



Tagore's birthday today

UNB, Dhaka

The 141st birth anniversary of Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore will be observed across the country today.

The government and different socio-cultural bodies have taken up programmes to observe 'Panchishey Baishak' the birthday of the poet.

National dailies will publish special articles on Tagore while Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and private TV channels air special programmes.

President Professor A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina have paid glowing tributes to the memory of Tagore in separate messages.

Cultural Affairs Ministry will hold programmes in the city and at Selaidah, Shahjapur and Patisar.

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PM's brief stopover in Brussels

BSS, Brussels

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia made a brief stopover here yesterday on her way to New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) special session on children.

The Prime Minister, who arrived at 9:30 am (local time), was received by Bangladesh Ambassador to Belgium Mohammad Zamir and other officials of the mission at the Brussels International Airport.

The Bangladeshis residing in Brussels were also present at the airport to greet the Prime Minister.

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KAS Murshid

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Fake swimmers were sent to South Korea

On the vessel of death

250 badly decomposed bodies may be buried in mass grave at Rangabali island

MORSHED ALI KHAN and ABUL KALAM AZAD, Patuakhali

Nearly 250 badly decomposed bodies piled on its lower deck, the 'vessel of death' MV Rahman moved from villages to villages without even handing over 10 per cent of the bodies to relatives.

Thousands of villagers gathered at Dalia, Kalishuri, Keshabpur, Gazimgit, Narainpur, Mishi, Kalaiya, Doshmina, Bandsbaria and in seven other places, but did not try to identify the badly decomposed bodies -- one stacked on another spreading the whole area with unbearable stench.

At Kalaiya under Baufal thana, some 50 kilometres off Patuakhali, about 3,000 people gathered at the ghat when the vessel arrived there at around 11:00am.

Waiting relatives, villagers and local public representatives including MP Shahidul Alam Talukdar were shocked to see the condition of the bodies and did not claim any. Only two bodies identified at Shaitnal earlier and kept inside a wooden coffin were unloaded.

Angry relatives said the bodies were beyond identification since they badly decomposed and were haphazardly stacked up. MP Shahidul Alam Talukdar said he wondered how the bodies could be left to travel in such a way.

On Monday when MV Rahman was getting ready at Shaitnal, north Matlab, with 177 decomposed bodies to transport them to Patuakhali area, two more mechanised boats full of decomposed bodies arrived and dumped them

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PHOTO: STAR

Dazed and distressed...people still gather on the bank of the Meghna to identify bodies of their relatives. The Patuakhali-bound launch MV Salahuddin-2 sank in the river Friday night.

127 feared killed as Chinese, Egyptian planes crash

AP, Beijing

A Chinese airliner with 112 passengers and crew aboard crashed yesterday evening in northeastern China, the official Xinhua News Agency said. It said rescue efforts were underway but gave no immediate information about any survivors.

The China Northern Airlines jet crashed in Dalian, a port city on the northeastern coast, 450 kilometres east of Beijing, Xinhua said. The agency's Chinese-language service said the plane went missing over the sea.

The plane was carrying 103 passengers and nine crew from Beijing.

Meanwhile, a report from Tunis

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Death trap

Prohibited fishing nets killed many

STAR REPORT

Gill nets may have prevented many passengers from swimming out of the MV Salahuddin-2, the ill-fated double-decked passenger launch, which was caught in a storm Friday night and sank into the Meghna within minutes. More than 300 people were killed in the latest launch disaster on the Meghna.

According to divers of the Bangladesh Navy, who took part in the rescue operations, MV Salahuddin-2 was virtually tangled in gill nets.

"Most of the windows was almost covered by the nets preventing people from coming out of the sunken vessel," said one of the divers on Monday.

Experts, who visited the spot Saturday, Sunday and Monday, also believe that fishing nets spread across the river near Shaitnal trapped many inside the launch.

"We strongly believe that many were caught inside and could not come out because of the nets," said Abdur Rahim, a naval architect and marine engineer.

Rahim of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) is a member of one of the two

committees probing into the tragic incident.

"We are sure that the fishing nets shrouding the vessel caused many deaths. There is no doubt about it and it is a major problem in the area," said Syed Monwar Hossain, director (port and traffic) of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

Hossain, who is also on one of the two inquiry committees, added, "We receive frequent complaints from our serangs that fishing nets often disrupt smooth sailing, especially on the Dhaka-Chandpur route."

According to a number of launch masters, who ply passenger vessels on the Dhaka-Chandpur route, fishing nets frequently disrupt navigation and they are often forced to shut down the engines because of these.

Despite a number of complaints lodged with the relevant authority, no action has yet been taken to prohibit fishermen from spreading the nets across the Meghna.

Meghna is one of the richest zones for fish fries because it carries water from three different rivers - Jamuna, Padma and Meghna - flowing downstream

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7,500 Bangladeshis in ROK face deportation

REAZ AHMAD

An impending crackdown on 'unauthorised' foreign workers in South Korea has sealed the fate of over 7,500 Bangladeshis there.

At least one-third of them are lucky enough to have free air tickets to fly back home within next few months under an official repatriation programme, but the rest 5,000 will be on their own to get back home to avert the crackdown.

According to May 3 issue of The Korea Herald newspaper, the South Korean government estimated that 260,000 of the 330,000 foreigners were staying in that country illegally, a big headache ahead of the World Cup, which Korea and Japan are co-hosting from May 31 to June 30.

Announcing the deportation plan in March, the Ministry of Justice said it would let illegal foreign workers leave the country by March 2003 after encouraging them to voluntarily report to the authorities by May 25 this year.

