

NEWS IN *brief*

US envoy escapes unhurt in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A CNG-run auto-rickshaw broke off the side mirror of a vehicle carrying US Ambassador in Dhaka Dan W Mozena at a turning in Chittagong city yesterday morning. The envoy escaped unhurt.

Police detained the auto-rickshaw driver and seized the vehicle from Lalkhan Bazar Ispahani intersection and a case was filed in this connection.

The envoy was on his way to visit Chittagong Port and Chittagong Export Processing Zone.

JCD man shot in chest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified miscreants shot a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activist in the chest before Kalabagan Staff Quarters gate in the capital last night.

The victim Mizanur Rahman Rajib, 30, a JCD Kalabagan branch activist, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Rajib's brother Monjurul Alam Sajib said Awami Jubo League men had been threatening Rajib for the last couple of days.

New DFID country chief arrives

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Sarah Cooke arrived in Dhaka yesterday to take up her role as country representative of DFID, the UK government's aid programme in Bangladesh, says a British High Commission press release.

On her arrival, she said, "The UK government is committed to Bangladesh's development and ambition of achieving middle income status within the next decade."

Yaba tablets seized, 4 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch of police arrested four young drug traders with 7,000 pieces of Yaba tablets worth Tk 24.50 lakh from the capital's Khilgaon on Thursday.

Police also seized Tk 3.5 lakh, five mobile phones and a microbus from their possession.

They are Md Aminul Islam alias Amin, Md Ayez, Md Ilias, and Noor Mohammad, Deputy Commissioner of DB Masudur Rahman told a press briefing yesterday while producing them before it at Dhaka Metropolitan Police Media Centre.

Govt to develop 24,000 websites

BSS, Dhaka

The government has developed about 5,000 web portals for its administration to deliver online services, officials of Access to Information (A2I) Programme told the news agency.

The 5,000 web portals, out of 24,000, under A2I Programme will be launched by this December, they said.

National Project Director of A2I Md Nazrul Islam Khan said, "The web portals are being developed to enable a single-window access to information and services by unions, upazilas, districts, divisions, directorates and ministries."

35 get certificates on TV news presentation training

METRO DESK

Participants of training course on "TV News Presentation" were awarded certificates at a function at Bangladesh Institute of Journalism and Electronic Media (BIJEM) in the capital on Saturday.

Maasranga Television Chief Executive Officer and Chief Editor Syed Fahim Mumaim as chief guest distributed certificates among the participants.

35 persons took part in the course conducted by the BIJEM, said a press release.

With Managing Director of RP Construction and BIJEM Advisor Farid Ahmed Bhuiyan in the chair, BIJEM Executive Director Mirza Tarequl Qader was



Speaker Abdul Hamid administers oath to ruling Awami League candidate Simeen Hussain Rimi, who recently won the Gazipur-4 (Kapasia) by-polls, in Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Rimi takes oath as lawmaker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League candidate Simeen Hussain Rimi, who won the Gazipur-4 (Kapasia) by-polls, took oath as a lawmaker yesterday.

Speaker Abdul Hamid administered oath to Rimi in his office in Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Rimi's mother Syeda Zohra Tajuddin, a number of AL leaders and officials of the parliament secretaria were present at the brief ceremony.

The Gazipur-4 constituency fell vacant following resignation of AL MP and former state minister for home Tanjim Ahmad Sohel Taj from parliament on July 7.

His sister Rimi, daughter of Bangladesh's first premier Tajuddin Ahmad, won the September 30 by-polls overshadowing her uncle Afsaruddin Ahmad by a huge margin.

BNP tries to pull JP as ally

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The main opposition BNP has taken an initiative to improve relations with HM Ershad's Jatiya Party aiming to weaken the ruling Awami League-led grand alliance ahead of the next general election.

As part of the initiative, some BNP lawmakers have recently contacted a few JP lawmakers, including JP senior leaders, and several meetings have taken place between them in the last few weeks, BNP insiders said.

A top BNP leader is coordinating the entire affair, but no-one from the party agreed to make any formal comment on the issue.

Party insiders said some senior BNP leaders talked to two senior JP leaders during this Ramadan and high commands of both

the parties were informed of the discussion.

Following the informal talks, the main opposition tasked some of its lawmakers to maintain communication with JP lawmakers and urge them to mount pressure on party chief Ershad to leave the grand alliance, they added.

The communication between the two parties will continue, as many JP leaders are no longer interested in the AL, a BNP leader told The Daily Star.

JP Presidium Member Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu, also a former minister, said any individual leader of his party could talk to any party including BNP but the party chairman or the party had no involvement in this process. "The issue was not even discussed inside the party," he told The Daily Star.

ATTACK ON BUDDHISTS Find real culprits to avoid politicisation

Says NHRC chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must find the real culprits behind the September 30 attack on Buddhist populated areas in Cox's Bazar and Chittagong to discourage politicisation of the issue, said NHRC Chairman Mizanur Rahman yesterday.

In Cox's Bazar, violent mobs torched and vandalised 12 Buddhist temples and monasteries and over 50 houses of Ramu upazila and torched two monasteries of Ukhaia and five houses of Teknaf upazila.

