

We reproduce below the editorial written by S M Ali in the inaugural issue of The Daily Star on January 14, 1991, setting forth his vision for independent journalism, which will remain as our guiding principle:

The Daily Star

Dhaka, Monday, January 14, 1991

An Independent Voice

It is with both a sense of challenge and a feeling of humility that The Daily Star today takes its place on the media scene in Bangladesh, with an overriding commitment that cuts across all other considerations: to serve the nation as a truly independent newspaper. By a propitious coincidence, the paper makes its debut at a historic time when, with the fall of an authoritarian regime, the country is well-set to begin a new journey towards establishing a democratic system of government, which has eluded this troubled nation so long but which we cannot do without.

For The Daily Star, it is a privilege to be part of this changing scene. But with this privilege comes an enormous responsibility which we share with the rest of the press in Bangladesh. In immediate terms, our responsibility is to serve as a watchdog in ensuring that the process leading to the holding of a free and fair parliamentary election next month and to the setting up of a truly representative sovereign assembly is not derailed either by thoughtless utterances or actions of political parties or by forces which, for reasons of their own, remain hostile to the concept of a democratic way of life.

This immediate responsibility will be later integrated into our larger and a more long-term role of strengthening public opinion on how the democratic system that, hopefully, will be in place by early March can be sustained and strengthened. Here, we should be able to impress upon our politicians that no matter how they guide the destiny of the nation, in the political sense, the ultimate test of the system will be in the way the elected government revitalises our economy so that it is able to meet the basic needs of our people. In short, unless the impoverished millions in rural Bangladesh get a fair deal, in terms of shelter, food, education and medical care, the democratic system for which so many have struggled so long and so many have died will gradually lose its credibility. We must never let that happen.

In this scenario, the uniqueness and have strength of The Daily Star lies in its non-partisan position or, to put it more positively, in the freedom it enjoys from affiliation with or influence from any political party, grouping or alliance. On the other hand, we will be anything but neutral in conflicts between good and evil, justice and injustice, right and wrong, regardless of positions assumed by political parties—whether in power or in opposition. No politician will be able to take this paper for granted, but none will be given cause to doubt our fairness.

Finally, there are issues, such as the rule of law, human rights, press freedom and accountability of people in the administration or in the world of trade and industry, on which this paper will never compromise, whatever the costs.

S. M. Ali passes away

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a bit of rest and an overdue holiday. In that order, probably from this afternoon, this column will not appear for the next three Fridays.

Alas! No one knew then that he would be keeping that deadline for his return, if not in life, at least in death.

The body of the late editor is expected to be flown to Dhaka tomorrow (Tuesday) afternoon by a Thai International flight from Bangkok.

His namaj-e-janaza will be held on the same day at the Dhanmondi office of The Daily

We Mourn

From Page 1 Col 1

S M Ali - 'Ali Bhai' to all of us, is no more.

He promised to return home by October 20 after a routine health check-up and holiday in Bangkok. He has kept the promise -- and is coming back on schedule, but in a way which is most painful for us to bear.

We, the members of the Star Family, have no language to mourn the demise of our revered Editor, the visionary and founder of this institution. Yet, we accept the reality and pledge to keep the flag flying high by following the path of brave and honest journalism championed by him.

Ali Bhai has left us, but he will remain with us forever. His ideals, thoughts and devotion to journalism will always guide us. To keep up the good work was the last assignment he left for us. And we promise to carry out the assignment.

As W H Auden consoled the death of WB Yeats in these words:

"Earth, receive an honoured guest, William Yeats is laid to rest. Let the Irish vessel lie, Empty of its poetry."

"We, too, would like to see that our soil receives this honoured guest, without whom The Daily Star will never be the same."

Executive Editor - Mahfuz Anam

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Nation condoles

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sympathies to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

Sheikh Hasina

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, in a condolence message, expressed her profound shock at the death of S M Ali.

"In the death of S M Ali, we have lost a distinguished personality in the domain of journalism," she said.

Hasina prayed for the peace of the departed soul and conveyed her heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family.

