



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting in the Pabna Police Parade ground yesterday. — Star photo

Biographies of heroes

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Participating in the discussion, Prof Muntazir Mamun pointed out that autobiographies, as records of contemporary social elements, bore immense importance.

He urged the Bangla Academy authorities to reprint all the 150 biographies and autobiographies published in the past 150 years, but now unavailable.

Bashir Al-Helal proposed that the Academy publish biographies of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani because the life-stories of these two great national figures were closely intertwined with the national politics and in some cases with the contemporary society.

But, he cautioned, such biographies must be written by a politically neutral person.

Dr Golam Morshed for his part called upon the Academy to encourage writers to work more on biographies.

M Moniruzzaman observed that writings on the lives of poets Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam could help the new generation to a great extent.

Winding up the discussion, Dr Anisuzzaman in his presidential speech said a writer must focus on the life and surroundings of the man whose biography was to be written.

RU Feb 6 incident

Date for statements extended

RAJSHAHI, Feb 18: The date for submission of written statements of the persons aware directly or indirectly of the incident of Rajshahi University campus on February 6 has been extended by the Enquiry Commission till February 22, reports BSS.

Peace mission

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On both the scores, Wimol lost to Chuan. The Dalai Lama arrived here on Tuesday from India where he lives in exile to a warm but unofficial welcome, enjoyed the hospitality of the Supreme Patriarch at Wat Bowan, addressed a press conference and left after a 27-hour stay here.

At the press conference, the Tibetan leader avoided all criticisms of the Chinese leadership and even expressed his optimism of an early resolution to Beijing-Lhasa differences.

However, without mincing words, the Dalai Lama called for an arms embargo against Myanmar and urged the international community to continue to fight for the release of Suu Kyt, the demand that has been voiced by all other members of this unique peace mission.

The peace mission, the brain-child of former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, included many noted personalities from Australia, Northern Ireland, Argentina and South Africa, all winners of the Nobel Peace Prize, often better known for their fight for human rights. It was the Amnesty International which played a key role in arranging the mission which, at a reception held yesterday, was described by many participants as a "peace effort" rather than a political exercise.

Most observers here believe this characterisation of the move was made mainly for the benefit of the Chuan Government which still wants to avoid too big a rift with the powerful army brass. This being so, government leaders have distanced themselves from the two-day activity of the mission, leaving the task of organising it to Dr Pradit Charoenhathawee, the Rector of the Mohidol University. As the mission came to an

end today, with all its members departing for their countries in four continents, questions were asked as to why the army leaders were so opposed to the move, what has the mission really achieved and what happens next.

On General Wimol's opposition to the plan, the consensus here is that his position underscores the Thai military's solidarity with the junta in Myanmar rather than his alleged concern for the sentiments in Beijing. In this respect, an editorial in the Bangkok Post said yesterday, "military thinking (is) out of tune with the times."

The achievement of the mission lies in its being able to send a "signal", essentially a moral one, whose meaning may eventually dawn on the military junta in Myanmar. However, as the Bangkok media puts it, it is far from a strident harsh message, anxious as the country is to maintain good relations with Yangon and Beijing.

What will the peace mission do next to secure the release of the Myanmar's dissident leader?

One hope here is that the process set in motion may eventually involve the United Nations.

As Antonio Blanca, the UN Undersecretary General for Human Rights said in Jakarta three weeks ago, "Asia-Pacific is currently the only UN-defined region without a specific human rights treaty and without some form of region-wide human rights mechanism."

This being the case, the release of Suu Kyt and formulation of a specific human rights treaty for the region as a whole may be interlinked in more ways than one. This is one message that emerged out of the Thai capital during the past two days. (Related story on Page 5)

PM: No scope

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At the outset, former MP and Pabna district Awami League General Secretary Rafiqul Islam Bakul handed over a statement signed by the AL leaders and members of all front organisations to the Prime Minister confiding their allegiance to her leadership.

Amidst cheers and clappings, Bakul, on behalf of the newcomers, expressed solidarity with the programmes of the AL and confidence in the leadership of its chairperson, Begum Khaleda Zia.

Among the newcomers, former Chairman of the local Pourashava Zahurul Islam Bishu and Chhatra League leader Kamrul Hasan Minto also spoke on the occasion.

Begum Zia told the full-ground gathering that her party, in the true sense of the term, was pursuing the politics of attaining peace, progress and prosperity of the nation against the negative trend of politics.

The BNP chief welcomed the newcomers in her party and urged them to work with utmost sincerity and dedication to implement the programmes of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman.

Mosquitoes

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why the authorities are not taking appropriate measures. Is there any underhand dealings with the mosquito coil companies that would help boost selling of the coils because of government inaction, he also questioned.

