

TRAIN-TRUCK COLLISION
Rail link
with capital
snapped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rail communication with the capital remained completely snapped for three and a half hours till filing of the report at 2:00am today following a train-truck collision at Uttara around 10:35pm last night.

No train could enter and leave the capital, as the rammed truck was still on the rail track. Sylhet-bound Upaban Express crashed the truck near an unauthorised rail gate at Jamtoli in Uttara (Sector no 4).

Only the truck driver is reported to have injured in the accident that left passengers of the entire train stranded at Jamtola. Till 1:00am, the rescue train was en route to Jamtola to salvage the truck.

ASI Anwar Hossain of Kamalapur railway police station said, "The accident already left a number of trains stranded in several rail stations across the country."

Two factories
burnt in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire gutted two small factories in the city's Jatrabari yesterday.

Fire brigade sources said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at a car's seat-making factory 'Lina Enterprise' and adhesive-making factory at the second floor of a tin-shed house at about 1:30pm.

Two units of fire fighters rushed to the spot and doused the flame at about 2:00pm. Most of the parts of the two factories were burnt in the incident, said the sources.

In another incident, a small fire spread panic among the locals of the city's Malibagh as huge amount of piled papers were torched around 12:00 noon.

Fire brigade sources said unidentified people set fire to the papers piled between Loofer Tower and Azad Tower near DIT road at Malibagh kitchen market.

Fire fighters doused the blaze around 1:00pm.

Hearing in
Tarique's
case deferred
again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday deferred till April 3 the hearing on taking into cognisance the charges against BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman and his business partner Giasuddin Al Mamun in a money laundering case.

Judge Mohammad Zohurul Haque of the Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after Tarique's lawyer Zakir Hossain submitted a petition seeking adjournment of the hearing.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) pressed charges against the duo on July 6 last year for laundering Tk 20.41 crore between 2003 and 2007.



PHOTO: STAR
More Bangladeshi nationals like Bazlu Mia, left, and Agith Sutradhar, right, arrive at Shahjalal International Airport in the city yesterday from Libya to escape political unrest there.

End racial discrimination
NHRC chairman urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Mizanur Rahman yesterday urged the government to take effective measure to ensure equal rights and justice to all the citizens irrespective of races, caste and communities.

Discrimination on the basis of race and caste is a clear violation of the constitution as well as human rights. So, the government itself should take the responsibility to end all sorts of racial, communal and caste-based discriminations in the country, he said.

Dr Rahman made the call at a press conference jointly organised by the Bangladesh Dalit Parishad (BDP), Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and Paritran at the National Press Club in the city. They arranged the event as part of month-long campaign programme to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21.

He announced to include the recommen-

ation of initiating necessary steps to end discrimination in his commission's annual report to be submitted to the president on March 31.

BDP General Secretary Ahok Das placed 12-point recommendations to establish their social rights and dignity.

Those include formulation of law to eliminate racial discrimination, announcement of 'Untouchability' practice as punishable crime, implementation of the government's election pledges of development of the Dalits, setting up special cell in the NHRC and Women and Children Affairs Ministry for them, arrangement of permanent accommodation for Dalits and reservation of seats in the parliament and local government for them.

MJF Director (rights) Rina Roy, human rights activists Hamida Hossain, Bangladesh Harijan Oikya Parishad Secretary General Nirmol Chandra Das, among others, were present.



PHOTO: STAR
Human rights activist Hamida Hossain speaks at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday ahead of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Dhaka needs compensatory
fund to cope with climate

Speakers tell IUCN workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh needs compensatory global fund and modern technology to cope with the climate change disasters and achieve desired economic growth, said government policy makers at a workshop.

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Bangladesh organised the workshop titled 'Climate Change Negotiations' at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

Speaking as the chief guest, Speaker Abdul Hamid said vulnerable countries like Bangladesh need money and technology to adapt the climate change impacts with a just and legally-binding international climate deal.

The countries in the world are still

looking at the climate change from their respective national interests, not as a global danger, said Dr Hasan Mahmud, the state minister for environment and forest.

"We are travelling from one capital to another to reach a consensus on a binding climate deal," he said.

Dr. Ansarul Karim, ecosystem and climate change advisor of IUCN Bangladesh, said in a keynote that the biggest challenge in the international negotiation is to establish the greater responsibility of the developed countries in combating climate change.

Chris Austin, country representative of DFID, said that climate change is central to the development agenda.

Though the developed countries like the USA, EU, Australia and Canada are historically responsible for carbon emission for their industrialisation,

they have not yet undertaken effective measure to cut the emission at a desired pace, said the minister.

Per capita carbon emission in the developed world ranges from 15 to 22 tonnes while the average rate in the developing world is 1.6 tonnes. In Bangladesh, it is 0.03 tonnes.

A total of ten lawmakers attended the workshop. Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad, coordinator of Bangladesh climate change negotiation team, and Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan, country representative of IUCN Bangladesh, among others, spoke while Hasan Mahmud was in the chair.

Bangladesh has formed a Tk700-crore climate Change Trust Fund with its own money and \$ 110-million Climate Change Resilience Fund with contribution from the UK, EU, Sweden and Denmark.

Princess Anne
meets acid
survivors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Princess Anne, the only daughter of Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom, visited Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) at Banani in the city yesterday, says a press release.

The princess also saw around ASF's rehabilitation centre and hospital and met the survivors who were receiving treatment. She spent time with 10 child survivors.

The British princess also unveiled a plaque to memorialise her visit. Ten-year-old acid survivor Bubby presented Anne with a bouquet before the princess left.

ASF chairman Dr Iftekharzaman expressed that they felt honoured by the visit of the princess.

"You graciously sent us greetings on the occasion of our 5th and 10th anniversaries. This visit is further evidence of your support for our work," he said.

"When you visited ASF in 2000, acid attacks were increasing. It reached a peak in 2002 with over 500 attacks recorded," said ASF executive director Monira Rahman.

"We developed a successful prevention campaign supported by the government. The number of attacks was down to just over 100 last year."

Hasina hailed for women
empowerment

UNB, Dhaka

Princess Anne, the only daughter of Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom, lauded Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's role for women empowerment, rooting out militancy and terrorism, and strengthening democratic institutions.

The princess' appreciation came when she paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Gono Bhaban in the city yesterday.

Princess Anne arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a three-day visit to Bangladesh, her fourth visit to the country.

During the meeting, Princess Anne discussed various issues of national and international development, said PM's press

secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

Hasina reiterated her commitment to eradicate all sorts of discrimination against women in the society.

As the education sector came up in the discussion, the prime minister said her government is distributing textbooks up to secondary level at free of cost.

She said the government has also a plan to provide free education up to higher education for poor students across the country.

Princess Anne also hailed the present government's success in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), over which the premier mentioned that Bangladesh has been given the MDG-4 award during the last United Nation General Assembly (UNGA).



PHOTO: PMO
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presents a bouquet to Princes Anne at Gono Bhaban in the city yesterday.

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