

NEWS IN *brief*

Call to conserve biodiversity

CU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a conference yesterday said biodiversity conservation is needed at individual, national, and international levels to ensure availability of resources to the future generations.

They were speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the three-day International Conference on 'Biodiversity-present state, problems and prospects of its conservation' at Chittagong University (CU).

Department of Zoology of CU and Department of Biology of Norwegian University of Science and Technology jointly organised the conference, supported by The Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU).

Primary Edn Week begins today

BSS, Dhaka

The National Primary Education Week 2011 begins in the country today.

The week will be observed through various programmes for expansion of primary education and improvement of its quality.

President M Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in separate messages wished successes of all programmes of the primary education week.

The president in his message said the country needs educated and skilled manpower with technical knowledge for balanced and sustainable development.

BNP joint meet today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP will hold a joint meeting today to chalk out elaborate programmes to observe the 75th birth anniversary of former president Ziaur Rahman.

BNP vice-chairmen, advisers to its Chairperson Khaleda Zia, joint-secretaries, and leaders of the associate and front organisations are expected at the meeting.

It will be held at 12:00pm at the party headquarters at Naya Paltan in the city, says a press release.

January 19 is the 75th birth anniversary of Ziaur Rahman, the founder of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Zia was born in 1936 at Bagbari of Gabtoli upazila in Bogra.

Santosh Gupta's birth anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 86th birth anniversary of late Santosh Gupta, a veteran journalist, columnist, freedom fighter and noted intellectual of the country, says a press release.

Santosh Gupta also a former senior assistant editor of the Daily Sangbad passed away on August 6, 2004.

To mark his birth anniversary, Santosh Gupta Smriti Parishad will take place wreaths at his memorial in the city's Postagola Crematorium at 9:30am today.

IUB recalls Prof Mobin

METRO DESK

Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) at a programme yesterday recalled the life and legacy of its former vice-chancellor Prof Bazlul Mobin Chowdhury.

The university organised the memorial programme on its Baridhara campus, which was attended also by the family members of Prof Mobin.

Chairman of IUB founding trust and governing council; and members of the trust, faculty, and management alongside the students, alumni, and well-wishers attended the event.



Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain is likely at one or two places over Chittagong division in next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain dry elsewhere over the country with temporary partly cloudy sky. Mild cold wave is sweeping over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions and the regions of Tangail, Jessore, Kushtia and Srimongal and it may continue, Met Office said.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions and the river basins of the country and light to moderate for may occur elsewhere over the country during midnight till morning.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:28pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 29.3 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and lowest 07.9 degrees Celsius at Chuadanga.

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	24.8	12.6	82	75
Chittagong	27.2	14.6	71	74
Rajshahi	24.4	08.2	94	76
Rangpur	25.0	09.8	99	79
Khulna	24.5	11.5	86	71
Barisal	25.0	11.8	95	79



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina witnesses the winter exercise of 66 Infantry Division of Bangladesh Army at Uttar Panapukur in Gangachara of Rangpur yesterday.



PHOTO: PTI

PM asks army to earn people's trust

UNB, Rangpur

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked the armed forces to gain the trust of the masses, and preserve it in view of its importance.

"Remember, the people are the strength of the country, and you are a part of these people. So it is very important to gain their trust and preserve it," she said at the Darbar 66 Infantry Division of Bangladesh Army after witnessing their winter exercise.

She said the Bangladesh Army has always played a sparkling role for the country whenever it has been needed, apart from their professional activities and training.

She especially mentioned the role of the Army in preparing photographed voter lists and identity cards. "The Army always remains beside the people of the country during various natural calamities," she said.

Hasina said the present government is working restlessly to develop the socio-economic conditions of the people along with the

development of the Army.

Describing the present government's various initiatives for welfare of the armed forces, she said, "Let me assure you, as in our previous tenure, the present government is implementing various types of projects for the army and their family members."

In this connection she said this time the government has introduced a new pay scale and increased ration for the army to bring it up to par with the Navy and the Air Force.

She also said the pension rate and medical allowance for the retired dead army soldiers have been increased. "We have also taken steps to mitigate the accommodation problems of armed forces at all levels," she said.

Hasina reaffirmed her government's commitment to make the army a modern, skilful and time-befitting force.

She said the strategic importance of the areas under the 66 Infantry Division of Bangladesh Army is crucial, considering the

Bangladesh Army played a sparkling role for the country whenever needed, apart from their professional duties.

national economy and security. "Especially, the presence of huge coal and hard rock mines attaches more importance to this area. It is your prime duty to ensure the security of the area," she said.

She said she was happy to know that like the previous times the winter exercise of this year also included Ansar and BNCC cadets.

She said just two years ago Rangpur was known as 'Monga area'.

"In the last two years we said goodbye to Monga from this area. Several projects are being implemented in this area to create employment, such as the VGD

and VGE"

After her speech, the PM invited two soldiers to speak to them. Speaking on the occasion, the soldiers demanded enhanced risk allowance after improving the economic strength of the country.

