

7TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF POET SUFIA KAMAL OBSERVED

# Vow to establish equal rights for women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a memorial meeting yesterday called for following the ideals of poet Sufia Kamal to establish equal rights for women in the society.

The meeting was organised by Samajik Protirodh Committee at the National Press Club in observance of the seventh death anniversary of Sufia Kamal, the founding president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

Speaking on the occasion Ayesha Khanam, general secretary of the Parishad, said the country's women have made considerable advancement since the death of the poet seven years ago.

She said the women including journalists, political activists and garment workers can now take to the streets even at night as a result of the lifelong struggle of Sufia Kamal.

Selina Khalek, president of Bangladesh Mahila Samity, said due to unavoidable circumstances, the memorial meeting could not be held on the day of the poet's death on November 20.

She urged the authorities concerned to publish all the writings of the poet as an anthology so that people can know about her life and ideology.

"Sufia Kamal was not only a person but also an institution," said Prof Dr Mahmuda Islam, president of Women for Women.

Speaking as chief guest, Sultana



Ayesha Khanam, general secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, speaks at a memorial meeting marking the 7th death anniversary of poet Sufia Kamal at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. Sitting from right are Sultana Kamal, adviser to the caretaker government, and Hena Das.

Kamal, adviser to caretaker government and daughter of Sufia Kamal, said the poet had to pass through many adverse situations alike us at present.

Reminiscing her own experience with the poet, Sultana Kamal said she liked transparency and taught others to be confident.

Executive Director of Steps Towards Development Ranjan Karmakar hosted the function which was attended by the representatives of different front organisations of Protirodh Committee including Karmajibi Nari, The Hunger Project,

Trade Union Kendra, Nari Pakkha, Nagorik Udyog and Bangladesh Women Lawyers Association.

The Committee at the meeting also demanded reformation of the Election Commission, correction of voter list and recovery of illegal arms.

The other demands of the Committee included restoration of National Women Development Policy of 1997, launching of united movement to resist the communal forces and inclusion of the biography of Sufia Kamal and other eminent women pioneers in the textbooks.

## Removal of Savar UNO demanded

JU CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) staged a demonstration at Genda bus stand in Savar yesterday demanding punishment to Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) A Z Salauddin Nagri for attending a secret meeting at Uttara hosted by former energy adviser Mahmudur Rahman.

Holding placards, the AL activists formed a human chain at the bus stand at 4:00pm. The placards read 'punish Salauddin Nagri, UNO of Savar,' 'remove conspirator government officers and withdraw all government officers loyal to Hawa Bhaban'.

Later they held a rally at Savar thana bus stand where the leaders demanded cancellation of 'fake' voter list done under the supervision of Salauddin in Savar.

Former lawmaker Ashrafuddin Khan Imu, Hasina Doula and Jahangir Alam were present at the rally.

## NSU convocation tomorrow

Tenth convocation ceremony of North South University (NSU) will be held at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city at 10:30am tomorrow, says a press release.

President, also Chancellor of NSU, Iajuddin Ahmed will preside over the ceremony and confer degrees upon 518 students.

Chai Xi, ambassador of China in Bangladesh, will be present as convocation speaker.



Different city streets become gridlocked again yesterday as life returns to normal after the postponement of blockade programme of 14-party alliance on Thursday. This picture was taken from Kakrail intersection.

## GOLD SMUGGLING CASE AGAINST ERSHAD Next hearing on Jan 11

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday refixed January 11, 2007 as next hearing date for a gold smuggling case filed against former president and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad following a time petition by the defence lawyers.

Judge SM Mujibur Rahman of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court changed the schedule, as it could not complete hearing on arguments.

In yesterday's petition, the defence lawyers prayed for adjournment of the hearing as their client went to abroad for treatment.

Earlier, the court recorded statements of eight prosecution witnesses and completed cross-examination of the witnesses.

On November 21, Ershad told the same court that the BNP government deliberately implicated him in the case in 1991 and made him an accused as part of a conspiracy to harass him politically.

According to the prosecution, customs officials held four people including two foreigners from Zia International Airport on July 17, 1990 while attempting to smuggle around 3.6 kg gold worth about Tk 2.5 crore into Bangladesh.

