

PM's call to members of armed forces Discharge duties imbued with spirit of Liberation War

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for the armed forces to discharge their duties for development of the country with the same spirit of unity, sacrifice and diligence shown during the great Liberation War, reports UNB.

"I hope the members to the armed forces will stand beside the people in any necessity of the country, including poverty alleviation and facing natural calamity, as you did in the past besides your great duty of safeguarding the country," she said.

Addressing the graduating ceremony of 23rd Army, 17th Naval Staff Course and 19th Air Staff Course at Defence Service Command and Staff College at Mirpur yesterday afternoon she hoped that the graduated officials would render their best possible services to the nation.

This year, 124 student officers, including 25 overseas students-officers from China, India, Kuwait, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Turkey and the United States, graduated from the staff college.

The Prime Minister said training has no alternative in attaining skill and excellence and the government had already taken measures to improve further the training facilities for the high officials of the armed forces.

She said the National Defence College started functioning side by side the Staff College. The curriculum activity of Army War College is also going to begin from 2001.

Hasina said the members of the armed forces would have to take the responsibility of making the independence meaningful and reach its bene-

fits to the doorstep of commonman.

"We are trying hard to establish ourselves as a self-esteem nation in the World arena. Since our assumption of office, we have been working for establishing the rule of law, transparency and accountability in all spheres of life. We have established people's franchise."

The government has signed the Chittagong Hill Tracts agreement to restore peace in that rugged region, she said, adding that the government is striving to solve all national problems, including poverty, illiteracy and population boom.

Speaking on the foreign policy of the government the Prime Minister said it is being pursued in light of the policy adopted by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"We believe in friendship with all, malice to none. We want to resolve all the contentious problems by peaceful means. We've reached effective agreements and understanding with our neighbouring countries in resolving various bilateral problems."

She said her government had taken effective initiatives for welfare of the country and the people as well as the world humanity at different bilateral, sub-regional and international forums.

Hasina said the government is determined to uphold the ideals of SAARC and had taken initiative to build up close relations in economic and commercial fields with the neighbours by forming 'Sub Regional Economic Cooperation Forum' alongside the SAARC.

She said the government was also trying to strengthen the role further at different international forums, including D-8, OIC, BIMSTEC, and mentioned that the D-8 summit is going to be held in the capital next month.

No visa required for 2-week stays in Hong Kong

Bangladesh passport holders can enter Hong Kong without visas for visits up to two weeks, a Foreign Ministry press release said yesterday, reports APB.

However, visas would be required for longer stays.

Hong Kong visas can be obtained from Chinese diplomatic and consular missions or from the Hong Kong Immigration Department either directly or through a local sponsor.

The Hong Kong administration recently reviewed the matter of visa free access by nationals of South Asian countries and took the decision considering the present situation, the release added.

Art exhibition on 'DU' campus

A five-day long open art exhibition of seven self-taught artists began on the Dhaka University campus yesterday, reports APB.

Over 100 works of the artists have been put on display beside the DU Central Library.

The exhibition, organised by a group of patrons, would remain open for the public from 10 am to 4 pm everyday.

Killing of Kazi Aref, other associates condemned

Ministers, political leaders and chiefs of the socio-cultural organizations yesterday strongly condemned the killings of JSD leader Kazi Aref Ahmed and other leaders of the party by terrorists yesterday and demanded immediate arrest and trial of the culprits, reports BSS.

In a condolence message, Home Minister Rafiqul Islam expressed his deep shock at the death of JSD leader Kazi Aref Ahmed and said that at his death the nation had lost a veteran and patriotic politician.

The minister went to the residence of the late leader and informed the members of the bereaved family that all measures had been taken to arrest the terrorists who gunned down Kazi Aref and other leaders.

Rafiq prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed his sympathy to members of the bereaved family.

Awami League general secretary and LGED and Co-operatives Minister Zillur Rahman strongly condemned the killing of JSD central leader and the veteran freedom fighter Kazi Aref Ahmed and his comrades.

