

NEWS IN *brief*

Housewife set ablaze for dowry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage housewife with severe burn injuries fights for her life after her husband allegedly set her ablaze at their Tongi residence on the city's outskirts Friday.

Ismat Ara, 16, was admitted to the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital with 37 percent of her body sustaining deep burns.

Lying on a burn unit bed, Ismat said her husband Mohammad Shaheen, 25, a bus driver, poured kerosene over her body and set her on fire around 2:00pm on Friday.

Following an affair, Ismat of Ershad Nagar in Tongi got married to her neighbour Shaheen five months ago without the consent of their families.

Victim's mother Momtaj Begum alleged that Shaheen set her daughter ablaze following their failure to meet his dowry demand of Tk 1 lakh.

"After a quarrel between the couple, Shaheen set fire to Ismat and went into the bathroom to mislead the locals," said Momtaj quoting her daughter.

"When the locals put out the fire, Shaheen came out and pretended to not know how his wife got burned."

When locals rushed Ismat to the hospital, Shaheen fled the scene, said Momtaj.

"Despite giving Shaheen various furniture worth Tk 20,000 as dowry, he had been demanding Tk 1 lakh from us."

Tongi Police Station Officer-in-Charge Ruhul Imam said police were yet to be aware of the incident as none filed any case in this connection.

Student jailed for uploading girl's obscene photos on facebook

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court in the city's Uttara yesterday sentenced a university student to a one and a half years in jail for uploading vulgar photographs of a female college student on the internet.

Shakil Ahmed, a BBA student of Southern University, had a relationship with the HSC girl student, said Executive Magistrate AHM Anwar Pasha.

Receiving a complaint from the victim, the mobile court in cooperation with Rapid Action Battalion-1 raided the boy's residence at Uttara Sector 11.

"As she did not follow Shakil's instructions, he uploaded four vulgar pictures of the girl on facebook," said the magistrate, adding that they also found vulgar footage of the boy with two other girls.

According to the magistrate, the pictures have been removed from facebook and the ID of the boy

Shushasthya project launched

BSS, Chittagong

The newly-floated Development Care Foundation, a non-profitable social organisation launched a new health initiative titled 'Shushasthya' (sound health) with basic objective to ensure health promotion and disease prevention through creation of health literacy among the community at village Mohammadpur, Bairag of Anwara upazilla on Friday.

President of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Jute and Textile Akhteruzzaman Chowdhury MP attended the inaugural function as chief guest while foundation President Principal Harunar Rashid presided over the function.

Bangabandhu's birthday observed in Washington DC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 91st birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the National Children's Day were observed at Bangladesh High Commission in Washington DC on March 17 with due respect.

On the occasion, the embassy arranged various programs including discussion, painting and essay competition, says a press release.

Messages of the president, prime minister and foreign minister were read out at the discussion at the Bangabandhu auditorium there.

Bangladesh ambassador to USA Akramul Qader chaired the event while Education Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury addressed the function.

WEATHER TODAY

Change in temperature unlikely

Urb, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Tangail and Mymensingh in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:09pm and rises tomorrow at 6:02am.

Country's highest temperature 36.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 19.6 degrees at Rangpur.

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	32.6	23.0	73	60
Chittagong	28.0	20.8	73	72
Rajshahi	36.2	23.0	77	50
Rangpur	24.8	19.6	88	82
Khulna	32.4	24.4	72	67
Barisal	30.2	23.0	74	73
Sylhet	31.8	20.6	75	62



Enthusiast Hindu youths celebrate Dol Purnima, the eve of festival of colours, at Shankhari Bazar in Old Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Businesses see no risks from Japan crisis as yet

BSS, Dhaka

Local businesses having trade links with Japan see no immediate risk from Japan crisis, but are concerned about the potential negative impact on the country's economy.

"We do not see any chance of immediate risk, but are concerned about the potential consequences of the worst-ever crisis in the Asia's major economy," said Abdul Haque, former president of the Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI), to the agency yesterday.

