

NEWS IN *brief*

Proposed Russian nuke power plants can boost ties: Dipu Moni

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said operationalisation of the country's nuclear power plants with Russian assistance could form an important element in defining bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Russia in the coming years.

She told this when Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Bangladesh Gennady Trotsenko paid a farewell call on her at the foreign ministry in Dhaka yesterday.

At the meeting, they discussed the state of Bangladesh-Russia bilateral relations, including finalisation of a number of agreements and MoUs, which were expected to be finalised this year, says a foreign ministry press release.

In this context, Dipu Moni particularly mentioned about the setting up of the atomic power plants in the country with Russian assistance.

She also acknowledged the ambassador's contribution in shaping the bilateral engagements in numerous fields during his five-year tenure in Bangladesh.

She extended an invitation to the Russian foreign minister to visit Bangladesh.

ASK concerned over RMCH clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a human rights watchdog, yesterday expressed grave concern over the clash between Jatiya Party activists and employees of Rangpur Medical College Hospital on quota allocation in employee recruitment at the hospital.

At least 50 people were injured in the clash early Saturday.

It is unfortunate that a local lawmaker led the clash, ASK said in a press release.

Quoting news published in different media, it said lawmaker Hossain Mokbul Shahriar Asif has been demanding to introduce quota for his party men for class-III and class-IV jobs. The clash occurred when the lawmaker's men went to gherao the hospital.

Youth kills himself under train

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A youth committed suicide by jumping on the railway tracks at Agmundia village in Kaliganj upazila of the district yesterday afternoon.

Identity of the deceased, aged around 22, could not be known immediately.

Mobarakganj Rail Station Master Fazlul Haque said a Jessore-bound Mahananda-16 train left the station at around 3:45pm when it reached near the village, the youth jumped onto the railway tracks, the train ran over him killing him on the spot.

DU TV and film studies dept starts functioning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly created Department of Television and Film Studies at Dhaka University (DU) has begun functioning with the appointment of Dr AJM Shafiul Alam Bhuiyan, a Canadian commonwealth scholar, as the chairperson.

The new department will initially offer a two-year master's programme and gradually initiate undergraduate and PhD programmes to produce human resources for television journalism and film industry, says a press release.

The chairman of the department Dr Bhuiyan was an associate professor of DU Mass Communication and Journalism department. He completed his BA (Honours) and MA in the same department and stood first class first in both examinations. He obtained three gold medals for his outstanding results at DU.

Dr Bhuiyan completed his second MA at Carleton University in Ontario, Canada as well and did his PhD in communication at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia where he taught communication and media studies for a few days.

WEATHER TODAY

Moderate to thick fog likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in 24 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 Rangpur division and the region of Srimongal and it may continue.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:43pm and rises tomorrow at 6:40am.

Country's highest temperature 29.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and lowest 06.3 degrees at Srimongal.

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	25.8	13.4	46	40
Chittagong	26.8	14.0	54	52
Rajshahi	24.5	10.8	83	60
Rangpur	24.2	10.0	77	64
Khulna	26.0	13.5	59	58
Barisal	25.7	11.3	70	67
Sylhet	26.9	12.1	67	57
Cox's Bazar	28.0	14.0	48	55



Participants at a discussion, "Apprehension on Tipaimukh dam", organised by the Bangla daily Prothom Alo at its office in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PROTHOM ALO

Bana Vante's treatment fund created

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A "Bana Vante Treatment Fund" was opened at Sonali Bank, Banarupa branch of Banarupa in Rangamati town yesterday to ensure better treatment of Sadhana Nanda Mohasthabir, also known as Bana Vante.

The fund, account number 34026716 of the bank's branch, was opened as per the decision of an emergency meeting of the monks at Rajban Bihar in Rangamati yesterday.

Affluent people of the society are earnestly requested to come forward and send their donations to the account to help ensure the proper treatment required for Bana Vante, abbot of Rajban Bihar.

The revered leader fell ill on Thursday night and was unconscious when he was being flown in to the capital's Square Hospitals Ltd from Rangamati Circuit House in Rangamati town by helicopter Friday noon.

He is yet to regain consciousness, said attending doctors yesterday.

Enhance skills before survey on Tipai dam
Suggest speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday emphasised enhancing technical knowledge and intellectual capability of government officials and experts before conducting the Bangladesh-India joint survey on Tipaimukh dam.

Terming the issue 'mystifying', they also stressed the need for more intellectual engagement rather than political motivation in the debate on Tipaimukh dam to get proper information.

A panel of discussants comprising eminent personalities, experts and bureaucrats made these remarks at a roundtable styled 'Apprehension on Tipaimukh dam' organised by Bangla daily Prothom Alo at its office in the city.

Some of the speakers debated with each other while presenting data on rainfall, availability of water, Indian dams and affect of dams on people and their livelihood in Bangladesh, citing

different sources.

Speaking as the chief guest, prime minister's foreign affairs adviser Dr Gowher Rizvi said the civil society men should participate in more and more debate on the Tipaimukh dam issue using their knowledge, intellectual power and information.

"We will have to understand the terms of references properly, otherwise we will not be able to negotiate efficiently," he said.

