

NEWS IN *brief*

**2 construction workers die in fall**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two construction workers were killed in fall at two separate places in the city yesterday.  
The dead were Hafizur Rahman, 20, from Tangail, and Mohammad Wasim, 22, from Chapainawabganj.  
Hafizur fell around 1:00pm while working on the 2nd floor of an under-construction building at Kalabagan. He was declared dead in Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).  
At Khilgaon Taltala, Wasim fell from the fourth floor of an under-construction seven-story building around 3:00pm. The victim succumbed to his injuries in DMCH around 8:00pm.

**Beheaded body found in city**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the beheaded body of an unidentified man from Sutrapur in the city yesterday.  
The body, covered with a bed sheet, was inside three layers of sacks, was recovered from Pyari Das Road around 3:45pm.

**Attack on Bauls condemned**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a rights organisation, has expressed grave concern over some madrasa students' recent attack on Bauls at a commemorative festival for Fakir Lal Shah in Magura.  
At least 10 Bauls (mystic singers) and 20-25 people were severely injured in the attack, the organisation said in a press release, referring to media reports.  
A group of Qaumi madrasa students led by some teachers launched the attack on the second-day of the festival at Pulum Golam Sarwar High School ground in Shalikhia Upazila.

**2 factories fined Tk 28.5 lakh**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) fined the owners of two dyeing factories Tk 28.5 lakh in Narayanganj yesterday on charge of polluting the Shitalakha river by dumping chemical mixed waste.  
Munir Chowdhury, the DoE director (enforcement), has also directed the authorities concerned to shut down the factories-- National Textile and Processing Industries, and SB Neat Composite--in Fatullah.



Heaps of soil and big pot holes, in the name of water pipe construction work by Wasa, cover a big portion of New Circular Road near Mouchak Market in the city, creating long tailbacks and sufferings to commuters and pedestrians in the area. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

**Bangladeshis stuck in Indian visa complexities**

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Bangladeshis nationals planning to travel to India for medical, tourism or business purposes have been facing difficulties in obtaining visas for months.  
The problem, which the Indian authorities attribute to application overload, is particularly hampering the activities of Bangladeshi businesspeople.  
"If you fill in the Indian visa form online, you can complete it. But at the end, you won't get any date for the visa", a businessman, preferring anonymity, has said.  
"If you try again and again for a few days, you will find the same result if you don't know that the date option is kept open for a very limited time during a certain period of the day".  
The Daily Star verified the claim and found it to be true.  
The Bangladesh and Indian business communities as well as common people have expressed their dissatisfaction over the issue and called for making the online visa processing hassle free.  
AK Azad, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries

(FBCCI), has told The Daily Star that the business people were facing difficulties in getting visas.  
He said the FBCCI would raise the issue with the Indian High Commission in Dhaka shortly.  
Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, first secretary (political and press), Indian High Commission, has told The Daily Star that the authorities are not creating any problem in the online visa system.  
"The problem is on the side of demand and supply. We try our best to help people get visas easily".  
Mohapatra said Indian visas were generally given to tourists, patients, and others within 48 hours of depositing visa forms. Everyday 3,000 visas are issued from the high commission, he added.  
The official said the authorities could not issue 10,000 visas per day, as the High Commission did not have that capacity, like infrastructure and manpower, right now.  
"We have plans to increase the number of visas in the future. But it is also difficult to get space with public facilities like waiting rooms and toilets in Dhaka".  
The High Commission used to

issue manually 1,500 visas, while now it issues 3,000 everyday through digital processes, Mohapatra said, claiming it a substantive development and a miraculous task.  
The Indian official also claimed that Bangladeshi business people did not know about the facilities that the High Commission offered them.  
"We have a separate booth for business persons at the visa deposition and collection centre. Unfortunately, the business people of your country [Bangladesh] do not know about it".  
Asked about his response, the FBCCI president said it was not true that the Indian High Commission provided extra facilities for business persons. "They are regularly complaining about visa complexities".  
Home Minister Shahara Khatun, who visited New Delhi on February 24-25 and met Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee and her counterpart P Chidambaram, discussed the visa issue and urged the authorities to make visa processing easy.  
Taking it positively, the Indian authorities assured Shahara of resolving the problems. The home

minister pointed out the matter in a written statement during the weekly cabinet yesterday.  
Recently, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar told The Daily Star in an interview that the visa processing should be made easier so that Bangladeshis could travel to India, which, he thinks, would play a major role in strengthening bilateral relations between the two neighbours.  
"What is the problem if the visa system is made easy?" he asked.  
Another claim made by Mohapatra is that only 30-40 visas are given from the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi and 300-400 visas from the Deputy High Commission in Kolkata.  
Enamul Haque Chowdhury, press minister at the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi, has said the authorities issue over 200 visas from New Delhi and some 500 from Kolkata.  
"We would like to say that 100 percent Indian nationals, who apply for Bangladeshi visas, are given visas without any complexities.  
"There is no example that anyone seeking a Bangladeshi visa has been refused".

