

Two 'commit suicide' in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 10-year-old boy and a newly-wed woman allegedly committed suicide in the capital's Sabujbagh and Rupnagar area early yesterday.

In an incident, Ishraq Farhan Ananta, 10, a class three student at Ideal School Banasree branch, committed suicide by hanging himself with a scarf from a ceiling fan in a bedroom of their house.

Quoting family members, Amena Khanam, assistant sub-inspector (ASI) at Sabujbagh Police Station, said Ananta's mother Ishrat Jahan Keya scolded him for not being attentive to his studies.

Following his mother's scolding, the boy hanged himself from the ceiling fan in the room around 12:30am, she said.

In another incident, police recovered body of newly-wed Yasmin Akhter, 18, wife of grocery shop-keeper Jibon Hawlader Emdad, from a house in Rupnagar residential area early yesterday.

Rupnagar police said Yasmin got married to Emdad on August 23, only two days after the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Quoting family members, police said Emdad asked his wife whether she would like to accompany him to go market for buying some gold ornaments around 9:00pm on Monday, but she replied him in the negative.

After returning home at dead of night, Emdad found the door of the house closed from inside.

Failing to get response to his calls, he informed police about the matter.

Later, police recovered the body by breaking open the door.

Police said they could not know the reason behind the suicide till filing of this report at 8:25pm yesterday.

NO TORTURE ON ABDIN!



On July 6 last year, the first day of the opposition called 48-hour hartal, Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque led a picket procession in the capital which was obstructed by police. In the process Abdin was beaten by the law enforcers. The Daily Star published some photos of that beating the next day, which are being re-published. A BNP lawmaker later filed an attempted murder case accusing some police personnel. The court took the case and ordered an investigation. The Detective Branch of Police submitted a report claiming police acted justifiably in the face of Abdin's unruly behaviour. The court accepted the report and dismissed the case on Monday.

STAR FILE PHOTOS



Govt urged to form ministry for the elderly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A voluntary organisation yesterday urged the government to form a separate ministry for the elderly.

Bangladesh Probin Adhikar Forum (BPAF) also demanded that the government increases old age allowances, allocates reserved seats in public transports and introduces senior citizen's cards for welfare of the elderly people.

BPAF made the call at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club in the capital ahead of the International Day of Older Persons to be observed on October 1.

Speaking at the event, Ahmed Hossain, executive director of BPAF, urged the government to allocate khash land for building homes for the elderly persons across the country.

Rina Amin, member of BPAF, stressed the need for establishing separate wards in government and non-government hospitals to ensure health services for them.

BPAF has chalked out programmes to observe the International Day of Older Persons on October 1. The programmes include a procession from Jatiya Press Club to Muktangan at 10:00am, publication of a souvenir, a two-day festival and a free treatment camp for the elderly.

BPAF members Khandakar Saiful Islam, Advocate Kamal Parvez, Feroza Naznin, Md Yunus Ali and Md Kaiyum also addressed the press conference.



Taher acting chief of info commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Commissioner MA Taher took over as acting chief information commissioner (CIC) of the Information Commission on Monday.

He took the office after Muhammad Zamir, who had been working as the CIC since March 31, 2010, retired from service the same day.

MA Taher joined the commission as an information commissioner at the commission's inception in 2009, says a press release.

ARSON CASE AGAINST OPPOSITION MEN HC stays proceedings for three more months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday extended by three months its earlier order that had stayed all operations of a Dhaka court dealing with an arson case against 46 opposition leaders and activists.

The earlier order was given on August 6, staying the proceedings of the Speedy Trial Court-5 for eight weeks following a writ petition filed by an accused, Mahbub Uddin Khokon, also a BNP lawmaker.

The petition had challenged the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court's decision to give power to Metropolitan Magistrate Harun-or Rashid to conduct the trial court.

The 46 opposition men, including BNP Acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, were charged with setting afire a bus near the Prime Minister's Office during the April 29 hartal.

The court farmed charges against the accused on July 31.

Yesterday's HC order came following an extension petition filed by Khokon.

In the latest petition, he said the trial court did not have any legal jurisdiction to deal with the case, as the government had not issued any gazette giving the judicial power to that court as per the relevant law.

The HC's August 6 stay order will expire towards the end of September, but the new extension started from yesterday because of advanced filing of the extension petition, Khokon told The Daily Star.

