



Participants at a kite festival organised by Dhakabasi and Biswakala Kendra on the playground of Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall of Dhaka University yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Transport strike in 3 northern districts start today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

Transport owner groups of Dinaipur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh jointly called an indefinite strike from today demanding that the government take steps to stop plying of shallow-machine-run and battery-run three-wheelers on highways in the districts. They also submitted a memorandum in this regard to the deputy commissioner of Dinaipur yesterday. Dinaipur Transport Owner Group Organisational Secretary Golam Rabbani announced the strike at a press conference at its office on Thursday night. He said during the strike, buses, trucks and other small vehicles would not be allowed to ply the three districts. Road communications between the three and other districts will also be snapped, he added. Earlier on March 30, the transport owners at a meeting decided that they would enforce a strike if their demand was not met within the timeframe they had fixed, which expired yesterday.

Arms, bombs recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Rapid Acton Battalion (Rab) recovered firearms, ammunition and bombs from Dakhalpur Bazar area in Harinakundu upazila of Jhenidah yesterday. Rab members said, acting on a tip-off, they raided the area around 6:00am and recovered a shotgun, seven rounds of bullets and seven bombs. A case was filed.

POLLS-TIME GOVT Govt wants unconditional talks with opposition: Inu

UNB, Kushtia

Asking the opposition to decide whether they wanted to take part in the next polls, Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday said the government was ready to sit with them for unconditional dialogues at any time. "You (opposition) must turn up unconditionally if you want to talk over the election. The government is standing on two legs regarding the unconditional dialogue," he told a primary school's annual prize-giving ceremony in Kushtia's Bheramara upazila. Inu also criticised the opposition for its demand, as a condition for the dialogue, to release those arrested for involvement in terrorist activities, including killing sleeping people on trains by removing fishplates of rail tracks, torching buses and trucks and damaging a girl's eyes.

The BNP-led 18-party opposition alliance, on many occasions, has demanded that the government release its top leaders and thus create congenial atmosphere for holding a dialogue. Inu also alleged that the opposition had no headache about the election despite the government's proposal for dialogue over the election for the last two and a half years. He accused BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia of hatching a conspiracy to overthrow the elected government by instigating the army alongside creating anarchy across the country. Kushtia Deputy Commissioner Syed Belal Hossain, Kushtia Police Super Mofiz Uddin Ahmed and Kushtia District unit Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal General Secretary Abdul Alim, among others, addressed the function held with the School Managing Committee President Amzad Hossain in the chair.

Resist communal forces: Menon

DU CORRESPONDENT

Lawmaker and Workers' Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon yesterday urged people to resist all militant and communal forces. He was addressing a two-day meeting of the party's central committee in the capital. The 13-point demand of Hefajat-e Islam, which opposed women's empowerment, intended to back-track on the country's development policies, he said. BNP, by expressing solidarity with the demands, showed its "political bankruptcy", Menon added. He said Jammāt-e-Islami, aided by BNP, was trying to stir up religious sentiments to instigate violence for stopping the ongoing war crimes trial.

Road crashes kill 10

METRO DESK

Ten people were killed and eight others injured in separate road accidents across the country on Thursday and yesterday. Our staff correspondent reports, a person was killed and three others were injured in a collision among a three-wheeler, truck and a motorbike at an intersection on Link Road in the capital's Badda. The deceased, Khukumoni, 22, was a professional dancer of Shariatpur. Injured Runa, another artiste, was in the CNG-run three-wheeler with Khukumoni. The other injured are the motorcyclist and the CNG driver. Our Pirojpur correspondent reports, Nur Mohammad, 85, died as a motorbike hit him at Shialkathi in Kawkhali upazila on Thursday. Our Natore correspondent adds, two women were killed and a man was injured when an oncoming bus of Hanif Paribahan rammed a motorcycle in Khezuratala area at Baraigram upazila on Thursday. The deceased are Fahima Begum, 41, and Chaimala Begum, 40, of Baraigram upazila. Injured motorcyclist Amir Hamza is Fahima's husband. Agitated locals blocked Natore-Dhaka highway for about half an hour, demanding speed bumps on the spot. Our Chittagong correspondent adds, nine-year-old Md Sajib, son of Md Alauddin

