

Govt launches comprehensive web portal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To manage huge quantity of datasets about the impacts of climate change in Bangladesh and initiatives taken to battle global warming which was scattered in numerous web portals, the government launched a web portal yesterday.

From now on, the new web portal www.climatechange.gov.bd will be the centre for the knowledge on climate change in Bangladesh.

On the site, there is a blog, discussion forum and video archive. University students, researchers, government officials who are working on climate change would be able to write there and discuss on the issue.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) launched the web portal which was inaugurated by Minister Anwar Hossain Manju in Dhaka's Sonargaon hotel.

Dr Kamal Uddin Ahmed, secretary in charge, and Ranjit Chandra Sarker, project director and deputy secretary to the ministry; and Kazuhiko Higuchi, country director, and Arif M Faisal, environment specialist, Bangladesh Resident Mission of ADB, among others, spoke on the occasion.

SINKING OF PINAK-6 SC stays

owner's Bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed for two weeks a High Court order that granted bail to Abu Bakkar Siddique, owner of Pinak-6 launch, which capsized in the river Padma last year, in a case filed for negligence.

Abu Bakkar cannot get released from jail following the SC order, Deputy Attorney General Khandaker Diliruzzaman told The Daily Star.

The order came following a petition filed by the government seeking stay on the HC order.

Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of SC, also asked the government to submit a leave-to-appeal petition before the SC against the HC order in two weeks.

Pinak-6, which had a capacity of carrying only 85 passengers, sank in the river with more than 250 passengers on August 4 last year. A total of 48 bodies were recovered and 62 remained missing.

Jahangir Zia, traffic inspector at Mawa river port, filed the case on August 5 saying that the launch carried passengers more than its capacity for profit.

Following a petition filed by Abu Bakkar, the HC on March 2 this year granted him six months' interim bail and also issued a rule upon the government to explain why the petitioner should not be granted regular bail in the case.

Journo Nadia

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Lady Michelle Obama and other US government dignitaries.

Following the IWOC Award ceremony, to be held at the US Department of State in Washington, DC, on Thursday at 1:00pm EST, Sharmeen will participate in various events organised by the US Department of State. She will meet American women leaders in journalism and other fields before joining women's rights activists from across the globe at the 59th Commission on the Status of Women, to be held at the UN Headquarters, New York.



Young women smear each other with coloured powder during the celebration of Holi, the Hindu festival of colours, on Dhakeshwari Temple premises in the capital yesterday. The festival also marks the onset of spring and the victory of good over evil.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

EKRAM KILLING IN FENI Bail for prime accused stayed for another week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed for one more week a High Court verdict granting bail to Mahtab Uddin Chowdhury Minar, the prime accused in Fulgazi upazila chairman Ekramul Haque killing case.

The four-member apex court bench headed by Chief Justice SK Sinha also asked the government to submit a leave-to-appeal petition with it against the HC judgment in a week.

An HC bench on March 2 granted the bail to Minar in the murder case following a petition.

Ekram, 45, former president of the upazila unit of Awami League, was shot and burnt to death in his car in Feni town's Academy area on May 20 last year.

Ekram's brother Rezaul Haque Jasim filed the murder case with Feni Model Police Station the same day, accusing Mahtab and 30 to 35 unnamed people.

Policy for women friendly work environment must

The Daily Star-Standard Chartered-British Council roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A standard policy creating an environment conducive for women to work in is required to encourage their participation in the country's workforce, said discussants yesterday.

Commitment of top management and leaders is also required to ensure equality and promote a gender-sensitive culture at organisations, they said.

The views came at a roundtable on "How to ensure a conducive working environment for women" organised by The Daily Star, Standard Chartered Bank and British Council in The Daily Star Centre of the capital.

"It is also the responsibility of leaders to search and groom women who can reach the top," said Rokia A Rahman, chairman of Mediaworld and

president of Bangladesh Federation for Women Entrepreneurs.

She said very few women are seen at the top management in any organisation.

Moderating the programme, Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said, "The percentage of women in the workforce, both in formal and informal sectors, has increased from 8.4 percent in 1983 to 34 percent in 2010."

The society is still not supportive enough as there is no level-playing field for women to work in, she said.

Abrar Anwar, chief executive officer, SCB mentioned their flexible hours, scope to work from home, maternity support and day care centre in line with the central bank's regulations as features that encourage women to work there.

Sheepa Hafiza, head of Gender, Justice and Equality, Brac suggested performance assessment of directors of organisation should include their contributions to creating a gender-sensitive environment and promotion of equality.

Sheepa also cited granting paternity leave and allowing women to draw their provident fund earning during maternity, which her organisation allows, as good practices.

Aasha Mehreen Amin of The Daily Star said ensuring gender equality is not only the job of leaders in an organisation; gender sensitiveness needs to trickle down every department.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said the media in general has been proactive in promoting gender equality.

"It is something we need to do to build a better society," he said.

DoE fines 3 factories, brick kiln Tk 40 lakh

UNB, Dhaka

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined three factories and a brick kiln a total of Tk 40 lakh in Dhaka, Gazipur and Narayanganj for polluting the environment.

East West Suiting Mills Ltd at Ashulia, outside the capital, was fined Tk 13 lakh for not renewing its environmental clearance certificate and directly releasing untreated liquid waste into water body. Washing factory, Summer Dress Ltd, located in Gazipur's Mirzapur, was fined Tk 1 lakh for operating without installing an effluent treatment plant (ETP).

