

# Draft of Int'l Mother Language Institute Act-2010 approved

**BSS, Dhaka**  
The cabinet yesterday approved in principle the draft on International Mother Language Institute Act-2010.  
The cabinet was given at the cabinet's regular weekly meeting at Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.  
After the meeting, Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad told reporters that Hasina along with the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan laid the foundation stone of the International Mother Language Institute at Segunbagicha in the city on March 15 in 2001.  
He said the construction works of the institute remained stopped during the BNP-led four-party alliance regime. The present government after taking office this

time resumed its construction works and the PM inaugurated the institute recently, he said.  
Azad said a 23-member managing committee with the Prime Minister as its chief patron and the education minister as its chairman was proposed in the draft law.  
The cabinet also discussed issues related to execution of the order from the petition of Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on the contempt of court arising from civil appeal. The cabinet opined that final decision on the matter will be announced later on.  
Besides, the meeting was apprised of two reports on the 'Regional Workshop on Paris Declaration Evaluation Methodology' and the visit of Turkish President to Bangladesh in February 12-13 this year.

# TRANSPORT, BURIAL OF MIGRANT WORKERS Relatives get money as bodies arrive

**PORIMOL PALMA**  
Ordeals facing the families of dead migrant workers while collecting money for transportation and burial expenses from the authorities are likely to end, as the government yesterday started providing the money soon after arrival of the bodies at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the city.  
Earlier, it took several months, even over a year in some cases, for the families to receive Tk 35,000 in expenses as the procedure was too complex.  
"We now have arranged a system so that the families can get the bank cheque soon after they receive the bodies at the airport," said Dr Mohammad Kawsar, director (welfare) at the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), yesterday.  
To collect the cheque, a family member should produce a certificate issued by an UP chairman and attested

photographs at the Expatriates' Welfare Desk of BMET, he said.  
Dr Kawsar yesterday handed over a cheque for Tk 35,000 and the dead body of Umar Ali to the deceased's son Moksed Ali of Natore at the airport in Dhaka. Umar Ali died in Kuwait 15 days ago.  
On an average, 200 bodies of migrants arrive at the airports in Dhaka and Chittagong a month.  
There are approximately 60 lakh Bangladeshis living in various parts of the world. They send home \$10 billion plus a year, the highest foreign exchange in real term, hugely helping the balance of payment of the country.  
But many migrants go through various forms of harassment both at home and abroad. And the families are also not spared of the sufferings after accidental or other forms of deaths that add insult to injuries of the relatives, researchers on migration said.  
Traditionally, the families of the dead migrants have to apply for the

money to the district manpower offices (DMOs) along with airway bill, death certificate, certificate of the heir and his or her photographs attested by the UP Chairman concerned.  
The DMO then sends all the documents to the BMET in Dhaka, which again writes to the Bangladesh mission abroad where the migrant died to verify if the worker was legal.  
If the mission confirms the dead worker's legal status abroad, and DMO confirms that the applicant is a member of the worker's family, BMET issues a clearance letter to the DMO and the family for collection of the money.  
"In our surveys, we found this process too lengthy. The missions take quite long time to confirm if the workers were legal abroad," said Al Amin Nayan, who conducted a research on deaths of migrant workers commissioned by an NGO, ActionAid.  
He said he did not find any families who could collect money in less than four months. "For some, it took even

overtwo years."  
Nayan said the migrants' families also face huge troubles to repeatedly go to the DMOs or BMET and spend good sum of money only on transports, which sometimes become equal to the amount provided as the cost.  
Dr Kawsar said the new digitised system is expected to reduce migrant families' woes. Using Internet, the embassy officials concerned can immediately inform the BMET officials in Bangladesh of the time of arrival of bodies in Bangladesh. Accordingly, the families of the migrants are informed without delay.  
Nayan said the government initiative to provide the cheque at the airport is praiseworthy.  
"As migrants' families know the information of the deaths of their relatives, they can surely collect their certificates from the UP chairmen before the arrival of the body. This will cut their sufferings," he said.



