

NEWS IN *brief*

Brac's Mahabub Hossain among 500 most powerful persons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Foreign Policy, a global magazine of politics and economics, has selected Brac Executive Director Dr Mahabub Hossain as one of the 500 most powerful people in the world who have proven to possess the outstanding capability of influencing global trajectories.

Dr Mahabub is the lone person chosen from Bangladesh, said a press release yesterday.

Before joining Brac in 2007, he was the head of social sciences division at International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Philippines.

Dr Hossain began his career as a staff economist at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies in 1970.

Jahanara Imam's 84th birthday today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 84th birth anniversary of Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam, mother of martyred freedom fighter Rumi.

On the occasion, Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee will place wreaths at her grave in the capital's Mirpur, said a press release.

The committee has also arranged a discussion on the barriers and successes of the on going movement under the banner of Shahbagh Gonogajoron Mancha at Dhanmondi WVA auditorium in the afternoon.

On January 19, 1992, Jahanara Imam led the formation of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee to press home the demand that all war criminals, includ-

Chinese embassy donates Tk 5 lakh for Savar building collapse victims

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chinese embassy yesterday donated Tk 5 lakh for the victims of April 24 Savar building collapse and their families.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jun handed over the donation to Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque in the capital's Foreign Ministry yesterday.

The staff of the Chinese Embassy donated the

Accurate list of missing people from Savar tragedy demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concern over the "dubious" number of missing people from Savar tragedy, 24 citizens demanded that BGMEA, Bangladesh Police and Dhaka district administration publish accurate list of the victims immediately.

"BGMEA [Bangladesh Garment Manufactures and Exporters Association] must publish the complete list of workers, who were present at Rana Plaza on that day for the sake of fair investigation. Otherwise, they will be liable for non-cooperation with the investigation," they said in a statement yesterday.

The signatories include Prof Anu Mohammad, Khushi Kabir, Prof Gitiara Nasreen, and Prof Manas

Man trampled to death by wild elephants in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A man was trampled to death by some wild elephants at Rangunia upazila of Chittagong early yesterday.

The deceased was Surendra Roy, 55, a worker at Kodala Tea Garden.

The garden's Assistant Manager Md Kamrul Hasan Bhuiyan said Surendra died on the spot as he was stepped on by some elephants when some of the garden's workers were chasing the animals.



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 Rangpur, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions and the regions of Jessore and Kushtia in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, said Met Office. Mild to moderate heat wave is sweeping over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Khulna divisions and the regions of Tangail, Faridpur, Madaripur, Barisal and Patuakhali and it may continue. Day temperature may rise slightly and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:28pm and rises tomorrow at 5:22am.

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	35.8	28.8	76	67
Chittagong	30.8	27.7	73	81
Rajshahi	40.5	27.5	77	37
Rangpur	36.8	24.8	86	48
Khulna	35.8	27.8	70	65
Barisal	36.3	28.2	77	65
Sylhet	29.5	20.9	96	72
Cox's Bazar	34.3	28.5	73	81



Farida Begum cries at the top of her voice after she identified the body of her sister Fahima at Jurain graveyard in the capital on Wednesday where Fahima, a victim of the Savar building collapse, was about to be buried unidentified.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

RMG FACTORIES

Participation committees remain only on papers

Seminar told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no existence of participation committees in many garment factories in the country, although formation of the committees is mandatory as per the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, said speakers yesterday.

In most cases, the committees exist only in paper, they said.

In absence of trade unions, the committees provide a platform for the workers and employers to engage in dialogues, they added.

The speakers were addressing a seminar titled, "The role of participation committee in ensuring safe working environment" at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital.

Karmojibi Nari, an initiative of working women in Bangladesh, organised the seminar as a part of a two-day long fair arranged by the Ministry of Labour marking the May Day.

According to the labour law, any busi-

ness establishment with at least 50 workers must form a participation committee with equal number of representatives from employers and workers.

The functions of a participation committee includes promotion of mutual trust, understanding and cooperation between employer and the workers; ensuring application of labour laws; and improving and maintaining safety, occupational health and working condition.

Mentioning that the concepts of trade unions and participation committees are different, Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan said garment factory owners should not consider the committees as an alternative to trade unions.

Citing a government investigation report on 156 garment factories, Karmojibi Nari Coordinator Nasreen Ara Begum said around 40 percent of those factories do not have any participation committee.

HALL-MARK SCAM SC tells HC to settle issue of bail to chairperson

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday asked the High Court to settle, on holding hearing in four weeks, the rule issued over the legality of granting bail to Jasmine Islam, chairperson of the Hall-Mark Group, in 11 corruption cases.

A Dhaka court on February 7 granted bail to Jasmin in the cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission on the condition that Jasmine and the Hall-Mark Group repay Tk 2,600 crore, which the company swindled out, to Sonali Bank.

The HC on February 11 issued the rule upon the authorities concerned to explain why the lower court order that granted bail to Jasmine should not be cancelled.

The Appellate Division of the SC yesterday asked the HC bench led by Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury to dispose of the rule in four weeks.

The apex court passed the order after hearing an appeal filed by Jasmine against the HC order.

