

NEWS IN *brief*

**Boy drowns in pond**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A student of class three drowned in a pond of Owaznagar area in the port city yesterday morning. The deceased was identified as Towhidul Islam, 12, son of Mobarak Ali and a student of Owaznagar Community Primary School.

Towhid went alone to the pond adjacent to his residence for taking bath and drowned, said Sekandar Alam, a cousin of the deceased.

After half an hour, the family members and locals found Towhid's body floating on the pond.

Towhid was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where on-duty doctor declared him dead. He was a patient of epilepsy.

**Beer, yaba tablets seized**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in separate drives arrested three drug peddlers and seized 1,440 cans of beer and 780 yaba tablets worth about Tk 7.44 lakh from Feni and the port city yesterday.

The arrestees were identified as Mujibur Rahman, 52, Roman alias Sumon, 26, and Sumon's brother Ali Akbar, 28. All are from Chandpur.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-7 conducted a drive on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Jor-kachar area under Feni Sadar Police Station and arrested Mujibur with 1,440 cans of beer worth Tk 4.32 lakh. A microbus, which was used for drug peddling, was also seized.

Later, another team of Rab-7 conducted a drive on the road in front of Bonoful and Co at Alankar Circle in Pahartali of the port city and held the other two with 780 yaba tablets worth about Tk 3.12 lakh.

**Shibir men lock CU classroom**

CU CORRESPONDENT

Activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) locked the door of a classroom of zoology department at Chittagong University (CU) yesterday keeping the teacher and students inside.

Campus sources said while Jadov Kumar Biswas, a lecturer of zoology department, was taking class of first year students of the department, the Shibir men allegedly locked the classroom from outside.

On information, the members of the university proctorial body rushed to the department and opened the door breaking the lock after 10 to 15 minutes.

Mentionable, CU Shibir called for an indefinite strike at the university from March 18, placing four-point demands to the university authorities.

**Driver killed under tractor**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A driver was killed under his tractor while he was ascending from cropland to highway at Sarathnagar village under Kasba upazila of the district on Friday evening.

The deceased is Abul Kashem, 40, son of Noor Mia of Musapara village in Muradnagar upazila of Comilla.

Police and witnesses said Kashem, after cultivating the land, was returning from the field. While he was ascending to the highway, his tractor collapsed down, leaving him dead under it.

**Four shops gutted in Ctg**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A fire gutted four shops at Chawkbazar in the port city yesterday evening.

Sources in Fire Service and Civil Defence Headquarters at Agrabad said the fire originated from an electric short-circuit at around 6:00pm at Telpatti under Kotwali Police Station and engulfed valuables of the shops.

On information, three fire fighting units from Nandankanan, Agarabad and Chandanpura fire stations rushed to the spot and doused the flame within an hour, said Md Rejaul Kabir, station officer of Chandanpura Fire Station.

The loss caused by the fire was estimated at Tk 5 lakh.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

The mangled remains of a car which was rammed by a train at Gandaria level crossing in the city yesterday morning, leaving one person dead and five others injured. (Story on Page 1)

**Bangladesh independent from today**

*Bangabandhu said moments before his arrest on the night of March 25, 1971*

BSS, Dhaka

Minutes before his arrest on the black night of March 25, 1971, Bangabandhu foresaw troops coming to arrest him and uttered the words: "From today Bangladesh has become independent", a close associate and witness to the incident at his 32 Dhanmondi residence said yesterday.

"They [Pakistani army] are coming to arrest me. I have decided to stay (at home)", Haji Morshed, now 81, who stayed at the house from around 8:00am till the detention of Bangabandhu at midnight, quoted Bangabandhu as saying.

Morshed recalled that Bangabandhu made the comment around 10:00pm, sitting alone in his room, eyes closed, and minutes later then student leader Tabibur Rahman came to see him as the "last visitor" of the day and earnestly requested him to leave to evade death.

"He (Tabibur) hugged him and said 'Leave the house immediately, they (army) will kill you ... (in reply) Bangabandhu said 'If they don't get me they will massacre all the people and destroy the city...in tearful eyes Tabibur left the house'.

