

NEWS IN *brief*

Abducted Bangladesh Army officer freed in Syria

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's Maj Shahidur Rahman Osmani, who had been abducted by Syria's opposition force protesters, was freed yesterday, said an ISPR release.

The official joined his work and remains safe and sound.

A UN military observer in Syria, Maj Shahidur along with six other observers was abducted on May 15 when they were on duty.

A total of 18 Bangladesh Army officers are working in the UN observer team to bring peace in the crisis-riddled Arab country.

Worker falls to death in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A construction worker was killed after he fell from the fifth floor of a 14-storied under-construction building in the capital's Green Road area yesterday.

The deceased, Akram Hossain, 24, hailed from Noakhali, was working as a tiles helper of the building of Eastern Housing.

Faruq Hossain, another worker, said Akram was coming down the building stairs around 1:30pm when his legs slipped and he fell down from the fifth floor.

Akram was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 2:00pm, where doctors declared him dead, said Faruq.

Primary teachers withdraw sit-in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Non-government primary school teachers yesterday withdrew their sit-in programme, scheduled to be held at the capital's Central Shaheed Minar premises today demanding regularisation of their jobs.

The decision came after a dialogue between the teachers and Primary and Mass Education Minister Md Afsarul Ameen, State Minister Md Motahar Hossain and Secretary AKM Abdul Awal Mojumdar at the Secretariat.

"The ministers assured accompanying us on our meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina within seven days," said National Non-Government (registered) Primary Teachers' Oikya Parishad Member Secretary Abdur Rahman Sachu.

The teachers have been demonstrating under the banner of the parishad, a platform of four organisations of non-government primary teachers.

Meanwhile, Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), a rights watchdog, yesterday expressed deep concern over Tuesday's police crackdown on the teachers.

Urging the government to instruct the law enforcing agencies to refrain from such behaviour in the future, ASK said every citizen in a democratic country has the right to demonstrate peacefully to press home his or her demands.

NGOs' FOREIGN DONATION Draft law discussed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The draft of Foreign Donation (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act, 2012 prepared to oversee foreign donations of NGOs was presented at a meeting at NGO Affairs Bureau office in the capital yesterday.

The draft has been made with the consultation of its stakeholders incorporating two acts--The Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Ordinance, 1978 and The Foreign Contributions (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982. The draft was also posted at the official websites of the bureau and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to receive opinions.

Speaking as the chief guest, International Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister Gowher Rizvi said the higher authorities did not imposed instructions on the draft makers but it has been made through interactive consultations.

The revised draft would be posted at the official websites as soon as possible, he added.

The NGO leaders who attended the meeting said the new law should not restrict or discourage foreign donations anyway.



A huge fire, which raged for about one and a half hours, burned down the entire shantytown adjacent to the capital's Shyamoli Kazi office bazar yesterday. Inset, two slum women lamenting the irreversible loss.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Journos demand removal of Dhanmondi OC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists besieged Dhanmondi Police Station for an hour yesterday, demanding removal of its officer-in-charge for baton-charging newsmen and firing gunshots when they were protesting the death of Bibhas Chandra Saha in the capital on May 11.

They withdrew the blockade after Syed Nurul Islam, deputy commissioner of Ramna division, assured them of considering the demand.

The DC said a two-member committee was making an inquiry into the assault on journalists. Necessary actions will be taken against the responsible police officers and his team members if they are found guilty, he added.

Bibhas, 46, chief crime reporter of The Independent newspaper, was killed in Dhanmondi-2 after being run over by a bus on May 11.

When journalists were protesting, Dhanmondi police OC Mohammad Moniruzzaman and his team charged batons on them.

Around 300 journalists, under the banner of Crime Reporters' Association of Bangladesh (CRAB), accompanied by the leaders of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU), brought out a procession from Segunbagicha office and marched towards the police station around 10:30am.

CRAB President Akhtaruzzaman Lablu and Secretary Isaraf Hossain spoke at the demonstration.

Savar dyeing factory fined Tk 21 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) fined a textile dyeing factory Tk 21 lakh in Savar yesterday on charge of releasing untreated chemical effluents into the river Dhaleswari.

AKH Knitting and Dyeing Ltd had been warned to stop polluting the river three times since 2006. It was penalised for the first time yesterday, says a press release.

Mohammad Munir Chowdhury, director of DoE (enforcement), handed down the penalty.

During a snap visit, a DoE enforcement team found a part of the factory's effluent treatment plant out of order and detected river pollution with toxic liquid waste.

An on-the-spot test revealed that the level of dissolved oxygen was much lower than the minimum standard.

SM Manjurul Haq, executive director of the factory, admitted to have committed the environmental pollution with the faulty treatment plant, the release said.

The factory is capable of dying 10 tonnes of textiles everyday.

250 shanties gutted in slum fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A devastating fire in Kazibari slum in the capital's Shyamoli yesterday gutted over 250 shanties and left at least 12 people wounded including two children with severe burn injuries.

Meanwhile, another fire at a Bata showroom in Farmgate destroyed all footwear and left six firefighters injured early yesterday.

In Kazibari Slum, the fire broke out around 8:00am in the morning and left 300 families homeless.

On information, 12 firefighting units rushed to the spot and doused the fire after battling it for three hours, said Alamgir Hossain, a station officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence Headquarters.

The fire burnt down around 250 shanties of the slum, Monir Hossain, assistant director (Dhaka Division) of

Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star.

