

NEWS IN *brief*

**Armed muggers snatch Tk 14 lakh**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed muggers snatched Tk 14 lakh in broad daylight in two separate incidents at Banani in the city yesterday.

Four muggers on two motorcycles snatched Tk 9 lakh from Mostafizur Rahman, assistant accountant of Mohammadi Group, on Road 11 of Banani while he and three others were on way on a car to deposit the money in a bank around 3:00pm.

Mostafizur alleged the muggers fled in presence of police.

In another incident in the morning, another gang of armed muggers took away Tk 5 lakh from Nizam Uddin, accounts officer of Windmill Group, at Banani when he was going to deposit the amount in a bank on a hired microbus.

Gulshan police said they arrested Abdul Jalil, driver of the hired microbus, in this connection.

**Ban on rally in Rajshahi**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) yesterday prohibited all types of meeting and gathering on Shipaipara Government School and Madrasa premises where Islami Ain Bastabayan Committee called a rally today.

Fazlul Haque Amini, the committee's central unit president, was scheduled to address the rally.

RMP Commissioner M Obaidullah, in a hand-out issued yesterday, said the prohibition is imposed following fear of possible law and order breakdown, as Rajshahi city unit of Bangladesh Muktijuddha Sangsad called a meeting at the same place and time.

Neither of the organisations can hold any programme at the venue between 12:00am of Thursday and 12:00am of Friday, the period the prohibition will remain in force.

**Conference on Tagore's paintings, drawings today**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A conference on paintings and drawings of Rabindranath Tagore will be held at the auditorium of Alliance Française de Chittagong in the port city today.

As a part of its one-year long commemoration programme of first Asian Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore's 150th anniversary, Alliance Française de Chittagong is going to organise the conference titled 'The Western Impact on Tagore's Art'.

Visva-Bharati Santiniketan's Kala Bhaban museum curator Sushobhan Adhikary, one of the foremost specialists of Rabindranath, will be present as the chief guest and historian Prof Alamgir Mohammad Serajuddin as special guest at the conference.

The conference will remain open for all.

**2 PDB engrs, contractor sued**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a misappropriation case against two engineers and a contractor of Power Development Board (PDB).

The accused are former sub-divisional engineer Abdul Latif (now serving at Shahjibazar Power Plant in Habiganj), former sub-assistant engineer Abul Kalam Azad (now serving at Kulaura, Moulvibazar) and contractor Abdul Hai.

ACC Sylhet office Deputy Assistant Director Amir Hossain filed the case with Sylhet Kotwali Police Station yesterday after its preliminary investigations came true.

The case reported that the accused, while serving at PDB Sylhet division-1 office from October 15 to 20 of 2006, received electrical equipment like electric wires worth Tk 1,44,383 from PDB store for specific works, but sold them.

**Govt mulls garment factories in jails**

AFF, Dhaka

The prison authorities yesterday announced plans to set up garment factories in the country's overcrowded jails in a bid to help convicts acquire skills and make money.

The project, which has not yet been approved by the government, aims to set up factories first in major prisons before expanding to all Bangladesh's 68 jails, said Deputy National Prison Chief Iftekharul Islam.

"The aim is to impart life skills to the country's prisoners. Garment jobs would also help them earn a good amount of money that will be handy when they finish their term," he told AFP.

The home ministry, which oversees the country's prisons, is in favour of the plan, Islam said, which will need formal approval from the government before coming into effect.

Bangladesh has a prison population of more than 60,000 people including nearly 1,000 inmates on death row. The country's prisons are chronically overcrowded, rights groups say.

Islam said most prisons already had small workshops where convicts make craft items for sale, but said producing clothes, which will be sold in local markets and not exported, would be more financially rewarding.

Bangladesh is the world's third-largest garment exporter after China and Turkey with export shipments surging more than 40 percent to \$15 billion over the last 10 months.



Old Secretariat Road at Nimtali in the city went under water after rain yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: STAR

**TV programme on safe crosswalk**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Popular child programme Sisimpur will demonstrate different rules for crossing road so that people become aware to protect children from road accidents.

The initiative has been taken as part of the UN declaration "Decade of action for road safety" that was launched yesterday across the world including Bangladesh.

The programme officials identified some activities to be implemented in their long-term commitment to ensure road safety, says a press release.

