

NEWS IN *brief*

Under-trial prisoner dies in N'ganj

UNB, Narayanganj

An under-trial prisoner died at Narayanganj General Hospital early hours of Saturday.

The deceased was identified as Faruk Miah, 32, son of Borhan Uddin of Baburail area of the town.

District jail super said police arrested Faruk in a drug case on March 22.

The court sent him to jail on March 25 when he was produced before it after two days of remand in custody.

Faruk was rushed to the hospital as he felt severe pain in his chest where the attending doctor declared him dead late at night.

Faruk's wife Selina Begum claimed that her husband died due to torture while on remand.

President flies to Singapore today for check-up

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman will leave Dhaka for Singapore today for medical check-up.

He will depart for Singapore by a regular flight of Singapore Airlines at about 11:55pm today.

The president will undergo medical check-up at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore where he will stay for six days, said a release of Bangabhaban.

Hill cutting protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A human chain was formed protesting hill cutting in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolan (Bapa), Green Cox's Bazar and Cox's Bazar Poribesh Bachao Andolon jointly organised the human chain programme in front of deputy commissioner's office in Cox's Bazar.

Journalist Mohammad Nurul Islam, Bapa Cox's Bazar Vice-President Mokbul Ahmed and Bapa central committee leader Saiful Islam Chowdhury spoke at the programme.

They urged the prime minister to take necessary steps to stop the hill cutting.



King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck calls on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

4 city canals still under grabbers' grip

Dhaka district admin fails to meet its January deadline to recover five canals

TAWFIQUE ALI

Dhaka district administration failed to recover city's four canals and file a single case against illegal housing projects occupying rivers during its month-long deadline ending in January. It however partially recovered one canal.

An inter-agency meeting of the administration decided to recover Devdholai (Kajlar Khal) in Demra, part of Ramchandrapur Khal out of Dhaka embankment, Baunia Khal (canal) in Uttara, Ulan Khal in Rampura and the main Kalyanpur Khal.

The canals are either grabbed by government agencies or private housing projects, as per findings of district administration's survey.

A High Court bench in June 2009, among other directions, directed authorities to free Buriganga, Turag, Balu and Shitalakhyia rivers from various encroachments by November 30, 2010.

Later, the administration concerned obtained an extension of the deadline till May 30 this year.

At the meeting held at the end of

December 2010, Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Dhaka Mohibul Haque instructed all assistant commissioners (land) concerned with the rivers to identify and inform him of the river grabbers with housing projects.

Assistant commissioner (land) of Keraniganj was instructed to place the list of land grabbers of Sobhadda Khal, which has been grabbed and recovered several times in the past.

But none of the assistant commissioners came up with the information though they held a similar meeting on February 13.

Asked on failure to file criminal cases against the river grabbers, the DC said, "District administration has to remain preoccupied with many other jobs."

According to officials concerned, two roads occupy Devdholai canal.

Habibur Rahman Mollah, local lawmaker of Demra, filled a stretch of the canal, four kilometre in length and 30 to 50 feet in width, for the construction of a road by Local Government Engineering Department. Dhaka Wasa owns this part of the canal for drainage of urban flood.

Habibur said the road occupies only several feet of the canal's width and was in the interest of the public.

Roads and Highways Department completely filled the other part, owned by Water Development Board, to build Dhaka-Narayanganj Road.

Regarding this canal, the DC said he placed the matter to the national taskforce on river and canal recovery on February 3 and they would instruct him for further developments. The part occupied by the road is irreversible, he added.

On the other hand, Ramchandrapur canal is occupied by different housing projects.

Nabinagar Housing occupies 1.7 acres of land, Sat Masjid Housing Ltd 72 decimals, Chandrima Housing 80 decimals, Ekota Housing 50 decimals, Dhaka Uddyan Housing 8 decimals and Basila Garden City and Future Housing Ltd 20 decimals each, he said.

Baitul Noor Jannat Jam-e Mosque also occupies 30 decimals while Mina Bazar 7 decimals, added Bashar.

Dhaka district administration served notices upon these grabbers with a

February 10 deadline, he said.

Baunia canal has been acquired and filled up by Rajdhani Unnayan Katripakkha, said Abul Bashar Md Fakruzzaman, revenue deputy collector and executive magistrate of Dhaka.

The stretch of Ulan canal within Hatirjheel development project will be restored as part of the project, said Bashar.

However, during the deadline, the administration carried eviction drives and almost freed Kalyanpur main canal from illegal structures.

They also carried eviction drives in Turag River near Tongi Bridge to remove illegal structures and in Buriganga River in Mohammadpur to remove earth filling by sand traders.

Meanwhile, a mobile court led by Magistrate Bashar penalised three sand traders for earth filling in Turag River at Amin Bazar on February 3.

A joint team of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority and Dhaka district administration also freed a stretch of Buriganga River foreshore in Lalbagh on February 14.

Bangladeshi scientist claims faster wound care dressing

BSS, Dhaka

A Bangladeshi scientist now living in New Zealand has brought good news for the people with severe wounds from acid attack and fire incident.

Dr Azam Ali, an agro-scientist, has invented a bio-based wound dressing, which cures severe wound 40 percent faster than any other conventional medicine currently available on the market.

A leading pharmaceutical company from Bangladesh has already contacted the scientist to introduce the new product on the local market.

The breakthrough innovation of the Bangladeshi scientist won the globally reputed Bayer Innovation of the Year Award in 2010.

