

NEWS IN

brief

Dipu pledges safe return of Jahan Moni hostages

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday assured the family members of Bangladeshi sailors, who kept hostage in Somalia since the hijacking of MV Jahan Moni on December 5 last year, about safe and secure return of the sailors.

She made the assurance when a group of family members called on her at the foreign ministry in the city yesterday afternoon.

This was the second time the family members of the victims met with the foreign minister seeking government's step to rescue the seamen.

"There is no way but to have patience...we are trying our best to ensure safe return of the sailors as quick as possible," said the foreign minister.

However, an official source preferring anonymity told The Daily Star yesterday that the negotiation process to rescue the 25 sailors and wife of the captain of MV Jahan Moni was almost reached on a conclusion, but recent excessive exposure in two private TV channels make the negotiation uncertain.

The source said the pirates have agreed to release the ship and sailors with a certain amount of ransom, but after the TV interview the pirates asking more money.

In the TV reports, the captain of MV Jahan Moni through telephone interview described about their condition, how they were being treated, scarcity of food etc.

Two more prosecutors for war crimes trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday appointed two prosecutors for conducting cases relating to war crimes on behalf of the state in the international crimes tribunal.

They new prosecutors are--Assistant Attorneys General Fazilatunesa Bappy and Nurjahan Mukta. Now the number of prosecutors stands at 10.

Hashem's case adjourned till Feb 20

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday deferred the hearing on charge framing against former BNP lawmaker and Partex Group Chairman MA Hashem till February 20 in connection with a tax evasion case.

Judge Mohammad Zohurul Hoque of the Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after Hashem's lawyer submitted a time petition seeking adjournment of the hearing.

Hashem was not present in the court as his sister died on Saturday.

The National Board of Revenue on August 23 last year filed the case with the Sessions Judge Court against Hashem, also chairman of United Commercial Bank Ltd, for evading tax.

Muggers stab man to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of muggers stabbed a man to death and injured two others in South Keraniganj yesterday.

The deceased is Bipul Roy, 35 and the injured are Kanai Roy, 28, and Gopal Roy, 30. All are carpenters and hailed from Aganagar of the area.

Injured Kanai said at around 7:00am, a gang of 5/6 muggers stopped their rickshaw did the act as they denied to give their belongings. They were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where Bipul died around 2:00pm.

Youth held with five cocktails

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested a youth with five cocktails in the city's Uttar Badda yesterday.

The arrestee is identified as Jamal, 22, of Boubazar of Mirpur, Section No-14. Police said on suspicious a police petrol team chased a group of youths and caught Jamal with five cocktails while others managed to flee.



WEATHER
TODAY

Change in night temperature unlikely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in next 24 hours till 6:00pm yesterday.

Light to moderate fog may occur 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 31.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and lowest 11.0 degrees at Sitakunda and 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	28.8	15.7	52	47
Chittagong	29.4	15.5	67	58
Rajshahi	28.4	12.0	87	74



KNOWLEDGE CORNER



Liberation War of Bangladesh

The questions of land reforms, state language, inter-wing economic and administrative disparities, provincial autonomy, the defense of East Pakistan and many other consequential questions contributed to the progressively deteriorating relations between the two wings of Pakistan ever since the independence of the country from Britain in 1947, thus resulting in the armed struggle of 71. In the general election in 1970, the Awami League secured 167 seats out of 169 allotted for East Pakistan but the Pakistan civil and military ruling clique refused to transfer power. On March 7, 1971, Sheikh Mujib gave the historical speech at the Racecourse Ground (presently Suhrawardy Udyan).

A planned military genocide was suddenly launched by the Pakistani Army- codenamed Operation Searchlight — on 25 March night. Pak Army attacked EPR Base at Pilkhana, Rajarbagh Police line and killed citizens. Sheikh Mujib was arrested and flown to West Pakistan. But just before it happened on 26th March, he sent a message for the Liberation War to begin. The next day, Major Ziaur Rahman broadcast the announcement on behalf of Bangabandhu from Kalurghat Radio Station, Chittagong.

An entire nation of 75 million, rose in arms against the military junta of Pakistan. A provisional revolutionary government was formed in exile on April 17, 1971 in Mujibnagar (Meherpur district) with Bangabandhu as the President, Syed Nazrul Islam as the acting President along with Tajuddin Ahmed as the Prime Minister. Throughout the war with the Pak Army the Mujibnagar government served as the nominal head of the pro-independence guerrilla militias, mainly the Mukti Bahini.

