

NEWS IN brief

Kabiraj dies from self-made drug

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A rural Kabiraj (herbal medicine practitioner) died from poisoning at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital yesterday hours after he drank the medicine he prepared for a patient.

Ayez Uddin Munshi, 70, a Kabiraj of Sonadaha village in Bagha upazila died from "unknown poison" around 3:00am, according to the hospital and police sources.

Two others -- Munshi's six-year-old daughter Sadia Khatun and his patient Mohammad Ripon, 21, of the same village -- were admitted to the hospital in critical condition after they were fed the same herbal solution.

Ripon's uncle Kamruzzaman said Munshi prepared the medicine mixture sitting at the courtyard of his house and fed Ripon when he came for treatment for weakness.

After feeding Ripon, Munshi fed his daughter some medicine, and drank the rest, he said. As the three started tossing in pain following drinking the medicine, neighbours rushed them to local health complex and then to RMCH.

Assistant Sub-inspector (ASI) Shariful Islam of Rajpara Police Station said an unnatural death case was filed with the police station in this connection.

Woman dies in city road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was killed after being knocked down by a microbus at Pallabi Beribadh in the city last night.

Dead is Mahmuda Aktar, 35, wife of Ali Hossain, a member of armed forces, residing in West Manikdi, Dhaka Cantonment. Mahmuda was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

SCBA polls begin today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day annual election of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) begins today. The voting will take place from 10:00am to 5:00pm today and tomorrow.

A total of 2,302 lawyers have been enlisted to cast their votes for the 14 executive posts, including the president and the secretary.

The SCBA authorities have taken all preparations for holding the election, sources said.

According to the sources, the main contest in the election will take place between the panel of ruling Awami League-backed Sammilita Aijibhi Samannaya Parishad (SASP) and the opposition BNP-backed Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Aijibhi Oikya Parishad (JAOP).

Incumbent president of SCBA Khandaker Mahbub Hossain (JAOP) and its former president Abdul Baset Majumder (SASP) are contesting for the post of president while incumbent secretary Bodruddoza Badal (JAOP), SM Abul Hossain (SASP) and Md Shahjahan (independent) are contesting the election for the post of secretary.

Surgical Oncology Assoc launched

METRO DESK

A new professional organisation, Bangladesh Association of Surgical Oncology (BASO), started in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Prof Mizanur Rahman, head of the department of Surgical Oncology of the National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital, has been made convener of a four-member convening committee.

Amini's remarks condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) yesterday condemned Islamic Ain Bastobyon Committee chief Fazlul Haque Amini's comment on the National Women Development Policy.

A statement signed by ASK acting Executive Director Noor Khan claimed that Amini during a press conference on Monday said the number of illegitimate children will increase in the country, if the new women development policy is implemented.

Such a comment is a clear violation of women's rights, and derogatory to women and their dignity, said the statement.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

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

The sunsets in the capital today at 6:13pm and rises tomorrow at 5:33am.

Country's highest temperature 34.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 17.8 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	
Dhaka	29.4	20.5	67
Chittagong	29.3	22.6	71
Rajshahi	30.5	19.2	80
Rangpur	27.8	17.8	72
Khulna	33.9	20.1	79
Barisal	32.5	20.0	83



A policeman charges truncheon on a rickshaw-puller to enforce the restriction of the movement of rickshaws between Kakrail and Shantinagar in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Three killed in Comilla road crash

UNB, Comilla

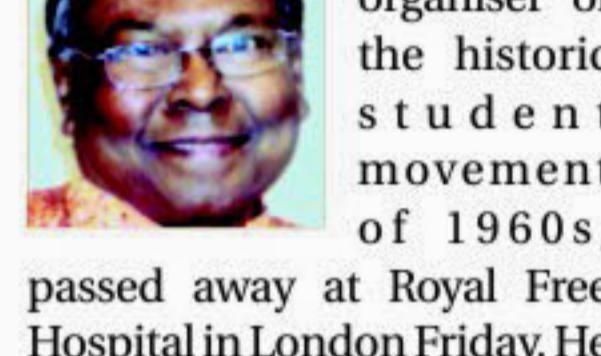
At least three people were killed and another injured in an accident on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Mia Bazar in Choudhogram yesterday afternoon.