A smuggling case was filed on the same day with Cantonment police station against the four-Bernhard Rudiger of Germany, David Anthony Chalmar Chaker of England, the then manager of Zia International Airport Maj (Retd) Ashraf Uddin Sekender and Abu Taher, an airport security guard.

Ershad's name was not in the FIR (First Information Report) during filing of the case. The investigation officer (IO) later included the former president's name in the supplementary charge sheet on August 31, 1991 as an abettor.

The trial against Ershad did not start due to a High Court stay order.

Ershad was acquitted in four graft cases in last August and September.

## Punish bureaucrats who attended secret meet

Demands B Chowdhury

UNB, Dhaka

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday demanded punishment to the bureaucrats who attended a secret meeting at Uttara on November 24.

"These partisan bureaucrats must be made OSD forthwith and should be punished after a proper investigation into the incident to inform the nation what conspiracy they were hatching over there," he told the inaugural session of a political training workshop in the city.

B Chowdhury said a group of bureaucrats could meet at a social gathering but hiding faces by coats is suspicious which proves that they were obviously involved in a conspiracy to manipulate the next national election.

He also demanded resignation of President Iajuddin Ahmed from the post of Chief Adviser for what he said his failure to create a good environment for holding a free and fair election.

Criticising Khaleda Zia for her recent remarks that MA Aziz still holds the post of CEC as he has just gone on a temporary leave of absence, B Chowdhury said she has "no right" to make any comments on CEC as she no longer holds the state power.

B Chowdhury also criticised Khaleda's recent speech at the Doctor's Association of Bangladesh (DAB) conference saying she cannot influence the doctors to work for any particular political party as 80 percent of them are government employees.

LDP Secretary General Maj (ret) Abdul Mannan, presidium members Alamgir Kabir, Redwan Ahmed, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Ali Kodor and Organising Secretary Mahi B Chowdhury, Adnan Anwar, AT M Kamal, Sheikh Sahiduzzaman, Mokarram Hossain Dorodi, Ajmeri Begum and Shamima Begum also attended the workshop.

Some 200 new LDP members took part in the workshop.

## 'Secret' meet indicates breakdown in admin

Say professionals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The conspiratorial meeting of a good number of former and in-service bureaucrats at Uttara indicates the complete breakdown of civil administration in the country, a Peshajibi Samannaya Parishad press release observed yesterday.

While the people of Bangladesh sacrifice their lives for the sake of continuing democratic process in the country, protecting civil administration should be given the utmost priority, the press release read, adding, or else, it would be suicidal for the country and nation.

The Parishad urged the caretaker government to identify the officials involved at the surreptitious meeting, form an impartial investigation committee, annulment of appointments under political consideration and bringing the officials to book that were involved in those activities.



## Shaheed Dr Milon Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is Shaheed Dr Milon Day.

On this day in 1990, Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon, the then joint secretary general of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), was shot dead on his way to a meeting against autocratic ruler Hussain Muhammad Ershad.

Different organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the day.

The programmes include holding discussions, doa mahfil, placing wreaths and offering Fateha at Dr Milon's grave on the premises of Dhaka Medical College (DMC) and at Dr Milon Memorial in front of Teacher Student Centre, where he was shot dead.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will place wreaths and offer nazarat at the grave and at the memorial at 9:00am.

BMA will also place wreaths and offer Fateha at his grave at 8:00am and hold a discussion at 9:30am on DMC premises. It will also organise a doa mahfil at 1:30pm.

Shaheed Dr Milon Sangsad and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal have also chalked out separate programmes to observe the day.

Meanwhile, BNP Chairperson and immediate past prime minister Khaleda Zia in a message yesterday called upon all to be untied to maintain democracy and save the constitution.

She paid rich tributes to Dr Milon and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

She also said the supreme sacrifice of Dr Milon had accelerated the movement for restoration of democracy and the democracy loving people will remember him with due respect forever.

In her message Awami League President Sheikh Hasina said Dr Milon sacrificed his life with a dream to establish a non-communal democratic country and his supreme sacrifice turned the mass movement into a mass upsurge that paved the way for the downfall of the autocratic regime.