Slum dweller Khairul Hossain's sons Bijoy, 11, and Hridoy, 10, were rescued with severe burn injuries during the incident. They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Besides, 10 people including a firefighter sustained burn injuries when they tried to douse the fire, he said. They are undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

Fire brigade however could not ascertain the reason behind the blaze.

The rescue operation was hampered as most of the shanties were locked from outside. The residents, mostly garment workers, had left for work in the morning, said fire brigade sources.

Panicked residents of two nearby

buildings vacated their flats when the fire spread to the buildings. But the flame was doused shortly.

The victims of the fire could not save any of their belongings.

Meanwhile, six firefighters were injured when they came into contact with live electric wires while dousing a fire at the showroom of Bata Shoe Company.

Five units of fire brigade doused the four-hour long fire around 4:00am yesterday morning.

The injured fire fighters -- Mazharul Islam, Khabiruddin, Saiful Islam, Jamaluddin, Monir Hossain and Jahangir -- were undergoing treatment at DMCH.

Alamgir Hossain, a station officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence Headquarters, told The Daily Star that the fire broke out from an electric short circuit.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visits a photo exhibition on Bangabandhu's diplomatic engagements and a painting exhibition at the foreign ministry yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

Need for continuing democratic process stressed

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed the need for continuing the country's democratic process to build a prosperous Bangladesh through economic development.

"No one would be able to toy with Bangladesh if we can prosper economically," she told officials and staff at the foreign ministry in the capital.

Bangladesh has successfully cast off its negative image of terrorism, militancy, communalism, corruption, cyclone and flood as it has established a democratic process after facing obstructions time and again, she mentioned.

"Bangladesh is now known as a secular and democratic country. We have restored and established democracy and eliminated terrorism and militancy," added Hasina.

Bangladesh is no longer a country of blasts, though 500 blasts were reported in 63 districts within half an hour on August 17 in 2005; rather the government has introduced Bangladesh as a country of peace, progress, prosperity

and possibility, maintained the prime minister.

Lauding the success of the foreign ministry in boosting the positive image of Bangladesh through its successful foreign policy, she said the country will win in the maritime boundary delimitation arbitration with India in 2014, just like it has achieved victory against Myanmar.

"Now we need to strengthen our defence to protect the huge sea and extract resources for the welfare of our people."

"We want to build Bangladesh as a country of peace in South Asia. There might be problems with our neighbours, but we can resolve those through bilateral talks as we did in the cases of Ganges water sharing treaty and CHT peace accord. We have resolved problems in the past and will settle the remaining issues in future," she noted.

Hasina also appreciated the foreign ministry for its achievement in different international bodies including the UN, NAM, BIMSTEC, OIC and Saarc.

She asked the ministry officials, especially those in foreign missions, to monitor the well-being of the expatriate Bangladeshis, look into their prob-

lems and extend all possible help to them. "You have to remember that your salary and allowances come from the hard-earned foreign currency of the expatriates. Bangladesh's forex reserve has topped \$10 billion and the expatriates have contributed to it greatly."

Regarding the government's initiative to mitigate the effects of climate change, she said her government has taken a huge initiative to save the country and its people from the impact of climate change without looking for foreign assistance.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes and Chief of Protocol Khondker M Talha, spoke, among others.

Earlier, the prime minister arrived at the ministry around 11:00am and held a meeting with senior officials.

She also visited a photo exhibition on Bangabandhu's diplomatic engagements and a painting exhibition on the ministry premises.

She unveiled a portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at foreign minister's lounge and planted a "Bokul" sapling.

Today's HSC exams tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today's scheduled exams of Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) were postponed due to a nationwide dawn-to-dusk hartal called by BNP.

The exam, under eight general education boards, will be held tomorrow with the morning shift at 9:30am and the afternoon shift at 2:00pm.

The rescheduling decision came at an inter board coordination committee meeting yesterday.

It decided to hold the exams of "Finance and Marketing" and "Mathematics" in the morning and "Social Science" and "Social Welfare" in the afternoon.

The hartal call comes in protest of the rejection of bail petitions of 33 leaders and activists of the BNP-led 18-party alliance in an arson case of April 29.

Hartals called earlier caused the postponement of several HSC exams, which began on April 1 with 9.26 lakh examinees sitting under 10 education boards across the country.



Save Tajruna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tajruna Binte Rahman Bristy, an HSC examinee from Chilmari Mahila Degree College of Kurigram, who passed SSC examination with GPA-5 in all subjects, has been suffering from blood cancer.

She is now under treatment in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. Doctors said her treatment would cost Tk 30 lakh, which is quite impossible for her poor family to collect.

Bristy father's Md Mozibur Rahman, a nursing supervisor at Chilmari Upazila Health Complex, requested the well off people to save his daughter from an untimely death.

Any assistance can be sent to Account Number 148.101.151709, Dutch Bangla Bank Ltd, Ring Road Branch, Muhammadpur.

Mozibur Rahman is available at 01746093243.



Help save Zahid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twelve-year-old Mohammad Zahid has been suffering from cancer since long. He is the son of Mohammad Abdur Rahman, a resident of the capital's East Rampura.

He is now under treatment of DMA Mannan at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMU). He has already taken five doses of chemotherapy which is needed to continue. But his family does not have such money to continue the treatment.

His father has requested rich and kindhearted people of the society to extend their hand for Zahid's treatment.

The assistance can be sent to A/C No. 0178101000100430, Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd, Gulshan Branch, Dhaka or call Md Abdur Rahman at 01920-451047.