

CU SHUTTLE TRAIN  
More police to check anomalies

CU CORRESPONDENT

More policemen will be deployed in the shuttle train of Chittagong University (CU) to stop the activities of compartment-based groups of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

The university authorities took the decision following a meeting with officials from the district administration, police, and railway authorities on Sunday night.

CU Acting Proctor Dr Mohammad Akter Hossain said all the names given to each car will be erased, and more policemen will be deployed in the compartments.

Hossain also said Hathazari Police Station will open a registration system where anyone can record the names of unruly students who create disorder in the shuttle trains.

CU Acting Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Mohammad Alauddin said they requested the three authorities for all-out cooperation to avert any further turmoil over shuttle train factionalisation.

On April 29 and 30, the compartment-based BCL factions engaged in strings of clashes, leaving a number of students hurt and leading to the closure of CU till May 12.

Saarc agri workshop starts today

METRO DESK

A three-day training workshop on information, agriculture, and development in South Asian countries begins at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (Barc) in the city today, says a press release.

Barc, Saarc Agricultural Centre (SAC), the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), and Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) jointly organise the programme.

The workshop is titled "Coherence in information for agricultural research for development (CIARD) and strengthening regional agricultural information systems (RAIS) in the Saarc countries."

Prof Dr MA Sattar Mandal, vice chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh will be present as the chief guest at the inaugural session of the workshop (May 10-12) at Barc conference room in Farmgate.

BPRA executives

METRO DESK

Mirza Tarequl Quader and SM Mahfuzur Rahman have been

elected president and secretary general of Bangladesh Public Relations Association (BPRA), says a press release.

The other office bearers elected for the next two years are Vice Presidents: Raoshan A Rahman, ASM Bazlul Haque, and Azam Khan; Joint Secretaries General: Mir Mohammad Morshed and Faruk Ahmed; Finance Secretary: Md Abdul Khalek; Organising Secretary: Sheikh Khayeruzzaman; Office Secretary: Md Al Amin Chowdhury; International Affairs Secretary: Bijan Lal Deb; Communication and Publicity Secretary: Shahid Mohammd Mobasser; Publication Secretary: SM Kamrul Islam Khan; Education and Research Secretary: Nur Kamrun Nahar; and Cultural and Sports Secretary: Shushmita Das.

The BPRA is a national level organisation of the public relations officers (PROs) working for different government or non-government organisations in Bangladesh.



Bangladesh Tamak Birodhi Jote forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding imposition of high tax on tobacco products. PHOTO: STAR

Price of essentials now beyond buying capacity

Khondoker Mosharraf tells Ctg rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

BNP Standing Committee Member Khondoker Mosharraf Hossain here yesterday demanded midterm election since the present government failed at every sector to rule the country.

He was addressing as the chief guest at a rally jointly organised by BNP Chittagong city, south and north district units yesterday afternoon at Laldighi Maidan, presided over by BNP Chittagong city unit President Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury.

Mosharraf said Awami League-led grand alliance government failed to keep its electoral pledges like keeping reasonable prices of commodities, which now is beyond people's purchasing capacity.

The government failed to provide any utility services like electricity, gas and

water while the country's economy is being destroyed, he alleged.

Over 33 lakh small investors lost their money due to share market fall, he alleged, adding that senior government officials are involved in the share market scam, which is why they are not being brought under trial.

If this situation continues, the suffering of the people would increase and so this government should not be given any more time, he said.

He blamed the government for harassing the opposition party leaders including BNP leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury by charging false cases.

BNP leaders Mir Md Nasiruddin Chowdhury, Jafrul Islam Chowdhury MP, Gias Uddin Quader Chowdhury, Syed Wahidul Alam and Mostafa Kamal Pasha MP also spoke.

Kenya keen to lease out lands to Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman asked the newly appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to Kenya to explore the potential sectors for increasing agricultural, trade and commercial activities in the African countries.

The president made the call when newly appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to Kenya Wahidur Rahman called on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban yesterday. During the meeting, the president said Bangladesh needs to extend its agricultural activities in the potential areas of African countries to produce crops, including rice and cottons to ensure the country's food security, create employment and help development.

Ambassador Wahidur Rahman who will also work in Tanzania and Uganda as Bangladesh Envoy, apprised the president that Kenya is keen to lease out its vast arable lands to Bangladesh for cultivation at the rate of 19 cents per Bigha.

Uganda has also agreed to allow Bangladesh to produce rice and cotton in its lands with condition of providing 80 percent of production to Bangladesh and the rest for Uganda, he said.

President Zillur Rahman gave him a patient hearing and also assured him of all-out support and cooperation to discharge his responsibilities in the African countries.

Zillur Rahman mentioned that Kenya has already been taking medicines from Bangladesh and it is necessary to explore more markets for pharmaceuticals in other African countries. Secretaries to the President's Office were also present.



Newly appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to Kenya Wahidur Rahman calls on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday. PHOTO: PID

Tagore's testimony to save man on treason charges

BSS, Khulna

A Khulna court witnessed Rabindranath Tagore's appearance over a century ago as a prosecution witness against a radical nationalist faced with treason charges.

He eventually stood with his testimony for the accused to protect him from wraths of the then British Raj.

According to several historical records being reviewed coinciding with his 150th birth anniversary celebrations, Tagore came to his ancestral home Khulna to appear as a prosecution witness to support the British Raj in connection with the sedition case filed against school teacher Hiralal Sengupta.

Sengupta, a teacher of a national school at Senhati of Digholia upazila of the district, was tried for instigating nationalism in a book of verses he authored titled "Hungkar".

