



PHOTO: COURTESY

A total of 20 students of Scholastica (Mirpur), an English medium school, gain first-hand agricultural knowledge by planting potato seeds in a field in Kewar village under Munshiganj sadar yesterday. Private television station Channel i took the initiative under the guidance of Shykh Seraj.

Doa mahfil

METRO DESK



A milad and doa mahfil will be held at 35 Rajar Dewri in the city at 2:30 pm tomorrow

(Friday) on the occasion of the second death anniversary of Akhtar Ahmed Khan, former secretary general of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), says a press release.

Akhtar, press minister at the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, passed away due to a massive cardiac arrest.

Colleagues, friends and relatives have been requested to attend the doa mahfil.

Investigative journalism faces crucial challenge

Observe discussion participants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said the growing corporate interest in journalism has come as a "mixed blessing".

They made the remarks at a programme on "Challenges of investigative journalism in Bangladesh: the way forward" organised by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) at Brac Centre Inn in the city.

"[Corporate houses] are making big entries in media with big capitals," said Moazzem Hossain, editor of The Financial Express. "While I can't oppose it, it is nevertheless

alarming for society."

TIB handed over awards to five journalists for their outstanding investigative reports.

The awardees are Mohammad Naymuddin of the weekly Sheersha Kagoj, HM Alauddin of Daily Purbanchal in Khulna, AHM Ahsanullah of Daily Chandpur, ATN News special correspondent Mashudul Haque and cameraman Habibur Rahman.

Speakers said investigative journalism in the country has come a long way over the years. But it faces some crucial challenges.

The challenges include lack of institutional support, adequate

resources and professional training, they added.

Speaking as the chief guest, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad said ensuring financial and job security for journalists is not enough, he said, urging the owners to introduce more training programmes for their staff.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB, Former advisor to a caretaker government Sultana Kamal, Member of TIB trustee board M Hafizuddin Khan and Dhaka University Journalism department teachers Dr Shakhawat Ali Khan and Dr Golam Rahman were also spoke at the programme.

Pharmacy owner shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A pharmacy shop owner was shot dead by muggers in the city's Purba Rampura area early yesterday.

The deceased Oahiduzzaman, 30, was the owner of Shajid Medical Care, which also included fax and phone business.

According to police, a gang of at least four muggers intercepted Oahiduzzaman and his brother Shahiduzzaman, when they were returning to their nearby residence after closing the shop around 12:45am.

The gang snatched six mobile phones and Tk 12,000 from the brothers.

The muggers shot Oahiduzzaman as he caught one of them when they were leaving the scene, Shahiduzzaman told this correspondent.

Oahiduzzaman was declared dead when he was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Shahiduzzaman said they have been running the shop for two years and some local miscreants often demanded tolls from them.

Brac launches e-education

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new website containing interactive and easy-to-understand lessons on mathematics, general science and English at secondary level was launched by Brac Education Programme yesterday.

The e-education.brac.net, launched by Brac Founder and Chairperson Sir Fazle Hasan Abed at the city's Brac Centre Inn.

Prof Dr Mohammad Kaykobad of Buet, Nazrul Islam Khan, national project director of A21 of PMO, Dr Mahbub Hossain, Brac executive director, Dr Shafiqul Islam, director of Brac Education Programme, also spoke at the event.

\$290m WB credit to strengthen UP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank (WB) yesterday approved \$290 million credit to strengthen the Union Parishads (UP) the lowest tier of rural local governments.

The loan is provided for the Second Local Governance Support Project (LGSP II) and all 4,504 UPs will get direct assistance from it.

The project builds on the success of LGSP-I to further strengthen local level accountability, and will support development initiatives prioritised by local communities, said a WB press release.

The LGSP II will continue to support the government's decentralisation efforts through provision of direct block grants to Union Parishads for financing local development projects once UPs meet the minimum transparency and governance conditions, the release said.

