

NEWS IN *brief*

Charge framing against Jamaat top leaders deferred

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday deferred the hearing on charge framing against five Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami leaders till April 6, in connection to a case filed against them for hurting religious sentiments of Muslims.

The accused Jamaat leaders include its Amier Motiur Rahman Nizami, Secretary General Ali Ahsan Md Mojahid, Delwar Hossain Sayedee, its city unit Chief Rafiqul Islam Khan and ASM Yahia, president of Islami Chhatra Shibir.

First Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate AHM Habibur Rahman Bhuiyan passed the order following a time petition submitted by the defendants' lawyers seeking adjournment of the hearing.

All the accused, except Yahia are now in jail. All the accused were present before the court yesterday.

Earlier on February 6, the court fixed March 14 for the hearing.

Syed Rejaul Haque Chandpuri, secretary general of Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, filed the case on March 21 last year against the five Jamaat leaders.

According to the case Rafiqul Islam at a discussion in Dhaka on March 17 the same year compared Nizami to Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM), which hurt the sentiments of the Muslims.

Al-Amin president, Manjur gen secy of BCS forum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Al-Amin (Administration) and SM Manjur Ahmed (Audit) have been made president and general secretary of 24th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Forum respectively.

The 45-member executive committee was formed at a meeting at Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the city on Friday, says a press release.

Japan to donate for health projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Japan decided to extend three grants assistance totaling US\$282,428 (approximately Tk 2 crore) for health projects in rural areas.

The grant contracts have been signed between H E Tamotsu Shinotsuka, ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh and representatives of three recipients at the embassy of Japan yesterday.

Wilson school to build new campus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sir John Wilson School inaugurated a new campus construction project at Shatarkul in the city on Friday, says a press release.

The new campus would include facilities including four science labs, a multi-purpose hall, an auditorium and a swimming pool.

The school principal Ann Burghard and Secretary of Social Services and Management Trust Monsur Choudhury were present during the occasion.



Brad Wall, premier of Canada's Saskatchewan province, speaks to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during a courtesy call at Ganobahban in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Correction

In the report titled "Recognise women for facing adversities to establish rights", published in The Daily Star on Monday, we inadvertently wrote "Dr Sultana Kamal", while actually the name would be "Dr Sultana Zaman". We regret the error.

Population census from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's fifth population and housing census began one minute past midnight today with counting President Mohammad Zillur Rahman at the Bangabhaban.

The Population and Housing Census 2011, conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, will continue till March 19 to enumerate the country's population, families and households.

The floating population will be counted at census night fixed from midnight to 6:00am today.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be counted at 9:30am today, Planning Minister Air Vice Marshal (retd) AK Khandaker told a press briefing at the Secretariat yesterday.

BSF to use non-lethal weapons on borders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Border Security Force (BSF) of India will use non-lethal weapons, alongside the regular ones, at some border points on a trial basis in a bid to stop killings of Bangladeshis.

And if the trial proves successful, it will use non-lethal weapons at the entire border area with Bangladesh, said a press release of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) yesterday.

The release, however, did not mention when the use of non-lethal weapons will start.

The decision came after the BGB director general (DG) expressed his concern at the DG-level meeting of the two forces over the killings of Bangladeshi nationals by BSF along the border.

The BGB DG also urged the BSF to abide by international border law, adds the press release, the first of its kind after a DG-level meeting between the two forces.

During the six-day talks in the Indian capital New Delhi that ended on Sunday, the border force authorities of both the countries agreed to hold weekly meetings in order to stop damaging border fences by traffickers and smugglers.

The two sides also agreed to complete a joint census of enclaves in the two countries as early as possible.

According to the press release, both sides will maintain a status quo on the controversially occupied land along the border.

In addition, neither side will undertake any development work within 150 yards of the zero point without informing its counterpart. In order to boost confidence, the two forces will hold a retreat ceremony.

Janata chips in stock fund

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Janata Bank yesterday decided to contribute Tk 200 crore to a fund designed to help prop up the shriveling stockmarket.

The board of the state-run commercial bank approved the financing for the Bangladesh Fund of Tk 5,000 crore, officials said.

Investment Corporation of Bangladesh, Sonali Bank, Janata Bank, Agrani Bank, Rupali Bank, Bangladesh Development Bank, Sadharan Bima Corporation and Jibon Bima Corporation agreed to contribute to the fund, which will be an open-ended mutual fund.