Haque, a current JBCCI director, said the JBCCI held a meeting immediately after the March 11 catastrophe followed by the nuclear disaster in the northeastern part of Japan to discuss the impact of the disaster on their trade and businesses and listed some areas those are exposed to potential risks.

Haque said the areas including flow of ODA (Official Development Assistance) and investment from Japan need to be monitored closely.

"The Japanese government will be spending billions of dollars to face the crisis, which will create a huge pressure on its fiscal management, prompting cut in ODA allocation."

A number of Japanese companies were planning relocation of their units from China to Bangladesh to reduce production cost, he said.

The relocation might be delayed as some

of the companies were also affected in the earthquake and tsunami, added Haque.

He said import from Japan will have a mixed effect, as vehicle import is expected to remain unhindered while shipments of steel and capital machineries will be delayed and costly as many major shipping lines already decided to skip some Japanese ports to avoid radiation.

"Bangladesh does not import motor vehicles from the areas devastated by the earthquake and tsunami because vehicles in these winter dominant areas often do not have good air conditioning," Haque, also a former president of Bangladesh Reconditioned Vehicles Importers and Dealers Association, pointed out.

He said export to Japan will not be harmed as well because Bangladesh mainly exports garments and textiles there.

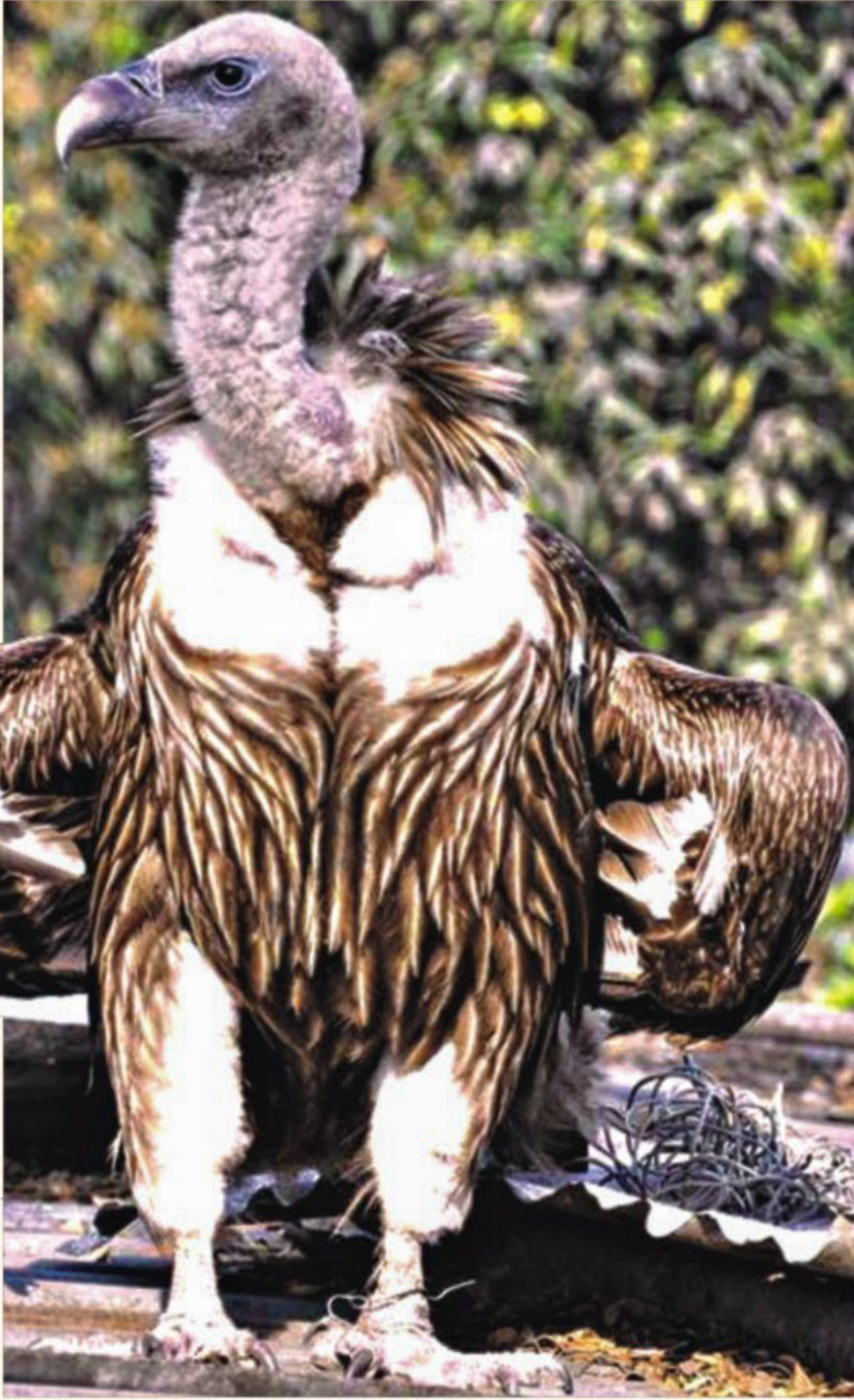
He said Bangladesh's annual import from Japan is still around US \$1 billion as the country buys high valued steel, capital machineries, and motor vehicles from there.

