

NEWS IN *brief*

Rapist gets life term in jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a rapist to life term rigorous imprisonment in a case filed for raping a 10-year-old schoolgirl in the capital's Jurain area on October 22 last year.

The court also fined 22-year-old Mohammad Al-Amin, Tk 1 lakh which will be handed over to the victim's family as compensation after realisation.

According to the prosecution, Al-Amin forcefully picked up the schoolgirl when she was on her way to Al-Hera mosque and raped her beneath the

9-day long book fair begins at RU

RU CORRESPONDENT

A nine-day long Ekushey Book Fair will begin today at Rajshahi University.

State Minister for Industries Omor Faruk Chowdhury will inaugurate the fair, which will continue till February 21.

Swapno, an organisation of the university's psychology department, have organised the fair which will be held in front of the second science

DSCC offices declared smoking free

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) has declared its five regional offices and its head office at Nagar Bhaban smoking free from yesterday.

DSCC Administrator Mohammad Nazrul Islam made the announcement at a function centring signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the corporation and Dhaka Ahsania

Speaker criticises MPs for chatting in House occupying others' chairs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Abdul Hamid yesterday criticised some lawmakers who occupy other members' chairs instead of their own and chat for hours in the House.

Hamid made the remark when he found Awami League lawmaker Israfil Alam sitting in Jatiya Party lawmaker Raushan Ersahd's chair and chatting with Labour Minister Raziuddin Ahmed Razu.

The speaker also said he feels disappointed when he sees some of the lawmakers on talk shows

Youth killed in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth was stabbed to death by unidentified miscreants in the capital's Khilgaon yesterday.

The victim, Minhaz Mohiuddin Razib, 24, was a Masters student of National University and resided in Farmgate. He was working on his music albums.

Khilgaon police recovered the body from a road near Khilgaon Community Centre and sent it to DMCH. Razib had two cellphones which police did



Two little girls break down in tears at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday as they receive the coffin of their father, Anwar Hossain, one among the 19 Bangladeshis who died in a recent road crash in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). PHOTO: FIROZ AHAMED

UAE ROAD CRASH

Eleven more bodies of victims arrive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-five-year-old Rina Begum first visited Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka to see off his husband Anwar Hossain two years ago. She visited the airport for the second time yesterday-- this time to receive Anwar as a dead man.

Anwar of Comilla was among 19 Bangladeshis who were killed in a road crash in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on February 4. His body arrived at the airport along with those of 10 other victims yesterday.

Rina, a mother of three little girls, said her husband went to the UAE spending around Tk 4 lakh, which was collected on loans. Anwar could not pay off the debts, she said. "I do not know how to pay the debts and run the family now."

Mukta Begum, who came to receive the body of her husband, Bashar Shaikh Alif, from Munshiganj, was too shocked to talk as journalists approached her.

The response came from Shilpi Begum, wife of Bashar's elder brother. "My brother (Bashar) told me on Sunday, the day before the accident, 'please, do not quarrel and look after my daughters'," she said.

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain handed the bodies over to their families at the airport.

The other victims are Shahjahan Mollah and Rokon Munshi of Faridpur, Mohammed Faruk and Md Faruq Hossain of Laxmipur, Noor Alam and Habibur Rahman of Comilla, Joynal Kobiraj of Rajbari, and Uzzal Miah of Netrakona.

The minister distributed cheques for Tk 35,000 to each of the victim families as burial cost and said the government would provide Tk 2 lakh more to each of the families later.

On Sunday, seven bodies arrived in Chittagong. The body of the last victim, Wasir Ali, will arrive in Sylhet today.

Ctg city, RU observe silence for 3 minutes

METRO DESK

From workplace to home, tens of thousands of people from all walks of life rose to their feet at 4:00pm and fell silent for the next three minutes in Chittagong city and Rajshahi University yesterday. They were demanding, in silence, execution of all convicted war criminals, including jailed Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah.

On Chittagong Press Club premises where anti-war criminal activists have been staging protests for the last seven days, the crowd grew larger and larger two or three hours before 4:00pm, reports our correspondents from Chittagong.

Students from Chittagong University, Chittagong Medical College, and other educational institutions of the port city joined the silence in masses. As soon as the clock struck 4:03pm, protesters broke into loud shouts of slogans again.

The silence was also observed in front of Chittagong Custom House. Around 1,000 people and professionals joined it. People also observed the programme at Prabartak intersection and in Mehedibagh area separately.

On Rajshahi University campus where the anti-war criminal sit-in entered its sixth day yesterday, the three-minute silence programme was held at Tukitaki Chattar, reports our RU correspondent.

Country's first female paratrooper gets her badge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Capt Zannatul Ferdous has become the first successful female paratrooper in Bangladesh.