Morshed told the news agency that he had been a confidant of Bangabandhu since the 1946 Azad Hind Captain Rashid Ali Day when Bangabandhu was a student leader in Kolkata. On those eventful days of March 1971, he stayed with

him all day from morning till late night.

He recollected that around 1:15am [March 26], the entire sky glowed with bright lights when he received a phone call. Bangabandhu came by his side asking him from which side the light was coming and went upstairs, he added.

Morshed said moments later someone shouted, "Hands up...mat maro (don't kill)" as he stood by a telephone set near the staircase of the house.

"In a fraction of a second, someone hit me with something on the back of my head and I lost consciousness. That was the last thing I could recall of that night".

Another witness to those moments, former BNP state minister AKM Mosharaf Hossain, who observed the incident from the building adjacent to 32 Dhanmondi, said Pakistani troops fired shots as they entered the house, creating panic in the neighbourhood.

"I heard him (Bangabandhu) shouting, 'Stop firing' and they stopped".

As Bangabandhu came downstairs, he saw Haji Morshed unconscious and bleeding, and seeing the scene he shouted "How dare you hit him, I want him alive", he said.

"Bangabandhu knew and we all understood Pakistani troops were coming to capture him and feared they might also kill him...he was prepared to confront them bravely...he was not a coward",

said Hossain, who was a neighbour of Bangabandhu and was living at the adjacent building west of 32 Dhanmondi, which was called "Dara-e-Khas".

Both the witnesses recalled that on the very day of March 25, several distinguished West Pakistanis and foreigners visited the 32 Dhanmondi residence to discuss the situation with senior Awami League leaders, workers and others, including government officials.

Haji Morshed remembered that one of the visitors to the house was police officer MA Awwal, who was then director of Ansar.

When Bangabandhu asked Awami League leader Barrister Amirul Islam where to find weapons to resist an imminent army crackdown, Awwal proposed that the weapons of the Ansar force, which were kept in police arsenal of every district police headquarters, could be used.

Student leader Sirajul Alam Khan apparently trashed the proposal, but later Bangabandhu sent Morshed along with Awwal to then Dhaka SP (superintendent of police) EA Chowdhury to ask him on his behalf to distribute weapons among policemen to resist the crackdown.

Morshed recalled that before the visit of Tabibur, senior Awami League leaders like Tajuddin Ahmed and Dr Kamal Hossain visited the house throughout the day till midnight.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Public Works Department Workers' and Employees Union stages a demonstration before Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday to realise their seven-point demand.

**'Old Khoai river near dead'**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists in a visit to the Old Khoai river in Habiganj yesterday found it to be near dead due to incessant land grabbing and pollution.

They blamed the local administration's reluctance in protecting the river and demanded stern legal actions be taken against culprits, said a press release of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa).

The visitors' team included columnist Syed Abul Moksud, Bapa joint secretary Sharif Jamil, Habiganj unit president Prof Ikramul Wadud, general secretary Prof Muhammad Abdus Jaher, environmentalists, and locals.

Syed Moksud said the country's rivers were disappearing because of some interest groups. He feared that it would lead to severe environmental disaster in the future.

For the present condition of the river, he blamed the local administration, which he said, was not active enough to ensure normal flow of the river water.

**Fire service martyrs' memorial opens today**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Shahara Khatun will inaugurate today a memorial erected in memory of the personnel of Directorate of Fire Service and Civil Defence, who were martyred during the Liberation War of the country.

The memorial has been built on the Mirpur Fire Service Training Complex premises at Mirpur section 10.

Speaking at a press conference on the complex premises yesterday, Director General (DG) of the directorate Brigadier General Abu Nayeem Md Shahidullah (ret'd) said the members of the Fire Service and Civil Defence played an important role in the country's glorious war of independence.

He said though 40 years have passed after the liberation, no memorial had been built to remember these valiant sons of the soil.

An architect of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) had designed the memorial, said Director (Development and Training) of the directorate Major MM Matiuir Rahman, also in charge of supervising the construction work of the memorial. He said the construction of the memorial started in the first week of this month.

The DG said initiative has been taken to collect and preserve the life sketches of the personnel and their contribution to the Liberation War.

He said 25 personnel of the directorate embraced martyrdom during the Liberation War.

The families of the martyrs would be given necessary assistance with the family members provided jobs on priority basis, he added.

