



Tributes paid to poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

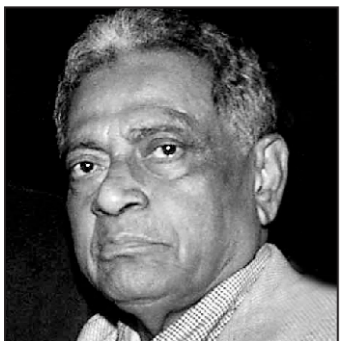
The fifth anniversary of death of poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah Khan was observed yesterday...

A recipient of Ekushey Padak and Bangla Academy Padak, Obaidullah was a language movement veteran...

Born in Barisal on February 8, 1934, he was the second son of Justice Abdul Jabbar Khan...

Obaidullah died in 2001 after suffering for about a year followed by a cerebral haemorrhage...

Also a diplomat, bureaucrat and minister, Obaidullah contributed a lot to the agro-reformation and expansion in South Asia...



Golam Mahub passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Language movement veteran Advocate Kazi Golam Mahub passed away due to old-age ailments at Lab Aid Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 79.

He left behind his wife, two sons, two daughters and a host of friends and admirers to mourn his death.

Lab Aid sources said he was admitted to the hospital a month ago with 'multi-organ failure problems'.

He will be buried at his family graveyard at Gourmadi in Barisal.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has expressed deep shock at the death of Kazi Golam Mahub.

In a condolence message, she prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

In another condolence message, Supreme Court Bar Association President Mahbubey Alam and Secretary M Enayetur Rahim expressed their deep shock at the death of Golam Mahub.

Shahjahanuddin Bhuiyan

UNB, Dhaka

Veteran freedom fighter and Awami League leader Lt. Col. (Retd) Shahjahanuddin Bhuiyan died of a cardiac arrest at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the city on Saturday night at the age of 64.

He left behind his wife, mother, brothers and sisters and a host of friends and relatives to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at DOHS Baridhara Central Mosque after Zohr prayers yesterday.

Abdur Razzak MP, Tofail Ahmed, Mukul Bosh, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mahiuddin, Lt. Col. (Retd) Faruq Khan MP, Ashim Kumar Ukil, Ahmed Hossain, Shafi Ahmed and Rana Hamid attended the janaza.

In a condolence message, AL President Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock at the death of Shahjahanuddin Bhuiyan.

"We have lost a sincere AL activist, eminent freedom fighter and social worker at his death," she said.

SMA Quader

UNB, Dhaka

SMA Quader, a freedom fighter and retired controller (accounts) of the land ministry, died of old-age ailments at Suhrawardy Hospital on Friday at the age of 76.

He left behind his wife, two sons, three daughters and a host of friends and well-wishers to mourn his death.

His qukhwani will be held at his Dattagram village in Tangail on April 7.

Enact new law to curb domestic violence

Women's rights activists urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday demanded new legislation for combating domestic violence in the country.

The discussion titled 'Combating domestic violence: Listening to experiences' was organised by Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) at LGED conference room in the city.

Taking part in the discussion Farida Sultana, founder of Shakti Community Council, a pioneer organisation to combat domestic violence, said confidence would have to be built up among the victims to combat domestic violence.

She said if a woman does not get peaceful environment in a family for her living, she should leave it immediately.

"Our women tolerate brutal repression from their husbands as they think that they have no place to go," Farida said.

"We have to ensure the safety of both mother and her children and empower them to maintain their livelihood," she added.

Farida said the male member of a family will have to develop a mentality to accept the social differences as every person has different views and desires.

Narrating her experience about combating domestic violence that she gathered during her visit to New Zealand, Advocate Fawzia Karim Firoz, former president of BNWLA, laid emphasis on restructuring the family court of Bangladesh.

She also stressed the need for making the judicial system of the country more women friendly.

Advocate Salma Ali, executive director of BNWLA, said, "We should let the society to understand the intensity of domestic violence and stressed on community participation for addressing such a heinous social crime."

Advocate Sigma Huda, president of BNWLA, underscored the need for enacting an independent domestic violence act to address the crime.

She said enacting a new law will not only help combating domestic violence but also make the existing law more effective.

Women lawyers, activists, and representatives of different NGOs were present at the discussion.



PHOTO: STAR

Sylhet Division Development Action Council stages a demonstration at Mukttangan in the city yesterday protesting price hike of essentials.

