

NEWS IN *brief*

Bangladeshi killed in Malaysia

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Just 20 minutes after assuring his father over phone to come home next month, a Bangladeshi man working in Malaysia was stabbed to death by unknown men in Kuala Lumpur on Monday.

The deceased Mohammad Azim, the only son of Belal Hossain of Madhugram village in Parshuram upazila of Feni, worked in a shoe factory.

The attack took place at Jalal Pahang around 10:00am when Azim was returning to work after sending money to his parents, said his colleagues.

The body was flown in yesterday morning and buried in his village graveyard in the evening.

10 brickfields shut, owners fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday shut down 10 brickfields and fined the owners Tk 24 lakh for using chimneys made of drums, which are banned, and destroying arable land in Belabo of Narsingdi.

DoE Director (enforcement) Mohammad Munir Chowdhury, leading the drive, also asked the owners to remove the brickfields and make the lands arable by January 18.

The brickfields are Messers Madina Bricks, RSB Brickfield, FJB Bricks, Messers BBB Brickfield, Messers Payel and Shanto Bricks Field, Messers NKB Bricks, Messers SMB Bricks, Messers Janoni Brickfield, Messers Udayan Bricks Filed and Messers RSB.

Tk24.3 lakh mugged in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers snatched Tk 24.30 lakh in separate incidents in the city's Gulshan and Uttara yesterday.

Police said four muggers in two motorcycles way-laid a microbus at gunpoint on Road 7 of Gulshan 1 and looted Tk 20 lakh from Rashed Parvez, assistant managing director of Palmal Group.

In another incident, four muggers in two motorcycles snatched Tk 4.30 lakh from a trader, Sahidul Islam,

Another trust fund set up at DU

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Ambassador of Bangladesh to USA Akramul Qader donated Tk 5.25 lakh to set up 'Shaheed Captain Aftabul Qader, Bir Uttam Memorial Trust Fund' at Dhaka University (DU).

He donated the money to perpetuate the memory of his brother Shaheed Captain Aftabul Qader, Bir Uttam. DU Treasurer Mijanur Rahman received a cheque of the amount from Akramul Qader at a simple ceremony held at the VC's office on January 9.

Hasina's Tripura visit to strengthen ties
Says India

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

India on Tuesday said the visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Tripura would further strengthen people-to-people links and enhance trade and economic relations between India and Bangladesh.

A statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on the occasion of Hasina's visit noted that India and Bangladesh share enduring fraternal, linguistic and cultural ties.

Cooperation between India and Bangladesh has been greatly enhanced with the Bangladesh prime minister visiting India in January 2010 followed by a return visit by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in September 2011, it said.

Dr Singh, during his visit to Bangladesh in September 2011, was accompanied by the chief ministers of four states bordering Bangladesh (Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram), which underscored the potential for furthering engagement and ties between the states of North-East India and Bangladesh, the statement added.

On her maiden visit to Tripura, the prime minister of Bangladesh will be conferred a Doctor of Literature honoris causa at the 9th Convocation of Tripura University by the Vice-President of India Hamid Ansari. The Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal, will be present on the occasion.



Students applaud at the closing ceremony of the American-Bangladeshi Youth Leadership Exchange Program at STM Hall of Scholastica in the city's Uttara yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Global youth to build bridges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Building bridges and solidarity among young people from different nations could help address the global challenges like climate change, speakers said here yesterday.

"Students are the best bridges that are invaluable and tie the world together, especially when so many forces try to divide the world," said Dan Mozena, US ambassador to Bangladesh.

The remarks came at the closing ceremony of a month-long American-Bangladeshi Youth Leadership Exchange Programme at Scholastica School in the city's Uttara.

For the first time, 30 US high school students and five US educators took part in such an exchange

programme with Scholastica students. They visited communities in Bangladesh to learn about climate change adaptation and mitigation. The students attended workshops and conducted small service projects.

World Savvy, a US-based non-profit organisation, arranged the event in partnership with Scholastica, and SPEED, a training centre in Dhaka, funded by the US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and World Savvy.

Speaking as chief guest, Mozena said the US students were lucky enough that they could enjoy the hospitality and graciousness of the Bangladeshis.

