

NEWS IN *brief*

Govt to form welfare trust for journalists: Info minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is considering forming a "welfare trust" for journalists, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad said in parliament yesterday. "The government took the initiative to form a 'journalist assistance allowance/ grant' fund worth Tk 1 crore to assist insolvent journalists," he added. Replying to lawmakers' queries, he said preparations of a guideline to provide grants and allowances to journalists are at the final stage. Replying to another question, the minister said the government will prepare a guideline to control "indecent and offensive" advertisements on private satellite television channels. Of 15 private television channels approved by the government, seven are transmitting in full swing, four are on test transmission and the rest are pro-

Facebook group to sue home minister: Mahi B Chy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Blue Band Call, a Facebook-based platform of youths, launched by ex-lawmaker Mahi B Chowdhury, will sue the home minister, home secretary, and Dhanmondi police by February 10 for mistreating its members. It will also file a writ petition with the High Court for violation of their constitutional rights, Mahi B Chowdhury said at a press conference at Dhaka Reports Unity (DRU) yesterday. The decision came after police foiled a mobilisation attempt of the platform members at Rabindra Sarobar in the city on January 27 for not securing

World Wetlands Day today

BSS, Dhaka

The World Wetlands Day will be celebrated across the globe today with this year's theme of "Wetlands and Tourism". On the occasion, different organisations have chalked out befitting programmes. The Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB), Bangladesh Poush, and IUCN Bangladesh will jointly organise a discussion titled "Wetlands and Tourism" at Jatiya Press Club at



Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), addresses a press conference at Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday. On her right is Abdullah Al Mamun and on her left are Farzana Naim and Shahana Huda.

PHOTO: STAR

775 tolas of gold jewellery 'stolen' in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gold ornaments weighing over 775 tolas were stolen from a jewellery shop at Eastern Plaza in the city's Hatirpool. The incident took place at Gram Bangla Jewellers sometime between Monday night and Wednesday morning, said its owner Amol Ghosh. "I closed the shop at 8:30pm on Monday and after the weekly holiday I opened it again today and found the ornaments missing," Amol told The Daily Star yesterday. Amol is bewildered by the incident as none of the 11 locks of his shop were found broken. The shop owner filed a case with Kalabagan Police Station in this connection. Sub-inspector (SI) Shariful Islam of the police station said "We are not sure how the crime was committed," the SI said they are trying to solve the mystery behind the incident. None was arrested in this connection.

Unnatural deaths claim 1,765 children

Says MJF report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 1,765 children died and 18,034 were injured in different incidents last year including accidents, repression, wrong treatment and inclement weather, said a report of a non-government organisation yesterday. Among the deaths, 384 resulted from road accidents, 589 from incidents like drowning, electrocution and snake bites, 112 from wrong and lack of treatment and 17 from rape and sexual harassment. It also includes six after kidnappings, five in torture and eight in other crimes, 35 in negligence in duty, especially by doctors, 88 in cold wave and four in other incidents. Among the remaining deaths, 334 resulted from family, land and dowry related feuds while 183 children committed suicide, said the report. Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), an NGO working to promote human rights and good governance, presented

the report it prepared based on news published in six Bangla and English dailies at a press conference in the city's Jatiya Press Club. The report classified child related news reports in two categories -- positive and negative news. Negative news includes violation of children's rights, killing, trafficking, rape, child marriage, kidnapping and child labour. The report said more than 1.79 crore children (including the deceased and injured) were victims of different forms of repression and deprived of their rights. The country saw over 86 lakh child victims of repression, over 64 lakh deprived of quality education, over 52 lakh leading a life with health hazards and over 20 lakh forced into early marriage. Meanwhile, the number of positive news was 1,244 last year, said the report. This includes children's participation in social and academic activities,

rescues from abduction, early marriage and trafficking, law enforcement on children's rights protection, awards and scholarships, seminars, workshops and trainings. Addressing the programme, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said children in the underprivileged section of society are leading a vulnerable life as they are deprived of their basic rights. "We are working to protect their rights and end discrimination against them," she said. Presenting the report, MJF Programme Manager Abdullah Al Mamun said the report's main purpose is to sketch a scenario of the problems face by children, their potentials, the reality of child rights and the reasons and trends of negative incidents against children. MJF Director Farzana Naim and Media and Communications Coordinator Shahana Huda also spoke at the programme.

