

BELA SERVES LEGAL NOTICE

Proper management of Sal forest demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) yesterday served legal notices on the authorities, demanding steps to ensure proper management of Sal forest in Madhupur and immediate halt to saline water shrimp farming on agricultural lands in Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira districts.

Bela issued a legal notice on the Forest Department with a call to ensure proper management of the natural forest in Madhupur and to recognise the legal and traditional rights of the members of the Garo community living in the forest.

In the notice, Bela said the

forest department is implementing social forestry programmes in the Sal Forest without considering the interests of the forest dwellers. Such programmes include cultivation of foreign plants such as eucalyptus, acacia and commercial plantation of banana and pineapple.

The notice also said that a large portion of the forest is being converted into rubber garden, firing range, sawmills and furniture stalls and forest lands are also being used for various other purpose.

Bela demanded immediate halt to commercial cultivation of banana and pineapple and steps to restore the large portion of the natural forest,

which was illegally occupied for commercial purposes.

In the other notice, Bela has described the negative impacts of shrimp cultivation on agricultural lands in Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira districts.

It has requested the authorities concerned to take appropriate measures to prevent the use of saline water without the clearance from the department of environment and to protect the villagers and their agricultural lands.

The notice said that there has been number of cases of harassment of farmers by local administration with the sole intention to deprive them of their agricultural lands.

BCL factions clash at Dhaka Polytech

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two groups of Bangladesh Chattra League (BCL), student wing of the ruling Awami League, were locked into a clash over establishing control on 'admission trade' of the first year students at Dhaka Polytechnic Institute at Tejgaon in the city yesterday.

Both the sides exploded seven bombs during the one-hour clash, leaving seven students injured.

Sources said the clash ensued following an altercation between the two rival BCL groups over 'admission trade', as admission from the waiting list began the same day.

Witnessed said Zakir and Russell groups were locked into the altercation leading to a brawl among the activists.

Tension gripped the entire campus after the news spread fast.

Several homemade bombs were exploded in the area, while both the two factions regrouped to show their supremacy over their rival group.

Russell group at one stage took the control of Latif Hall of the institute.

However, the police and teachers managed to bring the situation under control, said Omar Faruk, officer-in-charge of Tejgaon Industrial Area Police Station.

New swine flu case detected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Swine flu infection cases in the country rose to 22 as one more person was found infected with the H1N1 virus yesterday.

Official sources said, the number of Swine flu infection case was 18 a week ago and three new cases were diagnosed on Sunday.

The fresh case is a secondary case that means she was infected through close contact with the person having swine flu," said Prof Mahmudur Rahman, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research.

He also said that currently five people are under follow up and the authorities are treating them in home confinement. Steps have been taken so that the disease cannot spread much.

The rest of the people who suffered from the flu got cured by this time, he added.

OIL, GAS BLOCK LEASING

Road march ends in Cox's Bazar today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The road march of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Port to protest offshore oil, gas blocks leasing reached in the port city yesterday afternoon.

Leaders of the committee at a rally held at the Shaheed Minar vowed to resist the leasing of offshore oil and gas blocks to the foreign companies neglecting people's demand and bypassing the parliament.

They criticised the government's hasty move of leasing gas and oil blocks and demanded trial of corruption in energy sector.

National committee coordinator Engineer Sheikh Md Shahidullah, Prof Anu Muhammad, Prof MM Akash, Shah Alam, Saiful Hoque and Tipu Biswas addressed the rally.

The Dhaka-Cox's Bazar road march would leave the port city today and join rallies at different points on way to Cox's Bazar.



Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus calls on former South African president Nelson Mandela at the Nelson Mandela Foundation office in Johannesburg on Friday. Prof Yunus delivered the 7th Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture the next day.

Work unitedly to curb violence against women

Rights activists urge all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a view exchange meeting on Saturday called on the people, elected representatives and administration to work unitedly in order to stop violence against women.

Violence on the women not only violates the citizens' rights, but also disrupts social activities, they said, urging all to take measures to build resistance at homes against violence and fatwa (religious edict).

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) organised the meeting with the civil society members at Badarpur Government Primary School at Matlab (North) in Chandpur.

Advocate Maksuda Akhtar said issuing illegal fatwa is a crime and it has to be resisted socially to stop such illegal religious diktat.

Narrating the incident of issuing fatwa against Mayanur, Assistant General Secretary of BMP Masuda Rehana sought assistance from the locals and police administration for ensuring the victim's security.

Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Matlab

(North) Police Station, said incidents of violence against women take place frequently in the area.

He said they have received about 200 such incidents in the last two months which were resolved by the community police.

BMP President Ayesha Khanam said the elected representatives would feel interest in resisting such incidents of violence if the chairmen, vice chairmen and other members of the areas where such incidents are comparatively less were awarded.

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Police asked to act quick to tackle RMG labour unrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haque yesterday directed the deputy commissioners (DCs) and concerned police stations to take prompt action to tackle any unrest in the garment sector.