Some miscreants also vandalised two monasteries and a Hindu temple in Chittagong's Patiya upazila.

"The state has to stand against communalism to ensure citizen's rights because the gruesome attack was carried out not only against the Buddhist community but also against the democratic government of Bangladesh," he said.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) chairman was addressing the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between NHRC and Oxfam, an international development organisation, in the NHRC office in the capital.

On an NHRC team's observation during its October 5 visit to the spots of violence, he said NHRC will recommend some suggestions to the government regarding arrest of and punishment to the perpetrators.

He warned that no innocent person should be arrested and harassed only to increase the number of arrests.

Mizanur reiterated that the attack was preplanned to fulfill a "blueprint". "The attack would not be possible without help from local influential quarters and prior knowledge of intelligence agencies and the local administration."

During the attack, Muslim households remained untouched while the Buddhist community's households and valuables, including Buddha's golden statues, were looted, he said.

He said the commission received allegations that fire fighters were not allowed to reach the spots on time.

On Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's expected visit to Ramu today, he said, "I am hopeful that her visit will help the community regain its confidence."

Earlier, he also sought media assistance to establish people's rights.

Sheikh Hasina inaugurated Jamuna bridge Says Monju

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman Anwar Hossain Monju yesterday said the Jamuna bridge was inaugurated in 1998 by the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina while he was in charge of the communications ministry.

"Different quarters were saying that the Jamuna bridge was completed during their tenure. But I want them to remind that it was the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina who inaugurated the bridge on 23 June, 1998," said Monju in a statement.

He also said BNP, while in power from 1991 to 1996, completed 25 to 30 percent of the bridge's piling work.

But the activities stopped due to complexities centering land acquisition.

"However, it is true that the agreement on preparatory works and on other related issues were signed during their (BNP's) tenure."

"Without elaborating, I want to say that 70 percent of the piling and bridge docking works were completed while Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was in power," he said.



Desperate to make a living, this construction worker braves grave risks to scale a guardrail-less bamboo scaffolding without any safety harness or hard hat in Momin Road in Chittagong city yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

HALL-MARK SCAM

Hearing on writ adjourned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday adjourned for two weeks the hearing on a writ petition that sought its directive on the government to recover Tk 3,547 crore loan taken by Hall-Mark Group and five other companies from Sonali Bank.

Supreme Court lawyer Eunus Ali Akond filed the petition on September 17 with the HC, seeking its order on the authorities concerned to confiscate the assets of the companies on failure to refund the money.

The HC passed the adjournment order after Eunus prayed for postponement of hearing on the petition, saying that he will insert some new grounds in his petition.

He also urged the HC to ask the government to constitute a judicial commission to probe the irregularities in all the public and private banks.

The petitioner prayed to the court to order the seizure of the passports of Hall-Mark Group's Managing Director Tanvi Mahmud and his wife, so that they cannot leave the country.

Eunus, in his petition, said the Hall-Mark Group swindled Tk 2686.14 crore, T & Brothers Tk 609.69 crore, Paragon Group Tk 146.60 crore, Nakshi Knit Tk 66.36 crore, DN Sports Tk 33.25 crore and Khan Jahan Ali Tk 4.96 crore out of Hotel Ruposhi Bangla branch of the state-owned Sonali Bank.

Earlier on the day, an HC bench summarily rejected the petition, saying that the petition has become ineffective since the government has taken some actions over the Sonali Bank loan scam.

The bench, however, later withdrew the rejection order following the prayer of the petitioner.



Muddy puddles and potholes make vehicular movement difficult over this portion of road near the intersection connecting Panthapath, Russel Square, Karwan Bazar and Farmgate in the capital as patches of the road dug up for utility works were not covered up afterwards. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Worker dies after falling from building

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A construction worker died after he fell from the fourth floor of an under-construction building in Bahaddarhat area under Panchlaish Police Station in Chittagong city yesterday.

Police said the victim Shafiqur Rahman, 40, fell down while he was working on the building named Salma Manjil around 11:20am.

Locals rushed him to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The building's owner could not be contacted despite several tries over cellphone.

Pedestrian killed in construction wooden log fall

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A female pedestrian was killed when a wooden log from a roadside under-construction building fell on her head in the capital's Shewrapara yesterday.

The deceased was Hasina Begum, 48, hailing from Bhanga upazila of Faridpur.

The incident occurred when Hasina was walking on the road beside the construction site near her residence in Shewrapara around noon, said Zibon Mia, caretaker of the building where Hasina resides.

Locals rushed her to National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor). She was later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared her dead around 2:30pm.

The body was sent to DMC morgue for autopsy, said police.

WEATHER TODAY

Slight rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

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

Day and night temperature may rise slightly over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:39pm and rises tomorrow at 5:54am.

Country's highest temperature 34.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sandwip and lowest 23.2 degrees at Dinajpur.

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	33.6	25.5	63	71
Chittagong	32.6	25.4	87	79
Rajshahi	33.0	24.4	91	90
Rangpur	31.1	25.4	86	76
Khulna	32.6	26.0	88	84
Barisal	33.0	24.6	75	88