

Take a vow to strengthen national unity

PM tells Poet Nazrul birth anniversary function

UNB, Trishal (Mymensingh)

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged all to take a vow to further strengthen national unity through spreading poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's ideals in all spheres of society and culture.

songs and poem inspire us in happiness and sorrow, give us courage and keep our mind peaceful." During the War of Liberation, his songs and poems were the source of inspirations, she noted.

imprisoned for openly speaking for oppressed people and put up with the cruel torture by imperialist power," Khaleda told her audience. Khaleda said in the stormy and rough world his messages of humanity still echoes the words of a divine, innocent and beautiful life.

HC stays judicial function of Mothbaria UNO

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday stayed the operation of a notification giving Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Mothbaria in Pirozpur district additional charge for exercising judicial function in "violation" of the Constitution.

On May 22, the government issued a notification giving Abdus Salam, UNO of Matbaria, additional charge for exercising judicial function as magistrate.

Passing the interim order of stay, a division bench comprising Justice MA Matin and Justice ATM Fazle Kabir issued a rule upon the government to explain why the impugned notification without consultation of the Supreme Court "should not be declared unlawful".

The stay will continue until disposal of the rule, the court said. The court orders came upon a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) writ petition challenging the validity of the notification as it "violated" provision of Article 116 of the Constitution.

This Article says the control (including the power of posting, promotion and grant of leave) and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and magistrates exercising judicial function shall vest in the President and shall be exercised by him in consultation with the Supreme Court.

Advocate Manzill Murshid appeared for the petitioner, advocate Sarder Faruque Ahmed, president of Pirozpur District Bar Association.

Udichi bomb blast case verdict May 30

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Judgement in the sensational Udichi bomb blast case will be pronounced on May 30. Judge Abul Hossain Bepari of The Special Tribunal, Jessore fixed the date after hearing the argument of defence lawyers yesterday.

Out of the 23 accused, 22 appeared before the tribunal yesterday. Accused Mizanur Rahman did not turn up. Ten people were killed and over 100 injured in the bomb blast during the 12th national conference of Udichi Shilpi Gosthi at Jessore Town Hall Maidan on the night of March 6, 1999.

An explosive case and a murder case were filed the next day. Bakkar, Sifat, Alauddin and Abdul Alim.

According to the proceedings of the case, the convicted persons abducted Mofazzal Hossain Jhantu, a worker of BNP, from his house and stabbed him to death at Alaipur Primary School play ground on the night of June 21, 1998.

A case was filed with Pabna Sadar Thana in this connection accusing twelve people. Later the case was shifted to Speedy Trial Tribunal in Rajshahi.

Several hundred activists of Awami League and Krishak League held a meeting on Rajshahi and Pabna court premises protesting the verdict. They also tried to take out a procession but police and RAB members acted promptly barring them from holding any procession on the court premises.

A visiting delegation of British Muslims yesterday said Islam is wrongly being made synonymous with terrorism and that Muslims should return to the path of peace, the true meaning of Islam.

The delegation comprising young Muslim British lawyer, businessman, student and community activist, exchanged views with journalists at a city hotel. The British High Commission organised the press conference.

The objective of their five-day goodwill visit is to share their experiences about the position of Muslims in modern Britain with Bangladeshis. They said some misguided Muslims tarnished the image of liberal and peace-loving British Muslims through serial bomb blasts in London on July 7, 2005.

"Now we have come to you in a bid to revive our image," they added. They also appreciated Bangladesh's successful fight against militancy. Sahana Khan, a community activist, said the Muslims in Britain do not face any kind of obstacles to protecting their rights concerning cultural and religious values.

Lutfar Ali, a prominent Muslim figure in British business community, said that Bangladeshis in Britain are not represented in British civil service and politics as they should have been. Referring to a recent survey, he said that with the same qualification and potentiality, a British Muslim is three times less likely to be employed in Britain than an Indian Hindu.



Sammilita Ajinibi Samannya Parishad forms a human chain on the High Court premises in the city yesterday demanding resignation of the chief election commissioner and cancellation of the draft voter list.

Integrate indigenous people in project implementation

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday called for integration of the indigenous people while implementing projects in their areas.

They called for united efforts by government and non-government organisations to protect the livelihood of indigenous people in Madhupur Shal forest in Tangail.

The workshop titled "Madhupur forest and indigenous people: Problems and legal position" was organised jointly by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), Action Aid Bangladesh, Aino-Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), ALRD and Joinsahai Adibashi Unnayan Parishad at LGED Bhaban in the city.

The speakers said the government needs to be more rational while dealing with indigenous people who were evicted by all governments since Pakistan period in the name of afforestation.

