

NEWS IN *brief*

Pak diplomats keen to learn Bangla

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pakistani diplomats are willing to learn Bangla language through a course so that they can better communicate with the people of Bangladesh. Afzaal Mahmood, acting high commissioner of Pakistan in Dhaka, yesterday requested Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique to arrange a Bangla language learning course for the Pakistani diplomats working in Bangladesh. Paying a courtesy call on the VC, the Pakistani envoy also requested Prof Arefin to approve a teacher from the Institute of Modern Language of DU to run the Bangla language course. Dr Arefin assured him of taking necessary steps to launch the language course soon.

Unesco Club award for 17 journos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Association of Unesco Clubs in Bangladesh yesterday announced the 'Unesco Club Journalism Award 2011' for 17 young and promising journalists for their outstanding contribution in their respective fields.

The award giving ceremony will be held on October 11 at the association's office at Banbeis auditorium in the city.

The award winners are Wasim-Bin-Habib of The Daily Star, Kamran Reza Chowdhury of The Daily Sun, Zulker Nain Rano of Bangladesh Pratidin, Rafiqul Islam of UNB, Akkas Sikder of Prothom Alo, Samir Kumar Dey of Ittefaq, Abdul Majid of Samakal, Hossain Zakir of Jugantor, Dilruba Akter of Shokaler Khabor, Akhil Kumer Podder of Ekushey, Moursalin Babla of Channel I, Tamanna Majumder of NTV, Mahmudur Rahman of ATN Bangla, Farzana Rupa of Desh TV, Amirul Momenine Manik of Diganta, Sharmin Rinvy of Bangla Vision and Amin Al Rasheed of ABC Radio.

The association introduced this award in 2006, said a press release yesterday.

Japanese volunteers in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nine Japanese overseas cooperation volunteers arrived in the city for a two-year voluntary work in different public organisations in Bangladesh.

They will work in the field of infection control, rural community development, education, football and handball, said a press release yesterday.

Chemical co, hospital fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined a company Tk 5 lakh for storing chemicals in a residential building in the city where 300 hearing-impaired students reside. A DoE team also directed the authorities of Dysin Chem Limited at Bijoyagar to relocate the warehouse within a week, said a DoE press release.

Meanwhile, DoE fined Savar Modern Hospital Limited located at Simultala in Savar Tk 2 lakh for creating public suffering through dumping waste materials in the hospital's vicinity.



A potential death trap lies in wait for the unsuspecting pedestrian, especially after dark, as the lid of this manhole in Paschim Shahidnagar area in the city's Lalbagh went missing a long time ago. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Syed Abul busy with big projects

Forgets about regular road maintenance, says Nazmul Huda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Communications Minister Nazmul Huda yesterday said Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain did not take any initiative for development of the country's communications and transportation system.

"This minister (Abul Hossain) is much enthusiastic about some huge projects like metro rail and elevated expressway. But he has forgotten about regular road maintenance that caused dilapidated road condition across the country," he said.

During his tenure, he had done a lot of development work in this sector. But this present minister is doing nothing," said Huda, also a BNP leader.

But Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan said the development works, which completed during BNP's regime, were initiated by the Awami League government's previous tenure from 1996 to 2000.

"Sheikh Hasina planted the seeds and you (BNP) enjoyed the fruits," he said.

About drivers' educational qualification, Shahjahan Khan yesterday reiterated his previous stance that traffic sign based-training is much more important for making skilled drivers than intuitional academic qualification.

They made the remarks at a discussion on communications system of Bangladesh: problems and way out, organised by Media forum for Human Rights and Environmental

Developmental (MHED) at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Earlier Shahjahan at a press conference on August 18 said a driver does not need to be educated to get a driving licence. If a driver can sign his name, can understand traffic signs and signals, can differentiate between a cow and a goat and has good driving skills, what is the problem in giving him a licence?

Following the statement, he faced huge criticism from media and civil society with the demand of his resignation.