She also said the dreams for which Dr Milon shed his blood are yet to be materialised, as democracy, rule of law and people's right to franchise is yet to be established in the country.

She also urged the country people to come forward for establishing the people's constitutional, democratic and human rights.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia speaks at a view exchange meeting organised by Shikkhak Karmachari Oikya Jote at Biam auditorium in the city yesterday.

## Save women from repression on eve of polls

Nari Samaj urges govt

Peshajibi Nari Samaj yesterday formed a human chain on the Supreme Court premises in observance of the International Fortnight of Elimination of Violence against Women, says a press release.

They urged the government to take initiatives to save women from oppression on the eve of the election, as a lot of women were oppressed during the 2001 elections.

Ferdousi Priyobhashini, Mahfuza Khanam, Dr Sonia Nishat Amin, Shirin Akhtar, Dr Dipu Moni, Tasmina Hossain, Nasimun Ara Huq Minu and other women leaders took part in the programme.

## Sit with political parties to arrest price hike

CAB urges Dr Akbar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Consumer Association of Bangladesh (CAB) urged the caretaker government to sit with the political parties to stop political demonstrations which result in price hike of essentials and hamper country's export-import activities.

The association made the plea while a seven member CAB delegation led by its President Borhan Ahmed met Finance and Planning Adviser Dr Akbar Ali Khan at his office yesterday, said a CAB press release.

CAB leaders alleged that by taking opportunity of government's reluctance to keep the price of essentials reasonable, some businessmen hike prices in the kitchen market as per their will.

The leaders placed their ten-point demand to the finance adviser to check the manipulation of the commodity prices by hoarders and illegal businessmen.

They demanded to formulate a National Task Force comprising Finance, Home, Agriculture, Commerce and Industries ministries to keep the prices reasonable.

They also highlighted the need for Consumer Rights Protection Act to control the price of kitchen market and suggested resuming activation of Anti-hoarding Law, 1956 and Special Power Act, 1974.

Dr Akbar assured that he will provide his support to keep the price stable.



President, past presidents, president-elect, members and other office-bearers of Zonta Club III pose for photograph at a function at the Heritage Restaurant in the city recently.

## Zonta celebrates UN Day

Zonta Club III celebrated its International Foundation and UN Day at the Heritage Restaurant in the city on November 18, says a press release.

At a meeting held on this occasion, Zontians renewed their commitment to serve the community through educational and service programmes.

Current projects of the club include Shishu Bikash School and BERDO which provides education to visually impaired students.

The meeting discussed UN report on "Violence against Women" and members noted with regret that dowry-related female deaths continued to occur in the country.

It also condemned other acts of violence against women including rape and gangrape.

## UPDF demands equal rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) President Prosit Bikash Khisa demanded amendment to the constitution in order to ensure rights of all citizens of the country regardless of class, race, ethnicity, religion and profession.

Khisa was speaking at the first congress of UPDF.

Criticising the present constitution, Khisa said this constitution is unjust, as it does not ensure the rights of the indigenous community.

The congress was held at the Institution of Engineers in the city.

Jatiya Mukti Council President Badruddin Umar, Jatiya Gono Front Coordinator Tipu Biswas, Language Movement Activist Abdul Matin and Professor Jamal Nazrul Islam of Chittagong University spoke at the inaugural session.

The speakers said people of Bangladesh would not be able to resolve the crisis by repressing the indigenous people of Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT), as they are part of the country.

They said the indigenous people have all the rights to demand autonomy as their culture, environment and profession is different from the plain land inhabitants.

In a political report of UPDF, it is said that over 200 people were killed, 15 maimed and three hundred were sent to prisons during their eight years of fight for autonomy of CHT.

They even could not hold a congress during the regimes of the last two governments, the report added.

Diponkar Tripura conducted the session.

A colourful procession was brought out in the city after the end of the first day of congress.



Participants in the First National UPDF Congress observe a one-minute silence in memory of those killed in different movements in the country. The three-day congress began at the Institution of Engineers in the city yesterday.