Participation of all parties

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also depend on Bangladesh's ability to deal with core structural issues. Weak infrastructure imposes hidden costs on your businesses - added transportation costs from inadequate roads, poor rail connections and an inefficient port, lost productivity due to power shortages, increased costs of financing from a thin capital market.

"Governance issues loom equally large, especially corruption, inefficient government, weak policy and judiciary systems and under investment primary and secondary education."

With those concerns in mind, the US chargé d'affaires urged the business leaders to actively take part in the upcoming elections as the strength of any democracy resides in the strength of its people.

"Be active. Raise the issues of concern to your businesses and industries, and to the greater economy. Insist the candidates take clear positions on these issues, and then hold them accountable after the election," she suggested.

Chhamas also informed the meeting that the US investors are again looking to Bangladesh for opportunities.

Mentioning two US investors who are pursuing projects to add over 1,000MW electricity to the national grid, she said launching these and other power projects swiftly should be one of the key priorities of the government.

Speaking at the function, FBCCI President Mir Nasir Hossain urged the US government to keep the Bangladesh export interest out of the 3 percent sensitive list as it would not make much difference for the US to accommodate Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh's vital interest is to keep RMG out of 3 percent sensitive list. We need active support from the US Embassy to convey our views to the US authority," he said.

Chhamas said the readymade garment sector of Bangladesh is doing very well in the quota free regime proving that the country is competitive.

FBCCI directors MA Rouf Chowdhury, Aftab-ul Islam, Akhteruzzaman Manju, Manzur Ahmed, Shafiuzzaman and Prof Masuda Rashid Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

1,481 arrested on various charges

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested a total of 1,481 people on various charges from different parts of the country in the last 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday.

During the drive, the law enforcers also recovered six firearms, nine other weapons, 199 bullets and two explosives, said an official handout.



Discussion

Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) organises a discussion on a book titled 'Mukti Bahini Wins Victory: Military Oligarchy Divides Pakistan in 1971' by Major General (Retd) ATM Abdul Wahab. Venue: BILIA auditorium. Time: 5:00pm.

Workshop

Rupantar organises a national advocacy workshop to mark the World Child Drama Day. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy. Time: 9:00am.

Roundtable

Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) organises a roundtable meeting on 'Development Actions and Actors: The Case of Adivasis of Bangladesh'. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 9:00am.

CHITTAGONG FIRE Minor boy killed, properties worth Tk 20cr damaged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A minor boy was killed while properties worth over Tk 20 crore were damaged in the devastating fire at Sadarghat area of the city on Saturday night.

Nur Uddin, 5, son of Mohiuddin of village Boirag under Anwara upazila, was roasted in sleep at his slum house, sources said.

Zarina Begum, mother of the boy, was working in a nearby garment factory Arrow Fashion when the fire broke out.

Hearing the news, the divorced lady rushed to the spot only to discover the charred body of her little ward.

Firefighters from six city units brought the fire, which broke out at around 6:30pm, under control at around 1.00am yesterday.

But smoke was billowing from the spot at Kazi Nazrul Islam Road as of afternoon and firefighters were trying to extinguish the blaze completely.

The fire has gutted 14 slum houses, two staff quarters of City College, a portion of liquor shop Kazi and Company, and a four-storied godown of Victor Electronics where at least five thousand electronic goods including refrigerators, televisions and washing machines were stored.

Firefighters could recover around 700 pieces of refrigerators.

Husband stabs wife to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A housewife was stabbed to death allegedly by her husband at Kamrangirchar in the capital early yesterday.

In another incident, extortionists shot and injured a guard at Pallabi yesterday morning.

The housewife was identified as lifa Begum, 22, wife of Wahidul Islam, a resident of Companyghat in Kamrangirchar.

lifa's mother Telesa Banu alleged that Wahidul, who used to quarrel with lifa for no reasons, stabbed her daughter following an altercation on Saturday night.

lifa was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared her dead at 1:30am.

Telesa filed a case with local police station against Wahidul, who went into hiding after hearing the news of death of lifa.

Meanwhile, two extortionists shot Swapna Hawladar, 22, a guard of AI Arafat Builders Limited, twice in the left leg when he was taking a piece of paper they asked to hand over to his employer.

Injured Swapna was admitted to the DMCH.

Death anniversary



Today is the first death anniversary of Sultana Chowdhury, wife of late Dr Ali Ahmed, says a press release.