Visiting Italian Deputy Foreign Minister Stefania Craxi calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban, left, and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, right, at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday. (Story in Star Business)



PHOTO: PID & BNP

# RMG workers block highway over salary arrears

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj**  
Around 4,000 agitating garment workers blocked the Dhaka-Sylhet highway near Borpa bus stand at Rugganj in Narayanganj for more than two-and-a-half hours yesterday morning demanding payment of their arrears salaries.  
The blockade created severe traffic congestion on both sides of the highway, causing sufferings to the hundreds of stranded passengers.  
Witnesses said the workers of Intim Knitwear Ltd started demonstrating inside the factory at Rugganj around 8:00am for payment of arrears.  
The angry workers also ransacked furniture of the factory and locked its main gate from inside.  
Being resisted by police, the workers later

took to the street and blocked the highway near Borpa bus stand at about 9:00am by burning tyres.  
They also vandalised around eight to ten vehicles. To bring the situation under control, police charged truncheons on the agitators who, in turn, hurled bricks.  
Ten workers of the garments factory were injured from brickbats. They were admitted to different local hospitals.  
The agitators withdrew the blockade around 11:45am after the factory owners rushed to the spot and assured them of paying their arrears by May 15, Forkan Sikder, officer-in-charge of Rugganj Police Station, told The Daily Star.  
The owners also assured the workers of paying their salary by the 10th of each month, he added.

# Power generation faces big fall after recent recovery

**UNB, Dhaka**  
After a little bit of improvement in recent days, the country experienced a big fall in power production as a number of power plants were forced to shut down over the last three days due to technical faults.  
Power generation came down to below 3,750 megawatts yesterday from an average production level of 4,400-4,500MW three days earlier.  
Official sources said a little improvement in the power supply situation had appeared in the first week of May when bulk electricity supply was being withdrawn from irrigation sites and diverted to the urban areas. The power generation also reached 4,500MW after diverting of gas supply from fertiliser factories that

were shut down earlier.  
But two large generation units-- 450MW Meghnaghat plant and 210MW Ghorasal Unit-6 tripped this week after technical glitches.  
This sudden shutdown of the two major plants came as a big blow for the Power Development Board (PDB) which has led to a major drop in the overall power production, triggering a rise in load shedding across the country.  
Apart from this, some other generation units at different power stations were put on repair, maintenance or rehabilitation programmes following technical problems. The nagging gas shortage also forced some plants to reduce production.  
These also played a big role in aggravating the power supply situation in and

outside the capital.  
The plants shut down recently on different grounds also include Haripur IPP, one unit at Ashuganj combined cycle plant, Haripur Unit-3 of SBU plant and 110MW Khulna steam turbine.  
Official sources said the authorities concerned have been trying hard to manage more than 1,500MW load shedding for the last couple of days.  
The peak hour generation forecast was 3,748MW yesterday evening against a demand of 5,500-6,000MW although state-owned PDB says the demand is around 5,000MW.  
Many areas in the capital city experienced load-shedding every alternate hour throughout the day.

# Dhaka for quick release of 'fast track' climate fund

**BSS, Dhaka**  
Bangladesh has called upon the developed countries for quick disbursement of the 'fast track' fund of 30 billion US dollar as committed in the climate conference in Copenhagen for adaptation.  
In the informal climate dialogue held in Petersburg last week, Bangladesh also stressed the need for technology transfer to developing countries for free to strengthen their capacity to combat climate change.  
German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Mexican President Felipe Calderon hosted the dialogue to discuss the way forward in the UN climate change negotiations ahead of next round of formal negotiations.