Information Minister

Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda deeply consoled the sudden death of S M Ali.

In a message, Barrister Huda, terming late S M Ali as "a reputed journalist" said at his death the country lost a famous journalist and an intellectual who served his profession with boldness and honesty.

He prayed for the peace of the departed soul and conveyed his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family.

Foreign Minister

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman expressed deep shock at the death of S M Ali.

In a message of condolence, Rahman said in the death of Ali the country not only lost an outstanding journalist of international repute but also a man of rare courage, forthrightness and insight.

"Bangladesh media would be all the more poorer as a result of his untimely death," the Foreign Minister said.

"All the officers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs join me in conveying to you our heartfelt condolences at the trying moment," he added and prayed for the peace of the departed soul.

A minute's silence was observed at the briefing session of the Foreign Ministry yesterday to pay respects to the memory of S M Ali.

Earlier, Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman expressed profound grief at the demise of S M Ali.

Finance Minister

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, in a message, said "It is with a deep sense of grief and sorrow I came to know about the sad passing away of our world class journalist S M Ali. In him we have not only lost an outstanding journalist and unparalleled columnist of our part of the world but also a man of rare courage, forthrightness and insight who was a proponent of development journalism. The Bangladesh Media World will be all the more poorer as a result of the death of this illustrious journalist who was born in my district Moulvibazar."

In a message sent to the members of the bereaved family, Saifur Rahman said: "I am conveying to you my heartfelt condolences at this trying moment. I am with you in praying for the departed soul. May Allah give you the courage to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude."

Energy Minister

Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain expressed his deep shock at the death of S M Ali.

In a message, the Energy Minister said late Ali was a leading journalist who always depicted the true picture of the society through his bold writings. "At his death, the country has lost one of her illustrious sons," he said.

State Minister for Culture

In a message State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahar-Ara-Begum expressed deep shock at the death of S M Ali and conveyed her sympathies to the bereaved family.

She said in his death, the nation had lost a veteran journalist and one of her illustrious sons.

Telecommunication Minister

Post and Telecommunication Minister Tariqul Islam, in a condolence message, grieved the demise of S M Ali, founder-editor of The Daily Star.

In his death, the nation had lost a fearless journalist and an illustrious son of the country, the Minister said.

He conveyed deep sympathies to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for the peace on the departed soul.

Information Secretary

Information Secretary Noor-uddin Al-Masood, in a message of condolence, expressed his deep shock at the sudden demise of the veteran editor.

All was a journalist of international repute and had a chequered career of more than four decades in the field of journalism, he said, adding that Ali was a bright star in the galaxy of journalism in South and South East Asia.

The Secretary said late Ali, who used to value the ethics of journalism, made his mark as an editor of a national English-language daily.



Army take up positions near Kashmir's Hazratbal shrine at Srinagar Saturday where Muslim rebels are holed up. — AFP photo

Fighting leaves 40 dead in Georgia

TBILISI, Georgia, Oct 17: Fighters loyal to the ousted president clinched another victory on Sunday with the capture of an important inland town after battles that left at least 40 people dead, reports AP.

Samtredia, now in rebel hands, is an important junction on the main road linking the capital Tbilisi with Poti, a major Black Sea port.

Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze flew Sunday to Kutaisi, about 30 kilometers (20 miles) northeast of Samtredia, to direct the government forces as they regroup after the loss, said Zaza Bilkhodze, a spokesman for the government troops.

Forces loyal to ousted President Zviad Gamsakhurdia have vowed to fight their way to Tbilisi. They stepped up their offensive last month after government troops were routed by separatist fighters from the breakaway Abkhazia region, which includes another major port, Sukhumi.

At least 40 government troops were killed in the fighting, said Bilkhodze, who had no information on losses among opposition fighters.

Upon losing Samtredia, government forces mounted a counter offensive after crossing the Tskhenistskali river, which

Detectives hunt for magistrate Liaqat Ali

A special detective team is hunting for absconding magistrate Liaqat Ali Khan Chowdhury who is wanted for the alleged murder of Shaheeda Chowdhury, a female magistrate of Mymensingh, reports UNB.