UN Resident Coordinator Neal Walker said the world faces real risks due to climate change, and

some of the risks could be truly catastrophic.

He said melting of ice in the Himalayas and rise of sea levels put Bangladesh in the frontline of the challenges. Reducing carbon emission is a huge task, but it requires nations to come together, he noted.

"Your actions, as individuals and organisations, can have a lot of influence," he told the students, adding that despite different interests, various countries must come together and build consensus to tackle the global menace.

Lawmaker Saber Hossain Chowdhury said when climate change is a scientifically proven issue, there is yet skepticism about it in some people. "I think the US students can be our ambassadors on climate change in the US," he said.

Bangladesh is the champion in adaptation, but it cannot continue being so indefinitely. The UN has to play a crucial role in international governance, and bring all the nations together to reduce carbon emission, he noted.

Sharing his experience, Scholastica student Sharhan Munir said, "The biggest learning I would take away is solidarity. We will work together for humanity."

Scholastica Founding Chairperson Yasmeen Murshed and World Savvy Board of Directors Vice Chair Doug Tilden distributed certificates among the participants. Scholastica Managing Director Madiha Murshed and World Savvy Executive Director Dana Mortenson also spoke on the occasion.

BUS FARE HIKE
Protesters clash with cops, 25 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

At least 25 persons including five policemen were injured yesterday when demonstrators clashed with law enforcers in Narayanganj after police obstructed a procession brought out against recent bus fare hike.

Beginning at noon, the procession continued for half an hour until police dispersed the demonstrators.

Police said activists of Jatri Odhikar Sangrakkhan Forum held a rally in front of Shaheed Minar at Chashara protesting the recent hike of bus fare and demanded BRTC non-AC buses on the Dhaka-Narayanganj route.

They also brought out the procession but police obstructed it.

Incensed, protesters hurled bricks at the law enforcers prompting them to charge batons and use tear gas to disperse the demonstrators. The clash left 20 people injured.

Five policemen including Tobarak Ali, sub-inspector of Chashara police outpost, suffered minor injuries.

Later, the forum leaders submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner's office on their demands.

Rafiqur Rabbi, convener of the forum, alleged that police charged batons on their peaceful programme.

Manjur Kader, officer-in-charge of Narayanganj Model Police Station, confirmed that police resisted the procession.

"We received instructions from higher authorities to obstruct the forum members if they tried to besiege the DC office," the OC said.

The forum had earlier announced it would besiege the DC office to realise their demands.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inspects a guard of honour in Agartala in the Indian state of Tripura yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

'Make old airport civic centre' JnU students defy ban

STAFF CORRESPONDENTS

The four-acre Tejgaon Old Airport should be converted into a civic centre for the capital so that it becomes a multi-purpose arena capable of holding national events, suggested representatives of a think-tank at a seminar yesterday.

Moreover, effective measures should be taken for the "meaningful decentralisation" of Dhaka to make it a livable city and ensure the country's balanced development, they proposed.

Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), working on governance and poverty, organised the seminar, "Urban Bangladesh Challenges of Transition" in the city's Cirdap auditorium.

The suggestions are the findings of a study, revealed at the seminar, on the challenges of urbanisation carried out by PPRC with support from World Bank and Department for International Development of UKaid.

Dhaka has no perfect place to hold a mass gathering like that of March 7, 1971 or for the Pohela Boishakh celebrations, said Dr Adnan Morshed, a member of the study team of PPRC.

Urban policies would fail unless Dhaka's rising population is controlled and reduced by developing other cities and new opportunities are provided in rural areas to reverse

the inward trend of migration, he said.

In a survey on the reasons behind people flocking to Dhaka and Chittagong, the majority replied it was for employment followed by business purposes and education, said PPRC Executive Chairman Hossain Zillur Rahman.

Emphasising the need for decentralisation to reduce the pressure on Dhaka city, former governor of Bangladesh Bank Salehuddin Ahmed said the local government units must be provided with adequate resources for effective decentralisation.

Salehuddin, also a member of the study team, said though the economy grows from the produce of the rural areas, most of the development money is spent on urban areas.