Besides, several thousand false cases have been filed against the indigenous people accusing them as land grabbers, they added. Fazlul Sattar, coordinator of Global Network for the Prevention of Torture, said the indigenous people also known as Mandi inhabitant, have been living in Madhupur forest for thousand years and the area fully depended on the forest as Shal trees provide them with food and shelter.

But since 1962 after the declaration of Madhupur forest as National Park all successive governments tried to evict them without paying any heed to their land rights. Prof Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University said Madhupur afforestation project funded by the ADB is unsocial one as the participation of local people in it was ignored.

Plantation of Eucalyptus, Acacia and Manjani plants and cultivation of pineapple and banana by cleaning the Shal forest prove government's negligence to indigenous people as there is no need for fresh afforestation if steps are taken to protect the Shal trees, he added.

Speaking as chief guest Dr Abdur Razzak MP said as Shal forest is a national wealth a political decision is necessary in this regard. Some indigenous people who attended the workshop urged the government to withdraw all false cases against them and leave the forest untouched.

"We are now scared as food and medicine plants are on the verge of extinction," they added. What was the necessary to afford the area by destroying its natural tress, they questioned.

Earlier, a documentary titled 'Our Shalban' was screened. Presiding over by Dr Ainnun Nishat, country representative of IUCN Bangladesh, the workshop was also addressed by Syeda Rizwana Hasan, director of BELA, Dr Mahfuzur Rahman, associate professor of Jahangirnagar University, and Ajoy A Mri, president of Joinsahai Adibashi Unnayan Parishad also spoke.

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Leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) expressed their deep shock at the death of the renowned journalist. They also conveyed sympathy to members of the bereaved family and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

Mohammad Ali, joint secretary of Bangladesh Newspaper Employees Federation and a senior executive of the Bangladesh Observer, passed away due to cancer at his residence at Jalkuri under Siddirgonj Police Station in Narayanganj on May 19 at the age of 68, says a press release.

Ali left behind his wife, four sons and a daughter to mourn his death.

Today is the seventh death anniversary of Advocate Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury, former member of Bangladesh Bar Council and former president of Chittagong District Bar Association, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and doa mahfil will be held at his village home at Paragalpur at Mirersarai in Chittagong after Juma prayers.

Today is the 17th death anniversary of Group Captain Zia Uddin Ahmed, former Base Commander of Bangladesh Air Force, says a press release.

A milad mahfil will be held at his New DOHS Mohakhali residence in the city.

Quikhwani of Golan Rasul Mallick, former chief Editor and Managing Director of now defunct Eastern News Agency (ENA), will be held today after Asr prayers at his residence at House No-25, Road No-4, Section No-5, Uttara in the city.

Quikhwani of MA Raquib, director of Pubali Bank Ltd., will be held at his residence at 4 Holy Lane, Ashiana Apartment, Shyamoli, in Dhaka after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Raquib was also former chairman of Kanaighat upazila in Sylhet and an organiser of Bangladeshis in London during the Liberation War. He passed away at a city clinic on May 16.

Tributes paid to Justice BB Roy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting on Wednesday paid rich tributes to the memory of Justice Bimalendu Bikash Roy.

They said the late justice had earned a special position in the hearts of lawyers. The memorial meeting was organised by Justice Bimalendu Bikash Roy Chowdhury Jatiya Smriti Udjapan Parishad in the city on the occasion of his first death anniversary.

Presided over by ex-Chief Justice ATMAfzal, the meeting was attended by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain, Ex-Chief Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury, eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain, economist Debapriya Bhattacharya, and Convener of the Parishad Justice Naimuddin Ahmed, said a press release.

The meeting was held at Shaheed Shafiqur Rahman auditorium of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association.

Weekly Rupsha editor gets death threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Some notorious criminals gave a death threat to Editor of the weekly Rupsha Matiur Rahman on Wednesday night when he was returning home from his office at Khalishpur.

The threat came as he refused to withdraw a complaint he lodged with Khalishpur Police Station against some criminals who attacked him on the night of May 18, the editor said in a press statement.

Matiur Rahman, 71, was severely injured in the May 18 attack. The gang attacked him for writing against them. He and his family members are now feeling insecure following the death threat, the editor said in the press statement.

US immigration bill nears passage

Millions of illegals to get chance to win citizenship

REUTERS, Washington

A sweeping immigration law overhaul that would toughen border security and give millions of illegal immigrants a chance to earn US citizenship headed for Senate passage on Thursday and backers prepared for a bruising battle with the House of Representatives.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, a Tennessee Republican, said the bill was "on a glide path" to passage after the measure passed a key test vote on Wednesday by a strong margin.

A bipartisan coalition pushing the comprehensive bill withstood several attempts by opponents to unravel it. Backers say strong bipartisan approval should strengthen their position in negotiations with the House, which passed a vastly different measure that would further criminalise illegal presence in the United States.