Hasina agreed on the enhanced rationing for the infants of the soldiers, and said the government would provide enhanced risk allowance after improving the economic strength of the country.

Former president and JP Chairman HM Ershad, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Quader, Adviser to the PM Tarique Ahmed Siddique, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs AB Tajul Islam, Army chief General Abdul Mubeen and JP leader Rawshan Ershad were present on the occasion.

Earlier, General Abdul Mubeen received the prime minister on her arrival, and she witnessed the winter exercise, at Uttar Panapukur in Gangachara.

Prof Farida Huq laid to rest

METRO DESK

Prof Dr Farida Huq, wife of Barrister Rafique-ul-Huq, laid to rest at Banani graveyard in the city after namaz-e-janaza yesterday, says a press release.

She passed away early morning on Friday at a hospital in the city due to prolonged illness.

Dr Farida was a medical doctor and microbiologist.

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Qulkhwani of Syed Sirajul Huda, a politician and senior lawyer of

the Supreme Court, will be held at his Dhanmondi residence after Maghrib prayers today, says a press release.

Sirajul Huda, president of Bangladesh Jatiya Dal, passed away on Thursday due to a cardiac arrest.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Dhaka needs \$10b for adaptation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh needs US \$10 billion for mitigation and adaptation to climate changes in the next five to 10 years, said Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, co-ordinator of the National Climate Change Negotiation Committee, yesterday.

Government needs six more months to complete sector-wise assessment to know the amount required, he said.

He was presenting a keynote paper at a seminar titled 'The outcome of Cancun Climate Change Conference (COP-16) and Bangladesh', organised by Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) at its office in the city.

BEA President Prof Abul Barkat chaired the seminar.

BDR mutiny: 2 witnesses testify against 49 accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two witnesses testified against 49 accused members of 24 Rifles Battalion and Rifles Security Unit (RSU) at a special court in Pilkhana BDR headquarters yesterday.

Sepoy Motiur Rahman in his testimony said he had seen Sepoy Abdur Rahman, one of the accused, beat a female officer with the butt of a gun.

"While Abdur was beating and scolding madam, many mutineers cheered. Abdur also chased me as I went to save her."

Of the accused, 41 jawans have cross-examined the two.

The Special Court-7, set up at Darbar Hall and headed by BDR Director General Maj Gen Rafiqul Islam, has been adjourned till January 13 10:00am.

Agriculture of haor areas needs reform

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A holistic reform of agriculture in haor areas is needed to ensure food security and build a hunger-free country, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

Pointing towards lack of research and development initiatives there, they said haor areas are full of natural resources but those remain seriously neglected, says a press release.

The discussion was organised by some non-government organisations including Nagorik Shanghati, CSRL and IDEA at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the city.

Haor areas present in some eastern and

northeastern districts including Kishoreganj, Netrokona and Sunamganj, have large farmlands but remain flooded most of the year.

Pointing towards natural calamities there, speakers said farmers could not harvest crops for various natural disasters in five out of ten years.

Sunamganj-4 lawmaker Matiur Rahman, Netrokona-4 lawmaker Rokeya Momin, former National Press Club president Hasan Shahriar, agriculturist Dr M Gul Hossain and Prof Ashrafuzzaman Selim of Bangladesh Agriculture University also spoke at the discussion.



Momtaz Begum Shanu bursts into tears hearing news of murder of her husband Abul Kashem, inset, at Kamrangirchar in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: STAR

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Best Microfinance Institution (MFI) of the Year, Citi Foundation, Third Position (2010)

Best Published Accounts & Corporate Government Disclosures, South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA): Merit Certificate (2009), Joint 1st Runner Up (2008), Merit Certificate (2006)

Best Published Accounts & Reports, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB): Second Position (2009), Third Position (2008), Second Position (2006)

15 Saudi-bound passengers held at airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Immigration police yesterday arrested 15 Saudi-bound passengers at the Shahjalal International Airport on charge of using forged passports.

Later, the arrestees were handed over to airport police station.

Immigration police said the 15 were arrested as they were trying to go to Saudi Arabia using others' passports by replacing photos.

They were scheduled to leave the country by a GMG Airlines flight early yesterday.

The police also filed a case against 32 people, including the 15, in this connection.

The arrestees are Enamul Haque, Jahir Ahmed, Monjur, Naser Hossain, Imran, Sazzadur Rahman, Dhada Miah, Kalimullah, Kamal Hossain, Hasan, Rashed, Rezaul Karim, Masud Rana, Anwar Hossain and Abul Bashar.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar
A seminar on Scavenging Women and their Children will be held. Venue: Cirdap auditorium, Time: 10:00am.

Primary education week
National Primary Education Week - 2011 will be inaugurated. Venue: Osmani memorial auditorium, Time: 9:30am.

Meeting
TIB will arrange a meeting. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 11:00am.

Human chain
Bangladesh Chhatra Union will form a human chain. Venue: In front of National Press Club, Time: 4:30pm.

Protest rally
Gonotantik Biplobi Party will organise a