

NEWS IN *brief*

Two children burnt alive for dowry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two children were burnt to death in Sunamganj early hours of yesterday while their mother is fighting for life at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) after her in-laws allegedly set them on fire for dowry in Jaggannathpur in Sunamganj on Sunday.

The deceased are Emon, 5, and Emona, 3. DMCH doctors said 98 percent body of the mother Shazia Begum, 32, was burnt.

Banff Mountain Film Festival begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Banff Mountain Film Festival, a three-day international film festival and competition, begins today at Goethe-Institut Dhaka (German Cultural Centre) in Dhanmondi in the city.

The festival on short films and documentaries on the culture, sports and environment based on mountains will be showcased in 32 countries around the globe. This is the second time the festival is taking place in Bangladesh, says a press release.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN
The opposition BNP holds a protest rally in front of its Naya Paltan headquarters in the city yesterday. Inset, police use tear gas and baton to disperse the crowd as it prepares to bring out a procession.

MANMOHAN'S REMARK
Delhi happy over Dhaka's gesture

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi has heaved a sigh of relief at Dhaka's decision on Sunday not to make any formal statement on Manmohan Singh's remarks after the Indian external affairs ministry had issued a clarification that the remarks should not be seen as "judgemental".

Diplomatic sources said the Indian side was in confusion that Dhaka may react with the comment as well as the opposition parties in Bangladesh may launch street agitation, but they are quite happy with the good gesture from Bangladesh side.

They said the official announcement of Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's visit to Bangladesh on September 6-7 also came expeditiously following Dhaka's decision not to proceed with the remarks.

Sources said the high profile visit from India might be postponed if there was a serious reaction from Dhaka, but Bangladeshi leaders played a very responsible role so that the upcoming visits are not affected.

While Indian External Affairs Minister SM Krishna, who will pay a 3-day official visit from July 7, fears that the Bangladeshi leaders would raise the issue of the Indian PM's recent remarks "about 25 per cent of Bangladeshis being anti-Indian" (which were later erased from Indian government's website), the two countries are resolved not to allow the incident to cast a shadow either on his visit or on bilateral ties at a time when they are moving towards a substantive phase, albeit not at the desired pace.

The MEA clarification and Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Mirajul Qayes' statement in Dhaka on Sunday indicate the desire of the two countries to leave the developments of the last few days behind and move on to strengthen such a crucial bilateral relationship.

Prof Nasser passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi



Abu Nasser Mohammad Saleh, a psychology teacher of Rajshahi University, passed away at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital due to a cardiac arrest yesterday at the age of 59.

He is survived by his wife, a daughter, and a son.

Family sources said Saleh suffered a stroke at his Shipaipara residence in Rajshahi city at midnight and was taken to RMCH.

The hospital authority delayed over an hour in providing treatment and took him to respiratory ward instead of cardiology unit, alleged the family.

Saleh was the only son of Madar Bakhs, one of the founders of Rajshahi University and an eminent politician of the early 20th century.

He was laid to rest at Hatimkhan graveyard in Rajshahi city.

Rajshahi Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha, Vice-chancellor Prof Abdus Sobhan, and different social, cultural, and sports organisations condoled his death.

Ashraf Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Bangladesh Air Force Group Captain (ret'd) TAM Ashraf Islam, a valiant freedom fighter, passed away at Combined Military Hospital, Dhaka yesterday. He was 71.

Islam left behind his wife, two sons, and a daughter.

His namaj-e-janaja was held at the central mosque of BAF Bashar Base after Zohr prayers.

Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman, senior defence officers, and members of all ranks attended the janaja.

Islam was laid to rest at Banani Military Graveyard with state honour.

Sarmin Reshmin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg



Sarmin Reshmin, principal of Ramu Degree College of Cox's Bazar, passed away on Saturday (July 2) at Birdem Hospital in Dhaka at the age of 48, says a press release.

She was suffering from different incurable diseases for long and was treated at home and abroad.

She will be buried at her family graveyard in Ramu today after her first and second namaz-e-janazas in Cox's Bazar town and Ramu.

NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM STRATEGY

BEI draft at final stage to help govt

Says US expert

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) in association with Defense Institutions Reform Initiative (DIRI), USA is going to finalise a draft "National Counter Terrorism Strategy" to assist the government.

John Hansen, DIRI programme coordinator, said this while speaking at the inaugural of a four-day workshop titled "Developing a National Counter Terrorism Strategy for Bangladesh" jointly organised by BEI and DIRI at a city hotel yesterday.

The draft would be finalised by the end of the workshop, he added.

The workshop sources said the draft is being formulated emphasising four points -- prevention, protection, persuasion and preparation -- to combat terrorism.

The government has already taken an initiative to prepare the strategy under the home ministry and several government agencies, says the ministry sources.

Speakers at the workshop said though Bangladesh gained independence 40 years ago, it is yet to have any "National Counter Terrorism Strategy" of its own.

Dr Gowher Rizvi, the prime minister's adviser on international affairs, said the core of terrorism lies in sections that do not believe in democracy and the country's liberation and thus invite undemocratic elements to power.

Election Commission (EC) can be strengthened within six months or so to hold free and fair elections and check such elements coming to power, he said while speaking as the chief guest.

