

NEWS IN *brief*

2 new trains on Joydevpur route

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Railway will launch two additional 'Turag Express' train services on Dhaka-Joydevpur-Dhaka route tomorrow to ease traffic jam in the city and fulfill the demand of the commuters.

The Turag Express-7 train will leave Dhaka for Joydevpur at 1:30pm and reach at 2:50pm. On the other hand, the Turag Express-8 train will leave Joydevpur for Dhaka at 4:00pm and arrive at 5:15pm, according to an official release.

Railways Minister Suranjit Sengupta will inaugurate the train service at Kamalapur rail station.

NDC Capstone Course ends

UNB, Dhaka

The two-week long Capstone Course-2012 of National Defence College (NDC) concluded at Mirpur Cantonment in the city yesterday.

A total of 25 personnel including six MPs, two secretaries, two senior judges, three business personalities, two chief editors, one senior lawyer, two top NGO representatives, one senior doctor, one chief engineer, one senior police officer and four senior members of armed forces (major general/equivalent) took part in the course, said an ISPR press release.

Planning Minister Air Vice Marshal (Retd) AK Khandker distributed certificates among the participants as chief guest.

New trust fund set up at DU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new trust fund has been set up at Dhaka University to finance a memorial lecture based on women development research at the university every year, says a press release.

Prof Bashira Mannan Memorial Lecture Trust Fund is worth Tk 3 lakh. Bangladesh Ambassador to Germany Mosud Mannan, son of Prof Bashira, handed over the cheque to DU Treasurer Prof Dr Mizanur Rahman at the Vice Chancellor's office yesterday.

With the income of the fund, Prof Bashira Mannan Memorial Lecture will be held on February 8 each year marking her birth anniversary.

Prof Bashira was a former director of the Institute of Social Work and Research at DU.

US mission closed on Jan 15

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US mission in Bangladesh will remain closed January 15 on the occasion of Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday, an American holiday, says a press release.

The American embassy, including the consular section and the American Center with the Archer K Blood American Center Library and the Student Advising Center, will remain closed on the occasion.

Emergency services for American citizens will be available.

Death for Ghulam Azam demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers, students, officials and staffers of Jahangirnagar University (JU) demanded the death penalty for war criminals, including the detained former Jamaat-e-Islami chief Ghulam Azam.

They raised the demand at a human chain programme at the Shaheed Minar yesterday. The participants carried placards with various slogans demanding a trial of the war criminals.

JU advice to waiting candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jahangirnagar University (JU) authorities yesterday asked candidates from the waiting list to apply for admission to the vacant seats in different departments and institutions of the university under 2011-2012 academic session.

The candidates have to apply between 9:00am and 12:00 noon on January 15.

The authorities will publish the list of the selected candidates on January 16 and the admission process will begin from January 17.

The aspirants have to bring all necessary documents with them for purposes of admission.



Moderate to thick fog likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary or partly cloudy sky over the country in 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country during midnight till morning, Met Office said.

Mild cold wave is sweeping over the regions of Rajshahi, Pabna, Jessore and Kushtia and mild to moderate cold wave may spread over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Sylhet and Dhaka divisions and the regions of Barisal and Comilla.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged and night temperature may fall by 1-2 degrees Celsius over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:31pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow. Country's highest temperature 27.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and lowest 08.2 degrees Celsius at Jessore.

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	21.4	13.0	88	61
Chittagong	23.5	17.0	84	72
Rajshahi	21.4	09.3	85	68
Rangpur	17.4	12.5	92	83
Khulna	20.7	12.4	72	83
Barisal	23.2	13.0	89	74



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, *inset*, speaks at a civic reception accorded to her by Chief Minister Manik Sarkar at Assam Rifles ground in Tripura yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: HASAN JAHID TUSHER

UTTARA-SADARGHAT BUS RAPID TRANSIT

Service possible from 2014

Say experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts have primarily estimated costs at \$183 million for the introduction of faster and seamless bus service, otherwise called Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), between Uttara and Sadarghat in the city.

They said public transportation on BRT route can be started from early 2014 if the difficulties emerged in restructuring the 22 kilometers of alignment are resolved soon.

"Local and international experts are working to overcome the bottlenecks regarding restructuring the alignment and traffic management", said Dr Salehuddin, executive director, Dhaka Transport Coordination Board.

The experts were speaking at a seminar at Sonargaon Hotel yesterday, on the inception report on the BRT Line-3, which was outlined in the government's Strategic

Transport Plan.