The Senate and House will have to merge their separate bills in a conference before they can send a final measure to President George W. Bush for his signature. It is unclear whether the two chambers will be able to resolve their differences before the November congressional elections.

"If we can get a good vote (Thursday) on final passage, then I think a conference committee represents a good set of possibilities," said Sen. Chuck Hagel, a Nebraska Republican.



Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain discusses a point with Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain at a memorial meeting on Justice Bimalendu Bikash Roy Chowdhury in the city on Wednesday.

JHANTU MURDER CASE Six AL men get life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Six Awami League leaders and workers were awarded life imprisonment in sensational murder case of Mofazzal Hossain Jhantu of Goyeshpur village in Pabna district. Rajshahi Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge AFM Aminul Islam pronounced the judgement at a crowded court here yesterday.

Those who were awarded life term included Pabna district unit president of Krishak League Shahidur Rahman Shahid, Jubo League leader Motahar, Chhatra League district organising secretary Ranju, Alauddin, Aminul and Shamsul.

Shahid, Motahar and Ranju are three brothers. Six others were acquitted. They are Hasan Ali, Shafiqur Rahman, Abu



Family members of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria and members of the civil society form a human chain at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday as part of 'Blue for Peace' programme, demanding fair trial of Kibria murder case.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today. Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said in a forecast.

Highest temperature 39.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 24.2 degrees at Comilla. The sun sets in the capital at 6:39pm today and rises at 5:12am tomorrow.

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

Islam wrongfully being made synonymous with terrorism

Say visiting British Muslims

BDNEWS, Dhaka

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He portrayed a disappointing scenario of Muslims working in Britain, mentioning that one in every six Muslims drives taxi for a living. He also said about 25 per cent of Muslims work in restaurants. Earlier, the delegation members along with British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury met State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon at his office.

Nodi O Jibon project launched

30,000 poor families to be benefited

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Nodi O Jibon, a resource mobilisation project, was launched yesterday, aiming at improving the livelihood of vulnerable people of char lands in the northern region.

Concern Bangladesh, an international NGO, in partnership with seven local organisations will implement the project over a five-year period with a primary focus on 83 chars in 24 unions of Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Pabna districts. About 30,000 families, 10,000 of them extreme poor, will be brought under the coverage of the project.

Dr Atiur Rahman, chairman of Unnayan Shamannay, disclosed this at the launching ceremony of the project at Cirdap auditorium in Dhaka. Concern Bangladesh and Unnayan Shamannay jointly organised the programme. Economist Atiur Rahman said basic government services such as education and health services are limited in the chars, and the private sector has shown little interest in investing in the chars.

The project would work for a healthy livelihood for the char people through expanding NGOs and GoB services in the remote areas and building their capacity to access resources, he said. Addressing the launching ceremony as chief guest, Food and Disaster Management Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf said the private sector has not yet come forward with enough investment in SMEs and agro-processing industries, which could generate employment for the char people.

Lack of infrastructure, particularly electricity, is constraining such investment, he said. "We are lagging behind in some of the areas in terms of achieving the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). There is still some time left for reducing the gaps," the minister said.

Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, executive editor of the daily Sangbad, conducted the programme. Kieren Crawley, country director of Concern Bangladesh, Awami League lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor and Douglas Broderick, country director of World Food Programme (WFP), also spoke.

CMCH OUTAGE Probe body formed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A three-member enquiry committee was formed here yesterday to investigate the Wednesday's power cut at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) for around 10 hours that allegedly caused death to two patients of Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

Public Works Department (PWD), entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring smooth power and water supply to the hospital, formed the committee after holding a meeting with the CMCH authorities. CMCH Director Brigadier General Abedur Rahman presided over the meeting held at his office at 10:30am attended by officials from both sides.

At the meeting, the CMCH director urged the PWD to install another generator for the ICU to support the main 300KV generator of the hospital in case of emergency, sources said. The PWD officials present at the meeting also underscored this need.

While talking to The Daily Star, PWD Superintendent Engineer Abdul Majid, also the head of the three-member committee, said that the committee would submit its report after investigating the matter for three working days. However, PWD Sub-assistant Engineer Didarul Islam claimed that the power supply from the main line actually remained suspended for three hours since 4:30am and they switched on the generator to maintain the power supply from alternative source within a very short time.

Meanwhile, the patients alleged that another incident of power disruption for around half-an hour took place at the CMCH yesterday.

The meeting will begin at 10:00am at Paltan Maidan in the city, with AL President Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

AL extended meet now on June 5, 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League will now hold its extended meeting of the national committee on June 5 and 6, instead of May 27 and 28.

Members of the central executive committee, central advisory council, national committee, party MPs and presidents and general secretaries of district, upazila, thana, union, and ward units will take part in the meeting, says a AL press release.

The meeting will begin at 10:00am at Paltan Maidan in the city, with AL President Sheikh Hasina in the chair.