ACC's lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that Jasmine is now in jail as per an earlier HC order.

Dipu Moni defends labour safety steps

STAR REPORT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni defended the government's initiatives to improve labour rights in the country while talking to Al Jazeera on Wednesday.

The broadcaster interviewed the minister amid, what it said, "mounting pressure over perceived lax safety standards blamed for last week's deadly building collapse".

In the April 24 Rana Plaza disaster, the death toll crossed 400. "There have been widespread accusations that safety regulations are both insufficient and rarely enforced in Bangladesh's US\$20 billion garment industry, as the collapse was only the latest in a string of deadly disasters," reports Al Jazeera.

It quotes Dipu Moni as saying, "A 'culture of impunity' had prevailed in the country for many decades, making many people - including owners of buildings and factories - feel they did not need to comply with laws and building codes.

"She said that since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed's government came into power in 2009, it has been taking 'very strict action' against those who do not comply with laws.

"We have been working on improving labour standards; we have been working on improving safety conditions in workplaces; and we have been doing it in collaboration with the owners of the factories, with labour organisations and with international organisations."



PHOTO: COURTESY

The GreenWorld Earth Club of SFX Greenherald International School brings out a procession in the capital recently to encourage people to work with the club in creating a clean and pollution free area.

Road crashes kill 7

METRO DESK

Seven people were killed and 33 others injured in separate road accidents across the country on Wednesday and yesterday.

Our Munshiganj correspondent reports, three people were killed and 20 others injured when a bus fell into a ditch at Baliakandi in Gazaria upazila after hitting a standing truck yesterday.

The dead are helper Miji Md Akbar, 25, of Chandpur; and passengers Md Ashraf, 65, and Jesmin Akter, 25, of Comilla.

Our Chittagong correspondent adds, Mohammed Akther Hossain, 30, was killed as a car hit him near Notun Bridge at Bakalia of Chittagong city yesterday.

A Gopalganj correspondent reports, a motorcyclist was killed and ten bus passengers were injured when the two vehicles collided head-on in Puna area of Kashiani upazila on Wednesday.

The deceased is Bidhan Paul, 30, of Muksudpur upazila.

Our Brahmanbaria correspondent reports, two people were killed and three others injured when an oncoming bus rammed the CNG-run auto-rickshaw carrying them at Mukimpur village in Kasba upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Fatema Akter, 18, daughter of Mojibur Rahman, and CNG driver Jahidul Islam, 40.

ENFORCING BUILDING CODE

Govt to establish regulatory authority

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday decided to establish a regulatory authority to enforce building code across the country.

Nagar Unnayan Committee headed by the public works secretary at a meeting yesterday formed a nine-member committee to find how to ensure enforcement of Bangladesh National Building Code, which is legally mandatory on any building construction.

The newly formed committee would start functioning with specific terms of reference and submit report within two weeks.

Abu Sadeque, head of the committee, said their primary objective would be to make a proposal for a building regulatory authority to enforce the code out of purview of four development authorities.

The four development control authori-

ties, including Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha, Chittagong Development Authority, Khulna Development Authority and Rajshahi Development Authority, are responsible for enforcing the building code within their respective jurisdiction.

Abu Sadeque, also director of Housing and Building Research Institute, said they would suggest forming a provisional committee to oversee compliance with the code before forming the regulatory authority.

The provisional committee would be led by local deputy commissioners, and it will be consisting of engineers of public works department and local government engineering department, he added.

He said they would also point out building approval authority entrusted in municipality ordinance conflicting with the provisions of Building Construction Act 1952.

Indian Speaker greets Shirin Sharmin

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar has congratulated the new Speaker of Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury.

"Your appointment to this august office reflects the spirit of empowerment of women in your beautiful country and epitomizes your ethics, values and ideals in supporting causes for the people of Bangladesh, in general, and upholding the rights of women and children, in particular," she said in a message.

Meira said India attaches the highest importance to its relations with Bangladesh and reiterated the commitment to follow a partnership towards a mutual benefit.

She also expressed confidence that the inter-Parliamentary co-operation initiatives between the countries will further bolster.

Six BNP leaders get ad-interim bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted ad-interim bail for six months to six BNP leaders in different cases filed on charges of vandalising vehicles, attacking police and blasting cock-tails in early March.

The leaders are -- Mirza Abbas, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, Abdullah Al Noman, Amanullah Aman, Rizvi Ahmed and Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal.

The HC bench of Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice Md Jahangir Hossain passed the orders after hearing separate bail petitions filed by the accused leaders on different dates in March and April.

The court also issued separate rules upon the government to explain why the petitioners should not be granted regular bail in the cases.

Mirza Abbas got bail in six cases, Goyeshwar in five, Noman in five, Aman in six, Alal in seven and Rizvi in one case.

Sagir Hossain Leon, a lawyer of the petitioners, told The Daily Star that four leaders other than Aman and Rizvi will now get released from jail following the HC orders.

Aman and Rizvi are accused in other cases, he said.

On March 2 and March 6, police filed the cases against the BNP leaders with Paltan, Ramna and Shahjahanpur Police Stations.