He said it was a heinous act against democracy and humanity. Zillur Rahman also said the government would take all steps to ensure punishment to the killers of Kazi Aref Ahmed and his associates.

Jatiya Mahila Sangstha chairperson Begum Iy Rahman mourned the tragic death of Kazi Aref and other leaders and demanded immediate arrest and trial of the killers.

She also prayed for eternal peace of the departed souls and conveyed her sympathy to the members of the bereaved families.

Bangabandhu Juba Parshad president Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan and general secretary Rezaul Karim Khan also condemned

the killings of Kazi Aref and other JSD leaders.

Jatiya Garments Sramik Jute president Garmuzzaman and general secretary Jainal Abedin also condemned the killings of JSD leader Kazi Aref and other leaders and demanded immediate arrest of the terrorists.

President of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and Minister for Livestock and Fisheries A S M Abdur Rob yesterday expressed his profound shock at the death of veteran freedom fighter and JSD leader Kazi Aref Ahmed.

"I am unable to express my condemnation over this brutal and inhuman killing as Kazi Aref Ahmed was my most intimate friend in my political life," he said in a message of condolence from Australia.

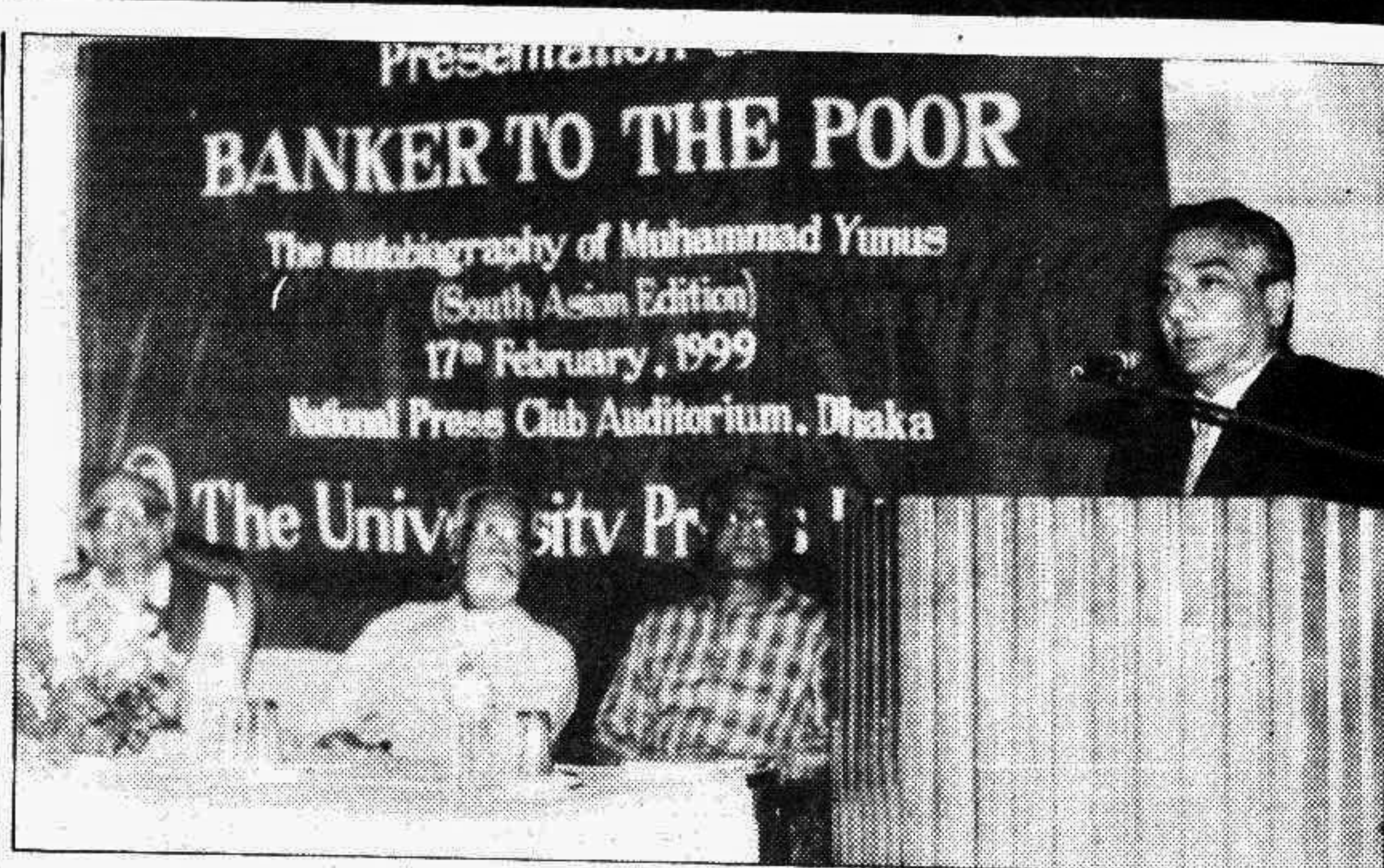
The minister already left Australia for home to attend his burial.

Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad yesterday expressed profound shock at the killing of JSD leader Kazi Aref Ahmed and four other party leaders, and demanded immediate arrest of the assailants, reports UNB.

In a statement, he said killing of some political leaders in front of thousand of people proved that law and order situation of the country had collapsed.

Accusing the government of its failure to maintain law and order, the JP chief said, "These days murder, rape and extortion have become a common feature. Public life and property are not safe in the hands of this government."

Recalling the contributions of Kazi Aref to the country's politics, Ershad prayed for salvation of the departed souls and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.



Mamun-ur-Rashid, Secretary, Statistical Division, speaking at the presentation ceremony of Prof Muhammad Yunus' autobiography, 'Banker to the Poor', at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium yesterday. From R to L are: Prof Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank, Aziz-ul Haq, former director of BARD, and Prof Rehman Sobhan, economist. — Star photo

'Banker To The Poor' launched

By Staff Correspondent

"No one is supposed to be poor. It is because of our wrongdoings and wrong thinking why poor are poor. Those who take decisions, make policies, give theories and shape institutions have to rethink how their thoughts and deeds restricted people's potentials from flourishing."

These remarks were made by Prof Muhammad Yunus, founder of the world's biggest micro-credit institution, Grameen Bank. Yunus was reciprocating all the good words said about him and his achievements at a book presentation ceremony in the city yesterday.

The South Asian edition of Yunus' autobiography, titled 'Banker To The Poor' was introduced at a capacity crowd at Jatiya Press Club auditorium amidst applause and enthusiasm about a man who brought proud for Bangladesh through his unique micro-credit venture.

"In the name of creating opportunities, we have created enough barriers. Giving loans to poor is also a barrier that pose a threat to the poor's potentials to flourish," said Yunus. He answered to critics of Grameen Bank's high rate of interest saying that "Poor have to flourish in competitiveness. In the name of offering low-interest loan, conventional banking system had just provided assistance to a handful of their selected poor while vast majority remained left out."

The University Press Limited (UPL), a prestigious house of quality book publication, presented the 230-page book in English, a French edition of which first came to world market in 1997. The French edition when put on display at Frankfurt Book Fair the same year succeeded to draw attention of world intelligentsia and so far the book has been published in about a dozen languages including Spanish, Japanese, German, Swedish, Greek, and Italian.

Responding to praises made by an august set of country's eminent personalities, Prof Yunus shared his sweet memories with a houseful audience. "While experimenting micro-credit, I can across poor people whose tremendous potentials and innovativeness to face adversities moved me," said Yunus. It used to always bother Yunus' mind that when rich took it granted that they would not require to repay loan, why poor had to bear the burden of collateral in getting loan from conventional banking system. Yunus' magic of micro-credit proved creditworthiness of teeming millions that the chairman of yesterday's function was mentioning.

In his presidential deliberation, renowned economist Prof Rehman Sobhan said, five million poor of the country who have been benefited from micro-credit offered by the Grameen Bank and likes set an example while Taka 10,000 crore had been defaulted with the rich.

