

SHIP-BREAKING YARDS

Workers face health hazards everyday

BSS, Chittagong

More than 50,000 people are working in the ship-breaking industry in Chittagong with serious health hazards because of the poisonous waste released from old ships.

The workers and people in the adjoining areas are also being attacked with various diseases frequently.

There are 56 ship-breaking yards on the coast in Sitakunda upazila while thousands of adult and adolescent workers work amid serious health hazards.

Though they have chosen this hazardous job only to earn their bread, many of them are not physically fit for such hard work. Therefore, incidents of various types of accidents and casualties

are rampant in the ship-breaking yards, but there is no hospital in that industrial area.

Old ships worth several thousand crores of Taka are purchased and brought to Sitakunda every year for breaking while more than two lakh people are involved directly and indirectly with this industry.

The labourers, local people and rights activists have long been demanding a hospital in the area, but to no avail.

If any worker is injured or if anyone falls sick, the patient is taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, which is 30 kilometers away from the ship-breaking yards.

People concerned said every ship brought for break-

ing in the yard is harmful for the environment as all the ships contain poisonous chemicals.

Though there is a rule for cleaning the ship from where it is procured, it is not followed by most of the owners of ship-breaking yards.

DFID Environment Consultant Prof Noman Ahmed Siddiqui told BSS that the owners of the ship-breaking yards are polluting the environment by releasing waste defying the rules.

He said uneducated and poor people working in the ship-breaking industry are dying from inhaling poisonous gas. People are also being attacked with various diseases.

Bangladesh Environment

Lawyers Association (BELA) Chittagong Divisional Coordinator Advocate Anwarul Islam Chowdhury said they are working to preserve the environment and protect the rights of the workers in the ship-breaking industry.

Chittagong Regional Director of Department of Forest M Abdus Sobhan said there is a High Court verdict to preserve the environment and uphold rights of the workers in the ship-breaking industry, but it is not being implemented properly.

A member of Bangladesh Ship Breakers Association, on condition of anonymity, said the yard owners are conscious about preservation of the environment and protection of labour rights.



Students of Adamjee Cantonment Public School and their guardians form a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday protesting hike of fees at the school.

3 fall sick after taking vitamin used for crops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least three people including a girl fell sick after taking a vitamin used for crops at Damardarpur village under Ghoraghat upazila in Dinajpur district on Thursday.

They were identified as Azizar Rahman, 40, Dipzol Ali, 17, and Delwara Begum, 15.

Azizar is being treated at Ghoraghat Health Complex where the doctors have described his condition as critical.

Villagers said Azizar bought Crop Plus, a product of Media Agro Marketing Company Ltd, from a local grocery shop for his physical weakness.

After the intake of vitamin, the three started complaining of severe pain in the stomach and suffered from acute diarrhoea.

Later they were taken to Ghoraghat hospital where the doctors said it was a case of severe bacterial infection caused by the consumption of some bad quality milk product.

When contacted, Ripon, owner of the shop, admitted that he had sold the vitamin.

Villagers alleged that Ripon has been selling agro-farming products including pesticides alongside other grocery products.

Barisal Vet Instt reopens Nov 5

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Barisal Veterinary Institute under Patuakhali University of Science and Technology (PSTU) will reopen on November 5, around two months after its closure on September 2 following widespread agitation by students on the campus.

PSTU Vice Chancellor Dr Syed Shahawad Hossain said the academic council took the decision at a meeting here on October 24.

It also decided to deploy police on the campus. Two male dormitories and one female dormitory will be opened on November 2.

The institute was closed sine die after its students mounted an agitation programme demanding restoration of their internship for one year and scrapping the changes in the curriculum by the authorities.

PSTU Registrar Dr Nirmal Chandra told The Daily Star that actions against the students and teachers were taken according to the decision of the academic council meeting on September 27 after reviewing the report of the probe committee headed by Prof Nizamuddin Ahmed.

The academic council expelled six students for one semester, served show cause notices on 10 students and made two teachers of the institute OSDs (officers on special duty).

The expelled students are Palash Kumar, ABM Mustafa Kamal, Kamrul Hassan, Md Shaifuddin, Abu Bakar Siddik and Fakrul Islam Sarkar.

Ten students of different semesters were asked to explain why they would not be expelled for their involvement in creating chaos on the institute campus. But the matter was not solved at the latest meeting.