The instruction came at a meeting between leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) with high police officials at the DMP headquarters in the city.

The commissioner also announced a four-member 'focal point' headed by joint commission (headquarters) to oversee problems in the garment sector and give prompt instructions if any situation or problems arise.

Other members of the 'focal point' are DC (headquarters), assistant commissioner (crime) and AC (operations).

The DMP commissioner also called for developing cordial relations between garment owners and workers by forming a welfare committee at each factory unit.

Referring to criminal activities centring jhut (garments rejects), the BGMEA and BKMEA leaders demanded a permanent solution to the problem. They also suggested formulating a joint committee to resolve the problem.

BGMEA President Abdus Salam Murshedy and BKMEA President M Fazlul Huq spoke at the meeting, among others.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alhaj MA Malek, former assistant director of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, passed away yesterday at the age of 79, says a press release.

He left behind two sons, one daughter and grandchildren. His body has been kept at Burden mortuary. His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Nakhalpara Chapra Mosque in the city at 11:00am tomorrow. He will be buried in Brahmanbaria.

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Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the 9th death anniversary of Advocate Kader Sarker, former secretary of Bangladesh Krishak League of Bogra district unit and pro-VP of Rajshahi University Central Students Union (Rucsu), says a press release.

On the occasion, a Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his village home in Joypurhat.

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Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina presides over the presidium meeting of the party at her Dhanmondi office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

No age limit for BARC researchers: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said there would be no age limit for the services of agriculture researchers in Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC) so that they could contribute to the agriculture sector for a longer period.

"Their (BARC researchers) financial solvency would also be ensured so that they can sincerely discharge their duties," PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad told report-

ers, quoting Hasina as saying after the weekly cabinet meeting.

He said the council of ministers approved in principle the draft of a proposed law 'Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council Act 2009' aiming to infuse dynamism into agriculture sector and help researchers conduct international standard researches and meet the demands of farmers.

The meeting with the premier in the chair also decided that commerce secre-

tary, chairman of agricultural research foundation and vice chancellor of Bangladesh Agriculture University would be included in the governing body of BARC.

The cabinet also endorsed in principle the draft of another proposed law 'Wall Writing and Poster Pasting Act'.

However, billboards would not come under the purview of the new law as those are used for carrying out mass awareness programmes and commercial activities.

Six police inspectors transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six police inspectors, including two officers-in-charge (OCs), were transferred yesterday in a latest reshuffle in Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

According to DMP, Gulshan Police Station OC Kamrul Alam Mollah was transferred to the detective branch (DB-North) while New Market Police Station OC Md Kamal Uddin was made the OC of Gulshan Police Station.

Inspector AM Kamrul Islam was made the OC of New Market Police Station while Inspector Md Abdus Samad was transferred to the Criminal Intelligence unit of DMP, Inspector Arzu Miah to DB-North and Inspector Nurul Amin to DB-South.

Formalin testing centre opens today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a view to ensuring formalin free fish for the city dwellers, a Formalin Testing Centre will be inaugurated at the retail fish market at Karwan Bazar in the city today.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdul Latif Biswas will formally inaugurate the first ever centre in the country.

After establishing the centre, consumers can have formalin test of the fishes for their satisfaction.

If the project succeeds at Karwan Bazar, the initiative will be expanded to other city markets and mega shops.

An official of the project, however, assured that there will be no increase in price or fall in supply of fishes after establishing the centre, says a press release.

Prior to the inaugural ceremony, a motivational meeting will be held with the locals and consumers.

SUBMISSION OF PARTY CONSTITUTION

Delwar sees AL-EC collusion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khondaker Delwar Hossain yesterday alleged that the Awami League (AL) and the Election Commission (EC) have an ill-motivated negotiation over the submission of party constitution.

Talking to journalists at the party central office in the city, he said the way the EC is speaking about the rules and regulations for the submission of the party constitution is a matter of regret.

It proves that the EC is following the path of the caretaker government to break the

BNP, he added.

Delwar said the AL did not want to submit its constitution within the timeframe set by the EC.

"But the AL suddenly changed its stance regarding the submission of its constitution and this proves that they had some negotiations with the EC," he added.

He urged the commission to extend the deadline for submitting the party constitution.

"No decision should be taken without the registration of a big party. It will not be good for the country and democracy," he added.



Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at many places over Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

It is also likely to occur at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions, Met Office said.

It said the day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:49pm today and rises at 6:20am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 35.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 25.5 degrees Celsius at Cox's Bazar.

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	33.9	27.4	73	60
Chittagong	32.6	26.2	73	84
Rajshahi	34.6	26.5	77	67
Khulna	34.0	26.6	75	70
Barisal	32.7	26.5	81	75
Sylhet	35.8	27.5	75	70
Cox's Bazar	32.5	25.5	76	82



Workshop

Media Initiative for Public Policy organises a workshop on telecommunication technology and related issues. Venue: PIB seminar room. Time: 9:45am.

