

Awardees with their crests and guests at a programme organised by Anjuman Mufidul Islam, a social welfare organisation, yesterday to recognise peoples' contributions in the collection of Zakat, animal hides and donations during the period of 2011-12 to help those in need. International Chamber of Commerce, Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman (second from left in the front row) and Transcom Group Chairman and CEO Latifur Rahman (second from right in the front row) were present as the chief guest and special guest respectively at the programme held at the organisation's Kakrail office in the capital.



PHOTO: STAR

Two killed in road accidents

METRO DESK

Two people, including a garment worker, were killed and another was injured in separate road accidents in Dhaka and Chittagong yesterday.

Our staff correspondent reports, garment worker Swapna Akhter, 20, daughter of Nazrul Islam, died as a human hauler hit her in front of Ahad Police Box at the capital's Gulistan yesterday evening.

She was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, Abdur Rahim, 50, a businessman of Gulshan-1, died yesterday after he was hit by a motorcycle at Uttar Badda in the capital on Friday.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and, later, was shifted to the Islami Bank Central Hospital where he died.

Our staff correspondent from Chittagong reports, traffic police Mohammad Shafiq, 35, was injured as a bus hit him in Chawk Bazar area of the city while he was discharging his duty around 5:00pm yesterday.

He was taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Abdul Jobber Mandol, a leader of Jatiya Party of Palashbari upazila unit and former chairman of Hossainpur union parishad, died of cardiac arrest in Dhaka on Friday night. He was 60.

He left behind his wife, two sons, three daughters and host of relatives to mourn his death.

Abdul Jobber was buried at his family graveyard at Hossainpur village in the upazila.

TIPAIMUKH DAM IMPACTS

Independent study by Bangladesh stressed

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh must initiate an independent study, instead of depending on a joint one, on the impacts of the Tipaimukh dam project that poses serious threats to the country's food security and biodiversity, observed experts and activists.

They said members of the joint expert group, drawn from Bangladesh, will have to bear the brunt of 'irresponsible' and 'submissive' statements made in favour of the dam project by several ruling party politicians and ministers of the country in the past.

The Bangladeshi members will sit with their Indian counterparts at a meeting of the group to be held in New Delhi on August 27-28 to study the impacts of the Tipaimukh dam project.

M Inamul Haque, former director general of Bangladesh Haor and Wetland Development Board (BHWDB), told UNB that construction of the Tipaimukh dam on the Barak river, 210 kilometres upstream of the Bangladeshi part of the common river, will undoubtedly change the natural pattern of water flow across the country's northeastern Haor region, which a hub of sweet-water fishes and Boro paddy.

Boro paddy cultivation in most of the Haor region, which constitutes eight districts and 33 electoral constituencies, is bound to be affected if the dam is constructed, he said.

"The dam operation will increase the water flow along the Barak, Surma and Kushira rivers during October-February period that will stop the water recession from the low lands across the river basins during that time," Inamul said, adding that if the Boro cultivation needs to continue in Haor region, water needs to be drained out during the period at any cost.

"Most of the Haor lands produce only one crop in the winter, which is Boro. I can roughly estimate the low-lying lands in the region produce Boro rice worth Tk 5,000 crore every year," he said.

The dam project not only poses threat to the food security of the Haor region but also involves the question of national food security as the Haor region contributes almost one-sixth of the annual rice production in Bangladesh, he added.

The Master Plan of Haor Area, prepared by BHWDB and Centre for

Environmental and Geographic Information Services, shows that about 19 lakh hectares of lowlands in eight Haor districts of Bangladesh account for 52 lakh tonnes of rice production every year.

Dr Mostafa Ali Reza Hossain, professor of the Department of Fisheries Biology and Genetics at Bangladesh Agricultural University, said about 50 critically endangered fish species in the Haor region will disappear if the region gets no water, as it is feared, during the two-year dam construction period.

The operation of the dam also poses threat to all of the 200-plus fish species in the region as the breeding condition of the fishes will definitely be hampered due to the change in water depth over the floodplains, he said.

"Many of the sweet-water fishes lay their eggs on shallow floodplains during April-July. If the shallow floodplains lose their character due to change in water flow, it will also affect the natural breeding of fishes, which are the major sources of protein for the people living in Haor region," Prof Mostafa added.

Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports, said, "I welcome the progress, though much belated, in the attempt for the joint study, but we also need to go for our own, independent environmental impact assessment of the Tipaimukh dam project."

"When the government people, including ministers and prime minister's advisers, spearhead showing enough of irresponsibility to people and submissiveness to the rhetoric on Tipaimukh dam forged by the Indian authority, it will be a harder task for the experts to achieve anything," he said.

"How did Prime Minister's Adviser Gower Rizvi or Foreign Minister Dipu Moni get convinced on India's assurance that Bangladesh will not be affected by the dam when no one has conducted an environmental impact assessment inside Bangladesh border," Prof Anu questioned.

"Whatever the study is going to reveal, it must be made public. Resuming the clandestine nature of the past or supporting the Indian version only for utmost faith on them will not convince the people," he stressed.

Col Shafaat Jamil's death condoled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday expressed their deep shock at the demise of freedom fighter Col (retd) Shafaat Jamil Bir Bikram.

He died of cardiac arrest at his Uttara residence in the capital early yesterday at the age of 72.

Sector Commanders Forum, Liberation War-'71, in a condolence message said with the death of Shafaat Jamil the country has lost one of the great freedom fighters who was conferred with the title Bir Bikram.

While Shafaat, was in 4th East Bengal Regiment, he revolted on March 27 in 1971 and, later, he took over the charges of 3rd East Bengal Regiment as its commander. He fought in the Liberation War under the Z forces when he also suffered injuries.

Shafaat had also played a vital role in trial of war criminals. In a separate message, Nabo Muktisena, also expressed deep shock saying the country has lost a patriot freedom fighter.

Both of the organisations prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and expressed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

A doa mahfil will be held at Raowa club in the capital after Asr prayers on Tuesday, family sources said.

Two accomplices of Dakat Shahid held in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of Police arrested on Friday night two close associates of listed criminal Dakat Shahid who was killed in a "gunfight" with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in the capital in July.

On a tip, a team of detectives arrested Bhagina Faruk, 23, and Al-Amin, 24, at a construction site on Tipu Sultan Road around 10:00pm.

The two men have links with criminal activities along the lines of extortion, possession of arms, murder and bombings, said Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner of the Media and Community Service, Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Police also recovered two pistols, four magazines of guns and 130 bottles of Phensedyl from the residence of Faruk's mother at Swamibag following interrogation.

Faruk, according to Rahman, used to extort money by phoning businessmen and industrialists. Those who refused to pay him were typically victims of violence involving bombs and gunfire. Faruk conducted such activities in many parts of the city, including Jatrabari, New Market and Sutrapur, he added.

Two cases have already been filed against Faruk and Al-Amin. Faruk has been remanded for six days while Al-Amin has been remanded for two days on charges of possession of arms and drugs, said DB Assistant Commissioner Mahbabur Rahman. The two men are being held at the DB office, he added.

Dakat Shahid, accused in 18 cases including six for murders, was killed in the gunfight with Rab at Laxmibazar in Old Dhaka on July 3. More than 100 general diaries (GD) were filed against him with different police stations in the capital.

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Employees of Maasranga Television form a human chain in the capital yesterday demanding arrest of and punishment to the killers of journalist couple Sagar Sarwar and Meherun Runi. Sagar was a news editor of Maasranga while Runi was a senior reporter of the TV channel ATN Bangla.

PHOTO: STAR