



As part of celebrating Mahalaya, the auspicious occasion heralding the advent of goddess Durga, a special event was held in front of Radha Gobinda Nibash temple in Barishal city yesterday. On the occasion, artists also enacted the incident of Durga slaying Asur (demon). This year's Durga Puja will be held on October 4-8.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Long way to go for ensuring people's right to information

Says chief info commissioner

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a discussion yesterday noted that right to information is required for maintaining continuity of development in the country, and there is no alternative to ensuring right to information to improve the quality of life.

The comments came at a discussion arranged by the Information Commission marking International Day for Universal Access to Information 2019 at the Jatiya Press Club.

Speakers, including government officials and mediapersons, agreed that implementation of the Right to Information Act is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability of the government.

Presenting the keynote paper, Chief Information Commissioner Martuza Ahmed said they are yet to ensure right to information for everyone in the country.

"We still have a long way to go to ensure everyone's right to information... Public awareness should be raised with the help of the mass media for promotion of the Right to Information Act," he said.

Martuza noted that it is not possible for the Information Commission alone to achieve the goal.

"The commission is already implementing various programmes... The Right to Information Act has to be implemented at all levels of the society," he added.

Jatiya Press Club President Saiful Alam said the incumbent government enacted the Right to Information Act to ensure free flow of information. "We, as media workers, always want that," he said.

SCC mayor files GD for death threat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A general diary was filed yesterday as Sylhet city Mayor Ariful Haque Choudhury received death threats over phone call in the morning.

Shahab Uddin Shihab, public relations officer of Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) filed the general diary with Kotwali Police Station in Sylhet, mentioning two phone numbers.

In the general diary he stated that the mayor received two calls at around 10:05am. On the other side, there were male voices, who verbally abused and threatened the mayor.

The public relations officer said, "The mayor is now fearing for his safety. He asked the police to trace the phone numbers and find the culprits."

Selim Miah, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, said, "The general diary has been recorded with the police station and we will be taking action regarding the matter".

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2003 MEGHNA LAUNCH CAPSIZE

HC compensation order in limbo for 28 months

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Victim families of a tragic 2003 launch accident in Meghna river are yet to get any compensation, nearly 28 months after the High Court directed authorities concerned for doing so.

An appeal against the HC verdict is pending with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in this regard, but there is no stay order on the HC judgement.

Launch MV Nasrin-1 capsized on July 8, 2003 at the confluence of Padma, Meghna and Dakatia rivers in Chandpur, leaving 110 people dead, about 200 missing and many others injured, according to a government investigation report.

The "unfit" triple-decker was on its way to Bhola from Dhaka with about 700 passengers. The launch owner also died in the accident.

On June 5, 2017, the HC upheld a lower court verdict that ordered Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and a launch owners' association to pay out Tk 17.11 crore in compensation to victim families.

The family of each deceased would

get Tk 10 lakh, and every injured victim would get Tk 1 lakh, the HC ruled.

Advocate ZI Khan Panna, a lawyer for Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), which is a party in the case, told The Daily Star on Thursday that BIWTA and launch owners' association have not given any compensation to victim families, as an appeal filed by them is pending with the SC's Appellate Division.

"We will fight for upholding the High Court verdict when the Appellate Division holds hearing on the appeal, although victim families have not communicated with us," he said.

BIWTA and the launch owners' association jointly filed a leave-to-appeal petition with the Appellate Division this year, seeking a stay on the HC verdict.

After a brief hearing, Chamber Judge Justice Hasan Foez Siddique on September 2 sent the petition to its full bench and set March 8, 2020 for hearing.

Advocate Ishrat Hossain, a lawyer for BIWTA and the launch owners' association, told this correspondent that her clients will not give the

compensation until the apex court disposes of the petition and issue directives.

Following the launch accident, the deputy commissioner of Chandpur published a list of 400 people who were affected by the incident. Accordingly, the shipping and disaster trustee boards gave Tk 15,000 to Tk 20,000 to the deceased and injured person's families.

