

TORTURE AT IU Phulpori refuses to meet BCL probe body

Cites security concerns

STAR REPORT

Phulpori, the first-year student of Kushtia's Islamic University who was tortured by two female BCL leaders, yesterday declined to appear before the university BCL's probe committee citing "security concerns".

However, she gave her statement to the committee over the phone.

After receiving the call on Saturday from the committee, formed to investigate the incident, Phulpori reached out to the proctor, expressing concerns over her safety.

"He reassured me about my safety on the campus. But will I be safe during the 75km journey to the university from home?" she told The Daily Star yesterday.

"I have no confidence in this committee," she added, "They haven't done anything all these days. How can I trust them?"

Kamrul Hasan, vice president of IU BCL and head of the probe committee, then called her around 12:15pm and took her statement.

"I have described the whole incident of my torture and humiliation at the Gonoroom," Phulpori said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Kamrul said they have noted down whatever Phulpori had told over the phone and asked her also to send a written note in this regard.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



SPEWING POISON ... Tainted with various chemicals and dyes, toxic sewage water from nearby factories pours out straight into the Buriganga in the capital's Shyampur. Already on the verge of death, the river has been a victim of chemical pollution for years, while efforts to save it remain unseen. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

LATIN AMERICA Dhaka keen to expand trade, ties

Argentine FM due today

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh is seeking to expand diplomatic and trade relations with Latin American countries in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war that has disrupted the global supply chains.

Mozammel Haque, director general at the South America wing of the foreign ministry, told this correspondent that Bangladesh is eagerly seeking to open new markets, especially for pharmaceuticals, IT services, and leather goods as part of diversifying its export basket.

"South America has remained almost unexplored so far. So, we want to deepen our relations with the Latin American countries," he said.

"This is important as Bangladesh graduates

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Aus women win 6th T20 WC title

REUTERS, Cape Town

Beth Mooney struck a match-winning unbeaten 74 as Australia claimed their sixth Women's T20 World Cup title with a 19-run victory over hosts South Africa at a vibrant Newlands in Cape Town on Sunday.

Australia won the toss and elected to bat, and posted a par score of 156 for six in their 20 overs. The home side struggled to keep up with the rate from the start and were restricted to 137 for six in reply.

Laura Wolvaardt scored a superb 61 for South Africa but there was too little support around her, and Australia's clever use of pace and length strangled the scoring rate for large parts of the innings.

MRT LINE-5 CONSTRUCTION

Southern route to cost 35pc higher than northern

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government is going to construct another metro rail line, whose construction cost per km is some 35 percent higher than that of a similar metro line.

The planned Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-5 (southern route) will be 17.3km-long and its estimated cost will be Tk 47,940 crore. The similar MRT Line-5 (northern route) will be 20km-long and estimated cost Tk 41,239 crore.

Meaning, the northern route's construction would cost Tk 2,062.4 crore per km, while the southern route's would cost Tk 2,771 crore per km - Tk 708.6 crore (34.35 percent) higher.

Metro authorities said the sharp hike in the prices of construction materials and the devaluation of taka against the US dollar due to the Ukraine war were the main reasons behind the rise in the project's estimated cost.

They also hinted that costs of the MRT Line-5 (northern route) and MRT Line-1 are likely to go

up during implementation for the same reasons.

As per the time-bound action plan, the government will build a 140-km network of metro rails consisting six lines in Dhaka and adjacent areas by 2030 to reduce traffic congestion and environmental pollution.

The MRT Line-6 was launched partially in December last year, while construction works of second line - MRT Line-1, also the first underground metro rail line - started early this month.

The 31.24km MRT Line-1, which will have both underground and elevated sections, will be implemented at the cost of Tk 52,562 crore.

Meanwhile, the physical work of MRT Line-5 is expected to start this July. The 20km line from Hemayetpur to Bhatara via Gabtoli, Mirpur, Gulshan will have a 13.5km underground section and a 6.5km elevated one.

The first three projects are being implemented with Japanese loans.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Metro authorities said the sharp hike in the prices of construction materials and the devaluation of taka against the US dollar due to the Ukraine war were the main reasons behind the rise in the project's estimated cost.

