

NEWS IN *brief*

India to provide scholarships

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

India will provide undergraduate, post-graduate, and PhD scholarships to the meritorious Bangladeshis for the academic session 2013-14.

Applicants are expected to have proficiency in English, said a press release of Indian High Commission.

Application forms available at Education Wing, High Commission of India, House No-2, Road No-142, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212; Assistant High Commission of India, Chittagong; and Assistant High Commission of India, Rajshahi, it said.

Application forms may be collected on any working day (Sunday-Thursdays) from January 13 to 17 between 11:00am-1:00pm and 3:00pm-5:00pm, upon submission of mark sheet photocopy of the qualifying examination.

The last date for submitting applications is January 24.

Mastercraftspersons award ceremony on Jan 11

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four crafts persons from across the country, who have mastered in their respective choice of craft, will be awarded the Mastercraftspersons Award 2013 at a ceremony at Bangla Academy in the capital on January 11.

The announcement of the award and arranging a crafts fair was made at a press conference in the capital's Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts yesterday.

National Crafts Council of Bangladesh and Bengal Foundation are jointly organising the award and the fair.

Countrywide artisans will display their craftworks at the fair from 11:00am to 8:00pm everyday from January 11-13 at Bangla Academy.

Another Jica team arrives

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

An eight-member team of Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) volunteers arrived in Bangladesh on Tuesday for contributing to social and economic development of the country.

The team includes one senior volunteer, one short-term volunteer and 6 regular volunteers. With this team, a total of 1,161 Jica volunteers have been working in different times during last 40 years in Bangladesh, said a press release.

Woman found dead in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

An unidentified woman, aged around 30, was found dead at a field in Mirsarai upazila of Chittagong yesterday.

Being informed by locals, Mirsarai police recovered the body that bore several injury marks from the field beside a road at Jafarabad village in the upazila around 11:00am, said Md Iftekhar Hasan, officer-in-charge of Mirsarai Police Station.

A murder case was filed with the police station

Body recovered in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The decomposed body of a man was found floating in a pond in DOHS area of Pallabi in the capital yesterday.

Identity of the man, aged around 30, could not be known immediately. Passers-by found the body around 2:00pm. Being informed by them, Pallabi police recovered the body from the pond and sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue.

An unnatural death (UD) case was lodged with Pallabi Police Station.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at a grand rally of non-government primary school teachers at National Parade Square in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

**GANG-RAPE IN SAVAR
Four accused denied bail**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected bail petitions of four accused in a case filed for violating a college girl in Savar last November.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Mohammad Shahidul Islam passed the order and sent them to jail after Ashraful Islam, sub-inspector of Savar Police Station, produced them before the court on expiry of their four-day remand.

The accused are Rayhan, 20, a second-year student of Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology in the capital, Mohidur Rahman, 21, a first-year student of Savar College, Danesh, 32, neighbour of the victim, and the victim's friend Liza, 20.

On January 4, police arrested the four for their alleged involvement in the incident.

According to the forwarding report placed before the court yesterday, police are yet to gather any vital clues about the incident and learn whereabouts of the prime accused, Jahed alias Rasu, from the four accused.

Ashraful Islam, also the investigation officer of the case, appealed to the court to confine the four accused to jail until the investigation is completed.

Earlier on January 7, the rape victim recounted her chilling tale before a judicial magistrate describing the trauma she went through in Savar last November.

The court later ordered to keep her under the custody of Bangladesh Jatiya Mahila Ainjibi Samity for security.

Rab gets two helicopters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) received two helicopters for the first time to check crimes.

Purchased by the government at Tk 56 crore, the helicopters were officially received by Rab Director General Mokhlesur Rahman yesterday at Old Airport in the capital's Tejgaon in the presence of other senior officials.

Termining the addition a milestone in Rab history, Mokhlesur said, "Rab is now capable of combating crimes through airways besides road and waterways."

The helicopters, made in the USA and assembled in Singapore, were brought to Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka on Tuesday.

Each helicopter has the capacity to carry two pilots and five passengers.

**SKYPE CONVERSATION
Moudud accuses govt of harassment**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee Member Moudud Ahmed yesterday accused the government of harassing a newspaper editor following the publication of a Skype conversation between the former chairman of International Crimes Tribunal-1 and a Bangladeshi legal expert.