Along with 17 others, Zannatul completed the special paratrooper course by jumping off a helicopter of Bangladesh Air Force from a height of 1,000 feet yesterday.

They jumped off the helicopter near Jalalabad Cantonment in Sylhet.

"It is very thrilling, I want to jump off again," said an animated Zannatul upon landing. "Other female colleagues should come forward now. I was scared in the beginning but after finishing the course it has become easier," she added.

Hailing from Bishnupur in Brahmanbaria, Zannatul Ferdous joined Bangladesh Army in 2007 after being commissioned with the 59th batch. She is now serving as a computer trainer at Bangladesh Military Academy.

Lt Col Saiful Islam, chief trainer of the paratrooper course, said there is nothing to bar female officers from joining the paratrooper course. Zannatul's success will surely encourage other females in the army.

Commandant of the School of Infantry and Tactics Brig Gen Mahbubul Haque said it is a milestone for the army as Zannatul became the first female paratrooper.



Capt Zannatul Ferdous successfully parachuting down from a height of 1,000 feet, becoming the country's first female paratrooper, inset, Brig Gen Mahbubul Haque pins a badge on Zannatul's uniform as proof of her accomplishment.

PHOTO: STAR

JAIL KILLING CASE

Prosecution prays for justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anisul Huq, the principal state counsel for the jail killing case, yesterday prayed to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court for justice in the case.

He said the lower court and High Court in their verdicts ignored the charge of conspiracy to kill four national leaders in Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

Anisul was citing statements of prosecution witnesses while placing arguments during a hearing before the Appellate Division.

Yesterday was the sixth day of the hearing on the government's appeal against the HC verdict that acquitted six former army personnel in the case.

The six acquitted are Marfat Ali Shah, Abdul Hashem Mridha, Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooq-ur Rahman, Lt Col (ret'd) Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Maj (ret'd) Bazlul Huda and Maj (ret'd) AKM

Mohiuddin Ahmed.

However, Farooq, Shahriar, Bazlul Huda and Mohiuddin were executed in connection with Bangabandhu assassination case.

According to Anisul, the then president Khandaker Mushtaq Ahmed held a meeting with the accused of the jail killing case on November 2, 1975 night when the decision to kill the leaders was taken.

As per the decision, Risaldar (ret'd) Muslemuddin, Marfat and Hashem went to Dhaka Central Jail the next day to kill the leaders.

In 2004, Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court sentenced the trio to death and 12 others to life for abetting the three in killing Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmad, AHM Quamruzzaman and Capt Mansur Ali. In 2008, the HC upheld the capital punishment of Muslemuddin, but acquitted Marfat and Hashem.

ARSENIC

165 per 1 lakh exposed may die: Study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 165 out of every 1 lakh people regularly exposed to arsenic contamination may die of cancer, found a research.

This rate is much lower than what experts anticipated in the early 90s, it added.

Dr M Abul Hasnat, senior lecturer of Centre for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics of The University of Newcastle, Australia, presented the key findings at a dissemination programme organised by NGO Forum in the capital's Brac Centre Inn yesterday.

Titled "Cancer Morbidity and Mortality among Chronically Arsenic Exposed Population in Rural Bangladesh", the study included a total of 6,667 individuals from 1,428 households of four villages in Pabna, Chapainawabganj and Jhenidah.

Addressing the programme, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Capt (ret'd) Dr Mozibur Rahman Fakir urged all development organisations to engage in arsenic mitigation activities across the country.

NGO Forum with the assistance of European Union conducted the research.



Basanta Utsab

Jatiya Basanta Utsab Parishad will arrange a Basanta Utsab (spring festival); Venue: Bakul Tola, Dhaka University's Fine Arts Faculty; Time: 7:00am.

Lecture

Bangladesh Bhasha Samity will organise a lecture on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Dr Ahmed Sharif, a researcher of medieval Bangla literature; Venue: RC

Majumder Auditorium, Dhaka University; Time: 4:00pm.

Meeting

Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh will organise a discussion meeting on the occasion of Agriculture Day; Venue: the institution premises; Time: 5:00pm.

Discussion

Bangabandhu Parishad will hold a discussion to express solidarity with Shahbagh demonstration; Venue:



Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain is likely to occur at one or two places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country till 6:00pm today.

Light fog may occur over the river basins of the country during late night till morning, Met Office said.

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

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:52pm and rises tomorrow at 6:32am.

Country's highest temperature 32.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and lowest 09.0 degree Celsius at Chuadanga.

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	29.8	17.8	60	37
Chittagong	29.5	15.2	61	61
Rajshahi	28.0	10.8	73	57
Rangpur	27.3	12.8	76	61
Khulna	29.0	12.2	77	61
Barisal	29.5	12.7	71	61