

Indians vow to stop Tipai dam

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

The Affected People's Association of Tipaimukh dam (APATD) has vowed that it would fight to the end to make the Indian government stop the construction of the proposed dam as it would displace a large number of people.

"The authorities must take cognisance of the people's concern and immediately stop construction of the proposed Tipaimukh dam, else people will fight to the end," said a resolution adopted at a meeting of APATD at Khawpuar on Thursday.

APATD General Secretary Lalpekliana said the height of the proposed dam, to be built in northeastern Indian state of Manipur, would be 162.8 metres and it would submerge an estimated area of 31,950 hectares displacing a large number of people living in the villages of northeastern Indian states of Manipur and Mizoram.

Besides, a rich biodiversity, flora and fauna would also be destroyed, he said.

APATD President Lalthulien Joute said no amount of money could compensate the loss of land and livelihood to be destroyed due to construction of the dam.

Hefajat reiterates 13-point demand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Brahmanbaria*

Hefajat-e Islam leaders yesterday reiterated their threat to besiege the capital on May 5 if the government failed to meet their 13-point demand, including ensuring highest punishment to "bloggers who were maligning Islam".

They were addressing a rally the Chittagong-based Islamist group organised in Brahmanbaria pourasabha.

The rally was presided over by Mawlana Asheke Elahi Ibramimi, chief adviser of Jamia Younisia Madrasa of Brahmanbaria.

Hefajat has taken centre stage in recent days as an opposite force to Shahbagh Gonojagoron Mancha from where youths have been demanding the death penalty for war criminals.

It, however, was not on the scene when the Shahbagh movement started on February 5. Its presence was felt with the killing of a blogger, who was branded as an atheist.

The rally was the culmination of a propaganda orchestrated by the Jamaat-e-Islami that organisers of the Shahbagh movement were atheists. The alleged defamation of Islam was at the heart of the campaign.

Obama greets Bangalees on Pahela Baishakh

UNB, *Dhaka*

US Secretary of State John Kerry, on behalf of President Barack Obama, yesterday conveyed warm greetings to all Bangla-speaking people around the world on the occasion of Pahela Baishakh.

"On behalf of President Obama, I convey my warm greetings to all Bangla-speaking people around the world as you celebrate Pahela Baishakh," he said in a press statement.

"The American people wish you all happiness and prosperity in the New Year. The vibrant Bengali-American diaspora will join the global Bengali community in gathering with family and friends to celebrate your many accomplishments," the message read.

As the New Year begins, let us all celebrate the rich cultures of West Bengal and Bangladesh in a spirit of optimism and mutual appreciation. Shubho Nobo Borsho, it said.

Fire guts 63 houses, 18 shops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

A fire gutted at least 63 houses and 18 shops at Shanti Nagar village in Rangamati town yesterday afternoon.

Two trucks and a pick up were also damaged in the fire.

Fire service said the fire originated from an earthen oven at a house around 1:30pm and engulfed adjacent Rangamati Bus Terminal area.

With the help of police and locals, fire fighters from Rangamati District Fire Station doused the flame after four hours of efforts.

Md Golam Mostafa, assistant director of the fire station, said valuables worth around Tk 2 crore were damaged in the fire.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Darter



Ducks and other birds which spend much time in water often use feathers to their advantage. Oil secreted from a special gland waterproofs the feathers giving the birds extra buoyancy which allows them to float easily. In addition, just like a goose down pillow, the feathers puff up and trap extra air. Since birds are warm-blooded creatures the extra air and waterproofing conserves their body heat in the water.

The darter is different. Its feathers do not have oil, neither are they air-filled. In fact, they absorb water. So, while most other water birds find it difficult to stay under water, a darter can dive in and swim underwater easily.