On the other hand, Associate Prof Abdul Matin of Dairy and Poultry Science department and Associate Prof Anisur Rahman of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery department have been made OSDs and closed to PSTU for "instigating" into the incident.

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PHOTO: STAR

Police produce Khandaker Mehnaz Rashid, daughter of Lt Col (retd) Khandaker Abdur Rashid, a fugitive condemned to death in Bangabandhu murder case, before a court in the city yesterday after a four-day remand. She was arrested in connection with the bomb attack on Awami League lawmaker Fazle Noor Taposh. (Story on Page 1)

Buet results published

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The results of the admission tests for undergraduate courses at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) for the sessions 2009-2010 was published yesterday.

The results are available on www.buet.ac.bd

The viva voce of the successful candidates will start on November 4.

A total of 6040 candidates vied for 965 seats at the admission test held on October 4.



Obituary

METRO DESK

Nicole Shireen Chowdhury, wife of Dr Iftekhar A Chowdhury, former foreign affairs adviser to the caretaker government, passed away at the Gleneagles Hospital in Singapore yesterday at the age of 54, says a press release.

She had been suffering from cancer for the last one and a half years.

She left behind her husband, only daughter Naureen, a research officer at the International Peace Institute, New York, and son-in-law Mathew Fink.

She was laid to rest in Singapore after a namaz-e-janaza.

Sajjadur Rahman Putul
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar



Sajjadur Rahman Putul, former chairman of Moulvibazar Pourasava, passed away due to old-age complications yesterday at the age of 73, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three sons and a daughter.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Dharkapon after a namaz-e-janaza at Moulvibazar Government High School playground.

IBA graduation ceremony held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Graduation Ceremony 2009 of the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Dhaka University (DU) was held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

A total of 250 graduates from the BBA 13th Batch, MBA 41st batch along with EMBA 1st and 2nd batches received certificates on the occasion.

In his welcome address, Chairperson of BBA Programme Sheikh Morshed Jahan said endowed with brilliance and personal commitment, these young men and women have vowed to make a difference in this world and they will lead the country towards prosperity.

They are the best graduates in the country and surely they will make a difference in the future, he added.

Asfia Mahin from BBA 13th batch and Sarkar Md Rezoan Hoque from MBA 41st batch received the Abu Talib Award for achieving the highest cumulative grade point averages (CGPA) in their respective batches.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said, "Face the challenges confidently and efficiently."

"On the happy occasion of this convocation I extend my heartfelt felicitations to the graduating students, their parents, guardians, and the university family and wish them a bright future," he added.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Atiur Rahman was also present on the occasion as a special guest.

6-yr-old girl raped, culprit held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A six-year-old girl was raped by a youth at Keraniganj on the outskirts of the city.

Family members of the girl said she went to a neighbour's house to watch television at around 1:00pm when Nabi Hossain, 22, found her alone and raped her.

Family members rushed her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition while she was screaming in pain.

Officer-in-Charge of Keraniganj Police Station said they have arrested the youth and a case is being filed in this connection.

'Fix Tk 5,000 as minimum wage for RMG workers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday demanded steps to fix Tk 5,000 as the minimum wage for garments workers and implement the wage within the shortest possible time.

They placed the demand at a human chain formed by Bangladesh Centre for Workers' Solidarity (BCWS) at Mukhtangan in the city.

The speakers said RMG workers are facing a lot of problems in leading their life with their poor salaries, because the prices of essentials are increasing daily, adding that even they have to face starvation.

Under the circumstances, it has become necessary to announce the minimum wage as Tk 5,000 for their survival as well as to protect the garment sector, they mentioned.

Kalpna Akhter, executive director of BCWS, Babul Akhter, director, Nasrin Akhter, finance secretary, and Shahawad Hossain, coordinator of a BCWS project, spoke.

Introduce compulsory military education

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called on the government to introduce compulsory military education both at primary and secondary levels to make children prepared for combating any threat to the sovereignty and independence of Bangladesh.

It is everyone's responsibility to safeguard the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. The children, who will take the country's leadership in future, should receive military education to get prepared for facing any challenge ahead, they noted.

The speakers said this while addressing the roundtable on 'Proposed Education Policy and National Value' organised by Sachetan Nagarik Samaj at the National Press Club in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, Justice Abdur Rouf, former chief election commissioner, called for formulating such an education policy which will help people flourish their human values.

Addressing the roundtable, Shaiful Alam Prodhan, president of Jatiya Gonotantrik Party, stressed the need for including religious education in the proposed education policy.

