

Another Ctg gas blast victim dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Another victim of the gas explosion in port city's Patharghata area succumbed to her injuries at Chattogram Medical College Hospital yesterday.

The deceased is Darin Tisha Gomez, a student of Islamia College, Chattogram and a teacher at Patharghata Saint John's Grammar School.

On her way to work, Tisha was critically injured as a large chunk of the building wall fell on her due to the gas explosion in the area on November 17.

She was rushed to the CMCH casualty ward. As her condition deteriorated, Tisha was shifted to the hospital's ICU, said Pranoy Kumar Dutta, associate professor of anesthesiology.

She passed away around 11am. With her, the death toll from the explosion now stands at eight.

CTG-8 BY-POLLS

Schedule next week; 5 AL, BNP leaders eye nomination

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

With Election Commission (EC) set to declare the schedule of by-polls to Chattogram-8 (Boalkhali-Chandgaon) constituency by next week, around half a dozen candidates from Awami League and BNP were trying to secure party nomination.

The constituency fell vacant due to death of lawmaker Moin Uddin Khan Badal on November 7. Badal, also executive president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, was elected lawmaker with the "boat" symbol from the constituency in three consecutive polls, between 2008 and 2018.

Sources said at least three leaders from AL and two from BNP were trying to get party nomination in the by-polls.

From AL, the aspirants are party's Chattogram south district unit president Moslem Uddin Ahmed, Chattogram city unit vice president and former minister Nurul Islam, and Chattogram city unit treasurer and former chairman of Chattogram Development Authority Abdus Salam, said party sources.

Meanwhile, from BNP, Abu Sufian, the

party's city unit vice president, and Ershad Ullah, BNP candidate in the constituency in 2008 polls, were trying to get party nomination, said BNP sources.

In addition, Selina Khan, Badal's widow, is also apparently interested to contest the by-polls with AL ticket, said sources.

Party sources said the interested leaders started lobbying with party high-ups to secure their nomination.

Contacted, Munir Hossain Khan, Chattogram district election officer, said the by-polls will probably be held by the second week of January next year, while the schedule will be declared by the first week of December.

"The schedule may be declared by Sunday or Monday," he said.

Contacted, Harun-ur-Rashid, BNP assistant organising secretary (Chattogram division), said the party was yet to decide whether it would participate in the by-polls.

"We will have a meeting on Monday to make a decision in this regard," he said.

However, BNP insiders said the party had decided to participate in the polls.

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CATCH OF THE DAY! With water receding during winter, catching fish from this ditch in Savar has become a favourite pastime for adults and children alike. The photo was taken at Baniapur area recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Prof Ajoy Roy's condition still critical

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The condition of renowned academic Prof Ajoy Roy, who has been on artificial ventilation support at the capital's Birdem Hospital since Wednesday, is still critical, said doctors.

The 85-year-old professor was admitted to the hospital on Monday with fever and difficulty in breathing. His health condition has been deteriorating since Wednesday evening, and he was moved to the ICU that night.

Prof Ajoy, father of slain blogger Avijit Roy and a founder of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, played a key role in the movement for trial of war criminals. He is now one of the advisers of the committee.

On Thursday, Nirmul Committee President Shahriar Kabir urged the prime minister to take necessary steps to provide better treatment for the veteran educationist.

Ajoy is a former physics professor at Dhaka University. He is best known for his prominent role in human rights activism and freethinking. While testifying last month before a magistrate court -- in his son's murder case -- Ajoy, out of frustration, said he would not continue appearing for the hearings.

Save Louhajang river, demands Tangail rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

People from all walks of life want to see the Louhajang river freed from clutches of grabbers and polluters, demanded participants of the movement to save the river yesterday.

To mark the third anniversary of the movement, a procession followed by a rally was held in Tangail.

Ratan Ahmed Siddiqui, general secretary of Nodi Rokkha Andolon in Tangail, said many structures by influential land grabbers still remain on the river.

Meanwhile, grabbers are becoming active again despite an eviction drive by the district administration, he added.

The 76km river, originating from the Dhaleswari, flows through the district town and falls into the Bangshai.

Even four decades ago, launches and merchandise carrying boats used to anchor in the river, said locals.

Environmentalists expressed frustration with the situation and demanded resumption of the drive to free the river following directives of the higher court.

Addressing the rally as chief guest, Mosharaf Hossain, additional deputy commissioner (general) in Tangail, said the government is committed to saving all rivers and waterbodies at any cost.

National Income Tax Day today

UNB, Dhaka

National Income Tax Day-2019 is being observed across Bangladesh today to raise awareness on income tax and encourage people to pay taxes regularly.

This year's slogan is "Shobai miley debo kor, desh hobey shonirbhor" (Let's all pay taxes, and make the country self-reliant).

Marking the day, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) is set to bring out colourful rallies in all divisional cities.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the occasion.

