

Univ student dies in fire at Niketan flat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A private university student died after a fire originated at a flat in Dhaka's Niketan area yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Mashrur Ahmed (23), who recently graduated from Computer Science and Engineering department of Brac University.

The youth, from Bogura, arrived at his sister's house a couple of days ago to collect his certificates from the university and attend a friend's wedding.

His sister's family was at their village home when the fire originated around 7:00am on the fifth floor of the building.

On information, two firefighting units rushed to the spot, doused the fire and recovered the youth in an unconscious state, said Md Rajib, senior station officer of Tejgaon Fire Station.

He was rushed to Sheikh Hasina National Institute

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Education Act to finally see the light

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday told parliament that the draft Education Act will be sent to Cabinet Division for approval in principle after finalising it on June 23.

She made the comments in reply to a question from Jatiya Party MP Shameem Haider Patwari.

The education ministry took the initiative to prepare an education law in line with the Education Policy 2010, which asked a subcommittee of the education policy implementation committee to draft a law on January 26, 2011.

In December 2016, the ministry sent a draft to the Cabinet Division. However, it was taken back after much criticism over legitimising private coaching as "shadow education".

According to the draft act, ban on printing, publishing, and marketing notebooks and guidebooks will be imposed. If violated, a punishment of a maximum imprisonment of three years or a maximum fine of Tk 5 lakh

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PRAYER TIMING		JUNE 20			
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4-05		12-45	5-00	6-52	8-17
JAMAAT 4-40		1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					



111th birth anniv of Sufia Kamal today

BSS, Dhaka

Today is the 111th birthday of Sufia Kamal, a renowned poet, social reformer and pioneer of women's rights movement in Bangladesh.

Marking the day, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages recalling the poet's contributions to emancipation of women.

Besides, various socio-cultural organisations have chalked out programmes on the occasion.



Grabbers have been filling up this wetland in the capital's Demra area. They have also built different settlements in some of the occupied portions. Although experts have warned that this illegal act would make the capital highly vulnerable to earthquakes and floods, their operations still go on at full throttle. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

PADMA BRIDGE

All set for grand opening

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

No truck or covered van would be allowed to operate on highways connected to the Padma Bridge -- from the morning of June 24 to that of June 26 -- to facilitate the inauguration of the Bridge on June 25.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, on June 25, will inaugurate the country's longest bridge. It will be opened to the public at 6:00am on the following day.

The authorities will not collect tolls from the vehicles for using the three bridges on Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway on June 25 to avoid traffic congestion at these points.

The three bridges are Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge (Buriganga Bridge-1 at Postagola), Dhaleshwari Bridge and Haji Shariatullah Bridge (Ariah Kha Bridge in Madaripur).

Road Transport and Highway Division under the Ministry of Road Transports and Bridges took all the decisions as part of the preparations for the opening of the much-awaited bridge.

Different agencies under the division have already started their work in this regard.

The government is currently busy preparing for the grand opening of the bridge. The bridge division of the ministry will hold a rally at Mawa.

Meanwhile, the ruling Awami League is planning to arrange a massive rally at the Janjira end of the bridge on June 25.

To make the inauguration a success, Road Transport and Highway Division on June 9 held a meeting with its agencies and companies.

As per the meeting's decision and the division's directive, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, on June 15, wrote to the additional inspector general of highway police, to restrict trucks and covered vans on the mentioned highways.

INSTRUCTIONS

PM to inaugurate Padma Bridge on June 25

No trucks or covered vans on connecting highways for 48hrs

No toll collection from 3 bridges on expressway on the opening day

Supply of sufficient number of BRTC buses

Bridge to open to traffic at 6:00am on June 26

Expressway, Bhanga intersections to be decorated with lights

"We have written a letter to the highway police. As per the letter, they will identify the highways that connect the Padma Bridge and take necessary measures," Hemayet Uddin, BRTA deputy director (enforcement), told this correspondent yesterday.

Meanwhile, following the decision taken in the June 9 meeting, RTHD sent a proposal to the finance ministry to arrange for free tolls on the inauguration day.