Open discussion

Deshmremik Jonogoner Mancha organises an open discussion on health services and constitutional rights. Venue: Gono Sangskriti Kendra. Time: 3:00pm.

2nd phase of voter info collection starts tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

Enumerators will start their door-to-door visit across the country tomorrow to collect information of the new voters under the second phase of updating the voter list with photographs.

Under the second phase, the enumerators will keep on collecting information from July 15 to 24, said an Election Commission press release.

"The voter registration will take place during August 1-25 at the registration centres set up in municipality/union council offices," the release said.

Under the third phase, the release said, the information of voters would be collected during August 16-24 in 166 upazilas and the registration task will continue from September 1 to 25 while under the fourth phase it will be done from September 15 to 24 in six city corporation areas. The registration time is from October 1 to 25.

The enumerators will start gathering new information by door-to-door visits from

July 15 and the new voters will have to pose for their photographs for registration in their respective union/municipal offices.

Those born on January 1, 1992 or before that or those could not be voters earlier will have to enroll their names in the voter list.

The listed voters who have died in the meantime would be excluded from the voter list and those to be found disqualified would be left out from the list.

Quake jolts Kurigram

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

A moderate earthquake measuring 4.5 on the Richter scale jolted Kurigram yesterday.

The tremor started at 2:42pm that lasted for only 10 seconds.

Meteorologist Mominul Islam of the Earthquake Observation and Research Centre in Dhaka said the epicentre of the quake was located in Bhurungamari upazila.

Ruling party men's backing

FROM PAGE 1

government takes immediate measures to arrest criminals, the numbers of killings, extortions, and tender manipulations will continue to rise.

According to police records, a total of 1,706 persons were killed across the country in the first five months of this year with 397 being killed in May, preceded by 349 in April, 323 in March, 300 in February, and 291 in January. The number had been 1,660 for the last five months of 2008.

Records of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) reveal that the number of killings has been rising in the capital too. In the first six months of this year, 157 persons were killed in the capital, 30 of whom were killed in June, 21 in May, and 24 in April.

The numbers of crimes like extortion, kidnapping, issuance of threats over the phone for money, and repression of women have been climbing to serious levels over the recent months, although ruling AL in its election manifesto pledged to put up a tough fight against crime, and provide security to every citizen.

Sources said numerous criminal groups allegedly backed by the ruling party and its front organisations--Bangladesh Chhatra League, Jubo League, and Sramik

League--emerged since Awami League-led grand alliance's ascension to power in January this year. Those groups are involved in extorting citizens, manipulating tender processes, and collecting illegal tolls.

Yesterday's shooting and killing of one person in Mirpur, the recent triple murder in Karwan Bazar, looting of gold worth Tk 1.7 crore in Gulshan, kidnapping and killing of an engineer in Mirpur, and looting of a money exchange place in Malibagh in broad daylight are some of the glaring examples of deteriorating law and order in the capital.

"Some notorious criminals, who had earlier fled the country to evade arrest, recently returned home and have started getting involved in criminal activities again," said an official of an intelligence agency.

He said law and order is deteriorating quickly in the southern region of the country as armed members of outlawed parties are active again. "Unrest is again gripping the region due to increasing number of killings in which outlaws are involved," he added.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun and her deputy Tanjim Ahmed Sohail Taj, both not being in the country at the same time, is also hampering

anti-crime drives of the government.

Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder however said the ministry is working in coordination with different law enforcing agencies to maintain order. "There should be an improvement in law and order soon," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said DMP will soon prepare a fresh list of top criminals and launch a drive to arrest them. "Nobody will be spared if found responsible for causing law and order deterioration, including even ruling party people," he added.

Police investigations reveal, existence of many illegal hotels, crimes surrounding trading of garment industry wastage, extortion in kitchen markets, and drug peddling are some of the root causes behind the escalating rates of crimes including killings in the capital.

Around 300 groups of blackmailers comprised of 1,200 operatives are engaged in extortion in the capital, who usually target the better off section of the residents.

DMP high officials sat for a meeting at the police headquarters on Monday to figure out more effective strategies for fighting crimes in the capital.

Presided over by DMP

Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haque, the meeting decided to implement some new measures to increase efficiency of the department in crime fighting, including dividing areas under each police station into individual jurisdictions under each sub-inspector of a station, and increasing the number of motorbike squads in each station for patrolling neighbourhoods.

A senior police officer posted at the police headquarters identified shortage of manpower and logistics, a lack of training of police personnel, and undue pressure on police for favours from ruling party leaders and activists, as some factors for the poor show of the police department so far. He said 313 posts of police officers out of a total of 1,590 allotted for the department still remain vacant, hampering policing.

"DMP has only 24,000 personnel, a half of whom remain busy with VIP duties, and with guarding key point installations. Fighting crime with such a small force is very tough in a city which has a population of 10 million," the officer said.

The officer added that the government should immediately recruit several thousand more cops to beef up the force for effective anti-crime drives.