Shahjahan, also the executive president of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samik Federation, demanded formation of a "Transport Ministry" that will work in integrated way to develop the

roads, river and railway communications.

About traffic congestion, he said around 50,000 new vehicles are coming on the roads every year. How can the problem be resolved? Moreover, parking space crisis are intensifying the problem.

About recent crisis of ferry services, he said nine more ferries will be procured to solve the crisis.

The government is working to formulate a law titled "Transport and Traffic Act" for the development of transport sector, he added.

Addressing the function, Bangladesh Institute of Planners President Dr Sarwar Jahan stressed the need for establishing a government fund for annual road maintenance.

V-SAT equipment seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized V-SAT equipment used for illegal voice over internet protocol (VoIP) business in Chittagong and Rangpur yesterday.

Rab sources said the equipment recovered from a building at Garibullah Shah Housing Society under Khulshi Police Station in Chittagong could be worth around Tk 30 lakh.

Nobody was arrested in this connection.

In Rangpur, Rab raided the house of Shamsuddin Ahmed, arrested two people and seized VoIP equipment and 1,214 pieces of SIM cards worth around Tk 1 crore from the rooftop of a building at Kerani Para in the district town.

The arrested Russell Ahmed, 32, and Mukul Mondol, 42, rented the rooftop in 2007, said Rab.



President Zillur Rahman cuts a cake with children marking a programme celebrating Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 65th birthday, organised by Kendria Bangabandhu Shishu-Kishore Mela at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

N'GANJ POLLS Army to be deployed if needed

Says Sakhawat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Election Commission (EC) might consider deploying the army if law enforcement agencies fail to maintain law and order prior to the maiden Narayanganj City Corporation poll, said Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Muhammad Sakhawat Hussain yesterday.

At a view exchange meeting with the prospective candidates and people from all walks of life at Shaheed Zia Auditorium in the city's Chasara, he said a free and fair poll is possible with the help of law enforcement agencies.

"This is the last election under the present commission outside Dhaka and the commission is firm to hold it in a free and fair manner by any means," he added.

Efforts of the administration and police officials are being monitored and a coordinator will be appointed in each police station under the city corporation. The commission will take strict action if any irregularities are found, Sakhawat cautioned.

Three mayoral candidates Taimur Alam Khandoker, president of district unit BNP; Shamim Osman, former Awami League (AL) lawmaker; and Dr Selina Hayat Ivy, the immediate past mayor of the now defunct Narayanganj municipality; also spoke at the programme.

Taimur urged Sakhawat to reshuffle the current "biased" administration. Echoing the same, Ivy, a vice president of the town unit of AL, demanded immediate deployment of the army ahead of the poll.

Shamim, in contrary, said the law and order situation of Narayanganj is much better than any other district.

Shamim got bail in an arms case filed against him during the last BNP-Jamaat government. Acting District and Session Judge Ali Akbar passed the bail order yesterday after Shamim sought bail before it.

Hasina's birthday celebrated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) and its associate bodies yesterday observed the 65th birthday of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also party president, through various programmes across the country.

Discussions, milad mahfils, cultural events and rallies were organised marking the day while the party personnel distributed foods among the orphans and destitute at different places.

Hasina is now on a visit to the USA after attending the UN General Assembly there.

Top AL leaders and intellectuals, at a party discussion in a city auditorium of Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, wished for Hasina's long life so that she can fulfill her dreams to build an economically established Bangladesh and to erase the sufferings of the poor.

Presiding over the discussion, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, AL presidium member and also deputy leader of parliament, praised the PM on winning the Global Health and Children's Award during her latest visit to the USA.

Hasina won the award for her outstanding leadership in developing the country's health sector, she added.

Hasina's teacher Rafiqul Islam said the department is proud of Hasina for her contributions to the nation.

The university's historian Professor Muntasir Mamun praised Hasina for her initiative to bring the 1971 war criminals under trial.

Party leaders Sahara Khatun, Syed Ashrafur Islam, Mahubul Alam Hanif, Asaduzzaman Noor, Nuhul-Alam Lenin, Yusuf Hossain Humayun and Abdul Latif Siddiqui, also addressed the meet.

