

NEWS IN *brief*

FM for upholding CMAG mandate

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni underscored the need for upholding the positive spirit of the new mandate of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) when discussing the modalities for implementation of the report on strengthening the role of CMAG.

The report was endorsed by the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Perth, Australia in October 2011.

The foreign minister was leading the Bangladesh delegation at the 37th meeting of CMAG in London on Monday, said a foreign ministry press release yesterday.

During the meeting, the Commonwealth ministers also discussed the proposal of the eminent persons group of the Commonwealth for establishment of a Commonwealth commissioner for democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

CMAG reviewed the prevailing political situations in Fiji and the Maldives.

She stressed the importance of continued engagement of the Commonwealth with the Maldives for strengthening the democratic institutions in the country, especially in the capacity-building of sectors like parliament, judiciary and the election commission.

Mentally challenged girl violated

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday arrested one person on charge of violating a mentally challenged girl at Abdul Latif Hat under CMP area in the port city.

The arrestee is Lokman Mia, 42, son of late Sona Mia, hailing from Undania village in Senbag upazila of Noakhali.

A case was filed with Bakulia Police Station in this

Body recovered from Bhawal park

UNB, Gazipur

Police recovered the body of a man from Bhawal National Park on Monday evening.

The deceased was Nurul Islam, 52, of Masterbari area in the sadar upazila.

Police and locals said Bakul Hossain, one of the lessees of the park, called Nurul to the garden on Saturday. Since then, he remained missing.

Forest department employees spotted the body of the victim near Gate No-6 and informed police. Later, Joydevepur police recovered the body.

Another lessee of the park, Shimul Shikdar,

5 BCL men injured in attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Five activists of one faction of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Chittagong Polytechnic Institute unit were injured in an attack by another faction at a tea stall adjacent to the institute yesterday.

All the injured were taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Witnesses and police said equipped with machetes, knives and iron rods several activists of one faction of the BCL attacked another faction, who were gossiping at the tea stall after finishing a rally on the campus, leaving the five injured.

Mafiz Uddin, Officer-in-charge (OC) of Khulshi Police Station said, "The attack occurred for estab-

Buet Officers' Assoc executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kamal Ahammad was elected the president and KM Ashrafuzzaman was elected the general secretary of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) Officers' Association, said a press release yesterday.

Md Rafiqul Islam was elected the vice-president, Md Sozibur Rahman the treasurer and Md Abdul Jaher the organising and publicity secretary of the association.

The other elected members were AKM Jahangir Alam, Md Moniruzzaman Mollah, Shamsur Rahman and Md Abul Kashem Miah.

Prof Dr Aminul Hoque of the Directorate of Students' Welfare conducted the polls.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina places wreath at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in the capital on the occasion of the historic Mujibnagar Day yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

3 policemen suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three police constables were suspended yesterday on charge of their involvement in assaulting two reporters on Dhaka University (DU) campus on Saturday.

The suspended policemen are Shahjahan, Sohanur and Sumit.

Krishna Pada Roy, deputy commissioner (Ramna zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that after several procedures, they found the accused guilty and suspended them.

The policemen assaulted Masum Billah, DU Correspondent of the Dainik Samakal, and Pintu Ranjan Orko, a feature writer of Dainik Kaler Kantho, when they went to collect information from a police control room at the gate of Suhrawardy Udyan.

RAILWAYGATE SCANDAL

Suranjit's statements in question

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suranjit Sengupta's changing statements with the unfolding of the drama over the April 9 railwaygate scandal has raised questions about the credibility of the veteran politician.

It all began with the midnight recovery of Tk 70 lakh from the microbus of his close aide after the driver reportedly pulled over inside the Pikhana BGB headquarters in the capital and its driver hollered that there was stash of bribe money in the vehicle.

BGB personnel on guard found Tk 70 lakh in the car. The money had allegedly been collected as bribe from railway job seekers.

At first Suranjit strongly defended his aides--Assistant Private Secretary (APS) Omar Faruq Talukder and Railway General Manager (East) Yusuf Ali Mridha and Dhaka Division Security Commandant Enamul Huq who were in the car that night.

He then dismissed his possible links to the scandal terming it conspiracy against him and promised to quit if needed, took a turnaround from the stance on the very next day; sacked his APS and suspended two other aides; and finally stepped down from his office on Monday.

On April 10, the day after the incident, Suranjit told the media that it is not illegal to carry money in the country, adding that he heard that the driver was trying to rob the money from his APS.

He also said he has a specific working hour, and it is not his responsibility to keep track of his

aides after that hour.