Ali has invented bio-based materials to create new wound dressing, bone-graft implant products and medical suture technology using wool from New Zealand sheep. He uses low-volume protein sources from the wool to wound dressing and medical devices.

Two of his wound-care medical products are now being used at New Zealand hospitals and are approved for use in Australia, United States and the European Union.

"Bangladesh can get benefit out of the invention," said Azam Ali who is a senior scientist at the AgResearch, a leading research organisation in New Zealand, in an interview with the news agency last week when he came to Dhaka for a personal visit.

He said the new wound dressing dramatically brings down the treatment time while the result is far better than any other existing treatment process as the bio-based wound dressing accelerates wound healing process and tissue growth.

"It works 40 percent faster than any other traditional products in wound treatment," Ali claimed.

The scientist sees very bright prospect of using the new product in Bangladesh because of availability of natural raw materials.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at a meeting with the high officials of National Board of Revenue (NBR) and its commissioners at her office in the city yesterday. (Story on B1)



PHOTO: PID

Solve Yunus issue to uphold country's image
Speakers urge prime minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prime minister (PM) should rise above political narrowness to solve the issue centring Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus for the sake of the country's image, speakers said yesterday.

They said mistreatment of the founder of Grameen Bank by the government is seriously damaging the country and its people.

They made the call at a discussion meeting organised by "Citizen Committee to Protect the Honour of Nobel Laureate Professor Yunus" at Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh in the city.

Mentionable, the committee, consisting of politicians, lawyers, civil society members, rights activists and noted professionals, was formed after Bangladesh Bank relieved the microfinance pioneer from the post of managing director of Grameen Bank.

ABM Mostafa Ameen, the committee convener, said the issue over Prof Yunus is unacceptable and unwanted.

"Prof Yunus regularly interacted with people through the Board of Grameen Bank. (Three of the 12 board members are from the government) Now the government says he was in the post without approval for the last 12 years.

"How was it possible? It means that there was no government in the country in the meantime," he said.

Former state minister Abul Hassan Chowdhury said, "By dishonouring Yunus, we are actually dishonouring ourselves and the country."

He urged the prime minister to be aware of people around her, as these "opportunists" would disappear when the masses begin blaming her in this issue.

Stating the time adjourned by the Supreme Court before hearing on two appeals in this issue an opportu-

nity, the former Awami League lawmaker said, "The government should utilise it and reach an amicable solution."

He said, "The government should keep the Yunus issue out of politics so that no conflict arises."

Former lawmaker Humayun Kabir said keeping or not keeping Prof Yunus in the post of managing director is a legal issue. "It should not be politicised."

"Whether we admit or not, Yunus's contribution in empowering women is recognised around the world."

Former lawmaker of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Mustafizur Rahman said there is still time for the government to make arrangement so that Yunus could hand over responsibility in a congenial environment, maintaining spirit of Grameen Bank.

Prof Tofail Ahmed, formerly at public administration department

of University of Chittagong (CU) and also former member of Local Government Commission, said Bangladesh's identity spawning from the worldwide fame of Dr Yunus is now at stake.

Public health activist Zafar Ullah Chowdhury said the PM has to rise above politics to settle the issue.

Former CU economics department Prof Sikander Khan said Yunus should be allowed to continue in the post of managing director as long as he can properly serve the microfinance bank. "He should be allowed to continue as we need him for the sake of the country. But we are doing the opposite."

Speakers also chastised Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury for her comments in parliament on the family affairs of Prof Yunus.

Abdur Rouf, presidium member of Gono Forum, chaired the meeting.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar
Governance Advocacy Forum will hold a seminar. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 10:00am.

Workshop
UBINIG will organise an international workshop. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 3:00pm.

Discussion
Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh will arrange a discussion. Venue: IDEB auditorium, Time: 5:30pm.

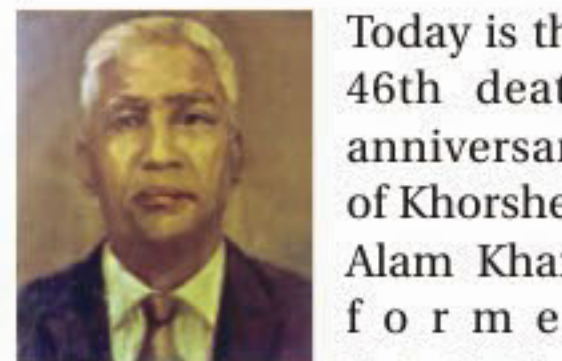
Anniversary
Rapid Action Battalion will celebrate its 7th founding anniversary. Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Time: 7:30pm.

Exhibition
An intellectual's comment and autograph exhibition will be held. Venue: Shilpakala Academy, Time: 5:00pm.

Sangeet utshab
Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigosthi will arrange a sangeet utshab. Venue: Shilpakala Academy, Time: 4:00pm.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 46th death anniversary of Khorshed Alam Khan, former inspector of school and father of prominent politician Sirajul Alam Khan, says a press release.

All have been requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

WEATHER TODAY

No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said. The sun sets in the capital at 6:12pm today and rises at 5:54am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 18.2 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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	30.5	19.5	60	48
Chittagong	30.2	21.5	94	69
Rajshahi	34.0	20.3	67	60
Rangpur	28.1	19.6	66	65
Khulna	33.0	21.0	74	54
Barisal	32.1	21.9	68	56
Sylhet	28.4	19.8	71	61
Cox's Bazar	32.3	23.8	76	72