Shaheda was reportedly stabbed at Kurmitola Air Force Officers' Quarters on October 8. She died at the CMH on October 15.

In her statement at CMH on October 8 to investigating Officer Shahidul Islam, Shaheda accused Liaqat of stabbing her. The statement was taken in presence of surgeon Dr Lt Col Mofazzal Hossain.

Immediately after the incident, police had arrested Liaqat and produced him before the court on the following day on charges of injuring Shaheda with sharp weapon and attempt to murder under non-bailable Sections 326 and 307.

Liaqat was, however, granted bail by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on October 12.

A police source said Liaqat was in Dhaka till the day before Shaheda succumbed to her injuries on October 15. He had been staying at his father's residence at Uttara.

SAARC workshop on disaster preparedness begins

COMILLA, Oct 17: Secretary General of the BNP and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder today said that our progress and prosperity would remain an illusion unless we could save our people from the vulnerabilities of disasters both natural and man-made, reports BSS.

It is, therefore, became imperative for us to go for an effective and meaningful programme to face the challenges of all disasters, he added.

The minister was inaugurating a three-day SAARC workshop on "Disaster preparedness and management" organised by the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARAD) at its auditorium here.

Thirty participants from Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the host Bangladesh are taking part in the workshop.

Presided over by the Director General of BARAD, Dr Salehuddin Ahmad, the inaugural session was also addressed, among others, by the Secretary of Rural Development and

along with the Rioni river forms the front between rival forces in Georgia's western province of Mingrelia.

The government troops reportedly planned to advance on Gamsakhurdia's hometown and stronghold of Zugdidi, located 50 kilometers (31 miles) northwest of Samtredia.

Gamsakhurdia, a former dissident and member of a famous Georgian literary family, was elected president in June 1991 but ousted seven months later by forces who claimed he was acting like a dictator.

PM : Cyprus

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ing of the heads of government will provide an opportunity to the Commonwealth leaders to review the global situation in the backdrop of the post Cold War era. Besides, they will add impetus to the promotion and establishment of human rights through evolving a new global humanitarian order, the Foreign Secretary said.

Replying to a question if there was any chance of a bilateral meeting between Begum Zia and Indian Prime Minister Narashima Rao in Cyprus, the Foreign Secretary said the Indian Prime Minister was not going to attend the meeting due to his preoccupations at home.

About the inordinate delay in finding a just solution to the sharing of waters of the international rivers like the Ganges, the Foreign Secretary said efforts were continuing in this regard.

He pointed out that the Bangladesh Prime Minister, in her speech at the plenary session of the United Nations, expressed concern at the situation arising out of unilateral withdrawal of waters by India at Farakka.

The Foreign Secretary said that a lack of solution to the water sharing issue does not affect India but hurts Bangladesh.

Rahman said the Indian Prime Minister had also realised the sufferings of the people of this country and had said that India would not do anything which would cause unnecessary sufferings to the people of Bangladesh.

Rahman said India was committed to solve the issue and the Indian side was ready to hold dialogue in this respect.

About a question regarding the return of the Chakma refugees from India, the Foreign Secretary said there had been good progress. The Home Secretary had had positive talks with his Indian counterpart on the return of the Chakmas, he added.

T & T minister faults system

Star Report

Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam, in a surprise visit to different telephone distribution points in the city yesterday, found that none of the cabinets containing the points on circuits had any locks.

The Minister immediately asked the Chairman of the Telephone and Telegraph (T & T) Board to lock all the cabinets within December this year.

"These open distribution points (DPs) were used by unscrupulous users and linemen for making free calls," Islam told The Daily Star. "I had a lot of complaints about the DPs and decided to see the condition with my own eyes."

The Minister visited the Ittefaq, Motijheel, WAPDA and Mohammadpur Areas. Each DP contains more than 400 telephone connections of the locality.

