

NEWS IN brief

Moudud gets bail in tax evasion case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail for two months to BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed in a tax evasion case.

An HC bench of Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice Shahidul Karim passed the order after hearing a bail petition filed by Moudud a day after a Dhaka court summoned him to appear before it on February 7 in the case.

National Board of Revenue lodged the case against the former law minister for dodging Tk 6.85 crore in income tax from 1997-98 to 2006-07 fiscal years.

The court took the charges into cognisance on Sunday and summoned Moudud.

The case statement says Moudud concealed information about his wealth worth Tk 27,68,81,078 and gave false information to the income tax department about his authentic income and expenditure.

Amal Sen's ninth death anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the ninth death anniversary of Amal Sen, former president of Bangladesh Workers Party and a veteran of Tebhaga Andolon, the revolt where peasants demanded two-thirds of the produce from the land owners instead of the pittance they had been used to getting.

Leaders and activists of Bangladesh Workers Party yesterday paid tribute by placing wreaths at Amal's portrait at Shaheed Russell Mancha in the city's Tophkhana road, says a press release.

Amal Sen, born in 1912 in Afra village of Narail, was the lead organiser of the Narail episode of Tebhaga Andolon which spread in East Bengal and West Bengal in 1946.

He was also elected president of Bangladesh Workers Party in 1992 and 1995.

Workers Party Bangladesh organised a two-day programme at his village home starting from today marking the death anniversary.

4 JU students die in 3 weeks

JU CORRESPONDENT

A student of Jahangirnagar University died of brain haemorrhage in a city hospital yesterday.

The deceased, Hamd Mohammad Adnan, hailing from Laxmipur, was a first year honours student of the Institution of Information Technology (IIT) at the university.

With him, a total of four students of JU have died since December 29.

Adnan was admitted to Green Life Hospital on Sunday evening. He died there yesterday noon.

Shocked at the four deaths in quick succession, JU Registrar Abu Bakr Siddique said we are very much frustrated, as we have lost many of our loving students within a few days.

We cannot express our unbearable pain in words, and we just pray to the almighty that we no more lose any of our children, he added.

On December 29, Vannei Liyan Bom, a first year honours student of archaeology department, died of a cardiac arrest in his room in Moulana Bhashani Hall. The boy hailed from Ruma upazila, Bandarban.

Just with a day's succession, a master's student of English department died in a fall from the rooftop of four-storey Shaheed Salam Barkat Hall. Muradur Rahman hailed from Tangail.

The latest shock came on January 9 as Zubair Ahmed, an honours final year student, succumbed to his stab injuries inflicted by a group of Bangladesh Chhatra League activists a day before.

In the meantime, a first year college student of Jahangirnagar University School and College died in a motorbike on the campus. Rahatul Islam Nayan succumbed to his injuries en route to Savar Enam Medical College Hospital on January 3.



WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country. Having chances of light rain or drizzle at one or two places over Rangpur division in 12 hours till 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 mid night till morning, Met Office said.

Mild to moderate cold wave is sweeping over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Dhaka divisions and the regions of Mymensingh, Feni, Jessore, Kushtia and Srimongal and it may abate.

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

The sun sets in the capital at 5:34pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 26.1 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and lowest 05.9 degrees at Srimgongal.

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	22.8	11.0	66	49
Chittagong	23.2	13.0	68	53
Rajshahi	23.0	07.1	97	69
Rangpur	22.5	07.2	82	71
Khulna	23.5	11.0	89	79
Barisal	23.5	09.2	89	78
Sylhet	24.9	09.5	86	54
Cox's Bazar	25.0	14.0	67	49



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina poses with the youths who received awards for self-employment at a function on the occasion of National Day 2011 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday.

PRESIDENT'S DIALOGUE
EU envoy asks political parties to resolve issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Appreciating the president's dialogue on forming a new election commission (EC), EU Ambassador to Bangladesh William Hanna yesterday asked all political parties to continue the dialogue to resolve issues regarding the EC and general elections.

"I am encouraged to see the dialogue initiated by the president on formation of a new election commission. We welcome it and it should be continued," he said.

Addressing a press briefing, "EU-Bangladesh Relations", at Jatiya Press Club in the city, the ambassador said a strong and independent EC is crucial in ensuring a free and fair election. The EU will provide support to that end, he added.

Hanna expressed satisfaction over the big turnout in the by-elections in Bangladesh and acceptability of the results. "These elections were free and fair."

On corruption, he said it is a problem the world over. The EU supports the Anti-Corruption Commission's activities in curbing graft in the country, he added.

Hanna also observed that Bangladesh needs foreign investment and an investment-friendly environment free from corruption to woo overseas investors.

Over Bangladesh's human rights condition, he said there is lot to be done to improve the situation.

Democracy and human rights are the centre elements of EU's development cooperation with Bangladesh. "We will support efforts to strengthen human rights through both diplomatic advocacy and development assistance projects," said Hanna.