Sachetan President Alamgir Hossain Raju placed a number of demands at the event.

The demands include introduction of compulsory religious education at primary and secondary levels, exclusion of the word 'secular' from the proposed education policy, introduction of a compulsory Islamic studies course of 100 marks at class 11, exclusion of proposals for construction of dance academy and theatre financed by the government.

Dr M Yusuf Ali, former vice chancellor (VC) of Rajshahi University, presided over the roundtable where Dr M Korban Ali, VC of Bangladesh Islamic University; Prof M Mujahidul Islam, chairman of Banking department at Dhaka University; and Dr Razia Sultana, associate professor of Buet, were also present.

BNP advisers feel ignored

FROM PAGE 1

Commenting on the advisers' role in the reorganisation process, an adviser to the chairperson and former BNP minister for two terms, said, "Ask the big leaders of the party because we don't count."

Advisory Council members Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan and Syed Hasan Ahmed declined to comment on the issue.

Another adviser Harun-Al-Rashid, also former state minister, said the chairperson sits with them at her will.

He said the party chief sat with them to discuss various issues during the tenure of the last caretaker government.

Informal meetings between the chairperson and her advisers are held often but the issue of national council

has not been discussed, he added.

Officials at BNP central office said the chairperson now has 18 advisers with the nomination of Maj Gen (retd) Ruhul Alam Chowdhury, former adviser to a caretaker government, on October 1.

Other advisers are Harun-Al-Rashid, Tahmina Khan Dolly, Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan, Shahjahan Omar, Jamiruddin Sircar, M Moshed Khan, Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah, Maj Gen (retd) ZA Khan, Reaz Rahman, MA Hakim, Mushfiqur Rahman, Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, Maj Gen (retd) Mahmudul Hasan, Harun-or-Rashid Munnu, Moeen Khan, Mofazzal Karim, and Syed Hasan Ahmed.

Of them, Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan, Maj Gen (retd) ZA Khan, MA Hakim, Enam Ahmed Chowdhury and Mofazzal Karim sided with expelled BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan during the tenure of the last caretaker government.

Harun-or-Rashid Munnu recently told The Daily Star that he is no longer active in politics.

Hannan Shah and Mahmudul Hasan are now working as conveners of district committees of Gazipur and Tangail.

The BNP chairperson's Press Secretary Maruf Kamal Khan Sohail said apart from the advisory council, the party chief has a few more personal advisers including chairperson's defence and security adviser Maj Gen (retd) Fazle Elahi Akbar.

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Comilla varsity classes, exams suspended

UNB, Comilla

All the classes and examinations at Comilla University were suspended again yesterday for an indefinite period.

The decision came from an emergency syndicate meeting, as the campus situation did not return to normal following the October 7 campus violence.

First, the classes and examinations had been suspended till October 15 and then till October 29 following the clash between the activists of Chhatra League and Islami Chhatra Shibir on the campus on October 7.

The university was scheduled to reopen on November 1.

But, the university authorities decided to suspend the classes and examinations for an indefinite period due to a pent-up mood on the campus.

When contacted, Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Jehadul Karim said the university will reopen when the situation gets normal.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the first death anniversary of Zia ur Rahman Bhuiyan (Rajiv), son of Mahboob R Bhuiyan and Humaira Yasmin, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held after Maghrib prayers at their Gulshan home. Relatives, friends, and admirers are requested to attend the milad and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Achiya Parveen

METRO DESK

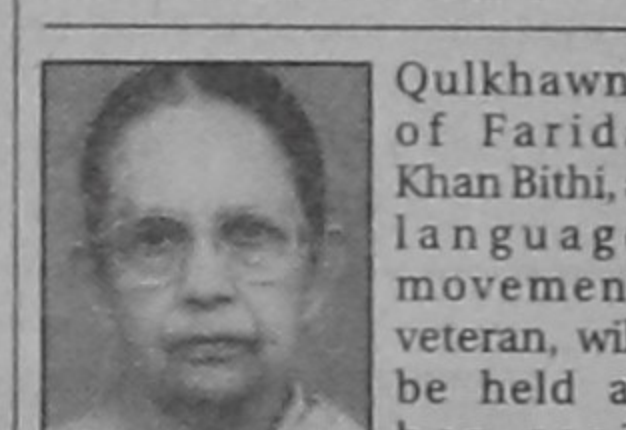


Today is the seventh death anniversary of Achiya Parveen, a senior teacher of Eskaton Garden High School and wife of former secretary MAM Ziauddin, says a press release.