"Poverty should be seen as an alien artifact in the museum," said Prof Rehman, also

the executive chairman of Centre for Policy Dialogue. He said a significant shift of credit money from rich to poor could be first pragmatic step towards financial structural reform in Bangladesh. Prof Rehman Sobhan said, when Bangladesh had established that rich are not creditworthy people, Grameen Bank established the fact that poor actually pay back.

Former minister and ex-VC of BUET Prof Iqbal Mahmud, former advisor to caretaker government and Dhaka University teacher Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, Prof Anisuzzaman of Bangla Department, DU, former minister and advisor Aziz-ul Haq, and Statistical Division Secretary Mamun-ur Rashid also discussed at length the works of Yunus and his autobiography. Mohiuddin Ahmad of UPL conducted the function.

Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud said that Prof Yunus always valued importance of market discipline of the capitalism while placing collective welfare over individual's profitability.

Prof Anisuzzaman recalled how a young teacher of Chittagong University in mid-70s began his micro-credit experiment in a sprawling village in the neighbourhood despite criticism from fellow colleagues and outside.

Publisher of the South Asian edition of the book, Mohiuddin Ahmad, told the audience that UPL would publish a Bengali edition soon.

Student bodies condemn killing of Kazi Aref

By DU Correspondent

Different student organisations yesterday brought out processions and held rallies on the Dhaka University campus to protest the killing of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) leader Kazi Aref Ahmed.

Kazi Aref, a valiant freedom fighter and former student leader of 1960s, was gunned down at a public meeting in Daulatpur on Tuesday afternoon.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of ruling party, brought out a procession in the morning and held a rally in front of DUCSU building.

Addressing the rally, BCL leader said that Kazi Aref was killed as he was against terrorism and anarchy till the last moment of his life.

They condemned the killing and demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the killers. BCL president Bahadur Bepari, general secretary Ajay Kar Khokan, Sajjad Hossain and A K M Azim addressed the rally.

Student wing of BNP, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), brought out a procession and held a rally on the campus condemning the killing of Kazi Aref.

They also demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the armed terrorists responsible for the killing.

Among others, DU unit JCD president Manir Hossain, Mostafizul Islam Mamun, Shafin and Lenin spoke at the rally.

Left-leaning Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) also brought out a procession on the campus and held a rally at the Aparajeya Bangla to protest the killing of Kazi Aref.

HC directive to 6 advocates of Khulna Bar Assoc

The High Court Division of the Supreme Court yesterday directed arrest of six advocates of the Khulna Bar Association for not appearing in the court in connection with a contempt petition.

The HC directed the Deputy Commissioner, Khulna to arrest Kazi Harun-ur-Rashid, Md Saidur Rahman, Fazlur Rahman (Babu), Zafarullah (Kalo), Sajjad Hossain and Md Rezaul Karim, advocates, Khulna Bar Association.

The Court also directed the Deputy Commissioner Khulna to release them after receiving undertaking for appearing before the HC on February 28, 1999 at 10.30 am.

The Dividing Bench of the HC comprising Justice Kazi Ebadul Hoque and Justice Md Mozammel Hossain also directed the order to be communicated to the Deputy Commissioner, Khulna by special messenger at the cost of the office.

Shelina Begum, Magistrate, 1st Class sent a report to the HC alleging that the contempters on December 13, last year made objectionable remarks, used vulgar words and pelted stones at her with the intention to kill her.

On February 3, 1999 the HC issued a contempt rule on them and directed them to appear personally before the court on February 17.

But yesterday they failed to appear before the court.

Telephone bills for Jan sent

Bills of the digital telephone for the month of January are to be paid by February 25, reports UNB.

A press release of Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board said bills have already been sent to the subscribers.

Aref's friends seek to finish his life's work

Paying glowing tribute to slain JSD leader Kazi Aref Ahmed, his friends in different political parties sought the unity of pro-liberation forces which the national hero worked for till last day of his life, reports UNB.

"Aref has been killed by those who don't believe in the spirit of Liberation War. The evil forces whom we fought in 1971 have killed him," said Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak.

