

A New Year

FROM PAGE 1
and engineering department of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet, in collaboration with GPIT Ltd have already launched a beta. However, its formal launching would be at 6:30pm at the Winter Garden of Rupashi Bangla Hotel in the capital.

Eminent writer, educationist and a professor at computer science and engineering department Muhammad Zafar Iqbal played a key role as the project director of Pipilika and Assistant Professor Ruhul Amin Sajib led the team.

In the beta version, it was found that the search engine uses Bangla as its default language and the search could be filtered in time periods, like the last 24-hours, the week, the month.

Avro, which uses English keyboard to type Bangla phonetically, is the default input system.

The search engine explains and uses reports of main Bangla and English newspapers of the country, Bangla blogs, Bangla wikipedia, and government information.

There is a Bangla dictionary which automatically searches for correct words once a user types in the wrong word. It tells the user that the search was carried out with the correct word and provides an option to do another search with the incorrect word.

A few categorical searches are also available on the left of the search page.

The researchers and developers developed the tools that were needed for working with Bangla. The developers believe that searches using Bangla would increase in the long run.

They want to capture Kolkata and other places where Bangla-speaking people live. They said they would be able to save and store the research papers done in universities and other sectors in the country.

They were optimistic that Pipilika would one day be a renowned search engine like Google and Yahoo.

Tanzania building collapse toll hits 34

REUTERS, Dar Es Salaam
The death toll from the collapse of a multi-storey building in Tanzania has risen to 34 after more bodies were pulled from the rubble, a senior government official said yesterday.

Rescue workers at the site in a district in the commercial capital Dar es Salaam have now cleared most of the debris and reached the basement of the building that caved in on Friday morning. It is likely more bodies could be found.

Tanzania's buoyant economy has fuelled a building boom, especially in Kariakoo and the city center. But the speed of construction has raised concerns about safety standards.

"A total of 34 people have so far been confirmed dead. We expect to conclude the search operation early today and officially announce the final death toll," Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner Said Meck Sadick told Reuters.

"The bodies being recovered now have started to decompose...so we want to conclude this exercise as soon as possible to allow funeral arrangements to take place."

The building of more than 12 storeys had been under construction near a mosque in the Kariakoo district near the city center. Several cars were crushed and boys playing football nearby were among the dead.

Police said four people had been arrested over the incident.

"This is the worst building collapse in our country's history," Dar es Salaam regional police commander Suleiman Kova told Reuters.

He said those responsible would face criminal charges.

Fatikhchhari

FROM PAGE 1
withdrawn at 8:00pm, Fatikhchhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer Anjana Khan Majlish told The Daily Star last night.

Three ruling Awami League men were killed and scores injured when activists of Hefajat-e Islam and Jamaat-e-Islami, joined in by locals, gathered through announcements over loudspeakers, attacked an anti-hartal procession of AL and Chhatra League at Kazirhat in Bhujpur.

Around 100 vehicles including motorcycles, jeeps, pick-ups, a police van and a fire truck were torched. Besides, some 20 shops were set ablaze during the mayhem.

Witnesses and local administration sources said at least 15 policemen, four firefighters, and two BGB men, were among the injured.

Of the injured, some 47 people were undergoing treatment at Chittagong Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Of them, condition of two -- who received head injuries -- was critical, said Moinuddin Jahed, on-duty doctor at the neurosurgery ward of the CMCH.

Namaz-e-Janaza of the three deceased AL men -- Forkan, 24, Md Rubel, 22, and Faruk Iqbal Bipul, 40 -- was held at Fatikhchhari High School field after Asr prayers yesterday.

ATM Peyarul Islam, AL leader and ex-chairman of Fatikhchhari upazila, said, "We brought out a motor procession, protesting Thursday's shutdown enforced by Shibir."

As the procession was going through Kazirhat around 11:30am, several hundred locals of Kazirhat, students of Kazirhat madrasa and activists of Jamaat and Hefajat swooped on the marchers with sharp weapons and sticks, he added.

"Things got worse following an announcement over loudspeakers from Kazirhat Bazar Jame Mosque that a procession was coming to attack the madrasa," he added.

A rickshaw puller, who witnessed the incident, said, "When they [the marchers] were going back, we heard an announcement from a nearby mosque that an imam had been killed in AL assault and the mosque and madrasa were under attack."

