

NEWS IN brief

Beautician kills herself in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A young woman allegedly committed suicide at her Madhya Azampur residence of Dakkhin Khan in the city yesterday.
The deceased was identified as Marufa Akhter, 22, daughter of Mujibur Rahman. She worked at Tushi Beauty Parlour of the area.
Police said Marufa hanged herself with a scarf from a ceiling fan at midnight.

Man arrested with fake notes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Police yesterday arrested an alleged fake note trader from Senpara Parabata at Mirpur in the city, and recovered huge amount of fake currency notes from his possession.
The arrestee, Bashir Uddin, 32, hailing from Pirojpur district, was long involved in trading fake notes, said police.
Mirpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Kazi Wazed Ali said, after getting a tip on the fake note trader around 11:00am, police rushed to the spot and arrested Bashir.
Police also recovered 900 pieces of Tk 100 note, 20 pieces of Tk 500 note and 8 pieces of Tk 1,000 note from him.
During primary interrogation, Bashir said he collected the fake notes from one Monir of Mirpur-10 area for Tk 25,000. Bashir was to sell the notes to another person and reap Tk 20,000 in profit.
Police are now trying to arrest Monir, said the OC.

Seminar on heart diseases, diabetes held in city

METRO DESK
Parkway Health, which owns and operates Mount Elizabeth, Gleneagles and Parkway East hospitals in Singapore, organised a seminar on Heart diseases and diabetes at a city hotel in the city recently.
Dr Tan Yong Seng, senior consultant of cardiothoracic and vascular surgeon and Dr Lim Yean Teng, senior consultant cardiologist discussed about heart diseases while Dr Peter Eng, senior consultant of endocrinologist talked about management of diabetes.
Tan Kok Nam, consul of Singapore High Commission of Bangladesh, Steven Mok, country manager and Zahid Khan, director of Parkway Health, Bangladesh office were present.

Photo exhibition time extended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Duration of the ongoing photo exhibition of four artists in Drik Gallery at Dhanmondi in the city has been extended one day considering the benefit of viewers.
Meanwhile, photos of Indian artist S Joyraj has been added in the exhibition alongside the four women artists of Bangladesh.
The exhibition titled 'Woman in Nature' was formally inaugurated by noted cultural personnel and lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor on March 17.
The exhibition organised marking the centenary of International Women Day, will remain open from 3:00pm to 8:00pm till March 24, says a press release.

Delegates leave for Koica training

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A 12-member high-level delegation from Bangladesh Supreme Court and Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs left for Korea today to participate in a training program.
The training titled "Legislation Development (Bangladesh)" is being organized by Korea International Cooperation Agency (Koica).
The delegation, headed by Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury, consists of 3 other SC judges, 3 district and session judges, and 5 law ministry officials.



People have no way out but use the river Buriganga, a watercourse that turned too stinky by industrial wastes being poured into it regularly. The photo was taken from Sadarghat in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

SC needs honest judges to avoid caretaker govt row

Says Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Renowned jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday told the Supreme Court that honest, competent, and neutral judges have to be appointed to this court in a very transparent manner in order to avoid any dispute over the system of caretaker government.
The last retired chief justice is appointed as chief adviser to the caretaker government, as per existing rules of the constitution of the republic.
The caretaker government system has been introduced in the country, as the election commission cannot work effectively and neutrally for holding free and fair elections, said Dr Kamal.
He said this while making submissions as amicus curiae (friend of court) during a hearing on an appeal against the High Court verdict that had declared valid the 13th amendment to the constitution allowing elections under the caretaker government.
Following a controversial election on February 15, 1996, demand for the caretaker government was pressed and the system was introduced through the 13th amendment.
A seven-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque yesterday held the hearing for the fourth day.
Kamal Hossain said dispute has been created on the caretaker government system due to the role of former President Prof Iazuddin Ahmed who arbitrarily held the office of chief adviser to the caretaker government in 2006.
Prof Iazuddin had to leave the office of chief adviser to the caretaker government and to stop the parliamentary election scheduled for January 22, 2007, under pressure from the military, he said.
The eminent jurist said the system of caretaker government cannot be cancelled due to anybody's personal role.
Dr Kamal also said the election commission has to be made stronger and more neutral to hold elections in a free and fair manner.
The loopholes in the system should be plugged through a consensus so the government can function effectively, he added.

