

NEWS IN *brief*

Injured Mirsarai boys return home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Eleven school boys who survived the Mirsarai tragedy returned home after they were released from the hospital yesterday.

Two guardians of victims who fell sick following the incident were also released, Centre Point Hospital officials told The Daily Star.

The students are: Ashique, Rizvi, Hridoy of class six of Abu Torab High School, Shubho, Tanim, Borhan Uddin, Mamun and Arif of class seven, Jewel and Sohrab of class eight of the same school and Zahidul Islam, class three student of Mollahpara Primary School.

On July 11, 40 students died in the tragic accident near Abu Torab Bazar in Mirsarai of the district.

Sonia Gandhi to receive Indira's award here on July 25

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi will receive the Foreign Friends Award by the government on behalf of her mother-in-law former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi posthumously at a simple ceremony at Bangabhaban on July 25.

The decision to hold the ceremony was taken at an inter-ministerial meeting at the foreign ministry yesterday with Foreign Minister Dipu Moni was

UP polls were fair: EWG report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Apart from some scattered violence, the union parishad elections were held in free and fair manner, says a study of Election Working Group (EWG), an alliance of 31 organisations, yesterday.

The report said no unwanted incident or irregularity could be noticed during the polls in 97 percent of the polling centres, while some anomalies were found in 3 percent of the polling centres.

EWG officials revealed the report at a press con-

Two women with 4,500 Yaba held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested two sisters and seized some 4,500 Yaba tablets from their possession in the city's Banasree.

Rab arrested Taslima Akter alias Sumi, 28 and her sister Fahima Akter, 19, from their residence at the city's South Banasree, says a Rab press release.

On information, Rab raided the residence of Sumi and seized the Yaba tablets.

Earlier, Rab arrested Sumi's brother Almgir and her husband Jamal with Yaba tablets and they are

16cr tree plantation campaign starts tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The inaugural ceremony of the campaign of planting 16 crore trees in each year throughout the country will be kicked off tomorrow.

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique will inaugurate the campaign on the premises of its Registrar Office, says a press release.

The initiative was taken by the first Everest conqueror of the country Musa Ibrahim and his

School debate contest ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The final round of inter-school debate competition for non-government secondary schools' teachers and students under Brac Education Programme was held in NAEM auditorium in the city yesterday.

Teachers of Lohagora Pilot School of Narail and Baksh Mahmud High School of Feni participated in the final round of the teachers' section debate while students of Rudra Boira Girls High School of Jamalpur and Mohalchhari Pilot High School of Khagrachhari took part in the students' section competition, says a press release.



Sardar Fazlul Karim, Binod Bihari Chowdhury and AF Salahuddin Ahmed at a reception accorded to them by Asiatic Society of Bangladesh at its auditorium in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Govt embarks on health insurance

MAHBUBA ZANNAT, back from Bangkok

The government in a pioneering move has set to introduce health insurance programme as an alternative healthcare financing for the country's 5 crore poor people from early next year.

Under the system, each of the poor would be given health insurance card to cover their medical expenses. The government will pay the insurance premium from general taxes as the insurance cost, according to the health ministry.

"We will form a taskforce to this effect this month (July). We would try our best to implement the health insurance programme from early 2012," Prasanta Bhushan Barua, joint chief of the ministry's

Health Economics Unit, told The Daily Star.

As part of the effort, the government delegates recently have visited some neighbouring countries where health insurance has been adopted successfully as an alternative healthcare financing.

Prasanta Bhushan was in the 15-member visiting team to watch the health insurance model in Bangkok, Hyderabad, and Delhi to verify the design, implementation process, and sustainability of health insurance programme in Bangladesh.

"Beginning with a pilot project for the 31 percent of the country's poor people, we would try to scale up for universal health coverage in phases," he said, adding that the first pilot project would begin soon

in Rangunia of Chittagong and Debhata of Satkhira. The two upazilas are home to around 6 lakh people.

The socio-economic study would begin next month to find out the exact figure of the poor people in those localities, he said.

The ministry sources said the taskforce, headed by Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque, would be the steering body for policy support and supervision of the total programme.

We should devise a way of our own to implement the programme, said the visiting team, adding that a combination of India's Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna (RSBY) and Rajiv Arogyashri Health Insurance may suit for Bangladesh. The Thai model would be too costly to

implement for this resource-poor country where per capita health expenditure is only \$7.5, the team said.

The ministry initially thinks of providing secondary level health services along with some tertiary cares to the poor people under the alternative health financing. The people with health cards would be able to get treatment free of cost in listed public and private hospitals, they said.

Under the RSBY programme, people are provided secondary healthcares. Preparing a card spending Rs 30 only, a five-member family can get the insurance facility up to Rs 30,000 a year. Rajiv Arogyashri Health Insurance programme, however, covers primary to tertiary level healthcare.

Bijoy Das passes away

STAFF COPRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Veteran journalist and writer Sudhindra Bijoy Das, father of special affairs editor of bdnews24.com Biswadip Das alias Pappu, passed away at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital around 11:30am yesterday. He was 79.