"We have received the proposal and prepared the documents accordingly. Hopefully, a

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Allocate 2pc of GDP for climate resilience

Demand civil society groups

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society groups have demanded that two percent of the country's GDP be allocated to fight the impacts of climate change. They made the demand in a seminar titled "Adequate Climate Financing for Sustainable Economic Development".

The seminar was organised by Coast Foundation, Centre for Participatory Research and Development and Coastal Development Partnership at Cirdap yesterday.

Coast Director Aminul Hogue said the allocated Tk 30,531 crore as the climate budget is unable to fight the impacts of climate change. All the climate resilience plans prepared by the government require around 2.20 percent of the GDP to be implemented.

"But the current allocation is only 0.69 percent," he said.

Dhirendra Debnath Shambhu, MP and chair of standing committee on ministry of livestock, said, "If coastal people are not protected, all the development will fall flat."

Sharif Jamil, general secretary of Bapa, said the impact of climate change has become more widespread than ever, and the ongoing flood is proof of that.

Dhaka may get flooded too

Says LGRD minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the context of Sylhet and Sunamganj's flood situation, Local Government and Rural Development and Co-operatives (LGRD) Minister Md Tazul Islam yesterday said even the capital, especially its low-lying areas, could inundate rapidly due to heavy rainfall and water from upstream.

The minister made remarks while responding to a query by journalists at an inter-ministerial meeting at his office.

"Upstream water and heavy rainfall are the main causes of flooding in Sylhet and Sunamganj. We were informed that a flood might occur but no government body could see something of this magnitude coming," he said.

He, however, said the government is being as prepared as they can and can deal with the disaster. Two city corporations -- following the direction of the ministry -- are working to recover and dredge canals to prevent such a disaster from occurring in the capital.

Most of the new areas of Dhaka's two city corporations are low-lying, and afflicted with infrastructural problems.

The government has already approved around Tk 4,000 crore for the development of such areas in DNCC, while some DSCC projects are also waiting to be approved, said the minister.

The minister also mentioned that they have formed a committee to monitor the flood situation till June 30 and will extend the period if necessary.

Flood damaged Aush paddy of 22,000 hectares cropland so far

Says agriculture minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 22,000 hectares cropland of Aush paddy have been damaged so far due to recent flood situation in the country, Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque said yesterday.

"We targeted 13 lakh hectares cropland [for Aush cultivation]. So far, saplings of Aush paddy have been planted in 11 lakh hectares [of land]," he said.

He said of around 3.87 lakh hectares of various vegetable cropland, around 5,000 to 7,000 hectares were damaged due to the flood.

He was addressing a seminar on "Agriculture and Media in the Face of Global Food Security" organised by Agriculture Information Service at the capital's Krishibid Institution Bangladesh.

The minister said at present, there is no crop in the field to harvest in Sunamganj district while there is few to harvest in Sylhet district, adding they were monitoring the situation.

He said there was not much damage done to seedbeds. The government has kept sufficient fund ready to bring damaged seedbeds under rehabilitation programme.

Besides, sufficient amount of seeds have been preserved, he said. He, however, expressed concern that deteriorating and prolonged flood situation may make it challenging for Aman cultivation in the days to come.

Presenting a keynote paper, Prof Emeritus MA Sattar Mandal of Agricultural Economics at Bangladesh Agricultural University said Bangladesh's domestic food production is "reasonably okay" while good yield of next Aman season depends on calamities.

He said recent food price inflation is mainly caused by rising wheat and edible oil prices.

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud said media can unearth different issues and build awareness regarding food security.

Agriculture development activist and media personality Shykh Seraj suggested for introducing liquid fertiliser in the country.



With a concerned look on their faces, Hazaribagh locals sit around an open line of Wasa with pitchers and buckets to collect water for daily use. For the last three days, they have been facing much peril as the water supply has been cut off from their homes. Even this water source isn't that reliable as they have to wait for three to four hours at a stretch to fill up a container. This photo was taken on Nilambor Shah Road yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Deteriorating and prolonged flood situation may make it challenging for Aman cultivation in the days to come.

ABDUR RAZZAQUE, Agriculture Minister

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