpur

UNB, Pirojpur

The bodies of two brothers who drowned in the Sandhya river at Bejkati village in Swarupkathi upazila on Friday were recovered from the Korsha canal yesterday.

The victims were identified as Rejai Rabbi, 23, a final year student of Computer Engineering Department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and Srishti, 16, an SSC examinee. They are sons of Advocate Shahjahan.

Witnesses said Rabbi and Srishti along with their father went to their village home from Dhaka on Thursday to attend the chelum of their grandfather.

The siblings were washed away by a strong current when they had gone to the river along with their uncle for taking bath at 2:30pm on Friday.

Despite hectic search in the river the bodies could not be recovered on Friday.

Local fishermen found the bodies in Korsha canal at 11:00am yesterday.

They were laid to rest in their family graveyard.

10 shops gutted in Ctg fire

CU CORRESPONDENT

Ten shops and nine thatched houses were gutted in a fire at Chergi Pahar intersection in Chittagong yesterday.

Sources said the fire broke out at a shop of the area at around 4:00pm and spread fast engulfing adjoining shops and houses. The fire was originated from an electric short circuit.

Eleven fire fighting units from different stations rushed to the spot and doused the fire after a one-hour effort.

Station Officer of Nandan Kanon Fire Station Mohammad Majid said the damages in fire could go up to Tk 1.5 lakh.

Obituary

METRO DESK

Mizanur Rahman, a businessman and social worker, and father of Rafi Hossain, a journalist of The Daily Star, passed away on Friday at the age of 74, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, son, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He will be buried at Sector-4, Uttara in the city after namaz-e-janaza at a mosque at Sector-3 after Zohr prayers today.

His qulhwani will be held at House-9, Road-19/A, Sector-4, Uttara in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to join the programme and pray for his departed soul.

Golam Mortuza Majumder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Golam Mortuza Majumder, a member of the National Press Club, passed away due to cancer at LabAid Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 70.

His body was taken at Uttar Anandapur under Fulgazi upazila in Feni for burial after namaz-e-janaza at National Press Club compound yesterday.

National Press Club President Shawkat Mahmud and General Secretary Kamal Uddin Sabuj expressed deep shock at his death and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Mahzarul Hoque

METRO DESK

Mahzarul Hoque, former director of Karpaphuli Traders Ltd, passed away at United Hospital in the city due to a severe cardiac arrest on March 26, says a press release.

He was buried at South Dhurang in Fatikchhari.

On the occasion, fateha will be offered at his village home today.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend fateha and pray for departed soul.

JCD calls off strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some activists of Dhaka University (DU) unit of Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday misbehaved with the central leaders as they called off strike on the campus.

The JCD leaders decided to call off the strike after a fruitful meeting with the university authorities to fulfil their demands for peaceful coexistence in the dormitories and stopping violence on the campus.

Earlier, a JCD leader of Bangabandhu Hall was injured in a clash between two groups of students in front of the Madhu's Canteen. It could not be confirmed that who beat Rassel Mia, organiser of the hall unit.

Chhatra League leaders said the JCD leader was injured in a factional clash, while the JCD leaders alleged that who beat Rassel Mia, organiser of the hall unit.

Noted economist Prof Muzaffar Ahmad said, "First step of ensuring rights of these women should start from home. We have to give them honour that they deserve."

JCD on March 22 threatened to declare a strike on the campus on March 29 if their demands are not met.

</div