

## NEWS IN *brief*

### EC to send letters to parties

BSS, Dhaka

The Election Commission (EC) will send letters to registered political parties to know about their organisational structures across the country.

The EC will inquire whether the organisational structures of the parties that they had showed while taking registration do still exist.

Election Commissioner Sahul Hossain told the news agency that the EC is taking the step to verify the information the parties had supplied to get registration in 2008.

A total of 39 parties got registered with the EC in September 2008. Of those, the registration of Freedom Party was cancelled later. A meeting will be held at the EC Secretariat today to fix a timeline

### Cable-TV operator shot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Extortionists shot and injured a cable-TV operator demanding extortion from him at Merajnagar in capital's Kadamtali last night.

The victim, Nannu Molla, owner of Al-Raji Cable Network, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with a bullet in his chest.

Ali Azgar, a witness of the incident, told The Daily Star two armed extortionists entered the office of Nannu, 55, which is located on the first floor of Shariatpur Plaza at about 10:00pm.

They sprayed five rounds of bullet targeting Nannu, while three of his friends including Azgar escaped unhurt, he said.

Salam, a local extortionist, earlier demanded Tk 2 lakh as extortion from Nannu on December 28 last year. The extortionists might have tried to kill

### Sri Lankan army commander meets navy chief

UNB, Dhaka

The four-member Sri Lankan delegation led by Commander of Sri Lankan Army Lt Gen Jagath Jayasuriya paid a courtesy call on Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral Z U Ahmed at Naval Headquarters in the city's Banani yesterday.

Sri Lankan army commander discussed matters of bilateral issues. Sri Lankan Defence Adviser to Bangladesh was present on the occasion.

The delegation arrived in Dhaka for a seven-day visit to Bangladesh on January 10.

The team is scheduled to leave Dhaka on

## Allocate Tk 8000cr to repair roads

JS body asks govt

UNB, Dhaka

The parliamentary standing committee on Ministry of Communications yesterday recommended urgent allocation of Tk 8000 crore to repair the country's dilapidated roads before the next monsoon.

The parliamentary watchdog body in its 26th meeting decided to urge the government for ensuring the allocation so that the repair work on roads can be completed before the rainy season.

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader, committee members M Zillul Hakim, Nazrul Islam Manju, HM Golam Reza, Omar Faruk Chowdhury, M Abu Zahir, M Golam Molla Ronny and Apu Ukil attended the meeting with committee chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the chair.

The meeting discussed issues related to division-based allocation of fiscal 2011-2012 under the Roads and Highways Directorate and put emphasis on balanced and consistent allocations for all divisions removing all the discriminations in the next fiscal year.

The meeting finalised the 'Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority Bill' after proper scrutiny, required addition and deduction in the bill.

The bill was prepared to restore discipline in Dhaka city transportation system, making it planned one and modern and to establish Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority by incorporating Dhaka, Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Gazipur and Narsingdi districts.



Workers observe the damage caused by a devastating fire originating from an electric short circuit at a plastic warehouse near the Eidgah ground in West Islambagh in Old Dhaka last night. *Inset*, Fire fighters conduct rescue operation.

PHOTO: STAR

## Malaysian co keen to invest Tk 1,100cr to improve three roads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Malaysian private company has expressed its interest to invest in both railway and transport sectors in Bangladesh.

Representatives of Gunung Capital, Malaysian property investor and travel and tour company, yesterday met Railway Minister Suranjit Sengupta and Communications Minister Obaidul Quader and expressed their interest.

The eight-member delegation of Gunung Capital headed by its Chairman Dato Syed Abu Hussain is visiting Bangladesh to explore the scope for investment in trans-

port sector.

At a meeting with Quader at his office, the company showed interest to improve three roads at an estimated cost of around Tk 1,100 crore, meeting sources say.

The roads are 49-kilometer Madanpur-Bhulta-Joydebpur of Dhaka bypass road, 23km Demra-Tongi of Dhaka eastern bypass road and 18km Boliapur-Ruhitpur-Bourovita of Dhaka western bypass road.

Of the budget, about Tk 600 crore will be spent for upgrading the two-lane Madanpur-Bhulta-Joydebpur road into four lanes, Tk 276 crore for widening the narrow

Demra-Tongi road into two lanes and Tk 216 crore for upgrading the Boliapur-Ruhitpur-Bourovita road into four lanes.

Another delegation of the company is expected to visit Bangladesh next week to discuss modality of its investment, says a press release of the ministry.

The meeting discussed both build-own-operate-transfer (BOOT) and public-private-partnership (PPP) options in this regard.

The delegation, at their meeting with Suranjit at Railway Bhaban, proposed to run commuter trains on Dhaka-Sylhet route.

"They proposed for running at

least one commuter train on the route. I welcomed their intention, but asked them to come with concrete proposal in this regard," Suranjit told reporters after the meeting.

"We will scrutinise the proposal and then take a decision," he headed.

Asked whether they have experience in railway, the chairman of the Malaysian company said, "We have vast experience in land-based transport service which we can use in the railway sector too."

The Malaysian delegation also met Finance Minister AMA Muhith last week and expressed their intention to invest in Bangladesh.



