

NEWS IN *brief*

Water transport workers demand pay hike, threaten strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Bangladesh Noujan Sramik Federation, a platform of water transport workers, yesterday threatened that they would stop working for an indefinite period if their 16-point demand was not met by December 25.

Their demands include restructuring of a new wage scale in consistence with the National Pay Scale and ensuring the workers' security on rivers, said a press release.

They made the threat at their rally in the capital's Moni Singh Farhad Memorial Trust yesterday. If the demands are not met by the deadline, they would announce the work abstention programme.

Japan concerned over hartal violence in Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Japanese embassy in Bangladesh yesterday expressed deep concern over the frequent hartals and violence, and urged all parties concerned to refrain from activities that tarnish the country's image.

In a press statement, the embassy also drew attention to the fact that a couple of Japanese firms' cars were attacked by unknown activists during the hartal hours.

The hartals with sporadic incidents of violence against innocent people are harming the country's economic activities.

"If this situation continues, the development of the country will be seriously hampered, and it will be the citizens of Bangladesh who will suffer the

Amar Desh acting editor, publisher summoned to court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday summoned Amar Desh acting editor, its publisher and district correspondent to appear before it on March 3, next year, in connection with a defamation case.

The defendants are: Mahmudur Rahman, acting editor of Amar Desh; Alhaj Mohammad Hasmat Ali, publisher of the Bangla daily, and Nahid Parvez Jony, correspondent in Muktisundur of Gopalganj.

Anwarul Islam alias SM Shahin, a resident of Muktisundur, filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka against the three for allegedly running a defamatory news on November 10.

Metropolitan Magistrate Ashiqur Rahman issued the summons after recording the statement

Man, daughter die as train runs them over

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

A father with hearing impediment and his two-year-old-daughter died when a train ran them over in Kumarkhali upazila of Kushtia district yesterday.

The deceased were Asmot Ali, 40, a dweller of Elangipara railway slum, and his daughter Sharmin Khatun.

Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge of Kumarkhali Police Station, said the Goalundo-bound intercity train Modhumoti crashed them while Asmot was feeding his daughter sitting on the railway tracks in the area at about 10:40am.

"Asmot was with hearing impediment, he failed to hear the train's whistle," Razzak said

WEATHER TODAY

Thick fog likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Thick fog may occur over the river basins of the country and Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions.

Light to moderate fog elsewhere over the country during midnight to till morning, Met Office said.

Night and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The lowest temperature of the country is likely to be 10-11 degree Celsius and the highest temperature of the country may be 27-28 degree Celsius.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:15pm and rises tomorrow at 6:36am.

Country's highest temperature 28.1 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sandwip and lowest 10.6 degrees at Srimangal.

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

	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	24.7	16.8	78	82
Chittagong	25.2	15.0	89	66
Rajshahi	23.6	12.7	98	86
Rangpur	24.3	15.0	97	82
Khulna	26.5	15.5	90	81
Barisal	27.3	13.5	88	86



Brick and sand traders carry out their businesses by encroaching on Buriganga river, narrowing it down to a large extent. The photo was taken from Ekuria yesterday.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN DHAKA
ADB, Bangladesh sign \$160 million deal

STAR REPORT

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) yesterday signed an agreement with Bangladesh to provide a loan of US\$160 million to help the country develop sustainable urban public transport systems in greater Dhaka.

The assistance will help build a 20km bus rapid transit (BRT) route in Dhaka North City Corporation and Gazipur City Corporation areas, which form part of northern Greater Dhaka.

It will establish the first modern mass transit system in Bangladesh pursuing a holistic solution for integrated urban mobility, the Manila-based lender said in a statement.

Saifuddin Ahmed, joint secretary of the Economic Relations Division (ERD), and M Teresa Kho, country director of ADB's Bangladesh Resident Mission, signed the deal at a ceremony at the ERD in Dhaka.

The assistance for the "Greater Dhaka Sustainable Urban Transport Project" will also construct sidewalks, mixed-traffic

lanes, high-capacity drainage system, BRT depot and terminal facilities, and 155 access roads for non-motorised transport.

The BRT airport terminal will be developed as an intermodal hub under a public-private partnership scheme.

With an inclusive approach, the project will install 1,000 energy-efficient streetlights along the corridor, improve 10 local markets, nine drains, 141 local roads, and two pedestrian-friendly pilot roads, and further improve traffic management. The project will directly benefit more than one million people.

"To ensure a sustainable future for Dhaka, public transport focused on people's mobility needs and accessibility has to be improved and given priority over simple road projects," said Kho.