In his message, the president said all the developed countries in the world collect revenue mainly from income tax. Bangladesh is heading towards development with

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Math Olympiad held at JU

JU CORRESPONDENT

The regional round of the eleventh National Undergraduate Mathematics Olympiad 2019 was held at Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday.

Ten contestants have been selected for the finale among 111 participants from 17 public and private universities in Dhaka north region.

The winners are Md Mojammel Haque, Rahil Afzal Nihal, Ishtiaque Ahmed Sayef, Shimul Debnath, Noshin Sermily and Jamiul Islam Moon from Jahangirnagar University; Ishmum Monjur from Islamic University of Technology; Md Rabiul Awal and Md Osman Ali from Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology; and Jobaida Gulshan Ara from United International University.

Dean of Mathematical and Physical Sciences faculty Prof Ajit Kumar Mojumder inaugurated the programme at the mathematics department. Chairman of the department Prof Abeda Sultana delivered the inaugural speech. Member Secretary of the Olympiad organising committee Prof Abdur Rab, Prof Layek Sazzad Andellah and Prof Jesmin Akter were also present during the opening session.

Relax organ transplant laws: experts to govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should relax the country's existing organ transplant laws and encourage people to donate organs posthumously to save thousands, particularly those whose kidneys have been damaged, said experts at a conference yesterday.

They said though kidney transplant is a better and cheaper option than dialysis, strict laws and shortage of organ donation -- an impact of the law -- are the main obstacles in this regard.

Gonoshasthaya Kendra, in association with Bangladesh Renal Association, is organising the conference titled "Gonoshasthaya Kendra International Nephrology Conference 2019" at its Nagar Hospital in the capital's Dhanmondi.

Around 200 nephrologists, biomedical engineers and nurses from home and abroad are participating in the two-day event -- the first of its kind in Bangladesh -- with the slogan "Quality Renal Care at Affordable Cost".

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Syed Mahbubul Haque's death anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 20th death anniversary of Syed Mahbubul Haque (Benu Mia), a prominent freedom fighter in Magura, will be observed today.

Mahbubul, who was also a leading businessman in the district, passed away on this day in 1999 at the age of 72.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to pray for the eternal peace of his departed soul.



TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Owls

Owls occupy a special place among birds. Nocturnal creatures, they look distinctive because of their large heads and upright stance. They hunt smaller animals such as mice using sharp talons, acute hearing and eyesight, and fast, silent flight. There are about 250 species of owls in the world belonging to the order Strigiformes. They are divided into two families: Tytonidae (owls with a heart-shaped face, such as Barn Owls) and Strigidae (all other owls.)

Since time immemorial, owls have captured our imagination. In some cultures they are considered wise and helpful while in others, primarily because of their nocturnal nature, they are associated with evil. In Shakespeare, the death of Julius Caesar was preceded by an omen: an owl - "a bird of night" - shrieked and hooted in the marketplace "even at noonday."

For a birder, the owl is captivating because it is so unlike other birds. For example, sometimes an owl will fix me with a long, unsettling stare of its large yellow eyes. If roosting, it will sit in one spot, static for a long time, with both eyes closed. The eyes will open drowsily once in a while to check the surroundings. It might preen its feathers with slow movements, eyes still closed.

The most common owl I have seen in Bangladesh is the Spotted Owlet, known in Bangla as *Khuruley Pecha*. I saw them in many places, but the National Botanical Garden hosts couples and families in the Teak garden. Once I saw a couple huddling in the rain, their wet, clumped feathers giving them a distinctive alien look.

I have also seen the Asian Barred Owlet, Brown Boobook, Collared Scops Owl and Barn Owl in Bangladesh. The last one was a special encounter. My friend from school days, Tanvir, saw it in his Banani backyard and alerted



Ural Owl, Hokkaido, Japan

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

me. I immediately went over. The roosting Barn Owl perched on a tree at a height of five feet while I photographed it. It remains the only wild bird I have been able to touch and elicit no response -- so deep was its sleep.

Overseas, the most memorable owl I saw was the Ural Owl, which we found roosting in a tree in northern Hokkaido. It is a large owl -- about two feet tall -- with a delicate pattern of grey, brown and white. And on a falconry I visited in Slovakia during winter, I photographed the spectacular Snowy Owl, its head as white as snow.

Like many other birders, if I hear about an (unusual) owl I compulsively search for it. But it

is an unpredictable proposition. I failed in my search for a Short-eared Owl in a *char* in Rajshahi. The large *char* it was known to inhabit was overrun by small shrubs. After several hours of searching among those shrubs, our team of three finally gave up. The Brown Fish Owl, supposedly easy to find, has also eluded me. Twice in Australia I combed large fields full of trees looking for a Scops Owl without luck.

I am yet to see the majority of the thirteen owl species of Bangladesh. For me, that holds the promise of more excitement in the future.

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