

## What's on today....

**Recitation programme:** Abritee Academy will present a recitation programme on the adaptation of *Surja Dighol Bari*, a famous novel by Abu Ishak. Venue: Shawkat Osman Memorial auditorium of Public Library. Time: 7:00 pm.

**BIDS seminar:** Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) will hold a seminar on "Inequality and Its Sources in Bangladesh." Venue: BIDS conference room. Time: 2:00 pm-4:00 pm.

**DESCO memorial meet:** Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd (DESCO) will hold a memorial meeting and *milad mahfil* on Bangabandhu. Venue: Green Building (Power House), Mirpur 13. Time: 5:00 pm.

## ..... and tomorrow

**Seminar:** Satanagarik Committee will hold a seminar on "the government's anti-people decision to give corridor to India". Venue: Engineers Institution auditorium. Time: 3:30 pm.

## Weather

## Light rain likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over Rajshahi, Chittagong and Barisal divisions and at many places over Khulna, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls may occur at places over Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions during the period. Met Office said.

Met Office also predicted slight rise in day temperature over the country.

The country's highest temperature was recorded 35.1 degree Celsius at Sylhet and the lowest 24.4 degrees at Dinajpur and Srimangal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:19 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:40 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	31.0	26.5
Chittagong	32.5	25.3
Rajshahi	31.3	25.0
Khulna	31.8	26.0
Barisal	29.0	25.0
Sylhet	35.1	24.8
Cox's Bazar	31.5	24.8

## JS session begins

From page 1  
tending the session to press their demand for withdrawal of a Cabinet decision to provide transportation facility to India.

At the beginning of the session, the Speaker nominated five members to the panel of chairmen, who will preside over the sittings in order of precedence in the absence of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

They are: Ali Ashraf (AL), Shawkat Ali (AL), Rahmat Ali (AL), Begum Khatun Jahan Haq (BNP) and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (JP-Manju).

The Speaker then moved an obituary reference on some distinguished persons included Awami League MP Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain, former minister and BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder, former state minister Mohammad Nurunabi Chand and King Hasan of Morocco. The House unanimously adopted a condolence resolution.

The House also adopted a resolution expressing profound shock at the loss of life and property in the recent earthquake in Turkey.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and six other MPs took part in the discussion on the obituary reference.

Others who spoke are: Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Forest and Environment Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Fisheries and Livestock Minister A S M Abdur Rab, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim (AL), Abdul Latif Siddiqui (AL) and Advocate Fazle Rabbi (JP).

Sheikh Hasina in her speech said the greatest achievement of a politician is love, confidence

and trust of people, which Mosharraf Hossain had earned through his selfless service to the people.

He was a soft-spoken man but "uncompromising" on the question of principle.

Once elected, many MPs are found making fortune. Mosharraf was an exception. He was elected MP three but led a simple life.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Nurul Islam led the prayer seeking salvation of the departed souls.

The House also observed one minute's silence to show respect to their memories.

The JP MPs who joined the session are: Anwar Hossain Manju, Fazle Rabbi, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Golam Faruque Ovee, Taslima Hossain, Tajul Islam Chowdhury, Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantia, Ahsan Ahmed, Nur Mohammad Mandal and Zeenat Hossain.

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Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Parishad held a token hunger strike at Osmany Udyan yesterday to press for their demand to observe the birth and death anniversaries of Bangabir M A G Osmany at the national level.

Two-day World Bank sponsored workshop concludes  
Municipalities should be free from political influence

By Staff Correspondent

The two-day workshop on the Bangladesh National Urban Strategy concluded yesterday with special emphasis on addressing an increasing rate of urban poverty with larger participation.

The workshop on urban service delivery mechanism suggested that the municipalities should be free from political influence. In his paper, the Chief Engineer of the Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED), said that weak institutional and financial capacity of municipalities contribute to poor service delivery and maintenance systems.

Poor resource mobilisation efforts in many municipalities is caused by the lack of timely reassessment and undervaluation of property and inadequate revenue collection, the LGED engineer said.

The poor services of the municipalities are also due to the current legal framework. Many rules and provisions are no longer relevant to municipal affairs and do not provide the flexibility for alternative ways to provide services.

The workshop organised by the World Bank also observed that notwithstanding the positive contribution of urbanisation to economic growth, rapid haphazard growth has also led to increasing urban poverty.

According to a recent GOB-ADB study, more than 60 per cent of the country's urban population are poor with a monthly income of less than Tk 2,500. But among the urban poor, around 96 per cent of the heads of households have some form of employment, mostly in the informal sector.

Calcutta City Corporation Commissioner, Ashim Barman said that the problem of Dhaka's slums were equally the same with Calcutta. But in Calcutta the authorities recognised the roles of the slum dwellers which dramatically enhanced the service delivery to improve living condition.

Commenting on the DCC's solid waste management and its line of hierarchy, Barman said it is simply pathetic. The workforce lack rational distribution at the field level. For instance, for a small area the DCC has the same number of sweepers and

inspectors than a big ward. It must be decided whether the Corporation should be a political, charitable or a service-oriented institution, he said.

World Bank's Country Director for Bangladesh, Frederick Temple said that the workshop would help formulate a national strategy as the WB is endowed with comparative advantage of inter-linking global experiences with local innovations. The workshop will also help the WB design its future strategy in assistance.

"In Bangladesh urban challenge is a big one and the WB is thinking of committing more of its resources in the future," Temple said.

The Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation, Mizanur Rahman Minu said that the 21st century can better be characterised as the new urban century. "We are convinced that in our society where government resources are scarce, urban services cannot be provided by the government alone. We are now realising the needs for building partnership with non-government sectors," the RCC Mayor said.

