

## NEWS IN *brief*

### Chinese, European Commission presidents greet Abdul Hamid

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chinese President Xi Jinping and President of the European Commission José Manuel Durão Barroso yesterday greeted the new president of Bangladesh, Abdul Hamid.

The Chinese president, in a message of congratulation, stressed the development of the relationship between China and Bangladesh and said China was willing to work together with Bangladesh to continue the development of bilateral ties.

In a separate message of congratulation, the European Commission president expressed confidence that Hamid would be able to lead the country into a peaceful and participatory general elec-

### Black flags at religious institutions urged denouncing communalism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Hindu Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad requested the authorities of all places of worship in the country to hoist black flags in the establishments tomorrow.

The call has been made to protest against communalism and express disgust for the attackers who have repeatedly vandalised monasteries and temples in the country, says a press release.

In another press release, the organisation demanded that the government identifies the attackers and take necessary action against them, and urged that such attacks should be stopped

### Today's strike at DU called off

DU CORRESPONDENT

A section of Dhaka University teachers and students yesterday postponed their strike, which was schedule to be enforced today, due to yesterday's Savar tragedy.

On April 17, they called a strike on the campus demanding release of the arrested bloggers.

Rafique Ullah Khan, professor of the Bangla department and one of the key organisers of the movement, said they will announce their next programme within some days.

Law enforcers arrested four bloggers -- Subrata Adhikari Shuvo, also a master's student of the Bangla department of DU; Russel Parvez, Mashiur Rahman Biplob, and Asif Mohiuddin -- for allegedly hurting religious sentiment via social

## TEMPLE ARSON IN CTG Buddhists seek protection from deputy commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Buddhists expressed anxiety and sought protection from Chittagong Deputy Commissioner Abdul Mannan during his visit to a burnt Buddhist temple and orphanage in Patiya upazila of Chittagong yesterday.

Dhatu Chaitya Bihar in Mukut Knight village mysteriously caught fire on April 20 and the following day its orphanage was burnt down.

Mannan gave assurance of safety to the Buddhist community there and directed Shafiqul Islam, assistant superintendent of police of Patiya circle, and Rokeya Parveen, upazila nirbahi officer, to submit probe report on the incident by April 29.

Mannan also handed over Tk 10,000 for the orphans.

Meanwhile, police arrested four persons in Boalkhali upazila in the last two days for their alleged involvement in robbery and arson attack on a Buddhist temple, Shakaymuni Bihar.



WEATHER  
TODAY

### Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Day and night temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country, Met Office said.

**The sun sets in the capital today at 6:24pm and rises tomorrow at 5:28am.**

Country's highest temperature 37.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangamati and lowest 17.9 degrees at Srimangal.

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	34.2	22.7	51	49
Chittagong	33.3	23.5	52	68
Rajshahi	33.8	20.7	73	61
Rangpur	32.0	19.5	58	56
Khulna	34.3	22.4	65	61
Barisal	34.0	21.8	65	59



Newly elected President Abdul Hamid, left, takes oath administered by Jatiya Sangsad Deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali, right, in Darbar Hall of Bangabhaban in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

## PM inaugurates first commuter train

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first-ever commuter train in the country hit the Dhaka-Narayanganj tracks yesterday to ensure faster travel on the 20-kilometre route.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the six-coach Diesel Electric Multiple Unit (DEMU) train at Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital.

Railways Minister Mujibul Haq, Home Minister Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir and Bangladesh Railway Director General Abu Taher were also present on the occasion.

The train departed the Kamalapur station at 1:25pm and reached Narayanganj at 2:00pm.

The train, which can carry 300 passengers at a time, will make 14 trips daily on the route.

Although the DEMU train can run at a speed of 80 kilometres per hour, it was running much slower due to presence of slums, bazars and level crossings at various points on the route, said Abu Taher.

The DEMU train is the first of a total of 20 trains being imported from China as per a \$58.31 million deal signed in 2011.

The railway is also importing five six-coach DEMU trains from India, which will start supplying the trains by the end of this year.

The government is planning to introduce commuter trains on short routes across the country.

## BISMILLAH GROUP LOAN SCAM ACC grills Jamuna Bank officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday interrogated four high officials of Jamuna Bank for allegedly assisting the controversial Bismillah Group in loan scams.

The four are the bank's Managing Director Matiur Rahman, Vice-President Mahibul Kadir, Senior Assistant Vice-President Younus Ali, and Executive Officer Rezaul Islam.