In 2004, on behalf of the victims, BLAST filed a case with the 3rd Joint District Judge's Court of Dhaka, claiming that the compensation was not adequate. More than Tk 28.93 crore was demanded in the case, where number of the deceased was mentioned as 171. The case was sent to the 7th Joint District Judge's Court in 2012.

In its verdict on February 2, 2016, the court asked the government to give Tk 17.11 crore to the families of the affected people -- 170 deceased and one injured -- within 60 days.

BIWTA and the defendant, however, filed a revision petition against the verdict on October 24, 2016. The HC on June 5, 2017 rejected the petition and upheld the judgement.

Bangladesh a shining example of communal harmony: info minister

BSS, Dhaka

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday said Bangladesh has set an example in the world by establishing inter-community coherence across the country.

"Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman led the nation to form a non-communal Bangladesh," a release quoted him as saying.

The government under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina believes in amity among the religions of the state... There is no place for communism here," the release added.

The information minister made the remarks while addressing two different programmes: puja ceremony of Gulshan-Banani Sarbajanin Puja Sangha and inauguration of the "Shubho Mohaloya" programme arranged by the Sanatan Samaj Sangha at Farmgate in the capital.

"Our flag bears the symbol of the blood of three million people of all religions, in exchange for which we achieved our freedom..." Dr Hasan Mahmud said at the event marking Durga Puja, to be held on October 4-8.

"We are Bangalees first, then Hindu-Muslim-Buddhist or Christians," the minister added.

He urged everyone to come forward together to develop the nation.

The minister said, as per Hindu faith, evil forces will be defeated with the arrival of the Goddess Durga and the unity will deepen among people of the country.

Work together to establish good governance: ACC chief

BSS, Dhaka

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Commissioner AFM Aminul Islam yesterday urged all -- including government, NGOs (non government organisations), civil society members and the media -- to work together to establish good governance in the country.

"The government introduced the 'National Integrity Strategy' to establish good governance while the Jatiya Sangsad also enacted related laws... Comprehensive and earnest efforts of all concerned is a must to establish good governance in the country," he said.

The ACC commissioner said this while speaking at a training course at the ACC office in the capital's Segunbagicha area.

Referring to the need of quality education with good character in different educational institutions at primary and higher secondary level across the country, the ACC commissioner alleged that a section of teachers are not playing their due role in this regard.

About coaching business, Aminul Islam said some actions were taken against such coaching centres.

He said a comprehensive initiative is urgently needed to end this type of business.

ACC, the country's anti-graft watchdog, organised the training course on the "National Integrity Strategy" where 70 of its officers -- deputy directors and directors -- took part.

Senior Secretary of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Ministry NM Ziaul Alam and ACC DG (training and ICT) AKM Sohel, among others, were present at the event.

Youth held for rape in Narayanganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Police yesterday arrested a youth for allegedly raping a female worker and capturing the crime on his cellphone, in Arahahazar upazila of Narayanganj.

The arrestee is Rakib Uddin Raki, 23, son of Noor Islam of Hargaan village in Rugganj upazila, said police.

Police with the help of locals and victim's family members caught Rakib from Fausia village on Friday, said Faizur Rahman, sub-inspector of the police station yesterday.

A case was filed against Rakib and his friend Sujon Miah with Arahahazar Police Station in this connection, said the sub-inspector.

The victim is a worker at a local factory. Rakib raped her and threatened to release the video on the internet, the SI said quoting the case statement.

The girl will be sent to Narayanganj General Hospital today for medical test, added the police official.

DENGUE OUTBREAK

More patients getting admitted outside Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hospitals outside Dhaka saw more patients taking admission than the capital in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday, as some 278 out of the 360 dengue patients were from outside Dhaka, according to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Meanwhile, yet another dengue patient died yesterday while undergoing treatment at Faridpur Medical College Hospital, taking the unofficial death toll to 158.

The victim was Sirazul Islam, 40, son of late Sheikh Falu of Narandia village under Saltah upazila in Faridpur. He was a fruit seller and lived at Shibchar upazila in Madaripur with his wife and son, reported Faridpur correspondent of this newspaper.