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## FBCCI demands

From Page 1

statement said.

FBCCI, however, expressed its satisfaction over the immediate steps taken by the government and the Bangladesh Bank to keep UCBL running.

"The sudden incident appears to be a deep-rooted and far-reaching conspiracy against the private sector," the statement said.

"It is now necessary to take immediate action so that such incidents do not take place in the future," FBCCI said.

Meanwhile, talking to newsmen, FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo said that different institutions of the country have become inactive because of "excessive politicisation resulting in erosion of social values."

He said the private banks were not being able to perform according to expectations because of excessive and unnecessary regulation. "This has weakened management infrastructure of different banks and also made the boards inoperative."

"The private banks are not being able to hold their annual general meetings (AGM) smoothly. Because despite making profits they cannot give dividends as per the central bank's circular."

The FBCCI president said he had contacted Home Minister Mohammad Nasim and the home secretary after the incident and requested them to take action against the accused.

"But both of them told me that he (Babu) has been absconding since the incident."

But Babu told The Daily Star Saturday that he had met Finance Minister SAMS Kibria on the day. Babu also met two Star journalists at his suite at Sonargaon Hotel Saturday night.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB) also demanded exemplary punishment against those involved in the UCBL incident.

An emergency meeting of the executive committee of BAB was held yesterday. The meeting also demanded proper investigation into the incident.

The BAB members expressed their view that the legally constituted board of directors can only be removed through a legal process.

The EC members termed the incident most undesirable and urged the government to take stern action to maintain discipline in the financial sector.

"The incident may impair the confidence of the customers over the bank and recurrence of such incident will adversely affect the public confidence in the banking sector," the BAB members said.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) also expressed grave concern over the suspension of the activities of Board of Directors of UCBL by the Bangladesh Bank following the untoward incident.

In a statement, BGMEA president Anisur Rahman Sinha feared that an anarchic situation could be created in the entire banking sector if the UCBL crisis was not properly handled.

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## Kader Siddiqui

From page 1

pledges including protection of rights of the freedom fighters, upholding spirit of the liberation war and practicing democracy.

Elected on an AL ticket from the Tangal-8 (Shakhipur) JS constituency, Siddiqui submitted his five-page letter of resignation to Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury at 10:57am, immediately after the House session was adjourned after a brief opening ceremony.

"It is unfortunate that an MP has resigned. This is the first such experience I had as Speaker — to receive the resignation letter of an MP. Departure of a member from the House is a matter of regret for any Speaker," Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury remarked to the press after receiving the resignation letter.

"I am feeling very good. Now I can speak freely and without any obstruction," a smiling Kader Siddiqui told reporters soon after his resignation that came after long brawls with the party hierarchy.

Accepting the letter, the Speaker further said he would soon take appropriate steps in this regard. He also passed an instant order by phone to the JS secretary for necessary measures.

Having endorsed his decision for resignation at a public rally in his constituency the day before, Kader Siddiqui attended yesterday's opening sitting of the current session. But he refrained from making any remarks in the House about his planned resignation as he had announced earlier.

"I did not find it decent and proper to seek the floor to speak when the House was cut short due to the death of an incumbent MP," he explained.

Coming out of the House, Siddiqui, clad in traditional *pajama-panjabi* and a black *mujib coat*, straight went to his Sangsod office, signed his resignation letter and took it to the Speaker's office at 10:50am.

Before handing over the letter to Speaker Chowdhury, a reserved but beaming Siddiqui recalled his association with the Speaker and thanked him for his cooperation.

"It was a rare opportunity to work with you. Both of us share the glory of participating in our great War of Independence... Personally, I regard you as my father. I could have been happy if I could complete my tenure as an MP with you," said a visibly emotional Siddiqui who wished the Speaker success.

The dissident AL leader also described how the government harassed him reviving a case filed against him in 1976 and the PM's recent comment about him.

"Calling a MP mad tantamounts to calling parliament and democracy madness... I hope the PM will recover from the daze she is now gripped with."

Later, he went back to his chamber and addressed a crowded press conference there. He mentioned the highlights of his resignation letter and answered to different questions.

Siddiqui alleged he earned wrath of the government for seeking a separate ministry for the freedom fighters and monthly allowance of Tk 2,000 each for them.

He criticised the prime minister for not scrapping the Atia Forest Ordinance, 1982, a burning issue of his constituency, despite her commitment to doing this.

He told newsmen that he could realise, ultimately, that he was suffering from an illusion and that the AL leadership had no *locus standi*.

Referring to the PM's comments about him, Siddiqui said

he is a freedom fighter and won the highest military award — Bir Uttam — for his contribution to the war.

In reply to another question, he claimed himself as a pro-liberation force, not Sheikh Hasina. "Not only India, all democratic countries are supporting my stand," he said, when asked if he had any backing from an Indian lobby.

To a question, he said he could not remain an MP being nominated by an illegal leadership of the AL. He also repeated his plan to contest the by-poll to the JS seat he had vacated.

He told another reporter he would meet Poet, Sufia Kader, Dr. Kamal Hossain, Barrister Ishtiaque Ahmed and some other well-wishers later in the day.

"I'll give up my office at the Sangsod Bhaban in two days," he announced.

Siddiqui also repeated his plan to call a requisition meeting of the AL councilors and elect a legal committee of the party and that he would contest the bypoll in the JS seat he had vacated.

Replying to another question, he expressed ignorance about the possible role of his brother, Latif Siddiqui, another AL MP, after