

NEWS IN *brief*

Hearing on Tarique's case today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court is set today for hearing an appeal filed by BNP leader Tarique Rahman against a High Court verdict in a money laundering case against him.

The HC on September 29 last year rejected a writ petition filed by Tarique, senior vice- chairman of BNP, challenging the proceedings of the case.

The Anti Corruption Commission filed the case on October 26, 2009 with a Dhaka court against Tarique and his business partner Giasuddin Al Mamun on charges of illegally sending Tk 20.41 crore to Singapore between 2003 and 2007.

Ikebana contest held in city

METRO DESK

First national Ikebana, a traditional Japanese art of flower arrangement, contest and demonstration was held at Lake Shore hotel in the city yesterday.

Embassy of Japan and Japanese University Alumni Association in Bangladesh jointly organised contest with the cooperation of Bangladesh Ikebana Association and Japan Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries, says a press release. Tamotsu Shinotsuka, ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh was present as a chief guest while Noriko Tanada, representative of the Japanese Association and Prof Monowara Islam, president of Bangladesh Ikebana Association demonstrated Ikebana.

Hena's Death: Arrest of rapist, fatwa issuers demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different rights-based organisation yesterday demanded exemplary punishment of the culprits, who raped and whipped to death a 14-year-old girl, Hena, in Shariatpur recently.

Leaders of the Sammilita Nari Samaj, a platform of women's rights activists, visited the family members of Hena and formed a human chain demanding punishment of the culprits at Chatka village of Shariatpur.

They demanded immediate arrest of rapist Mahbub and the local leaders, who issued the fatwa to whip Hena. Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum also expressed deep concern over the death of Hena.

DU holds GC Dev memorial lecture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gobinda Chandra Dev memorial lecture for 2009 and 2010 was held at the Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate building of Dhaka University yesterday.

Prof Hasan Azizul Haque of History department delivered the lecture for 2009 on humanity and human welfare while Prof Ajoy Roy delivered lecture on humanity and philosophy in the thought of Rabindranath.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique was present as the chief guest at the memorial lecture, which was organised by Gobindra Chandra Dev Philosophy Research Centre.

Speaking on the occasion Prof Arefin expressed honour for the martyred intellectual Prof Dev.

Breach of law blamed for frequent road accidents

UNB, Dhaka

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said law violation tendency is the main cause behind the sharp rise of road accidents.

He told the inaugural session of the fifth national grand rally of Nirapad Sarak Chai (we want safe road) at Mohanagar Natyamancha in the city.

Roads and Railway Division Secretary M Mozammel Haque Khan and BRTA Chairman M Ayubur Rahman Khan were present at the function with Nirapad Sarak Chai Vice Chairman Syed Ehsanul Haque Kamal in the chair. Nirapad Sarak Chai Chairman and film actor Elias Kanchan presented the keynote paper.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over Barisal and Chittagong divisions and the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere over the country during midnight till morning, Met Office said.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:48pm and rises tomorrow at 6:37am.

Country's highest temperature 31.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 10.29 degrees at Srirangol.

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	29.3	14.8	55	54
Chittagong	30.4	13.8	75	45
Rajshahi	28.5	11.2	85	63
Rangpur	26.8	12.8	71	61
Khulna	28.5	14.5	84	58
Barisal	29.4	13.0	86	72
Sylhet	30.8	14.8	56	47
Cox's Bazar	31.5	16.2	59	72



Queues at open market sale (OMS) points of rice becoming longer due to its rising price. The photo was taken from Mirpur 14 in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

BARAPUKURIA, PHULBARIA

JS body suggests open-pit mining

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on power and energy ministry has strongly recommended open-pit mining at Barapukuria and Phulbaria coal mines.

A document obtained by The Daily Star says the parliamentary watchdog made the recommendation after visiting different coal mines in Cologne, Germany.

The committee chief Shubid Ali Bhuiyan led a four-member delegation to Germany in October 2010 to gain a first hand experience on mining operations there, it adds.

The delegation upon observations concludes that soil structures, density of coal, and level underground water of Barapukuria and Phulbaria mines are similar to those in Cologne.

So open-pit mining in Cologne can be an example in extracting coal from the two

mines of Bangladesh, according to the observers.

"Many believe that our country will turn into desert and the environment will seriously be affected if we go for open-pit mining. But after close observation of open-pit mining in Cologne, we believe that open-pit mining is possible in our country if we plan properly."

The parliamentary body also said the delegation members exchanged views with local people living around coal mines in Cologne who did not say anything negative about open-pit mining.

"It is possible to extract coal applying open-pit mining in Bangladesh by harming the environment the minimum through successful water management and proper rehabilitation of local people of mine areas," says the committee.

UP polls by May: Sohul

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Elections to union parishads will be held by May while its schedule will be announced later this month.

Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain said this while talking to reporters after inaugurating a server station for updating voter list in Araihaajar upazila.

Voting will take place in phases. It will start with coastal areas and wrap up with Dhaka division, he added. He also mentioned the upcoming UP election will be non-partisan.

'Call off strike for World Cup Cricket'

BSS, Dhaka

Leaders of different political parties yesterday urged BNP to withdraw tomorrow's hartal saying that it would hamper the preparation of the World Cup Cricket alongside by side with increasing sufferings of the people.

"The hosting of World Cup Cricket in Bangladesh is a matter of pride. But calling hartal before the gala event, will certainly disrupt its preparation along with increasing sufferings of the people," Senior Awami League leader Suranjit Sengupta told the news agency.

Suranjit said the government has reconsidered setting up airport at Arial Beel, while no case was recorded against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for killing of policeman.

