

NEWS IN *brief*

RU officials go on strike for raising retirement age

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Officials and staff of Rajshahi University yesterday began a three-day work abstention programme on the campus demanding increase of their retirement age limit to 62 years from 60 years.

Under the banner of the Rajshahi University Kormokorta and Kormochari Oikya Parishad, they staged demonstrations in front of the university's administrative building to press home their demand.

Administrative and academic activities were hampered due to the programme that would con-

Khalid, Ziaul Buett architecture alumni assoc president, GS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mustapha Khalid Palash and Ziaul Huq Chowdhury have been unanimously elected president and general secretary respectively of the 7th Executive Committee of Architecture Alumni Association of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

The biennial election was held on December 30 last year, said a press release.

The other elected members are Rezaur Rahman (vice president-1), Tamanna Rahman (vice president-2), Ruhul Amin (treasurer), Abdullah Al Mamun (joint secretary), Tasneem Tariq (member), Tania Taher Lata (welfare) and Anindya

Maj (retd) M Taneem Hasan takes over as new RAOWA chairman

METRO DESK



Newly elected Chairman of Retired Armed Forces Officers' Welfare Association (RAOWA) Maj (retd) M Taneem Hasan took over the charge of the association on January 1.

Other elected executive committee members are Brig Gen (retd) Golam Zakaria, idmc, psc; Brig Gen (retd) Md Ismail Hossain; Capt (retd) Mustafa Sami Mozumder; Lt Col (retd) Rukhsana Hamid; Wg Cdr (retd) Md Hasan Masud, psc; Col (retd) Md Shahidul Haque and Maj (retd)

Fire guts seven houses in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Seven tin-shed houses were gutted in a fire at Dohazari in Chandanaish upazila of Chittagong yesterday morning.

The fire originated from a kerosene lamp at Abdul Rahman's house around 7:00am and soon spread to the adjacent houses, said Jashim Uddin, deputy assistant director of Agrabad Fire Control and Civil Defence Station.

On information, two fire fighting units from Satkania Fire Station doused the fire after an hour long effort. Fire service officials estimated the

3 Rohingyas held with Yaba pills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Coast Guard detained three Rohingyas with 3,000 pieces of contraband Yaba tablets worth around Tk 15.5 lakh on Friday night.

The detainees -- Shamsul Alam, 24, Ansar Alam, 26, and Kamal Hossain, 26, -- hail from Maungdaw.

The coast guard team (east zone) recovered the tablets from a trawler that they chased and later halted near Shah Porir Dweep of Teknaf upazila in Cox's Bazar while patrolling in the Bay of Bengal, said



A procession as part of the daylong Grameen Phone Channel i Prokriti Mela at Tejgaon in the capital yesterday. Telecom operator Grameen Phone and private television station Channel i jointly organised the programme to raise awareness about the importance of conservation of mother nature. Similar processions were brought out across the country on the occasion.

PHOTO: COURTESY

ABDUCTION OF KALPANA CHAKMA

No credible probe yet

Human chain told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a human chain yesterday highlighted the state's failure since 1996 to conduct an impartial and credible investigation into the abduction of Kalpana Chakma.

Rejecting the Criminal Investigation Department's final investigation report for, what they said, dropping the names of the real perpetrators, they demanded that the abductors, protected by successive governments, be finally brought to justice.

Bangladesh Adivasi Women's Network and Hill Women's Federation (HWF) jointly organised the programme before the capital's Bangladesh National Museum in anticipation of a hearing on the report at the Rangamati District Judge's Court on January 13.

The speakers also demanded withdrawal of army camps from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and proper implementation of the CHT peace accord of 1997.

Kalpna, organising secretary of HWF, was abducted from her New Lalyaghona residence under Baghaichhari upazila of

Rangamati on June 12, 1996 allegedly by security personnel in plainclothes. She was 22.

Human rights activist Hameeda Hossain said Kalpana was a Bangladeshi citizen and it was unacceptable that the case of her abduction still remains unresolved. Rights activists and lawyers must work together so that justice can be ensured in this regard, she added.

Information Commissioner Prof Sadeka Halim registered her outrage at the delayed and ineffective justice delivery process, stating that it was the state's responsibility to guarantee safety and justice for its citizens.

HWF Chairperson Chanchana Chakma emphasised that the abduction was not an isolated event as the state failed to ensure safety and security of indigenous women everywhere. Kapaeeng Foundation Coordinator Mong Sing Neo Marma said many official investigations were undertaken in the name of unearthing the truth about the abduction but none were credible.

Power price hike protested widely

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Various organisations called for protest programmes against the latest round of fuel and electricity price hike that became effective from Friday.

The BNP will call for a non-cooperation movement if fuel prices are hiked yet again, said senior BNP leader Moudud Ahmed.

The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports has called for a countrywide protest on January 11 as it stressed that people will not suffer the brunt of government's wrong policies.

Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the committee, said people should not bear the government's claim of compensation for fuel as a huge portion of this compensation would go to quick rental plants.

The government has to pay Tk 28 crore for only 1,000 megawatts of electricity while they could get 1,500MW by spending much less through repairing the existing power plants, he said.

On January 9, the Communist Party of Bangladesh will hold a rally in front of the district administration offices across the country and wave black flags before the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission in Dhaka.