Moving away from this stance, the former minister on the very next day told journalists at the Jatiya Sangshad Bhaban that he had asked Faruq and Yousuf not to come to work until further notice.

Saying that the incident was "unwarranted" and has happened before in the country, Suranjit had said that the incident had created "problems" for him and he would face it.

As questions arose about his possible links to the scandal that was hauled, Suranjit on April 12 dismissed the allegation terming it a conspiracy to ruin his political image.

Some people were after him as he has been trying to revive the long-not-cared-for railway sector, he said in a press briefing at Rail Bhaban on that day.

He, however, clearly said he would resign if his involvement in the incident could be proved. "I will not stay for a moment if any such situation arises."

Suranjit took a complete U-turn on the very next day on April 13 and outright rejected the notion of quitting.

He told the BBC: "You mentioned that a railway officer was involved in the incident along with the APS and his car and if it is so, then where is my involvement? Why is there the question of resignation?"

He said, "The Border Guard Bangladesh headquarters is a restricted area after 10:00pm. How did the car enter that area? Who let them in? Why did they stay there the whole night? The answers to these questions are needed. Who gave the

money, where was it given, where did it come from?"

"There is so much talk regarding the driver but is it not a mystery that he cannot be traced?"

On April 15, Suranjit announced that his then APS Omar Faruq was sacked and Yusuf Ali Mridha and Enamul Huq were suspended in connection with the railwaygate scandal.

He also announced that recruitment of around 3,500 posts in the railway ministry had been suspended, and that legal action would be taken against the trio.

Suranjit, however, avoided making direct replies on why Mridha and Enamul were suspended, and not fired.

He stepped down the next day taking full responsibility for the scandal surrounding the cash haul.

"At the meeting with the prime minister on Sunday night, I told her that I wanted to relieve myself of the charge of the railway ministry, and she happily accepted it," a pale-looking Suranjit told a press briefing at the Rail Bhaban on the afternoon that day.

"As a minister, I'm responsible for all good and bad things in my ministry."

He however insisted that the vehicle with the money was not heading for his Jigatola residence in the capital, contrary to the claims of the APS and two other railway officials travelling in the microbus.

The seven-time parliamentarian from Sunamganj in the northeast region also hoped that the "truth" would emerge through the inquiry.

ICT-1 decision on Ghulam Azam's indictment May 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday deferred to decide until May 2 whether to indict former Jamaat ameer Ghulam Azam for his alleged involvement in crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971.

The tribunal set the new date, as it could not complete detailed examination of the relevant documents and arguments.

On March 29, the court fixed yesterday for the decision after both prosecution and defence presented their arguments over the formal charges brought against Ghulam Azam.

The three-judge tribunal, however, gave permission to two of the defendant's counsels to visit his prison cell at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University on April 21.

Ghulam Azam was not produced before the court yesterday.

The 89-year-old was arrested and sent to jail on January 11 for his alleged involvement in crimes against humanity.

On January 9, this year the International Crimes Tribunal accepted formal charges against Ghulam Azam, after the prosecution submitted to the tribunal 62 charges of crimes against humanity against him on January 5.

Foetus in twin's belly!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Doctors in Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) yesterday operated on a 10-month-old baby girl to bring out her 'dead' twin sister from her belly.

The baby named Tithi, daughter of Jamal Uddin at Iswardi in Pabna, was admitted to the hospital over a week ago with swollen abdomen and problems of taking food.

The 'dead' baby weighing 1.1 kilogrammes had a head, chest, belly and parts of hand and leg.

Dr Nawshad Ali, assistant professor of Pediatrics Surgery unit of the hospital, described the incident as rare.

"Actually, both of the babies were growing up as twin in their mother's womb. At one stage, physical development of one of the twins ceased and it somehow managed way into another's womb," said the doctor.

"We were astonished to see shadows of human skeleton inside the baby's womb and later studied out that the status is called fetus in fetu in medical term."

Tithi was now safe and out of danger, he said.

OIL, GAS EXPLORATION Engage Bangladeshi expatriates

Parliamentary body tells Bapex

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary panel yesterday asked Bapex to engage renowned Bangladeshi expatriates, working in foreign oil and gas exploration companies, in its operations in order to make the state-owned company self-reliant.

Members of the parliamentary standing committee on public undertakings said the country still has to depend on foreign experts for exploration of oil and gas.

"Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration & Production Company (Bapex) will be benefited largely if it gets the service of the Bangladeshi expatriates working in foreign oil and gas exploration companies," ABM Ghulam Mostafa, chief of the parliamentary watchdog, told the meeting.

