

NEWS IN *brief*

BBC Janala's new English course

METRO DESK

BBC Janala is launching the new BBC Janala Amar Engreji Course on mobile, web, print and on television with a second series of the TV show, BBC Janala Mojay Mojay Shekha.

The new course will be available on mobile, web, WAP, print, television and CD. The course has been developed to provide adults in Bangladesh with the opportunity to learn English, said a press release.

The Amar Engreji Courses are progressive courses for independent learners. The first course has been launched offering personalised learning through mobile and web. Learners can chart their progress through the course with quizzes, and those who complete all 24 chapters can get a course report. The course is also available in a daily newspaper.

Charlotte Imbert, country director of BBC Media Action, said this new course is an incredible opportunity for people to learn in a structured but a fun way.

Rickshaw puller 'kills himself'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rickshaw puller allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself from the ceiling at a slum in the city's Uttara on Wednesday.

The dead Julhas Hossain, 35, lived at Rana-Bhola Avenue slum in Uttara sector 10. Police recovered the body from his house at about 10:00am on the day.

His maternal uncle Mohammad Sekandar said Julhas received injury on his left leg in a road accident a few days ago.

His wife and three children went to their village home at Sreepur in Gazipur after he met the accident. Loneliness made Julhas depressed, Sekandar said.

Dhaka, Tokyo to celebrate diplomatic ties tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh will organise a reception in commemoration of the Great East Japan Earthquake towards "Open Reconstruction" and the celebration of the 40th anniversary of establishment of Japan-Bangladesh Diplomatic Relations tomorrow.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni will attend the function, to be held at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, as chief guest.

Takashi Nagayasu, member of the house of representatives of Japan and Ichiro Tsukada, member of the House of Councillors of Japan will attend the reception as representatives from Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentarians League.

Japan Ambassador to Bangladesh Shiro Sadoshima will make an opening remark.

Help poor students: Nahid

BSS, Dhaka

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday urged society's well-off people to supplement the government's endeavor for ensuring higher education for the students of poor families.

The minister made the call at a stipend giving ceremony of Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) at its auditorium here, a handout said.

This year PKSF has provided Taka 15,000 stipend for 187 graduate and post-graduate students. The number of stipends will be increased in the next year.

Presided over by PKSF Chairman Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman, the function was also addressed by PKSF Managing Director Dr Mesbah Uddin Ahmed and member Dr M A Kashem.

Koica to set up IT lab at home ministry

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Korea and Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to setup an IT lab in the Ministry of Home Affairs aiming to increase the efficiency of the government officials in IT sector.

The MoU was signed among Korean International Cooperation Agency (Koica), Korea Telecom Corporation (KT) and home ministry, said a Koica press release.



Traders illegally occupy the footpath on Mirpur road near Dhanmondi 6 in the city to sell pottery. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

SHAHJALAL FERTILISER FACTORY PM to lay foundation on March 24

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will formally lay the foundation of Shahjalal Fertiliser Factory at Fenchuganj in the district on March 24, sources said yesterday.

The factory, with a capacity of producing 1,760 tonnes of urea and 1,000 tonnes of ammonia per day will be located adjacent to the existing state-run Natural Gas Fertiliser Factory (NGFF).

The NGFF authority would soon hand over the 150 acre site at the existing west housing colony of the factory, said Rasamay Chakrabarty, managing director of NGFF.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) approved the project worth Tk 5,409 crore, 73 percent of which will be provided by China, at a meeting on December 1, last year.

A Chinese company which has been awarded the contract for setting up the factory will be completing its construction by June 2015, sources said.

The Chinese government and the China Exim Bank would provide Tk 3,986 crore in project loan with 2 per cent interest. The rest would be financed by the government of Bangladesh. The loan is to be repaid in 20 years.

The location for the Shahjalal Fertiliser Factory was first selected near the Laltila area years ago, where a signboard can still be seen.

However, there had been no progress made during the last 20 years since the age-old factory of the BCIC was about to be shut on technical grounds, a high level technical committee intervened and suggested for continuing production in the old factory by overhaul it and to go for setting up a new factory nearby.

AL lawmakers verbally abuse Khaleda in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku during his thanksgiving motion on the president's speech in parliament yesterday described BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia as "mentally and physically sick".

He also said it was Khaleda who had repeatedly plotted from Hawa Bhaban, the alternative power centre during the tenure of last BNP-Jamaat government, to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, then opposition leader.

Monzur Quader Quraishi, another ruling Awami League lawmaker, made fun of the BNP chairperson's gait. "She had threatened to maim the government but she walks like a cripple now."

During his speech, some AL lawmakers were seen giving the thumbs up.

Only three days ago, Speaker Abdul Hamid, upset by recurrent use of offensive words in parliament, urged lawmakers to adhere to the code of conduct while addressing the opponents.

"Hurling abusive words at others may at times be lauded by party members but it is not usually accepted by the people," he said, referring to a recent speech of A L l a w m a k e r Fazilatunnesa Bappy.

Bappy launched a tirade against Khaleda Zia, leader of the opposition in the House, and her two sons, during the thanksgiving motion on the president's speech.

POLL MECHANISM

US envoy hopes for consensus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan W Mozena yesterday expressed hope that major political party leaders would reach consensus on a mechanism to hold the next general elections as the nation could not afford further political instability.

"It is the duty of the leaders of political parties to engage in constructive dialogue and find a way to reach agreement on a mechanism for holding free, fair, credible and participatory elections," he said.

Mozena was replying to questions at a press conference organised by the US embassy at a restaurant in Rajshahi city at the end of his five-day tour to the country's five northern districts.

"I think these people (political party leaders) understand that this Bangladesh can be the world's largest exporter in terms of readymade garment, pharmaceuticals, small freighter vessels, information technology, finished leather goods and silk."