DHAKA TODAY

Discussion
Samillito Peshajibi Forum will organise a discussion; Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity; Time: 4:00pm.

Seminar
Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh will hold a seminar; Venue: its seminar room; Time: 5:30pm.

Workshop
Tamak Birodhi Nari Jote will organise a workshop; Venue: Narigrantha Probortona, 2/8 Sir Syed Road, Mohammadpur; Time: 4:00pm.

Discussion
Bangabandhu Mahila Parishad will hold a discussion; Venue: Local Government and Rural Development building; Time: 3:30pm.

Human chain
Totho Adhikar Forum will organise a

human chain; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

Discussion
Shamprodoyikota-Jangibadh Birodhi Mancha will organise a discussion; Venue: Liberation War Museum; Time: 3:30pm.

Discussion
Bangladesh Heart Research Association will hold a discussion; Venue: Al-Helal Hospital; Time: 4:00pm.

Seminar
National Heart Foundation of Bangladesh will organise a seminar and heart camp; Venue: its premises; Time: 9:00am.

Hunger strike
National Garment Workers Federation will hold a token hunger strike; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

Procession
Bangladesh Cardiac Society will

organise a

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over all the seven divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

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

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:49pm and rises tomorrow at 5:50am.

Country's highest temperature 34.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangpur and lowest 23.0 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	32.2	25.4	74	68
Chittagong	31.0	25.8	77	83
Rajshahi	33.0	25.5	85	77
Rangpur	34.5	25.3	90	78
Khulna	34.4	26.4	75	72
Barisal	34.4	25.8	76	82
Sylhet	33.8	25.4	95	73

Transport fares in port city to go up from Oct 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

District Road Transport Owners' Group, Chittagong will introduce a new fare chart in the port city from October 7 as per the government's decision.

The group made the announcement at a press conference yesterday held in a local restaurant.

In the new fare chart, Tk 0.05 per kilometre (km) will be added to the previous fares, said transport owners.

However, this is not applicable for the first three kms, which is charged Tk 5 now, they said.

REPRESSION ON THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED Law enforcers negligent in handling cases: Guardians

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers appear negligent in handling cases of the physically and mentally challenged people who face various forms of repression, alleged guardians of the victims and rights activists yesterday.

Police dilly-dally in accepting and investigating cases, while the perpetrators having links with influential people pressurise the victims' families to withdraw the cases or face dire consequences, they said.

The allegations came at a view exchange meeting titled "Demanding justice for physically or mentally challenged people violated of their human rights" in the city's Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Parliamentarians Caucus on Disability and National Forum of Organizations Working with the

Disabled jointly organised the meeting. Niranjana Mallik, father of Kamala Rani Mallik, a physically challenged girl who was allegedly violated and killed in July 2009, said he is still waiting to see the trial of the killers but sees no progress.

"They (perpetrators) control everything with money and are continuously threatening me... please save me," said Niranjana, urging the government to ensure justice.

Member of a human rights organisation said police initially did not accept a case against the co-worker of a 14-year-old girl, working in a washing and dyeing plant in Tejgaon last year, for allegedly violating her.

They recorded the case three days after the incident following requests from her organisation, she said, adding that the perpetrator is still working at the company after getting bail while

the victim was sacked.

The forum Secretary General Jowaherul Islam Mamun said, "Police lack interest in taking cases as most of the victims are economically insolvent and the perpetrators are influential."

Everyone must raise their voice to stop repression against these challenged people, said Deputy Speaker Col (retd) Shawkat Ali.

There is no option for the release of the perpetrators following a compromise with the victims' families, he said.

Convener of the parliamentary caucus Abdul Matin Khasru said it is the duty of the state to ensure equal rights for the physically and mentally challenged people.

"Equal rights are not charity but one of the basic rights." Enacting a new right-based law for physically and mentally challenged people is underway, he noted.