

NEWS IN *brief*

Probe into police torture on Tajuddin's grandson starts

BSS, Dhaka

The two-member committee of police formed for probing an assault on Rakib Hossain, a grandchild of the country's first Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed, yesterday started investigation into it. The probe committee talked to a number of concerned police officials, including deputy commissioner and assistant commissioner of Gulshan Zone, officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station and its two sub-inspectors, who allegedly tortured Rakib, the joint commissioner of DB and chief of the probe committee, Maruf Hasan, told the news agency. "We also talked to witnesses of the incidents", he said.

16 geekos smugglers jailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court jailed 16 people on charges of smuggling geekos, a kind of rare reptile known as Tokkhok in Bangla, in the city yesterday. ASP Abdul Baten of Rab-1 said executive magistrate Anwar Pasha sentenced one to two years imprisonment to the persons. Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel detained the poachers from Moghbazar, Dakkhinkhan and Ashulia areas with 16 gekos.

They are Opu Ahammed, Rafiqul Islam, Romir Sikder, Kazi Mahiuddin, Nuruzzaman, Ashiqur Rahman, Abed Ali, Wahidul Alam, Joynal Abedin, Mehedi Hasan, Abdur Rahim, Abdul Baki, Atiqur Rahman, Mozaharul Islam, Abdul Jalil and Ashrafal Huq.

Sahara lauds coast guard's role

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday said the Coast Guard has been playing important roles to prevent smuggling through maritime areas and robbery in coastal zones apart from safeguarding the country's sea ports. The home minister made the remark at the 17th founding anniversary function of the Coast Guard at its Agargaon headquarters. She said the government is committed to equip the Coast Guard with sophisticated equipment as our coastal areas are the source of endless resources. State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku, Home Secretary CQK Mostafa Ahmed and Director General of Coast Guard Rear Admiral KS Hossain also spoke on the occasion.

Woman found dead in Savar

BSS, Savar

Police recovered the body of an unidentified young woman from Dogarmora Mohallah here yesterday morning. The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy. OC of Savar Model Police Station Asaduzzaman said the body bore marks of injuries and suspected that miscreants dumped the body there after violating her. A case was filed with the police in this connection.

Japanese space industry team arrives today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A high-level Japanese mission on space industry will arrive here today on a three-day visit to expand co-operation between Japan and Bangladesh in the field of space technology and industry. The Japan is sending the mission commemorating the 40th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The 30-member delegation includes government officials as well as representatives of agencies and Japanese companies involved in space industry, said Japan embassy sources. The mission will hold "Japan-Bangladesh Space Sector Workshop" here on February 16. State Minister for Science and ICT Yeafesh Osman will attend the workshop as chief guest. Concerned government officials from Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation (SPARRSO), the food and disaster management ministry, the water resources ministry, the agriculture ministry, Bangladesh meteorological department, Survey of Bangladesh as well as academics and business persons will attend the workshop.



More than one month has passed without any significant progress in the sewer installation work going on at a snail's pace on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near Paribagh foot-bridge in the city, causing utter suffering to commuters. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Lalmonirhat



Md Moniruzzaman, a language movement hero, passed away at his residence in the town yesterday at the age of 82.

He left behind his wife, four sons, five daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

Hesamuddin Ahmed

METRO DESK



Lieutenant Colonel Hesamuddin Ahmed, a former secretary, died at his residence in the city's Baridhara yesterday. He was 77.

His quikhwani will be held at his own residence after Asr prayers on Friday, says a press release.

ATM Musa

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Registration department ATM Musa died of cardiac arrest at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday at the age of 57, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, one son, one daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed expressed deep shock at the death of Musa.

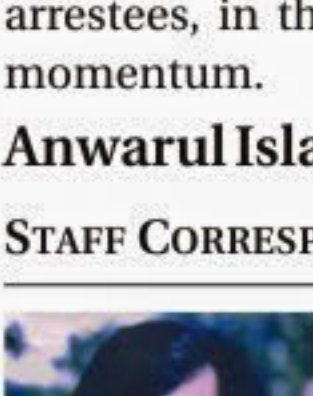
Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 43rd death anniversary of Shahid Sergeant Zahurul Haque. On the occasion, different organisations and his family members will place flower wreaths at his grave at 9:00am. Zahurul, an accused of Agartala conspiracy case, was killed by Pakistan military in 1969, said a press release. Following the killing, the movement demanding unconditional release of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other arrestees, in the case, got a momentum.

Anwarul Islam Bobby

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Bobby, renowned journalist and founder of now defunct The Morning Sun, says a press release. On the occasion, a doa and a milad mahfil will be held at his Dhanmondi residence in the city.

Bill placed to extend time for speedy trial act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday placed a bill in parliament for extending the term of a controversial law by another two years.

The present government has already increased the term of the Law and Order Disruption Offence (Speedy Trial) Act 2002 by two years in 2010. It will expire on April 7 this year.

After passage of the act, the then opposition Awami League described it as "a black law" and accused the BNP-led government of crushing the opposition agitations.

In defence of the extension, Sahara Khatun told the House that the law was made to improve the law and order situation by ensuring quick trial of offences like creating obstacles to movement of any vehicles or damaging any of them or destroying government proper-

ties or demonstration of muscle power in an organised way to create panic.

Sahara placed the bill when the BNP-led opposition parties are preparing to gear up street agitation to force the government to restore the caretaker government system.

The home minister yesterday placed another bill seeking to bring about changes in the anti-terrorism act 2009.