BCL men torture JU student in dormitory

STAR REPORT

A Jahangirnagar University student has alleged that he was tortured physically and mentally by some BCL activists for not being present at the guest room and not attending political programmes on various occasions.

Sakibul Islam Farabi, a student of statistics department and a resident of Bishwakabi Rabinranath Tagore Hall, submitted a written complaint to the Hall Provost yesterday in this regard, seeking justice over the assault, reports our JU correspondent.

The accused are Junaid Hasan Rana of English department, Naimul Islam Sagar of pharmacy, Atiq Shahriar of history, Mohtasim Billah of fine arts, Uthsho and Kabbo of government and politics, Junaid Evan of mathematics, Imran Mirza of biochemistry and molecular biology, and Saikat Islam of physics departments.

All of them are JU BCL activists and residents of Bishwakabi Rabinranath Tagore Hall.

In the written complaint, Sakibul Islam wrote, "Thursday, around 2:00am, seniors from the 48th batch

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Mystery of salt deserts' honeycomb patterns solved

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have solved the riddle of the mysterious honeycomb patterns found in salt deserts across the world.



These places are among some of the most extreme and inhospitable on Earth, and their odd polygon-shaped structures attract hundreds of thousands of tourists every year.

Salt deserts occur in areas including Badwater Basin in Death Valley, California, and Salar de Uyuni in Chile, which Star Wars: The

Last Jedi fans will recognise as the backdrop for the desert planet Crait.

The new study suggests the shape and size of the honeycomb pattern may be down to the movement of saline water (with a high concentration of dissolved salt) under the surface.

The constant size of the features and the speed with which the patterns grow can also be attributed to this, the researchers at Nottingham Trent University and TU Graz in Austria say.

It was previously thought that the salt crust of the desert dries out and that cracks form, around which the patterns grow.

Another suggestion was that the salt crust grows continuously and bends due to lack of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

'Men posing as DB officials' pick up three RMG workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Three garment workers were picked up by some people in civilian clothes, who introduced themselves as Detective Branch officials, in Savar on the outskirts of the capital on Saturday night.

They are Tushar Mia, 20, Rasel Mia, 19, and Shawpan Mia, 20, all workers at a garment factory in Savar's Bhagalpur area.

Shamim Khan, a transport worker, said he and some of his friends, including the three, were hanging out at Tarapur field next to Enam Medical College around 8:30pm, when five to six persons on a microbus arrived there.

They identified themselves as members of DB and whisked away the three, he said, adding they neither brandished any gun nor wore any uniform.

Shamim said he then informed the families about the incident.

The family members communicated with the officials of Dhaka District North DB and Savar Police Station but the officials denied

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



People of various ages visiting the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital yesterday, just days after the International Mother Language day on February 21. However, every single one of them had their shoes on -- considered to be a blatant disrespect to the spirit of the day and the martyrs who had laid down their lives. Inset, A sign placed on the premises warns against all kinds of disrespectful acts, but the public seems to be disregarding it completely.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

59 migrants killed in Italy shipwreck

12 children among dead; most of the victims from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran

REUTERS, Steccato Di Cutro

At least 59 people died, including 12 children, when a wooden sailing boat carrying migrants to Europe crashed against rocks near the southern Italian coast early yesterday, authorities said.

The vessel, which sailed from Turkey and was carrying people from Afghanistan, Iran and several other countries, sank in rough sea conditions near Steccato di Cutro, a seaside resort on the eastern coast of Calabria.

The incident reopened a debate on migration in Europe and Italy, where the recently elected right-wing government's tough new laws for migrant rescue charities have drawn criticism from the United Nations and others.

By yesterday afternoon the provisional death toll stood at 59 but was expected to rise, junior interior minister Wanda Ferro told reporters.

Manuela Curra, a provincial government official, earlier told Reuters that 81 people had survived the shipwreck. Twenty of them were taken to hospital, including one person in intensive care.

As emergency services searched the sea and the coastline in stormy weather, Curra said that survivors had said some 140 to 150 were on board - suggesting that some people were missing.

The boat set sail from the western Turkish port of Izmir about four days ago and was spotted about 74 km (46

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3