

NEWS IN *brief*

**Outlaw killed in 'shootout'**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A person was killed last night in a fight between a team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and a banned outfit Ganobahini at Kadamdi village in Kushtia.

The deceased is Tabibur Rahman Tota, 42, of Shantidanga of Kushtia sadar upazila.

Commander of Rab-12 Major Mahfuz claimed Tabibur, hit by four bullets, was a member of the party.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab team rushed to the spot when a gang of the outfit surrounded a house. Later, the gang hurled bomb at Rab men, Mahfuz claimed adding the law enforcers opened fire in response.

The Rab men entered the house and found Tabibur

**2 ex- customs officials sent to jail**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent two former customs officials to jail after they surrendered before it in connection with a graft case filed against them for allegedly evading more than Tk 1.26 crore in revenue.

Judge (in charge) Mohammad Akhteruzzaman of the Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after rejecting their bail petition.

The officials are former inspector (Customs and Excise) Mizanur Hossain of Chittagong Customs House and former customs superintendent Anukul



PHOTO: STAR

Two young girls, wearing colourful sarees with flowers embedded on their hair, join the Pahela Falgun celebration at Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, surfing through their favourite books. The photo was taken from the fair premises at Bangla Academy yesterday.

**Boi Mela bustles with spring lovers**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the occasion of Pahela Falgun, the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela yesterday took on a colourful look, as hundreds of young girls and boys in colourful traditional dresses thronged the fair premises.

Celebrating the on set of spring, girls in Bashonti (light orange) coloured sarees with flowers on their hair and boys in colourful panjabees gathered on the Bangla Academy premises.

They came in numbers - friends, families, siblings and couples - to check out the books, take photographs and be a part of the celebrations. Alongside the bookworms, many came to buy books for their loved ones.

While the fair yesterday drew a much bigger crowd than previous days, sales were mixed amid different bookstalls, booksellers said.

A total 128 new books hit the fair yesterday, among which were 40 collections of poems and 22 novels.

Meanwhile, the Bangla Academy authority yesterday announced about Shishu Prohar, dedicated hours for the children and their guardians, on February 16, 17, 23 and 24 from 11:00am to 3:00pm.

**SHARIATPUR BY-POLL AL nominates Razzak's son**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League Parliamentary Board (ALPB) has nominated late veteran party leader Abdur Razzak's son, Nahim Razzak, as the AL candidate in the Shariatpur-3 constituency by-elections scheduled on March 15.

The constituency remains vacant after the death of AL lawmaker Razzak, who died on December 23 last year.

The ALPB at a meeting at Gono Bhaban, official residence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, on Sunday night finalised the nomination.

Earlier on February 1, the Election Commission announced the by-poll date.

Former presidents of Bangladesh Chhatra League Bahadur Bepari and Enamul Haque Shamim had also sought the nomination.

**Pink City residents panicked by firing**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of miscreants yesterday fired blank gunshots for half an hour at Xenovalley Pink City, a housing complex on the capital's eastern outskirts, to create panic among the residents.

Tariqul Hoque, a resident there, said, "We were awakened by the frightening sound of gun shots at 6:10am on the first day of Falgun and it continued incessantly."

He said to have seen a man firing the shots near road no 6 in the area with another man supplying bullets.

Md Shamim Hossain, another resident, alleged that the incident was a planned showdown by ICS Business Group, developer of Xenovalley Pink City.

Holding a press conference and human chain last Saturday, the residents protested the developer's move to build a high-rise building on a complex space that was initially allotted for making children's playground, said Sheikh Faridul Islam, president of the Pink City Home Owners' Association.

The association filed a case in this connection. Meanwhile, none of the official of the developer company could be contacted over phone despite repeated attempts.

**BID TO CURB MILITANCY**

**Police asked to monitor khutbah**

KAILASH SARKAR

Police across the country have been directed to monitor whether the *khatib* (who leads the Jumma prayers) of the mosques deliver *khutbah* (the speech before the prayers) in favour of militancy or against it.

Talking to The Daily Star, Inspector

General of Police (IGP) Hassan Mahmood Khandker said the field-level policemen have been asked to monitor the *khutbah* as part of the decision of the National Committee on Militancy Resistance and Prevention.

The directives came from a two-day-long quarterly conference of Bangladesh police held at the police headquarters where the law enforcers opined that cases in connection with women repression, assault on law enforcers and drugs have increased.

The IGP said police officials were also asked to hold discussion with the *Khatib* to educate the devotees that there is no room of

militancy in Islam.

High officials of police took part in the conference that ended yesterday.

The meeting sources said assaults on the law enforcers have increased during violence and other times due to lack of adequate protective measures.

Besides, district level senior police officials opined that although the number of cases in connection with women repression has increased, most of the cases are filed with false charges for harassing the opponents of the plaintiffs.