Fatema Chowdhury Parul of the ruling party said omnipresent mosquitoes were in our lobby and on the floor.

As health Minister Kamal ibne Yousuf was not present at the House, Deputy Health Minister Strajul Huq said that he had no information about mosquitoes but could later come up with an answer.

Fish prices

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fifty per cent, fish vendors said. The fishes which are available are arriving in the city from nearby fishing regions which require less or no ice for preservation.

"We also get fishes in ice," fish vendors at Kawran Bazar informed, "but in a very small quantity. Fish suppliers are thronging small ice cream factories for this small amount of ice."

At Mirpur Section One Bazar, buyers were seen purchasing a tiny Hilsa for Taka 25, a finger size Kot for Taka 12 and a small size Katla for Taka 120 a Kg.

A small size rooster previously priced at Taka 40 was seen to be sold at Taka 60, the average size chicken at Taka 55 for Taka 80 and the standard medium size rooster for Taka 100.

"We were short of supply of chickens during the winter season," the chicken vendors at Kawran Bazar said, "but as the supply was increasing since the first week of February, customers in growing numbers started buying chickens. Now we are unable to meet their demands."

The Allied Products Exporters Association President Fariduddin Ahmed said that the exporters were not getting any fish for the last three days resulting in stoppage of fish export to Singapore, Taiwan and Malaysia.

In the last one week, export of fish dropped by 30 to 40 metric tons. Every week, some 100 tons of fishes are being exported earning about Taka 40 lakh.

"What we are exporting now is from our stock," Ahmed said, "which will exhaust within a couple of weeks."

He informed that the prices of exportable fishes rose incredibly. The Taka 120 per Kg Ruih rose to Taka 170, Taka 70 per Kg Boal to Taka 120, prices of small shrimp rose from Taka 70 to Taka 100 and Kot from Taka 90 to Taka 120.

JCD sweeps Dhaka College union polls

The nominees of the Jatnyabadi Chhatra Dal, the student front of BNP, yesterday won a landslide victory at the students union elections in all the four educational institutions including Dhaka College, reports BSS.

The JCD nominees won full panel victory excluding General Secretary at the students union elections of Dhaka College. Z Murtoza Tula of JCD was elected Vice President of Dhaka College students union.

The candidate of Chhatra League had captured the post of only General Secretary at the Dhaka College Students Union Polls.

The nominees of the JCD won full panel victory in Tejgaon College, Barisal Polytechnic Institute and Barisal Commerce Institute Students Unions poll held yesterday.

Abu Sufian Dulal and Syed Shamser Alam of JCD were elected VP and GS of the students union of Tejgaon College.

DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman, MP, in a statement, congratulated the newly elected student leaders.



Police was deployed in Dhaka College during student union polls yesterday. — Star photo

AL MP demands

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bench members draw huge sum of money for their region, while the opposition members were being deprived of this privilege, he said.

He alleged that Minister Tariqul Islam took Taka one crore and 50 lakh for Jessore and ruling party MP Moshir Rahman got Taka one crore for Jhenidah.

Refuting the charges, Deputy Minister for Local Government and Cooperatives Abdul Hye said that allocation was being given against the local development projects, not against any person.

Hye said in absence of Minister Abdus Salam Talukder that if the proposal was accepted the Local Government Ministry would require an additional budget of Taka 330 per year.

Ten amendment proposals were brought by the members on the resolution but those were not discussed as Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali adjourned the session at 6 pm until 4:30 pm Monday.

BADC employees meet Speaker

A delegation on behalf of the BADC Employees Union led by its President Mofizur Rahman and Secretary General Khandkar Azizur Rahman met the Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali yesterday reports BSS.

Dhaka-Delhi relations

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He also agreed with suggestions that the two diplomats also talked the long-stalled meetings of the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) and the Joint Committee of Experts (JCE) on water sharing. The JEC meet was originally planned for last October but was deferred to January. The second JCE meet has also been long due.

The Indian diplomat refused to say that the bilateral relations were strained. "Our relations have always been normal... there might have been some problems but those are not unusual in relations between neighbours," he said.

However, Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman himself admitted January 31 that the relations were not normal. "It's a little cold," he had said adding "let's wait and have patience" to normalise.

Asked, Bangladesh Foreign Ministry officials only admitted that the two met yesterday but would not say what they talked. One source, however, hinted that the holding of the 'uncertain' summit was the number one issue.

Relations ruptured first when the two countries traded strongly-worded statements over what led to the postponements of the SAARC summit scheduled and rescheduled for December 12-13 and January 13-14 respectively and then again when Bangladesh parliament condemned the December 6 demolition of the Babri Mosque and India took strong exception to it.