She was the daughter of late Arifur Rahman Chowdhury of Ramnagar Chowdhury Bari at Daganbhuiyan, Feni.

Her family has requested all to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

M Fazlur Rahman



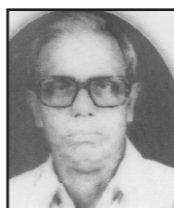
Today is the third death anniversary of M Fazlur Rahman, one of the founders of Chittagong Press club and former mayor of London.

Borough of Waltham Forest, says a press release.

A senior journalist, he worked with the Ittefaq, Purbadesh, Holiday and The Bangladesh Observer.

Quarankhani and milad mahfil will be held at his village home in Pabna and at a mosque at Mohammadpur in Dhaka.

Haji Abdul Quadir



Today is the 10th death anniversary of Haji Abdul Quadir, son of late Khan Shahib Haji Emdad Ali of Zinzira, Keraniganj, says a press release.

He was the founder-chairman and managing director of Gulshan Cinema Ltd, ex-Mutali of Khan Shahib Haji Emdad Ali Wakf Estate and former president of Zinzira Bus Owners' Association.

A milad and doa mahfil will be held at his Gulzarbagh residence in Zinzira after Asr prayers tomorrow. Friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the milad.

ADIVASI FESTIVAL BEGINS IN CITY

Indigenous people still hold on to own cultural heritage

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Indigenous people still hold on to their cultural heritage though they are most vulnerable and marginal ones due to ethnic discrimination and exploitation.

Speakers said this at the inaugural function of a three-day-long 'Adivasi Festival' that began at the National Museum in the city yesterday.

Arranged by the Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD), the festival was inaugurated by Kumudini Hajong, a woman leader of the historic Tanka Movement.

Selima Rahman, state minister for cultural affairs, attended the

function as the chief guest while Chingku Roaza, a leading intellectual of the hill tracts, Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori, and Prof Mahmudul Haq, director general of the National Museum, spoke as special guests.

Director general of SEHD Prof Sakhawat Ali presided over the function.

The speakers said Adivasi language and culture are now on the verge of extinction. The indigenous people are still struggling to establish their rights to land although the struggle started during the British rule, they added.

They said the Adivasi sacrificed their lives during the Liberation War, but they are now living as aliens in

their own country.

The speakers called on the government to take initiative for the education of Adivasis in their own language.

Adivasi artistes also performed in cultural programmes on the first day of the three-day festival. Various programmes will be held from 5:00pm to 7:30pm everyday.

As part of the festival, a seven-day-long photo exhibition began at Drik Gallery on Saturday. The exhibition focuses on 'Arannya O Arannya Shangskriti' (Hills and Hill culture) and will remain open to all from 10:00am to 8:00pm daily.

The organisers said a total of 15 Adivasi cultural groups are taking part in the festival.

WEATHER TODAY Dry weather likely UNB, Dhaka. Weather is likely to remain dry over the country during the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.



Students of Bangladesh International Tutorial explain their project at the Annual Science Fair held on March 17-18 on its campus in the city.

Bangkok Hospital expanded Staff Correspondent

Bangkok Hospital expanded and turned into Bangkok Medical Centre (BMC) consisting of original Bangkok Hospital (BGH), newly opened Bangkok Heart Hospital, Bangkok Cancer Hospital, Bangkok International Hospital and Bangkok Rehabilitation Centre.

Bangkok Hospital Office, Bangkok organised a press meet at a local hotel in the city yesterday on 'Introducing Bangkok Medical Centre and Recent Advancement and Innovative Technology for Cardiac Treatment'.

Dr Rapin Kukreja, Chief Cardiologist of Bangkok Heart Hospital, Tawhid Iqbal, co-ordinator of Bangkok International Hospital, B Rahman, CEO, Bangkok Hospital Office, Bangladesh and Dr Nilanjan Sen, Medical Co-ordinator, Bangkok Hospital Office Bangladesh were present at the press meet.

They informed the journalists about different facilities and advancements of the expanded medical centre while Dr Kukreja presented a paper on recent advancement and innovative technology for cardiac treatment.

The hospital authorities said they are also prepared to provide support for the poor patients who cannot afford the treatment expense there.

They informed that each year a good number of Bangladeshi people visit their hospital for treatment and there are some critical patients who went to the hospital by air ambulance and came back after recovery.