Naturally, it takes advantage of this ability. How? While the darter is swimming underwater it stalks fish. Once the fish is within range, it strikes and impales it on its pointed dagger-like beak. It has strong neck muscles and a neck structure that allows it to flex and dart the neck forward with great speed. With fish impaled on its beak, the darter raises its head above the water and shakes it vigorously, tossing the fish up in the air. It catches the fish in its mouth – either rolled-up or head-first - and swallows it whole.

Other water birds such as egrets and herons also catch fish, but they stay above water while using stealth and cunning. The darter uses the same skills and concentration under water.

While it is looking for fish, the darter often swims with only its head showing, swaying to and fro. Because of its extraordinarily long neck, its head looks like a snake in the water. Hence it is sometimes called snake bird, or *shap pakhi* in Bangla. The first time I saw a darter was exactly like this - swimming in a haor with only its head showing.

After swimming, it must quickly dry its wet wings, so it perches on a pole or branch and spreads them out in the sun.

The second time I saw a darter, it was drying itself in the company of a flock of cormorants which had gathered on a network of bamboo poles

Darter in flight.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

in a river. These poles are used in the countryside for setting up fishing nets. The darter had blended in well with the dozens of cormorants also drying their wings, though it was quite a bit larger. As our boat drew closer, the darter flew away long before the cormorants did, allowing me this photograph.

Different species of darters can be found in the Americas, Africa, Australia and South Asia: they are closely related. The one found here is called Anhinga Melanogaster. Anhinga means "devil bird" in the Brazilian Tupi language, while Melanogaster means "black-bellied". Thus, its full name is "black-bellied devil bird."

But devil bird or not, isn't a darter a sight to behold?

www.facebook.com/tangents.ikabir



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Bangladesh Students' Union brings out a procession with lit torches on Dhaka University campus yesterday demanding a ban on Jamaat-e-Islami and speedy completion of the war crimes trial.

BEFORE KHULNA CHAMBER

Three hurt in cocktail blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

At least three people, including a policeman, were injured after three cocktails exploded near them before the Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry building on Lower Jessore Road of Khulna city last night.

Splinters from the exploding cocktails hit Abdul Zabber, 35, chauffeur of a businessman, in the abdomen, constable Liton Howlader in the left hand and Khorshed Alam, 37, chauffeur of the Khulna City Corporation mayor, stated witnesses.

Indian High Commissioner Pankaj Saran was inside the building, attending, as chief guest, a meeting on bilateral trade between Bangladesh and India during the explosions, which took place around 8:15pm.

He, however, left the venue unhurt under police protection afterwards.

Abdul Zabber said he was gossiping with other chauffeurs outside the building and policemen were on duty nearby when the cocktails exploded.

Assistant Police Commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police Abul Kalam Azad, however, said there was no policeman among the injured.

Additional police and Rapid Action Battalion members conducted raids in adjoining areas but none was arrested till 10:00pm.

Hartal hits commuters

Causes waste of time, energy, money in Ctg

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN, *Ctg*

Hartals are causing a waste of time, energy and money for commuters who are bound to come out for work despite the violence that overruns the streets.

With most public transports staying off the streets fearing vandalism, drivers of those that do dare to ply the streets demand exorbitant fares to "recoup damages they might incur and make up for days not worked".

Tabarul Huq, an employee of a non-government organisation, recently told The Daily Star of this phenomenon he has been experiencing.

Normally, a one hour-bus ride, costing Tk 13, takes him to his office in Chittagong city' Enayet Bazar area from his home in Chowdhury Haat area of Chittagong's Hathazari upazila, a distance of 20 kilometres.

"But on hartals, I have to change vehicles at least four times, each time having to rely on the driver's whim, pay nearly ten times more and spend nearly two hours to

reach my destination," he said.

One Chittagong University student, Jafar Ahmed, told of his recent plight when he, in the absence of buses, was forced to take a CNG-run auto-rickshaw to travel some five kilometres, from the city's Muradpur area to Jamalkhan intersection.

"It cost me Tk 80 whereas the bus fare is only Tk 6," he said.