India had retreated from its statement that Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's inability to attend due to a volatile situation at home was the reason. New Delhi later attributed the postponements to a "vitiating regional atmosphere." Dhaka did not accept and publicly protested.

When Bhatia came to explain Indian position on postponement and spoke of "dust in the region" as the cause, Dhaka underplayed his visit. Indian officials were disgruntled to see that Indian Prime Minister's special envoy was not seen off at the airport by his counterpart.

The Parliament resolution angered India which rejected it calling it "a totally unacceptable interference in our internal affairs" and went to the extent of saying that New Delhi would "watch and judge future actions of government of Bangladesh, with due attention".

Dhaka issued a rebuttal saying it was right to condemn the incident, but made it a point to say that the resolution did not charge the Indian government.

The Midnight File

Israel orders closure of Nabi Mousa Mosque

JERUSALEM, Feb 18: Israel's authorities ordered the closing for six months of a major mosque in the occupied West Bank, calling it a hideout for criminals. The army said the order issued on Wednesday does not bar praying at the mosque on the site but termed the remote Nabi Mousa Mosque a hideout for criminals, reports Reuter.

India to increase arms sale

ABU DHABI, Feb 18: India, which has just entered the arms export market, expects its weapon sales to increase this year despite stiff world competition, Minister of State for Defence M Mallikarjun said today. He said India, which lifted a ban on arms sales in 1989, exported 25 million to 30 million dollars worth of defence equipment in 1992. "Our target for this year is 40 million dollars. The figure will rise in the next years despite strong competition in the market," he told AFP at an international arms show in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

32 arrested in Gazipur for taking part in barricade

GAZIPUR, Feb 18: Police arrested 32 people, including two picked up today (Thursday), for their involvement in the 48-hour blockade on the Dhaka-Tangail road at the call of jute and textile workers' unions. Those arrested today are inhabitants of Nazirpara village in Mirzapur thana in Tangail district and are students, local people said, reports UNB.

Azam: Complexion

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to remain a permanent resident, it is a very material point," the Court remarked.

The Court pointed out that the state was not saying that Azam was not a citizen but was saying that he was not eligible to be a citizen.

Barrister Yusuf noted that Azam's applications for restoration of his citizenship was "never rejected" by the government, but that the government failed to respond to his request until the show cause notice under the Foreigners Act was served on him and he was arrested in March last year.

The government's silence was also malafide and politically motivated," he stated.

The Court asked if Azam's stay in Pakistan could be described as that of a permanent resident.

The Counsel for the petitioner referred to an Appellate Division judgement in which the citizenship of Abdul Huq was restored, even after a stay of six years in Pakistan under the consideration of temporary absence.

"But Golam Azam remained there and did not take the opportunity to repatriate," countered the Attorney General.

Barrister Yusuf argued that "any person stranded in Pakistan shall be deemed to remain a Bangladesh citizen", adding that the relevant article was "expanded beyond students and serviceholders."

The Court asked what was the position of the petitioner on the day April 10, 1972 the relevant laws were adopted for Bangladesh.

Azam was a Bangladeshi citizen according to both the laws, the Temporary Order and the Bangladesh Citizenship Act, Barrister Yusuf said, adding that during the initial hearing of the petition by a Division Bench, one judge "avoided" this question while the other "agreed".

"I will look into the precise point of difference with a reason of my own, I must give a different judgement on my own but on a point of reference," said the Court.

Barrister Yusuf went on to note a finding by Justice Sarkar that Azam "was not a collaborator".

"I cannot be more wiser than the law because that is by good law prohibited," the Court added.

The Prime Minister and the two presidential candidates met the Jamaat-e-Islami leader after the last parliamentary election, noted Barrister Yusuf.

"He may be an influential person, but the Prime Minister and the two presidential candidates does not mean that he is entitled to citizenship," the Court said.

The Court remarked that it was not clear how much it could go into the fact finding reports, but added "I will look into anything the Attorney General wants to present."

To which, the Attorney General replied "I will not only make verbal submissions but I will also present documentary evidences that I have collected."

The Court readily acknowledged the difficulties faced by the Attorney General's office in gathering documents saying "I know the limitations."

Barrister Yusuf began to present the affidavit of reply on behalf of the petitioner and went on to note how the Razzakar force was formed in 1971.

Attorney General Aminul Haque pointed out that the Ansar Act was disbanded and replaced by the formation of the Razzakar force as a government organ, which was placed at the disposal of the Pakistan army.

"But the petitioner was not a government functionary and he did not have anything to do with the Razzakar's," said Barrister Yusuf.

