

More gas likely to be found in Kailashtila

Says Nasrul Hamid

UNB, Sylhet

State Minister for Power, Energy, and Minerals Resources Nasrul Hamid hoped that 1.6 TCF (trillion cubic feet) more gas will be found at the Kailashtila gas field in Golapganj upazila of Sylhet.

It will be confirmed once the drilling is completed within the next four months, he said. He made the remarks after visiting the Kailashtila well-8 yesterday.

Nasrul said the Kailashtila field previously had three TCF reserves and more gas reserve will be found once the current search wells are drilled.

"The ministry does not undertake any project. We want everyone to show their capability. Sylhet gas field has moved forward, taking on more projects. We want others to come forward as well," he told officials.

Mizanur Rahman, managing director of Sylhet Gas Fields Limited, said seven wells were drilled in Kailashtila earlier, and gas was found in them all.

"We are expecting more than 1 TCF of gas after the digging," he said. The drilling of the Kailashtila-8 well started on January 11. The work is expected to be completed in 120 days. State-owned BAPEX is digging the well.



Dancers of Uttaran Cultural Organisation presenting a recital at the inaugural ceremony of the three-day Jibanananda festival on the premises of Barishal Brojomohun College yesterday. Several other events, including discussions and cultural programmes commemorating the poet's 125th birth anniversary, were organised across Barishal on the day.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Mother, son among four killed in road accidents

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Four people, including two of a family, were killed in two separate road accidents in Tangail yesterday.

In Gopalpur upazila, a woman and her son were killed as a motorcycle they were riding and a bus collided head-on in Jhawai area.

Following the accident around 8:00am, China Begum from Jhawai and her son Shakib Miah died on the spot, said Gopalpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Emdadul Islam Tayeb.

The bus driver and helper fled the scene.

In another incident, two motorcyclists were killed and one of their pillions was injured as their bikes collided from the opposite directions on Jamalpur-Madhupur Road in Nekibari area around 12:00pm.

Boni Amin from Boali in Madhupur and Tanvir Ahmed from Khagdohor of Mymensingh Sadar upazila were declared dead at Madhupur Upazila Health Complex, said Murad Hossain, inspector (investigation) of Madhupur Police Station.

The injured -- Maruf Hasan from Khagdohor in Mymensingh -- was undergoing treatment at the health complex, he said.

Protect our homes, croplands from erosion

Speakers tell human chain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Residents of Andharmanik and Jaynagar areas under Manikganj Municipality yesterday organised a human chain demanding that the authorities concerned take steps to protect their homesteads and croplands from Kaliganga river erosion.

More than 100 people joined the hour-long human chain on the riverbank in Andharmanik area around 11:30am.

Stressing that sand lifting from the river is worsening the erosion, speakers urged the authorities not to lease out the balumahal in Beutha-Pouli mouja of Manikganj.

"Locals and farmers have been suffering a lot due to erosion. If the extraction of sand and soil from the river using dredgers is not stopped, their sufferings will increase. Croplands, graveyards, mosques and hundreds of homesteads will be at risk of erosion," said Abu Md Nahid, councillor of Ward-8 of the municipality.



He urged the authorities not to lease out the balumahal this year for the peoples' sake.

Abu Sayeed, a farmer of Jaynagar village, said, "Over the last five years, the river engulfed 14 bighas of my cropland. I have only four bighas of land now, which may be eroded if the situation continues. Who will take responsibility for my losses?" Abdul Khalek, a farmer of Andharmanik village, said he said he lost 15 of his 45 decimals of cropland to the river, while the rest is also in risk.

Numerous crops, including maize, lentils, and sesame are cultivated in croplands on the banks of Kaliganga.

Contacted, Rehana Akhter, deputy commissioner of Manikganj, said, "We will take action in this regard upon receiving a written application."

Take stern action against culprits

Says education minister on recent clashes at CU

UNB, Dhaka

Expressing deep concern over the recent clashes on Chittagong University campus between two groups of Chhatra League activists, Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury yesterday urged the university authorities to take stern action against those responsible.

The minister spoke to CU Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Shireen Akhter and called for immediate action to identify and punish the perpetrators.

He also asked the CU authorities for steps to ensure a safe and secure campus for all students by driving out outsiders from the dormitories.

He suggested the CU administration to work with teachers and law enforcement agencies to maintain peace and discipline on campus.



