

NEWS IN *brief*

Prof Jahangir new Cuet VC

CU CORRESPONDENT

Prof Md Jahangir Alam has been appointed the new vice-chancellor (VC) of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet) for next four years.

A fax message from education ministry announced his appointment yesterday.

Prof Jahangir, a teacher of civil engineering department, took the charge yesterday, says a press release of the university.



Shahidul made envoy to France

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has appointed M Shahidul Islam, currently serving as Bangladesh Ambassador to Korea, as the new Ambassador of Bangladesh to France.

A career diplomat, Shahidul belongs to the 1985 batch of BCS (foreign affairs) cadre, said a foreign ministry press release.

Earlier, he served Bangladesh Missions in Kolkata, Geneva and Washington D.C. in various capacities.

Shahidul obtained his master's degree in International Relations from Dhaka University in 1987. He also received a Diploma in French Language and Diplomacy from Paris in 1991.

Developer fined Tk 5 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined a developer Tk 5 lakh for earth filling in a lake of Pathalia in Savar.

The DoE Director (enforcement) Muhammad Munir Chowdhury yesterday fined MDC, the developer, and asked it to remove the earth from the water body to bring back its earlier look within seven days, says a press release.

After being informed by locals, a DoE team visited the lake on April 2 and found the developer filling the lake with earth.

Free camp for diabetic patients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 400 diabetic patients were given free treatment at a camp at Laxmi Khola Collegiate School in Paikgachha upazila of Khulna on Saturday.

FRF Diagnostic and Research Centre, a non-profitable organisation, organised the camp on the occasion of Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bengali new year, says a press release.



Channel i, a satellite private TV channel, celebrates Pahela Baishakh through a cultural programme titled "Hajaro Kanthe Koti Bangalee Barshobaran" at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital on Saturday.

Nation tinged with Baishakh colours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shedding the preceding year's glooms to oblivion, the nation welcomed Pahela Baishakh, its biggest and most colourful festival and the first day of the Bangla year 1419, on Saturday with its customary fanfare and festivity.

Thousands turned out on the streets, parks and open spaces since morning with the day being a public holiday, women clad in white saris covered in intricate designs of red and men sporting panjabis.

Revelers thronged the Baishakhi Melas (fairs) in the capital and other parts of the country which celebrated Bangla culture, entertainment, art and food and featured live music and performances, colourful rallies and "pitha" (cake) festivals.

Braving the scorching heat, people patiently nudged forward in massive crowds into the fairs at Ramna Park, Suhrawardy Udyan, Central Shaheed Minar, Dhaka University, Shahbag and Dhanmondi Lake in the capital.

Dhanmondi, Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban and

other city areas were also seen swarming with people from early morning till night.

Many had their cheeks and parts of their body painted with the country's map and other emblems, giving a special vibe to the celebrations.

As in every year, the biggest venue of the celebration was at the capital's Ramna Batamul where a huge stage, a trademark of the cultural programmes, was set.

Artists of Chhayanaut, a cultural organisation organising the event for over three decades, launched the performances with Rabindranath Tagore's song "Esho he Baishakh..." at sunrise. It was followed by other songs and recitation of poems.

Tight security measures were taken in and around the park.

The next best attraction, a decorated procession called Mongol Shovajatra organised by the students of the Faculty of Fine Arts of Dhaka University, also started off from the premises at 9:00am.

The procession featured giant replicas of "Sampan", tiger, horses, cat, owl, tortoise, elephant and huge colourful masks symbolising the

triumph of good over evil. Its participants danced along the beats of traditional musical instruments.

Scores of cultural shows organised by different organisations kept the Dhaka University area lively. Visitors were seen buying traditional food, masks and toys at the fairs.

Many ate traditional "panta bhat" (watered rice) with fried lish, lentil, green chilli and onion at home, restaurants and fairs.

The state-owned BTV, Bangladesh Betar (radio), and private television channels broadcast special programmes and the newspapers brought out special supplements marking the day.

