

NEWS IN brief

Convection over North Bay

BSS, Dhaka

Deep convection is taking place over North Bay. Sually weather may continue over North Bay and adjoining coastal area of Bangladesh.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal number three.

All fishing boats and trawlers over North Bay have been advised to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution till further notice.

BNP rally tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

The opposition BNP will hold a rally in front of the party's central office at Naya Paltan in the city tomorrow as part of its countrywide programme demanding midterm election.

BNP sought permission to hold the rally at Paltan Maidan or Muktangon, but was refused to hold the programme either of the places.

Journos not getting info despite RTI Act

Speakers tell Safma discussion

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a roundtable discussion yesterday said the journalists are still not getting necessary information from bureaucrats despite the Right to Information (RTI) Act is in operation.

They also observed that journalists are frequently facing defamation cases being filed by ruling party men, which has become a big threat to freedom of press.

South Asia Free Media Association (Safma) organised the roundtable on "Press Freedom and Responsibility" at the National Press Club in the city on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day.

President of Media Commission Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley presented the keynote paper at the programme presided over by Safma President Reazuddin Ahmed.

Safma Secretary General Zahiduzzaman Faruque, President of Bangladesh Federal Journalists Union (BFUJ) Ruhul Amin Gazi, BFUJ Secretaries General Shawkat Mahmud and Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, President of South Asian Women Association in Media Rashida Amin, former DUJ president Altaf Mahmud and Saiful Islam Talukder spoke at the programme.

AUTO-RICKSHAW LIFTING

4 held in city, Gazipur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammadpur police yesterday arrested four people belonging to an auto-rickshaw lifting syndicate in the city and Gazipur in two separate drives.

Abdur Razzaq, 30, was held in Mirpur and Abdullah, 18, Rafiqul Islam, 23, and Md Roni, 23, in Kaliakoir, Gazipur.

Police said Razzaq leads a gang of 10 men who in disguise of passengers steal auto-rickshaws by making the drivers unconscious by serving them sedative-mixed juice.

The arrestees, as quoted by police, said they rent auto-rickshaws for long distance to get intimate with the driver during the journey and feed them the sedative juices.

Anowar Hossain, sub-inspector of Mohammadpur Police Station, who led the drive, said Abdullah, Rafiqul, and Roni run a workshop in Kaliakoir and buy the lifted vehicles.

At the workshop the three do some modifications to the auto-rickshaws and then sell them, said Anowar.

The three men buy auto-rickshaws from 5-7 auto-rickshaw lifting gangs, who are active in the city.

Razzaq, during primary interrogation, said they sell each lifted vehicle at Tk 40 thousand, and after modification the second party sell them at Tk 2-3 lakh.

The lifters also make fake documents and change number plates to camouflage them from the law enforcers' eyes.

Police seized such a modified auto-rickshaw from the Kaliakoir workshop and three meters of the auto-rickshaws already sold. The arrested four informed police that they had lifted around 12 vehicles last month.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

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

The sunsets in the capital at 6:30pm today and rises at 5:20am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 36.3 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessor and lowest 20.8 degrees Celsius at Sylhet.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

| City/Town | Temperature in Celsius | | Humidity percentage | |
|------------|------------------------|------|---------------------|---------|
| | Max | Min | Morning | Evening |
| Dhaka | 33.5 | 25.2 | 75 | 65 |
| Chittagong | 32.2 | 25.0 | 68 | 79 |
| Rajshahi | 35.8 | 25.7 | 82 | 68 |
| Rangpur | 34.0 | 24.5 | 85 | 56 |
| Khulna | 35.3 | 25.8 | 77 | 65 |
| Barisal | 32.5 | 25.1 | 80 | 69 |

Instant energy, instant recharge

Unable to see doctor, old woman kills herself

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elderly woman, financially unable to cure herself from different complications she has been suffering for long, committed suicide in the city yesterday.

Jahura Begum, 55, wife of late Habibur Rahman of Pukur Par slum in Pallabi, allegedly poisoned herself Friday evening.

She was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where she died yesterday.

Shafique Miah, son-in-law of Jahura, said she had been suffering for about seven years from severe headache and eye and other old age complications.

Lately she took different traditional treatments, but the condition remained unimproved. She could not see a good doctor for want of money.

Jahura had been telling her children for a few days that she would kill herself to be free of the unbearable sufferings.

On Friday she managed to collect a bottle of insecticide, which was found lying beside her as neighbours rushed to her house after she took the poison and was groaning.

Jahura used to work as an aya with a non-government organisation, but could not continue the job due to illness.

She lived with her only son Farhad, 22, who worked in a genji (vest) factory. Jahura had three daughters who were married off earlier.

Pallabi police said an unnatural death (UD) case was filed in this connection, and the body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy.



People from all walks of life pay their last respect to sector commander Lt Col (retd) Quazi Nooruzzaman Bir Uttam at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Woman dies at hospital: Husband held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman tortured allegedly by her husband succumbed to her injuries at a city hospital yesterday evening after three days' fight for life.

Family of the victim, Bipasha Dhor, 21, wife of Dipongkor Dhor of the city's Tantibazar, said Dipongkor tortured her three days back for dowry. Bipasha was admitted to National Medical College and Hospital.

Police detained accused Dipongkor following her death.

CMP destroys huge drugs

BSS, Chittagong

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) yesterday destroyed a huge quantity of drugs recovered from various places in the city last month.

WORLD THALASSAEMIA DAY TODAY

3.5 lakh people affected in country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will observe World Thalassaemia Day today as elsewhere across the globe with the theme "Equal Chance to Life".

Bangladesh Thalassaemia Foundation and Shandhani Sir Salimullah Medical College unit jointly organised a seminar in Baridh auditorium in the city yesterday marking the day.