Cop killed in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

An assistant sub-inspector of police were killed in a road accident in Mymensingh yesterday.

Liton Chandra Sarker, 28, was killed in a road accident at Golganda area of the district town at around 11:00am.

Son of Sujon Chandra Sarker of Andharia village under Barhatta upazila in Netrokona district, Liton died on the spot when a sand-laden truck hit his motor-cycle from behind on Mymensingh-Tangail highway.

Police said ill-fated Liton was going to his new workplace at police training centre in Tangail after being transferred from Chittagong recently. His body was sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Sikri pins high hope

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gap between India and Bangladesh in the latter's disfavour, Sikri referred to some positive steps taken by the Indian side in lifting all sorts of para-tariff and non-tariff barriers giving Bangladeshi leather, batteries and cement a smooth export line to India.

"Bangladesh's export volume to India grew three-fold from \$50 million in 2002-03 to \$144 million in 2004-05. But I know still the trade gap is way high," she said.

Sikri considers that the potential of minimising trade gap between Bangladesh and India lies with a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA). "Our FTA with Sri Lanka is the testimony. Sri Lanka had an adverse trade balance with India of 1:16 ratio and after Indo-Lanka FTA signing that ratio has gone down to 1:5."

She also pinned high hopes on Khaleda-Singh signing an illegal trafficking of narcotics accord curbing the phensidyl menace.

Mentioning a draft extradition and legal assistance treaty that India gave to Bangladesh, Sikri said things did not progress much for signing a much-needed extradition treaty.

On the issue of rising menace of extremists and militants, the Indian envoy termed the phenomenon serious which did not necessarily remain confined within a national territory rather neighbours also got affected. She expressed India's readiness to assist Bangladesh in curbing the rise of terrorism.

On the question of India's fencing more than 4,000km porous boundary with Bangladesh and occasional skirmishes between the otherwise-friendly border forces centring disputes over border demarcation, Sikri said, "India is raising the fences 150 yards inside its territory away from the zero line throughout Indo-Bangla border except some stretches totalling 297km where India requires to do the fencing in between zero line and 150 yards because of geographic

peculiarities—difficult terrains, rivers and households fall on those locations." Sikri claimed that India allowed Bangladesh to raise wall at Hill border within 150 yards of the zero line for practical reasons.

She referred to the contentious issues of border fencing, lands under adverse possessions and enclaves both inside India and Bangladesh to recall that back in March, 2002, India had made a "package offer" on all these at an Indo-Bangla Joint Boundary Working Group meeting. "There has been no headway thereafter. We wanted to have a follow-up meeting of the joint boundary group prior to the Bangladesh premier's Delhi visit but things did not move in that direction."

Sikri was asked to comment on what could be India's responsibilities to its developing neighbours as a fast growing economy having much greater geo-political clout in international arena. "India's growth is linked with peace and growth in Bangladesh. Our president was in Myanmar just the other day. We're constantly maintaining good relations with all our neighbours," she said.

Claiming that Bangladesh has been enjoying road transit through India to Nepal and Bhutan since 1997, the Indian high commissioner said India wishes to get transit through Bangladesh to the north-eastern region of India.

On the contentious issue of water sharing, Sikri observed that "the issue here is water management, not water scarcity." She quoted Asian Development Bank figures to point out that per capita water availability is greater in Bangladesh than in India and said, "India has always showed its readiness to assist Bangladesh in bettering its management of water resources."

On the question of huge trade

Cellphone firms asked to record

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is asking the operators to do that job. "How can we install 'lawful interception' system when it is unlawful at the first place?" commented a mobile operator's high official requesting anonymity. He dubbed the directive as "grossly inconsistent" because recording the conversation of any customer or preserving clients' messages is totally illegal for any operator and the telecoms law as well as the license strictly mandates them to maintain customers' privacy.

Sources said the government has realized its incapability to maintain and process a mammoth database of fast growing tens of millions of mobile users. It has allegedly prompted Omar Farooq, who was the home secretary right before joining BTRC, to devise the idea of asking the mobile operators to do the intelligence agencies' job instead.

"We will step into a legal minefield soon after recording our customers' calls and we simply can't do that," another mobile operator's high official commented to The Daily Star, requesting anonymity. Sources said all operators have forwarded BTRC's letter to their legal departments and all the CEOs are likely to meet soon to strategize a unified legal warfare against the telecoms regulator.

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