

NEWS IN *brief*

Help save student Asif

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Thirteen-year-old Asif Al Alam has been suffering from brain cancer. He is a student of class six at Dr Majharul Hoque High School in the port city. Asif is now undergoing treatment at United Hospital in Dhaka. Till now Tk 5 lakh has been spent for the treatment. Physicians said his treatment would cost about Tk 20 lakh more. It is quite impossible for his father Masud Alam Bhuiyan, a small trader, to bear the cost of the treatment. So, Masud has requested the kind-hearted people of the society to help save his son. Any assistance can be sent to Masud Alam Bhuiyan, AC no 129.101.30572, Dutch- Bangla Bank Ltd, CDA Avenue Branch, Chittagong or call Masud at 01925-848407.

'Increase old age allowance'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Senior citizens yesterday demanded increase of old age allowance to Tk 500 per month from existing Tk 300 in the upcoming budget. They also urged to increase amount to Tk 5 crore from 65 lakh which is given annually to the Bangladesh Association for the Aged and Institute of Geriatric Medicine by the health and family welfare ministry. They made the call while addressing a press conference on "National Budget 2012-2013: Expectation of Old Age People" at the Jatiya Press Club. Addressing the event, Professor Dr ASM Atikur Rahman, secretary general of Bangladesh Association for the Aged, called upon the government to increase the retirement age to 60 years from 59, form an independent ministry or old age people welfare depart-

80,000 books for N'ganj schools

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eighty educational institutions in Narayanganj received books from Subornogram Foundation with support from The Asia Foundation at a programme yesterday. Eighty thousand books were distributed among 80 different educational institutions. Kobi Shahid Kaiser, CEO of Subornogram foundation, presided over the programme. Chief guest Selina Hayat Ivy, mayor of Narayanganj City Corporation, and special guest Saima Anwar, deputy country representative, The Asia Foundation,



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates multimedia classrooms in 1,000 schools and teacher-led contents by pressing a computer button at her office in the capital yesterday. PHOTO: PMO

1,000 multimedia classrooms start journey

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the country had made good progress in its efforts towards building 'Digital Bangladesh' during the last three years as pledged in the ruling party's election manifesto. "We've achieved many successes to this end," she said, while inaugurating through videoconferencing from her office the multimedia classrooms and digital academic contents developed by teachers. Hasina said the education system had made a step forward towards the digitalisation goal with the inauguration of 1,000 multimedia secondary and primary school classrooms across the country. The premier opened the multimedia classrooms in 1,000 schools and the teacher-led contents by pressing a computer button. She expressed the hope that 'Digital Bangladesh' could be built much ahead of 2021 if the present trend of digitalisation continues. Hasina said, "Only the information technology can quickly reach the multipurpose flow of development to the grassroots level at a minimum cost."

"ICT can connect rural people not only with upazila and district headquarters but also with the entire globe," she added. She said multimedia classroom was the digital version of teaching method, which was widely used in the developed world. The government was attaching priority to ICT education and all books up to secondary level had been transformed into e-books which were also helping the expatriate students, she added. She said the teachers were the main medium of reaching knowledge to the learners and they were playing an important role in building an educated nation with digital knowledge. Hasina called upon the private sector to come forward so that multimedia classrooms could be established in all educational institutions of the country very fast. She asked the teachers to get habituated with the use of ICT and learn the techniques of developing colourful academic contents and build the future generation enriched with science and technology-based education. Hasina called upon the teachers, students, guardians and ICT experts to work unitedly to build a hunger- and poverty-free prosperous Digital Bangladesh and thus materialise the dream of Bangladesh. Terming the teachers and students the pioneers of the country's advancement, she said the

government would establish digital classrooms -- at least one in 20,500 secondary schools and madrasas each - by next year. "It'll help raise the standard of education to international level and remove the discrimination of teaching methods between rural and urban areas as the students could acquire latest knowledge of the world on various subjects to build themselves as worthy and skilled human resources to survive in the global competition," she added. The premier said her government had already introduced e-governance, e-commerce e-health, e-education, and e-service, and the scope of these services are expanding day by day. Later, she exchanged views with the students of Reazuddin Pilot High School of Debidwar, Comilla, Monirampur Government Girls' School, Jessore, and Tungipara GT Model High School of Gopalganj districts, and the teachers of Rangpur Teachers Training College. Presided over by Primary and Mass Education Minister Dr Afsarul Amin, the function was also addressed by National Project Director of Access to Information Programme NI Khan and Group CEO of Orascom Telecom Ahmed Abu Doma.