Dr Salehuddin said a group of international consultants, who have already done the pre-feasibility study on the alignment, will prepare a draft final report by March this year.

"We hope the detail design would be ready by the end of 2012", he said and added, "Since the BRT route will be built on the existing road, it will not take them much time to complete".

In the mass transport system (BRT), long-bodied buses pass seamlessly on designated routes, quickly reducing the volume of waiting passengers. A study says 25,000 people can be transported during peak hours.

Arnest J Mata of Advanced Logistic Group, who is a World Bank consultant of the BRT Line-3 project, said they were working out all the problems on the alignment.

The under-construction elevated expressway, Banani overpass, Kuril, Cantonment, Moghbazar-Mouchak, Mohakhali and Gulistan flyovers, Hatirjhel project, and the proposed metro rail are the main hurdles.

The alignment is very narrow at different points while numerous intersections and several rail crossings are the other bottlenecks to be solved before finalising the alignment and preparing a design.

The BRT Line-3 will pass through Mohakhali, Tejgaon, Moghbazar and Kakrail. From Kakrail, the route will branch off into two directions--one through Rajarbagh, DIT extension road, Bangabhaban, Kaptanbazar, and Baldha Garden and the other through Matsya Bhaban, Abdul Ghani Road, Golap Shah Mazar, and North South Road--

to merge at Babu Bazar to finally reach Sadarghat.

The BRT line has an extended part, which stretches from Uttara to Gazipur. The 20 kilometers of alignment has made significant progress as the Asian Development Bank has nearly completed the detail design after doing feasibility study last year. It is expected to be complete by the next year.

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader, WB Country Director Elein Goldstein, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Prof Alamgir Mojibul Hoque, Communications Secretary MAN Siddique, Environment and Forests Secretary Meshbaul Hoque, and another consultant of the project A Peres also addressed the function.

Parimal Mutsuddi passes away

BSS, Dhaka

Parimal Mutsuddi, a leading leader of the Buddhist community, passed away at a health facility in the city due to a massive brain hemorrhage yesterday at the age of 77.

He is survived by his wife, four sons, a daughter and several grand children.

Family sources said he would be cremated at the Kamalapur Buddhist crematorium today in the morning after overnight prayers at the Buddhist temples at Badda and Kamalapur.

Mutsuddi had recited from the holy Tripitak at the historic March 7, 1971 public rally of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Rajendranath Das

METRO DESK

Rajendranath Das, former teacher of Rajshahi Government Laboratory High School, passed away at his Rajbaki residence in Dinajpur town due to old age complications on Tuesday at the age of 78.

He left behind his wife, one son, two daughters, a host of relatives, students and well-wishers to mourn his death, said a press release.

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Union co-ordinator Ayub Reza Chowdhury's qulkhwani will be held at Ali Ahmad School ground in the city today, says a press release.

Relatives, friends, colleagues and well-wishers are requested to attend the programme.

'ADIVASIS AND ENVIRONMENT' Convention begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A 3-day convention, "Indigenous Community and Sylhet's Environment", began at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) yesterday calling upon the new generation to remain vocal in enforcing the rights of every citizen of the country.

The convention, jointly organised by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, Bangladesh Environment Network and Sust, began with a colourful procession in the campus attended by communities of Hajonj, Orao, Tipra, Khasia, Manipury and those working on tea estates.

The procession was adorned with banners demanding recognition of ethnic communities and urging to save the environment. The day's event concluded through a film show and a cultural function in the evening.

Former Chief Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman inaugurated the event while eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain, former adviser to a caretaker government Advocate Sultana Kamal, Sust Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Saleh Uddin and Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal attended the programme.

Today's programmes include a debate and film show. The convention ends tomorrow with the announcement of "Sylhet Declaration", calling to save the environment.

Etihad freighter hit by Biman car

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parts of a freight aircraft of Etihad Airways were damaged after being hit by a cargo loading car of Biman Bangladesh Airlines at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Wednesday night.

Officials of Etihad and Biman said a hole was created at the engine cowl of the freighter, Boeing 767. They, however, could not assess immediately the extent of the damage. Following the incident, the Biman management has suspended the driver of the loading car, Fazlul Haq.

"An investigation is underway and our Abu Dhabi office is in touch with Biman. The amount of the loss will be determined upon the investigation", Etihad's country manager Ashraf Kabir told The Daily Star last night.

A Biman director wishing anonymity said Biman may not have to compensate unless the aircraft was struck due to wilful negligence of the driver.