Kamoda Prosad Saha, superintendent of Faridpur Medical College Hospital (FMCH), said, "Sirazul was admitted to the hospital on September 24 with dengue fever. He died while undergoing treatment around 7am on Saturday".

Anamul Haque, civil surgeon of Faridpur, said a total of 2,795 dengue patients got admitted to different hospitals in Faridpur, including FMCH, between July 20 and September 28. Of them, 203 patients are taking treatment in different hospitals, and 10 patients had died, he said.

Meanwhile, since January, the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) received information about 231 dengue-related deaths. So far, it has reviewed 136 cases and confirmed 81 deaths.



Roads and alleys getting waterlogged even after a brief spell of rain has become a common sight in the capital. Residents of many areas, like Tejturi Bazar where this photo was taken from yesterday, have to suffer as a result.

Bangladeshi lawyer appointed Int'l Trademark Association member

CITY DESK

International Trademark Association (INTA) appointed Bangladesh Intellectual Property Forum's (BIPF) founder, Barrister ABM Hamidul Mishbah, as a member to the INTA Emerging Issues Committee for the 2020-2021 term, said a press release.

Barrister Mishbah is the first Bangladeshi to be appointed in a committee of INTA. International Trademark Association is one of the oldest and largest global associations founded in 1878 by trademark owners and professionals dedicated to supporting trademarks and related intellectual property to foster consumer trust, economic growth, and innovation around the world.

According to the press statement issued by BIPE, International Trademark Association confirmed the appointment of Barrister Mishbah on Thursday.

Barrister Hamidul Mishbah, a practicing lawyer at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and an intellectual property campaigner, has played an instrumental role in promoting intellectual property rights and spreading mass awareness about it, said the press release.

Moni Zaman passes away

CITY DESK

Moni Zaman, former media director of Interspeed, died on Friday following heart failure. She was 65, says a press release.

She was born on July 9, 1956 in Kolkata, India.

Moni joined Interspeed's media department in the seventies. She soon became an integral part of the agency-press network.

She was buried at Tikapara graveyard in Rajshahi.

Her relatives and colleagues sought prayers for her departed soul.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT ALLEGATION AT JU Students demand punishment of teacher

JU CORRESPONDENT

Students of Jahangirnagar University yesterday formed a human chain on campus, demanding punishment of a teacher who allegedly sexually harassed a female student of government and politics department.

The demonstrators, under the banner of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad, gathered in front of the university's Shaheed Minar around 2pm, looking to press home their demand.

At the programme, they demanded exemplary punishment of Sanwar Siraj, an assistant professor of the government and politics department.

Shakil-uz-Zaman, one of the protesters and the convener of the platform, said there are multiple accusations against Sanwar Siraj. "Such an immoral person cannot be a guide for students and the nation," he said.

Prof Jamal Uddin Runu of environmental sciences department said, "We feel ashamed for Sanwar's behaviour as a teacher."

College student among two killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Two people were killed and two injured in road accidents during the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Dinajpur, a college girl was killed on the spot as a speeding bus hit her in Rangpur city yesterday.

The deceased -- Ity Begum, 20, daughter of Dulal Hossain from Mirganj area in Rangpur city -- was a student of Begum Rokeya Government College in Rangpur.

She was crossing Dhaka-Rangpur road in Panchmire area while she was on her way to the college, police quoted the family and witnesses as saying.

Following the accident, locals seized the bus, said Anwar Hossain, inspector (investigation) of Tajhat Police Station.

In Faridpur, a man was killed when a motorbike carrying two people hit him in Baganbari area of Saltha upazila on Friday.

The identity of the deceased could not be known immediately.

The two injured -- who were on the bike -- are Hasan Mia, 35, from Sihipur; and Md Rassel, 30, from Gorgardia in Saltha.

Of them, Hasan was undergoing treatment at Faridpur Medical College Hospital and Rassel was referred to Dhaka, as his condition deteriorated, said SM Siddik Hossain, station officer of Saltha fire service.