

NEWS IN *brief*

Restoration of 1972 constitution demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A pro-liberation platform observed a half-day mass hunger strike yesterday on the 40th anniversary of the formulation of Bangladesh's constitution to press home several demands.

Bahatturer Sangbidhan Punoprotishttha Jatiya Committee (the national committee for restoration of the 1972 constitution) organised the event demanding that the government removes communal and undemocratic amendments to the constitution, constitutionally recognises adivasis, expedites the war crimes trial and brings perpetrators of the recent communal violence in

17 fishermen rescued from Bay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Seventeen fishermen were rescued from deep sea by a merchant ship on the Bay of Bengal on Saturday.

The fishermen, all hailing from Cox's Bazar, were handed over to Bangladesh Coast Guard (East Zone) yesterday to be sent home.

Engine of the fishing trawler carrying the fishermen broke down 120 nautical miles south of Saint Martin's Island on Saturday night, said coast guard sources.

Merchant vessel MV Amsir, owned by Abul Khair Group, rescued the fishermen and informed

Young man killed in Keraniganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young man was killed by some unidentified assailants on the bank of Buriganga river in Tower ghat area of Keraniganj last night.

The victim was Mohammad Yasin, 20, of Keraniganj and also an employee of a cloth shop in the old part of the capital's Islampur market.

Police said some miscreants stabbed Yasin in the ghat area around 10:30pm.

With severe injury in the chest and abdomen, he was rushed to a local hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Police detained the victim's friend Alamin in this connection.

Quoting Alamin police said he had talked to Yasin

Bangladeshi frigate 'Bangabandhu' reaches Kochi

PTI, Kochi

Bangladeshi frigate "Bangabandhu" has arrived in Kochi on a four-day visit to India, en route to Doha.

The ship, which arrived in the Indian port city on November 2, is on its way to Doha to participate in a naval exercise titled 'Exercise Ferocious Falcon', said a press release. Tariq Ahmad Karim, high commissioner of Bangladesh to India, went to Kochi to welcome the Bangladesh Navy flagship frigate on its arrival. The ship will leave Kochi for

Court summons ex-OC for tax evasion

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday summoned a former officer-in-charge of Demra Police Station hours after the National Board of Revenue (NBR) filed a tax evasion case against him.

Accused Saiful Islam will have to appear before the court on January 6 next year.

Judge Md Zahirul Haque of Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after Zobair Ahmed Chowdhury, additional assistant tax commissioner of NBR, filed the case against Saiful for dodging Tk 1.92 crore in tax from fiscal year 1990-91 to 2009-2010.

Saiful had concealed Tk 58,662,582 while he submitted his tax returns to the NBR, Zobair said, adding that Saiful repeatedly gave false information about his real income and expenditure.



PHOTO: STAR

Artists of Shurer Dhara perform at Rabindra Sarobar in the capital's Dhanmondi yesterday marking the 14th founding anniversary of Bangla daily the Prothom Alo.

55 posts of lower court judges lie vacant

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

A total of 55 posts of the lower court judges have been lying vacant for over one year, affecting the future of numerous people seeking justice across the country.

Over 18 lakh cases are pending with lower courts across the country while 2.82 lakh with the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, said sources in the SC and Ministry of Law.

Of the vacant posts, one is of district judge, one is of joint district judge and the remaining 53 are of additional district judge, Mahbubar Rahman Sarkar, senior assistant secretary to the ministry, told The Daily Star.

He said the vacant posts would be filled up within this month as judges from lower tiers have already been promoted as per approval from the SC and only their postings were awaiting.

State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam told The Daily Star that the government would take steps to fill up all the vacant posts of lower court judges within this year.

The government is giving serious

consideration to the issue so that litigants did not face any trouble in getting justice, he said.

A total of 1,598 judges are now discharging judicial functions in the lower courts and recruitment of 125 new assistant judges is now under process.

An official concerned said the vacant posts of judges could not be filled up all at a time as appointments of the judicial officials were made only at the entry level, meaning the post of assistant judge.

These judges are promoted in the sequence of senior assistant judge, joint district judge, additional district judge and finally district judge in order to fill up the vacancies, he said.

The lower court judges are appointed after the Judicial Service Commission selects suitable candidates by holding different tests and examinations, he said, adding that a total of 726 judges were appointed through the commission so far.

The ministry in May requested the commission to select suitable persons from 125 candidates for appointment in 77 posts of assistant judges, he said.

INDO-BANGLA POWER PLANT Cabinet okays PPA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet committee on economic affairs yesterday approved a power purchase agreement (PPA) to buy electricity from the proposed 1,320 megawatt coal-fired power plant in Khulna to be built by a joint venture of Bangladesh and India.