During the Bangladesh Liberation War the Bangladesh Forces were divided in the geographical area of Bangladesh into eleven sectors. Col. M.A.G.Osmani was the Commander-in-chief and each sector was under a sector commander who directed the military operations.

Thus the war went on and gradually the Pakistanis got cornered. India joined hands with the Mukti-Bahini. The allied forces crushed all resistance and slowly approached Dhaka. Finally on December


16,1971 General Niazi with his more than 90000 soldiers surrendered to General J.S.Aurora, the commander of the allied force at the Racecourse Ground, making it the largest surrender since world war II.

A large section of the intellectual community of Bangladesh were murdered, mostly by the Al-Shams and Al-Badr forces at the instruction of the Pakistani Army. Just two days before the surrender, on 14 December 1971.

There has been numerous works of art and films that depicted the Liberation War. The concert for Bangladesh organized by George Harrison and Ravi Shankar at New York- was a major happening in 1971.

Four categories of gallantry awards were created after the war in Bangladesh to honor those who had demonstrated outstanding bravery in the war. In decreasing order of importance, They were Bir Sreshtho (Posthumous), Bir Uttom, Bir Bikrom and Bir Protik.

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Committee to ensure fuel supply to power stations formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An inter-ministerial committee was formed yesterday to ensure uninterrupted fuel supply to the rental, quick rental and picking power stations by using Bangladesh Railway.

Additional Secretary of communications ministry will head the six-member committee. Other members are two joint secretaries, one each from power and rail divisions, director general of Bangladesh Railway and chairmen of Power Development Board (PDB) and Petroleum Corporation of Bangladesh (BPC).

The committee was formed at a meeting between communications and energy ministries with communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain in the chair. State Minister for Energy Enamul Haq was also present at the meeting, held at the communications ministry.

A few AL poll pledges fulfilled

Say eminent citizens

Though Awami League (AL) in its election manifesto promised to bring changes, a few initiatives have been taken in this regard under this government, said some eminent citizens at a discussion yesterday.

They said the government did well in the agriculture and education sector and also in combating militancy but failed in various others like controlling price hike of essentials, solving electricity, water and gas crisis and improving law and order situation.

Shushasoner Jonno Nagorik (Sujan) organised the discussion titled 'Pledge of charter for change and reality' at Jatiya Press Club in the city.

Discussants also observed that pledge for a positive change in the political culture by making parliament effective remains unfulfilled.

Columnist Syed Abul Maksud said it would be harsh on the government if all the changes are expected to be brought about in two years but the process could have begun.

"Some tasks could have been done in seven days while some



Chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh Hafizuddin Khan speaks at a discussion titled 'Pledge of charter for change and reality' organised by Shushasoner Jonno Nagorik (Sujan) at Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

within one month but they did not do those," he said.

The government took some bad decisions in these two years like the plan to construct an airport at Arial Beel, Maksud said.

Former AL Organising Secretary Mahmudur Rahman Manna said the present government is certainly better than other governments but

me that Awami League made both the government and the party weak," Manna said.

Prof Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University law department said it is not a matter of regret that the government could not bring positive change in many sectors but the dangerous thing is that in some cases negative changes occurred.

Political culture was in a dire situation during the BNP government but that culture worsened during present government's term, he said.

But the government was also successful in bringing the country out of its image of being synonymous to militancy and starting the trial of war criminals, he said.

Sujan General Secretary Badiul Alam Mazumder presented a keynote paper with Chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh Hafizuddin Khan moderating the discussion.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President ASM Abdur Rob, AL leader Subash Singha Roy and Prof Dilara Chowdhury of Jahangirnagar University also spoke.

Road crashes kill 14

METRO DESK

Fourteen people were killed and 14 others injured in road accidents in Bagerhat, Naogaon, Chittagong, Brahmanbaria and Kushtia on Saturday night and yesterday.

Our Bagerhat Correspondent reports: Three people, including the driver of a pickup van, were killed when the vehicle fell into a roadside ditch when the driver lost control over the steering at Jaidihi in Mollahat upazila around 5:45am yesterday.