Well-wishers of Manik Chandra Saha form a human chain before Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding exemplary punishment to those who bombed and killed Manik Saha, a Khulna correspondent of the Daily New Age and a stringer of BBC Bangla Service, on January 15, 2004.

PHOTO: STAR

### MANIK SAHA MURDER

## Fresh probe, speedy trial demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a rally yesterday demanded the arrest, speedy trial and exemplary punishment of the killers of journalist Manik Chandra Saha.

At the rally organised by "Manik Sahar Suridra" (well-wishers of Manik Saha) in front of the Jatiya Press Club to observe the 8th death anniversary of the journalist, they also demanded a re-investigation of the killing, said a press release.

Khulna correspondent of the Daily New Age and a stringer of BBC Bangla Service, Manik was killed when unidentified miscreants hurled bombs at him on January 15, in 2004 near Khulna Press Club.

The speakers said the killing of Manik was a political plan of the then BNP-Jamaat led government.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Secretary General Mujahidul Islam Selim said although the present government also had blamed the BNP-Jamaat for the murder, it did not take any steps to try the killers.

Journalist Aminur Rasel Babul chaired the rally while President of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, and General Secretary Abdul Jalil Bhuyian, Dhaka Reporters' Unity Secretary General Sajjad Alam Khan Topu, and CPB leader Ruhin Hossain Prince spoke at the rally.

## More launches on three routes from Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aiming to ease passengers' sufferings, the shipping ministry yesterday took a firm decision to end the rotation system in operating launches on three major water routes from Dhaka to the southern districts.

The ministry instructed launch owners to operate a total of 10 launches on the Dhaka-Barisal route, six on the Dhaka-Patuakhali route and six on the Dhaka-Bhola route from today.

The decision came after a meeting among Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan, shipping officials and launch owners at the shipping ministry.

Under the rotation system, which was allegedly introduced by launch owners during the last BNP-Jamaat tenure, the owners daily operated fewer launches than the government's direction to make higher profits per launch.

As per the system, a launch had to wait

around one week to get a chance of plying, which in turn caused a water transport crisis.

The new system will ease the sufferings of passengers and will make the journey comfortable, said an official of the ministry.

The meeting also formed a 'survey committee' to prepare a report on how many passengers travel daily on the routes, how many launches are required and what sort of problems passengers face during travelling.

The survey committee, headed by the joint secretary (administration) of the shipping ministry, has been asked to submit its report within a month.

Shipping Secretary Abdul Mannan Hawlader, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) Chairman Golam Mostafa Kamal, Mayor of Barisal City Corporation Shawkat Hossain Hiron and Bangladesh Inland Waterways (passenger carrier's) Association Chairman Mahbub Uddin Ahmed Bir Bikram also attended the meeting.

### Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan, shipping officials and launch owners hold meeting

## Non-govt primary school teachers' strike begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Classes at 24,000 non-government registered primary schools will remain suspended for five days as teachers launched a movement yesterday demanding nationalisation of their jobs.

Around 4.2 lakh students across the country are going to miss their classes till January 19.

Teachers of these schools, which represent 25 percent of the country's total primary educational institutions, locked up the classrooms yesterday and will continue with their strike today. They will also abstain from taking classes for three days from tomorrow but will take part in other activities.

National Non-Government (registered) Primary Teachers' Oikya Parishad, a platform of four organisations of non-governmental primary teachers, has launched the movement and announced its next course of action.

Parishad chairman Samsul Alam said they will submit a memorandum to all 345 members of parliament from January 20 to February 20. They would also submit a memorandum to the Speaker in parliament on March 14 and lay siege to the Prime Minister's Office on April 10, he added.

"There are more than 98,000 teachers

working in around 24,000 non-government registered primary schools across the country and almost 90 percent of them observed the strike," Alam told The Daily Star.

These teachers enjoy basic salary equivalent to that of the government primary teachers but are not entitled to other allowances or facilities.

According to sources at Directorate of Primary Education, there are over 87,000 primary schools of different types in the country.

The agitating teachers under the same banner are demonstrating for their demand for the last few months. Their demonstrations got intensified after the primary and mass education minister in last September announced that the government won't nationalise their jobs.

In December last year, the teachers staged a sit-in at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital.

They are aware that students' study will be hampered but they expect an announcement from the government in their favour soon, the teachers observed.

The government announced nationalisation of their jobs on many occasions but did not implement it, Samsul said, adding, "We will withdraw our programmes if the government meets our demands."



WEATHER TODAY

### Cold wave may continue

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in 12 hours as of 6:00pm today. Moderate to thick fog may occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere over the country during midnight till morning, Met Office said.

Mild to moderate cold wave is sweeping over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal divisions and the regions of Feni and Srimongal and it may continue.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. The sun sets in the capital at 5:33pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 25.9 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and lowest 06.0 degrees Celsius at Sayedpur.

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	23.0	10.5	63	47
Chittagong	24.0	14.0	83	60
Rajshahi	21.0	06.6	95	72
Rangpur	20.8	06.5	93	75
Khulna	22.5	10.4	93	57
Barisal	23.0	09.5	84	78