Haque also ruled out risk of radiation from Japanese imports against the backdrop of the nuclear disaster saying that the crisis-hit areas of Japan produce mainly agriculture products, but Bangladesh does not import food, agriculture and consumer products from Japan.

He admitted that some motor parts producers are situated in the crisis areas, but said import from those areas remained stalled after the disaster.

This snap of a vulture, now near-extinct in Bangladesh, resting on the roof of a roadside shop, was taken from Barapukuria Bazaar under Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur Wednesday morning.

PHOTO: COURTESY



Hamida Khanam passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India, passed away Friday night at a city hospital at the age of 88.

She left behind her husband and host of relatives and was the first principal of Home Economics College, Dhaka, says a press release.

BSS adds: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock at the death of Prof Hamida and visited her residence, consoled the bereaved family, and offered munajat.

Prof Khanam was wife of Dr Salauddin Ahmed, president of Executive Advisory Committee of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum.

The namaz-e-janaza of Prof Khanam was held at Gulshan Azad Mosque after Zohr prayers and she was buried at Banani Graveyard yesterday.

Amin Mia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amin Mia Chowdhury, former divisional commissioner of Dhaka, passed away yesterday due to old age complications at the age of 79, says a press release.

He left behind his two daughters and one son.

He joined Admin Cadre in 1958 and retired in 1989. After his retirement, he was appointed as a member of Public Service Commission.

A doa mahfil will be held at his residence on March 25 after Asr prayers.

High radiation in food, tap water

FROM PAGE 20

can be used to help protect against thyroid cancer in the case of radioactive exposure in a nuclear accident, Reuters reports.

"Though radioactive iodine has a short half-life of about 8 days and decays naturally within a matter of weeks, there is a short-term risk to human health if radioactive iodine in food is absorbed into the human body," the IAEA said in a statement.

The findings are nevertheless likely to fuel consumer fears in the wake of last week's quake and tsunami, which critically damaged the Fukushima No 1 plant northeast of Tokyo, sending radioactive substances leaking into the air.

"Radiation exceeding the limit under Japanese law was detected," government spokesman Yukio Edano told reporters.

The contaminated milk was found in Fukushima prefecture, where the quake-damaged atomic power station is located, while the tainted spinach was discovered in neighbouring Ibaraki prefecture, Edano told reporters.

The milk was found more than 30 kilometres from the Fukushima No 1 nuclear power plant -- outside the government's exclusion zone.

The spokesman said the health ministry had ordered authorities in both prefectures to check where the products came from, how they were distributed and -- depending on their findings -- suspend sales.

"The government will do its utmost... to avoid health hazards and to resolve this problem," Edano said.

"The number does not present an immediate health threat. I would like to ask you to act calmly."

He noted that even if a consumer were to drink the contaminated milk for a year, the radiation level would be the equivalent of one hospital CT

scan.