The activities include developing of road safety curriculum in partnership with Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) and other global road safety experts, producing a series of Public Service Announcements (PCA) for worldwide broadcast, implementation of national road safety outreach and developing a national muppet icon to link with the UN's decade of action strategy and activities.

**PM returns home**

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned home yesterday morning upon completion of her four-day official visit to Turkey where she attended the fourth UN Conference on LDCs.

Hasina was received at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport by Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury and PM's Adviser HT Immam.

**\$195m WB credit for reliable national ID card**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank (WB) yesterday approved a \$195 million credit to Bangladesh in developing a reliable and accurate national identification (ID) system that will enable transparent delivery of benefits and services to the poor.

The credit will be used in Identification System for Enhanced Access to Services (IDEA) Project with which the Election Commission will build a system upon the existing voter-list database and modern technology will be used to produce robust national ID cards to protect citizens from fraud and forgery, said a WB press release.

The release said under the project identification numbers and cards will be issued to about 90 million Bangladeshi citizens of age 18 and above within next five years.

"A comprehensive national identification system will transform the way in which public services, including social benefits, are delivered to recipients" said Ellen Goldstein, WB Country Director for Bangladesh. "It will also assist in better planning, minimising corruption and increasing transparency in service delivery."

The project will also help build 'Digital Bangladesh by 2021' programme, it added.

"An important foundation for effective service delivery is the country's capacity to identify citizens accurately and quickly," said Junghun Cho, Project Team Leader.

"The system will assist public agencies in identifying and verifying the identities of citizens as well as compiling data that would help focus social programmes to those most in need. It is

also expected that private sector entities, such as banks and mobile companies, will benefit from their increased capacity to verify service users."

The core information available through the system will also help track many other transactions undertaken by the public sector, including collection of tax revenues, and systematise a wide range of record-keeping, from land ownership to utility connection, it said.

The IDEA project would aid the government's effort to establish a reliable and authoritative national identification system that can serve as an efficient, secure data platform. The project would focus on developing a legal and policy framework for the national ID system, upgrading data quality, and supporting the strengthening of Election Commission to administer the national ID system.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina being received at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport by cabinet members, senior AL leaders, chiefs of three services, and foreign diplomats in Dhaka yesterday on her return upon completion of a four-day official visit to Turkey to attend the fourth UN Conference on LDCs.

PHOTO: PTD

**Tax evasion case Court summons Hashem, family members**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday summoned former BNP lawmaker and Partex Group Chairman MA Hashem and seven others to appear before it on May 25 in a tax evasion case.

Judge Mohammad Zohurul Hoque passed the order after National Board of Revenue (NBR) filed the case against Hashem and seven others with Senior Special Judge's Court on Tuesday.

The others accused include Hashem's wife Sultana Hashem and sons Aziz-al Kaiser, Aziz-al Mahmud, Aziz-al Masud, Shawkat Aziz, Ashfaq Aziz and Partex General Manager (finance and accounts) Joyal Abedin.

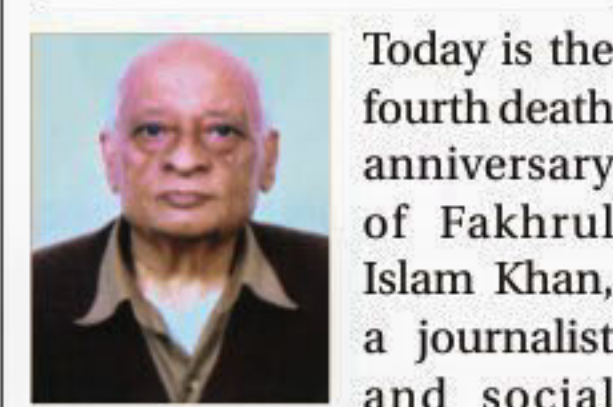
NBR Deputy Tax Commissioner Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman mentioned in the case that the accused dodged tax amounting to Tk 13 crore from fiscal year 2005-2006 to 2008-2009.

In the complaint, Ashrafuzzaman also stated the accused concealed information about the income of Tk 53.64 crore in their tax returns and also provided false information about the expenditure of the company.

Earlier, two more tax evasion cases were filed against the accused.