Police fired several rounds of bullets to disperse the unruly mob, said Shamsuddin Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Bhujpur Police Station.

Police picked up 44 people on Thursday night

Medicine

FROM PAGE 1
vandalised the furniture and machinery inside the factory.

Baharul, also joint secretary of district AL and vice-president of Bangladesh Medical Association, claimed that the criminals had used gun powder during arson. The fire totally ruined a huge quantity of ready medicines, raw materials and other materials.

On information, three units of fire fighters from Bagerhat and Khulna rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control after a hectic effort of nearly three hours.

The owner of the factory alleged that Jamaat-Shibir men had intentionally attacked the factory, as he had long been demanding trials of war criminals.

Ali Azam, manager of the factory, filed a case with Fakirhat police accusing eight to 10 unnamed people in connection with the attack.

Official of Khulna fire service Sheikh Arifur Rahman said they were yet to ascertain whether the attackers had used gun powder.

Officer-in-Charge of Fakirhat Police Station Masudul Alam said they were investigating the violence. So far, none had been arrested.

Meanwhile, Prof Mofazzal Haider, political secretary of the upazila unit Jamaat, termed the arson and vandalism at the factory a staged drama.

including local Jamaat leader and Bhujpur union chairman Shafiqul Alam Nuri, one of the 100 named accused in the case filed by police yesterday.

Azizul Haq Islamabadi, organising secretary of Hefajat-e Islam, alleged that one of their supporters named Sekandar, 40, was also killed during the violence.

No administrative and independent sources, however, could confirm his claim.

Islamabadi denied Hefajat's involvement in the incident. He, however, acknowledged the madrasa in question is run by the Islamit organisation.

Some 25 local people were left bullet-hit as both the law enforcers and AL men fired at them, Azizul claimed.

Superintendent of Chittagong police AKM Hafiz Akhter told The Daily Star, "In our primary investigation it was revealed that Jamaat-Shibir men had provoked the villagers by spreading rumour."

ATTACK WAS PLANNED
Police suspect the attack on law enforcers was planned, as more than a hundred vehicles were burnt within a span of an hour. Some inflammatory substance might have been used during the torching, said a high official of Chittagong district police.

Law enforcers were also trying to find the person who made the announcement from mosque, he added.

Bird flu kills two in China

AFP, Shanghai

China's commercial hub Shanghai is stepping up monitoring after a new strain of bird flu killed two people, state media said yesterday, as Taiwan announced it would screen travellers from the mainland.

The government's National Health and Family Planning Commission said over the weekend that two men, aged 87 and 27, died in Shanghai in early March after being infected with H7N9 avian influenza.

A 35-year-old woman in the eastern province of Anhui, near Shanghai, was also in critical condition after developing the subtype, which had not previously been transmitted to humans, it said.

Shanghai's health bureau has ordered hospitals to boost monitoring and supervision of respiratory illness cases, but authorities were unsure how the three became infected, the Shanghai Daily newspaper said on Monday.

The two victims in the city both had histories of chronic illness, said a statement from Shanghai's health bureau, without giving details.

None of their close associates had become infected with H7N9, although two sons of the elderly man both had respiratory illnesses around the same time, one of them dying.

The woman from Anhui had contact with birds, while the younger man in Shanghai worked butchering and selling meat, the state-backed Health News said on its website on Monday, suggesting a route for transmission.

Some Internet users reacted with anger that the announcement came three weeks after the second man died, but authorities said time was needed to verify the new strain.

"Delaying the release of such information is gambling with people's lives," said a microblog post under the name Fenuh Kuaidi.

Taiwan, which saw 2.6 million Chinese visitors last year, said passengers from the mainland, Hong Kong and Macau must now pass a mandatory temperature check on arrival at its airports.

Taiwan residents who develop fevers with 10 days of travelling to China would also be required to undergo further health checks at hospitals, the island's disease control centre said late Sunday.

Joypurhat

FROM PAGE 20
also called a half day hartal in the district for today.

The leaders, however, urged the law enforcers to hand over Nazrul to police if he is found guilty of any criminal offence.

Unidentified men allegedly picked up the district Jamaat leader from his Sahebpara residence in Joypurhat town around midnight yesterday. Police, however, denied having arrested him.

