

NEWS IN *brief*

Bird interrupts Biman flight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Cox's Bazar-bound flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines was cancelled yesterday after the aircraft's engine came in contact with a stray bird during take off.

Biman sources said the left engine of the F-28 aircraft was damaged after the bird hit it during the take off run around 10:00am. The damaged engine was replaced with a spare one later in the day, sources added.

The 77 passengers boarding the 80-seat aircraft were off loaded and those among them going to Chittagong were sent through alternative flights.

Biman officials said staff of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh are present with guns and bullets to drive away birds ahead of a flight, but they did not perform their duty properly yesterday.

Sust body starts functioning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The seven-member committee, formed by the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) vice chancellor on January 18 to return normalcy on the campus, started holding talks with student and cultural organisations on Friday.

An indefinite strike was enforced by Shibir from January 15 demanding withdrawal of cases filed against its activists and release of those arrested after Bangladesh Chhatra League and Shibir clashed on January 11, leaving 20 injured.

Vice Chancellor Prof Md Saleh Uddin said though it may take time, he was optimistic that the committee would be able to bring back a congenial atmosphere on the campus.

If necessary, the committee would seek opinion of the country's civil society members, he added.

Withdraw 'false cases': Sylhet BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet district and city unit BNP yesterday staged a three-hour long token hunger strike and a rally to press for withdrawal of 'false cases' against their district president and other party men.

Sylhet city BNP Chief MA Haque chaired the programme while its Vice-President Nasim Hossain and General Secretary Abdul Quaiyum Jalali addressed among others in the city's Central Shaheed Minar.

**TK 15CR GRAFT CASE
10 former customs officials get bail**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Ten former customs officials yesterday surrendered to a Dhaka court and obtained bail in a graft case filed against them 11 years back for allegedly evading more than Tk 15.42 crore in revenue.

Judge Mohammad Zohurul Haque of the Senior Special Judge's Court granted them bail upon a bond of Tk 20,000 with two guarantors after they appeared with their lawyers seeking bail.

An official of the now defunct Bureau of Anti Corruption filed the case with Cantonment Police Station on May 29, 2001.

The case statement says that the customs officials, in collusion with the chairman, managing director and three directors of M/S Art Garments Ltd, set up a garment factory using forged documents.

Between 1994 and 1996, they opened 13 fake L/C at Sonali Bank in Chittagong and imported 50,17,970 yards of cloth in the name of the factory they set up, evading and misappropriating Tk 15,42,54,568 in revenue, it added.

Anti-Corruption Commission Assistant Director Abu Bakar Siddique submitted the charge sheet against the 15 accused on May 22 last year.

The accused are former principal appraisers of Chittagong Customs House Nurul Kamal Chowdhury, Syed Siddiqur Rahman, Abul Kashem and Mohammad Shahjahan, former appraisers Mohammad Abdul Jalil, Priti Rani Chakma, Habib Ullah Bahar and Zafar Ullah, former customs inspector Abdul Ali and former customs superintendent Nurul Amin.

The chairman, managing director and three directors are yet to obtain bail.

WEATHER TODAY

Fall in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky 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 and Rangpur divisions and the regions of Tangail, Faridpur, Sirimongal, Jessore, Kushtia and it may spread and continue.

Day and night temperature may fall slightly over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:38pm today and rises at 6:42am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 26.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 06.4 degrees Celsius at Rajshahi.

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	22.5	13.3	60	47
Chittagong	24.0	15.0	75	42
Rajshahi	20.9	06.4	88	67
Rangpur	21.2	08.6	90	71
Khulna	23.5	11.4	69	63
Barisal	24.0	11.8	80	72
Sylhet	24.0	11.0	88	98
Cox's Bazar	26.0	16.5	69	49



A man, left, and his father seek treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital after being shot in the leg and robbed of Tk 11 lakh by armed miscreants in broad daylight in the city's Shanti Nagar yesterday. (Story on Page 1)



PHOTO: STAR

DU rolling back session jam

PALASH RAHMAN

Session jams that ate away valuable years from the lives of the students of Dhaka University since the eighties, are now all set to become history as all of its departments and institutes have succeeded in drastically slashing the backlog.

This has been possible largely due to a peaceful environment at the university, backed by introduction of the semester system at honours and masters levels, regular holding of classes and examinations.

Frequent strikes and closures of the university in the politically turbulent eighties had compelled students to qualify three to four years degrees in eight to nine years.

Of the 67 departments of the university, there is no session jam in 19 departments under two faculties--social sciences and business studies--at both honours and masters levels.

All the nine institutes of the university are also enjoying zero session jam, said the directors of the institutes.

The duration of session jam at 30 other departments under five faculties--arts, pharmacy, earth and environmental sciences, engineering and technology and science--has come down to around six months, said sources at the faculties.

There is no session jam at 17 departments of two other faculties--fine arts and biological sciences--at the honours level, but there is around six to ten months jam at masters degree level, said faculties sources.

The faculty of law has succeeded in cutting its session jam from 18 months to around six months.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique told The Daily Star that keeping the academic programmes "unhurt" was the main reason behind of the lessening ses-

sion jam.

"In the last three years, classes at Dhaka University were not suspended for a single hour and students and teachers attended their examinations and classes so regularly that even on the days of hartal an academic activities ran in full swing," the DUVC added.

He said the lessening of session jams has been possible as all the teachers, officials and the students helped the authorities to accomplish the job.

"If we are able to continue the current flow of academic programmes for six months ahead, the session jam will reach an end," he hoped.

Faculty deans said the process of a reduction of semester jams began three to four years ago.

Students and teachers told this correspondent that only a few classes were suspended in the last few years due to a reduction of campus violence and political

clashes.

