

## NEWS IN *brief*

### 20km AL human chain today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League-led 14-party combine will form the first-ever 20-kilometre-long human chain today across the city protesting conspiracies and subversive activities to hinder the ongoing war crimes trial and the country's democratic process.

The one-hour-long programme will begin at 3:00pm from Gabtoli to Jatrabari through Shyamoli, Asad Gate, Russell Square, Panthapath, Sonargoan Hotel, Shahbagh, Jatiya Press Club, Gulistan, Ittefaq crossing, Sayedabad, Jatrabari and Baridhara Biswa Road.

Central AL leaders including Matia Chowdhury, Syed Ashraful Islam, Obaidul Quader, Kazi Zafarullah, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Yusuf Hossain Humayun, Raziuddin Ahmed Raju, Sahara Khatun, Satish Chandra Roy, Abdul Latif Siddique, Nurul Islam Nahid, AFM Bahauddin Nasim and Dipu Moni will lead the chain at different points.

### Two fall to their deaths

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A madrasa student died after falling from the roof of a four-storied building in Kadamtoli while a construction worker fell to his death while working on the under-construction Kuril Flyover in the city yesterday.

The deceased are Md Niamat Ullah alias Fahad, 17, a student of Matuail Dakhil Madrasa, and the worker Anwar Hossain, 30.

### One murdered in Keraniganj

UNB, Keraniganj

Police recovered the body of a young man bearing marks of injury from Peguria Pubdi area under South Keraniganj Police Station yesterday morning.

The victim Billal, 22, is the son of Anwar of Ikorkandi village in Shariatpur district and resident of Noakhali Patti in Keraniganj.

Being informed, police recovered the body from near Janani Ball Pen Factory and sent it to Mitford Hospital for autopsy at about 9:00am.

## Schoolboy dies in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage schoolboy was killed as a government-run bus ran over him near Fulbaria bus terminal in the city.

The 14-year boy identified as Mehrab Hossain Aupi was a student of Class VII of Graduate High School on Tipu Sultan Road, police said.

Mir Hossain, sub-inspector of Bangshal Police Station, said the bus of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation hit him from behind and ran over Aupi while he was riding a hired bicycle near the bus terminal in the afternoon.

Aupi, son of Md Selim, used to live in Narinda. He went out of the house in the afternoon to ride bicycle.

### AUG 21 CASES

## Ex-DCC councillor appeals for discharge

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Ariful Islam Arif, a former ward councillor of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), appealed to a Dhaka court yesterday, for discharging him from the August 21 grenade attack cases.

Arif would complete his arguments on the discharge petitions during the next hearing (February 13), Joydul Abedin Meshbah, one of Arif's lawyers, told The Daily Star.

The former councillor submitted the discharge petitions to the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 yesterday when it resumed hearing on charge framing against the accused.

A total of 52 persons are sued for the grenade attack, with 32 now in jail, only Arif on bail, and the remaining 19, including BNP senior vice-chairman Tarique Rahman, fugitive.

Earlier on the day, counsels for Harkat-ul Jihad al Islami (Huji) leaders-Jahangir Alam and Shahdatullah Jewel-completed their arguments for discharge of their clients from the charges.

Judge Shahed Nuruddin fixed February 13 for the next hearing.



WEATHER  
TODAY

### Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during midnight till morning, Met Office said.

Day and night temperature may rise slightly over the country.

**The sun sets in the capital at 5:48pm today and rises at 6:37am tomorrow.**

Country's highest temperature 31.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 09.0 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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	29.4	14.0	53	46
Chittagong	29.9	13.8	69	48
Rajshahi	29.5	11.7	83	56
Rangpur	26.8	12.2	--	60
Khulna	30.8	13.8	80	58
Barisal	30.4	12.4	85	70
Sylhet	29.0	14.0	73	52
Cox's Bazar	31.5	14.8	59	46



The Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) leads an eviction drive to free the banks of Gulshan-Banani Lake in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

### DRAFT WILDLIFE PRESERVATION ACT

## Focus on protecting wildlife, not commercial forestry practices

### Say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Instead of protecting wildlife, the proposed wildlife preservation act focuses more on giving more power and dominion to an incompetent forest department widely criticised for its commercial forestry practices, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

The draft law is worse than the 38-year-old Bangladesh Wildlife Preservation Act, 1974 it is replacing. It needs a comprehensive review with increased focus on preserving biodiversity and rights of local inhabitants, improved monitoring and enforcement policies, they said.

The Daily Star organised the discussion on Wildlife Preservation Act 2010 at The Daily Star Centre in the city. Environmentalists, lawyers, indigenous leaders and wildlife experts took part in the discussion.

The actual contents of the draft are very different, filled with complex and confusing definitions and loopholes, said Bangladesh

Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) Joint Secretary Iqbal Habib.

For example, the previous law bars the construction of industries or any other forms of polluting elements within 10 kilometres of a forest. But the draft seeks to shrink that zone to two kilometres, he said.

If passed, the law will declare much of the protected forests as "buffer zones" where commercial plantations will be in place, said Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) Chief Executive Advocate Syeda Rizwana Hasan.

"Buffer zones need to be outside the protected forest areas, not inside them," she said.

Providing the forest department with more authority on forests and protected areas will only "legalise the indiscriminate acquisition of land currently going on across the country," said Iqbal Habib of Bapa.

This will only lead to greater violation of rights of the indigenous population living across the country, said Bangladesh Adivasi Forum

General Secretary Sanjib Drong, adding that the draft needs more discussions and reviews.

It promises to worsen conditions for indigenous people, who have been facing legal action over false and trivial matters, said Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) Rangamati unit coordinator Advocate Jewel Dewan.

The draft law does not include any policy on monitoring activities, which deserves an entire chapter, said Reaz Morshed, programme officer of Sundarbans Tiger Project at Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh.