The total cost of the project is US\$ 255 million. Agence Française de Développement is expected to co-finance the project with US\$ 45 million, while the Global Environment Facility will provide US\$ 4.60 million. The Bangladesh government is also providing \$45.40 million.

Two cops confess stealing ammo

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Two policemen yesterday confessed before a magistrate to their involvement in stealing ammunition from Rajarbagh Police Lines armoury and supplying those to robbers based in Nijhum Dwip of Noakhali district.

Detective Branch (DB) of police was keeping an eye on some policemen for their alleged involvement in the theft after five of their colleagues were arrested earlier with stolen ammunition, said a DB official seeking anonymity.

The two -- Shamsuddin, a sub-inspector, and Shahdat Hossain, a constable, -- were arrested on December 7 after substantial evidence was found against them, said the official.

DB has identified some other policemen involved in the crime and will nab them soon, added the official.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Ismail Hossain recorded the duo's confessional statements and ordered to send them to jail.

In their statements, the two said they had been stealing ammunition from the armoury since mid-November, 2011.

Shamsuddin, deployed at the armoury's reserve storage, used to steal bullets and give those to Shahdat, posted at the capital's DB, who passed it on to his associates. The associates then sold the bullets to the robbers, they said.

Left parties call upon people to observe hartal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of left-leaning political parties have called upon the people from all walks of life to observe today's country-wide dawn to dusk hartal.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal and Gonotantrik Baam Morcha (GBM), an alliance of seven left-leaning parties, enforced the hartal demanding that the government imposes ban on communal and religion-based politics including that of Jamaat-e-Islami, and expedite the trial of war criminals.

"The hartal will be a success through spontaneous participation of people rather than vandalism, burning vehicles, and violence on the streets," said GBM Convenor Zonayed Saki.

He was addressing a press conference at the alliance's office yesterday.

Different garment workers' organisations, including Garments Sramik Trade Union Kendra and Bangladesh Poshak Shilpo Sramik Federation, expressed solidarity with the hartal demanding immediate trial of the people who were responsible for the recent fire incident at Tazreen Fashions garment factory.

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami will observe an eight-hour hartal in Sylhet division on Wednesday demanding release of its central acting secretary general Shafiqur Rahman, and protesting foiling of its rally in the city.

Twelve like-minded Islamist parties threatened to enforce a hartal on Thursday if the left-leaning political parties do not withdraw today's hartal.

A doctor performs a check-up on a child at a free health camp for children and newborns in Insaf Hospital and Diagnostic Centre at Gazipur yesterday. Some 300 children received treatment at the camp organised by Apollo Hospitals Dhaka from morning to evening as part of its CSR activities.



PHOTO: COURTESY

KHALAF MURDER
Prosecution appeals for capital punishment

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The prosecutor of the Saudi embassy official Khalaf Al Ali murder case yesterday concluded their arguments and appealed to the court for giving capital punishment to the five accused of the killing.

SM Rafiqul Islam, special public prosecutor, said all the 33 prosecution witnesses, including complainant and investigation officer of the case, had earlier given their statements which proved that the five killed Khalaf.

Judge Mohammad Motahar Hossain of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 of Dhaka fixed December 20 for defence arguments.

Of the accused, Mohammad Al Amin, Saiful Islam Mamun, Rafiqul Islam Khokon and Akbar Ali Lulu are now in police custody, while Selim Chowdhury is still at large.

Khalaf, 45, was shot dead near his Gulshan residence in the capital on March 6 this year.

Road crashes kill 3, injure 22

METRO DESK

Three people were killed and 22 others injured in separate road accidents in Netrakona and Pabna yesterday.

Our Netrakona correspondent reports, a nine-month-old child was killed on the spot and 20 others were injured as a passenger bus fell into a ditch beside Barhatta-Kalmakanda road at Nishchintapur in Barhatta upazila of the district yesterday noon.

The deceased was identified as Ritumoni, daughter of Dilu Biswas of Korolapur village in Kalmakanda upazila.

Police said the bus plunged into the ditch in the area as its driver lost control over the steering.

Of the injured, Sabuj Mia, Nilu and

Barkatullah were taken to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital while the others were admitted to a local health complex.

In another accident, Sajjadul Islam, 25, a motorcycle rider was killed instantly as his motorcycle was hit by a truck on Purbadola-Hogla road at Chuchua Bazar in Purbadola upazila of the district yesterday morning.

Our Pabna correspondent reports, a man was killed and two others were injured as a speeding truck hit a human hauler on Pabna-Kushtia highway at Roopur square yesterday morning.

The deceased was Md Nasir Uddin, 40, of Verama in Kushtia.

Of the injured, Md Talha was admitted to Ishwardi Upazila Health Complex.