**Death anniversary**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the fourth death anniversary of Fakhru Islam Khan, a journalist and social worker and son of former minister of undivided Bengal Khan Bahadur Hasem Ali, says a press release.

Milad mahfil and qurankhwani will be held at Barisal and Dhaka today.

**JS committee for 'hijra' rehabilitation**

BSS, Dhaka

The parliamentary standing committee on Social Welfare Ministry yesterday asked the ministry to take up projects aiming at rehabilitating trans-sexual (hijras) and ensuring their basic rights.

The committee also recommended taking measures for removing fear of the common people towards the 'hijras', a parliament secretariat press release says.

The recommendations were made at the 15th meeting of the committee at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the city with its Chairman M Mozammel Hossain in the chair.

Committee Members M Monirul Islam, AKM Bahauddin, Chemon Ara Begum and Mahjabeen Morshed attended the meeting.

**Allocate JS seats as per party votes: Ershad**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday proposed distributing seats in the House among political parties on the basis of total votes they will get.

Ershad made the proposal at a press conference at the party's Banani office in a bid to what he said "to stop muscle power, black money and other bad elements" from influencing the general elections.

Criticising the caretaker government system strongly, the former military dictator lauded the Tuesday's Supreme Court verdict that declared illegal and rescinded the 13th amendment to the constitution that paved the way for holding parliamentary polls under a caretaker government.

"It is impossible to hold free and fair elections under the present system as bad people, using their black money and muscle power, can win the polls instead of dedicated and honest politicians," Ershad said in the briefing.

Even a neutral caretaker government and an independent election commission (EC) are not enough to ensure a fair election if the existing election practice continues, he added.

On flaws in the present voting system, Ershad said the then ruling party bagged only 30.81 percent of the total votes cast during the 1991 elections. The AL, despite bagging 34 percent votes, had to go to the opposition bench.

A party will have to prepare list of candidates ensuring 50 percent quota in general category, 30 percent for women, 10 percent for minorities and professionals each, he added.

**Swim lessons to cut child drowning**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A programme to reduce child drowning by teaching children to swim and keeping infants away from water bodies has been managed to reduce child-drowning rate by 85 percent in project areas, reveals a study.

The four-year collaborative project of Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB) and Royal Life Saving Society, Australia, also showed significant reduction in drowning related injuries among the children who attended the programme.

It also reduced child deaths from drowning by 90 percent among the children graduating from the programme, says a press release.

CIPRB Executive Director Dr AKM Fazlur Rahman said the study proved that innovative steps taken in Bangladesh to reduce child drowning could be exercised in other countries as well.

Bangladesh has the highest drowning rate in the world with around 18,000 children drowning every year, he said.

Drowning deaths exceed the number of deaths from tuberculosis, malaria, tetanus, whooping cough, and polio combined, the press release said.

Rahman said the unique and innovative programme taken up by the CIPB is not only effective, but also is very cost effective and can be used in other countries to reduce child drowning.

**Glaxose WEATHER TODAY**  
100% GLUCOSE

**No change in temperature likely**  
UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Chittagong and Barisal divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna and Sylhet divisions in 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 6:32pm today and rises at 5:18am tomorrow.**

Country's highest temperature 35.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Mongla and lowest 20.2 degrees Celsius at Tangail.

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	31.0	21.8	71	74
Chittagong	31.8	22.0	67	93
Rajshahi	33.5	24.0	70	71
Rangpur	31.5	22.4	79	73
Khulna	34.0	27.4	80	73
Barisal	34.2	26.4	74	79
Sylhet	30.2	22.3	73	87
Cox's Bazar	33.4	24.0	62	89

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**DHAKA TODAY**

**Book launching**  
Ain O Shalish Kendra will hold a book launching; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 5:00pm.

**Seminar**  
Centre For Advanced Research In Humanities will organise a seminar; Venue: Lecture Theatre, Dhaka University; Time: 4:00pm.

**Memorial**  
Sammitto Sangskritik Jote will hold a memorial meeting; Venue: Central Shaheed Minar premises; Time: 5:00pm.

**Rally**  
Acid Survivors Foundation will organise a rally; Venue: in front of Sonargaon Hotel; Time: 10:00am.

**Discussion**  
Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Tanti Dal will hold a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:30am.

**Discussion**  
Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee will organise a discussion; Venue: BILLA auditorium; Time: 4:00pm.