The deceased are Ershad Ali, 30, Son of Abul Sharif of Gopinathpur village in Goplaganj, Mollah Shahidul Islam, 32, son of Mannan Mollah of South Kokra village in Kashiani upazila of the same district, and driver Nasir Khan, 35, son of Abdul Mazid Khan of Sonadanga in Khulna.

UNB adds: Three people were killed when a truck rammmed a human hauler at Teromile in Mohadebpur upazila at 8:30am yesterday.

Two of the dead were identified as Iftekharul Islam Jewel, 58, and his son-in-law Mahfuzur Rahman, 33, of Rodil village in the upazila.

In Chittagong, three people were killed and two others injured when CNG run autorickshaw was hit by a truck at Borotakia Bazaar in Mirsharai upazila at about 10:00pm on Saturday night.

The dead are Khairul Bashar, 25, Rubel, 22, and Abul Hossain, 25, of Hadi Fakirhat died on the spot.

Our Brahmanbaria Correspondent adds: A construction worker was killed and 10 others were injured in a road accident while a trolley, carrying them, fell into a roadside ditch as its driver lost control over the steering at Mulagram village in Kasba upazila at 9:00am yesterday.

The identity of the dead could not be known.

Our Correspondent from Kushtia: A truck driver and his helper were killed and two others injured as the deceased's vehicle collided head-with another truck and fell into the ditch beside Kushtia-Pabna Highway at Baromile at about 11:00am yesterday.

The driver was identified as Jahidul Islam, 40.

Our Correspondent from Rangamati adds: Two people were killed when a bus hit their CNG run three-wheeler at Moghachharai Joutakhamar on Chittagong-Rangamati road in Kawkhali upazila yesterday morning.

Rabiya Khatun, 32, wife of Abdul Latif of village Dhamayerhat in Rangunia, died on the spot while CNG driver Fazu died on the way to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital.



Rotarian Yamada Yasunori, president of Rotary Club of Japan Nagoya Sakae, and Rotarian Mostafa Kamal, president of Rotary Club of Dhaka Cosmopolitan, exchange club flag at the joint meeting held in the city recently.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Zafar Iqbal gets death threat

A CORRESPONDENT, Sust

Noted academician Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, chairman of Computer and Engineering department of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, received a death threat through SMS on mobile phone.

Dr Iqbal in a letter informed the university administration about the death threat yesterday.

He said he received the death through a SMS on Wednesday from a mobile phone which number is 01911069022 that said, "Ami khun kre felbo tok" [I will kill you].

University Register Dr Isfaquul Hossain said after receiving the letter the university administration had filed a general diary with Kotwali Police Station.

"We have also sent a letter to the Sylhet metropolitan police commissioner informing about the matter," he said.

Rowsanuzzaman Siddique, assistant police commissioner of Sylhet Metropolitan, said they had received the letter and would take necessary legal action in this regard.

Talking to the Daily Star Dr Iqbal said, "I often receive such threat. I am not afraid about it. After receiving such threat, I usually inform the university administration."

HC stays ACC's recruitment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed the process for recruiting 80 assistant directors and deputy assistant directors to the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) for a month.

A HC bench of Justice Mohammad Momtazuddin Ahmed and Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore passed the order following a supplementary petition filed by Syed Liakat Hossain, an officer of now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC).

Liakat recently filed the supplementary petition along with a pending writ petition that challenged the ACC's decision to declare 148 BAC officials including him surplus for the ACC.

Following the writ-petition, the HC on April 30, 2008 issued a rule upon the ACC and the government to explain why the decision to declare the BAC officials surplus should not be declared illegal.

In the meantime, ACC in last year started process to recruit 40 assistant directors and 40 deputy assistant directors for the commission.

The commission last week started process for holding viva voce examination of the candidates to the post of assistant directors and deputy assistant directors.

Liakat recently filed the supplementary petition challenging the ACC's move to recruit new officials.

Advocate Rais Uddin Ahmad appeared for the petitioner.

HC scraps case against Selim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday quashed all proceedings against Awami League leader Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim in a corruption case filed by Anti Corruption Commission (ACC).

The ACC had filed the case with Ramna Police Station on April 23, 2008, against Selim on charge of amassing illegal wealth and concealing information about it.

An HC bench of Justice A H M Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain yesterday also declared the proceedings against Selim illegal.

It came up with the verdict after hearing a writ petition filed by the AL leader challenging the proceedings of the case against him.