They also said the semester system kept both students and teachers busy with their assignments, term papers and examinations along with attending classes regularly, all of which resulted in slicing away the session gap.

Prof Dr Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, chairman of the department of Banking, said there is no session jam in his department.

"Attending classes and taking exams on time by teachers are two of the vital reasons for the lessening of the semester gap," observes Mainul Hossain, a third-year student of the department of International Relations.

Prof Dr Shah Mohammad Ullah, chairman of the department of Soil, Water and Environment, said there is no session jam under the faculty of science at the honours level but its masters level thesis students have to face a little session jam.

Journalists decry plot in army

BSS, Dhaka

President of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury yesterday said democracy could not flourish without freedom of press.

"If democracy prevails, people's constitutional rights will be ensured," he said adding, journalists oppose grabbing state-power through any unconstitutional means.

Speaking at a rally, jointly organised by BFUJ and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) in front of Jatiya Press Club following a human chain as part of the their countrywide agitation, Iqbal said, "Election is the only way to transfer power."

The human chain was organised protesting the recent evil move to topple the government by creating unrest in the army.

BFUJ Secretary General Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, former president Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, Vice President Dr Utpal Kumar Sarker and journalists' leaders, including Kartik Chatterjee, Shafiqur Rahman, Azizul Islam Bhuiyan, Modhusudhan Mandal, Khairuzzaman Kamal, Kazi Rafique, Jakaria Kajo, Molla Jalal, Enamul Reza Dipu, Omar Faruk, Enamul Haque Babul, Shaban Mahmud, Ashish Kumar Dey and Rahman Miostafiz also spoke at the rally.

Jalil Bhuiyan said, "The followers of militant outfits are now active in Bangladesh army. People want to know the identity of the army personnel and civilians involved in the recent plot in the army."

Iqbal demanded exemplary punishment to the plotters who attempted to oust the democratic government.

Bangladeshi shot by Indian smugglers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Bangladeshi man was shot allegedly by Indian smugglers near the Charghat border in Rajshahi Saturday evening.

The injured, Dulal Hossain, 25, was involved in drug smuggling with the group of Indians, Subedar Hossain Ali, company commander of Border Guard Bangladesh in Charghat, told The Daily Star.

Hossain, a resident of Moktarpur Sarkarpara, went about half a mile into the Indian territory through Char Moktarpur border around 3:00pm on the day to meet his Indian coworkers led by Amirul Islam.

They were locked into a dispute over division of money, BGB and police sources said.

At one point, one of the Indian group shot Hossain in his right leg.

The injured man managed to crawl back inside Bangladesh territory where BGB personnel found him. He was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital around 9:00pm.

Nayek Subedar Asaduzzaman of BGB filed a general diary with Charghat Police Station in this connection yesterday.

Shakil PM's special assistant

UNB, Dhaka

Mohammad Mahbubul Haque Shakil has been made special assistant (media) to prime minister with the status of joint secretary on contractual appointment, according to a PID handout.



Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists form a human chain before Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday protesting the plot in the army.

PHOTO: STAR

BNP gives ultimatums with ill motive, says Hasina

BSS, Joypurhat

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday came down heavily on the Leader of the Opposition for giving the government ultimatum one after another and said people observed her motive of such provocation few days ago.

"BNP gives all ultimatums with ill motive as the party and its leader do not like to see people live in peace. They don't believe in people's power," she told a public gathering organised by Awami League's Joypurhat district unit at the Circuit House ground here in the afternoon.

Hasina asserted that none will be allowed to play with the voting rights of people in future. "People are the owners of their voting power and none will be able to snatch their power," she added. "I'm ready to make sacrifice like my father to establish the rights of people... I'm not greedy for power. My aim is to establish a Sonar Bangla as dreamt by the Father of the Nation and millions of

martyrs of independence," she said.

The prime minister said the BNP leaders have forgotten that they made the country a terrorists' heaven. Sons of the Leader of the Opposition were found guilty in the US federal court, bringing an embarrassment for the whole nation, she said.

Criticising BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for her demand for restoration of caretaker government system, she said, "Once they could not even realise what is a caretaker government; but now, they're shedding crocodile tears on the issue."

She urged the Leader of the Opposition to refrain from its movement aimed to save the war criminals. "When the countrymen are united for their trial, the leader of the opposition is waging movement for their protection," she regretted.

President of the district unit Shamsul Alam Dudu presided over the meeting when party advisory council member Abdul Jalil, former minister Mohammad

Nasim, Joint general Secretary Mahbul Ul Alam Hanif, Abdullah Abu Sayeed Swapan, Shahin Monwara Haque MP also spoke.

Minister for fisheries and animal resources Abdul Latif Biswas, State Minister for liberation war affairs Captain (ret'd) ABM Tajul Islam, state minister for science and technology Yeafesh Osman, State Minister for law Quamrul Islam, State Minister for youth and sports Ahad Ali Sarkar, Fazley Rabbi MP, Abdul Mannan MP and Khaled Mahmud Chowdhury MP, were present.

Hasina, also the AL president, said her government is working for socio-economic development of the people. During the Awami League tenure in 1996-2001, she said the government chalked out a plan to fulfil the basic demands of people. But, the next BNP-Jamaat government halted many programmes depriving people of getting access to food, shelter, health and education.

Int'l confce on cultural diversity from May 9

BSS, Dhaka

An international conference on 'Cultural Diversity Ministerial Forum of the Asia-Pacific Region 2012' will be held in the city from May 9 to 11.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the conference while Director General of Unesco Irina Bokovo will be present as special guest.

The decision came from a meeting of National Convention Management Committee held at seminar hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) yesterday with Information and Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad in the chair.