

## NEWS IN *brief*

### 3 injured in int'l school fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people suffered severe burn injuries in a fire inside the substation of an English-medium school in the city's Bashundhara Residential Area yesterday morning.

Authorities of International School Dhaka (ISD) rushed the injured electrical engineer Masudur Rahman and electricians, Jahangir Alam and Mahiuddin, to Apollo Hospitals. They were later shifted to City Hospital.

The fire originated from a spark in a switchboard around 8:30am as the victims were handling it while the power was switched on, said Syed M Babar, the school's business manager.

The fire was put out before firefighters reached the spot, he added.

### Rokanuddin won't contest SC Bar elections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent lawyer Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud yesterday said he would not contest any election of the Supreme Court Bar Association.

"I have no intention to contest any election of Supreme Court Bar Association at current or in future, whatever the lawyers discuss or consider about me," he said in response to a news article titled "SCBA polls Mar 21, 22" published in The Daily Star yesterday.

### Broker stabbed to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified miscreants stabbed to death a travel agency broker in the city's Paltan area yesterday.

The deceased Saiful Islam alias Jalal, 30, hailing from Habiganj district, was talking to two men before his Paltan residence around 11:30pm on Tuesday when one of them stabbed him on the neck and abdomen, said witnesses.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries around 2:30am.

### Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the 35th death anniversary of Lt AM Atau Haque, a freedom fighter, says a press release. He joined the Royal Indian Navy in 1945.

Atau Haque, who fought during the War of Liberation as personnel of Bangladesh Navy, passed away due to a cardiac arrest on February 23 in 1977 at the Combined Military Hospital, Dhaka.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to pray for eternal peace of the departed soul.



European Parliament Member Jean Lambert calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, left, at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday and Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office in the city.



PHOTO: PMO, BNP

## BOI MELA

### In a serene ambience

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Compared to the number of visitors on February 21, Amar Ekushey Boi Mela saw a dwindling turnout yesterday.

Those who did come seemed to be enjoying their time at the Bangla Academy premises in the city, patiently going through the new books hot out of the press.

"I came today assuming that few people would be here," said Masum Saied, a Bangla lecturer of Savar Model College, "I like to take my time in going through the books I am interested in before buying them."

With no crowd nagging him, he had already spent Tk 4,500 on some books and was looking for more. "I usually spend around Tk 10,000 each year on books but I could not resist spending so much today," he said with a smile.

His colleague, Abdul Awal Khan, came from Savar with his three daughters. "I came today as I wanted to avoid the crowds and let my daughters spend some quality time."

There was a mixed reaction among book-sellers on the day's sales.

Sharif Ahmed, a bookseller of Agamee Prakashani, said book sales usually rise after February 20 and the publishing firm had made good profits yesterday.

The owner of Ittadi Grantho Prokash, Johirul Abedin Jewel, however, was not satisfied. "Today was a really bad day for sales. We closed the stall with around half an hour still left on the clock."

Meanwhile, a total 89 new books arrived at the fair yesterday. A discussion was held and Nasiruddin Yusuf's movie on the Liberation War, "Guerrilla", was also screened.

#### COMMEMORATIVE NOTE

Agrani Bank Limited's Bangla Academy branch started selling the commemorative notes of Tk 60 and Tk 40 denominations at the fair from February 20, drawing the attention of a lot of visitors.

Shahnaj Begum, the branch's senior principal officer, said commemorative notes worth around Tk 30,000 had been sold in the first two days.

A buyer, Shahin Alam, a businessman by profession, said, "I wanted to collect the notes as part of memorabilia since I heard about them a few days ago."

Bangladesh Bank released the Tk 60 note on February 15 to mark the 60th anniversary of the country's Language Movement. The Tk 40 note was released on December 26, 2011 marking the country's 40th Victory Anniversary.

#### SHISHU PROHOR TODAY

Only children and their guardians will have access to the fair between 11:00am and 3:00pm, an exclusive four-hour period termed Shishu Prohor (children's hour), today, as per Bangla Academy's earlier announcement.

Shishu Prohor will also be observed tomorrow.

## PILKHANA CARNAGE

### Torab Ali ordered dumping of bodies

#### Witness tells court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The bodies of eight slain army officers, including that of the BDR chief, were collected from the Darbar Hall and adjacent areas to be dumped behind the BDR Hospital after directions from nayeb subedar Torab Ali on February 25, 2009, a witness said yesterday.

The soldiers who carried the bodies admitted the incident to Commanding Officer (CO) Lt Col Salam a few days after the massacre in Pilkhana, havildar Salim Sarwar, a medical assistant of the BDR hospital, said, adding that he was present during the soldiers' confession.

Salim, a witness in the carnage case, gave the account during his deposition before a Metropolitan Sessions Judges Court in the city's Bakshibazar.

The witness also said he found three bodies, those of a BDR soldier and two civilians, inside an ambulance before the mortuary at about 1:30pm on February 26.

"Since we couldn't identify the bodies, I asked nayek Khandakar Mozzamel (who was with Salim) to register them as uniden-

tified bodies. Later we kept them in the mortuary".

However, Shameem Sardar, the defense lawyer of Torab Ali, said Salim did not find the bodies; rather he killed the three persons and hid them in the mortuary.

"You are not right", Salim replied.

During cross-examination, the lawyer also asked the witness why the CO (Lt Col Salam) did not arrest Torab Ali as soon as he was informed of Torab's involvement.

Salim said he did not know.

Later, Havildar Hasanuzzaman and Nayek Samadul Haq gave depositions against five accused for opening fire and burning a motorcycle and a car of two army officers on February 25.