The authorities of Metro Steel and Re-rolling Mills Ltd, in Narayanganj's Siddhirganj, was fined Tk 22 lakh for running the factory without environmental clearance certificate and polluting the air by not installing air treatment plant (ATP).

Besides, Maa Brick Field was fined Tk 2 lakh for conducting operations through traditional method.

During the hearings held at DoE headquarters in the capital, representatives from the factories and brick kiln made their apologies to DoE Director (monitoring and enforcement) Md Alamgir and pledged to take preventive measures to avoid recurrence of their offences, said a press release.



Participants at a roundtable "How to ensure a conducive working environment for women" jointly organised by The Daily Star, Standard Chartered Bank and the British Council in The Daily Star Centre of the capital yesterday, marking International Women's Day.

PHOTO: STAR

Rangpur mayor helps to end

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152 employees. The VC, however, maintains that all these decisions lie with the University Grants Commission and the syndicate.

When asked whether as a mayor he could call for preventing the entry of the VC, Jhantu said, "I didn't say I would not let him enter. I asked the protesters to do that."

The VC declined to talk about this. "I will give my reply after coming to the campus," he told The Daily Star by phone.

Meanwhile, police sued 200 unidentified protesters on charges of attacking them, obstructing their work, and vandalising vehicles during a clash on

Wednesday.

The clash started when some locals pressed for calling off the strike. At least 20 people were injured when police used rubber bullets and batons to contain the fighting.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi University Teachers Association (Ruta), worried at the long-running deadlock at BRUR, yesterday condemned the attack on the hunger strikers, and demanded a fair investigation into it and removal of the BRUR vice chancellor, said a press release.

In a separate statement, Ruta demanded immediate arrest of those who killed secular writer Avijit Roy on the Dhaka University campus on February 26.

Two more

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The three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan adjourned the proceeding until Sunday, when he will face further cross-examination.

Mahidur and Afsar, two alleged members of the anti-liberation Razakar force, face three charges of crimes committed in the district in 1971. The duo pleaded not guilty.

Chhabi finally

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"We are common people and we don't understand politics. Why did they attack my uncle?" Fayeze asked. "What will happen to his wife and children now?"

Meanwhile, Hathazari police arrested 16 activists of BNP and Jamaat-Shibir during a raid in the area after the incident.

Mechanised harvesters make farmers happy

BSS, Rajshahi

Potato growers in Rajshahi have started using mechanised harvesters, instead of the conventional method, in order to save money, reduce labour requirement and increase production.

According to sources concerned, the potato-harvester driven by power tiller has recently been developed in Regional Wheat Research Centre (RWRC) in Rajshahi.

Golam Rasul, a farmer of Dayenghat village under Paba upazila of the district, said potato harvester meets up the labour shortage by speeding up the harvesting process.

On an average, it can harvest potato from around 10-12 bighas of land in a day depending upon the operator's skill.

It takes three persons to harvest with the machine while in the conventional method eight persons are needed for per bigha of land and therefore the harvesting cost is also saved by at least 60 percent.

Babar Ali of Shayampur village told the BSS that there is an acute labour shortage in potato growing areas during peak harvesting period. Manual potato harvesting is a slow, time consuming and costly process.

Potato growers always face risks of bad weather especially during harvesting time.

Sometimes, unpredictable rain causes huge damages. So, potato harvester can cover many areas within a limited period and escape bad weather, uncertainty and labour dependency.

Farmers have already started using this harvester in their own fields in Rajshahi area during the current harvesting season.

They can be benefited as it lowers the production cost as well as labour requirement.

Agriculture Engineer Dr Israil Hossain, chief scientific officer of RWRC, Rajshahi, told the BSS that the harvester is a light machine and easily enters the small farmers' fields and a single person can drive the machine.

He said the fabricating cost is around Tk 35,000 and there is no need of specialised training for driving the machine.

Many of the farmers told the BSS that the production is higher than that of the previous seasons.

At present, the farmers are harvesting around 100 bags of potato (each bag contains 90 kg) from per bigha of land and there is no apprehension of incurring loss.



Social movement against corruption

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) is inviting applications for filling up the following vacancies.

Sl. No.	Position	No	Posting Place	Monthly Gross Salary (BDT)*
01.	Director (Finance & Administration)	01	Dhaka	190,419.00 (Gross)
02.	Programme Manager (Outreach & Communication)	01	Dhaka	78,723.00 (Gross)
03.	Programme Officer (BAWIN)	01	Dhaka	47,943.00 (Gross)

* Other benefits are applicable as per relevant rules of TIB.

Before applying please visit TIB website: www.ti-bangladesh.org/vacancy for further details including position description and application procedure. Applications which are not consistent with the given procedure will not be considered. Only candidates short listed on the basis of prescribed qualifications will be called for selection process.

Applications must be submitted using the Applicant Information Format available on the website.

Last date of application: March 21, 2015

Dependence on coaching

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should be given the highest priority and he stressed the need for an integrated education system.

Prof Mahabuba Nasrin, director of the Institute of Disaster Management and

Vulnerability Studies, Dhaka University; Dr Makduma Nargis, additional secretary of Community Clinic Project; Ahmed Shapan Mahmud, Supra chairperson, and its member Hosne Ara Hasi spoke among others.