Mozena observed that Rajshahi has the potential and facilities to produce 1,000

tonnes of raw silk a year but it currently produces 50 tonnes against the country's demands for 300 tonnes.

He hoped that increasing silk production would create jobs for women.

"This is a moment in world history, in the world economy that Bangladesh can take off. Bangladesh can be the Bengal tiger, the next China in terms of exports...this is the time when these opportunities cannot be ceased," he said.

The US government provided over US \$5 million in assistance in sectors like health and community policing in the five northern districts in the last one year. Now it wants to encourage a new bio-cooking stove technology, he said.

This technology, costing around US \$5 to 9, would help reduce fuel consumption and pollution by 40 to 60 percent, he added.

Later, the ambassador attended a Community Policing Festival in Rajshahi Liberation War Memorial Stadium where 160 students and 32 teachers from 16 schools and 40 people involved in community policing attended.



Quayes flies to Singapore for treatment

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Secretary Mohammad Mijarul Quayes, who has been suffering from severe pneumonia and respiratory problems, was flown to Singapore yesterday for better treatment.

"He had been put on artificial ventilation at Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka since Wednesday afternoon," said a foreign ministry official seeking not to be named.

An air ambulance from Singapore arrived in the city at 8:30pm and left for Mount Elizabeth Hospital with the patient on board at 10:20pm.

Quayes initially developed a fever and cough on Monday and had been taking treatment at home.

He was admitted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital on Wednesday morning as his health worsened.

UK education fair begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14th annual Education UK Exhibition 2012 began at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in the city yesterday.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid inaugurated the two-day exhibition as the chief guest.

Representatives from 48 renowned higher educational institutions of the UK are participating in the exhibition organised by the British Council.

The exhibition will remain open for public from 12:00 noon to 7:00pm till today. The entry fee has been fixed at Tk 50 for each person.

The UK Border Agency representatives were also present to answer to UK visa related queries.

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert W Gibson and British Council Director Rosemary Arnott were present at the inaugural ceremony.

Meanwhile, a daylong exhibition will also be held in Chittagong on March 4.

Hearing on case against Tarique Mar 8

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday deferred the hearing of the money-laundering case filed against BNP Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman and his business partner Giasuddin Al Mamun till March 8.

Judge (in charge) Jesmine Anwar of the Special Judge Court-3 passed the order following a petition submitted by Mamun's lawyer barrister Fakhru Islam seeking adjournment of the hearing.

A prosecution witness Mir Alimuzzaman, the then inspector of Detective Branch of police, was present at the court.

In the petition, Fakhru said Khondaker Mahbub Hossain, a senior lawyer who would cross-examine the witness, could not appear before the court due to his illness. So, he prayed for adjournment of the hearing.

Earlier on February 16, Hosne Ara Begum, the then officer-in-charge (OC) of Cantonment Police Station, said the money laundering case was filed on specific allegations of laundering Tk 20.41 crore to Singapore.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case against Tarique and Mamun on October 26 in 2009 with Cantonment Police Station.



(From left) Liberation War Museum trustees Z Tariq Ali and Dr Sarwar Ali, National Professor Mustafa Nurul Islam, Farhana Mithu and the museum trustees Mofidul Hoque and Rabiul Hussain at the handing over ceremony of some documents belonging to veteran journalist Faiz Ahmed to the museum at its auditorium in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Faiz Ahmed showed how to work unitedly Say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a commemorative meeting yesterday said Faiz Ahmed had set an example by showing how to unite people of different opinions and work in unison.

"One of his versatile qualities was that he (Faiz Ahmed) had the charisma to unite people of different opinions", said Dr Sarwar Ali, a trustee of the Liberation War Museum.

The journalist had played a pivotal role in bringing Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia to the same platform against the autocratic rule of HM Ershad, he said.

Faiz Ahmed, a freedom fighter and veteran journalist, passed away on February 20 at the age of 84.

Mofidul Hoque, another trustee, said, "Faiz Ahmed is no more with us but his memories will".

Farhana Mithu, niece of Faiz Ahmed on behalf of his family, handed over some documents of Faiz Ahmed to the Liberation War Museum.

The documents include a press accreditation card and a movement order, provided by Indian government, and a certificate provided by the Mujibnagar government terming him a political commentator.

National Professor Mustafa Nurul Islam and Rabiul Hussain, another trustee of the museum, also spoke at the meeting organised by the Liberation War Museum at its auditorium.

28 junior officials vow not to be corrupt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-eight young research assistants of the Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday took oath to stay away from corruption and influence in preserving the country's environment.

They joined the department three months back. Their main task is to check waste management systems of factories at field levels, says a press release.

DoE Director (enforcement) Mohammad Munir Chowdhury administered the oath at the end of a weeklong training at the DoE.

Before the oath, Munir Chowdhury told them, "Environment pollution can be checked at grassroots levels if those responsible for the laboratories are honest and courageous".

This will improve the image of the DoE and reduce immoral pressure, but create scopes for corruption if they are not honest, he said.

"Dishonesty of the research assistants will cause environmental degradation, affect the people, but will benefit some individuals".

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at one or two places over Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country with temporary partly cloudy sky in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

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

Day and night temperature may fall 1-2 degree Celsius over Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions. Day and night temperature may rise slightly elsewhere over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 06.02pm and rises tomorrow at 6:19am.

Country's highest temperature 32.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Khepupara and lowest 12.6 degrees at Dinajpur.

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	31.0	20.3	83	51
Chittagong	28.5	19.8	82	85
Rajshahi	32.0	13.0	86	32
Rangpur	29.0	14.5	74	41
Khulna	31.8	20.2	82	64
Barisal	31.8	20.7	88	53