Tariqul Islam also asked the chairman to take actions against the officials responsible for the negligence in maintaining the DP boxes.

"I was totally disgusted with the system," Islam said. "This cannot go on any longer."

Minister in city

Iranian Minister for Labour and Social Welfare Hossein Kamali spent a busy day in the capital yesterday, reports UNB.

The Minister, who arrived here yesterday morning on a four-day official visit, was received by Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan at the Zia International Airport.

Kamali leads a five-member delegation, including Deputy Minister for Labour Abbas Taghipour.

The Iranian Minister called on Bhuiyan at his office at 12.30 pm and discussed matters relating to Bangladesh nationals living in Iran.

He also discussed the possibility of recruiting skilled manpower, including doctors and engineers, from Bangladesh.

Later, the visiting Iranian Minister also called on Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam at his office.

They discussed further promotion of trade relations between the two fraternal countries and matters of mutual interests.

Kamali also visited the National Memorial at Savar in the afternoon and placed wreaths there.

He will visit the Islamic Centre for Technical and Vocational Training and Research (ICTVTR) at Gazipur and the Industrial Relations Institute (IRI) at Tongi today (Monday).

Fresh gunshots rock DU

By DU Correspondent

A group of unidentified youths fired at least a dozen shots from behind the Arts Faculty building on the Dhaka University Campus yesterday afternoon.

Another group of young men assaulted two pro-Awami League Chhatra League (M-I) activists near the 'Campus Shadow', a snack-bar on the Arts Faculty premises at about 1.20 pm yesterday.

The minister said our government was well aware of the adverse effect of the recurring disasters like flood, cyclone, tornado and earthquake on our economy and that was why the government was prepared to cope with such emergency and unavoidable situation.

The minister suggested a number of measures to face and mitigate the fatal consequences of disaster which include construction of shelters, flood control embankments, cyclone preventive embankments, afforestation in the coastal areas, embankments along the river belt, construction of stronger houses, proper navigation facilities between the mainland and islands and evacuation of the people before, during and after disasters.

Earlier in the morning, Sher-e-Bangla Hall where her son, a Chhatra Moity leader, was killed allegedly by Shibir activists in a pre-dawn attack on September 19. She visited the room in which Rimu used to reside, with permission of the university authorities.

The RU authorities on October 11 imposed ban on political activities on the campus for an indefinite period.

The Midnight File

Somalis hold peace rally

MOGADISHU, Oct 17: In an effort to soften the warrior image of their leader Gen. Mohammed Farrah Aidede, about 1,000 Somalis rallied Sunday in an orderly demonstration for peace. Aidede did not attend the gathering at a square in southern Mogadishu. But top officials of his Somalia National Alliance told the audience they want peace and faulted the United Nations for the conflict that has racked this part of the Somali capital since early June, reports AP.

Ghali arrives in Maputo

MAPUTO, Oct 17: United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali arrived in Maputo today for talks aimed at speeding up the Mozambican peace process. Boutros-Ghali was met at Maputo airport by Prime Minister Mario Machungo, government ministers and members of the foreign diplomatic corps, reports Reuters.

Company laws to be revised for capital market

Commerce Minister Shamsul Islam yesterday said the government had a political will to form a good capital market and taken steps to revise certain company laws hindering its development, reports UNB.

The government will take care of those laws which stands on way of the formation of capital market, he said, adding public determination is also needed for a good capital market.

He was addressing as chief guest a seminar on "Factors Inhibiting Industrial Financing through Capital Market in Bangladesh", organised by the Bureau of Economic Research, Dhaka University, and sponsored by the Asia Foundation.

AL candidate leading in Feni poura polls

FENI, Oct 17: Awami League candidate Khabad Ahmed was leading with 8,307 votes in 12 out of 13 centres in Feni poura-rasava chairman election held today, unofficial sources said, reports UNB.

His nearest rival Nurul Absar of BNP polled 5,656 votes in the 12 centres.

Officials said voting at Rampur Girls High School centre was postponed following a violent clash between supporters of the Awami League and BNP candidates at about 2 pm. There are 5,022 eligible voters under the centre.

