

NEWS IN *brief*

Govt working on online news portal policy: Info secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is working to prepare a separate policy on online news portals, Information Secretary Hedayetullah Al Mamoon told journalists after a meeting in Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday.

"The government wants to facilitate online based media and its expansion through the guideline," BBC Bangla quoted the secretary as saying.

Different online media houses raised questions about the necessity of the policy. They said it would provide the government an opportunity to establish control over the media houses, the report adds.

Now there are over 200 online media organisa-

Schoolboy drowns in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A schoolboy drowned in the Turag River in Nababer Bagh dam area of Mirpur in the capital yesterday.

The victim was Ashraful Islam, 15, a student of class seven at Shahali Model High School, and a resident of Darus Salam area.

Locals said Ashraful drowned when he went there to take a bath along with his two friends around 2:30pm.

On information, two divers from fire service department went to the spot and recovered the body after about 45 minutes of efforts around 4:30pm.

Fire service sources said the body was found about

Koica to give vocational training to govt officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Korea International Cooperation Agency (Koica) will provide advanced vocational training to four senior level government officials of Bangladesh to enhance the post-management capacity of vocational training centers in the country.

The four high-ups are a joint secretary of Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, director of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, principal and chief instructor of Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre.

They, along with twelve more participants from Vietnam, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, will attend the 17-day-long training programme in Korea that starts

ENT society elects executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Dr Mohd Abdullah and Prof Dr AF Mohiuddin Khan have been elected the president and general secretary respectively of the Society of Otolaryngologists and Head Neck Surgeons of Bangladesh, the official organ of ENT Surgeons of Bangladesh.

The organisation's members chose their first ever committee members through an election on September 8, says press release.

Other elected office bearers included Treasurer Prof Dr SM Khorshed Alam Mazumder, Vice Presidents Prof Dr Zahedul Alam and Prof Dr Sabahuddin Ahmed, Joint Secretaries Dr Mahmudul Hasan and Dr Majharul Shaheen, and Organising

Jubo League gets new committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami Jubo League, youth body of ruling Awami League, announced its 148-member central committee yesterday, two months after Mohammad Omar Faroque Chowdhury and Harun-ur-Rashid were made its chairman and general secretary respectively.

Dr Mizanur Rahman and Sheikh Fazlur Rahman Maruf, among others, have been made presidium members, says a press release.

Mohiuddin Ahmed Mohi, Manjur Alam Shahin and Mamun-or-Rashid, among others, have been made joint secretaries while Fazlul Haque Atique, Salauddin Mahmud Zahid organising secretaries among others.

Former leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League Iqbal Mahmud Bablu, Dr Helal Uddin, Nasim AL Momin Rupok, Masum Hasan and Mehedy Hasan have been made deputy secretaries.



Raging flames sweep across Chandmari slum in Narayanganj district town yesterday morning, burning down at least 50 houses and two warehouses.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

REDRAWING JS CONSTITUENCIES EC to sit with civil society today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission will sit today with civil society personalities to seek their opinion on redrawing the boundaries of parliamentary constituencies and the ongoing task of updating voter lists.

Around 100 individuals of civil society were invited to join today's talks at 11:00am at National Economic Council conference room in the capital.

This is the first time that the Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad-led EC is holding such talks.

The commission also plans to hold talks with senior journalists but is yet to fix a date for this.

After receiving their opinions, the EC will finalise its course of action on redrawing the boundaries of parliamentary constituencies.

Although the commission is undecided whether to sit with political party leaders, Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad several times said the EC would hold talks with them if the need arises.

Dhaka Wasa unveils sewerage master plan

Entire capital to come under network

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) has prepared a 23-year sewerage master plan to bring the whole Dhaka city under its network.

Currently only 30 percent of the capital is covered by the sewerage network, speakers said at a programme at Sonargaon Hotel yesterday where the plan was unveiled.

Due to an absence of sewerage system in the large parts of Dhaka city, waste is being dumped in rivers, canals and other water bodies, causing serious water pollution.

Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan said the plan would be implemented in three phases at a cost of US\$ 2 billion.

In the first phase, Pagla Sewerage

Treatment Plant will be improved so that it can use its full capacity of treating 1.2 lakh cubic metres of waste. Currently it treats only 40,000 cubic metres of waste.

In addition, the trunk sewerage from Madhubagh (near Tejgaon) to Pagla will be rehabilitated and new sewerage system will be built in Gulshan and Banania area.

Wasa will also rehabilitate or construct four lift stations at Tejgaon, Gulshan, Bashabo and Golapbagh. The first phase will be implemented by 2015.

In the second phase to be completed by 2025, Wasa will construct four sewerage treatment plants in Dhaka and two in Narayanganj.

Five more treatment plants in Savar, Tongi, Keraniganj, Purbachal and Gazipur will be constructed in the third phase by 2035.



Malaysian Human Resources Minister Dr S Subramaniam meets Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Muggers stab 2 schoolboys in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers stabbed two schoolboys in the capital's Rupnagar Residential area yesterday.

The victims Md Rajib, 15, a student of class X at Mirpur Bangla High School and his friend Md Shaheen, 15, a student of class X at Rupnagar Model High School, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

At knife-point, the muggers tried to snatch cellphones and wallets from the victims around 12:00pm.

