

NEWS IN *brief*

Youth beaten to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth was beaten to death by a gang of unidentified criminals in the capital's Jatrabari early hours of yesterday.

The deceased was Md Russel, 35, a resident of Dholaipar in the area.

Razia Begum, the victim's elder sister, told reporters that Russel went out of home at around 9:00pm on Wednesday after receiving a phone call. Later, his friend phoned her husband Md Rubel's at around 11:30pm saying some miscreants were beating up Russel near Mir Hajariabagh.

Following the information, they rushed to the spot and found injured Russel lying on the road. They took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at around 12:10am.

Local sources and police said Russel was involved in Yaba trading in the area. He might be killed in

3 Bangladeshi Lunabots prepare for Nasa's competition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three Bangladeshi universities prepared robots to compete in Nasa's Third Annual Lunabots Mining Competition from May 21 to 26 at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex in Florida, says Nasa's website.

Teams from Military Institute of Science and Technology, Islamic University of Technology and Brac University are going to compete against 69 teams representing universities from around the world.

The goal is to design and build a telerobotic or autonomous excavator, called a Lunabot, capable of mining and depositing a minimum 10 kilograms (22

British HC closed on May 6

METRO DESK

The British High Commission and DFID Bangladesh will remain closed on May 6.

The high commission's office in Dhaka and Sylhet and DFID Bangladesh will be closed for public on the day on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, said a press

Flat buyers conned out of Tk 15cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A real estate developer has swindled buyers out of about Tk 15 crore by selling one flat to several clients, a group of victims alleged at a press conference yesterday.

Sumona Landmark, the developer company, resorted to fraudulence to misappropriate the hard-earned money of the buyers, said Shaheen Parveen, a victim.

The buyers have been paying big amount of money for apartment houses since 2007 at seven apartment projects, she said, but Rubayat Islam Monti, owner of the company, resorted to various fraudulent tricks to sell one apartment to many.

The company sold three apartments at Swapno Neer project in Uttara to 16 people, Md Shamsul Hoque Chowdhury, one of the victims, told the conference at Jatiya Press Club.

Sumona Landmark used to be a sister concern of Sumona Group but recently it has changed its registration and named itself as Sumona Landmark and Technologies Ltd, said Kaiser Ahmed, another victim.

Rubayat is the son of Sumona Group managing director Dr Sirajul Islam, he said.

Though they have paid Tk 25 to 50 lakh each so far to buy apartment, construction work is presently stalled at all the projects, while Rubayat is missing, he said. "We have so far gathered a total of 51 deceived buyers", he added.

The apartment projects in which buyers have been deceived include Sumona Swapno Neer, Sumona Rose Vila and Sumona Affection in Uttara, Sumona Radisson in west Dhanmondi, Sumona Sun Cloud in Mohammadpur, and Sumona Orchid Dale and Sumona Alpona Castle in Adabor, Ahmed said.

Contacted at the head office of Sumona Group at Sumona Goni Trade Centre, office staff said Sirajul Islam was not available and asked this correspondent to talk to the company's director Zahir Ahmed.

Zahir Ahmed did not take phone calls of the correspondent.



Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain addresses a press conference at Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday.

Form national unity to tackle 'sick politics'

Dr Kamal urges conscious citizens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday called upon the country's conscious citizens and civic, professional and women organisations to form a "national unity".

This unity will establish "a fair political trend and effective democracy" by altering the ongoing "sick politics" in the country, he said.

The noted jurist was addressing a crowded press conference at Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

Kamal observed that the nation is suffering from anxiety over fears of "disappearing" and in fear of their lives as clashes, killings, disappearances and politics of confrontation is prevailing in the country.

"People already started refusing negative politics and they are waiting for the moment to get rid of corruption

and criminalised politics. People's unity and politics of consensus is a must to get rid of this situation," he said.

Expressing disappointment over its performance, he advised the government to hold the next parliamentary election in advance, if it wishes, to tackle the present situation in the country.

He said people cast their vote in the last national polls for the Awami League-led 14-party alliance not for money but with hopes that corruption, bad governance, nepotism and politics of killing and forced disappearance will be tackled.

"But confrontations, clashes, killings and disappearances are still prevailing in the country. The real information behind the disappearance of BNP leader Ilias Ali is yet to be revealed.

"Criminal activities, clashes and tense situation still prevail in different educational institutions," he said.

He also said necessary reforms are inevitable in different sectors of the country, including economics, politics, administration, education, health and judiciary for the continuation of development.

Kamal said the nation is greatly frustrated over the severe deterioration of the law and order situation and the killings of journalist couple Sagar-Rumi, Narsingdi mayor Lokman Hossain and Jahangirnagar University student Zubair.