Protesting the incident, Jamaat-Shibir men blockaded several roads in the town from 3:00pm to 6:00pm.

Family members claimed that about 14 men in a white microbus reached Nazrul's home around midnight. Identifying themselves as members of law enforcement agencies, they picked up Nazrul and left the area.

At the press conference, Ameer of Sadar upazila unit Jamaat Mamunur Rashid read out a written statement. Local BNP lawmaker Mozahar Ali Prodhan, Nazrul's wife Salma Sultana and political secretary of Joypurhat unit Jamaat Abdul Momen Farid were present.

Salma later filed a general diary with Joypurhat Sadar Police Station in this connection.

Witnesses said Jamaat-Shibir men clashed with police in Tetultoli area when they blocked Joypurhat-Paharpur road around 5:00pm.

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh rushed to the spot and fired 11 shots to quell the trouble.

Contacted, Joypurhat Police Super Hamidul Alam denied picking up Nazrul from his residence. Police were looking for the Jamaat leader, he added.

Tight security

FROM PAGE 20
The festival points will be smoking-free zones and people have been requested not to bring bags, flammable substances, knives and other weapons at the venues for the sake of security, he added.

A good number of police - in uniform and plain-clothes - will be deployed in and around the venues.

To keep a close watch on the festival-goers, police will set up monitoring cells around the venues. It will also set up lost-and-found centres and assistance booths to extend necessary support to people.

Meanwhile, Rab sources said some 5,520 personnel will be deployed across the country. Of them, 2,520 will be kept on duty in the capital throughout the day.

Rab will also deploy dog squad and bomb disposal units at different venues.

Law enforcers will install closed-circuit cameras at different points of some important venues and people will be frisked at the entry points of venues.

On the day, vehicular movement will be restricted on roads from Bangla Motor to Kakrail intersection, from Shahbagh to High Court via Matsya Bhaban, from Nilkhet crossing to Teachers-Students Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University, from Plassey intersection to Doyel Chatter via Shaheed Minar and from Bakshi Bazar intersection to TSC crossing via Jagannath Hall.

Hilsa

FROM PAGE 20
However, prices of smaller hilsa did not change much over the same period.

"Demand for big hilsa is high, but its supply is low," Shukkur added.

He collected big hilsa several days ago from different fishing wharves and stored those, anticipating the high demand for hilsa ahead of Pehela Baishakh.

Fish traders are also bidding high prices for hilsa at the fishing wharves.

Contacted, Jakir Hossain, a hilsa wholesaler at Parerhaat Fishing Wharf in Pirojpur, said he was selling hilsa weighing more than 1 kg for over Tk 2,000 a piece and those under 1 kg for Tk 1,500-1,800. Hilsas weighing between 500 and 800 grams were being sold at Tk 1,200 a piece.

As the demand for hilsa is on the rise, illegal netting of the fish has increased in the Meghna and Tetulia rivers in Bhola, a report from Bhola added.

TIB proposes framework

FROM PAGE 1
political parties.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman and its Programme Manager-In Charge Rumana Sharmin placed the "Polls-time governmental system in Bangladesh: Process and structure proposal" at a press conference at Brac Centre Inn in the capital.

The proposal was placed for consideration of all stakeholders with an aim to create a congenial atmosphere for holding a free, fair and credible national election, they said.

According to the proposal, the cabinet members of the polls-time government may be selected either from elected representatives of both the ruling and opposition alliances, or from unelected and non-partisan persons, or it may be composed of both the elected and unelected persons.

But the selected members must be acceptable to all, said the proposal.

Among the 10 members, equal number of members can be selected from both the alliances or from different political parties on the basis of vote ratio the parties had won in the last three parliamentary polls.

The committee will place the list of eleven members of the polls-time government to the president through the Speaker for approval.

If the list is approved, the president will dissolve the parliament in due time and will hand over power to

the polls-time government.

If the committee fails to reach a consensus on selecting the chief of the government, the committee will propose names of three persons to the president through the Speaker of parliament.

The president will select one from the proposed names as the chief of the government.

The tenure of the polls-time government will be 90 days and it will have to hold election within the tenure.

The polls-time government will have the jurisdiction to run election-related activities and regular essential administrative activities only.

It will refrain from initiating any project, taking any steps related to diplomatic affairs, and making any promise related to bilateral, regional, international or foreign aid affairs.