The \$1.5 billion private power plant will be built by a company equally owned by the Power Development Board (PDB) of Bangladesh and the National Thermal Power Company (NTPC) of India. The plant may come into operation in 2016-17.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith chaired the cabinet committee meeting yesterday.

The PPA now paves the way for formal launching of the joint venture company within this month, officials said.

According to the PPA, the company will be exempted from paying corporate tax for 15 years like other private power companies.

But after 15 years, the PDB would pay the tax on behalf of the joint venture company. This raised eyebrows of industry insiders as this is absent elsewhere.

The PDB will sign the PPA with the joint venture company for purchase of power for 25 years from this plant.

The PPA does not have a power tariff profile. Instead, it spells out a formula to fix the tariff annually.

The PDB has acquired 1,800 acres of land for the project. The Environmental Impact Assessment of the project is now at its final stage.

Jamaat-e-Islami announces fresh programmes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday announced nine-day long fresh programmes demanding release of its arrested leaders facing war crimes trial, and restoration of "full faith in Allah" and the caretaker government system in the constitution.

Jamaat, the key ally of the BNP-led 18-party alliance, will stage protests in all cities, upazilas and districts today and will carry out mass public relation programmes from November 6 to 13.

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Mia Golam Parowar announced the programme at a press conference in the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

Ex-DGFI chief summoned by court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday summoned Maj Gen (retd) Sadik Hasan Rumi, former director general of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), to appear before it today to narrate what he knows about the August 21 grenade attack cases.

Judge Shahid Nuruddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 issued the summoning after cross-examining a Metropolitan Magistrate AKM Emdadul Haque on behalf of all the accused of the cases.

Rumi, a key prosecution witness in the cases, was director general of DGFI when the August 21 grenade attack was carried out on an Awami League (AL) rally in 2004 on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Of the 52 accused in two cases of the August 21 grenade attack, former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar, Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and 24 others were produced before the court yesterday.

Seven other accused, including former Dhaka City Corporation ward councillor Ariful Islam Arif, now out on bail, were also present.

BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman and 18 others accused are absconding.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina meets the chief of Bai Dinh Buddhist Temple in Ninh Binh city of Vietnam yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Temperature may fall

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain may occur at many places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions till 6:00pm today.

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

Day and night temperature may fall (1-3) degree Celsius over the country.

The lowest minimum temperature is likely to be 17-18 degree Celsius and the highest maximum temperature is likely to be 31-32 degree Celsius.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:17pm and rises tomorrow at 6:08am.

Country's highest temperature 31.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and lowest 19.0 degrees at Dinajpur and Sayedpur.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
Dhaka	23.8	20.9
Chittagong	27.2	23.2
Rajshahi	23.0	20.0
Rangpur	27.0	19.3
Khulna	26.4	22.0
Barisal	26.9	21.8
	Max: 95	93
	Min: 84	82
	97	100
	78	85
	91	93
	92	93

Urdu speaking people demand rehab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urdu speaking people in Bangladesh yesterday demanded that the government ensures their proper rehabilitation, welfare, education and treatment facilities.

They raised the demands at a human chain arranged by Urdu Speaking Peoples Youth Rehabilitation Movement in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

Shahid Ali Bablu, general secretary of the organisation, said, "We were born and grew up in the country. We are now Bangladeshi. It is pathetic that the Bangladesh government does not want to take our responsibilities."

According to Shahid Ali, the people, popularly known as Biharis, have been living in 116 camps across the country since the country's liberation.

There is no government school in the camps. Poor families can not afford education of their children at any primary schools outside of the camps, he said.

Despite getting rights to be enlisted in voter list following a directive of High Court in 2008, they are still fighting for citizen rights, Shahid Ali said.

Bangladesh successful in meeting food demand Says Matia Chowdhury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although the country's population is increasing by 20 lakh every year, Bangladesh has been able to meet its food demands due to the government's support in availing agricultural tools and efforts of farmers and scientists, said Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday.

"In the context of global warming and other impediments, our rice scientists have developed a total of 10 varieties of rice. Five of them are salinity tolerant, which can be cultivated during Aman and Boro seasons, two are flood tolerant and two are draught tolerant," said Matia Chowdhury while inaugurating an Agricultural Policy Support Unit (APSU).

Set up under the agriculture ministry,

APSU is designed to provide timely, adequate and accurate information to formulate policy and carry out in-depth research to generate policy options.

Implemented by International Food Policy Research Institute, APSU has been established by the Ministry of Agriculture and the USAID-funded Policy Research and Strategy Support Project.

During the function held at Sech Bhaban, the minister said along with population growth, the country is losing arable land because of climate change and global warming.

She said more varieties of rice are under development, but due to improper implementation of government policies many farmers have been deprived of just price for their rice produce.