

NEWS IN brief

DU student injured in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka University student was critically injured as a lorry hit him at Motijheel in the city last night. Redwan Hossain, 25, a Masters student of the Arabic department, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Police said the accident took place around 9:30pm when Redwan was crossing the street in front of the Hiraheel restaurant. As the news spread, over a hundred students gathered outside the hospital to visit Redwan.

Youth leadership summit ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-day long youth leadership summit concluded at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday. Bangladesh Youth Leadership Centre (BYLC) organised the event with Dr Gowher Rizvi, international affairs adviser to the prime minister, was in the chair. Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, US Ambassador James F Moriarty, Charles Undeland, senior governance specialist of the World Bank, and DYLC President Ejaj Ahmed also spoke at the programme. A total of 50 speakers and 200 delegates participated in the three-day summit, which aimed to bridge the gap between the youth and the eminent personalities.

Bangladeshi selected for int'l public speaking contest

BSS, Dhaka

The Bangladesh chapter of UK-based English Speaking Union (ESU) yesterday selected two Bangladeshi students for an international public speaking competition to be held in London in May this year. Ratib Mortuza Ali of BRAC University was selected as the best speaker of Bangladesh while Abedin Kader and Risana Nahrin Maliq of BRAC University secured the second and third position respectively.

Nurses association formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nurses Association of Bangladesh (Nab), a body to protect the interest of nurses, was formed on Friday, says a press release. The 79-member central executive committee was formed with Bilkis Jahan Chowdhury as president, Khadija Begum as secretary general, and Muhammad Nazrul Islam as treasurer.

CPB's 63rd anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 63rd founding anniversary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB). The party was formed in this region in 1948 though the communist movement is matured enough for 90 years in this region. CPB President Manzurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim expressed their tribute to all the martyrs who sacrificed their supreme for the party and for the people, says a press release.

'Improve communicative English'

METRO DESK

A seminar and workshop on "Promoting functional English through academic accreditation in non-English speaking countries" was held at a city hotel recently. Wenlyn Global Group, an English language teaching (ELT) and promoting enterprise working in South and Southeast Asian countries, organised the seminar. Deena Huq, former director general of the prime minister's office, and Md Touhid Hossain, secretary and principal of Foreign Service Academy, were present as guests of honour. Deena stressed the need for improvement of functional and communicative English in every sector beside Bangla in a changing scenario of globalisation.



Rise in temperature unlikely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Tangail, Mymensingh and Comilla in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today. Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said. Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:03pm and rises tomorrow at 6:17am. Country's highest temperature 35.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 14.4 degrees at Srirangal. 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	33.0	18.8	47	26
Chittagong	33.5	18.0	55	29
Rajshahi	33.0	15.4	54	47
Rangpur	30.3	17.4	66	50
Khulna	34.0	18.0	70	61
Barisal	34.2	17.0	58	54



PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) is constructing some rooms on the roof of its old building in the city defying objections from the Public Works Department.

Human rights situation improves

Says NHRC chairman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Chairman of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Dr Mizanur Rahman yesterday said the number of extra-judicial killing has been decreased and human rights situation has also been improved in the country. He told a stakeholders' consultation workshop on 'Building a Human Rights Culture in Bangladesh' organised by NHRC at RDRS Auditorium in Rangpur. He said an extra-judicial killing is a violation of human rights. "Killing one without giving him an opportunity for self-defence is inhuman. Without investigation it cannot be said that extra-judicial killing occurs for self-defence," he said. The NHRC chairman visited Rangpur Medical College Hospital and expressed dissatisfaction over poor quality of services.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Md Sirajul Islam, a freedom fighter and former secretary, passed away in Singapore yesterday. He was 66, says a press release.