Defense lawyers later cross-examined them.

The court will resume on February 27.

A total of 74 people, including 57 army officers, were killed in the Pilkhana headquarters of erstwhile Bangladesh Rifles (now Border Guard Bangladesh) on February 25-26, 2009.

## NON-PARTY GOVT

### BNP ready to talk with govt: Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia said her party was ready to join talks with the government regarding a neutral and non-party government to ensure a free, fair and credible general election in the country.

She made the remark at a meeting with a European Parliament delegation led by Jean Lambert at her Gulshan office in the capital yesterday evening.

"We want a neutral and non-party government [to hold the next parliamentary election]. So, we are ready for talks," BNP Vice-chairman Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury quoted Khaleda as saying in the meeting.

He said the delegation had wanted to know what would be Khaleda's foreign policy if she voted to power in the next election.

In reply, Khaleda said, "Building good relationship with all on the basis of understanding will be the BNP's foreign policy."

Khaleda, also leader of the opposition in parliament, at the meeting expressed her happiness over the political development in Myanmar.

BNP chairperson's advisers, Reazuddin Ahmed and Sabihuddin Ahmed, were present at the meeting.



Amar Ekushey Boi Mela in the city's Bangla Academy premises saw a low turnout yesterday compared to February 21, which marks Language Martyrs' Day and International Mother Language Day.

PHOTO: STAR

## SQ Chowdhury appeals for dropping 25 charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Defence counsels of BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury yesterday appealed to the International Crimes Tribunal to withdraw six of the 25 charges in the case filed in connection with crimes against humanity.

Counsels Ahsanul Haq Hena and Fakhrul Islam placed the petition in which they argued that six cases were lodged against Salauddin under the Collaborators Act, 1972. While the law, enacted to try collaborators of the Liberation War in 1971, was revoked by the Fifth Amendment to the constitution, it has been brought back to life with the Fifteenth Amendment to the constitution, said Ahsanul Haq Hena.

Hena argued that this made way for "double jeopardy" meaning double trial for the same offence, which is forbidden by the constitution.

"It is my submission that the prosecution withdraws six of the 25 charges and save itself from future embarrassment," he told the court.

The defence counsels also began submission of another petition for discharging Salauddin Quader from charges.

The three-member tribunal led by its Chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq will hear the rest of the submission on Sunday.

The detained BNP lawmaker from Chittagong was produced before the tribunal yesterday. He is among two BNP and six Jamaat-e-Islami leaders facing charges of crimes against humanity at the tribunal.

## DEMAND FOR EXAM RESCHEDULING

### 15 HSC candidates wounded as police use batons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 15 candidates in the upcoming Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations were injured as police used batons during their protest demanding rescheduling of the exams yesterday.

Police also picked up at least eight candidates from in front of Dhaka Education Board where around 500 students were staging a sit-in. They, however, were released later.

The science group students of different colleges in the city have been demanding changes to the examination routine since the government published it last week.

At a human chain on Saturday, they said the examinations of science group would end within 29 days while the other groups would get 50 days.

Yesterday, the agitating students gathered at the office of the education board in Bakshi Bazar around 12:00pm and staged the sit-in, according to witnesses and dem-

onstrators.

They also submitted a memorandum to Prof Fahima Khatun, chairman of the board, who assured the students of taking steps, the sources said.

The agitating students said that around 4:30pm, a police official arrived at the scene and started misbehaving with one of them.

"As we protested the misbehaviour, police started charging batons on us and picked up eight candidates", said a student of Birshrestha Munshi Abdur Rouf Rifles College.

Contacted, Prof Fahima Khatun claimed that a significant number of the demonstrators are not regular students and they did not come for any solution.

"Most of them are from coaching centres, and some outsiders involved in politics are instigating the incident", she said, adding that the ministry could only take decision regarding the change.

According to the current routine, the HSC examinations will begin on April 1.

## Ershad fears chaos over CG issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM yesterday expressed his apprehension about the confrontational situation in the country over the issue of the caretaker government.

"The time ahead of us is very crucial as the country might be put into a chaotic situation if we fail to reach a solution on the caretaker government issue," he said at a discussion at the party's Banani office.

The Jatiya Party organised the discussion to mark International Mother Language Day.

Speaking as chief guest, Ershad said an amicable solution to get out of the deadlock over the issue must be found.

He said the appointment process of the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners has not been accepted by all, which is also a matter of concern.

He stressed the need for abolishing all undemocratic systems from the constitution including, the provision of appointing unelected persons as ministers. He also said the judiciary should have a separate secretariat instead of being under the law ministry.

Meanwhile, the Anwar Hossain Manju-led Jatiya Party (JP) yesterday at another discussion urged all to reach a consensus on the caretaker government issue.

Manju said politics is now dominated by people other than politicians, which is harmful for politics.

Speaking as chief guest, Awami League senior leader Tofail Ahmed said the present culture of confrontational politics should be shunned. Such politics should be practised that future generation can learn from it, he added.



## Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

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

Day and night temperature may rise slightly over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:58pm today and rises at 6:25am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 33.2 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Patuakhali and lowest 11.4 degrees Celsius 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	31.3	16.5	55	35
Chittagong	28.6	17.2	64	87
Rajshahi	30.7	13.4	72	51
Rangpur	27.8	15.0	81	65
Khulna	32.4	16.0	64	52
Barisal	32.0	15.5	75	50
Sylhet	30.5	16.1	52	41
Cox's Bazar	29.0	17.0	64	82