



Recipients of the Ibn Sina Award Dr RJ Garst, Major General (ret'd) MR Chowdhury, National Professor MR Khan, Professor Emiretus M Nabli Alam Khan. Chairman of the Ibn Sina Trust, Advocate Mujibur Rahman and the Director of Child and Mother Care Institute Prof MQK Talukder are also in the picture.

NATO ready to act, Clinton warns Milosevic

US pushing Kosovar Albanians to accept self-rule plan

LONDON, Mar 6: US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was meeting today with former US Sen Bob Dole, a presidential emissary returning from a mission to try and seal a Kosovo peace deal with ethnic Albanians before a March 15 conference, reports AP.

The Clinton administration is pushing for Kosovar Albanians to accept a self-rule plan, so NATO allies can increase pressure on Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to agree to stop fighting and accept peace with separatists or face military airstrikes.

With that objective in mind, Albright is also meeting with Gen Wesley Clark, the supreme NATO commander, and British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook. Britain and France were partners in inconclusive peace talks last month in Rambouillet, France.

US President Bill Clinton delivered the NATO airstrike warning against Milosevic again on Friday. Meanwhile, Dole said the Kosovar Albanians could accept the agreement as early as this weekend.

"This agreement would be

signed within 48 hours," said Dole, speaking Friday in Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, where he met with Kosovar Albanian leaders.

Kosovo is a province in southern Serbia, the largest Yugoslav republic. Ethnic Albanians make up 90 per cent of Kosovo's population, and most favour independence.

Ethnic Albanian politicians, including Ibrahim Rugova and Edita Tahiri who met with Dole, are ready to sign immediately, they said. But Kosovo Liberation Army leaders have yet to agree, according to the former Republican presidential candidate who has long supported the Albanian community in the United States and abroad.

Dole said he spoke to KLA spokesman Jakup Krasniqi by phone. Dole said his talks centered on concerns over the future of the KLA if it is forced to disarm under an agreement.

Dole held the talks in Macedonia because he was denied a Yugoslav visa.

Albright has kept in close contact with Dole during his talks. She made an unscheduled stop in London to meet with him as she returned home from

a week-long Asia trip that included official visits to China, Thailand and Indonesia.

Albright was frustrated she couldn't get an agreement from ethnic Albanians at Rambouillet. Now she's looking for them to carry through with what she thought was a commitment they would sign the agreement, said a senior administration official.

"We misunderstood the Kosovar Albanians" at Rambouillet, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. Gaining the Kosovar Albanians' signature before peace talks resume March 15 outside Paris will allow the Clinton administration and NATO allies to focus on Milosevic, who they consider the real problem.

Albright and Clark will discuss three possibilities: A 30,000-troop peacekeeping force, including 4,000 Americans, should both sides sign an accord; airstrikes against the Serbs if the ethnic Albanians sign but the Serbs don't; and NATO's reaction if the Serbs make aggressive moves on the ground, and neither side signs, said State Department spokesman James P Rubin.

Maneka Gandhi selected for Mahaveer Award

NEW DELHI, Mar 6: Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Maneka Gandhi has been chosen for this year's Mahaveer Award for excellence in human endeavour in the sphere of truth, non-violence and vegetarianism by the Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation, reports PTI.

The award carries a cash prize of Rs five lakh, a citation and a memento, an official release said today.

The award will be presented to Maneka, an environmental and animal rights crusader, in Chennai on 'Mahaveer Jayanti Day' on March 29, it said adding that the selection jury headed by Bharat Ratna O Subramaniam was unanimous in its choice.

S'pore removes regulatory barriers to innovative cos

SINGAPORE, Mar 6: The government is helping to foster an environment of innovation by removing regulatory barriers and helping the market work efficiently, Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said Saturday, reports AP.

"The best environment is not a spoon-fed one, where the government meets all the needs of would-be entrepreneurs and risk takers," Lee said at the opening of the Minnesota-based 3M Co.'s new circuit manufacturing plant.

The best environment "is one where firms compete fiercely against each other for capital, and face the rigorous discipline of the market," said Lee, who is also the head of Singapore's de facto central bank.

"No US government financing schemes exist in Silicon Valley," he said. "Despite this, or more likely because of this, the valley has one of the greatest concentrations of entrepreneurs and risk takers in the world."