Meanwhile, the House passed a bill amending the Public Servants (Retirement) Act of 1974 for increasing the public servants' retirement age to 59 from 57.

On behalf of LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam, who is also in charge of the public administration ministry, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury proposed passage of the bill.

Earlier, the government had increased the retirement age by amending the law through a presidential ordinance promulgated in December 2011.

The government placed the bill to

ratify the changes brought by the ordinance.

Meanwhile, the parliamentary standing committee on the law, justice, and parliamentary affairs yesterday recommended that the House pass two bills, seeking to make it mandatory for the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, and MPs to pay tax on their remuneration.

It also recommended the passage of another bill seeking enactment of a law on mutual cooperation to combat criminal activities.

Advocate Fazle Rabbi Mia, chief of the parliamentary body, placed the committee's reports on scrutiny of the three bills.

Meanwhile, Maj Gen (retd) Abdus Salam, chief of the parliamentary standing committee on the home ministry, placed a report recommending that the House pass two bills to enact laws on prevention of human trafficking and control pornography.



Participants at a roundtable on sustainable land management organised by the daily Prothom Alo at its office in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PROTHOM ALO

SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT Minister for political consensus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Land Mustafizur Rahman yesterday stressed consensus among all political parties of the country to design an action plan for sustainable land management.

"The country's farmland is decreasing every day alongside deterioration of fertility. All the political parties should reach consensus to chalk out a plan to address the crisis", he said.

The parties are very busy with political issues like caretaker government, but they should put five times more attention on national issues like land, education, and health, he said.

The minister pointed out that making policies and law is important to ensure sustainable land management, but much more important is political commitment and political consensus.

Expressing concern over water table depletion due to irrigation, he said, "If we do not find a solution to this problem, it will create a disaster-like situation in the country in near future".

The state minister made his observation at a roundtable, "Sustainable land management: Bangladesh perspective", organised by

the daily Prothom Alo at its office yesterday.

At the discussion, Environment Secretary Mesbah ul Alam shed light on the Sundarbans, saying that the ecosystem and beauty of the forest is being destroyed gradually because of vessels' movement inside the forest and setting up of industries adjacent to it.

He laid emphasis on coordination among different government agencies to implement the existing laws to protect the forest, wetlands, and farmlands as those are interconnected.

Brac University Vice Chancellor Prof Ainun Nishat expressed his opinion for an imposition of restriction on misuse of land. He said agriculture, urbanisation, industrialisation, forests, and fishing should be elaborately considered for proper land management.

He also suggested the land of shoals be used for productivity.

All the speakers emphasised population control on urgent basis for resolving land crisis.

Prothom Alo joint editor Abdul Quayum moderated the function while Environment Joint Secretary Dr Mohammad Nasiruddin, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) research director Dr M Asaduzzaman, and Dhaka University's Prof Nurul Islam Nazem, among others, also spoke.

Save journalist

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Lalmonirhat



Ali Akhter Gollam Kibriya, a journalist in Lalmonirhat, has been suffering from serious back-bone disorder for the last two years. An immediate operation could cure him, say doctors in India. But for the wretched journalist, the medical cost is too high to afford.

"Doctors in Calcutta and Shiliguri of India advised me an immediate operation. I was told that the operation would cost Tk 7 lakh at Apollo Hospital in Chennai. I and my wife returned home as we had no money to bear the operation expense", Kibriya said.

Kibriya is Hatibandha upazila correspondent of the daily Sangbad and senior news presenter at Rangpur Radio. He is also a botany professor at Hatibandha Alimuddin Degree College.

Having all his financial sources run out and the disease intensifying day by day, Kibriya's only hope is now the people around him. At present, he has no other choice but waiting for financial assistances to come from people.

Kibriya is now passing his days in bed at his house in Hatibandha upazila town.

Any contribution for him can be sent to Account No. 34046225, Sonali Bank, Hatibandha Upazila Branch in Lalmonirhat. His family can be contacted at 01720551090.

UK modifies student visa terms

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The British government has announced changes to its student visas that will ensure that only the best and the brightest overseas students can stay and work in the UK following completion of their studies there.

The changes will come into effect from April 6 next year, said a press release of the British High Commission in Dhaka yesterday.

Currently, overseas students can work in the UK for two years after their course has finished, but tighter restrictions on post-work study will be introduced in April.

From then on, only graduates with a job offer from a reputable employer accredited by the UK Border Agency at an annual salary of at least £20,000 will be able to continue living and working in the UK.

Up to 1,000 places for non-EU students will be made available under the new Graduate Entrepreneur Route, said UK Immigration Minister Damian Green.

The new route means that "young entrepreneurs or small company directors will get the chance to stay on in the UK after their studies if they have £50,000 to invest in their business".

Additionally, the time that can be spent studying at and above degree level will now be restricted to a general limit of 5 years, with some exceptions.



Dry weather likely

Unb, Dhaka

Light rain is likely to occur at one or two places over Jessore, Kushtia, Rajshahi and Pabna and weather is likely to remain mainly 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 of the country during midnight till morning, Met Office said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged and night temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:53pm and rises tomorrow at 6:31am.

Country's highest temperature 31.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and lowest 07.4 degrees at Srimangal.

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	28.2	13.8	46	49
Chittagong	30.9	14.8	52	38
Rajshahi	28.6	12.6	78	60
Rangpur	26.2	12.4	78	56
Khulna	29.2	14.2	85	58
Barisal	29.5	12.2	74	71
Sylhet	29.3	12.5	44	45
Cox's Bazar	31.0	15.0	46	44