Deceived in the desert

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worry about our families, left back heavily indebted for our migration expenses, the two men led us to a factory one day, where we were told we would be working from early morning till evening."
"A month later, when we asked the factory owner for our salaries, he told us the two men had a contract with him, according to which he would pay our salaries to them only. Two weeks later, the two men arrived at our dormitory and gave us 250 Libyan dinars each, half of what we were promised in Dhaka. The two men told us that the remainder of our salary was deducted for our food, accommodation and agency fees. For the next three months, the men arrived at our dormitory every month and paid us the deducted salary. Then over the last three months, before we fled Libya, there was no trace of the men. We were told by the factory owner, that he had paid the men our salaries."
Over the last nine days I have been working in Choucha, where 17,000 Bangladeshi migrant workers from Libya took shelter, this has been the most common story I heard.
Most of these workers paid up to Tk 3 lakh to the agencies back home for a job in Libya.
The sad story of most of these migrant workers goes far. Noor Hossain, a middle-aged man from Noakhali Sadar, who spent 11 months in Tripoli, narrated his bitter experience to me.
"We could not complain to anyone in Bangladesh embassy in fear of harassment because those notorious dalals (manpower brokers) were closely associated with officials there," said Noor Hossain.
"In the recent official Bangla new year celebration at the embassy, those dalals were the top guests," he added.
Noor Hossain and many others in Choucha camp told me how the brokers come into play in the entire process of exploitation. They also blamed the Libyan system of visa issuance for migrant workers for the exploitation. They said lack of honest officials at the Bangladesh embassy made the situation worse for the innocent workers.
A chronic shortage of laborers and skilled and semi-skilled workers always prevailed in the oil rich Libya, where, at any time, hundreds of big overseas companies are working on mega projects in all different sectors.
"Whenever a site requires some workers desperately, the Bangladeshis and other dalals are instantly there to sign a deal, because they have the ready foreign laborers within their custody in Libya, languishing in some undisclosed warehouses" said Ashutosh Roy from Shoilkupa in Jhenidah, who spent 2.5 years in Libya working as a construction worker.
How the Bangladeshi workers are initially brought into Libya before their brokers throw them into warehouses is yet another story that stands as "administratively perfect".
Noor Hossain said false documents are produced in Libya with letterheads from different companies in fictitious names, and then, the documents are approved, as required by Bangladeshi rules, by the Bangladesh embassy.
A vicious cycle of human traffickers, comprising Libyans and other nationals, manage the visas in Libya.
"There were instances when the dalals and their associates added a zero to the number 100 and imported 1,000 workers from Bangladesh, and kept the extra 900 under their custody in derelict warehouses in the suburbs of the industrialized zones," Abdul Halim, around 45, from Savar in Dhamrai.
As I sat down with a group of stranded Bangladeshi migrants inside a tent, more people crammed in to tell their stories.
"Over the last 11 months, we learnt about the warehouses where hundreds of newcomers from Bangladesh were kept in the most sub-human conditions," said Noor Hossain.
Mohammad Sobhan from Narayanganj said he tried to call the Bangladesh Embassy in Tripoli to inform that their approved papers for the company in which he was supposed to work for US\$ 400 did not exist.
"After trying the phone for a long time, an embassy person picked up and asked me to speak in English," said Sobhan. "I gave up hope and obeyed the dalals thereafter," he added.
Some of the names of the dalals they mentioned, have their own warehouses across Libya. For instance, 'Salaudinner godown', 'Babuler godown', 'Jahangir godown', 'Swadhiner godown', where hundreds of Bangladeshis were forcibly confined.
"Many of these workers have sold their last belonging back home with a hope to prosper by offering sweat in a country that paid its laborers much better wages than in Bangladesh," said Noor Hossain. "But now their dreams have been shattered with Libya going into war," he added.
While many in the Choucha camp were deeply worried about their future in Bangladesh, I met one man, Mohammad Abdus Samad Mukul, about 50, from Monirampur in Jessore, who stood firm against all odds. Since Mukul left his 22-month old employment in Libya and fled towards Tunisia recently, he started writing songs about the upheavals in Libya and the ensuing sufferings of Bangladeshi migrant workers there. In the crowded camps every evening, young men gather around Mukul listening to his songs of hope in folklore tunes in his husky voice.
"I want to tell all my brothers here that our sufferings today will bring happiness for our future generations," said Mukul after he finished singing a song.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Shahidullah Titon, senior cameraman of Channel-i, passed away due to cardiac arrest on Monday night at a hospital in Jessore at the age of 40, says a press release.
He left behind his wife and one child.
He will be buried at his family graveyard at Halishahar in Chittagong after two namaz-e-janazas on Channel-i premises in Dhaka and Halishahar in Chittagong.