On December 21, a large aircraft of Biman struck a parked jet of GMG airlines before its take-off run at the same airport and damaged a section of the jet's tail.

Meghna Group fined for filling up riverbank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The environment court under the Ministry of Environment and Forests yesterday rejected the appeal filed by Meghna Group of Industries and stood by the DoE's decision to fine the company Tk 30 lakh for illegally filling up the Meghna riverbank in Narayanganj.

The Department of Environment also directed the managing director of the company to remove the soil from the filled-up wetlands immediately.

Earlier on September 10, last year, a team led by Muhammed Munir Chowdhury, director of DoE's monitoring and enforcement wing conducted a drive.

During the drive, they found the company had filled up almost 30 acres of lower areas of the river at Dakshin Anandabazar under Sonargaon in Narayanganj.

The director ordered the company to halt any ongoing work of the project and fined the company Tk 30 lakh.

However, the company challenged the DoE's decision and appealed to the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

According to the hearing, attended by the secretary of the ministry, the company had been filling up the low-lying riverbank to construct a factory for its industry.

The DoE officials who witnessed the unauthorised land filling said it could obstruct the flow of the river.

Arrest warrant against Ctg college teacher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chittagong court yesterday issued an arrest warrant against a lecturer of Chittagong College over a rape case filed by a woman.

The plaintiff, a former student of Chittagong University, alleged that the lecturer of Islamic history department raped her several times after false promises of marriage.

Judge Mohammad Rejaul Karim of the First Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression in Chittagong took the charge into cognizance yesterday as per the case.

The accused could not be contacted for comment despite repeated attempts.

HINDU MARRIAGE LAW

Draft handed over to minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nagorik Uddiyog, an alliance of 50 NGOs, yesterday handed over a copy of Hindu Marriage Draft Law 2011 to Law Minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed and demanded its enactment to protect the human rights of the Hindu women.

The platform took the initiative of drafting the law following the demand of Hindu women from different regions of the country, who have suffered due to the absence of such a law, said a press release.

Activists and officials of the alliance have already taken opinion from around 4,000 Hindu community members and around 200 Hindu lawyers on the drafted law.

Besides, several meetings and rallies were organised at grassroots level to discuss it when most of the people demanded enactment of the law.

The alliance includes Manusher Jonno Foundation, Ain o Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Mohila Parishad, Steps Towards Development, Naripakkha, and Research Initiative Bangladesh, among others.

ASSAULT CASE

Hearing on petition of Imtiaz Jan 15

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed January 15 for hearing on a bail petition filed for Imtiaz Ahmed, son of former president Iajuddin Ahmed, in connection with a case for allegedly assaulting the registrar of Atish Dipankar University of Science and Technology.

Judge Mohammad Zahurul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court set the date after Imtiaz's lawyer Pran Nath filed a criminal appeal against an order passed by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka on January 10.

Imtiaz, founder member of the university's trustee board, is also charged for holding the registrar, Kabir Hossain Talukder, hostage in the Gulshan house of the former president and threatening him with death.

Gulshan police picked up Imtiaz along with Sirajul Huq Chowdhury, member of the university's trustee board, and Junayed Ahmed, deputy registrar of the university, from the private university's Banani campus on January 8, the day he assaulted the registrar.

Sirajul and Junayed were later freed against bonds while Imtiaz was shown arrested the next day after Registrar Kabir Hossain filed a case against him with Gulshan Police Station.

21 stolen auto-rickshaws recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch (DB) of police in two separate drives recovered 21 stolen CNG driven auto-rickshaws from different areas of Naogaon district and arrested a youth with home-made bombs from the city's Malibagh on Monday and early yesterday.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of DB of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Masudur Rahman said a gang led by Jamal, Alam, and Mizan negotiate with buyers as the middlemen to sell vehicles with fake papers in Naogaon.

Later, a team of DB from Dhaka conducted a raid on a garage in Naogaon Sadar and recovered the 21 stolen auto-rickshaws, he said.

DB officials requested the owners of CNG auto-rickshaws, who have lost their vehicles recently, to contact them and identify their vehicles.

The ADC said auto-rickshaw lifting gangs of the city and Narayanganj area used to steal vehicles from the drivers using many techniques. Later, they contact the owners and demand money from them to return the vehicles.

If the owners fail to meet their demand, they make fake documents of the vehicles and sell them.

In another drive, DB police arrested Azizul Haque Fakir, 28, from a house at West Malibagh. The police found machetes and the bombs in a car of his garage.