Emphasising on protecting the city's environment, Environment and Forest Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud said it is high time to take up a sustainable and comprehensive plan otherwise the city will be "unmanageable" just after 10 years.

Each year two lakh acres from a total of two crore acres of arable land in the country is being destroyed due to unplanned urbanisation and industrialization, he added.

Head of Bangladesh Urban Forum Secretariat Prof Nazrul Islam, World Bank Country Director Ellen A Goldstein and a study member, Prof MA Taslim, also spoke at the seminar.

KAILASH SARKAR

Defying the Jagannath University (JnU) authorities' ban, its students yesterday staged daylong demonstrations demanding withdrawal of a "development fee" charged with first year admission fees.

Afterwards JnU's syndicate meeting, chaired by Vice-Chancellor Dr Mejbah Uddin Ahmed, at around 3:00pm decided to shut JnU down for an indefinite period, cancel the studentship of the protesters and termed the demand "irrational".

One syndicate member said, "The meeting decided that the VC could take any step such as closing down the university at any time and suspending or canceling the studentship of any protester."

"The meeting observed that a few students were trying to create anarchy in the name of the movement which is not supported by general students."

Yesterday's demonstration, including abstention from classes and exams, resulted from the stalemate of Tuesday's meeting between the VC and the agitating students.

Witnesses said the students staged a demonstration at JnU's Shaheed Minar premises. Another group of students paraded English Road, Roy Shaheb Bazar and Johnson Road of Old Dhaka.

After the last BNP-led government upgraded Jagannath College to a university in mid-2005, a law was enacted stating that the institution would have to fund itself after five years.

Students began protesting at around mid-2011 against the law and the development fee and for the recovery of its halls, which are illegally occupied.

After September, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced a continuation of JnU's government funding but the two remaining demands remained unsettled.

POWER PROJECTS
Delhi welcomes Dhaka's participation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

India has formally welcomed Bangladesh's participation in joint venture power projects in India, particularly in the north-eastern states of India adjoining Bangladesh.

"Such joint ventures in the power sector involving the two countries would also facilitate the evacuation of power from north-eastern India to Bangladesh and through Bangladesh to other parts of India," said the official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi yesterday.

During Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Bangladesh in September last year, India and Bangladesh agreed to promote trans-border cooperation in the management of shared water resources, hydropower potential and eco-systems and in the area of connectivity, the spokesperson said in response to a question on cooperation in power sector between the two countries.

It was also agreed that arrangements for cooperation in the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity, including electricity from renewable or other sources, would be established.

India has a liberal policy permitting 100% FDI in respect of projects relating to electricity generation, transmission and distribution.

In this regard, Bangladesh's participation in power projects in India would be welcome.

Pro-Jamaat lawyers protest tribunal's decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pro-Jamaat-e-Islami lawyers yesterday protested the order of International Crimes Tribunal that sent former Jamaat chief Ghulam Azam to jail in connection with charges of crimes against humanity committed during the War of Liberation in 1971.

The lawyers, under the banner of Islamic Lawyers' Council, held a protest rally in front of the office building of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday afternoon. Earlier on the day, they gathered on the tribunal premises during its proceedings against Ghulam Azam.

Nazrul Islam, the council's senior vice-president, said they have become victims of state terrorism and torture.

The council's Dhaka unit president Abdur Razzaq said the tribunal's order to send Ghulam Azam to jail was not correct.

Its central leader Mashiul Alam said the government is arresting patriots in the name of war crimes trial and the country's independence will not sustain if they are convicted.



WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary or partly cloudy sky over the country. Having chances of slight rain or drizzle is likely at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the country during midnight till morning, Met Offices said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country and night temperature may fall slightly over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions and nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:30pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 27.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 13.4 degrees Celsius at Rangpur.

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	24.5	17.0	81	66
Chittagong	26.0	16.9	90	63
Rajshahi	22.3	15.2	87	74
Rangpur	23.3	13.4	92	76
Khulna	23.8	16.5	89	80
Barisal	25.0	15.8	88	90
Sylhet	27.6	16.5	75	62