Mughal Emperor Akbar introduced the tradition of celebrating the Bangla New Year in relation to closing of the annual tax collection. Traditionally, traders and shopkeepers open "halkhata" (new account register) on the day and serve sweetmeats to clients.

Slowly this non-communal festival became an integral part of the Bangalee culture with people irrespective of their religion, sect and creed celebrating the day as one nation.



Sabera Mustafa passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sabera Khatun Shamsun Ara, former educationist and cultural personality, wife of late journalist and former ambassador KG Mustafa passed away early hours on Sunday at the age of 78.

She was better known by her married name Sabera Mustafa.

Sabera was admitted to Square Hospitals in the capital with severe abdominal complaints. She died of heart attack triggered by respiratory failure, said doctors at the hospital.

She left behind her three sons, economist Shams Mustafa, journalist Sabir Mustafa (presently head of BBC Bangla service) and advocate Sipar Mustafa.

She graduated from Dhaka University in 1956.

In the mid-1950s, Sabera became one of the first women in the former East Pakistan to act on stage. Her career in drama spanned over three decades, which included stage, radio and television.

Her career as a teacher was spread over four decades. She taught at different colleges in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held after Zohr prayers today at Mohammadpur Iqbal Road Mosque in the capital.

Prof Dilara Haroon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Prof Dilara Haroon, a freedom fighter and former lawmaker, wife of late prof AKM Haroon-or-Rashid, a dramatist, poet and music composer, died of cardiac arrest at National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases in the capital on Saturday night at the age of 66.

She left behind her one son, one daughter, a host of relatives and admires to mourn her death.

She was buried with state honour at Sherpur graveyard in the district following namaz-e-janaza at National Hero Abdul Kuddus Makhhan Mukta Mancha.

She was the vice-president of the central committee of Bangladesh Krishak League.

Alhaj Fazle Haque

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Alhaj Fazle Haque, a social worker, passed away due to old age complications at a hospital in the capital yesterday at the age of 90.

He left behind his three sons and one daughter to mourn his death.

He was buried in Kalibari graveyard in the town after a namaz-e-janaza at local Anjuman Eidgah after Esha prayers.

QWAMI RELATED ISSUES

Body to formulate recommendations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed a "Bangladesh Qwami Madrasa Education Commission" to formulate recommendations on issues related to qwami madrasas' educational management and its curriculum for government approval.

The 17-member committee headed by Mawlana Ahmed Shafi, director general of Darul Ulm Mainul Islam, Hathazari, has been asked to submit its recommendations to the education ministry in six months.

The ministry yesterday issued a circular that said the commission would frame its recommendations on qwami education levels, curriculum, evaluation process, and other guidelines for the development of qwami education.

Mawlana Allama Farid Uddin Masud, director general of Jamea Darul Ma Aarif, is the co-chairman of the commission while Maulana Mufti Ruhul Amin, director general of Gowhordanga Madrasa, is the member secretary.

The statement also said the commission can co-opt other members and form sub-committee if needed.

Bangladesh Madrasa Board will perform the secretarial job and provide financial support and manpower.

**ATTACK ON HINDUS
HC summons
Satkhira SP,
Kaliganj OC**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summoned the superintendent of police of Satkhira and Kaliganj Police Station's officer-in-charge to appear on April 23 for their alleged failure to protect properties of some Hindus in an attack.

Earlier this month, some newspapers reported that some Muslims of Kaliganj attacked the houses of Hindus on April 1 over allegations that they disrespected Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) while staging a play.

Several houses were vandalised and looted while the others set on fire during the attack, said the reports. Issuing a suo moto rule, the HC directed SP Habibur Rahman and OC Syed Fariduddin, already withdrawn from the district and police station, to appear by 10:30am and explain their roles in connection with the incidents.

Bangladesh Minority Watch President Advocate Ranindra Ghose placed some reports, published on the Prothom Alo, Bhorer Kagoj and Janakantha over the incidents, before the HC bench yesterday.

The bench comprises Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim.



President Zillur Rahman welcomes Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with bouquet at Bangabhaban in the capital yesterday on the occasion of the Pahela Baishakh.