Razzak, who was a colleague of Kazi Aref Ahmed in the Chhatra League and in the struggle against war criminals, said: Aref is the symbol of unity of Liberation War. He always wanted to see the pro-liberation forces united and worked for it. Another Awami League leader, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, a disciple of Kazi Aref, said: "A vanguard of the long freedom struggle of the nation and a pioneer of the Liberation War has been killed. It's a pre-planned murder."

"After the gruesome killing of a national leader and freedom fighter like Aref, now it is clear none is safe in this land," said Shahjahan Siraj, one of the founders of militant JSD along with Kazi Aref Ahmed.

Workers Party general secretary Rashed Khan Menon, who was shot at in 1993, said: "I

could survive the assassins' bullets. Aref couldn't. He brought all of us together against killings and terrorism by sacrificing his own life."

Communist Party general secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim urged the people to wake up and help eliminate terrorism, while National Professor Kabir Chowdhury termed the murder as part of a deep-rooted conspiracy to create a civil war-like situation in the country.

Also ministers Abdus Samad Azad, Sajeda Chowdhury and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, during the funeral of Aref, called upon all pro-liberation forces to stand united.

5 arrested from Trade Fair venue

Detective Branch (DB) of Police on Thursday night arrested five youngsters from the International Trade Fair venue for teasing girls and pick-pocketing, reports BSS.

The arrested are: Mohammad Suraj Miah, Mohammad Siddiqueur Rahman, Mohammad Rezaul Islam Apu, Mohammad Rony Islam and Mamun Hassan.

A case was registered with the concerned thana in this connection.

Life sketch of Kazi Aref



Veteran freedom fighter and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) leader Kazi Aref Ahmed was born in 1948 in Kushtia, reports BSS.

Kazi Aref started his political career in the 60s as a member of the then Asen Pakistan Chhatra League. In 1962, he along with Abdur Razzak, now Water Resources Minister, formed 'Swadhin Bangla Biplobi Parishad', popularly known as 'Swadhin Bangla Nucleus', for establishing a sovereign state for the Bangladesh in 1962.

As elected president of Dhaka City Chhatra League in 1966, Kazi Aref was the first among the national and student

leaders to raise voice for the six point demands declared by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

During 1968-69, when Bangabandhu was implicated in the 'Agartala conspiracy Case', he along with others organised the student movement and led the mass upsurge against the Pakistani rulers demanding Bangabandhu's release and for realising the six point demands.

Kazi Aref actively participated in the War of Liberation in 1971. He was the deputy commander-in-chief of the Mujib Bahini.

He was one of the front-ranking leaders who formed Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) after the emergence of Bangladesh.

Under his leadership, JSD took part in the political movement against the military rulers — Ziaur Rahman and H M Ershad.

Throughout his life Kazi Aref Ahmed raised his voice against the anti-liberation and fundamentalist forces. He played a pioneering role in organising a fresh movement in 1992 against the war criminals under the banner of 'Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Jatiya Samannay Committee' led by Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imran.

Kazi Aref was second-in-command of Ganobahini, the armed wing of JSD during its post-independence political debut.

EUCSU election March 10

By BUET Correspondent

Engineering University Central Students Union (EUCSU) election will be held on March 10, says a press release.

The Director of Department of Students' Welfare (DSW), Professor Shamimuzzaman Basunia, announced the date and schedule of EUCSU election yesterday.

The schedule is as follows: Election schedule on February 16, preliminary voter list on February 25 by 5 pm, objection to voter list on February 27 by 5 pm, final voter list on March 1, submission of nomination paper on March 1 by 5 pm, scrutiny of nomination paper on March 1 by 6 pm, list of candidates on March 1 by 10 pm, withdrawal of candidature by March 3 by 4 pm and final list of candidates on March 3 by 10 pm.

Terry Fox Run tomorrow

The fourth Terry Fox Run Bangladesh will be held in the city tomorrow, reports UNB.

The 3.9-km run will start from the Canadian Club, Gulshan Avenue at 8:10 am, said a Canadian High Commission announcement yesterday.

