



PHOTO: STAR

Participants at a condolence meeting in memory of late Ahmedul Kabir, chief editor of the Sangbad and president of Gonorantri Party, held at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. The Gonorantri Party organised the condolence meeting.

Tribute paid to Ahmedul Kabir

Dr Kamal for common platform of AL, 11-Party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent lawyer and President of Gono Forum Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday reiterated his appeal to forge a broad unity among democratic, progressive and secular parties to ensure socio-economic emancipation of the people.

He called on the Awami League and the 11-Party to unite at a common platform to achieve economic freedom of the people and to uphold the Constitution.

"We achieved independence not for a Bangladesh as it is today, which failed to change the lot of the people," he said.

Dr Kamal was speaking at the condolence meeting in memory of Ahmedul Kabir, chief editor of the daily Sangbad and president of the Gonorantri Party, at the National Press Club.

Top leaders of different political parties, except the ruling alliance,

attended the condolence meeting organised by the Gonorantri Party.

The speakers paid glowing tributes to the memories of Ahmedul Kabir.

The pioneer of non-communal and progressive politics, Kabir had played a significant role in the progressive movement in the region since 1950s, they said.

Addressing the meeting, AL presidium member Amir Hossain Amu said, "We are already in an alliance of ideology and now it is time to go for programme-based unity against the present government."

He called on all to come forward to launch a united movement against corruption, crimes and other misdeeds carried out by the ruling alliance.

Referring to Dr Kamal, Professor Mozaffar Ahmed of the National Awami Party said, "We have all confidence in you, but you and

others who are calling for unity have to make it clear what you are going to do."

President of the Workers Party of Bangladesh Rashed Khan Menon said, "People now feel the need for an alternative political stream, but the 11-party realised it much before".

At present, resurfacing of the communal forces is one of the worst problems, he said.

President of the Communist Party of Bangladesh Manzurul Ahsan Khan, President of Jatiya Samjtantrik Dal Hasanul Haq Inu and Editor of the Sangbad Bazlur Rahman also spoke. Azizul Islam Khan presided over the meeting.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and LGRD Minister and BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan were scheduled to take part in the discussion, but they did not turn up.

'Health sector given top priority'

BSS, Dhaka

State Minister for Jute Lutfur Rahman Azad yesterday said the four-party alliance government gave top priority to the health sector to ensure better health services for rural people.

He said this during his visit to Tangail General Hospital, a press release here said.

The state minister talked to the patients of hospital and inquired about their treatment facilities.

Earlier, the state minister presided over the district law and order and development coordination committee meeting.

He asked the officials concerned to discharge duties with utmost sincerity to improve the law and order and combat crime.

He also asked the officials to implement the various development projects of power, agriculture, education and health sectors within the stipulated timeframe for public interest.

Death of 15 army officers condoled

BSS, Dhaka

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury and Advisor to the Prime Minister on Primary and Mass Education Prof Jahanara Begum in separate messages yesterday condoled the death of 15 army officers in a plane crash in Benin.

The home minister in his message termed the deceased army officers as heroes and pride of the nation who were selected for UN peacekeeping operation for their professional distinctions and personal qualities.

He lamented that the incident has shattered the promises showed by these brilliant officers who joined the military profession with the noble goals of safeguarding the independence and sovereignty and upholding the glory of their motherland.

"As the whole nation mourns this loss, I condole the death of these great sons of the soil and pray to Almighty Allah for their eternal salvation", he said.

He prayed for granting strength to the members of the bereaved families to bear the irreparable loss.

In a separate message, Prof Jahanara Begum expressed deep shock and grief at the premature death of 15 army officers working in UN peacekeeping mission.

Prof Jahanara prayed for peace of the departed souls and expressed deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved families.

Meanwhile, Vice president of Bangladesh Bar Council Barrister M Amir-ul Islam also expressed deep shock at the tragic death of 15 Bangladeshi peacekeeping army officers.

"Bar Council is mournful with the entire nation for the loss of the valiant officers of Bangladesh Army," Barrister Amir-ul said in a condolence message addressed to the Chief of the Army Staff Lt. Gen. Hasan Mashud Chowdhury.

He prayed to the almighty Allah to enable members of the bereaved families to bear the loss and for eternal peace of the departed souls.

AL accuses PM of 'false campaign'

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil in a statement yesterday alleged that the prime minister resorted to "false campaign" against Awami League to cover up her "miserable failure" in developing the country.