Allegations of charging fares in excess are not only against the auto-rickshaws but nearly all types of public transports, including rickshaws and buses.

Admitting that higher fares were charged on hartals, Md Jamal, a human hauler driver, said they were putting their lives on the line for not having any other source of income.

Chittagong Auto-Rickshaw and Auto-Tempo Sramik Union General Secretary Md Harunur Rashid justified the extra fare stating that the drivers were the "hapless victims" of hartal violence and have to stay put during most hartals.

NEWS IN *brief*

Hefajat men sued for attacking journo Nadia Sharmin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A case has been filed against activists of Hefajat-e Islam on charge of assaulting Ekushey Television correspondent Nadia Sharmin.

Serajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh police station, filed the case against 50 to 60 unnamed activists of Hefajat with the police station on Thursday night.

On April 6, activists of the Islamist group assaulted four journalists, including Nadia, and a woman; and passed lewd comments to them in a rally in the capital.

Woman's severed body found

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The body of a woman, with parts below the torso severed and missing, was found inside a luggage left by the roadside at Abdullahpur in the capital's Uttara area yesterday.

The identity of the victim could not be known.

West Uttara police said they recovered the luggage from near Hanif bus counter around 4:00pm.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Police suspect that the woman was killed on Thursday and the bag was left near the bus counter sometime early yesterday.

Mohit set to scale Kanchenjunga

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

MA Mohit, one of four Bangladeshis to have conquered Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, is now going to scale Kanchenjunga, the world's third highest mountain standing between Nepal and India at 8,586m (28,169ft).

He is scheduled to leave for Nepal on April 15 and start his 45-day expedition from Bhadrapur two days later, Mohit told a press conference in the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Enam Ul Haque, founder of Bangla Mountaineering and Trekking Club also was present at the event.

Eminent educationist Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed and noted writer Muhammad Zafar Iqbal handed over the national flag to Mohit for the expedition.

UP member hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Natore*

A union parishad member was hacked to death in Baraigram upazila of Natore yesterday.

The deceased, Abdus Salam, 48, was a member of Baraigram union parishad.

Police arrested Idris Ali, 50, and his son Maktbul Hossain, 35, in connection with the murder.

Mohammad Ibrahim, officer-in-charge of Baraigram Police Station, said Idris and Salam were arguing over a disputed land.

At one stage, Idris and his son attacked Salam leaving him critically injured. Locals took Salam to the local health complex where he was declared dead.



DHAKA TODAY

Discussion

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad will organise a discussion, "Allotment for women in the upcoming national budget: Ensuring the correct and highest usage of the allotted budget to remove gender discrimination"; Venue: Cirdap Auditorium; Time: 4:00pm.

Discussion

Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh will hold a discussion, "Rules for operation of foreign higher education institution in Bangladesh"; Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity; Time: 11:00am.

Human chain

Steps Towards Development will form a human chain vowing "to prevent attacks on women's development and the constitution"; Venue: before Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

Cultural programme

Pothikrit Foundation will organise a cultural programme marking the Bangla New Year; Venue: Sangskriti Bikash Kendra, 1/E/1 Poribagh; Time: 5:00pm.

Dialogue

Centre for Policy Dialogue will hold a dialogue, "Bangladesh at present: Political context and economic condition"; Venue: Lakeshore Hotel, Gulshan 2; Time: 10:00am.



WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, *Dhaka*

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Comilla and Noakhali in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Mild to moderate heat wave is sweeping over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna divisions and the regions of Rangamati and Srimangal and it may continue. Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:19pm and rises tomorrow at 5:39am.

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	36.8	27.2	72	60
Chittagong	31.5	25.0	71	77
Rajshahi	40.0	22.5	53	42
Rangpur	33.5	21.0	59	48
Khulna	37.6	25.5	77	42
Barisal	35.8	26.5	78	64
Sylhet	34.5	23.9	67	58
Cox's Bazar	33.5	25.5	75	75