The deceased were identified as Abdus Sobhan, 35, an employee of press of the Daily Prothom Alo, Ripon Mia, driver of a pickup van and son of Rafiqul Islam of Haliabab of Charfashion of Bhola district and helper of pickup Amin Mia, 38, son of late Jamal Uddin of Mohipur of Kuliarchar of Kishoreganj district.

Police said a Chittagong-bound covered van collided head on with a pickup van.

Shahidul Islam passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Dr Shahidul Islam, an organiser of the historic student movement of 1960s, passed away at Royal Free Hospital in London Friday. He was 67, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, a daughter, two sons, friends and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Shahidul Islam was also the elder brother of Mahboob Zaman, president of Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services.

Mokbul Ahmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned labour leader Mokbul Ahmed, also a former member to the executive committee of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal (BJSD), died of a cardiac arrest yesterday. He was 62, says a press release.

BJSD President Nazrul Islam Khan and General Secretary Jafrul Hassan expressed deep shock at his death.

Govt dents country's image abroad: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in Saudi Arabia yesterday alleged that Awami League-led grand alliance government has tarnished the country's image abroad.

Khaleda Zia, who is now visiting Saudi Arabia, was addressing a discussion at a local hotel organised by BNP's Saudi Arabia unit to mark the country's 40th Independence and National Day. Maruf Kamal Khan, press secretary of the BNP chief, said in a release.

Describing the country's present condition as unwell, the opposition leader also said the incumbent government could not resolve any problem of the people in the last two years.

"The present government has no alternative but resigning. People became so fed up with this government. I, therefore, am demanding a mid-term election."

She also said the government has dented the country's reputation in the world, as "no foreign investment" has been channelled to Bangladesh.

"We will establish the rule of law in the country if we win the next election. We will unearth the real perpetrators involved in BDR carnage and also give back dignity and respect of Prof Muhammad Yunus and other dignitaries," said the opposition leader.

Khaleda Zia yesterday reached Madina to offer special Munajat at the Rowza Mubarak of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM). She will also visit Mecca to perform Umra hajj. The BNP chief is expected to return home on April 02.

Children at high risk of sexual abuse Reveals Unicef study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children in Bangladesh are highly vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation, not only behind the closed doors of brothels but also in households, academic institutions and on the streets, revealed a Unicef study yesterday.

The research exposed a serious issue of sexual abuse of boys which has been hardly recognised in the past. It also stressed recognising the long-lasting effects of sexual abuse on the victim's family and society.

Unicef Bangladesh launched the study styled "Sexual Abuse and Commercial Exploitation of Children: Elements for a National Strategy and Plan of Action" at a function hosted at the Spectra Convention Centre in the city's Gulshan area.

Home Minister Shahara Khatun addressed the event as chief guest.

The study, conducted by five researchers in six months, documented case histories of 40 sexually abused girls, 28 boys and 59 girls engaged in prostitution and some other features.

It also revealed little support is offered to the traumatised person.

According to the findings, girls abused do not seek justice as they want to limit the scandal and even do not trust the prevailing judicial system.

"We need to speak out and ensure the immediate care and protection of these vulnerable children," said Michel Saint-Lot, deputy representative of Unicef Bangladesh.

Rose-Anne Papavero, chief of child protection section of Unicef, also spoke on the occasion.

PM to repay rickshaw puller's love for Bangabandhu tomorrow

BSS, Dhaka

Poor rickshaw-van-puller Hasmat Ali, who spent his whole life in abject miseries, is the pride of Gafargaon of Mymensingh district.

He set a unique example of generosity, liberality and rare love in society by donating a piece of land, his last resource, to Sheikh Hasina.

The extremely poor Ali had to pass most of his days either remaining half-fed or unfed when he was living at Kharua Barail village home.

Finding no other way, he later moved to the capital Dhaka with his wife Ramiza Khatun and their only son Abdul Quader and took shelter at Agargaon Slum.

The sense of worries and love prompted Ali to save part of his income that eventually enabled him to buy a piece of land at a cost of Tk 24,000 at his village home at Kharua Barail at Gafargaon in Mymensingh, neither for his wife nor for his only son, but for Bangabandhu's daughter before his death in 2003.