"So there is no justification of enforcing hartal at this moment," he said.

Suranjit also urged the opposition to call off hartal.

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon said there is no issue in the hands of BNP for which they enforce haratl just 10 days before the World Cup.

Mujahidul Islam Selim and General Secretary of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Sharif Nurul Ambia also spoke at the programme.

Capt Iftekhar laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Captain Iftekhar Alam, a member of United Nations Peace Keeping Mission who died in a road accident in Sudan on January 30, was buried at Banani Military Graveyard with a complete military honour after namaj-e-janaza held at Dhaka cantonment yesterday, says an ISPR press release.

Chief of Army Staff Gen Md Abdul Mubeen, Naval Chief Vice Admiral ZU Ahmed, Air Force Chief Air Marshal Shah Md Ziaur Rahman, senior defence officers and relatives of Iftekhar were present at the namaj-e-janaza. He left behind his parents and one brother.

New wage for journos demanded

BSS, Dhaka

Leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) yesterday strongly demanded of the government to form new wage board for the print and electronic media.

They said with enhancements of salaries in all other categories, the pay-scale of the journalists dropped to such an extend, which is far below the dignity of the media people. They made the demand at the biennial council of BFUJ at Jatiya Press Club auditorium here.

They said the government should announce the eighth wage board considering the continued high prices of essentials. Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad inaugurated the council with BFUJ President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury in the chair.

Abul Kalam said, "The role played by the electronic and print media after 1/11 is acclaimed by the people at home and abroad."

Make hartal a success: Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night urged the people to make tomorrow's hartal successful and said tougher programmes will follow if the government is failed to resolve crises like acute shortage of gas, water, and electricity.

"Hartal will be withdrawn if only the existing gas, water, and electricity crises are resolved. Otherwise it is not the last hartal. More programme will be announced," she said while addressing a joining ceremony at her Gulshan office.

Eminent heart specialist Dr Mohosin Zillur Karim joined BNP by placing bouquet to the party's chairperson.

Referring to Arial Beel incident, the former premier said cancellation of the project of building a new airport is not enough. The government must withdraw the case filed against thousands of local people, she said.

Mohosin Zillur Karim said a platform is a must for bringing change in the country and nationalistic force is the only such platform.

Former ministers M Morshed Khan and Abdullah Al Noman, Golam Akbar Khandaker, Zafrul Islam Chowdhury, and Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee were also present.

S Asian foreign secys meet today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The foreign secretaries from eight South Asian countries meet today in Bhutanese capital Thimphu for two days to review and finalise a report regarding various initiatives taken for greater connectivity, economic integration, and cooperation in security.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes, who is already in Thimphu, will lead Bangladesh delegation at the 38th meeting of Saarc Standing Committee that is comprised of the foreign secretaries of the member states. The standing committee will finalise a report that will be considered at the meeting of Council of Ministers, which is constituted of foreign ministers of Saarc nations.



PHOTO: STAR

People of Hatibandha form a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday over the recent deaths caused by nipah encephalitis virus in Hatibandha upazila of Lalmonirhat.

Worker dies, 3 hurt as poorly-made scaffold collapses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage construction worker died and his three fellow workers sustained injury after falling down from the seventh floor of an under construction building in the city's Banani on Friday afternoon.

Injured workers -- Rashedul Islam, 16, his brother Mofizul Islam and Md Zakaria and Kamal, 16, -- were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Rashedul dead.

Witnesses said the four workers fell down around 5:30pm while working at a bamboo made platform at the seventh floor outside the eight-storey building of the construction firm Urban Topaz on road-23, block-B.

Police said no case was recorded in this connection till 3:30pm yesterday (Saturday).

On a spot visit, this reporter found that safety measures were poorly maintained. Very thin bamboo sticks were being used for making platform at which several workers stay with construction materials for their work.

Even bamboo supports behind the platforms were not properly tied with long bars at the height. Project engineer Mohammad Arif, however, made no comment regarding the accident.

OIL-RUN POWER PLANTS

3 local cos offer lowest tariff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three local companies have quoted lowest power tariffs in their financial offers for setting up five furnace oil-run private power plants.

Bangladesh Power Development Board opened the financial offers last week. These five tenders drew 23 offers from various local companies.

Barakatullah Electro Dynamics Ltd quoted the lowest price for two 50 megawatt power projects in Natore and Barisal, Abul Khair Power for two 100 MW projects in Rajshahi and Khulna and a consortium of Confidence Cement, Rulelec PLC and Energypac Power Generation Ltd for a 100 MW plant in Chittagong.



Seminar

Ministry of Agriculture will hold a seminar, Venue: Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council auditorium, Farmgate, Time: 10:00am.

Meeting

Bangladesh Awami League led 14-party grand alliance will hold a meeting, Venue: House No-51/A, Road No-3/A, Dhanmondi Residential Area, Time: 4:00pm.

Memorial meeting

Bangabandhu Academy will hold a memorial meeting on journalist Pathik Saha, Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium, Time: 10:30am.

Human chain

Bangladesh Students' Union will organise a human chain, Venue: Jatiya Press Club, Time: 4:00pm.

Exhibition

Artist Mohammad Yunus organises an exhibition of his paintings, Venue: Dhaka Art Centre, House No-60, Road No-7/A, Dhanmondi, Time: 3:00pm.

Seminar

Bangladesh Meteorological Department will hold a seminar, Venue: Bangladesh Meteorological Department headquarters, Time: 10:00am.

Hunger strike

Bangladesh MPO Banchito Shikhhak Forum will hold a hunger strike, Venue: DG Office, Time: 11:00am.

Launching

Intertek will hold a launching ceremony, Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Time: 4:00pm.