Bar Council election on June 20

HC asks to update voter list in 10 days
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the Bangladesh Bar Council authorities to hold its elections by June 20, with updating the voters' list within next 10 days. The court came up with the directive while delivering verdict on a writ petition challenging the process for holding the elections to Bangladesh Bar Council, the licensing authority for allowing legal practice to lawyers. Election to Bangladesh Bar Council was scheduled to be held on May 28. The HC stayed process for holding the elections on April 26 for four weeks in response to a writ petition filed by four Supreme Court lawyers. It also issued a rule upon the authorities to explain why the process for holding the election on the basis of 'faulty' voter list should not be declared illegal. The Appellate Division upheld the order of stay on May 7, asking the HC to dispose of the rule in 15 days. The bench of Justice Hasan Foz Siddique and Justice Md Jahangir Hossain yesterday delivered the verdict after hearing on the rule. Additional Attorney General MK Rahman, who appeared for the Bar Council, told The Daily Star that the Bar Council authorities had corrected and updated its voters' list. His client would send the voters' list to the respective polling centres after finalising it within next 10 days. Barrister MI Farooqui appeared for the writ petitioners.

ZAMINDAR'S PALACE

HC order on allegation today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday fixed today for passing an order on the allegation against a joint district judge and three others of occupying "a former Hindu zamindar's palace" at Nawabganj in Dhaka. During the hearing of a rule, the court asked the four to appear before it further today in connection with the allegation. The court issued the suo moto rule on May 10 following a report published in the Daily Sun under the headline "Zamindar palace is judge's palace now!" The four, who will have to appear before the court today, are: Abul Hossain Khandker, the then joint district judge of Feni, who is now attached to the ministry of law, his brothers Abul Kalam Khandaker, and Abu Ashfaq, also a local BNP leader and chairman of Nawabganj upazila, and their uncle Hashem. They appeared before the HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim yesterday as per the court's May 10 order. They told the court through their lawyer that they were not involved in occupying the land. The court said that Abul Hossain was somehow involved in grabbing the property, since its house was named as Joj Bari (Judge's house), and the truth behind has to be unearthed. Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) of Nawabganj Mirazul Islam Ukil, also appeared before the bench. He, however, will not need to come to court today as per court order. TNO Mirazul told the court that the land of the zamindar palace was vested property which was leased to the Ansar Academy and some people many years ago and some cases involving the ownership of the land have been running around in different courts.

BOMB BLAST CASE

DB finds involvement of some BNP leaders

Charge sheet to court soon, says DB (south) DC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective personnel have found involvement of some leaders of BNP and its allies in the April 29 bomb blast in the secretariat. The investigators are going to submit a charge sheet in this connection soon. "Most of the 28 accused in the bomb blast case are found involved in exploding the bomb and we have nearly completed the investigation," said deputy commissioner Monirul Islam of detective branch (south) of police yesterday. He told The Daily Star over phone that they would submit the charge sheet to the court this week but he did not mention the names of the leaders. "We have collected evidence and found that if the bomb was hurled at a person, the

person might have died," he added. Police filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station accusing 28 leaders and activists of BNP-led 18-party alliance and some other unknown persons. BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, party Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, party lawmaker Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anny and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President Oli Ahmed were, among others, made accused in the case. Two 'bombs' went off--one in front of the home ministry in the secretariat and another on a road near the secretariat--during the hartal enforced by the BNP-led alliance on April 29 to protest "the government's failure" to return BNP leader M Ilias Ali.