An 11-party alliance will stage a rally on January 9 before the National Museum to protest the hike, while Bangladesh Khudra Matshajibi Zelay Shamity and Bangladesh Tariqat Federation have already protested it.

13 suspected pro-Jamaat female students held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police detained at least 13 women from the Jatiya Press Club area suspecting them as members of pro-Jamaat-e-Islami female students' body, Islami Chhatri Sangstha, yesterday.

The women were picked up by Shahbagh police around 3:30pm while they were coming out of the press club after taking part in a roundtable on women's right issues at the club.

Three of them were identified as Joshna Begum, 50, Fatema Begum, 48, and Sadia Jahan, 45.

Sources said the women were detained on information that they were associates of those 20 women who were arrested from the Chhatri Sangstha's office at Moghbazar on December 17 on charge of anti-government activities.

At yesterday's meeting, the women protested the arrest of the 20 women and demanded their immediate release. The 13 detained women were taken to Shahbagh Police Station for interrogation.

Syed Nurul Islam, deputy commissioner of Ramna Police Division, said the new arrestees were aides of those 20 women, and police were trying to know their political background and motives.



The Bangladesh Monitor Editor Kazi Wahidul Alam, second from right, accords a reception to Tabei Junko, the world's first woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest, second from left, yesterday. Junko's husband Tabei Masanugo, left, and Musa Ibrahim, the first Bangladeshi Everest conqueror, right, were also present.

PHOTO: COURTESY

'Death Clock' launched to discourage tobacco use

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A "Death Clock", displaying the number of people dying in the country of tobacco related diseases every day, was launched in the capital's Bijoy Sharani yesterday.

First of its kind in Bangladesh, the clock was launched by Progga, an anti-tobacco campaigning organisation, with the support of the government, said a press release.

It was aimed at raising awareness against tobacco consumption and urging lawmakers for a stricter anti-tobacco law.

The clock displayed a tally of 20,529 people who have died due to tobacco related diseases since August 27 last year till yesterday.

"Further delay in passing a stricter anti-

tobacco law will result in more deaths," said Taifur Rahman, advocacy and media coordinator of Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.

On this, Information Minister Hasanul Haque Inu said the revised law will be passed in the winter session of the parliament due to start this month.

The Tobacco Control Act was passed in the country in 2005 and it was revised in 2009.

A draft for further revision of the law will be proposed in the upcoming parliamentary session.

It will include stricter provisions, including Tk 100 fine for any individual smoking in public and Tk 100,000 fine for advertisements of tobacco products.

30 rumour-driven protesters hurt in police action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 30 people were injured when police used tear gas, rubber bullets and batons to disperse protesters who were blockading Dhaka-Tangail highway in Kaliakoir, Gazipur yesterday following a rumour of deaths in a road accident.

The blockade had lasted for about three hours since 7:30am when a bus hit and injured a factory worker, Saiful Islam, in the area. Most of the protesters were workers of different factories in Kaliakoir.

Police said the injured took treatment in a local hospital and returned home in good health. A bus hit him from behind when he was cycling to work.

In the hospital, a rumour spread that two people were killed and six others were injured. Soon several hundred workers gathered in Mouchak area and blockaded the busy highway, causing immense suffering to travellers.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Sundarbans' existence in crisis

Experts tell seminar

BSS, Dhaka

Experts yesterday raised a fresh concern about the existence of the Sundarbans against the backdrop of climate change.

One metre rise in the sea level could extinct nearly 70 percent of the world's largest mangrove forest, they said.

"The Sundarbans will be the worst victim of the sea level rise... the inundation of other parts of Bangladesh might be compensated, but the loss of Sundarbans cannot be recovered," expatriated climate expert Dipen Bhattacharya told the news agency on the sidelines of an international conference on water resources in the capital.

He said if sea level rises by one metre by the next century as per scientific prediction, 68 percent areas of total Sundarbans would be submerged and the forest would almost disappear with a two-metre rise.

Bhattacharya, a faculty of US Riverside Community College, said the demographic features obstructed Sundarbans' natural capacity to shift away for survival as it did centuries ago in natural course.

But the climate change phenomenon now exposed the forest to dangers of total extinction, he said.

Scientific data suggests the sea level across the globe was now rising at a rate of 3.5 millimetres every year due to climate change while some forecasts feared the figure could be as high as 5 millimetres in near future due to intensified impact of climate change or global warming.



Slight fall in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Moderate to thick fog may occur over the river basins while light to moderate fog elsewhere over the country during midnight till morning, Met Office said.

Mild cold save is sweeping over the regions of Pabna, Dinajpur, Sayedpur, Kushtia and Srimangal and it may continue and spread over the rest parts of Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions and the regions of Tangail, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Madaripur and Jessore.

Night and day temperature may fall slightly over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:26pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43am.

Country's highest temperature 27.9 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and lowest 09.0 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 | 25.0 | 14.6 | 67 | 49 |
| Chittagong | 26.4 | 13.3 | 84 | 70 |
| Rajshahi | 21.8 | 11.5 | 81 | 78 |
| Rangpur | 22.8 | 10.4 | 76 | 66 |
| Khulna | 25.5 | 12.5 | 93 | 88 |
| Barisal | 25.3 | 12.4 | 84 | 79 |