Experts at the seminar said thalassaemia is a hereditary blood disorder where patients have to undergo repeated blood transfusions, as the body cannot produce enough haemoglobin.

They said an estimated 3.5 lakh people in the country are suffering from thalassaemia while seven percent of the total population are its carriers.

The foundation Secretary General Dr Mohammad Abdur Rahim said if both parents are the carriers, then one or two of their children can be affected with thalassaemia.

So thalassaemia must be tested before

marriage to prevent it from spreading, said the experts.

Prime minister's Health Adviser Prof Modassar Ali said thalassaemia would get priority in the 2011-16 five-year plan of the health ministry and the government's Health Education Bureau would work to raise awareness in this regard.

Modassar launched "Guideline for Clinical Management of Thalassaemia" jointly published by Thalassemia International Federation and the foundation while Eastern Bank provided five computers to the foundation.

Prof Sharuddin Ahmed, secretary general of Bangladesh Medical Association; Prof Iqbal Arslan, general secretary of Bangladesh Swadhinata Chikitshak Parishad; and Dr Habib e Millat, director of Bangladesh Medical Research Council; also spoke.

They were joined by Golam Sarwar Shuvo, general secretary of Sandhani Central Committee; and Dr Jamshed Haider Siddiqui, chairman of the foundation.



UPA Chairman Sonia Gandhi, second right, releases "Rabindra Chitravali", a commemorative volume of paintings by Rabindranath Tagore, at the opening ceremony of the poet's 150th birth anniversary programme in New Delhi yesterday. On her right are India's Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and Bangladesh's Planning Minister Air Vice Marshal (Retd) AK Khandker and on her left is India's Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: REZAUL KARIM LOTUS

AL won't counter BNP agitation, says Hanif

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League (AL) will not take any programme countering agitation programmes of the main opposition BNP, said AL Joint Secretary General Mahbubul Islam Hanif yesterday.

He said people will not support BNP's programmes if AL tells them about development programmes taken by the government in past two years.

Answering questions at a press briefing after a joint meeting at the political office of AL president in the city's Dhanmondi, Hanif also said AL will celebrate the homecoming of its President Sheikh Hasina on May 17.

Hasina returned to Bangladesh from exile on May 17 in 1981, six years after the brutal assassination of most of her family members including Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975.

The meeting decided to publish a memorial book and make a documentary on the political life and struggles of Hasina, he said.

The party will bring out a colourful

procession marking the day from Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the city, ending at Dhanmondi 32, said Hanif.

Party leaders will place wreaths at Bangabandhu's portrait in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi 32 in the city.

All Dhaka lawmakers; presidents and general secretaries of AL associated bodies; City AL president and general secretaries; and departmental secretaries of AL central executive committee; were present at the meeting presided over by AL President

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 9th death anniversary of Abdur Rashed, former assistant professor of Chittagong University, says a press release.

On the occasion, prayers will be offered at his house in Chittagong, and different organisations will hold programmes including discussion on him.

Kazi Habibur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 8th death anniversary of Kazi Habibur Rahman, former marriage registrar of Sirajganj, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil was held Friday at his home in Rameshwargate. His friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

War hero Nooruzzaman laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Veteran freedom fighter Lt Col (retd) Quazi Nooruzzaman (Bir Uttam) was laid to eternal rest with full state and military honour in city's Banani Military Graveyard yesterday.

Nooruzzaman, commander of sector-7 of the War of Liberation in 1971, passed away due to old age complications at a city hospital on Friday.

He was buried around 6:30pm following two namaz-e-janazas -- one at Dhaka University Central Mosque after Zohr prayers and another at Central Army Mosque inside Dhaka Cantonment after Asr prayers.

Assistant military secretaries of both the president and prime minister paid last tributes to Nooruzzaman on behalf of the president and prime minister at the cantonment.

Earlier, his body was kept on Central Shaheed Minar premises around 10:30am where freedom fighters, political leaders, cultural activists, academicians and people from all walks of life paid their last respect.

Awami League leaders led by Matia Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed and Sahara Khatun and BNP leaders led by party's Acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir paid floral tributes on behalf of their respective parties.

Sammilita Sangskritik Jote President Nasir Uddin Yusuf, Language Movement Veteran Abdul Motin, Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, noted educationalist Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Prof Mianur Rahman, lawmakers Rashed Khan Menon and Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, noted Barrister Amirul Islam, Filmmakers Tareq Masud and Catherine Masud, Theatre personality Mamunur Rashid, cultural personality and lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor, cultural personality Aly Zaker and family members of Nooruzzaman also paid last respect on deceased's coffin at Shaheed Minar.

Dhaka University Teachers' Association, Muktijuddha Kendriyo Command Council, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Liberation War Museum, Sammilita Samajik Andolan, Bangladesh Uddihi Shilpi Gosthi, GanoForum, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Workers' Party of Bangladesh, liberation war affairs ministry, Dhaka city unit of Awami League, Ain O Shalish Kendro, Ganobanghati Andolan and Ganotantrik Biplobi Party also paid their tributes.

Chiefs of the three services also placed wreaths at the coffin in cantonment to pay their last respect.

After his burial, army personnel presented a guard of honour and a gun salute honouring the sector commander. Later, a national flag and a flag of Bangladesh Army were handed over to the family members of Nooruzzaman, said ISPR sources.

Meanwhile, Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee expressed profound shock at the death of Nooruzzaman, a founder of the committee.

The committee issued a joint statement signed by the committee's Advisory Council's President National Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Central Executive Council President Justice Guhram Rabban, Executive President journalist Shahriar Kabir and General Secretary Kazi Mukul expressing sympathy to the bereaved family.