Baby receives name

FROM PAGE 3
ceremony in the evening.
"We have not got any scope for arranging any formal programme like Akika since the villagers and my relatives keep coming to visit me all the day," said Main.
Over phone, he also told The Daily Star that they called a Moulvi (religious leader) from the local mosque and named the baby.
Main's wife Lisa said she did not name the baby, as she was waiting for her husband to do it. "It is our first child so I cannot name him alone," she said.
Araf was born on December 23 last year when Main along with 25 other crew of the ship MV Jahan Moni remained confined by Somali pirates after the hijack on December 5.
He was in dark about his son's birth for three days since the Somali pirates stopped contact with the ship's owner company officials for 11 days till December 26.
"became so worried about my wife she her condition was in advanced stage but I could not make any contact," said Main.
Upon request by all the crewmembers, the pirates allowed him to make a call, he said.
"At last they agreed and allowed only one minute for calling on the night of December 26 and thus I got to know the good news."
Main said the news made him so excited that he forgot the sufferings of hunger, thirst, and skin diseases developed on him due to daily use of seawater.
All the crew confined in the bridge room of the ship greeted him at gunpoint of the pirates after getting the news, he said.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Today is the fifth death anniversary of Anwara Begum, wife of Mizanur Rahman Bachchu, a freedom fighter and Awami League leader, says a press release.

Milad mahfil

METRO DESK
A milad mahfil for Prof AK Shamsuddin Siddiquey, former director general of Health Services, will be held at his residence at Urban Orchid, House No-45, Road No-3/A, Dhanmondi in the city after Asr prayers on Friday, says a press release.
Prof Siddiquey died on March 18 at his residence at Dhanmondi at the age of 70.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at the 36th founding anniversary of the Islamic Foundation in Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

Two found dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
An official of Dhaka Deputy Commissioner's office was stabbed to death in the capital's Jatrabari area Monday night.
The dead, Sajjad Hossain Khan Jamal, lived on Mutual College road.
Police recovered Jamal's body from the 1st floor of his under-construction six-story building.
Police sent the body for autopsy to Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital morgue, where sources said the body had over 25 stab marks.
Jatrabari Police Station Officer-in-Charge KM Abul Kashem said, around 8:30pm, a man took Jamal to his construction site saying that the man wanted a look at Jamal's site.
When Jamal went missing, his family informed the police who went to the spot and recovered the body.
Meanwhile, Shampur police recovered the body of Quddus Mollah, 55, from a ditch in Tulabagicha around 12:00pm yesterday.
Police said the man was missing for the last 8-10 days until his decomposed body was found in the ditch near his residence.

WEATHER TODAY

Table with 5 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.