The president will give necessary suggestion to the polls-time government and will take decision in consultation with the government's chief about exclusion or inclusion of any cabinet members, the proposal said.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "A direction has been outlined for the polls-time government system in the proposal. We do not say that it is absolutely appropriate. Another improved formula may be taken. We want a free and fair national election."

"If the proposal is acceptable, then the political parties can sign an agreement of consensus.

Cargo piles up at Ctg port

FROM PAGE 1
On Thursday, however, a section of transport workers joined the work following assurances that their demands would be met. Over the last two days, 1-1.5 lakh tonnes of goods were unloaded from a number of vessels.

Port sources say hartals and work abstentions hamper the delivery cycle greatly, and it is the general people and factory owners who bear the brunt.

Prices go up in case of supply shortages, and production is badly hampered, even halted, when raw materials do not reach factories on time, they note.

A large number of containers lay at different yards, as frequent hartals in the last couple of months hit hard the delivery of imports from Chittagong Port to other parts of the country. The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) is now making extra efforts for quick delivery.

Till Thursday, 21,347 TEUs (twenty equivalent units) of goods-laden containers were stranded at the port, according to CPA data.

Farewell to a revolutionary

FROM PAGE 1
Many were seen unable to hold back tears.

The tributes started pouring in from around 2:00pm with the private secretary to the president, paying homage on behalf of the chief, taking the lead.

Mahbul Haque Shakil, special assistant to the prime minister, and Saifuzzaman Shikhor, the premier's assistant personal secretary, paid tribute on behalf of Sheikh Hasina.

On behalf of the ruling Awami League, its Joint General Secretary Mahabubul Alam Hanif and Telecommunication Minister Shahara Khatun paid homage while opposition BNP standing committee convener MK Anwar and BNP city unit convener Sadeque Hossain Khoka also placed wreaths on the coffin.

Communist Party of Bangladesh President Mujahidul Islam Selim, Workers' Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon, Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain, Ghatok Dala Nirmul Committee acting president Shahriar Kabir, Gonojagoron Mancha convener Imran H Sarker, Udichi President Kamal

CPA Secretary Syed Farhad Uddin Ahmed agreed that hartals and strikes did hamper the delivery cycle, but said this could not be seen as congestion given the port had capacity for 30,000 TEUs.

But importers see this as a mess and say they are paying heavily for this.

BSM Group Chairman Abul Bashar Chowdhury, for example, imported over 35,000 tonnes of wheat and lentil that arrived in a ship on April 2.

All but 5,000 tonnes of his imports are yet to be unloaded, he said, adding that he was to pay the shipping company \$14,000 for each day's overstay. The ship has already overstayed eight days for which he would have to pay \$1,12,000.

Bashar told The Daily Star that importers would be forced to recover the additional cost by selling goods at an increased price, which would ultimately be borne by the consumers.

Chittagong Port had already been reeling from recurrent hartals over the past few months. But things

The constitution may be amended to implement it and an arrangement of referendum can be considered to this end," he said.

"We will formally place the proposal before all stakeholders," he added.

Addressing the press conference, TIB Trustee Board Chairperson Sultana Kamal said, "We have placed the proposal as Transparency International has emphasised ensuring good governance."

"Lack of good governance is a major cause of corruption and non-transparency... Besides, as citizens of the country we have the right to raise our voice," she added.

TIB Trustee Board Member M Hafizuddin Khan also spoke at the function.

Meanwhile, BNP Standing Committee Member Mosharrif Hossain yesterday told BBC Bangla Service that if the TIB proposal was placed formally, BNP would observe the government's reaction and then decide on the matter.

He at this time expressed worry about the fact that most of their top party leaders were in jail.

Talking in the same programme, Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahabubul Alam Hanif said discussion on the proposal should be held following constitutional obligations.

"... But we can reach a solution through discussion," he added.

worsened on April 4, when general workers of lighter vessels that carry goods from mother vessels to different destinations began a strike over a 20 percent pay rise and security on waterways.

As a result, 26 cargo vessels with around 7.5 lakh tonnes of imports got stranded at the outer anchorage as of Thursday.

On Wednesday night, workers of some 150 lighter vessels owned by different industries joined the work after a meeting between BIWTA and Naujan Sramik Federation, said Chowdhury Ashikul Alam, general secretary of the federation.