Picking up dried fallen leaves from under trees, Sufia Begum stacks them in a sack in Jhalakathi's Beligona area. The 62-year-old uses them to kindle fire for cooking, collecting it in bulks during the dry season and preserving it for later.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

CTG-COX'S BAZAR Dedicated train service yet to start



Dedicated train service between the port city and Cox's Bazar has not started even after two and a half months since inauguration of the newly constructed track.

PHOTO: STAR

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

Dedicated train-service between the port city and Cox's Bazar has not started even after two and a half months since inauguration of the newly constructed track.

Constructed under a Tk 18,000 crore project, the 101km new route from Dohazari to Cox's Bazar was set up to enhance local tourism. Nine new stations, including the country's first iconic one in Cox's Bazar, were constructed under this initiative.

"Working in Cox's Bazar, I travel this route regularly. I had expected this initiative to ease my commute but they haven't even started services yet," said Shahadat Hossain, a resident of Dohazari.

Due to a shortage of locomotives and manpower, Bangladesh Railways failed to start the service, said officials.

BR eastern zone needs around 300 locomotives to operate trains in different routes. However, it currently has only 160 engines, some of which are not fully operational.

Around 849 individuals are currently employed in this zone against its 1,295 sanctioned posts for station masters and assistant station masters. The zone is also suffering from shortage of loco masters, assistant loco masters and guards.

According to Saiful Islam, divisional railway manager of Chattogram, BR had requested speedy recruitment in the zone to start the operations of the new tracks. However, the ministry directed them to initiate operations with the existing manpower.

Earlier, BR had planned to operate a train between the port city and the beach town with the existing Chattala

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Trucker killed by muggers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A truck driver was killed and his helper injured when a group of muggers stabbed them on Dhaka-Tangail highway at Mirzapur bypass early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Nazmul alias Azizul, 35, from Jatindra Narayan village in Fulbari upazila, Kurigram.

His helper Abu Taleb, 25, from the same area, was undergoing treatment at Mirzapur Kumudini Hospital.

Quoting Taleb, police said the driver of the Narayanganj-bound corn-laden truck from Bogura stopped the vehicle after they saw an object lying beside the highway.

Soon after he and his helper got down from the vehicle, a group of muggers surrounded them and snatched Tk 18,000 in cash and mobile phone sets from them.

At that time, the muggers stabbed them as they tried to run away.

Hearing their screams, a patrol police team rescued and rushed them to the Kumudini Hospital where driver Nazmul was declared dead, Mirzapur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star.

The body was handed over to the family after completion of legal procedures, said the OC.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Workers protest for arrears in Gazipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Workers of Mahmud Jeans Garment factory staged a protest in Gazipur's Kaliakoir upazila yesterday, demanding arrears.

Around 4,500 workers of the factory protested in Chandra area from 9:00am to 2:00pm, said Nitai Chandra Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Gazipur Industrial Police, Kaliakoir Zone.

According to police and aggrieved workers, Mahmud Jeans Garment paid the workers 40 percent of their basic salary for the month of January.

They, however, did not pay the workers their annual earned leave for last year.

In the morning, the workers entered the factory and refused to work until the remainder of their salary was paid.

The demo was called off after the owners and police held talks with them and promised to pay the arrears by Thursday afternoon.

Chief Business Officer of Mahmud Jeans Arman Chowdhury said 40 percent of the workers' basic salary was paid on last Thursday. The remaining will be paid by this week.

He did not make any comments regarding last year's earned leave.

5-day book fair kicks off in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A five-day "Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2024" organised by the District Administration started at Shaheed Smrity Pouro Udyan in Tangail town yesterday.

A total of 55 stalls were set up at the book fair. Various programmes -- including debate and quiz competitions -- for students will be held at the venue, said organisers.

Artists from the district's Shilpakala Academy will perform cultural programmes during the five-day programme.

Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Md Sabirul Islam, as chief guest, inaugurated the book fair. Md Kaiserul Islam, deputy commissioner in Tangail, was also present.

Among others, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Md Oliujjaman, Additional Superintendent of Police Sohel Rana, Mayor of Tangail Municipality Sirajul Haque Khan Alamgir, freedom fighter Khandakar Ashrafuzzaman Smrity, Tangail Press Club President Jafar Ahmed and Secretary Nasir Uddin were present on the occasion.

Local poets, litterateurs, intellectuals, freedom fighters, public representatives, government officials, and cultural activists also attended the event.

The book fair will end on February 21 with a discussion, cultural programme and prize distribution ceremony on the occasion of Shaheed Day and International Mother Language Day.