**Three more fertiliser factories to be set up, says PM**

UNB, Sylhet

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government has taken initiatives to set up three more fertiliser factories in the country to meet the growing demand for the agri-input.

The prime minister made the disclosure while laying the foundation stone of Shahjalal Fertiliser Factory in Fenchuganj.

Once completed, she said, this factory would help reduce the import of around six lakh tonnes of urea fertiliser a year.

The annual production target for the Shahjalal Fertiliser Factory has been fixed at 5.81 lakh tonnes.

Hasina said there are currently six factories in the country, most of which are old and their production capacity has fallen.

"That's why a total of 15-20 lakh tonnes of fertilisers are imported a year to meet the demand, spending huge

foreign currencies," she said.

The construction cost of the factory has been fixed at Tk 5,409 crore of which Tk 3,986 will come from Chinese government. The construction works is expected to be completed by the next 38 months.

The Bangladesh government signed a framework agreement with China during Hasina's visit to Beijing in March 2010. State-run Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) is implementing the project.

Hasina alleged that the previous BNP-Jamaat alliance government closed down a large number of mills and factories, including the Adamjee Jute Mills and eight BCIC factories.

After assuming office, Hasina said, the present government has taken steps to reopen the mills and factories.

She mentioned that Chittagong Chemical Industries, Khulna People's

Jute Mills, and Qaumi Jute Mills in Sirajganj have already resumed production.

Chaired by Industries Minister Dilip Barua, the function was addressed by Finance Minister AMA Muhith, PM's adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, local MP Mahmudus Samad Chowdhury and Chinese Ambassador Li JUN.

The prime minister also inaugurated the commissioning of the Sylhet 150MW power plant at Kumargaon and the second unit of 90MW Fenchuganj combined cycle power plant.

Meanwhile, Hasina offered fateha at the mazars of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) and Hazrat Shah Paran (RA). She also prayed for the continued peace, progress of the nation and the welfare of the countrymen.

Later, she inaugurated the Nagar Bhaban on the premises of Sylhet City Corporation, divisional passport and visa offices, and laid the foundation stone of Sylhet Education Board.

**Keya Chy, her son, daughter on remand**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Keya Chowdhury, her son, daughter and their four accomplices were remanded yesterday for eight days each in four cases filed for assaulting police, journalists, attacking on a police station and vandalising vehicles in the city on Friday.

Sher-e-Bangla Nagar police arrested Keya Chowdhury, her daughter Bristy Chowdhury, son Ra Chowdhury and the four who work for the family on Friday on the above charges.

Imam Hossain, deputy commissioner (DC) of Tejgaon Division, told The Daily Star that the seven persons were produced before a court with remand prayers and the court granted eight days remand for each.

The DC said Keya Chowdhury with her son and daughter and flanked by a number of musclemen vandalised the police station after assaulting a motorbike rider, a police sergeant and two journalists in the capital.

The four cases were filed by police, motorcyclist Mehedi Hasan, sergeant Sharey and private television channel Rtv reporter Osman Gani Babul.

**Volunteer for Bangladesh cleans up Banani Lake**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Volunteer for Bangladesh, the volunteer wing of JAAGO Foundation, stepped into cleaning up the Banani Lake in its annual World Water Day 2012 campaign on Thursday.

This year, the programme lasted for three days and two nights. And the project was designed to give the volunteers a look into the lives of the Karail slum-dwellers and their daily problems, said a press release.

"The event was full of fun and excitement. We had a great experience! It was tricky and taught us a very important lesson in teamwork," said Saleh Rahman Shimanto, a participant in the programme.

The event was sponsored by Coca-Cola Bangladesh and Robi Axiata Limited.

**WEATHER TODAY**

**No change in temperature**

UNB, Dhaka

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

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:11pm today and rises at 05:57am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 36.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangamati and lowest 14.8 degrees Celsius at Chuadanga.

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	33.6	19.4	34	29
Chittagong	31.8	24.3	76	75
Rajshahi	34.8	15.4	62	34
Rangpur	31.8	16.4	55	46
Khulna	35.3	19.4	77	51
Barisal	34.5	19.0	79	58
Sylhet	34.0	18.5	49	31
Cox's Bazar	32.1	24.4	71	-