But workers of 373 lighter vessels owned by Bangladesh Cargo Vessel Owners Association and Coastal Ship Owners Association of Bangladesh are still on strike, as their owners are unwilling to meet the demands, he added.

The decision about a 20 percent pay hike was made at a meeting on January 11 where Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan was present, Ashikul said.

pay their respect to the icon of the anti-British movement.

Chittagong Mayor Manjur Alam, former mayor A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury, BNP city unit president Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, Industries Minister Dilip Barua, Chittagong University Vice-Chancellor Anwarul Azim Arif, Bangladesh Puja Uddyan Parishad, Jonmastami Uddyan Parishad, Hindu Boudha Christian Oikya Parishad, Chittagong Press Club, Chittagong Union of Journalists, District Teachers' Association, AK Khan Foundation and many more organisations placed floral wreaths on the coffin.

His funeral procession started from JM Sen Hall and marched on important thoroughfares of the port city before stopping at Central Shaheed Minar of Chittagong.

The body was at the Shaheed Minar for some time during which more people and organisations paid homage before his body was taken to Abhy Mitra Cremation Centre.

Binod Bihari was born in Chittagong in 1909. He was a co-fighter of Surya Sen in the 1930 Chittagong Armoury Raid to free India from British colonial rule.

Long queues

FROM PAGE 20
And all this culminated in massive gridlocks.

The onrush of vehicles pushed road communication through Dhaka-Tangail highway, which connects 23 north-western districts to the capital, to the brink of collapse. There was an 80km-long jam between Baipail in Savar and Bangabandhu Bridge in Tangail, reports our Tangail correspondent.

Businessman Emdad Ali said he set off with his family from Mohakhali around 6:00am to go to Kalihati in Tangail to celebrate Pehela Baishakh there. He had only reached Chandra in Gazipur around 11:00am.

Vehicles were barely moving.

Syeda Mahfuza Begum, district primary education officer in Tangail, said a total of 27,857 examinees were supposed to take part in the primary teachers' appointment examination at 32 centres in the district. Around 5,000 missed the exams while many showed up late.

Many people were seen waiting for buses at Gabtoli and Mohakhali bus terminals in the capital yesterday as the buses they were supposed to board were stuck in the jam on their incoming trips.

An official of SR Travels, a coach service provider, said seven of their buses had left for Dhaka from different districts Thursday night but even at 2:00pm yesterday they had not reached Dhaka.

On Dhaka-Chittagong highway, passengers faced a 30km-long jam stretching from Daudkandi Bridge toll plaza to Madhya. Vehicles were hardly moving there.

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader got stuck in the jam at Barpara in Daudkandi while Home Minister MK Alamgir on his way to Kachua, said highway police in Daudkandi.

On Dhaka-Mymensingh highway the gridlock began yesterday morning and it was not before evening traffic movement became normal.

Martian

FROM PAGE 20
A passing European Space Agency spacecraft captured the 50km wide craters, named the Arima twins, in January.

They contain a unique central 'pit' formed by underground explosions, the space agency says.

The 'twin' craters are in the Thaumasia Planum region, a large plateau that lies immediately to the south of Valles Marineris, the largest canyon in the Solar System.

"Multiple terraces slump from the crater walls onto a flat floor, but perhaps the most striking feature is the central pit, a feature it shares with Arima crater to its north," said the agency.

Dramatic underground explosions, perhaps involving ice, are responsible for the pits inside these two large Martian impact craters, which was imaged by ESA's Mars Express spacecraft on 4 January.

Researchers say impact craters like these can provide windows into the past of a planet's surface.

"In this case, they provide evidence for the Thaumasia Planum region having once hosted plentiful subsurface water or ice that was liberated during impact events both small and large," it is claimed.

The craters were formed when an asteroid hits the rocky surface of a planet, and both it and the surface are compressed to high densities.

Immediately after the impact, the compressed regions rapidly depressurise, exploding violently.

In more dramatic events, larger craters are produced with more complex features, such as uplifted central peaks or sunken pits.

Many neighbouring small impact craters also show evidence for subsurface water or ice at the time of impact as evidenced by their 'rampart' ejecta blankets.

Ejecta blankets are debris deposits surrounding the crater, excavated from inside the crater during its formation.