"In the dialogue we emphasised quick disbursement of 'fast track' fund and technology transfer free of cost as was spelled out in the Copenhagen Accord," State Minister for Environment and Forests Dr Hasan Mahmud, who attended the dialogue, told BSS at his office in the city yesterday.  
"Adaptation is urgent for us while mitigation is the ultimate solution," he said explaining the position of Bangladesh with other LDCs in the dialogue.  
He said, "As one of the most vulnerable countries (MVCs), we have also stressed the resolution adopted in the Copenhagen Accord for giving preferential treatment to most vulnerable developing countries, such as the least devel-

oped countries, small island states and Africa."  
In a workshop on adaptation, on the sidelines of the dialogue, Bangladesh also urged all polluting countries for delivering their shared responsibilities to address the climate change issue.  
"Our position was that all major polluters should take their responsibility," he said adding "Global warming could not be checked only with emission reduction target of developed nation."  
The Petersburg dialogue called for providing necessary political guidance to the negotiators empowering them to take a decision in the next round of meeting to be held in Bonn from May 31 to June 11.

# 5 hurt in gas cylinder blast

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj**  
Five persons including an expatriate and his son were injured yesterday afternoon when a gas cylinder of a microbus exploded at Kanchpur Nayapara in Sonargaon upazila.  
Of the injured, three were identified as Alam Miah, Bangladeshi expatriate in Oman, his son Mehedi Hasan and friend Saiful Islam. They were admitted to Sonargaon Upazila Health Complex and

clinics in the area.  
A one-hour long traffic jam was created stretching for about 12 kilometre from Signboard area in Siddhirganj to Darikandi area in Sonargaon upazila following the blast.  
Later, traffic movement resumed when highway police rushed to the spot, extinguished the fire and removed the vehicle.  
Alam with Mehedi and Saiful took a microbus at Shahjalal International Airport to go to their village home. Alam, of Dulapur village in Comilla, returned to the country yesterday.

# INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM TIB invites applications from Rajshahi journo

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
With a view to increasing the professional skills in investigative journalism, the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Dhaka University and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) are jointly organising a training programme in Rajshahi division.  
Journalists working in print and electronic media in Rajshahi division are requested to apply for the four-day training on investigative journalism on corruption-related issues.  
An applicant has to graduate and will have to have three years' experience in reporting in print or electronic media. The age limit is 40 years, says a press release of TIB.  
The application should be sent to the Outreach and Communication Department, Transparency International Bangladesh, House-141, Road-12, Block-E, Banani, Dhaka-1213 by May 15.  
The trainees will receive Tk 3,000 and a certificate.  
More details will be available at the TIB website www.tib-bangladesh.org

# 1042 prisoners to be freed

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The prisons authorities have sent a list of 1042 inmates to the home ministry with recommendations for their release on special consideration, jail officials said.  
The Department of Prisons will also send around 300 more names of prisoners to the ministry soon, the officials added.  
The convicts recommended for the release include those who have already served most portions of their sentences and the physically challenged persons.  
The officials said the prisons department as well as the government took the decision to release these prisoners with two separate views -- one is giving some relief to the overcrowded jails and the other is providing the criminals with chances to be corrected.  
Golam Haider, deputy inspector general of prisons for Dhaka division, told The Daily Star that they recently sent a list of 1,042 inmates

from all 67 jails across the country and another list would be sent soon.  
"We are analysing the prisoners' files further for sending another list containing more names," the DIG said. "We've just sent the list, but the home ministry would finalise it."  
Towhidul Islam, senior superintendent of Dhaka Central Jail, said he sent a list of 79 names to the prisons department that forwarded it to the home ministry.  
Sources said 250 prisoners were released in November last year on a special consideration of the government.  
Besides, the government every year releases a huge number of prisoners on the occasions of the Independence Day, the Victory Day, Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha.  
According to jail sources there are around 86,000 inmates in 67 jails across the country while the jails have the capacity to contain around 27,000 prisoners.