Cancel decision to remove Prof Yunus

Ex-GB staff urge govt OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Some retired officials of Grameen Bank yesterday demanded of the government to cancel the decision to remove Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus from the post of managing director of the bank.

They made the call at a press conference at Chittagong Press Club auditorium organised by Retired Officers' Association of Grameen Bank, a forum formed recently.

The association convener Abu Tayab read out a written statement.

Manjur Kader Chowdhury, Muchha Khan, SM Sirajul Mustafa, Ahmed Yusuf Harun, Emran Hossain, Firoj Ahmed, Sudarshan Barua, Harunur Rashid, Shah Alam Bhuiyan, Monir Hossain, Jasim Uddin and Abul Mansur also attended.

**FIFTH AMENDMENT
Govt files petition over SC observations**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday filed a review petition with the Supreme Court (SC) against some of SC observations regarding transitional and temporary provisions in the judgement over Fifth Amendment to the constitution.

The SC in its judgment on February 2 last year upheld the High Court (HC) judgment over the Fifth Amendment with some observations and modifications.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star that the government in the petition prayed to the SC to expunge its observations, which condone provisions regarding transitional and temporary provisions in Article 150 of the constitution.

The petition also prayed to Appellate Division for upholding its HC Division observation, which did not condone the provisions.

He said if the SC observations remain in force, there would be provision for considering the transitional and temporary period, meaning the state before framing of the constitution.

There is nothing in the name of transitional and temporary period in the constitution, he said. The date of hearing of the review petition was not fixed, he said.

Bill to repeal tax ombudsman act placed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday placed a bill in parliament seeking to repeal the tax ombudsman act as the ombudsman's office failed to remove misrule in the tax administration.

The last BNP-led government enacted the act and set up the office.

Pointing to a Tk 1.25 crore allocation for the office in the 2000-10 revised budget, he said, "The office of the tax ombudsman has turned into a costly, but ineffective institution."

In a written statement tagged with the bill, Muhith said only 725 complain were lodged with the office in the last four years and people seeking remedy are taking legal shelter in other ways.

It seems people refrain from filing complaints, as the office does not have authority to force organisations concerned to implement its recommendations, he added.

Only a few recommendations of the ombudsman were implemented while most are still under consideration of the national board of revenue, he said.

The minister said the government has taken other measures including strengthening appeal and alternative dispute resolution system in the tax administration.

The bill proposed that all assets of the office, both moveable and immovable, documents and other properties would be put under the custody of the government while all pending complaints, investigation, and witnesses will be cancelled.

The officials who were directly recruited for the ombudsman office will be considered as the government's surplus staffs and be absorbed, the proposed legislation said.

WEATHER TODAY

Change in temperature unlikely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Pabna, Bogra, Comilla and Noakhali in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met offices said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:07 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:07am.

Country's highest temperature 34.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Shitakunda and lowest 16.0 degrees at Sayedpur.

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
Chittagong	33.5	21.8	64	46
Rajshahi	30.5	21.0	73	64
Rangpur	33.7	16.4	67	52
Khulna	30.0	17.0	63	46
Barisal	32.5	21.8	79	65
	33.5	21.0	78	61



Speakers at a discussion on 'draft water law, national water policy and water rights to the mass people' organised by Paani Odhikar Forum at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Honour to war

FROM PAGE 3

Lt General Jagjit Singh Aurora and 13 other Indians, sources said.

Former US senator Edward Kennedy and eight others from his country, rock icon George Harrison and six others from the UK, four Russians, three Japanese and one each from Australia, Bhutan, Germany, Ireland, France, Nepal, the Netherlands and Sweden are also on the list.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva-based International Commission of Jurists, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and All India Radio are among the organisations to be awarded.

At the meet, the cabinet expressed deep shock over the loss of lives and properties in Japan. The premier

told the meeting that the government has kept a rescue team ready to send to the tsunami-hit country.

Japan ambassador in Bangladesh has already been conveyed the government's will, said a minister quoting Hasina.

The prime minister also told the meeting that her government has taken all measures to bring back the Bangladeshi workers stranded in Libya. Like the foreign minister, the labour and expatriates' welfare minister will go to Tunisia soon to bring them back home.

The cabinet approved the draft of National Salt Policy to ensure the growth of country's salt industry, the prime minister's press secretary, Abul Kalam Azad, said.

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SHAPTAK GRIHAYAN LIMITED
House No. 2/2, Block-B, Lalmatia, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh
Tel : 880 2 8143008, 8143106, 8143202, 8159561, 9119098, 9133258
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