With his savings, Ali had purchased about 6.75 decimals of land on February 22 in 2003 and got it registered in the name of Sheikh Hasina.

Ali's family said he disclosed the matter of donating the land to Sheikh Hasina at the deathbed of Chest Diseases Hospital at Mohakhali in the capital.

The matter was later published in last year's June 2 in a daily which drew the attention of Sheikh Hasina.

The PM also asked her office and the Mymensingh district administration to construct a building on the land for Ramiza's family.

To repay for the gesture of rare love for Bangabandhu by Hasmat Ali, Sheikh Hasina, now the prime minister, is going to Gafargaon tomorrow to inaugurate the building and hand over the deed of the land to Ramiza.

Woman tortured for dowry dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A wage-earning woman succumbed to her injuries yesterday at a city hospital following seven days of alleged torture by her husband asking for dowry.

Hasina Yasmin, 28, computer assistant of a private clinic, was beaten up by her husband Shafiqul Islam, a private company staff, at their Tollabagh house in the city on March 22.

Yasmin was admitted unconscious to a private hospital the next day.

Mamataz Begum, a paternal aunt of the victim, said Shafiqul kicked Yasmin abruptly that night and went out the house leaving her unconscious.

Neighbours took Yasmin to the hospital the next day, and she regained her consciousness a day later.

Mamataz told this correspondent that Shafiqul took Tk 3.66 lakh from her savings a few months back and was putting pressure on her to hand over the remaining amount she had deposited in banks. Upon her refusal, Shafiqul started torturing her.

Mamataz quoted the victim as saying Shafiqul also poured some poisonous liquid into her mouth and beat up her brutally after she went unconscious. "I saw a bottle of toxic spirit in their house following the incident," she said.

Shafiqul came to see his wife at the hospital for once when she was unconscious, but fled the house after she died, added Mamataz. The couple got married about a year back.

FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM Moriarty praises Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador in Dhaka James F Moriarty yesterday lauded the role of Bangladesh in combating terrorism and extremism.

"The government of Bangladesh is doing good job in addressing the issue of terrorism," he said while addressing the opening ceremony of a two-day workshop in a city hotel.

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) in assistance with Defense Institution Reform Initiative (DIRI) of USA organised the workshop titled 'Towards Developing a National Counter Terrorism Strategy for Bangladesh.'

About the importance of regional cooperation to combat terrorism, Moriarty said terrorists are crossing borders and using different countries to launch attacks in the third countries.

He emphasised the need for increasing military and civilian interactions to build trust and establish working relationship, and also developing a comprehensive counter terrorism strategy to combat terrorism.

Addressing the function as the chief guest, lawmaker M Idris Ali, also chairman of parliamentary standing committee on defence ministry, said Bangladesh has been subjected to a series of terror attacks.

"The most severe attack took place in August 2004 in a public meeting of the then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina." On August 17, 2005 more than 500 bombs were exploded in 300 locations in a span of only half an hour in that attack, he said.

BEI President Farook Sobhan presided over the workshop. John Hansen of DIRI also spoke on the occasion.

Law afoot to protect farmland: Minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is preparing a law to ensure protection and maximum utilisation of the farmlands across the country to achieve food security.

The land ministry has already started working to enact the law styled "Protection of Farmland and Land Utilisation Law 2011" that will stop misuse of arable lands.

Land Minister Rezaul Karim Hira said this to a two-day international workshop at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban, Dhaka University (DU) yesterday.

He was addressing as the chief guest the technical session of the workshop on "Impact of tobacco cultivation and policy advocacy for shifting to food and other agricultural crops."

Eight papers were presented in the first-day session of the workshop yesterday, being hosted by Ubinig, a policy and action research organisation.

Prof Jacob K Kibwage of South Eastern University College of Kenya presented a study paper in the session, suggesting for cultivation of alternative crops like bamboo instead of tobacco as a means for livelihood and protection of the farmlands.

Another study, presented by Engr Sayeed Ahmed Baset of LGED, Mymensingh, showed that tobacco farming is destroying the ecosystem of the Matamuhuri River flowing across the county's southern hilly areas.