**INDECENT TIRADE AT JS  
After Bappy, its  
now Gini!**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A ruling Awami League lawmaker in parliament yesterday launched into a vile tirade against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her two sons.  
It was the second time in around 20 days that an AL MP has used abusive words against the leader of the opposition in parliament.  
Speaking on the thanksgiving motion on the president's address, Mahbub Ara Begum Gini, from Gaibandha-2, said, "Khaleda uses her husband Ziaur Rahman's name with hers for political gains, but she did not tag that [Zia's name] with her sons' names as she had doubts over their birth."  
On February 15, Fazilatunnesa Bappy, elected to one of the women's reserved seats in December last year, too used abusive language to blast Khaleda and her sons. It was her maiden speech in parliament.  
As Bappy was saying unpleasant things about Khaleda's personal life, many treasury bench MPs were thumping their desks to applaud her. Deputy Speaker Col (retd) Shawkat Ali was presiding over the sitting that day.  
He was in charge of the House proceedings yesterday as well, and again he neither interrupted Mahbub Ara nor asked her to watch her language.  
He rather gave her an additional two minutes when her allotted eight minutes were running out.  
Oftentimes, MPs get additional time when they verbally attack the opposition.  
Against this backdrop, Speaker Abdul Hamid on February 26 urged lawmakers to adhere to the code of conduct when addressing their opponents.  
"Hurling abuse at others may at times be lauded by party colleagues, but it is not accepted by people," he said at a book launch.

**Schoolgirl found dead**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A schoolgirl was found dead yesterday, with multiple stab wounds, inside her Keraniganj residence, which was found ransacked and from where Tk 2.5 lakh and seven tolas of gold were missing.  
The victim, Lamia Akhter, 18, was a student of class eight at Keraniganj Girls School and College.  
She used to live with her maternal grandmother, Ayesha Begum, and uncle, Sajib, at Monu Beparir Dhal.



Journalists who have received training on investigative reporting at Savar recently pose for photograph with guests at its certificate awarding ceremony at the residence of British High Commissioner in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

**AFTER MARCH 7...**

**Pakistani military knew it was the end**

BSS, Dhaka

As Bangladesh is set to recall Bangabandhu's historic speech of March 7, 1971 tomorrow, the Pakistani media and former military officials acknowledged that the address marked the end of Pakistan 41 years ago.  
"A parallel government had come into effect. After the (pre-partition) 1942 martial law in Sindh, this was the second parallel government in the subcontinent," said Pakistan's newspaper, Dawn, in a recent opinionated article in its online version.  
It recalled that on that day, "when ZA Bhutto was holding a press conference in Karachi and Mujib was addressing a public meeting in Dhaka, national flags on all official, semi-official and private buildings in Bangladesh were replaced by Bangladeshi flags."  
"Mujib's house hoisted the same flag," read the article, "A leaf from history: A parallel government takes over."  
It recalled that on March 19, "when Yahya and Mujib met, it was all blank. No substantive talk took place. It was,

therefore, decided to continue talks the next day. A more serious era was to follow."  
Dawn's review last week came as several ex-army officers earlier described the address to be the line which drew the end of a united Pakistan.  
"Bangladesh had virtually come into being on March 7, 1971," Lieutenant General Kamal Matinuddin wrote in his book, "Tragedy of Errors: East Pakistan Crisis 1968-1971".  
The commander of the Pakistani troops in East Pakistan, Lieutenant General AAK Niazi, in his "Betrayal of East Pakistan" wrote that after that day "Mujib virtually became the ruler".  
"His residence became the presidency... the command of the central government began to be defied," he wrote.  
But observations by another relatively junior officer reflected how the then West Pakistani military junta kept an anxious watch on what could be the content and impact of Bangabandhu's speech on over a