He said EU is operating over 100 projects focused on education, health and food security in the country.

On extra-judicial killings and incidents of disappearance, Hanna said, "We strongly condemn it and it should not happen. We look at it very closely. Justice should be done through court."

On the process of holding the war crimes trial, he said EU wants the international standard of justice to be ensured in the trial.

BDR CARNAGE CASE
Lawyer claims flesh of accused cut off

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A defense lawyer of the BDR carnage case yesterday claimed before a session judge's court that flesh from his client's legs was cut off during remand.

When the lawyer, Faruk Ahammad, asked for the court's permission to bring the accused Havildar Yousuf Ali so that it could view the injury, the court refused, asking him to submit necessary medical documents to support his claim.

Earlier in the day, witness Havilder Bazlur Rashid claimed he saw jawans throwing off the bodies of Col Mujibul Haque and Lt Col Enayetul Haque from the third floor of a building.

Faruk claimed that Bazlur was lying as some bones in the bodies would surely have been found broken in the post mortem report after such a fall.

Bazlur refuted Faruk's accusation.

The court also recorded the deposition of Major Rawshanul Feroz, after he was cross-examined, where he elaborated his escape from Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) headquarters in Pilkhana during the carnage on February 25-26, 2009.

The makeshift court set up on the Alia Madrasa playground in the city's Bakshibazar was adjourned till tomorrow.

Fifty seven top and mid-ranking army officers of the erstwhile BDR, now Border Guard Bangladesh, and 17 others were brutally killed in the carnage.

Awareness of sexual health of adolescents stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Guardians' lack of knowledge about the sexual health of their adolescent children coupled with their unwillingness to discuss sexual issues with their children is making the adolescents vulnerable to many health risks, speakers observed at a roundtable yesterday.

They also called for public-private partnership to educate guardians and teachers and create social awareness among the masses about the issue.

They also urged the government to include the issue under the mainstream health sector and introduce sexual health education at school level.

"Adolescence brings about major changes in the body of a young person. It also creates huge mental pressure on them. Lack of education about the issue makes them vulnerable to many health risks as they are not being prepared to cope with the situation," said MM Niaz Uddin, director general of the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP), who was addressing as the chief guest.

The roundtable titled "Adolescents' sexual health: Role of guardians" was organised by the Bangla daily Prothom Alo with assistance from Canadian International Development Agency and Plan Bangladesh at Prothom Alo's head office in the city.

Niaz urged the media to come forward for creating mass awareness on the issue since the government initiative alone is deemed insufficient to ensure significant progress over the issue.

Dhaka University (DU) psychology department Prof Dr Mehtab Khanam called for educating guardians about parenting since guardians generally do not bother to act considering the growth of their children.

She also said teachers' training on the issue should be arranged while home education should be made mandatory for both boys and girls.

While presenting the keynote paper,

City road collapses as building site caves in

Rajuk official points finger at faulty design

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A portion of Circuit House road in the city collapsed into a 33-foot foundation ditch yesterday morning when underground piling work on the site of an under-construction nearby building caved in.

Several cracks developed on the road opposite the office of the deputy commissioner (traffic south) at around 8:00am while an excavator was digging out mud for the foundation work of the 10-storey building on plot no 5.

Two hours after the digging began, the concrete pillars of the road protection piling collapsed on the excavator, burying it under mud and debris from the collapsed four-foot of the 24-foot wide road.

The operator of the excavator, however, managed to save himself.

No casualty has been reported. But local people living in nearby high-rises buildings went into a state of panic.

Sheikh Abdul Mannan, member planning of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), said a total of 33-foot of earth was dug up for the foundation work while pillars were set under 51-foot of piling which was not adequate for such a high-rise structure.

The owner of the under-construction building, Monzurur Rahman, obtained approval from Rajuk on July 25 last year, said another official of Rajuk. But he did not inform Rajuk about site inspection before starting construction work, mandatory even after such approval is granted.

Though there is a rule about informing Rajuk of construction work 15 days before it commences, in this case the owner did not inform the building authorities, said Khalekuzzaman Chowdhury, authorised officer-4 of Rajuk.

"We could not reach the owner till 6:00pm as his mobile set was switched off," he said.

All the workers fled the site immediately

after the accident. Neither the owner nor his family members were to be seen when this correspondent visited the site at noon.

A visit to the area in the afternoon revealed that more cracks had developed in the middle of the remaining portion of the road, which construction experts say could make other big structures nearby vulnerable.

"The buildings around the accident site could be at risk if proper measures are not taken," said a former chief engineer of Rajuk seeking anonymity.

The decades old two-storey building is just 10-foot away from the nearest cracks in the middle of Circuit House road and remains at most risk, he said.

Police blocked off the road just after the incident and had to wait for six hours for the crisis management team of Rajuk to arrive on the scene.