A four-member ACC team led by its Deputy Director Syed Iqbal Hossain interrogated the four at the commission's Segunbagicha office in the capital.

"In the preliminary interrogation we just verified documents," Iqbal said refusing to disclose further details.

He said Bismillah Group, using fake documents, took loans of around Tk 1,100 crore from five banks -- Jamuna Bank, Prime Bank, Shahjalal Islami Bank, Janata Bank and Premier Bank.

## NOISE POLLUTION IN CAPITAL Level double than permissible: Poba

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noise pollution levels around the capital's "quiet, residential, industrial, commercial and mixed zones" in April were nearly double the maximum limits allowed by the Noise Pollution (Control) Rules 2006, stated a Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba) report yesterday.

The report, "Current state of noise pollution in Dhaka city: Steps to take", prepared following a Poba survey, was unveiled during a press conference in Poba's Kalabagan office in the capital. As per the rules, the maximum daytime noise limit for "quiet zones", defined as any area with hospitals, educational institutions, offices and related organisations within a 100-metre radius, is 50 decibels, says the report.

However, noise levels around Shahid Zia Girls' School and College in Jatrabari, and National Institute of Kidney Diseases and Urology and National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar were recorded at 100 and 97 decibels respectively, it said.

"Noise pollution can hamper people's mental and physical development. The worst affected are children, pregnant women and heart patients," said Poba Secretary Mohammad Abdus Sobhan.

The penalty provisions of a maximum six-month jail sentence or fines worth Tk 10,000 or more for offenders, as stated by the rules, are hardly enforced, he said.

## Condolences pour in for Savar victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Acting Speaker Shawkat Ali and many political parties and organisations expressed deep condolence at the death of those killed in a building collapse in Savar yesterday.

They prayed for the salvation of the departed souls and expressed deep sympathy to their family members and to the injured.

Ruling Awami League-led 14-party coalition, Workers' Party of Bangladesh, Gonoforum, Zaker Party, Ain o Salish Kendra, and several student organisations also demanded arrest and punishment of the owners of the building and the garment factories inside the high rise.

The organisations also demanded that the government compensate the families of the victims and carry out an extensive probe into the incident.

Communist Party of Bangladesh termed the collapse "a planned murder" and demanded arrest of the culprits within 24 hours. Transparency International Bangladesh and Bikolpodhara Bangladesh demanded a judicial probe into the incident.

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry urged all to join the rescue operation to save the victims.

Other organisations which expressed condolence are: the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, Gonosanghati Andolon, Bangladesh Garment Workers' Unity Council, Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, Awami Jubo League, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Bangladesh Jubo Moitree, Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation, Naripokkho, Bangladesh Jatiya Mahila Ainjibi Samity, Biplobi Chhatra Moitree, and Jatiya Gonorantrik Gonomancha.

Human Rights Forum including Acid Survivors Foundation, Karmojibi Nari, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Nijera Kori, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Bangladesh Adivasi Forum and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, expressed condolence.

Deputy Leader of the Parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Communications Minister Obaidul Quader, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed and his deputy Qamrul Islam, Industries Minister Dilip Barua, Information Minister Hasanul Huq Inu, and Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbulul Alam Hanif, among others, expressed deep shock at the tragedy.

SAVAR TRAGEDY

## Foreign envoys express shock

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Heads of different diplomatic missions in Dhaka have expressed deep shock at the loss of lives in a tragic building collapse at Savar on the outskirts of the capital yesterday.

In a joint statement, the envoys of the nine EU missions' heads said, "We are greatly saddened to hear of the tragic collapse of a commercial building in Savar."

"We are shocked at the loss of so many lives and we extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims," they said.

The signatories of the statement are – Danish Ambassador Svend Olling, Swedish Ambassador Anneli Lindahl Kenny, Italian Ambassador Giorgio Guglielmino, European Union Ambassador William Hanna, Spanish Ambassador Luis Tejada Chacón, UK High Commissioner Robert Gibson, Netherlands Ambassador Gerben Sjoerd de Jong, German Ambassador Albrecht Conze, and French Charge d'Affaires Babou Kamichetty.

US Ambassador Dan Mozena in his statement offered his deep condolences to the incident's victims and to their families.

He appreciated those who were working to rescue and aid the people who are reported to be still trapped in the destruction, and the medical professionals who were caring for the injured.

In a separate message, British High Commissioner Robert Gibson said he was saddened at the loss of the many lives and the injury to so many people at Savar.

Japanese Ambassador Shiro Sadoshima in his message expressed his deep condolences to the victims and the bereaved families.

# Grand Opening

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