of Noakhali, was killed when a human hauler hit him in Kalamia Bazar area in the port city yesterday. BSS from Laxmipur reports, three people were killed and two others injured when an oncoming bus hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Mandari Bazar area at Sadar upazila on Thursday. The dead are Mohiuddin, 35, Mohammad Yusuf, 38, and Shahjahan, 40, of Sadar upazila. The injured were admitted to Noakhali Medical College and Hospital. UNB from Kushtia adds, a man was killed as a bus of JR Paribahan hit him at Zia Road intersection in Mirpur upazila yesterday. Nurul Islam, 45, of the upazila, was an office assistant of Dhuboil Secondary School. Agitated locals blocked Kushtia-Meherpur highway for an hour and vandalised several vehicles. In the district town, two policemen were injured when a CNG-run auto-rickshaw hit their motorcycle in Saddam Bazar area. Sub-Inspector Abul Hashem, 55, and constable Asaduzzaman, 34, of Khoksa Police Station were admitted to Kushtia General Hospital. UNB from Benapole adds, Kamrul Islam, 28, a microbus driver, was killed when a bus of Shohag Paribahan ran him over at Dhopadi intersection in Abhaynagar upazila of Jessore on Thursday.

LAND BOUNDARY DEAL BJP president hints at support

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

President of India's main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party Rajnath Singh yesterday indicated that he favoured a resolution of land boundary issue with Bangladesh but his party appeared cautious about endorsing the constitution amendment bill, given strong opposition in the border states of Assam and West Bengal. At the Idea Exchange programme at "The Indian Express" newspaper, Singh said, "I would want that the government of India should try to put a sweetener... to try to compensate for the deal. But the boundary dispute should get resolved. We will try our best, there is no opposition from our side." Hours later, the BJP top brass meeting at BJP parliamentary party chairman LK Advani's residence appeared not to agree and reportedly decided to take a "cautious" line. The 1974 India-Bangladesh land boundary agreement envisages India handing over 111 land enclaves to Bangladesh in return for 51 enclaves from Dhaka. India would have to let go of over 17,000 acres of territory in exchange for a little over 7,000 acres. The move requires a constitutional amendment with two-thirds majority which cannot be passed in parliament without BJP's support.

Bangladeshi worker 'commits suicide' in Saudi Arabia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladeshi worker allegedly committed suicide by jumping off the roof of a two-storey building in Jazan province of Saudi Arabia yesterday, reports Saudi Gazette. The unidentified man, aged around 50, fell on his head and died on the spot, the report added, quoting Saudi police. According to Col Awad Al-Qahtani, spokesman for Jazan police, they were investigating the reason behind the suicide. On contact, Md Emdadul Haque, labour counsellor of the Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh, failed to ascertain the details of the incident.



Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Oikya Parishad brings out a procession in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday demanding a Bangladesh free from communalism.

PHOTO: STAR

ATTACK ON JOURNO MASUD Police 'showing apathy' to arrest main culprit

Alleges victim OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Police are "showing apathy" in arresting the main culprit in the attack on Masud Alam, Abhaynagar correspondent of the Bangla daily Prothom Alo, the victim told The Daily Star yesterday. Around six miscreants beat Masud indiscriminately in Dhopadi area of Jessore's Abhaynagar upazila on March 28 and broke his left hand. Masud, also a lecturer of Sundali College, was undergoing treatment in the capital's Birdem hospital. He alleged that police were doing nothing as the culprits and their "godfathers" were from the ruling Awami League. A case was filed accusing around 10 people, including Sundali Union Parishad Chairman Poritosh Biswas, and his accomplices Abu Sufian, Abdul Hannan, Monirul Islam, Shaheen and Yasin of Dhopadi in the upazila. Masud, in his case statement, said the attack was launched as per the order of Poritosh as he covered several stories on corruption, including misappropriation of a climate change project fund which went against Poritosh. Masud said the main culprit Abu Sufian, also an accused in several cases including murder, was still at large.

Abhaynagar police Sub-Inspector Taizur Rahman Fakir, denying the allegation, said they were trying to arrest Abu Sufian.

Quader slams misuse of students in politics

DU CORRESPONDENT

Former student leader Obaidul Quader yesterday strongly criticised the current trend of misusing students in the name of student politics. "MPs, ministers, big leaders, small leaders -- all use students to serve their own interests," the communications minister told a seminar in Dhaka University's Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban. Bangladesh Sociology Association organised the seminar on "the recent experience on people's rights and movement". He also asked teachers to support political parties, not engage with them. "If teachers engage in politics, who will teach in the classrooms?" he asked. A section of politicians were giving provocative speeches before the media to make the current political situation more volatile, he said. Quader viewed the Shahbagh movement as a chance to bring qualitative changes to current politics. Environmentalist Syeda Rezwana termed the Shahbagh movement "a message for politicians". People, frustrated with the governance and deprivation, might take to the streets at any moment, she warned. Prof Zia Rahman of DU sociology department, Information Commissioner Sadaka Halim and Kaberi Gayen of DU mass communication and journalism department addressed the seminar.

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