Noakhali district Superintendent of Police (SP) Harun-ur-Rashid Hazaree said a total of 794 cases were filed with different police stations in the district during 2011 in connection with women repression, but police had to press final reports in around 64 per cent cases as they did not found any proof.

"Mostly the cases were filed to harass the opponents of the plaintiffs," the SP added.

*'The field-level policemen have been asked to monitor the khutbah as part of the decision of the National Committee on Militancy Resistance and Prevention'*

**'LEGALISING EXTORTION' TIB slams minister's proposal**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday decried shipping minister's proposal for legalising extortion in the country's transport sector.

Shahjahan Khan, the minister, who is also a top leader of transport workers, on Sunday demanded before a parliamentary sub-committee that extortion be made legal to stop illegal money collection from vehicles on the roads.

"The proposal is illegal, undemocratic and unconstitutional. Implementation of such a proposal will encourage one offence in the name of controlling another offence," said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB, in the release.

It would also be a deviation from ruling Awami League's election pledge to prevent illegal toll collection, he said, adding that such legalising would encourage extortions.

**Obituary**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nurjahan Begum, mother of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Secretary General Mir Sahabuddin Mohammad, passed away at a city hospital on February 12 at the age of 88, says a press release.

She will be buried at the city's Sahjahanpur graveyard after her second namaz-e-janaza after Zohr prayers at Bashir Uddin Mosque of Kalabagan in the city.

**RETIREMENT AGE AT PUBLIC VARSITY**

**Teachers to work till 65**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The teachers of all the 34 public universities will retire at 65 as the government has approved a proposal to increase the age limit. Currently, only the teachers of four universities enjoy the facility.

The cabinet yesterday endorsed in principle the draft of Public University Teachers' (retirement) (special rules) Act-2012 that proposed the increase in age limit to bring equality, Cabinet Secretary M. Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan said.

The teachers of Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Jahangirnagar universities which run under the 1973 ordinance at present retire at 65.

The cabinet meeting also witnessed a detailed presentation on the development programmes and future plans of power sector.

Musharraf said last year's growth rate in power generation was 13.5 percent with 2,944 megawatt of electricity added to the national grid. The average growth in the last two decades since 1990 was 7 percent, he said.

The meeting also directed authorities concerned to ensure uninterrupted power supply across the country during the upcoming irrigation season.

It also endorsed proposals of Bangladesh's formal accession of Revised Kyoto Convention and ratification of Multilateral Agreement on Customs Cooperation among D-8 member countries.

A condolence motion was adopted by the cabinet at the death of noted cultural personality Humayun Faridi and on the murders of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Mehrun Rumi.

The cabinet members prayed for the salvation of their departed souls and conveyed sympathies to the bereaved family members.



PHOTO: PID

President Zillur Rahman awards a gold medal to a graduate at the 2nd convocation of Stamford University Bangladesh held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital yesterday.

**Subedar Yousuf ordered BDR rebels to dig mass grave: PW**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mutineers were ordered to dig a mass grave to bury the bodies of slain army officers who were brutally killed in a carnage at erstwhile Bangladesh Rifles' (BDR) headquarters at Pilkhana on February 25-26, 2009.

Addressing the unruly jawans, Subedar Yousuf Ali Khan, one among the 850 accused in a carnage case, ordered the soldiers to dig a mass grave at the west of mortuary as no one could find the bodies.

Quoting Yousuf, a prosecution wit-

ness Nayeb Subedar Moniruzzaman yesterday said, "We've killed 50/60 army officers. It won't be wise to keep their bodies scattered. Their bodies should be kept in hide."

The mutineers later buried the bodies in the grave, said Moniruzzaman who was frightened by the incident and left the BDR headquarters in the afternoon on February 26.

The Metropolitan Session Judges Court set up at the playground of Alia Madrasa of the capital's Bakshibazar

recorded Moniruzzaman's deposition.

In his deposition, the witness also mentioned the name of some mutineers who were moving here and there with firearms.

Earlier, defence lawyers cross-examined another witness of the case.

The court was adjourned till February 15.

Seventy-four people, including 57 army officers, were killed in the carnage at BDR headquarters.

After the mutiny, BDR has changed its name as Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).



**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 country during midnight till morning, Met Office said.

Mild cold wave is sweeping over the regions of Rajshahi, Pabna, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Jessore, Kushtia and Srirangal and it may continue.

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

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:52pm and rises tomorrow at 6:32am.

Country's highest temperature 30.7 degree Celsius was recorded today at Sitakundu and lowest 06.6 degrees at Srirangal.

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	27.3	12.2	54	41
Chittagong	29.0	13.8	55	37
Rajshahi	26.4	09.4	84	51
Rangpur	25.4	09.8	91	60
Khulna	27.8	12.4	60	59
Barisal	27.0	11.0	74	67