Singapore is trying to make itself a hub for high-technology manufacturing, research and development and financial services, and Lee said the new 3M plant would fit in with that picture.

Lee said the Economic Development Board aimed at attracting 7.8 billion Singapore dollars (\$4.58 million) in investment commitments this year, the same level as in 1998.

"Besides providing supportive conditions, the government's main contributions are to remove as many regulatory barriers as possible, and to ensure that its policies help the market to work efficiently and effectively," Lee said.

'Opposition would be detached from people if they boycott UZ polls'

GAZIPUR, Mar 6: LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman today called upon all Opposition political parties to strengthen the local government system by taking part in the forthcoming upazila elections, reports BSS.

The Opposition political parties would be detached from the people if they did not participate in the upcoming local government elections," he said while inaugurating a newly constructed bridge on the River Turag at Kaliakoir in Gazipur district.

Referring to the recently held pourasava elections, he said that the people of the country exercised their right of franchise in the municipal polls despite negative politics and destructive activities of BNP and its allies. "The BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia should take lesson from the pourasava elections," he added.

Laying emphasis on political

and social stability for the overall development of the country, Zillur said stability in all sectors is very much needed for expediting economic progress, encouraging foreign investment and massive industrialisation in a country.

Criticising the BNP-led opposition hartal during the pourasava elections, he said that BNP and its political allies had chosen the path of hartal and negative politics to create political instability.

The minister, who is also the general secretary of ruling Awami League, said the people of the country ousted Begum Khaleda Zia from power for her failure to rule the country. "The people would not forget the misrule, massive corruption and nepotism of Begum Zia while she was in power," he said.

He said the government of Sheikh Hasina has taken various pragmatic efforts to make the country self-sufficient and

achieve economic emancipation. Construction of Bangabandhu Bridge, signing of the Cig peace accord and Ganges water sharing treaty with India and distributing 42 lakh VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) cards to the flood affected people are different welfare oriented steps taken by the government," he said.

The minister bitterly criticised the past BNP government for what he said its (BNP's) anti people activities and autocratic attitude during its regime. "The BNP pushed the economy to the brink of collapse through misrule," he said.

He urged BNP and its allies to refrain from negative politics and come forward for the welfare of the country's down trodden people.

Local parliament member advocate Rahmat Ali and leaders of local Awami League and its front organisations also addressed the inaugural function.

Cuba lashes out at activities of foreign correspondents

HAVANA, Mar 6: Defending the trial this week of four dissidents accused of sedition, Cuba on Thursday charged the group with having ties to the US government and exile groups and accused some foreign correspondents of serving as their spokesmen, reports AP.

The three-page editorial in the Communist Party daily Granma levelled charges similar to those the suspects faced in court: promoting aggressive US policies toward the communist nation and trying to harm the economy by discouraging foreign investment.

After Monday's trial, prosecutors recommended a six-year sentence for Vladimir Roca, a former military pilot and son of late Cuban Communist Party leader Blas Roca, and five years each for lawyer Rene Gomez Manzano, engineer Felix Bonne and economist Marta Beatriz Roke.

The verdicts are pending. The Granma editorial made it clear the government's case has more to do with their perceived ties to a country that Cuba considers its No 1 enemy than with their criticisms of the communist system.

"As on many occasions, the United States is the principal promoter and organiser of these campaigns," the editorial said. Foreign Ministry spokesman Alejandro Gonzalez said

Thursday that the Cuban government had protested to the US government about Michael Kozak, the chief of mission at the US Interests Section in Havana, for his criticisms of the trial.

Television cameraman videotaped Kozak protesting when security forces refused to allow him, as well as other diplomats and journalists, in to the trial.

"His declarations and behaviour are obviously at odds with how a diplomat should be under international norms of diplomacy," Gonzalez said.

The phones at the Interests Section rang unanswered Thursday evening. In the past, Kozak has repeatedly denied that the US government finances the opposition in Cuba and has said there is a difference between maintaining contacts with the dissidents and financially supporting them.

The defendants were arrested in July 1997 for criticising a Communist Party document that they said did not present solutions to Cuba's severe economic problems.