He said Bangladesh has been facing terrorism for a long time in the form of assassinations of many political leaders.

Rizvi said the army is blamed for military takeover of the government and some sections consider using the cantonment as a shortcut to gain political power.

"The 15th amendment has restored democracy and has adopted measures so that we no longer become subject to undemocratic power. We need a

mechanism instead of a caretaker government to hold free and fair elections," he said.

If EC is strengthened and allowed to discharge its duty, it will be able to hold credible elections, he added.

Relations between civilians and the military should be strengthened and military should build professionalism and strong chain of command under the civil authority. The military should help the government in combating terrorism, he said.

Replying to a query of reporters there, he said calling hartal is a democratic right and the government cannot stop it. But at the same time the government has to uphold the rights of citizens to work and move freely.

BEI and DIRI, under a project since November 2009, earlier held three workshops attended by military, government and civil society members and foreign experts.

BEI President Farooq Sobhan and Chargé d'Affaires of US Embassy in Dhaka Nicolas J Dean attended the function.

Justice Ansar's anniversary of death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 16th anniversary of renowned lawyer and Justice of Supreme Court Muhammad Ansar Ali.

Recitation from the Holy Quran and milad mahfil will be held at his village home in Naogaon district, says a press release.

Ansar, also a freedom fighter, was imprisoned in 1952 for participating in the Language Movement and later awarded "Matribhasha Padak 2001" for his contribution to the movement.

5 acres of Buriganga river recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) recovered five acres of Buriganga river at Baktaboli of Fatullah under Narayanganj sadar upazila during a drive to evict illegal structures yesterday.

Three brick kilns, a saw mill and a fuel pump were set up on both sides of the river at Baktaboli ferry ghat by filling up the river.

During the drive, Executive Magistrate Abdur Ruff Talukder of the district administration slapped a Tk one lakh fine on the owner of a brick kiln on charges of grabbing the river.

The magistrate ordered the saw mill owner Delwar Hossain to remove the earth he dumped to grab the river. The drive also recovered around 700 feet of land into the river grabbed by Delwar.

Talukder said the drive was conducted as part of their regular activities as per the High Court directives.



PHOTO: PID
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates AHQ Selection Board Meeting 2011 at Army Headquarters (AHQ) in Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

BCL, JCD clash at IU: 25 buses vandalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least 25 buses of Islamic University in Kushtia were vandalised after activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League swooped on Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists yesterday as the latter were about to enter the campus.

Some 15 students and bus drivers were injured from broken glass pieces during the rampage. They were given first aid.

According to campus sources, a number of BCL activists with lethal weapons swooped on JCD activists when they got to the campus around 10:30am.

Chased away by BCL men, JCD activists then started vandalising university buses coming to the campus on Kushtia-Jhenidah highway.

Law enforcers from Kushtia, Jhenidah and University Police Station rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. No one has been arrested.

University Proctor Mahbubul Arefin and other teachers and officials also rushed to the spot. All administrative and academic activities of the university remained suspended for the day.

The proctor said stern disciplinary actions would be taken against those involved in damaging university assets.

According to sources, the Awami League student wing BCL has not been allowing JCD on the campus since the AL-led government came to power. BNP's student organisation JCD did the same to BCL when BNP and its allies were in power during 2001-06.

JS to function rightly with opposition parties

Hopes outgoing British envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Stephen Evans said the British government is committed to strengthening international borders through collaboration and cooperation with its global partners.

The envoy made the remark at the launching of an anti-fraud instrument set at Osmani International Airport in Sylhet yesterday afternoon. The UK government donated the forgery detection equipment to help detect passport and visa forgery.

The modern equipment has been set in the pretext of starting direct international flight operation, including the UK destinations to and from Sylhet by now, said the high commissioner.

Sylhet Metropolitan Police (SMP) Commissioner AB Barua also addressed the event.

Earlier, the high commissioner talked to journalists at the regional liaison office of the British high commission in Sylhet.

Stephen Evans said, "Although

Bangladesh had a free and fair election in the 2008 parliamentary polls, we are yet to have the parliament functioning rightly. The opposition is joining very limited activities of the parliament."

He hopes that parliament will be functioning in the presence of opposition parties.

The UK will increase its development assistance to Bangladesh from this year against the last year's 150 million pounds. A total of one billion pounds will be given in four years for programmes on poverty alleviation, capacity building of governance, schooling, women's empowerment and maternal health improvement, he added.

Mostly there is no possibility of religious fundamental groups' uprising in Bangladesh since most of its people are liberal and peace loving, he added.

Meanwhile, Stephen Evans attended a reception organised by Sylhet City Corporation at a hotel in the city on Sunday evening.

Sylhet City Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran also spoke at the reception.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Dhaka, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at few places over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Khulna divisions in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:16am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 33.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 24.0 degrees Celsius at Rangamati.

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	31.3	26.5	73	77
Chittagong	31.5	24.5	88	76
Rajshahi	33.4	26.0	90	84
Rangpur	31.3	25.7	88	80
Khulna	32.5	24.5	92	87
Barisal	31.2	25.8	88	77
Sylhet	30.3	24.8	93	73
Cox's Bazar	31.4	24.5	77	76