"Health, education, police, judiciary and civil administration are on the verge of destruction for partisan recruitment and job offers against handsome amounts of money," he added.

**SEARING STUDENTS
Madrasa teacher absconding**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday raided different areas in the capital but failed to arrest a female madrasa teacher who burnt legs of 14 students as punishment on Tuesday.

A raid was also conducted on the Kadamtali madrasa to see if any illegal activities were going on there in the guise of a religious institution, but no such things were found.

Inspector Abdur Razzak of Kadamtali Police Station said Maulana Masudur Rahman, husband of the accused madrasa teacher, Jesmin Akhter, was an imam of a local mosque.

A mother of three, Jesmin started the madrasa with about four to five girls. Later the number of students increased. She ran the madrasa in a rented house.

Local people said the students were taught there from 8:00am to 8:00pm, and in exchange Jesmin used to take monthly fees and examination fees from the girls.

Inspector Razzak quoted the house owner Iqbal Hossain as telling police that the madrasa had no government approval, and Jesmin had already left the area with her family.

Jesmin, who ran Talimul Quran Mahila Madrasa, is the lone accused in a case filed by Abdul Jalil, father of an eight-year-old victim, Jannatul Ferdous.

The madrasa teacher seared legs of 14 students with a hot spatula to make them feel the "agony of fire in hell", as they were "irregular" in prayers.

'Jamaat starts politics of disappearance in '71'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two lawmakers of the ruling alliance yesterday said Jamaat-e-Islami started politics of killing and disappearance during the Liberation War which later got institutionalised by law enforcers under different governments.

Rashed Khan Menon and Hasanul Haque Inu made the comment at a discussion titled 'Jahanara Imamer Andolan Abong BNP-Jamaater Rajniti' held on the occasion of the 83rd birth anniversary of Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam.

Ekkattor Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the discussion at Bilia auditorium in the capital.

Menon, president of Workers Party of Bangladesh, said Jamaat was involved in the killing and disappearance of intellectuals during the War in 1971 and continued to fulfil their hidden agenda.

Echoing Menon, Inu, president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), added

Jamaat continued politics against the country's interest and BNP patronised them.

The leaders stressed that the incumbent government must end the trial of war criminals within its tenure; otherwise BNP-Jamaat would stop it if they came to power.

"The BNP-Jamaat alliance is hatching conspiracy to foil the trial of war criminals, 10 truckloads of arms haul, and the August 21 grenade attack cases," Menon said.

He however alleged the recent incidents of disappearance under state patronisation started by Jamaat and 'Rakkhi Bahini' in the country.

Both Menon and Inu said such disappearance and killings resulted in the politics of the anti-democratic forces that reject the democratic ruling system.

The leaders recalled the contributions of Shaheed Janani saying she was the pioneer of voicing necessity of trial

of war criminals for establishing justice in the society.

They also urged the government to recognise the contributions and sacrifice of Shaheed Janani who raised her strong voice against the atrocities of the collaborators.

Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, presidium member of ruling Awami League, said BNP-Jamaat alliance started and patronised disappearance and killings abusing their power. He alleged BNP leader Ilias Ali was the pioneer of terrorism and he was kidnapped by terrorists.

Deputy Speaker Col Shawkat Ali said a section of people who opposed the birth of Bangladesh are still hatching conspiracy to foil the spirit of the Liberation War.

Shahriar Kabir, acting president of the forum, chaired in the discussion which was also addressed, among others, by Prof Muntasir Mamun and Prof Ajoy Ray.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

BNP leader Alim gets fresh conditional bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday granted fresh conditional bail to former BNP lawmaker Abdul Alim in connection with crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War.

The tribunal, the second of two set up to deal with the war crimes, passed the order on "medical ground" following a petition.

Alim, who is facing 74 counts of crimes against humanity in 28 incidents during the Liberation War of 1971, was arrested on March 27, 2011 and has been on conditional bail since March 31 last year.

As the Tribunal-1 transferred Alim's case to the Tribunal-2 for quick disposal on April 16, the defence were directed to submit a fresh petition for bail.

The defence filed the petition on April 26 and appealed that the tribunal considered their client's physical condition and old age.

As yesterday's proceedings started at 10:30am, defence counsel Tajul Islam told the tribunal that Alim, at 82, has been suffering from various diseases and surgical intervention is needed as soon as possible.

Besides, Alim did not misuse the privilege of the bail conditions and it is impossible for him to influence the investigation as he did not take part in any political and social activities in last couple of years.