Prothom Alo editor gets death threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An anonymous caller on Tuesday threatened to kill a senior reporter of the Bangla daily Prothom Alo and its Editor Matiuir Rahman on February 20 for reporting on politics and terrorism in Khulna. Three reports on politics and terrorism in Khulna were published in the daily on October 4 and October 6. Calling on the personal mobile phone of the reporter, Iftekhar Mahmud, at 3:59pm, the person said, "You and your Editor Matiuir Rahman have a court appearance in Khulna on the coming 20th, right? Come prepared to die that day. "You people have published a lot of false reports against my leader. You people will face dire consequences. We will meet on the 20th in Khulna. We are prepared to tackle you people. We have tolerated a lot, we will no more do so." Iftekhar Mahmud filed a general diary with Tejgaon Police Station yesterday stating that he and his editor had been receiving such calls since the reports were published. Iftekhar said he had filed the GD as they were feeling insecure since Tuesday's call.

Ferries to ply Meghna from Feb 9

UNB, Dhaka

The government will reintroduce ferry services on the Meghna River on February 9 for carrying of heavy vehicles, said Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday. "The ferry services will be launched... as the Meghna Bridge has turned risky for the movement of heavy vehicles," he told a four-member BGMEA delegation. The delegation, led by BGMEA president Safiul Islam Mohiuddin, met the minister at the latter's secretariat office and placed their demands.

ARMOURY BREAK-IN AT PILKHANA Victim Maj Reaz tells story

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mutineers broke into the armoury locking in its in-charge Maj Reazul Karim, about 10 minutes before the beginning of Darbar at the Pilkhana headquarters of erstwhile Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) on February 25, 2009, the victim said to a court yesterday. Maj Reaz said the mutineers beat him up indiscriminately and carried him to the duty officer's room after taking away his mobile phone and wristwatch. "They chained and roped me and locked the door of the room from outside", said the army officer, who had been confined in the room for about 12 hours. Around 9:00pm of February 25, some armed jawans came to the room and brought him outside, he said. "They were saying--bring out that dog and kill him". "I told them, 'please don't kill me, I have two daughters. I didn't do anything wrong'", He said the mutineers then took him to another room where women and children were kept. Some mutineers also went to his residence at Pilkhana and looted valuables, said Maj Reaz, who had joined BDR on deputation from the army about one and a half months before the mutiny. Maj Reaz was giving his deposition against 21 BDR soldiers before a Metropolitan Session Judge's Court at the city's Bakshibazar yesterday. Before him, the court recorded the depositions of sepoy Feroz Hossain Doptori and a civilian. The court was adjourned till February 6. A total of 74 people, including 57 army officers, were brutally killed in the mutiny at the headquarters of BDR, now Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), in Pilkhana on February 25-26, 2009.



US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena takes part in a cleaning campaign organised by Community Development Centre (Codec) on Patenga beach in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

DPHE lab's role a must for safe water

Say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The central laboratory of Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) must play a significant role in achieving the government's target to ensure safe drinking water for all by 2013, said speakers at a seminar yesterday. Water quality monitoring identifies problems and provides remedies. Failure to take analysis findings-based timely and remedial actions would make ensuring safe water supply almost impossible, they added. The seminar on the project, "Strengthening capacity for water quality analysis and monitoring system in Bangladesh", was organised by DPHE and Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) in the city's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel.

