



Begum Rokeya Day today

BSS, Dhaka

The nation will celebrate Begum Rokeya Day today, paying glowing tribute to the memory of the legendary woman who had played a pioneering role in establishing women's rights in the subcontinent.

The nation will also recall with deep respect the contribution of Begum Rokeya, especially in promoting the education of Muslim women.

In a message on the occasion, BNP Chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia paid tribute to the memory of Begum Rokeya, saying that this great woman with a strong determination carried on her mission towards changing the destiny of the backward section of women by defying all obstacles in the 19th century conservative society.

Apart from official programmes, various institutions and socio-cultural organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes to mark the day.

The Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University will take out a colourful procession in the morning.

Provost of the hall Prof Tajmeri S A Islam, house tutors, teachers and students will take part in the procession. Later, a discussion will also be held on the hall premises.

Bangla Academy will hold a discussion on 'Dreams of Sultana: Symbol of Women's Awakening' at 11am on December 10 at the seminar room of the academy.

Prof Neaz Zaman, Prof Kazi Madina and acting Director General of Bangla Academy Moinul Hasan will take part in the discussion chaired by Prof Mokbula Manjur.

Bangladesh Shishu Academy will arrange a painting competition for children at the Shishu Art Gallery of the Academy at 2:00pm today. And the prize giving ceremony and a cultural function will be held at Ziaur Rahman auditorium of Shishu Academy at 7:00 pm.

Citigroup has also organised a programme to mark Begum Rokeya Day. As part of the programme, Citigroup will distribute books among the students of different girls' schools and colleges at 11:30 am at 109 Gulshan Avenue.

Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar will also broadcast special programmes on the occasion.

'Saarc provides platform to work together'

BSS, Dhaka

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) has provided a platform for the people of South Asia to work together in the spirit of friendship, trust and understanding, said acting Foreign Secretary M Touhid Hossain yesterday.

The cooperation among the Saarc states is based on the respect for principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs of the member states and mutual benefits, he said at the inaugural ceremony of the Saarc Charter Day at the Saarc Meteorological Research Centre (SMRC) in the city.

Joint Secretary to the defence ministry Brig Gen Shah Mohammad Sultan Uddin Iqbal attended the function as the special guest.

The acting foreign secretary said the Saarc agenda of cooperation spread over many substantive areas, including agriculture and rural development, health and population, women, youths and children, environment and forestry, science, technology and meteorology, trade and investment, and energy and human resources development.

On December 8, 1985, the historic Saarc charter was signed in Dhaka by the heads of state and government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The signing of the charter paved the way for formal launching of the Saarc, he said.

Touhid Hossain also said the Saarc charter demands that the people and the governments of South Asia should work together to find out solutions to the common problems in the spirit of cooperation based on mutual respect and shared benefits.

Director of the SMRC Dr Samarendra Karmaker also addressed the function.

8 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least eight people were killed and 25 others injured in separate road accidents in Rajshahi, Brahmanbaria, Patuakhali and Chittagong yesterday.

Our Staff Correspondent from Rajshahi says: Two people, including a school teacher, was killed and 20 others were injured in a road accident at Damkura at the outskirts of the city yesterday.

The victims were identified as Rajshahi Court Academy School teacher Abdus Sukur, 65, and Sohrab Ali, 40, of Srirampur village under Durgapur upazila.

The accident occurred at around 12:00 noon when a city-bound speeding passenger bus from Kakonhat hit a electric pole, turned upside down and fell into a roadside ditch, leaving them dead on the spot.

The injured were rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Our Correspondent from Brahmanbaria adds: Two people were killed in separate road accidents at Sadar and Kasba upazila in the district yesterday.

The dead were identified as

Arzina Akter, 8, daughter of Farid Mia of Jagatshar village and bus driver Abdur Razzak, 43, of Mukandapur village under Sadar upazila.

Arzina, 8, was killed under the wheels of a speeding bus on Brahmanbaria - Comilla highway at Jagatshar village under Sadar upazila at 10:00am while she was crossing the road.

The girl died on the spot. The driver and helper along with their bus managed to escape.

On the other hand, Razzak was killed as the tyre of a bus burst with a big bang while a worker was pumping up the tyre at a garage at Kuti Bazar under Kasba upazila.

The driver was near the wheel when the tyre burst, leaving him seriously injured.

He succumbed to his injuries on the way to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital.

Our Correspondent from Patuakhali reports: Two people, including a child, were killed and five others injured in separate road accidents in Patuakhali yesterday.

One person was killed and four others were injured when a

Patuakhali-bound passenger bus from Barisal fell into a roadside ditch at Bat Tala Bazar area under Bakerganj upazila.

The dead was identified as Abdu Rahim, 45, a passer-by of Bakerganj. Of the injured, Malek, 22, and Jabbar Sikder, 40 of the same area were rushed to the Bakerganj upazila health complex.