Four supporters of the BNP candidate were injured in a series of clashes in at least three centres. Some 50 hand bombs were blasted during the clashes, witnesses said.

Champa Murder Case 5 more witnesses examined

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Oct 17: Five more witnesses were cross-examined on the second day of the trial of the sensational Fauzia Rahman Champa murder case today.

So far, eight of the 45 witnesses have been examined at the District and Sessions Judge Court.

Fauzia Rahman Champa, a house wife, was allegedly murdered at her father-in-law's house in Barisal city in October 18, 1989.

Those examined today are: Champa's mother Hasina Rahman, Prof Mokhlesur Ali Sheikh, head of the Chemistry Department of the BM College, Inspector Nawshar Ali, Constable Abu Bakar and nurse Saleha Begum.

The witness' examination will end on October 20, court sources said.

Mob gouges out eyes of one in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Oct 17: Villagers gouged out the eyes of one Inval Bepari for his alleged involvement with the outlawed Sarbahara party in Muladi union under Barisal district.

Witnesses said a group of 8 to 10 Sarbahara men raided Husnabad village yesterday morning but was resisted unitedly by the villagers.

Ainal Bepari 28, was caught by the mob while the other managed to escape. Police rescued Bepari from the mob and sent him to the Muladi Health Complex.

DEPZ projects

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shoes and clothing and fishing gear manufacturing units. The DEPZ is the second such export-oriented industrial zone in the country after the Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) which was opened in 1983.

There are 57 units in operation in CEPZ, with an investment of 103 million dollars, including 14 investments from Japan, 11 from South Korea, eight from Hong Kong, six from the United States, seven from Pakistan and one each from Holland, Sweden, Singapore and Thailand.

About 100 projects have been sanctioned for the CEPZ.

Vanishing act

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5000 from a lady teacher of a college from this Agrabad area this afternoon.

Police said Kasona Aktar Khanam was attacked by muggers on her way back home from the Agrabad Women's College by a rickshaw.

The miscreants fled from the spot by an autorickshaw after snatching her purse, police added.

Round Table

From Page 1 Col 5

practised socially. The participants noted that health facilities were not very accommodating for the women and the girl child and stressed the need for increasing doctors and facilities at the thana level to decrease deaths related to pregnancy.

The programme was participated by Chairperson of the Shishu Academy Dr Kazi Anwar Mansur, Advocate Sigma Huda, Director of the MIDAS Board Rokia Rahman, Associate Professor of the Shishu Hospital Dr Naila Khan, Director of UCEP and Chairperson of Shishu Adhikar Forum Dr Ahmed-ullah Mia and Video Coordinator of Proshika Nargis Jahan Banu.

It was also participated by Director of Terre Des Hommes Ruby Guznavi, Director Project HELP of the Ain O Shalish Kendra Khurshid Erfan Ahmed, Director of Non-formal Primary Education, BRAC Kaniz Fatema, Senior Principal Officer of the Grameen Bank Maheem Sultan, Social Anthropologist Therace Banchet and Coordinator of Shaishab, Helen Rahman.

Naripakkha Representative Firdous Azim, Unicef Representative to Bangladesh Rolf C Carriere, Director of Information of Unicef Mehr Khan, Unicef, Bangkok representative Purification Qusumbing, Unicef, New Delhi Representative Razia Ismail and General Secretary of the Mahila Parishad Ayesha Khanam also took part.

The complete text of the discussions of The Daily Star Round Table will be published in our October 21 issue.

PPP nominees

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forming a government in Punjab faded.

Gilani, a former minister who belongs to populous Punjab province's Multan district was immediately sworn in as the 12th Speaker of the country's National Assembly.

Assuming office, Gilani urged MPs to make endeavours to let the House complete its five-year tenure.

He said the country was passing through a crucial period in its history.

"We should all strive to make this assembly complete its five year tenure," he said, in a reference to the confrontational politics in the past which resulted in the dissolution of three assemblies in the past eight years.