He was suffering from heart, liver and kidney related complexities for long.

Sudhindra left behind two sons, a daughter, and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

He would be cremated at Chalibandar Cremation ground in Sylhet city at 4:00pm today.

Sudhindra began working as a journalist in 1965 with newspapers like the Weekly Eastern Herald and the Weekly Jugabhey. He also served as the district correspondent of the then Bangladesh Observer and The Daily Star.



Jatiya Nagorik Sangsad holds a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding death penalty of Porimol Joydhor, the sacked teacher of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, for his alleged sexual assault on a female student at his Badda coaching centre on June 17. (Story on Page 3)

PHOTO: STAR

Binod Bihari calls for building Sonar Bangla

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Binod Bihari Chowdhury, the iconic revolutionary figure of the subcontinent, yesterday called upon the youths to build a prosperous Sonar Bangla, brushing aside fears and negating dishonesty and injustice.

Addressing a reception in the city, Binod Bihari said "The person who has moral integrity, ability, and novelty is a real man. Let's become men like that".

Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organised the reception at its auditorium for three national professors -- AF Salahuddin Ahmed, Sardar Fazlul Karim, and Rangalal Sen -- and revolutionary Binod Bihari Chowdhury who was given honorary membership of the society.

The noted persons were greeted with Uttorio (celebratory scarf) and given crest at the programme. Prof Rangalal Sen, however, did not attend the reception due to his illness.

Speaking at the programme, Prof Salahuddin suggested the young generation not to fear to express truth. "Truth can be discovered through research, but we are moving away from that path", he said.

Mahfuza Khanam, general secretary of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, read out brief biographies of the noted persons. Khanam said the programme was held to pay tribute to their contribution to the society. "We are proud of their role", she said.

President of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh Prof Sirajul Islam presided over the reception ceremony and later was greeted with Uttorio.

Govt plans forensic labs in districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Home Minister Sahara Khatun here yesterday said forensic lab would be established in all districts of the country as part of the government's ongoing effort to reduce crimes.

Lab tests related to any crimes will be examined properly so that the criminals cannot escape through loopholes of the law, she said.

Sahara said forensic reports will help correctly identify the criminals and discover stories behind any offences like killing or snatching.

The government plans to establish the labs all over the country in phases, she said.

The home minister was addressing as the chief guest the inaugural ceremony of Forensic Lab of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) at Dampara Police Lane in the port city.

RANSACKING JOURNO'S HOUSE BY COPS 'Vandal' appointed IO

Rajshahi journos demand punishment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, RAJSHAHI

Different journalists' organisations in Rajshahi yesterday held protest programmes demanding punishment of the responsible police officials for assaulting journalist Imran Hossain and ransacking his house.

They also demanded withdrawal of the "false" extortion case against Imran Hossain, Tanore upazila correspondent of Rajshahi-based daily Sonar Desh. The journalist still remains hiding to avoid arrest in the case.

Azizur Rahman Sarker, officer-in-charge (OC) of Tanore Police Station, assaulted Imran calling him to the police station on Thursday morning for publishing report in the local daily on corruption of the police.

The OC was closed on Friday following the incidents. The OC sent policemen [to the journalist's house] and the cops ransacked the house early Friday.

Hours before his removal, Tanore police recorded an extortion case filed by one Delwar Hossain who was mentioned in the Imran's

report published in Sonar Desh on Wednesday as one of the middlemen of the OC in collecting bribes from local people.

Sub-inspector M Solaiman of the police station, who was also mentioned in the report as a "bribe collector" from people, and led the ransacking mission in the name of raid in the house, was appointed investigation officer of the case filed against Imran.

Tanore Press Club in a protest meeting at the club office urged senior police officials to end harassment to journalists. Its acting president Sayeed Saju chaired the meeting. They will form a human chain in the upazila headquarters today.

Rajshahi Metropolitan Press Club in a meeting decided to form a human chain on July 19 protesting torture on the journalist.

Durgapur, Puthia, Godagari and Bagha press clubs also protested the assault on the journalist and his family members and demanded withdrawal of the case against Imran.



WEATHER
TODAY

Heavy rainfalls likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rangpur, Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

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

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:48pm and rises tomorrow at 5:21am.

Country's highest temperature 34.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 24.5 degrees 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	32.0	27.2	75	71
Chittagong	31.0	26.2	80	78
Rajshahi	34.8	27.2	83	96
Rangpur	33.4	26.6	87	74
Khulna	33.0	27.5	80	75
Barisal	30.6	26.0	92	80
Sylhet	31.6	26.2	92	85



Anjum Husain, chairperson Summerfield & Tiny Tots School, signing the agreement with Munaf Moin, CEO Core Knowledge for implementation of DigiClass solutions recently. Yashpia Salema and Rachana from Summerfield International School and Julius Gomez from Core Knowledge were also present at the signing.

PHOTO: COURTESY