His first namaz-e-janaza will be held at Shabji Bagan Jame Masjid (west of Ramna Police Station) in the city after Asr prayers today. He will be buried at his village Krishnapur of Narshingdi after second namaz-e-janaza after Zohr prayers tomorrow.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the 2nd death anniversary of Comrade Ali Aksad, a freedom fighter, journalist and writer, says a press release. He was a close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman. He worked as an Assistant Editor of the daily Itfaq and as a News Editor of the daily Sangbad. He was the president of the Bangladesh Peace Council.

Bangladesh Peace Council will place wreaths at his grave at the Martyr Intellectual Graveyard at Mirpur today.

Farida Sarker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the sixth death anniversary of Farida Sarker, a former newscaster of Voice of America and teacher of North South University, says a press release. On the occasion, a special prayer will be offered at an orphanage and food will be distributed among orphans.

SCBA erecting rooms on old building 'illegally'

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) is erecting rooms on the roof of its office building defying objections from Public Works Department. Some lawyers seeking anonymity told The Daily Star the Bar leaders are constructing the extension to please a section of lawyers ahead of its executive body election on March 30 and 31. On February 7, PWD lodged a general diary with Shahbagh Police Station, saying it is too risky to put up a tin-roofed structure on the old building. According to the GD statement, the executive engineer of Dhaka PWD on February 2 had requested the association leaders to refrain from building the extension.

Former SCBA secretary SM Rezaul Karim on February 19 told The Daily Star the three-storey building will be vulnerable and at risk of collapse if the tin house is erected. The 50-year-old structure will be unable to stand an earthquake. Badal said the association had consulted officials of PWD, Roads and Highways Department and Local Government and Rural Development. They opined the extension will not pose any danger. He said the Bar took the decision of constructing the additional room at a general meeting by common consent. SCBA Assistant Secretary Moshfaqueur Rahman Sabuj, who won from pro-AL lawyers' panel, said the secretary floated tender for the work never heeding his opposition. Following the filing of the general diary, police on Friday obstructed the work, the Bar said adding the GD was not a legal bar to construction. PWD has filed the GD at the instigation of some lawyers backed by ruling Awami League ahead of SCBA election, the association leader also said. The existing committee of the association is dominated by pro-BNP lawyers.



National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Mineral Resources, Power and Ports brings out a procession from in front of Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding a stop to the forced acquisition of land for open-pit mining at Barapukuria.

PHOTO: STAR

Rice queue gets longer

FROM PAGE 20 By the poor, at Tk 34-37 a kg, down from Tk 35-37 per kg last week. The rice prices dipped slightly more than two months after it was traded at a record high price level at retail. Despite having a good rice output in the last three crop seasons, prices of coarse rice soared by 31 percent locally during the last year. A low government stock and rising international prices heated the local rice market, analysts said. However, prices of other essentials, such as wheat, flour, cooking oil and spices, shot up too. This price surge was attributed to poor crop output in the producing countries due to natural calamities. On a year-on-year basis,

prices of cooking oil and flour, for which Bangladesh heavily depends on imports, rose as high as 56 percent and 51 percent respectively. It deepened the hardships of the low income people who account for 40 percent of country's population. People standing in queues at OMS shops said hike in prices of essentials put them into trouble at a time when most of them have to pay higher amounts for house rents and children's education. "My income has not increased in line with the rising costs of living. House rent has been going up every year," said Babu Pal, a worker at a light engineering workshop. To reduce the sufferings of the poor and ease prices, the

government expanded its various safety net measures including doubling the number of OMS outlets in Dhaka. "People now think they will not go empty-handed as the number of OMS trucks has increased," said Md Mirazul Haque, OMS operation supervisor at Kamrangir Char Lohar Pool. Buyers look for saving at least Tk 50 by purchasing 5 kg of rice from a fair price point. They said the saved amount helps them to buy vegetables or spend on other family purposes. "We do not need to stand here if market prices are affordable. Even cooking oil and vegetables have become pricey," said a housewife Sultana Ahmed Dipa. OMS dealers said the gov-

ernment sells sunned rice two days a week, which finds very few buyers. They gather in large numbers when boiled rice is sold during the other weekdays. Ahmad Hossain Khan, director general of Directorate of Food, claimed the crowding at OMS outlets has eased after the increase in fair price points. Now rice stocks do not deplete faster, he said adding, nearly 2,000,000 people are getting the benefit due to expanded OMS operation across the country. He also hoped prices of rice would drop to Tk 26-27 per kg within this month. The government last week decided to add another 50 truckloads of rice to the present OMS quantity from this week.