'Reducing healthcare cost a challenge'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although Bangladesh has significant achievements in the health sector, the country still faces challenges to reduce the high cost of health services that deprives the poor of healthcare, said a study yesterday.

The study observed the gradual increase of health expenditure as a burden for patients of non-communicable diseases and recommended taking an appropriate strategy for financing of national healthcare, a core objective of universal health coverage.

Universal Health Coverage is a concept that ensures health security of mass people. Along with government and non-government organisations, the media can play a significant role in generating demand for universal health coverage by creating awareness among the people, the study said.

The study was prepared on the basis of a total of 516 health related news published in six national dailies throughout last year. The study also focused on some aspects of the reports including structure and quality.

The newspapers are Jugantor, Ittefaq, The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, Kaler Kontho and The Independent.

Associate Professor Pradip Kumar Panday, a teacher of Department of Mass Communication and Journalism of Rajshahi University, carried out and presented the study titled 'Health Reporting and Universal Health Coverage' at a seminar organised by

Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB).

With the assistance of Rockefeller Foundation, PIB organised the seminar under a project styled 'Making a March towards Universal Health Coverage in Bangladesh: Training up Journalists and Capacitating PIB' at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in the capital.

According to the study, Bangla daily Ittefaq is in lead in context of news coverage with Prothom Alo, The Daily Star and Kaler Kontho in second position.

Speaking as chief guest in the seminar, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Capt (retd) Mojibur Rahman Fakir said the government had significant successes in MDGs (millennium development goals) through fulfilling some major health indicators and the effort will be continued with the assistance of non-government organisations.

Humayun Kabir, senior secretary of Health and Family Welfare Ministry, said awareness should be made among mass people for them to raise their voice for a larger allocation in health budget.

Information Secretary Hedayetullah Al Mamoon said the media has been continuing its endeavor to increase awareness and participation of the people in different ways by publishing health related news.

Dulal Chandra Biswas, director general of PIB, chaired the seminar while Jeanette Vega, managing director of Rockefeller Foundation, spoke among others.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Awareness raising campaign launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human trafficking can be prevented by raising awareness through electronic and print media and other means of communication and campaigns, speakers said at a campaign launching programme in the capital yesterday.

Actions for Combating Trafficking in Persons (ACT) Program by Winrock International and USAID jointly launched the "ACT" campaign to raise awareness of human trafficking.

With the new campaign individuals should be able to judge the legitimacy of job offers and safety of migration procedures, said Laura Romah, ACT Program's acting chief of party.

Maruf Kabir, executive director of Visual Communication Ltd, gave an elaborate presentation on the campaign materials that he developed in collaboration with ACT.

The materials include television commercials with actor Riaz Uddin Ahmed, radio messages, posters, T-shirts, caps, notepads and information cards with emergency helpline numbers, he said.

Hazrat Ali, additional secretary of Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, among others, was present at the programme held at Brac Centre Inn.

Two ceramic factories fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment yesterday fined two ceramic factories Tk 41.78 lakh at Bhabanipur in Gazipur for destroying agricultural land and polluting forestland.

DoE Director (Enforcement) Mohammad Munir Chowdhury fined Fu-Wang Ceramics Ltd Tk 14.90 lakh and Sunpower Ceramics Ltd Tk 26.88 lakh, said a DoE press release.

During a drive, the DoE found the Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) of Fu-Wang closed while the Sunpower with no ETP.

The factories untreated liquid wastes have been affecting a huge forest and farming lands around them.

The Fu-Wang did not take DoE clearance while the Sunpower did not renew its clearance certificate.

Ex-Buet students urge VC, Pro-VC to quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-eight former students of Buet have condemned the ongoing deadlock at the university and urged the VC and Pro-VC to step down.

In a joint statement on Monday, they said Vice-Chancellor Prof SM Nazrul Islam and Pro-VC Prof M Habibur Rahman had proved their inefficiency in running the university.

The former students, who are now renowned architects, have asked the duo to handover their responsibilities to an apt leadership.

The teachers and students had been in a movement showing no confidence in the VC and the pro-VC, which is severely hampering the academic activities of the university, the statement said, adding that the campus might turn into a battlefield due to this.

An institution is much more important than an individual's interest, position and presence, the statement read.

Architects Mobasser Hossain, Uttam Saha, Abu Sayeed Mostaq Ahmed and Iqbal Habib were the signatories of the statement, among others.

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