million people assembled at the then Ramna Race Course Maidan.  
The public relations officer of the Pakistani military in the then East Pakistan, Major Siddique Salik, had seen the event obviously from a Pakistani point of view. But he could not conceal his admiration for Bangabandhu as he described the scene in his "Witness to Surrender".  
"As the crucial 7 March - the day Mujib was to address a public rally at Ramna Race Course - approached, Dacca became restive with rumors, fears and apprehensions," wrote Salik.  
He recalled that the Pakistani Chief Martial Law Administrator's headquarters had directed Dhaka Radio station to stop this "nonsense" while he himself conveyed the order to the radio station.  
"The Bengali friend (Bangabandhu) at the receiving end reacted sharply to the order. He said, 'If we cannot broadcast the voice of the 75 million people we refuse to work'. With that the radio station went off the air," Salik wrote.  
At the Race Course Maidan in the

afternoon, he said Mujib mounted the dais and "surveyed the sea of humanity waiting for his long awaited declaration".  
"Mujib started in his usual thunderous tone but gradually scaled down the pitch to conform to the contents of his speech.  
He did not make the unilateral declaration of independence but laid down four preconditions before attending the assembly session on March 25.  
These were the lifting of martial law, transfer of power to the people's representatives, the return of the army to the barracks and the establishment of a judicial enquiry into the killing of Bangalees.  
"The crowds that had surged to the Race Course dispersed like a receding tide. They looked like a religious congregation returning from mosque or church after listening to a satisfying sermon," Salik wrote.  
"They lacked the fury which might have motivated them to charge on the cantonment; as many of us had apprehended," he added.

**WB to provide \$ 300m for silos**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank will provide US \$300 million for the construction of modern silos providing the capacity to store a total 10 lakh tonnes of food grains for a longer period of time.  
The silos will be constructed in three years, said a press statement from the Directorate General (DG) of Food, signed by its Deputy Secretary Mohammad Gaziur Rahman, yesterday.  
"It is expected that a large part of the proceeds for payment of the construction and supervision would be funded as grant from the WB," said the statement.  
Bangladesh has already obtained an International Development Association credit of US \$1 million for the payment of consultancy services for the preparation of the "Bangladesh Modern Food Storage Facilities Project".  
Meanwhile, the DG of Food signed a contract with a joint venture consultancy firm comprising Key International, USA and Sthapati Sangthad Ltd, Bangladesh in this regard on February 7.  
Once completed, the country's food storage capacity would reach around 26 lakh tonnes by 2015.

**No dam on Kapotakkha  
HC asks govt**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to stop all kinds of earth-filling, encroachment in Kapotakkha river and construction of a dam on it in Tala upazila of Satkhira within 48 hours.  
In response to a writ petition, the court ordered the authorities concerned to submit a report after complying with the order to it in two weeks.  
It also issued a rule upon the government to explain in 10 days why it should not be directed to protect Kapotakkha river from encroachment and earth-filling and to stop the project for constructing the dam on the river.  
The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim came up with the order and the rule after hearing the petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) Secretary Asaduzzaman Siddiqui.

**20 journo  
trained in  
investigative  
reporting**

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Twenty journalists have received a two-day long training on investigative reporting at Savar recently.  
The British High Commission in Dhaka organised and supported the training at Savar on February 27-28, said a British High Commission press release yesterday.  
The journalists from print and broadcast media in Bangladesh took part in the training on "Capacity Development for Investigative Reporting on Financial Management and Accountability".  
Management and Resources Development Initiatives (MRDI) in partnership with Thomson Foundation UK conducted it.  
British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Wittington Gibson handed over certificates to the participants at his residence yesterday.  
Gibson said, "The media's role is extremely important for in-depth reporting of issues that matter - to both UK and Bangladesh. It is important that financial transparency and accountability is understood widely and reported credibly.

**WEATHER TODAY**

**Rain likely**  
UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Tangail and Mymensingh.  
Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country 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 remain nearly unchanged over the country.  
The sun sets in the capital at 6:04pm today and rises at 6:15am tomorrow.  
Country's highest temperature 34.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 14.5 degrees Celsius at Ishwardi.  
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	32.0	21.2	70	54
Chittagong	28.0	19.3	73	84
Rajshahi	34.4	15.6	67	41
Rangpur	27.0	16.4	64	50
Khulna	33.5	21.0	85	59
Barisal	32.5	20.9	84	58
Sylhet	31.4	18.4	62	44
Cox's Bazar	30.0	19.8	76	82