It also needs to address poaching and illegal logging through effective monitoring, especially by local residents through incentives, he said.

However, effective wildlife preservation is impossible without an independent body for wildlife protection, said Dr Ronald Halder, a noted wildlife expert.

Biodiversity protection needs equal attention as animals will not survive without proper flora and fauna, said Save the Environment

Movement Chairman Abu Naser Khan.

There is also no agency to regulate hunting, which is an important factor in preserving wildlife, he added.

The loss of animal species should be blamed on decreasing forests, not hunting, which receives more criticism than it deserves, said Wildlife Conservation Foundation Secretary Maqbul Elahi.

Association for Land Reform and Development Executive Director Shamsul Huda urged the government to review the laws practised in other countries and take pointers on improving the draft.

Chairman of the Standing Committee on Ministry of Environment and Forests, Abdul Momin Talukder, said there was still much time and room for discussions and consultations before the law was passed in parliament.

He urged all stakeholders to approach the government with suggestions and recommendations so that it can pass a "beautiful law".

## Makeshift structures demolished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) in an eviction drive yesterday knocked down makeshift structures erected on Gulshan-Banani Lake in the city and evicted several hundred slum dwellers from there.

The Rajuk carried out the daylight drive, led by its Executive Magistrate Rokon-Ud-Dowla, for the second time on the west side of the lake to the south of Gulshan-Banani arch bridge to free the stretch of illegal occupancy.

It carried out similar eviction drive in September last year.

Nurul Islam, executive engineer of Rajuk, said that after the September drive, nearly 120 families returned to the lakeside, as they are homeless.

## 15 Shibir men arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested 15 activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir, a student organisation backed by Jamaat-e-Islami, from a procession in the capital's Mirpur area yesterday.

A Dhaka court placed the arrestees on a two-day remand after Mohammad Saju, sub-inspector of Mirpur Police Station, filed a case against them under the Speedy Trial Act.

Kazi Wazed Ali, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station, told The Daily Star that at 10:00am, around 500 Shibir activists brought out a procession marking their founding anniversary.

A running battle started between protestors and police when the activists attempted to block a road but were thwarted by law enforcers, said the OC adding that police picked up the activists from the vicinity of Mirpur Ideal Girls School and College.

The detainees are Md Rafiqul Islam, 25, Mohammad Atiqur Rahman, 30, Nazmul Hossain, 20, Sayem Rahman, 19, Mahtar Uddin, 21, Mostafizur Rahman, 22, Abu Tayeb, 19, Yahiya Hasan, 19, Abdul Halim, 24, Imran Hossain, 20, Abdul Rashid, 22, Mohammad Shahin, 20, Ferdous Habib, 21, Monirul Islam, 30, and Rezaul Alam Sakib, 22.

Aslam Uddin, investigation officer of the case, said they prayed for a five-day remand to interrogate the activists on whether they were involved in any subversive activity but were only granted two days.

## PM invited to visit Iraq

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was invited by her Iraqi counterpart Nouri al-Maliki to visit his country.

Iraqi Ambassador to Bangladesh Shakir Qasim Mahdi Al-Kaffaf formally handed over the original invitation letter to Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday.

They said Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who himself wrote the letter to Hasina, sought Bangladesh's support in the reconstruction and rebuilding the war-ravaged country.

Maliki also hinted recruiting skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manpower from Bangladesh for carrying out various development works, especially the construction of roads and infrastructure.

However, the chances of Hasina to undertake a visit to Iraq in near future is highly unlikely because of the prevailing law and order situation in Iraq, a highly placed source told The Daily Star.

But the Iraqi envoy said that the situation of Iraq was peaceful than earlier.

Ambassador Shakir informed the foreign minister the Iraqi prime minister in person, is keen to looking for a visit by Bangladeshi prime minister to Iraq at her earliest convenience, preferably in the first half of the year.



Maiz Bhandari Association brings out a procession from Shahjanpur railway playground marking the holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi on Sunday.

PHOTO: STAR

### EKUSHEY BOI MELA

## High visitors' presence marks initial days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unlike previous years, Amar Ekushey Boi Mela has drawn larger crowds in its initial days this time, bringing smiles on publishers' face with book sales running high.

Three of the first six days being holidays, the fair witnessed a high presence of visitors and increase in sale.

Though the number of visitors was comparatively low yesterday, many visitors were seen leaving the fair premises with a number of new books in hands.

The bookstalls especially big ones like Anyaprakash, Oitijhya, Ananya, Agami Prokashoni, and Dibya Prokash remained crowded throughout last evening.

Amjad Hossain Kajal, an executive of Oitijhya, said a huge number of booklovers thronged the fair in the last few days. "So sale of books was also high".

He hoped that the sale would increase further after the first 15 days of the fair. "We're, however, happy with the sales of books on the first few days".

Expecting rise in sale was also Shaharul Islam, a Dhaka University student who has been selling books of Dibya Prokash temporarily during the book fair for the last four years.

Mohammad Alauddin, manager of Jagriti Prokashoni, expressed his satisfaction over the environment of the fair and his happiness for increase in sale this year.

At the fair premises, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Benazir Ahmed said police are working to ensure security of the visitors and will work till the end of the fair.

Meanwhile, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday inaugurated a stall of National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) with a view to disseminating information about the National Education Policy 2010.

"We brought the national policy to the Ekushey Boi Mela so that people can easily collect it and be informed", he said.

Poet Asad Chowdhry, who sees significant changes in the book fair over the years, told The Daily Star that a good sign of the fair is that young people are buying books more.

But it is a matter of regret that young writers fail to catch the attention of publishers, even after writing well, he added.

A total of 102 new titles hit the fair yesterday compared to 171 new books on Sunday.