RAILWAYGATE SCANDAL

BNP wants Suranjit's resignation in 48 hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demanding a judicial inquiry, to be led by a retired chief justice, into the railwaygate scandal, BNP leader Moudud Ahmed has asked Railway Minister Suranjit Sengupta to step down in the next 48 hours.

"Suranjit should quit on moral grounds and fair investigation is not possible with him at the helm of the ministry. The incident proved that the government has completely sunk into corruption," said the BNP standing committee member.

He was speaking at a press briefing, organised on behalf of the party's parliamentary party, at the parliament media centre yesterday.

Moudud said, "The minister (Suranjit) should quit within 48 hours for the sake of the image of the parliament. It is clear that the 'bribe money' was being taken to his residence and the minister was of course involved in this [process]."

He said the railwaygate scandal has severely damaged the dignity and image of all lawmakers and politicians.

Rejecting the two probe bodies, formed by the railway ministry, Moudud said there was no significance of such probe committee as these committees will never be able to probe the incident fairly.

He said the prime minister has returned from abroad and now they are waiting to see that what steps would be taken by the premier regarding the railwaygate scandal. "The government has become failed to run the country due to corruption. The bribe scandal once again proved it," he added.

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized Tk 70 lakh from the car of Suranjit's APS Omar Faruq Talukder in BGB headquarters on Monday night.

Apart from Faruq, general manager (East) of Bangladesh Railway Yusuf Ali Mridha and Divisional Commandant Enamul Huq were also in the car.

APS Omar Faruq was sacked and Railway General Manager (East) Yusuf Ali and its Dhaka Division Security Commandant Enamul Huq were suspended yesterday in connection with the railwaygate scandal.

RULE AGAINST ASIF NAZRUL

HC requests some lawyers to be amicus curiae

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday requested some eminent lawyers to give their expert opinions as amicus curiae (friend of court) before it on April 29 on the rule issued earlier against Asif Nazrul, a professor at Dhaka University.

During the hearing, the court also asked Asif to appear before it on the day.


The DU teacher yesterday appeared before the bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim as per its March 15 order.

The amici curiae include Mahmudul Islam, Rafique-ul Huq, M Amir-Ul Islam, M Zahir, Moudud Ahmed, AF Hasan Arif, Mahbubey Alam, Akter Imam, Rafique-ul Islam Miah and Abdul Matin Khasru.

The HC issued the rule upon the government following a writ petition filed by Md Nawsher Ali Mollah, a Supreme Court lawyer, on March 15. The court in its rule asked the government to explain why it should not be directed to file a sedition case against Asif for making a "provocative statement" about the prospective next government.

Asif allegedly commented at a live talk-show on private TV Bangla Vision on March 12 that if the prime minister and the opposition leader were asked who would come to the power next, they would perhaps reply that a third power would.

Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud appeared for Asif while Barrister Nawsher Ali Mollah himself moved the writ petition.



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, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Noakhali and Comilla in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met office said.

Mild heat wave is sweeping over Khulna division and the regions of Rajshahi and Ishwardi and it may continue.

Day and night temperature may rise slightly over the country.

The highest temperature is likely to be 36-37 degrees Celsius and lowest temperature may be 21-22 degrees Celsius.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:20pm today and rises at 5:36am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 37.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 20.2 degrees Celsius at Hatiya.

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	34.6	24.6	76	69
Chittagong	31.0	23.5	87	82
Rajshahi	37.4	24.5	77	63
Rangpur	32.0	22.6	79	80
Khulna	36.5	24.8	83	65
Barisal	34.8	24.0	83	63
Sylhet	33.0	23.0	58	61
Cox Bazar	32.2	23.0	76	74



Workshop
International Rice Research Institute will arrange a workshop; Venue: Spectra Convention Centre, Gulshan-1.

Seminar
HIV/AIDS and STD Alliance Bangladesh will organise a seminar; Venue: Brac Inn, Mohakhali; Time: 11:30am.

Discussion
Resource Integration Centre will hold a discussion; Venue: Cirdap Auditorium; Time: 9:30am.