"Hearing our hue and cry, locals came forward. But the muggers left the spot after hitting us with small knives in back and neck," claimed Rajib while talking to reporters at DMCH.

Police said they were looking into the matter.

PROPOSED COMMISSION FOR NGOS Stakeholders fear disruption of innovative activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government's proposed commission to streamline non-government organisations stirred criticism among NGO stakeholders who apprehended that the new move would disrupt their innovative and voluntary activities.

New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW), in a September 10 statement, said the government, on August 25, mentioned of launching a commission to look into NGO operations, claiming that many were involved in "terror-financing and other anti-state activities."

HRW had suggested scrapping the proposed commission and apprehended that the government move would stifle civil society activity.

Though the government stated that the commission would ensure transparency and accountability in the NGO sector, the stakeholders consider the move a way to control their activities.

"It is good to have an institution to regulate the non-state organisations' activities. But if the commission's purpose is to impose too much control on NGOs, it will create a scope for corruption," said Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular

Education, yesterday.

With different sectors, including banks and the share market, troubled with unbridled corruption, the government should not go for any new move without consultations with the stakeholders who may suffer in future, she told The Daily Star.

NGO Federation of Bangladesh Chairman Tajul Islam told The Daily Star that he heard about the government's plan informally and through the media and none from the government had formally informed the stakeholders.

Refuting the stakeholders' apprehensions, Social Welfare Ministry Secretary Ranjit Kumar Biswas said the plan was still in an embryonic stage.

"There is nothing to control or regulate in the NGOs activities, rather the commission, if formed, will facilitate the NGO activities," he told The Daily Star.

He said there were currently around 50,000 NGOs operating in the country by obtaining registration from the Ministry of Social Welfare, NGO Affairs Bureau and The Office of the Registrar of the Joint Stock Companies and Firms.

Director General of the NGO Affairs Bureau Nurun Nabi Talukder said no discussions were yet held with the government about the formation of the commission.

Secularism must for country's progress

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Planning Minister AK Khandker yesterday said secularism must be maintained in Bangladesh for the country to progress.

"If we want Bangladesh to advance, people of different religions have to treat each other as brothers. Thus, secularism must be maintained," he said.

The minister was addressing a discussion after screening of a documentary titled "Jihad Without Border" made by noted writer and war crimes researcher Shahriar Kabir in Women's Voluntary Association (WVA) auditorium in the capital.

"I believe Bangladeshes have spiritual power which will emerge on time and absolute secularism will be established in the country," said Khandker.

However, noted historian Prof Muntasir Mamun said the future of secularism in Bangladesh is dark as communal education is expanding.

On the ongoing war crimes trial, Mamun claimed the prosecution of International Crimes Tribunals is very weak.

Also laying blame on the government, he said, "The government itself also tolerates fundamentalism in the country."

Presiding over the discussion, cultural personality Kamal Lohani said the government is showing contradictory attitude because establishing secularism is not possible keeping Islam as the state religion.

Through his documentary, Shahriar Kabir disclosed different information on "history, politics, economy and character of militancy in Pakistan."

Veteran left politician Ajoy Roy, Chairperson of Ain O Salish Kendra Hamida Hossain among others, spoke at the discussion.

Fire destroys 50 slum houses in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

At least 50 houses and two warehouses were completely destroyed by a fire that broke out at Chandmari slum in Narayanganj town yesterday morning.

Witnesses and police said the fire originated from the house of one Edu Mia in the area around 11:00am and soon engulfed the adjacent structures.

On information, five fire fighting units from Mondal Para and Hajiganj in the town rushed to the spot and doused the fire after an hour of hectic efforts.

More than half of the 100 houses in Chandmari slum were burnt to ashes in the fire incident.

Two arrested for killing trader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch (DB) of police yesterday arrested two men on charge of killing a small handicraft trader in the capital's Pallabi on August 5.

A dispute over collecting money through extortion led to the murder of trader Mohammad Ali, 35, said police quoting the arrestees.

Detained-- Jibon Ahmed alias Joni, 24, and Md Kalam, 30, have admitted their involvement in the killing of Ali.

Acting on a tip off, police arrested the two from Baonia of Turag.

Ali was a member of a criminal gang led by one Musa and he used to collect money for Musa. However, the two got into a disagreement when Ali demanded money from an associate of Musa, police said.

Enraged Musa planned to kill Ali and after an altercation with Ali, Musa and two others shot him, they said.

On August 5, Ali was found dead with three bullet injuries.

WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely
UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:04pm and rises tomorrow at 5:45am.

Country's highest temperature 34.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 24.4 degrees at Hatiya and Teknaf.

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	33.4	27.0	86	82
Chittagong	30.0	25.5	93	90
Rajshahi	34.6	26.6	86	81
Rangpur	31.7	27.0	92	84
Khulna	32.0	26.6	86	95
Barisal	31.5	26.0	87	95

DHAKA TODAY

Conference
Bangladesh Economic Association will organise a conference; Venue: Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh; Time: 10:30am.

Competition
East West University Telecommunications Club will hold a competition; Venue: its premises; Time: 11:00am.

Roundtable
Nagorik Oikya will organise a roundtable; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

Seminar
Prioporom Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra Shatsanga Foundation will hold a seminar;