The charges also included encouraging Cubans not to vote, urging foreign businessmen not to invest in Cuba and asking Cuban exiles to encourage relatives on the island to undertake acts of civil disobedience.

Communist officials reject the characterisation of the four as prisoners of conscience.

The Thursday editorial, carried by Cuba's Prensa Latina news agency, also accused the US government of "lending material and political support" to dissidents here for their "destabilising activities."

And it criticised some unidentified foreign journalists here for "distorting the reality of the country in their reports and becoming spokesmen" for people who "are interested in damaging the national economy and subverting the social order of the country."

The Granma editorial and a new law aimed at independent Cuban journalists has alarmed some foreign correspondents, who have expressed concerns it could be applied to them.

Gonzalez denied that the law had anything to do with the foreign press but added that on the island "you have to follow the Cuban law just as you do in any country in the world."

As for foreign reporters who don't comply, Gonzalez said: "We could just simply invite them to leave the country. We don't have to jail them for 20 years."

The new law calls for up to 20 years for those who actively support US policies against Cuba, such as the trade embargo.



A study team consisting of high ranking govt officials and NGO executives from North West Frontier Province of Pakistan visited UCEP projects in the city recently. Dr Muhammad Masum, Executive Director UCEP was present during their visit.

Khmer leader Ta Mok arrested

PHNOM PENH, Mar 6: Khmer Rouge military chief Ta Mok has been arrested by Cambodian government forces, a senior official told AFP here today.

"It is true that Ta Mok has been arrested, but I do not want to give any details on the arrest at this stage," the statement from Hun Sen's cabinet office added.

Military sources told AFP the one-legged Ta Mok — also known as "the butcher" — arrived by helicopter to the capital this afternoon and was then

transferred under heavy armed escort to a "safe house" in the city centre.

They said he had been transferred from "an area near the northern border with Thailand."

Believed to be in his early 70's Ta Mok was the last senior Khmer Rouge figure still at large after nominal leader Khieu Samphan and top ideologue Nuon Chea quit the movement in December.

Northern Alliance says

Forthcoming talks with Taliban a positive step

KABUL, Mar 6: The anti-Taliban Northern Alliance today described its forthcoming talks with Taliban in Turkmenistan as a positive step and hopes the meeting will focus on finding a peaceful settlement, reports AFP.

The UN-sponsored talks at Ashkabad on March 10 should have a broad agenda topped by a peaceful solution to the Afghan crisis in its entirety," opposition spokesman Mohammad Yunus Qanooni said.

"As far as we are concerned, we are optimistic and we welcome the Ashkabad meeting as a positive step," Qanooni said. Both sides should enter the

talks with "sincerity, resoluteness and authority" to take decisions, he added.

The peace talks will be attended by Qanooni and another Northern Alliance official Abdullah with senior Taliban officials Wakil Ahmad and Maulvi Abdul Jalil representing the Islamic militia.

He said it would be counter-productive if the Taliban insisted on restricting the agenda to the exchange of prisoners and ceasefires.

"Our people do not like us to talk one again on a temporary ceasefire and a prisoner swap," he said, stressing the need for a political settlement to achieve

permanent peace.

Taliban officials have reportedly said that the Ashkabad meeting would discuss only issues of prisoners and ceasefire, Qanooni said.

"We do not have anything officially. This is what we have learnt from the media," he said. The Taliban controls around 80 per cent of Afghanistan, while several northeastern provinces are held by the forces of opposition commander Ahmad Shah Massoud.

The Ashkabad meeting follows reports that both sides were feverishly preparing for a new round of spring fighting.

Dr Mohiuddin elected chairman of BPMI

State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir was elected chairman of Bangladesh Project Management Institute (BPMI) in the 19th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the institute held yesterday at BPMI premises in the city, reports BSS.

Dr Mokbul Ahmed Khan was elected secretary general of the 29-member executive committee of the organisation.

Later, in his speech, Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir stressed the need for constructive role of BPMI to facilitate the implementation of projects, which are leading to economic development of the country.

He urged the 400 members of BPMI to improve services in the field of human resources, development, consultancy and research.

Dr Alamgir assured all cooperation from the government towards the efforts of BPMI to attain its objectives.