On the other hand, Bahdur, a 10-year old boy, was crushed under wheels of a truck when he was crossing a road at Amragachia area on Amtali-Patuakhali road.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong adds: One youth, identified as Baburchi (chef) Ali, 35, son of late Arab Ali, was knocked down by a taxicab at Agrabad Hajipara area under Double Mooring Police Station at around 11:00am.

Ali succumbed to his injuries at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) at around 12:00 noon.

UNB adds: an unidentified middle-aged man was killed when a truck hit him at Fakirahat in Sitakunda upazila at about 5:30pm.

Police sent the body to CMCH morgue for autopsy.



Bangladesh Paribesh Bachao Andolon forms a human chain in front of Fine Arts Institute in the city yesterday protesting earth filling of the water bodies.

PHOTO: STAR

Tribute paid to Hanif

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a memorial meeting yesterday paid glowing tribute to former mayor Mohammad Hanif, saying that he was a champion of clean and terrorism-free politics.

The countrymen will always remember him for his contribution to politics and social service, they added.

Hanif, president of Dhaka city Awami League and the first elected mayor of Dhaka City Corporation, died on November 28 in the capital after a prolonged illness.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote organised the meeting in his memory at the National Press Club where leaders of different political parties and civil society members paid tribute to him.

Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran said the nation needs persons like Hanif to tackle the present political crisis.

Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, said Hanif did politics for the welfare of people and played a vital role in all progressive movements in the country.

Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, editor of The Bangladesh Observer, actor ATM Shamsuzzaman, Alamgir Kunkum and Hanif's son Sayeed Khokan also spoke at the meeting.

Children's rally on Victory Day

BSS, Dhaka

President/Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed will take salute from a children march past on the occasion of the Victory Day-2006.

A grand children rally will be held in Dhaka National Stadium with full enthusiasm and respect to celebrate the Victory Day on December 16, an official press release said.

In the rally, the children from various educational institutions, Scouts and girls guides will perform the march past and the display.

10 'porno CD makers' held

UNB, Dhaka

Rab personnel arrested 10 alleged porno CD makers along with firearms from a house in the city's Rampura area on Thursday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-3 raided the house at about 4:30pm and arrested the 10 people along with a revolver, 18 rounds of bullet, 100 porno CDs and a girl from the house.

Rab said the arrested had long been carrying out anti-social activities in the area.

Recording of BBC Sanglap in Sylhet today

BSS, Dhaka

Recording of the 13th edition of BBC Bengali Service's 'Bangladesh Sanglap' will take place at the auditorium of Jalalabad Gas Transmission and Distribution System Ltd in Sylhet today at 5:45pm.

Sylhet Mayor and President of Sylhet Metropolitan Awami League Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, President of Moulavibazar district BNP and former lawmaker Naser Rahman, Vice-chancellor of Sylhet Metropolitan University Dr Kabir Hossain Chowdhury and journalist Shamsad Husham will join a panel on the occasion.

The recorded Sanglap will be broadcast on the BBC Bengali radio at 7:30pm tomorrow and telecast by Channel i at 8:00pm on Monday.

Include issue of dev of haors in election manifestos

Speakers urge political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday urged the political parties to include the issue of development of the haor areas in their electoral manifestos in a bid to ensuring proper utilisation of the potentials of these areas in national development.

They also demanded reforms in the existing haor lease system since it only benefits local influential figures instead of common people and fishermen.

Nagorik Sanghati organised the

press conference at the office of news agency Abas in the city.

Abas Chairman Mostafa Jabbar in his keynote paper said people living in the haor areas are leading a miserable life as most of them are struggling against hunger, poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, flood and death of works.

The poor fishermen of the haor areas are deprived of the rights to haor assets due to the leasing system as it benefits the well-to-do and influential quarters, he said adding that such people are not even eligible to get bank loans.

They would benefit from the system only if the assets are leased to the fishermen and their association, he said.

Besides, the haor area is a huge resource of sweet water fishes and a suitable plan can provide the country with a lot of foreign currencies, he added.

He also said a long-term political planning is a must to use the potentiality of the haor areas.

Engineer M Inamul Haque, director general of Bangladesh Haor and Wetland Development Board, said a licence system can be introduced in the area as the fishermen never get any benefits from the leasing system.

He also said the government will also get revenues if it introduces a licence system.

Advocate Abed Reza, president of Sylhet Division Development Council, said though there is a concerned authority -- Bangladesh Haor and Wetland Development Board in the country, their work is rarely found.

A master planning along with a mass movement is necessary to save the haor people as well as the biodiversity and aquaculture of the country, he said.

Joint Secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon Mihir Biswas and Secretary of Nagorik Sanghati Sharifuzzaman Sharif also spoke at the rally.

NEGLIGENCE OF OFFICIALS RU students fail to draw scholarship money

RU CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of meritorious students of Rajshahi University could not draw their scholarship money for negligence of the university accounts officials for the past six months.