Hopes run high for stalled issues

FROM PAGE 20 initiated during Sheikh Hasina's visit has decelerated, the sources added. Manmohan Singh attended the Saarc Summit in Dhaka in 2005. His upcoming trip would be the first bilateral visit to Bangladesh in his two terms as prime minister. The two sides are looking forward to an agreement on sharing Teesta water and resolve boundary disputes, particularly the exchange of enclaves in each other's territory. The joint boundary working group met in November last, followed by discussions on sharing Teesta waters and a

meeting between the home secretaries of the two sides this January. During Sheikh Hasina's visit to India, New Delhi had agreed to resolve several outstanding issues like maritime and land boundary disputes, allowing Nepal and Bhutan transit to Bangladesh, rail links to access Nepal and Bhutan. But there has been no such initiative to meet these commitments from the side. Most importantly, no tangible development has been noticed over New Delhi's commitment to remove all trade barriers to allow Bangladeshi products in

India. Dhaka has requested New Delhi to issue notification to allow Nepal and Bhutan transit through India, which would give Nepal and Bhutan access to Mongla and Chittagong ports, but India is yet to respond. Talking to The Daily Star, a high government leader on condition of anonymity said the government has started facing criticism from media, civil society and opposition parties for not being able to get reciprocal treatment from India.

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Kuwait envoy meets Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

Kuwait Ambassador in Dhaka Ali Ahmad Ebraheem S Al Dafiri made a courtesy call on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office yesterday evening. During the meeting they discussed bilateral matters of mutual interests between Bangladesh and Kuwait. BNP Vice-chairman Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury and Khaleda's advisers Reaz Rahman and Sabihuddin Ahmed were present.

Stop cutting hill to save biodiversity

Bapa urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some environmentalists at a rally yesterday demanded the government's effective measures to stop hill cutting to save the environment and biodiversity. According to them, the country is becoming increasingly vulnerable to massive earthquake day by day due to unceasing hill cutting. Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) organised the rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the city to put the demand, said a press release. According to the release, sheer negligence of administration and law enforcement agencies was blamed for hill cutting. The speakers also stressed the need for stern legal action against people responsible for hill cutting saying that local influential and political people in the hilly areas are directly and indirectly involved in the destructive activity. Their other demands include imposing embargo on construction of buildings and industries and stopping sand lifting from hilly regions. Bapa executive body member Prof M Shahidul Islam presided over the function addressed by its general secretary Dr Abdul Matin and Brac University teacher Dr Mahbub Hossain, among others.



- Convocation**
East West University will organise its convocation; Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre; Time: 11:00am.
- Discussion**
Jatiya Gonatantric League will hold a discussion; Venue: Supreme Court; Time: 4:30pm.
- Meeting**
Nagorik Forum will hold a meeting; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 3:30pm.
- Human chain**
Narigrontho Prabaranta will organise a human chain; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 3:00pm.
- Programme**
Amra Kuri will organise a programme; Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy; Time: 3:00pm.
- Human chain**
Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation will hold a human chain; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 3:00pm.
- Discussion**
Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka will hold a discussion; Venue: Chamber Conference Hall; Time: 10:30am.
- Conference**
Canada Bangladesh Trade Promotion Centre will host a conference; Venue: LGED Bhaban; Time: 5:00pm.
- Discussion**
Karmojibi Nari will hold a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.
- Seminar**