Yeltsin recovering

MOSCOW, Mar 6: President Boris Yeltsin has been responding well to treatment for his ulcer, but doctors still haven't set a date for releasing him from the hospital, a news report said Friday, reports AP.

Yeltsin, 68, has been at the Central Clinical Hospital since last Saturday, when he was admitted for an ulcer that kept him hospitalised for two weeks earlier this year.

Doctors have ordered Yeltsin to limit his workload, but the president continues to "resolve important issues," the Interfax news agency reported, citing sources at the hospital.

The president on Thursday night fired Boris Berezovsky from his post as executive secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States, a grouping of former Soviet states. Berezovsky is a controversial business tycoon who has been involved in numerous political dramas in recent years.

Yeltsin's ulcer is the latest in a long string of illnesses.



Isratunnessa Quader, wife of State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader, inaugurated Bioteque Herbal Clinic, a beauty and health Care Centre for women, in the city yesterday.

Herbal beauty clinic opens

By Staff Correspondent. Biotique Herbal Clinic (BHC), a beauty and health care centre for women, was inaugurated at Dhamond Rd No. one in the city yesterday.

Begum Isratunnessa Quader, wife of State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader, inaugurated the herbal clinic as chief guest. The clinic, a venture of Kazi's Trade Ltd, has been awarded exclusive distributorship and franchise from Biotique Herbal India and will provide world famous herbal products designed and manufactured abroad.

Isratunnessa Quader said necessity of herbal treatment which is based on time tested methods using botanical extracts, cannot be ignored alongside developments in science and technology.

She also hailed setting up of the herbal clinic as it would, what she said, satisfy the requirement of womanhood.

Among others, managing partner of the herbal clinic and renowned beautician Nahin also spoke on the occasion.

Freshers' reception held at DU

By DU Correspondent. A freshers' reception programme and a discussion meeting was held yesterday at the Teachers and Students Centre (TSC) auditorium of Dhaka University to welcome the tribal students who are studying in the different educational institutions in Dhaka.

Prof Md Sahadat Ali, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the university attended the programme as the chief guest.

Organised by the Dhaka City unit of Pahary Chhatra Parishad (PSP), the programme was presided over by Ashok Kumar Chakma.

Among others, Prof. Dur-

gadas Bhattacharya, Rupayan Dewan, Prasanta Kumar Tripathy, Palash Khesha and OQ Sing Marma addressed the programme.

The programme was followed by a cultural show.

Foundation of drug company laid in Khulna

KHULNA, Mar 6: Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf said here that the present government was pledged-bound to reach medical care services to the doorstep of the common people across the country and for this health and family welfare complexes were being set up in every police station, reports BSS.

The Health Minister was formally laying the foundation plaque of the Essential Drug Company yesterday at Gilatala under Phulitola police station of the district.

Presided over by Phulitola thana Nirbahi Officer Nurul Islam, the function was addressed by State Minister for Relief and Disaster Management Talukder Abdul Khaleque, Managing Director of Essential Drug Company AKM Abdul Mannan Mondol, Civil Surgeon Dr. Sukur Uddin Mridha, Secretary Khulna Press Club Manik Chandra Saha, Chairman Atragilatala Union Parishad Mir Abdul Gaffar, Chairman Jamir Union Parishad Abdus Salam and President of Phulitola thana Awami League Anwaruzaman Mollah.

The Health Minister said that the present government had launched massive development programmes throughout the country aimed at alleviating poverty and eradicating illiteracy from society as well as to bring about a balanced development of the country. He also said that a peaceful atmosphere was a prerequisite for any developments, but all parties were trying to hinder the process of development by their destructive policies.

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Death anniversary

By Staff Correspondent. The first death anniversary of former Member of Parliament (MP) Nurul Islam Khan will be observed by his family members and admirers today and at his village home in Debber thana.

He died of cardiac arrest last year at the age of 64.

He left behind four sons and two daughters including Naimul Islam Khan, journalist and the Executive Director of Bangladesh Centre for Development, Journalism and Communication (BCDJC).



Father JS Peixotto, Headmaster of St Gregory High School distributing prizes among the winners of the annual cultural programme of the school recently.

— Photo by A K M Maruf Tahsin.