Refuting Begum Zia's public remarks at Hatia on Sunday, he questioned "If Awami League had not done any development works, red ribbons of which projects she has been cutting and giving lectures?"

Jalil said after assuming the office, the coalition government had not undertaken any new project, rather changed the names of projects while works of many other projects were stopped due to their "corruption".

He said construction work of the Meghna bridge at Bhairab began and was completed during tenure of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina. The bridge was named after Syed Nazrul Islam but the alliance government inaugurated it with a changed nomenclature.

In Barisal, work on the construction of Shikarpur-Doarika bridge began and completed during the AL rule while Khaleda Zia cut the ribbons. She also opened the Hatikamrul-Banpara road completed during the AL times.

Jalil said "Perhaps, the prime minister was speaking incoherently when she cut the ribbon of Dharala bridge recently in

Kurigram as she does not have any idea of the time needed for completion of such project."

He said Khaleda Zia's government stopped all projects concerning poverty alleviation. Including 18,000 community clinics which were set up by AL government depriving the poor people of health services.

The government also created impediments to "Asrayan" project and abandoned "one farm, one house" programme casting adverse impact on rural economy, the AL leader said.

He said instead of development, Khaleda Zia's government has been patronising terrorism, corruption and released hardcore criminals by withdrawing 70,000 cases.

Jalil said when the prime minister tries to speak in support of her rule, the visiting Amnesty International Secretary General remarked that crime and violence had increased in Bangladesh and human rights were being violated frequently.

He said in reality the alliance regime has ruined the economy. Price-hike of essentials and "silent famine" in countryside had led to the death of "unfed people".

"Slide in investment under the present government and closure of mills and sacking of workers only reflects a disastrous condition of national economy," said the Awami League general secretary in the rebuttal.

Seminar on gas exploration at Khulna varsity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A national seminar on "The potential impact of oil and gas exploration in Block-5 on the Sundarban ecosystem" will be held at the Khulna University auditorium today.

Organised by the Centre for Integrated Studies on the Sundarbans, the seminar will be attended by Environment and Forest Minister Shajahan Siraj as chief guest while Information Minister Tariqul Islam and City Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman will attend as special guests.

Vice-Chancellor of Khulna University Prof Dr Abdul Kadir Bhuiyan will preside over the seminar.

University Grants Commission Member Prof Monirul Huj, VC of Independent University Prof Dr Bazlul Mobin Chowdhury, President of East-West University Prof Dr Mohammad Farashuddin, VC of Jahangirnagar University Prof Dr Jashim Uddin Ahmed, and VC of Moulana Bhasani University of Science and Technology Prof Dr Yusuf Sharif will also attend the seminar.

Ten papers will be presented in the seminar, says a press release of the university.

New Year celebration at Sheraton

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel is going to celebrate the New Year in a razzle-dazzle way, says a press release.

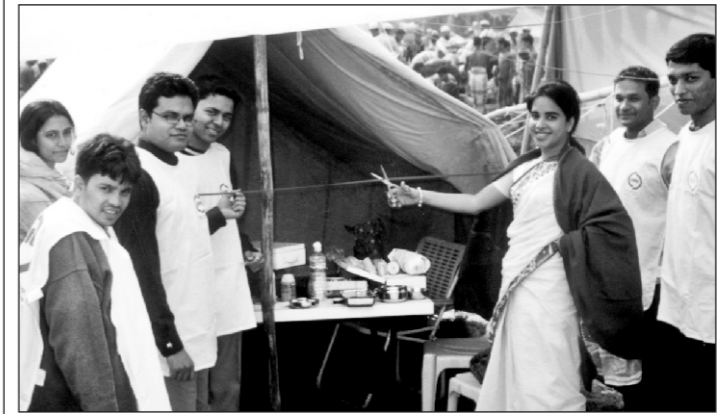
It offers dinner and dance programme at the Grand Ball Room with the entry fee of Tk 1500 per person.

Death anniversary



Today is the first death anniversary of Dr Moulavi Md Sahabuddin, a retired government official, says a press release.

A milad mahfil and doa will be held at his village home at Ujan Gopindi Paschim Para in Arahazar upazila of Narayanganj district on January 2.



The Safety Assistance for Emergencies (SAFE) and Savlon opened a first aid centre at Bihwa Ijtema venue in Tongi on Saturday to provide first aid for the devotees.