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

Qulkhawani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Qulkhawani of Farida Khan Bithi, a language movement veteran, will be held at her residence at Road # 8/A, House # 62 at Dhanmondi after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Farida Khan, wife of late Amanullah Khan, founder and chairman of Star Garments Ltd., passed away on Wednesday due to a cardiac arrest at the age of 76.

She was a teacher of Dhaka University and Eden Girls' College and also a leading singer of Tagore songs in the 50's through 60's.

She left behind her only daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

Fight for survival still on

FROM PAGE 1

the government to repair her house, but that money was spent meeting their daily needs. "How could I rebuild my house when I was struggling to have three meals a day?" a virtually hopeless woman asked.

A mother of two children who left their parents two years ago, Ayesha said she could not even join the dam repairing work due to old age.

The plight of Fatema Akter, 32, a resident of Garkumarpur village of the same union, is no less than Ayesha's.

A mother of three, she worked hard in the dam repairing work for several days and received some rice. But now she has no alternative to fishing as there has been no effective rehabilitation programme for the Aila victims in the one and a half months.

She is one of the most unfortunate victims who did not get the house repairing assistance from the government. "Those who suffered little by the cyclone received the money, while we lost everything and received nothing," she said.

Like Ayesha and Fatema, thousand others in Gabura and Padmapukur unions in Shyamnagar upazila and

Pratapnagar union in Ashashuni upazila are facing hardship due to poor rehabilitation programme of the government.

The cyclone took their houses along with their means of earning. The sufferings of the survivors increased further as the government is running no relief work or rehabilitation programme now.

Though the occupations of most of the people of the poverty-stricken, Aila-hit areas are fish farming, day labouring and woodcutting, most of them now pass their days either fishing or just staying home.

A number of Aila victims who took shelter on the embankment in Gabura and Padmapukur say they are helpless and in dire need of food and work.

They say the last thing they have received was some clothes, a sheet of tarpaulin, polythene, soaps and a few buckets from some non-government organisations (NGO) one and a half months ago.

Shafiqul Azam Lenin, chairman of Gabura union, says the victims are desperately waiting for government support as they have no income sources. "Everything has stopped

here -- relief or assistance by anyone. Only life goes on with severe crises of food, drinking water and accommodation."

He adds some 2,000 families in his union have received 10-kg rice under Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme after the Eid-ul-Fitr and since then no assistance from the government came.

Echoing the same, Amzad Hossain, chairman of Padmapukur union, says there is no work in the area, even no supportive programmes from the government.

He says they have distributed 10-kg rice to each of 1,200 families in his union under the VGF programme after the Eid.

Both the chairmen say though VGF cards for the victims were allocated, they have yet to get the demand order for it.

Food Minister Abdur Razzaque told The Daily Star the government has provided huge assistance for the victims and will continue it till December.

The district administration of Sathira says around Tk 65.45 lakh in cash and 56,500 tonnes of rice were distributed among the Aila victims and more rice will be distributed soon.

"We will give 20 kilograms of rice to each of the 5,250 families in Gabura, 4,000 families in Padmapukur and 500 families in Pratapnagar a month till December," says Abdus Samad, deputy commissioner (DC) of Sathira.

He adds they have received the allocation and would distribute it very soon.

On house repairing assistance, he informs they have given Tk 2.48 crore for rebuilding houses to 11,500 families in the entire district. Each family received Tk 3,000.

Samad says they will soon give Tk 1.5 crore to the worst-affected Shyamnagar and Tk 1.5 crore to another worst-affected Ashashuni upazila for building houses.

"We have received delivery orders and will start distribution of the money within a few days," he adds.

Abdus Samad goes on to say they will start the employment generation for hardcore poor programme from November 1 where each of the victims will get Tk 100 by working for seven hours a day.

He adds he has also asked the NGOs and other organisations to chalk out alternative income generation programmes for the Aila victims.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours hours as of 6:00pm today.

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

The sun sets in the capital sets at 6:20pm today and rises at 7:05am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 33.8 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and the lowest of 16.8 degree at Jessore.

The 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	31.7	22.8	57	60
Chittagong	30.8	22.4	69	70
Rajshahi	30.5	17.9	67	72
Khulna	32.5	19.5	67	77
Barisal	32.5	20.1	76	91
Sylhet	32.8	20.1	62	71
Cox's Bazar	33.8	23.9	67	70