Opposing the bail petition, Prosecutor Nurjahan Begum Mukta argued that the Tribunal-1 granted Alim bail during investigation, but the case is now on trial. Witnesses will be discouraged if Alim, a former minister and very influential person in his locality, remains outside jail, she added.

Despite Alim's old age, the tribunal should reject the bail petition considering the gravity of the offences he allegedly committed

during the Liberation War, she said. If the accused was placed to custody, jail authorities will ensure his treatment as per the jail code, she added.

The three-member tribunal headed by Justice ATM Fazle Kabir with members Justice Obaidul Hasan and Judge M Shahinur Islam granted Alim's bail on several conditions considering his health.

Alim's son Faisal Alim and his counsel Tajul Islam will have to pay Tk 1 lakh bail bond to the tribunal's registrar as security money for his bail.

Other conditions say Alim must not contact with political leaders, victims and witnesses of war crimes; he cannot go to his district home in Joypurhat without permission of the tribunal and has to stay in his son's house in Banani; he must not make any statements to the print or electronic media; he has to cooperate

with the investigation agency in discharging its duties; he has to surrender his passport and provide his cellphone number to the registrar, if he uses any.

Alim would be taken to custody and his bail order will "stand cancelled" if any of the conditions is violated, the tribunal said.

The tribunal adjourned till May 7 the hearing on charge framing against Alim following a time petition of the defence, as they could not prepare their defence yet.

Meanwhile, the same tribunal deferred till May 7 the hearing on charge framing against Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah in connection with crimes against humanity.

The tribunal fixed the date, as Abdur Razzak, chief of the defence, could not appear before the tribunal as he was busy with the Tribunal-1 in connection with another case.

Japan's special role in our dev to continue

Hopes Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night expressed hope that Japan would continue its special role for economic development of Bangladesh.

She expressed the hope when visiting Japanese Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Katsuya Okada made a courtesy call on Khaleda at her Gulshan residence last night.

After about 50 minutes' meeting, BNP Vice Chairman Shamsher Mobin Chowdhry told journalists that the Japanese deputy prime minister emphasised maintaining political stability in Bangladesh for its development and an increase in foreign investment.

He said Okada hoped that the next general elections in Bangladesh would be held with participation of all political parties and stability would remain in the country.

Replying to a question regarding investment in construction of the Padma bridge, Shamsher Mobin said Okada stated that Japan would invest in any sector in Bangladesh if a corruption-free atmosphere was ensured in the future.

He said Khaleda emphasised that special facilities should be provided to Japan for its investment in Bangladesh and if her party was voted to power in future it would provide the one to Japan, a tested friend.

BNP chairperson's advisers Reaz Rahman and Sabihuddin Ahmed were also present at the meeting.

Journos' sit-in now on May 15

UNB, Dhaka

The journalists shifted their sit-in, scheduled for Sunday in front of the home ministry, to May 15 as Buddha Purnima, the biggest religious festival of the Buddhist community, falls on that day.

It was decided at an emergency meeting, chaired by BFUJ President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), Jatiya Press Club and Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) leaders attended the meeting.

The meeting sources said the sit-in would be staged in front of the ministry at 11:00am on May 15 instead of May 6 and the next course of the journalists' movement will be announced from there to realise their demands, including arrest and punishment of the killers of journalist couple Sagar and Rumi.

Besides, a joint meeting of executive committee members of BFUJ, DUJ, DRU, NPC and other journalists' organisations will be held at Jatiya Press Club on May 10, followed by a view exchange meeting of the editors of newspapers and the chiefs of private television stations at the same venue on May 13.

WEATHER TODAY

Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, Barisal, Khulna, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Moderate heavy falls are also likely at places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions.

Day and night temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said. **The sun sets in the capital at 6:28pm today and rises at 5:22am tomorrow.**

Country's highest temperature 37.2 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 20.6 degrees Celsius at Comilla.

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	22.8	67	61
Chittagong	32.5	24.0	76	67
Rajshahi	37.2	21.5	64	52
Rangpur	30.6	21.7	77	69
Khulna	35.5	22.5	78	64
Barisal	34.5	22.5	75	56

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Md Mahfuzur Rahman, secretary general of Bangladesh Public Relations Association and national public information consultant of World Health Organisation (WHO), passed away at his Uttara residence in the capital yesterday at the age of 47.

He left behind his one son and wife, a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death, said a press release.

He will be buried at his Durgapur village home in Ashashuni upazila of Satkhira.

Mahfuzur started his career as journalist after receiving university degree from Mass Communication and Journalism Department of Dhaka University. He also served Dhaka Wasa as deputy chief public information official. He joined the WHO three years ago.