In water quality analysis, the laboratory and 11 zonal ones can now adhere to 22 quality parameters including arsenic contamination detection, said the speakers. Currently analysing samples from DPHE-built water sources, the laboratories would soon extend services throughout the country including the pourasavas, they said. Joint Secretary of Local Government Division Zuena Aziz, addressing as the chief guest, said they want more of Jica assistance to ensure safe drinking water in the country. DPHE Chief Engineer Md Nururzaman said the once rampant deaths from cholera and diarrhea is reducing due to assistance from DPHE, Unicef and other organisations in providing safe drinking water.

PROTESTING ARREST AT AIRPORT

Cargo handling disrupted for half-hour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cargo handling activities at the city's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport remained suspended for half an hour yesterday after workers of C&F agents stopped work, protesting detention of seven fellow workers by Armed Police Battalion (APBn). The law enforcers picked up seven workers around 3:30pm when they were entering Biman's cargo village without any pass from the authorities, an APBn official said. The activities resumed around 4:00pm after the Biman authorities had the detained workers released and assured the protestors of finding out a solution for their entry to cargo village next week. President of C&F agents association Shahjahan Mondol said the APBn personnel detained the workers despite their having custom pass and being well known. A top APBn official wishing anonymity said that as a recent meeting of the high-ups asked them to tighten security and not to allow anyone without valid pass in the wake of repeated allegation of stealing from Cargo warehouses, the APBn detained the workers. He also said the detainees told them that once they were Biman staff and using that identity, they used to enter the restricted area and help find out goods in exchange for tips.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Map vulnerability

Suggest speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Proper preventive measures to check physical and sexual violence against women and children cannot be taken without having a geographical mapping of vulnerability to these violence, speakers said at a project launch yesterday. Reasons behind such violence differ from region to region and if the authorities concerned detect the facts behind, the problems will be addressed well, they said. Titled "Addressing gender-based violence against women and girls in Bangladesh: From evidence to policy", the project has been undertaken by the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) and Population Council. The launching ceremony was held at the ICDDR,B in the city. Ruchira Tabassum Naved, a scientist of ICDDR,B, gave an overview of the project at the programme. Quoting a study, she said violence against

women causes a series of health problems to both the victims and their children. Often the victims give birth to low weight children, having lower quality of maternal-infant feeding interaction and lower nutrition and growth, she added. Naved said such violence lead victims to poor health, walking problem, pain, memory problem, vaginal discharge, and dizziness. Rights activist Sultana Kamal said men actually do not understand what is sexual violence and often apply some degree of force during intercourse. "It is our cultural problem. Mindset should be changed", she said. University teachers, representatives from different NGOs, physicians, and researchers attended the programme with ICDDR,B deputy executive director Dr Abbas Bhuiya in the chair. Gwen Hines, country representative of the Department for International Development (DFID), was also present.

WEATHER TODAY

No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins and elsewhere over the country during mid night till morning, Met Office said.

Mild to moderate cold wave is sweeping over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions and the regions of Kushtia, Tangail and Srimangal and it may continue.

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

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:45 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:39am.

Country's highest temperature 29.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Dinajpur and lowest 08.1 degrees at Srimangal.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	26.0	14.5	42	37
Chittagong	27.7	14.0	68	34
Rajshahi	25.4	08.8	61	60
Rangpur	25.0	09.0	82	35
Khulna	26.0	12.2	58	58
Barisal	26.1	10.6	58	66

DHAKA TODAY

Convocation
AIUB will organise its convocation. Venue: Bangladesh Army Stadium, Banani; Time: 9:30am.

Poetry recitation ceremony
Creative communication Ltd will organise poetry recitation ceremony. Venue: Brac Inn Auditorium; Time: 6:00pm.

Discussion
World Peace Mission will organise a discussion. Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:30am.

Seminar
Architecture department of Buet will organise a seminar. Venue: Buet; Time: 6:30pm.

Rally
Krishi Sramik Adhikar Mancha will organise grand rally. Venue: Suhrawardy Udyan; Time: 2:30pm.

Human Chain
Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jot will