Police arrested this man, allegedly a Pakistani national named Aslam Khan, with a huge amount of rupees from Koilar Dipo area under Patenga of Chittagong city yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Decision on indicting Kamaruzzaman June 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday fixed June 4 to decide whether it would indict Jamaat-e-Islami leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman on charges of committing crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War. The three-member tribunal headed by Justice ATM Fazle Kabir set the date after both prosecution and defence concluded their arguments over the charges. During his 75-minute argument, prosecutor AKM Saiful Islam said Kamaruzzaman was the "principal organiser" and shouldered the "commander's responsibility" of Al Badr (an auxiliary force of the Pakistani army) in Mymensingh during the Liberation War. Quoting from the statements of a prosecution witness, he said the accused was a commander of Al Badr and visited different Al Badr camps during the Liberation War. Placing a news report of Daily Azad titled, "Fifteen other betrayers held", published on December 31, 1971, he said Kamaruzzaman was the 14th person on the list in the report. "Those arrested at the time were not regular people," said Saiful. Earlier, the defence counsels claimed that the prosecution had failed to provide documents

showing that Kamaruzzaman shouldered the "commander's responsibility". They claimed that 195 Pakistani army personnel were the "principal accused" of war crimes and since they were released under a tripartite agreement reached by Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, their abettors or aides could not be tried. In response, the prosecutor said the tripartite agreement was an executive decision, not an act. Any executive decision cannot deviate from any established law, he said. The tripartite agreement was signed by Bangladesh, India and Pakistan in 1974 while the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 was enacted just a year earlier. Kamaruzzaman, assistant secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami, facing nine charges of committing crimes against humanity, was not produced before the court yesterday as per the court's earlier decision. **Case against Abdul Alim** Earlier on the day, Tajul Islam, a defence counsel of former BNP lawmaker Abdul Alim, completed his arguments in support of the petition seeking his client's discharge from the charges brought by the prosecution. The tribunal adjourned case proceedings till 2:00pm today, following a time petition by the

prosecution. Tajul said the trial was being held 40 years after the crimes had been committed only to suppress the opposition in a political atmosphere which has changed. Justice Obaidul Hassan, a member of the tribunal, questioned why Alim would be tried over political issues since he was a leader of the Convention Muslim League during the Liberation War, 40 years ago. Tajul replied that Alim was also involved with the BNP, now the opposition party. "Why were allegations not brought against other BNP leaders but your client?" asked Justice Obaidul. Afterwards, Tajul said there are similar allegations against some ruling party leaders but they were not facing charges due to their political affiliation. When the judge asked the defence whether they had filed any application bringing charges against the mentioned ruling party leaders, Tajul replied in the negative. On why they did not do so, Tajul said it was the government's responsibility. Tajul also said the prosecution had failed to bring the required legal and factual elements to frame charges against Alim. Alim, facing 74 charges of crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the Liberation War, was present in court yesterday.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira.

Social worker Alhaj Md Nasir Uddin, father of Enam Haque, executive director of a local NGO Jess Foundation, passed away at his house in Salimpur village of Kalaroa upazila on Saturday. He was 98. He left behind his wife, five sons, three daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death. Local Awami League Lawmaker Engineer Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Kalaroa upazila Chairman BM Nazrul Islam expressed deep shock at his death. **Abdur Razzak Miah** OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur. Abdur Razzak Miah, a senior lawyer, passed away at Faridpur Diabetes Hospital due to age old complications yesterday. He was 86. He left behind three sons, three daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death. He was laid to rest at Alipur graveyard in the town.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers 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, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in 12 hours as of 6:00pm today. Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places over Barisal and Chittagong divisions. Mild to moderate heat wave, which is sweeping through Khulna division and the regions of Rajshahi, Patuakhali and Khepupara, may continue, Met Office said. Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. **The sun sets in the capital at 6:37pm today and rises at 5:13am tomorrow.** Country's highest temperature 38.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 21.0 degrees Celsius at Ishwardi. 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	34.0	26.1	93	61
Chittagong	33.8	26.0	80	69
Rajshahi	37.6	24.4	65	59
Rangpur	33.7	23.2	96	62
Khulna	37.8	28.5	81	69
Barisal	35.0	27.8	77	77