The run is a token of honour to Canadian youth Terry Fox who died of cancer in 1981 at the age of 23. He ran for 144 days in 1980 to create awareness about cancer.

The Toronto-based Terry Fox Foundation has made enormous strides in cancer research with fund supports from around the world.

Participants have been requested to reach the venue by 7:30 am and line up in the Canadian Club premises. The 50-minute walk/run will begin after a brief opening session.

Milad mahfil

A milad mahfil will be held at 4 pm today at the Jatiya Press Club on the occasion of the first death anniversary of photojournalist Manu Munshi, reports BSS.

Colleagues, relatives and admirers of late Munshi have been requested to attend the milad, a press release said.



Namaj-e-janaza of JSD leader Kazi Aref Ahmed was held at the Jatiya Eidgah in the city yesterday. —Star photo

JS told

\$4.1m earned from export of computer software

Bangladesh earned 4.1 million US dollars from export of computer software in the last six months, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, reports BSS.

Replying to a question from Prof Mohammad Rezaul Karim (BNP-Narayanganj) Tofail said the export earnings from software from July 1998 to December 1998 stood at four million US dollars in 1997-98 fiscal.

He said the government has declared the software sector as the thrust sector and taken all-out steps for the promotion of its exports.

A commission, headed by Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) has been for the promotion of software exports. The government has already accepted some recommendations of the commission which included exemption of duty and taxes from the import of computer and the setting up of an information technology village, he added.

What's on today . . .

Seminar: A seminar on 'University governance models' will be held. Organiser: Independent University, Bangladesh. Venue: LGED Auditorium, Agargaon. Time: 10:30 am.

Space festival: The 2nd Dhaka space festival, Spacefest '99, will be held. Organiser: Bangladesh Astronomical Association in cooperation with BUET. Venue: BUET playground, Palashi. Time: 11 am.

Seminar: A 3-day international seminar on theatre, 'One World, Many Theatres,' will begin. Organiser: Bangladesh Centre of the International Theatre Institute. Venue: National Museum auditorium, Shahbag. Time: 5 pm.

Film show: "All Things Fair" by Bo Widerberg (Sweden) and "Chungking Express" by Wong Kar-Wai (Hong Kong) will be screened as part of a film session on contemporary world cinema, organised by Zahir Raihan Film Society. Time: 5 pm and 7 pm respectively. Venue: German Cultural Centre, Rd: 9, Dhanmondi.

Seminar: A day-long seminar marking the birth centenary of poet Jibanananda Das will begin. Organiser: Centre for Advanced Research in Humanities. Venue: Lecture Theatre of Dhaka University. Time: 9:30 am.

Memorial meeting: A meeting commemorating the 30th death anniversary of Shaheed Dr Samsuzzoha, a teacher of Rajshahi University, will be held. Organiser: Rajshahi University Ex-Students Association. Venue: Planning and Development Academy, Nilkhet. Time: 5 pm.

Meeting: The weekly meeting of Rotary Club of Dhanmondi will be held. Venue: Upstair Family Lounge, Dhaka Club. Time: 5:30 pm.

Ershad leaves for Kathmandu tomorrow

Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad leaves for Kathmandu tomorrow to attend an international conference, reports UNB.

Ershad will present a keynote paper on 'Strategies for the next millennium' at the conference to be held at Birendra International Conference Room on Sunday.

15 shops gutted in Bakerganj

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Feb 17: Some 15 shops were burnt to ashes when a devastating fire broke out at the Mudighat Bazar under Bakerganj thana of the district last night.

The loss of property in the fire was estimated at about Tk five lakh. According to local people, the fire started from an electrical short circuit.

Jagjit Singh due Mar 16

Jagjit Singh, a popular Indian ghazal singer, will arrive in city on a two-day visit in the middle of next month, reports APB.

Singh, who has won the hearts of millions of music-lovers of the sub-continent, will perform ghazal at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on March 16 and 17. Shetubandha, a local socio-cultural organisation, has arranged the trip.



Namaj-e-janaza of Motahar Hossain Siddiqui, a veteran journalist and politician, was held at the Jatiya Press Club premises yesterday. —Star photo