After March next, it would force all illegal migrant workers out of the country, the Korean daily reported adding that till May 1, about 60,000 illegal foreign workers reported to the authorities, with over 4,000 reporting daily.

Caught up by post-Twin Tower recess in world economy, Bangladesh is facing great difficulty in exploring new markets for its abundant workforce that fetch a good amount of remittance each year.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Minister of State for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Mohammed Quamrul Islam said against the backdrop of planned crackdown by the South Korean authorities, the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), Bangladesh recently signed contacts with four recruiting agencies to bring back some 2,500 Bangladeshis from that country.

The four recruiting agencies that sent these workers to Korea a few years back with three-year job contacts would now bear the cost of air fares for their repatriation as they had overstayed in South Korea.

However, at least 5,000 Bangladeshis, who got into the South Korean labour market through other channels and overstayed their by 'illegal' job-hopping, would have to manage their own way back home by March, 2003 provided they wish to avert the lawful actions.

Official sources in Dhaka told The Daily Star that a little over 13,000 were staying there against an official job quota of 5,500 for Bangladeshis in South Korea. This is because many people who went there six or seven years ago kept overstaying.

The minister said, "We want those overstaying and the job-hoppers to get back home at the earliest paving way for other Bangladeshis to go to South Korea and earn a living."

He also said his ministry was trying to bring discipline to the sector so that there is no bad image of the country abroad that may shrink the international labour market

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4 doctors held for 'wrong treatment' as patient dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four doctors of a private clinic in the city were arrested yesterday for alleged wrong treatment of a patient, resulting in his death.

The physicians are Al-Mamun Ferdousi, Habib Ibrahim, Mohiuddin Ahmed and Shaheen Ahmed, police said.

They were arrested from Delta Clinic at Dhanmondi at about 1:am following allegations that wrong treatment caused the death of a student, Anwar Hossain, 21. He died at the operation theatre of the clinic on Monday.

The arrested doctors were produced before the CMM's Court yesterday and they were granted bail.

Anwar, an under graduate student from Kutubpur in Noakhali, was admitted to the clinic for treatment of 'enlarged bone' in his mouth.

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Improve law & order, check corruption

Editors suggest during talks on financial issues with Saifur

UNB, Dhaka

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman at a meeting with editors of national dailies and weeklies yesterday apprised them of his strategy to rationalise expenditure and reduce budget deficit in view of declining import tariff following WTO regime.

Appreciating his financial management and plan, the editors emphasised the need for improvement of law and order and checking corruption for overall economic development.

They also suggested various measures to ensure transparency and good governance.

Saifur Rahman's meeting with the editors held at the Secretariat was part of his pre-budget discussions with different sections of the society.

The meeting was attended by Ahmedul Kabir of the Sangbad, Mahfuz Anam of The Daily Star, Enayetullah Khan of Weekly Holiday, Mahbubul Alam of Independent, Motiur Rahman of Prothom Alo, A M M Bahauddin of Inqilab, Amanullah Kabir of BSS, Moazzem Hossain of Financial Express, Farhad Mahmud of Ekushey Television, Monirul Haq of Weekly Economic Times, Zahiduzzaman Faruq of Arthonity and A Q M Jainul Abedin of Dainik Shakti.

The finance minister later told reporters that he apprised them of various aspects of finance and his plan to overcome the problems in view of declining revenue from import duty.

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Disorderly ward commissioners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ward Commissioners-elect of Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna city corporations took oath at the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) auditorium in the city yesterday.

Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan administered the oath to 193 out of a total of 201 newly elected people's representatives.

The elected representatives created a disorder during the oath-taking.

The minister administered oath in phases. In the first phase, 114 word commissioners including 30 from women's reserved seats out of total 120 in Dhaka took oath, followed by 39 out of 41 from Khulna and 40 from Rajshahi.

Eight ward commissioners-elect (six from Dhaka and two from Khulna) did not turn up at the oath-taking ceremony as there were warrants of arrest in advance against them. Heavy contingents of police were seen outside the venue.

Of the absentees, Mohammad Nesar Uddin Kajal of word 24, Md Salimullah Solu of word 42 and Md Saidur Rahman Shaheed of ward 83 in Dhaka were arrested earlier. Three others in the city who are wanted by police did not turn up. They are Abdur Rouf Nannu of ward 5, Haji Abul Hashem Hasu of ward 43 and KM Ahmed Raju of ward 44.

Sheikh Asaduzzaman Litu of ward 24 and Md Golam Mowla Shanu of word 26 in Khulna did not

Chaos marks swearing-in

attend the function as they are wanted by police.

According to election rules, elected representatives must take oath within a month of publication of official election result. Otherwise, their seats would fall vacant.

As soon as the announcer called DCC ward commissioners-elect to

the dais, all of them were in a haste to climb it as if they were in a race to be in the front line. Instead of maintaining order, they surrounded the chief guest's table and read out the oath.

When their oath-taking was over, the announcer called the commissioners of Khulna to the dais. But

the DCC word commissioners kept the dais occupied despite repeated requests by the announcer to vacate it to allow the rest to take oath. At one stage, the LGRD minister asked them to take their seats in front of him but they were seemingly unwilling.

On the other hand, the commissioners, the women commissioners

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PHOTO: STAR

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan swears in newly elected ward commissioners of Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna city corporations at the Local Government Engineering Department auditorium yesterday.

The Daily Star RANGS TOSHIBA WORLD CUP QUIZ! 2002

See the rules and coupon of

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
May 8		6-31pm
May 9	5-19 am	

Prayer Timings

May 8

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-41
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation