

BRIDGE OR BARRIER?

One of the 13 bridges around the capital that lack vertical clearance for the vessels to pass as soon as the water level rises during flood season. The photo taken recently shows a medium size bulkhead barely making through inadequate height of the Ashulia Bridge on the river Turag.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ



Evidence ready against twelve

Says war crimes prosecutors after district visits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

War crimes investigators and prosecutors have collected evidence against 12 people including former Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Ghulam Azam and BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

Five of them are now in prison in two cases filed on charges of crimes against humanity.

Moves would be made to arrest the rest, Zeed Al Malum, member of the prosecution team, told journalists at his office at the Old High Court Building yesterday. He however did not elaborate.

Their involvement in crimes against humanity became evident in primary investigation, he said.

Crimes against humanity fall under article 3(2) of International Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973, which also covers offences like war crimes, genocide, murder, abduction, confinement, torture and rape.

If found guilty, they might face up to death sentence.

The other 10 people are -- Jamaat Ameer Motiur Rahman

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Pabna govt officials not bowing to pressure

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Pabna district administration yesterday vowed to perform their duties defying pressure from influential quarters belonging to the ruling party.

Twenty-six officials of the local administration submitted mass transfer applications to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Pabna showing security reasons. "We have already

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Blast in factory kills 1, hurts 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One employee was killed and five others injured in an explosion at a ceramic factory in Gazipur yesterday morning.

The dead is Rafiqul Islam, 28, while the injured are Mohammad Ali, 35, supervisor of the finishing unit; Mossaraf Hossain, 25, floor in-charge; team leader Selim Miah, 30; workers Abdul Haque, 34, and Akkas Ali, 24.

A nitrogen gas cylinder and an oil tanker of the printing section of Sun Power Ceramics went off with a bang at about 11:00am, injuring six staffs, said Afzal monir, executive director of the factory at Hotapara.

The six employees were admitted to the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital where Rafiqul succumbed to his inju

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PM's adviser trashes RTI

UNB, Gopalganj

The government is not bound to give any information to the journalists, said Dr Syed Modasser Ali, health adviser to the prime minister.

He was addressing a meeting in the conference hall of Gopalganj Sadar Hospital to discuss the anthrax situation in the district.

The adviser also said "Some 13,350 employees will be recruited shortly for community clinics. We have decided that none outside the party

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Strong laws for safe climate

Environment bills seek more clout, courts to tackle polluters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two bills were placed in parliament yesterday seeking to increase power and number of environment courts to take stern actions against polluters and also to establish a trust to tackle adverse impacts of climate change.

State Minister for Environment and Forest Hasan Mahmud placed the bills, which were sent to the parliamentary standing committees on environment and forest ministry for scrutiny.

The bill to enact new law aims to expedite trial of environment related offences and offers setting up environment court at every district headquarters with expanded jurisdiction to take stern actions against all sorts of polluters.

A judicial officer of the rank of a joint district judge will be appointed as the judge of the environment court to conduct trial of environment related offences alongside his general jurisdiction.

The bill also proposed for setting up one or more special magistrate's courts at district level with the authority to hold trial of environment offences and issue order to confiscate goods and other materials as punishment.

It proposed repealing the existing Environment Court Act, 2000 which allows the government to form court only at divisional headquarters. According to the existing law, a person might be jailed for maximum three years or fined Tk 3 lakh for polluting environment.

But the proposed legislation increased the jail term up to five years and the fine up to Tk 5 lakh.

Both the special magistrate's court and the environment court will enjoy authority to realise fines from the offenders. Besides, the courts may order to meet

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PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina holds up the UN award for her country's remarkable achievement in attaining the Millennium Development Goals particularly in reducing child mortality. The premier accepted the trophy at a hotel in New York yesterday.

CHILD DEATHS HALVED

UN award for Bangladesh

UNB, New York

Bangladesh received a UN award for its remarkable achievements in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) particularly in reducing child mortality rate.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina accepted the award at a colourful function at Astoria Hotel in New York yesterday.

The award was conferred upon Bangladesh and five other countries a day ahead of the MDG conference on the sidelines of the 65th UN General Assembly (UNGA).

The award came 10 years after the general assembly of the global forum that had set the 8-point MDG at the UNGA session in 2000, which Sheikh Hasina attended as the head of the government during her previous tenure as Prime Minister.

Briefing the reporters about the event, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said Bangladesh was given the award in recognition of the government of Sheikh Hasina's efforts in reducing child mortality by 50 percent during the current tenure of her government.

The award committee highly appreciated the premier's personal leadership in spearheading a campaign in achieving the MDGs.

Speaking on the occasion, Hasina said the award will encourage Bangladesh in strengthening its efforts for achieving all the

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7 other MDGs seen as tough

Experts say maternal mortality, child malnutrition still remain high

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although Bangladesh receives a UN award for reducing child mortality, malnutrition of children and maternal mortality rate still remain high and a major concern, said Prof Quazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad.

Besides, though poverty rate has come down from 60 percent in 1990-91 to 37 percent, rising inequality between the rich and the poor is a major concern, he observed.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Ahmad made the observations on the eve of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) conference starting today on the sidelines of the 65th UN General Assembly in New York.

The MDGs 2015 set by the UN in 2000 include eradicating extreme poverty, universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.

Bangladesh's child mortality rate, which was 146 per

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