"There are many Bangladeshi expatriates working efficiently in different oil and gas companies abroad," Mayeen Uddin Khan Badal, a member of the panel, said after the meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the capital.

"A Bangladeshi is also working in the US-based ConocoPhillips, which was awarded for exploring oil and gas in our offshore area," said Badal, also a Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal MP.

He said the committee has asked the Bapex high officials to immediately contact such Bangladeshi expatriates and offer them work opportunities along with financial packages and other facilities, similar to the ones that they are getting from the foreign companies.

It is imperative to turn Bapex into a self-reliant organisation, specially after winning huge maritime areas in the Bay of Bengal, he added.

The committee asked Bapex to submit paper work related to the issue at the committee's next meeting scheduled next month.

It also recommended that the government give an Independence Day award to Bapex for playing a 'historic' role in exploring the country's oil and gas resources.

Probe labour leader's death

Mozena urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador Dan W Mozena has requested the government to investigate the death of Aminul Islam, a labour leader, and to hold the perpetrators accountable, says a press release.

He made this remark during a visit to the office of the American Centre for International Labor Solidarity on April 12 where he met with trade union leaders.

The body of Aminul Islam, who was allegedly tortured and death by law enforcers, was found in Tangail in the first week of April.

The ambassador shared the views of Aminul's widow and his colleagues that his death was senseless and that Aminul Islam is a martyr of Bangladesh's labour movement.

Kalpona Akter of Bangladesh Centre for Workers Solidarity, Babul Akter of Bangladesh Garment and Federation, and Morium Akter of Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Union Federation attended the meeting.

Suranjit made scapegoat: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said the government would not be able to survive by making Suranjit Sengupta scapegoat as, from the top to the bottom of the government, all are corrupt.

"There is no ministry without corruption. Not only Suranjit, but also the finger is now at the prime minister (PM) herself. It has been published in Canada that a relative of the ruling party's top leader took bribe," he said, while addressing a demonstration in front of the opposition's central office at Naya Paltan in the capital.

Thanking the media for digging out the railway corruption, he said the PM is trying to save herself by making Suranjit, a minister without portfolio, a scapegoat, but everything is clear to the people now.

The BNP leader said about Tk 20,000 - 22,000 crore have been plundered in the

name of setting up power plants while the electricity generation deteriorated, causing huge sufferings to the people.

Criticising the PM for organising reception programme over the maritime victory, he asked the government to organise a national debate. "Arrange a debate and we will prove that nothing has been achieved," he said.

It may be mentioned that Awami Jubo League will today accord a reception to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the city's Bangabandhu Stadium marking Bangladesh's maritime victory over Myanmar.

Mirza Fakhru said the government has stopped the Dhaka City Corporation election process fearing defeat after BNP hinted about its participation in the election.

The High Court on Monday halted the election process for three months following a writ petition filed by a lawyer.

The city BNP Convener Sadeque Hossain Khoka presided over the meeting.

4th IO tells court that he could not arrest anyone in Batamul blast case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Another prosecution witness (PW) gave his deposition before a Dhaka court yesterday in the murder case over the 2001 Pahela Baishakh blasts at Ramna Batamul.

Judge (in-charge) Mohammad Akhteruzzaman of the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court recorded statement of Mohammad Awlad Hossain, the then detective branch inspector, also the fourth investigation officer (IO) of the case.

Awlad in his deposition told the court that he took over the charge of the investigation into the cases on August 30, 2002 and continued it till May 3, 2003.

During his eight-month investigation, he tried to arrest the culprits who had committed the heinous crimes, but he could not arrest any of them, he said.

The witness was later cross-examined by all of the accused. After completion of cross-examination, the court fixed April 22 for next hearing of the case.

Eight of the accused, including Harkatul Jihad (Huji) chief Mufti Abdul Hannan, now in jail custody, were produced before the court yesterday, while Akbar, now on bail, was also present.

Five others, including Maulana Tajuddin, brother of BNP leader Abdus Salam Pintu, have been absconding.



Dry weather 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, Chittagong, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kusthia 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, Ishwardi, Tangail and Faridpur and it may continue.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged and night temperature may rise slightly over the country.

The highest temperature is likely to be 37-38 degrees Celsius and lowest temperature may be 22-23 degrees Celsius.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:21pm today and rises at 5:34am tomorrow. Country's highest temperature 37.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Ishwardi and lowest 20.2 degrees Celsius at Srirongal.

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	35.2	26.0	76	46
Chittagong	31.8	25.2	75	79
Rajshahi	37.2	23.0	58	34
Rangpur	33.0	22.5	75	57
Khulna	37.3	26.0	78	57
Barisal	34.3	26.0	83	73