Sengupta dedicated the book to Rabindranath, incorporating "Bande-Mataram" of Bangkim Chandra at the beginning and "Banglar Mati, Banglar Jal" of Tagore at the end.

The book earned huge public attention because of its patriotic thoughts and radical nationalist spirit soon after its publication from a Kolkata press which had printed 6,000

copies of it.

The British government in India initially planned also to implicate Tagore in the case but did not, as he had no involvement in publishing the book.

According to a report published on November 18, 1908 issue of "Amrita Bazar Patrika", Tagore appeared before the court of British district magistrate John Stone on December 4 and gave his testimony.

The report read that Tagore's statement was not in favour of the British Raj as he said it was "not unusual at all for a freedom-loving young man to write patriotic poems and songs".

Tagore also told the court that Sengupta was not a lawyer by profession, so it was "not possible for him to understand the level of instigation or liability in the eyes of law".

According to the report, after giving his statement, the poet visited his father-in-law's house at Dakkhindihi and left Khulna for Kolkata on December 6.

But the poet's testimony could not save Sengupta as the court handed him down 18 months of imprisonment on December 8 in 1908.

But on his release, Tagore brought him to Kolkata to work under him for several subsequent years.

Asian workers call off strike in Jordan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All Asian workers, including Bangladeshis, holding strike for a month in Jordan for a rise in salary, finally called off their strike yesterday on a slight hike.

"All 320 Bangladeshi workers in Oasis Textile International Company Ltd in Irbid, Jordan called off their strike and joined work in respective factories," said Toufiq Islam Shatil, first secretary of Bangladesh embassy in Amman.

This was the last group of garment workers with some others from Sri Lanka, India and Nepal to stop holding strike and join work.

Around 6,000 workers, of which 1,500 were Bangladeshis, from these countries

were holding strike, demanding increase in their basic salary from JD 110 to JD 150. (JD 1 = Tk 103).

Some of the companies increased salaries by up to JD 15, while others gave assurance, which the workers accepted. "The situation is calm now," he said.

Meanwhile, a worker Shahidul Islam from Jordan said employers agreed to provide them three hours of regular overtime, a fixed bonus of JD 5 a month and JD 10 as attendance bonus.

"We are not very happy with this increase. But we joined work as many others did and we had no alternatives," he told The Daily Star last night.

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Four killed, 35 injured in road accidents

METRO DESK

Four people were killed and 35 others injured in separate road accidents in Manikganj and Kishoreganj yesterday.

Our correspondent from Manikganj reports: A woman was killed and 35 others injured in a road accident at Uchutia in Manikganj.

The deceased was identified as Lucky Akter, 30, daughter of Zakir Hossain of Jessore.

Police said the driver of a Jessore bound bus lost control over the steering while overtaking a rickshaw-van and hit a roadside tree around 10:30am, killing Lucky on the spot.

The other injured passengers, inhabitants of Khulna, Jessore and Bagerhat districts, were rushed to Manikganj Sadar Hospital and later 10 of them were referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for their critical condition, the hospital sources said.

Our correspondent from Kishoreganj adds: Three people including a woman and a child were killed in three separate road accidents here.

The deceased are Lucky Akter, 22, daughter of Sohul Mia of Chandipasha Ajaldi village in Pakundia; Abdus Salam Azad, 45, son of Abdul Mannan of Amua village in Habiganj; and Joshen, 5, son of Nasir Uddin of Mirarchar village in Bhairab.

Police said in the first accident, a Dhaka-bound bus ran over Lucky while she was crossing a road near Sukia area in Pakundia around 8:00am, killing her on the spot.

Agitating locals immediately blocked Dhaka-Kishoreganj Highway for around six hours but police brought the situation under control.

In the second accident, a Dhaka-bound truck ran over Azad near Bhairab bus stand on Dhaka-Sylhet Highway around 12:00noon while he was going to Habiganj from Narayanjan on his motorcycle, killing him on the spot.

In the third accident, a Kuliarchar-bound pickup van ran over Joshen while he was crossing Bhairab-Kishoreganj Highway in Kalika Prashad bus stand area in Bhairab around 12:30noon, leaving him critically injured. He was rushed to a private clinic where doctors declared him dead.

Woman allegedly tortured for dowry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A woman was allegedly tortured by her husband for dowry and rescued her from her in-law's house at Wazedia in the port city on Sunday night.

Victim Ayesha Akhter Reshma, 28, married Abdul Jabbar, 36, son of late Badiul Alam of the area in 2003. They have a six-year-old child.

Reshma's father Kamal Uddin filed a case with Bayezid Police Station on Sunday alleging that her daughter was tortured confining her to her in-law's house.

He also informed to Rehana Begum Ranu, a councillor of Chittagong City Corporation and President of "Fight for Women's Rights" of the matter.

Later, Rehana along with police rushed to Jabbar's house and rescued Reshma, said Rehana to The Daily Star.

"If we would not reached the spot she might be tortured to death," said Rehana.

Reshma's brother Tipu Sultan said Jabbar used to torture Ayesha for dowry. Jabbar divorced Reshma secretly and but he did not inform to Reshma of the matter.

On Saturday when they went to her in-law's house, Jabbar showed them the divorce papers, said victim father Kamal.

Jabbar told The Daily Star that the allegation against him is completely false. Reshma's family filed several cases to harass him as he divorced her on March last year. A few days back the religious leaders told him that it is not legal to live with a divorced wife. So, he asked her father to take their daughter back, said Jabbar.

OC Mohiuddin Selim said that his policemen found no incidence of confining Reshma to her in-law's house.

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