As the students failed to draw their money, a group of students recently staged a demonstration against the officials and staffs and demanded that the university authorities take necessary steps to draw their money soon.

Students alleged that they have gone to the accounts office of the university for their money several times but the officials could not pay them.

According to the merit list in the HSC results, the university authorities grant Tk 12 to Tk 120 as scholarship to around 300 meritorious students every month during four-year honours courses, campus sources said.

Earlier on June 20, Higher Secondary Education Department sent a list of scholarship recipients to the university academic section and asked it to draw the money by June 30 from the Rajshahi Treasurer office.

As the accounts section of the university failed to draw the money for their negligence from the concerned office, the money was refunded, sources added.

Meanwhile, talking to the newsmen, Rajshahi university accounts section director Shahidullah Sarker accepting the fault of the officials said 'We received the letter late and failed to draw the money.'

He however assured the students that they would be able to draw money in the next June.

Add flights for non-ballottee Hajj pilgrims demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Non-ballottee Hajj pilgrims under different Hajj travel agencies yesterday urged the caretaker government to operate additional flights to ensure that they can perform Hajj in time.

Several hundred Hajj pilgrims under the banner of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab), a platform of all private Hajj travel agencies, held a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque in the city protesting delay in issuing 'tasria' documents for hiring residences in Saudi Arabia- and demanding additional flights for them.

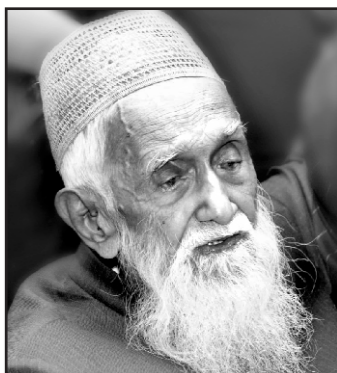
Leaders of the Haab claimed that they received only 19,098 'tasria' but Moyasesa (concerned Saudi authority that issues fitness certificates of houses) did not issue 28,158 'tasria', the key document of getting visas from the Saudi embassy in Dhaka.

"Around eight to ten thousands non-ballottee pilgrims will not be able to perform Hajj if all 'tasria' are not issued in the next 24 hours," said Mohammed Faruque, president of Haab, while addressing the rally.

He also said the crisis of Hajj pilgrims will not end without ensuring additional flights.

He termed officials of Bangladesh Biman as inefficient in dealing the issue saying Biman has taken slots without consulting with Hajj agencies.

Among others, Haab leaders Mohammed Rurul Amin and MA Rashid Shah Samrat also addressed the rally.



Obituary

Bazlur Sattar, a veteran politician and a close associate of Moulana Bhashani, passed away due to old-age complications at his Sattar Manzil residence in Chittagong yesterday morning at the age of 97, says a press release.

He was the eldest son of late Khan Bahadur Abdus Sattar, the first elected chairman of the then Chittagong municipality. He was also involved with many social organisations.

He left behind his wife, one son, five daughters and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death. His kulkhwani will be held in Sattar Manzil after Asr prayers on Monday.

Kishwar Ibne Dilwar

BSS, Sylhet

Kishwar Ibne Dilwar, a poet and son of Poet Dilwar, passed away at his Varthkhola residence at South Surma yesterday at the age of 45, family sources said.

He was buried at his family graveyard.

A collection of Kishwar's poems was published recently.



PHOTO: STAR

Different human rights organisations form a human chain at Muktangan in the city yesterday to mark Begum Rokeya Day and International Human Rights Day.

Training for election monitors

BSS, Dhaka

Election Working Group (EWG), one of the election watchdog bodies, launched a training workshop for the district coordinators at Hotel Lake Castle yesterday.

Kim McQuay, country representative of the Asia Foundation, Dr Zahirul Alam, director of EWG, Heads of EWG member organisations and representatives from donor organisations were present, said a press release.

The training is expected to equip the participants from 64 district representatives with important aspects of election monitoring,

knowledge of pre-election, during election and post election observation reporting system and information on the EWG's nationwide network.

The district coordinators will facilitate the thana-level coordinators and union-level coordinators to ensure smooth and timely reporting.

EWG is a coalition of 34 civil society organisations engaged in election monitoring, voter and civic education and electoral reform advocacy to encourage free, fair and acceptable elections in Bangladesh, the press release added.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may also occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged night temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 30.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 11.0 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5.12pm today and rises at 6:30am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns today were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.9	15.6	72	60
Chittagong	29.4	16.0	75	76
Rajshahi	27.4	13.4	96	82
Khulna	28.5	16.2	95	73
Barisal	28.4	14.6	90	91
Sylhet	28.7	15.6	70	67
Cox's Bazar	30.0	17.4	70	69



Jatiya Garment Sramik Federation stages a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding implementation of the government decision to grant a minimum wage of Tk 1662.

PHOTO: STAR