His accusation comes a day after a High Court bench refused to pass any order on a bail petition filed by Bangla daily Amar Desh acting editor Mahmudur Rahman and publisher Hasmat Ali in connection with a case.

"The crime for which he was sued is that he reproduced a report of The Economist. There was a one-and-half-hour argument in the court yesterday and finally the high court bench sent back the bail petitions to the petitioners," he said.

"The government is trying to influence the judiciary, putting its independence at risk," Moudud told a seminar. "Institutional complicity in human rights violations in Bangladesh."

Group 2009, a forum of pro-BNP professionals, organised the seminar at a hotel in the capital.

Degradation of the rule of law is the country's greatest crisis, he said, adding, "While a gang rape has shaken India, two or three rapes are now a daily event in Bangladesh. Forced disappearance is now a culture."

Former commerce minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and journalist Shafiq Rehman also spoke at the seminar.

Fakhrul again seeks bail in two cases

COURT CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday again sought bail in two cases filed for blasting cocktails and assaulting police during the opposition's countryside road blockade last December 9.

On January 3, the detained BNP leader was shown arrested in the two cases filed with Sutrapur and Motijheel police stations.

Fakhrul's lawyer Sanaullah Miah filed the bail petitions with Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court in Dhaka challenging the legality of a lower court's rejection order on the petitions.

A Dhaka court on Tuesday sent Fakhrul back to jail after rejecting his bail petitions in the two cases.

Judge (in-charge) Dr Md Akhteruzzaman of Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday fixed January 15 for hearing on the bail petitions. Earlier, Fakhrul was sent to jail on December 11 following rejection of his bail petitions in two other cases for torching a car and blasting cocktails during the December 9 blockade.

The High Court on January 2 granted him six months ad interim bail in the cases filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and Paltan police stations.



Passports, official pads and seals seized by Rab personnel from a house in the port city's Panchlaish area yesterday. Five men were arrested in this connection.

PHOTO: STAR

Caretaker govt to solve political crisis stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday stressed the need for reintroducing caretaker government system in the constitution to solve the ongoing political crisis.

It is necessary to ensure voting rights of people to get rid of the current political crisis, said Tariqul Islam, standing committee member of BNP, while addressing the discussion as the chief guest.

He said BNP has been fighting to restore caretaker government system to ensure people's voting rights.

Bangladesh Muktijoddha Gano Parishad organised the discussion on "ongoing political crisis and neutral national elections", at Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

Tariqul said the government has removed the biography of Moulana Bhashani from textbooks of class V and class VIII.

He said the ruling party is writing the history of the country.

Samsuzzaman Tuku, adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, said the current political crisis cannot be solved through dialogues but through violence.

Ganashasthya Kendra's Dr Jafrullah Chowdhury urged BNP to carry out their movement not only on the streets but also in parliament.

Syed Muhammad Ibrahim, chairman of Bangladesh Kalyan Party, and BNP leaders--Ismail Hossain and Abdus Salam--among others spoke at the discussion.

Five brokers held with passports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Five alleged passport brokers were arrested from Panchlaish area in Chittagong city yesterday with 153 passports and several official documents and seals.

They are Md Yunus Chowdhury, 60, Md Jalal, 33, Chandra Shekhor, 55, Md Jahangir, 42, and Saiful, 50.

Acting on a tip-off, Rapid Action Battalion personnel conducted a drive at a tin shed house nearby the Regional Passport office in the area, said Squadron Leader Nazmul Haque, second in command of Rab-7.

During the drive, Rab personnel found the five men dealing over passports with other people at the house, he said.

The elite force later seized 153 passports, several passport forms, official pads and seals from them, he added.

The five men were members of a broker group, which illegally prepares passports for passport seekers in exchange of money, said Nazmul.

WEATHER TODAY

Cold wave may continue

UNB, Dhaka

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

Thick fog may occur over the river basins and moderate to thick fog elsewhere over the country during midnight till noon, Met Office said.

Moderate to severe cold wave is sweeping over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions may continue.

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

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:29pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43am.

Country's highest temperature 22.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and lowest 03.2 degrees at Dinajpur.

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	15.0	07.2	81	70
Chittagong	18.5	09.6	75	60
Rajshahi	17.5	04.4	91	75
Rangpur	15.0	04.2	94	87
Khulna	17.5	07.0	87	91
Barisal	18.2	06.5	98	82