Protests against construction of the dam are going on not only in Bangladesh, but also in India, he said adding, "Noting will happen related to the dam until a concrete decision has been reached from both the countries."

Mir Sazzad Hossain, a member of Bangladesh-India Joint Rivers Commission (JRC), said the government is officially communicating with India to conduct the joint survey and a letter has been sent in this regard.

Dr Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to

the caretaker government, suggested conducting a study to assess long-term, mid-term and short-term effects of the dam.

Referring to the negative effect on bio-diversity due to construction of dam on Gomati river, he suggested raising voice against any mega project in Tipaimukh and to establish a disaster management unit under this project.

Dhaka University Professor of Law Asif Nazrul said Bangladesh should strongly oppose any Indian move to construct the dam before the joint survey.

Prothom Alo Editor Matiar Rahman delivered the welcome speech while its Joint Editor Abdul Quayum moderated the roundtable.

Brac University Vice-chancellor Dr Ainnun Nishat, Institute of Water & Environment Chairman M Inamul Haque and water resource engineer MA Kashem also spoke among others.

TAX DODGING IN ALCOHOL IMPORTS
HC asks govt to investigate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the government to investigate within 15 days into allegations of foreign alcoholic drinks worth crores of taka being imported and sold without the tax being paid to the country.

A Bangla daily reported on December 21, 2011 that the government is losing crores of taka in taxes as thousands of litres of alcoholic drinks are being imported by showing a higher number of listed foreigners in Bangladesh each year.

In response to a writ petition, the court ordered the authorities to submit the investigation report to it in two months.

The government will gain around Tk 200 crore as revenue every year if the taxes are properly paid, said Manzill Murshid, counsel for the petitioner.

The HC directed the finance secretary and National Board of Revenue (NBR) chairman to form a committee to investigate into the allegations.

This committee will comprise the additional secretary of the finance ministry, an NBR member, a high official from the commerce and law ministries and an intelligence official from the customs.

The HC also ordered the NBR chairman to list the privileged persons (foreigners entitled to import alcoholic drinks) and submit it to the court within two months.

It ordered the finance secretary to list the prices of alcoholic drinks imported under the Diplomatic Bonded Warehouse from 2008 to 2011 and submit it to the court within one month.

The finance minister was directed to list the people employed at the warehouse from 2008 to 2011 and submit it to the court within a month.

The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim also issued a rule upon the government to explain in three weeks why it should not be directed to properly execute relevant laws to stop such tax dodging.

Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh yesterday filed the writ petition.

NARSINGDI MAYOR KILLING
Fifth accused held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fifth accused in Narsingdi municipality mayor Lokman Hossain murder case was arrested at Shahjalal International Airport in the city yesterday after he arrived from Malaysia.

Immigration police arrested Nurul Islam, Narsingdi sadar upazila unit BNP general secretary, arriving on a Malaysian airline flight around 2:00pm, and handed him over to Narsingdi police, said Khandker Mahid Uddin, superintendent of Narsingdi district police.

The statement of the case filed by Lokman's brother Kamruzzaman accused Nurul to be one of the 14 people involved in the assassination. Police so far arrested 23 people, 13 named and the remaining on suspicion.

Nurul went to Malaysia on October 15 last year, said police. On November 1 Lokman, also the general secretary of Narsingdi town unit Awami League, was gunned down by armed criminals at the town Awami League office on Sadar Road.

"Nurul Islam was taken to Narsingdi and would be produced before a court tomorrow (Monday) seeking remand for interrogation.

"So far we know that he was in Malaysia but after interrogation we will know whether he was staying elsewhere," said the SP.



PHOTO: STAR

Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia chairs a standing committee meeting at the party's Gulshan office in the city yesterday.



Issue 7 is out



FINDING FINFOOT

RED ALERT BLACK FRANCOLIN - P33

In this issue

We go after the elusive and endangered Masked Finfoot in the death of the Sundarbans.

And we peek into the nests of the **pygmy cotton goose** and bring you the story of how they survive in nest boxes.

And we look up-close at a **spider** that many would think an ant.

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Qulkhwani of Jahanara Begum Feb 3

METRO DESK

Qulkhwani of Jahanara Begum (Ruby), wife of eminent industrialist late Moqbulur Rahman of Jalpaiguri, will be held at Concorde Honeydew, House-18, Road-101, Gulshan-2 in the city after Asr prayers on February 3.

Her children--Ishrat, Fehmi and Meeta--regret that the qulkhwani has been rescheduled and it will not be held today as announced previously, said a press release.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the qulkhwani on Friday.

Jahanara Begum died at United Hospital in the city on January 27.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Mohammad Kubad Ali, former deputy general manager of Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation, passed away on Friday.

He is survived by his wife, three daughters and two sons.

He was buried at city's Azimpur graveyard.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 40th death anniversary of freedom fighter Bir Protik Lt Selim Md Qamrul Hasan, says a press release.

On the occasion, qurankhwani will be held at Dhaka Cantonment graveyard.

Shahid Lt Selim Shikshalaya will organise a discussion, a doa mahfil and special munazat on the institution's premises at Modhubagh in the city's Moghbazar today.

Friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the programmes.