As there was no crisis management unit of Rajuk, they had to depend and wait for the help of the army to take measures to stop a further collapse, said a Rajuk official.

Later, a team of army engineering corps reached the spot at around 2:45pm and started working to protect it from further collapse by dumping sand bags at the site.

When asked, member planning of Rajuk Sheikh Abdul Mannan said the collapse of foreshore piling and a portion of the road might have occurred due to faulty design or construction failure or both.

Member, development, of Rajuk, Mahbul Alam, said Rajuk was taking safety measures to avoid any further collapse.

A team of Wasa went to the spot and switched off the water supply lines, which had leaked during the collapse.

While visiting the site, DMP commissioner Benazir Ahmed blamed the construction workers for their negligence and said the police would take legal action against them.

Three-legged tigress sent to recover in Dulahazari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The three-legged Bengal tigress rescued from a house in Angthara village of South Betkashi union of Koira, Khulna on Sunday was sent to Dulahazari safari park of Cox's Bazar after it arrived in the capital around 5:30am yesterday.

The tigress was fed after it reached the forest department in Agargaon and sent to the park under the supervision of veterinary surgeon Dr Nizamuddin, says a forest department press release.

This is the first time that a tiger rescued from human habitation was brought to the capital, said Dr Tapan Kumar Dey, conservator of forest, wildlife division of Bangladesh Forest Department.

The six-year-old and seven and a half feet long endangered mammal is physically weak and weighs only 70 kilogrammes. It would be nursed back to health at the park, he said.

The hind leg, missing from the knee for a long time, was probably chopped off by leaf collectors or lost in a snare set by hunters in the Sundarbans. The disability affected its hunting ability, forcing it to enter human habitation in search of prey, he said.

Officials of Sundarbans Tiger Project tranquilized the tigress on Sunday morning after it entered and was locked inside the house by the locals on Saturday night.

Websites now means of communication for militants

Say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the crackdown on militant organisations and activities, websites have become the means for militants to spread their ideology and become reorganised, said speakers at a conference yesterday.

They are now using the social network and altering their dress code to avert the eyes of law enforcers, they added.

The conference, "Countering Violent Extremism through Strategic Communications", was organised by Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) and Centre for Civil-Military Relation of USA at a city hotel, attended by representatives of six South Asian nations.

Addressing the programme as the chief guest, prime minister's Security Affairs Adviser Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique said the number of militant website now stands at 4,000 but 15 years back it was only 20.

Militancy is being encouraged at home with the use of internet and the madrasa education system, he said.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan W Mozena said, "Terrorism is not simply somebody else's problem. It is a threat to each of our countries individually and to all of us collectively as a community of states."

Those involved in combating militancy must collectively detect and stop the means through which militant ideologies spread, said the speakers.

BEI President Farooq Sobhan presided over the conference where the US centre's Programme Coordinator Paul Clarke also spoke.



Guests at a roundtable titled "Adolescents' sexual health: Role of guardians" organised by Prothom Alo in association with Canadian International Development Agency and Plan Bangladesh at the Prothom Alo office in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PROTHOM ALO

Dr Tahmina Mirza, project manager of the Plan Bangladesh's project related to adolescent sexual health, showed that 47 percent of about 4 crore adolescents, between the ages of 10 and 19, of the country are married, implying that they are already leading their sexual life.

These adolescents are becoming parents while lacking complete understanding about their sexual health, said the paper.

Dr Zahir Uddin Ahmed, former director general of Bangladesh Paribar Porikolpona Samity, emphasised on making the public infrastructure offering health service friendly to adolescents.

Recalling memory from his adolescence days, DU Prof AKM Nurunnabi said, "Back then, the chapter on sexual organ was overlooked by our school teachers and we were asked to finish the chapter at home. And, the scenario is almost same nowadays as our mindset has not changed."

Mohammad Sharif, MCH and line director, highlighted another incident in which Bangladesh did not respond to a donor agency offer to supply birth control products to schools, while

Pakistan accepted the same offer.

DGFP Program Manager Ishrat Jahan said that even media is overlooking the issue simply as it involves the issue of sex.

WHO representative Rabeya Khatun emphasised on coordinating activities between the department of family planning and the health directorate to address the issue.

Plan Bangladesh's Health Adviser Iftokhar Hasan Khan called for public and private partnership to address the issue alongside child marriage and birth control programs.

Syeda Selina Parvin, Hasab team leader, said the government could not make significant progress over the issue though it has been working since 1994 as all the government activities had been based on projects. She urged to include the issue into mainstream health sector.

Prothom Alo Joint Editor Abdul Quayum moderated the roundtable while ICDDR,B assistant scientist Dr Kamrun Nahar, Plan Bangladesh's Country Project Manager Dr Selim Amin, Population Council Senior Program Officer Laila Rahman and lawyer Salma Ali attended among others.