"The World Bank is committed to support Government of Bangladesh's decentralization reforms and remains a longstanding partner in the efforts to strengthen local governments, which play a vital role in enhancing domestic accountability and participatory development," said Ellen Goldstein, country director of WB Bangladesh.

A key new feature under the project is introduction of performance-based grants in addition to expanding current block grants amount and coverage supported by the initial project.

The new performance-based grants window will reward UPs who demonstrate improvements across a range of indicators including local revenue mobilisation.

RMG worker killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After killing a teenage female garment worker last night in the city's Dakkhinkhan over a love affair, a transport worker surrendered before the police station with the knife he used for the murder.

Neighbour Billal Hossain, stabbed Shapla Begum, 17, of Nodda indiscriminately around 8:30pm at Holan Society playground, said SI Mofizul Islam of Dakkhinkhan Police Station.

Billal claims that they engaged in a love affair since last several months.



Award winners of investigative journalism with guests, including Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 9th death anniversary of educationist Selina Bahar Zaman.

On the occasion, Selina Bahar Jaman Smriti Parishad will arrange a memorial lecture at Kabi Sufia Kamal auditorium of the National Museum at 4:00pm on Saturday.

Mizanur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 40th death anniversary of martyred cultural activist Mizanur Rahman.

He was killed by the Pakistani occupation forces along with 96 Bangladeshis at his village Munshipara in Dinajpur during the War of Liberation in 1971.

Badiul Alam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 18th death anniversary of Syed Mohammad Badiul Alam.

A milad mahfil will be held at Laksham in Comilla. A free eye camp will also be conducted today.

Dissent leaflets found 4 days prior mutiny

Says seventh witness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four days before the BDR carnage, some leaflets carrying different demands of the jawans were found pinned to the walls of the BDR headquarters in Pilkhana, the seventh witness told a court yesterday.

Afterwards, 11 officials of major rank put 24-hour guard at the quarter guards, said the witness, Major Tareq Mohammad Bhawali, who was at that time an official of 45 Rifle Battalion in Mymensingh.

He later got to know that the leaflets were composed at Prim Coaching Centre of one Zakir and sepoy Selim Reza and Moin and Lance Nayek Ekram were involved in printing it, claimed Tareq.

He was outside the headquarters on official duty when the mutiny broke out in the morning of February 25, 2009, added Tareq.

After Tareq's deposition, the makeshift Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka adjourned the proceedings till December 5.

Earlier, one of the accused, Deputy Assistant Director Mirza Habibur Rahman Khan, cross-examined the sixth witness, Major Razaul Mostafa Md Asad-ud-Doula.

Habibur claimed that a section of army men, involved in the mutiny, were giving "false depositions" to convict the accused.

He asked the witness whether he knew that the then director general of Ansar Maj Gen ATM Amin was caught entering Pilkhana with a firearm. The witness replied in the negative.

The carnage at the headquarters of BDR, now Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), claimed 74 lives, including 57 army officers.

The court will continue its proceedings during the month-long annual vacation beginning today.

POLICE-JAMAAT CLASH Charge framing hearing Jan 1

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Two separate Dhaka courts yesterday fixed January 1 next year for the hearing on charge framing against 121 leaders and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir, including its acting Ameer Maqbul Ahmad.

The date was fixed after the prosecution submitted petitions seeking adjournment of the charge hearing against the accused in the cases filed over the party's recent violence in the city.

Eighty accused, including Maqbul and former acting secretary general ATM Azharul Islam, were common in both the cases.

Metropolitan Magistrate Erfan Ullah of the Speedy Trial Court-7 held trial of the case filed with Paltan Police Station against 161 leaders and activists of party while Metropolitan Magistrate Asaduzzaman of the Speedy Trial Court-14 held the trial of the case filed with Ramna Police Station against 120 accused.

During yesterday's hearing, jail authorities did not produce any accused before the courts.

On September 19, several hundred Jamaat activists clashed with police in the capital, torched and vandalised vehicles and shops, leaving at least 100 people injured.

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