"But he (Azam) was the chief recruiter for them," replied the Attorney General, and went on to add about the change in Azam's stand right after the military crackdown.

Barrister Yusuf proceeded to note that although the government placed the petitioner as an abettor in the rape of 65,000 women by the Razzakar, Al-Badr and Al-Shams, not a single case was filed of a complaint lodged against him in the last 22 years.

"Golam Azam may not have been physically fit to commit rape but he was quite fit to organise an orgy of rape of over 65,000 women," stated the Attorney General. Thus, he (Azam) is an abettor in arson, loot and rape by extending help to the Razzakar's."

The Attorney General further noted a comment of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in his book "If I am assassinated" edited by Pran Chopra, which was written in jail, he added, on "toilet paper and smuggled to India".

In that book, the Attorney General said, Bhutto stated that "the Pakistan military authorities legitimised rape in erstwhile East Pakistan to purify the blood of Bengali Muslims."

He stated that Azam was "still quite capable enough to destabilise the entire independence and sovereignty of Bangladesh and therefore he was detained."

At this point, Barrister Yusuf stated that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had ended his March 7, 1971 public speech by saying "Joy Bangla, Joy Pakistan".

To which, the Attorney General sprang to his feet saying "It is untrue, and I object to it".

At this juncture, the Court adjourned the hearing till 2pm Tuesday. On a prayer from the Attorney General, the Court agreed to hold the hearing only in the afternoon session of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

The Attorney General was assisted by Deputy Attorney General AF Hasan Arif and Deputy Attorney General AK Mujibur Rahman.

Barrister Yusuf was assisted by Barrister Abdur Razzak.

The Writ petition was earlier heard by a Division Bench of the High Court Division last year comprising Justice Ismail Uddin Sarkar and Justice Badrul Islam Chowdhury.

As the Judges had given a split verdict it was sent to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who constituted a Single-Judge Bench to hear the petition.

2 garment workers killed in N'ganj road accident

NARAYANGANJ, Feb 18: Two garment workers died and another was seriously injured when they were run over by a speeding Dhaka bound truck at the port town's Jamtala area early this morning, police said, reports BSS.

Exempt units

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down leads to a loss of Taka 152.98 crore for the industrial sector at current market prices.

The garments industries are the worst hit in hartals as they have to maintain schedules as well as guarantee volume of export.

In the first half of this fiscal, the country's export fell short of its target by 3.54 per cent. Besides, tea, frozen food and chemical products, the major sectors witnessed sharp drops in exports.

BCU celebrates 40th founding anniversary

By DU Correspondent

The Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) yesterday celebrated its 40th founding anniversary with a call to resist fundamentalism.

Hundreds of former leaders and supporters of the organisation attended the grand reunion held in two sessions at the Central Shaheed Minar and the Institution of Engineers.

The BCU leaders also urged all to strengthen the movement against terrorism.

The day-long programme began through hoisting of national and organisational flags at the Central Shaheed Minar in the morning.

After a brief musical soiree all the former leaders and supporters of the organisation along with the present activists brought out a grand procession in the city.

Elder leaders including Zahurul Islam, Kamal Lohani, A K Badrul Huq Bachchu and younger leaders Nasruddoza and Ruhin Hossain Prince spoke on the occasion.

EBCCI proposals

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bottlenecks and promoting exports.

According to FBCCI sources, the proposal is part of a 31-point recommendation the apex trade body has prepared for the 23rd Export Promotion Council, being held on February 20.

FBCCI also suggested strengthening of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) with full autonomy and adequate fund for overall development of the export trade.

The federation said a product development institute should be established for expansion of export, product development and diversification.

It further recommends that professional commercial counsellors be appointed and export and investment wing be opened in Bangladesh missions abroad.

The federation underscored the need for participation in international trade fair as a means of introducing Bangladeshi products to foreigners. Necessary steps can be taken by EPB to facilitate quick and easy despatch of Bangladeshi products.

It also stressed the need for establishing a commercial bank for boosting export.

"Setting up of a bank exclusively for exports will intensify competition among commercial banks and result in efficiency and reduction in cost of services."

It further suggests immediate implementation of 100 per cent income tax rebate on export earnings in order to make export competitive, attractive and inspire exporters.

The exporters should be allowed to sell 60 per cent of export earnings in the open market, it said and called for extending the time-limit of bank credit at concessional rate.

Export premium of Tk 2.00 per US dollar over the existing exchange rate be allowed to exporters and be made available at the time of negotiating export bills, the federation said.

Alternately, the exporters should be allowed 50 per cent foreign exchange of the export bill.

FBCCI recommended that the pick hour electricity rate be waived for two years, 50 per cent concessional rate than the export-oriented industries be wived.