# Info body boss to enjoy status of state minister

**UNB, Dhaka**  
Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) Muhammad Zamir has been given the rank and status of a state minister.  
The CIC will draw the salary and be accorded all the facilities available to a state minister, says a PID handout yesterday.  
The Right to Information (RTI) Act went into full effect last year facilitating every citizen of the land with the right of access to information regarding any government and non-government organisation, with the exception of a few national security and intelligence agencies.

# 3 jewellers arrested in city

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Detectives arrested a jewellery shop owner and his two employees at Tanti Bazar in the city on Sunday night on charges of buying stolen gold ornaments from 'dope gang' members.  
The gang looted the ornaments from the Banani residence of former IGP AK Khandaker after doping a member of his family on February 10.  
Earlier, four 'dope gang' members, including two women, were arrested in this connection on Saturday.  
All the seven arrestees were produced before a Dhaka court with a remand prayer yesterday, but the court sent them to jail.  
A team of detectives led by

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Obaidul Haque yesterday arrested Kanchan Akand, 24, owner of Adi Kartik Jewellers, his employees -- Bahmal Sarkar, 24, and Bimal Ghosh, 33, -- on Sunday night.  
The police arrested the four gang members, Amena Begum, 35, and her husband Bashir alias Motaleb from a house in the city's Gendaria, and Rozina Begum, 30, and her husband Badsha Mian from Gaibandha.  
A revolver, Tk 50,000 and 550 sedative tablets were also recovered from Amena's possession, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Mollah Nazrul Islam said.  
Amena Begum, who started working as a domes-

# Ctg jewellers enforce strike

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**  
Jewellery shop owners enforced a daylong strike in the port city yesterday demanding immediate arrest of the culprits involved in burglaries at six shops in a span of one month.  
Around 2000 jewellery shops in the city kept the shutters down to press home the six-point demand of the jewellers, sources said.  
Owners and staffs of the jewellery shops under the banner of Bangladesh Jewellers Association formed a human chain in front of the Chittagong Press Club at around 12:00 noon.  
Burglaries took place at six jewellery shops in three markets -- Bipani Bitan (New Market), Lucky Plaza at Agrabad and Swajan Super Market at Bahodderhat -- on the nights of March 22, April 23 and April 30 respectively.

**DHAKA TODAY**  
**Roundtable**  
Shamunay and Manusher Jhonno Foundation will jointly organise a roundtable titled 'Inflation and the upcoming budget: Thoughts of marginal people'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 10:00am.  
**View exchange meeting**  
Nagorik Uddyog and Partnership of Women in Action will jointly organise a view exchange meeting titled 'Social security and non-formal sector'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:30am.  
**Workshop**  
CARE Bangladesh organises the launching workshop of its EMPHASIS Project. Venue: Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 9:30am.  
**Film festival**  
Desh TV and WaterAid Bangladesh will jointly organise a short film festival titled 'Water for Life'. Venue: Russian Science and Culture Centre. Time: 5:00pm.  
**Memorial meeting**  
Alamgir Kabir Film Centre organises a meeting in memory of AKM Abdur Rouf and Alamgir Kabir. Venue: Public Library seminar room. Time: 5:30pm.

**WEATHER TODAY**  
**Rain likely**  
**UNB, Dhaka**  
Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.  
Mild to moderate heat wave is sweeping over Dhaka and Khulna divisions and the regions of Chandpur, Rajshahi, Ishwardi, Bogra and it may continue.  
Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.  
**The sun sets in the capital at 6:32pm today and rises at 5:17am tomorrow.**  
Country's highest temperature 39.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and Ishwardi and lowest 20.9 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.  
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 36.7 28.0 78 65  
Chittagong 32.0 25.2 81 77  
Rajshahi 39.6 26.8 80 62  
Khulna 37.0 28.8 77 67  
Barisal 35.4 28.6 77 70  
Sylhet 28.5 23.6 94 83  
Cox's Bazar 34.2 25.2 76 77