Hideki Mukaitsubo, president of Fukushima Prefecture Minami Dairy located in Izumizaki village, 60 kilometres from the nuclear plant, said he was concerned about the long-term prospects for the industry.

"We've halted shipping completely. I really don't know what to do from tomorrow," Mukaitsubo told AFP by telephone, criticising the government's "unclear" sampling methods.

"I don't know any more about my future," said Mukaitsubo, who takes milk from several local producers.

Yukihiro Ebisawa, an official at Japan Agricultural Cooperatives in Ibaraki prefecture, said they had received an order to tell spinach producers not to harvest or ship any more produce.

"We are worried... I hope the situation will calm down as soon as possible," Ebisawa told AFP.

'SOME STABILIZATION'

One of six crippled reactors appeared to stabilize yesterday as Japan raced to restore power to the stricken power plant to cool it and prevent a catastrophic release of radiation.

Engineers reported some rare success after fire trucks sprayed water for several hours on reactor No 3, widely considered the most dangerous at the ravaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear complex because of its use of highly toxic plutonium.

"The situation there is stabilizing somewhat," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano told a news conference.

Japan also reported its first contamination of food since the powerful March 11 earthquake and tsunami that has left nearly 18,000 people dead or missing, turned entire towns into debris-strewn wastelands and triggered a nuclear emergency.

A 1.5 km power cable was con-

nected to the outside of the mangled plant in a desperate attempt to re-start water pumps that would cool overheating nuclear fuel rods and prevent a deadly radiation leak.

Four of the worst-hit reactors in the complex should have electricity by Sunday, Japan's nuclear safety agency said, a potentially crucial milestone in the world's worst nuclear accident in 25 years.

Restoring the plant's cooling system might help to allay anxiety in Tokyo, about 240 km (150 miles) to south where tens of thousands of tourists, expatriates and residents have either left or stayed indoors, despite radiation readings well within the average and winds blowing from the plant off to sea.

Engineers fixed the power cable to the No. 2 reactor but have yet to turn on its coolers, and they plan to test power in reactors No 1, 2, 3 and 4 today, Hidehiko Nishiyama, deputy director general at the Japan Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, told a news conference.

PUBLIC APOLOGY

Thousands living outside that danger zone but within a 30 km radius face dwindling supplies of heating fuel, food and water, heeding a government request to stay indoors and close all windows, doors and vents.

The operator of the 40-year-old plant, Tokyo Electric Power Co (Tepeco), is facing mounting criticism in Japan, including questions over whether it hesitated too long before dousing the reactors with seawater, which permanently damages them.

Yesterday, its president issued a public apology for "causing such great concern and nuisance."

Tepeco also apologised for the contamination of foodstuffs and said it would look into compensating the farmers affected, Jiji Press reported.

DHAKA TODAY

Discussion

Bangladesh Palliative & Supportive Care Foundation will hold a discussion; Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity; Time: 10:00am.

Cultural programme

Ananda Niketon European School will organise a cultural programme; Venue: House #11, Road #7, Dhanmondi; Time: 7:00pm.

Procession

Gonotrantr Baam Mocha will organise a procession; Venue: Muktagong; Time: 4:00pm.

Condolence meeting

Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sangskritik Foundation will hold a condolence meeting; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 3:30pm.

Workshop

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry will organise a workshop; Venue: DCCI auditorium; Time: 12:00noon.

Programme

Bangladesh Children Theatre Federation will hold an inaugural programme; Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy premises; Time: 4:30pm.

Discussion

Sammilito Peshajibi Forum will hold a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

Programme

World University of Bangladesh will organise a programme; Venue: Institute of Diploma Engineers Auditorium; Time: 9:30am.

Inaugural programme

Bangladesh Amateur Wrestling Federation will hold an inaugural programme; Venue: National Sports Council auditorium; Time: 4:00pm.

Discussion

Garment Stramk Trade Union Kendra will organise a discussion; Venue: Muktibhaban; Time: 3:00pm.

Rally

Bangladesh Communist Party will