

Dr Zohora Kazi & Prof Akhter Imam get Rokeya Padak

UNB, Dhaka

Decorating two pioneer woman academics in higher education with Rokeya Padak, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon all irrespective of political affiliation to contribute towards further advancement of the country's womenfolk.

"The country and society will not move forward into enlightenment if women are kept backward, in the dark," she told a function for distribution of Rokeya Padak 2002 at Osmani Memorial Hall in the capital.

This year, two eminent woman personalities were selected for the Rokeya Padak 2002. They are elderly physician professor Dr Zohora Begum Kazi and professor Akhter Imam.

The 90-year-old Dr Zohora Begum Kazi, the first Bengali Muslim lady physician and medical academic in this subcontinent, has been adjudged for the medal for her contributions to medical science, particularly in gynaecology. She served as head of Gynaecology Department in the Dhaka Medical College.

Professor Akhter Imam, the first woman teacher of Dhaka College and the first provost of Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University, was honoured with the prestigious award for her contributions in the field of education. She is now 85.

Akhter Imam obtained her Honours from Calcutta University and did her Master's from Dhaka University in Philosophy, securing first class in both. She was also the head of Philosophy Department of Dhaka University.

Shahriar sent to Ctg jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained writer Shahriar Kabir has once again been transferred to a jail in Chittagong.

He was earlier sent to the Kashimpur jail in Gazipur from Dhaka.

Shahriar's family members yesterday went to Kashimpur jail to meet him. But the jail authorities informed them that he was transferred to Chittagong early in the morning.

Shahriar could not sign his vokalatnama to represent his lawyers in the court till yesterday as the jail authorities did not allow any lawyers to meet him.

Family members alleged that the jail authorities did not provide him any division in jail despite a High Court order.

Shahriar was arrested under Section 54 on December 8 and was later implicated in a sedition case.

Meanwhile, AL leader Tofail Ahmed has been sent to Kushtia jail yesterday. He was earlier sent to the Kashimpur jail from Dhaka.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 23		5-17 pm
Dec 24	6-38 am	
Prayer Timings		
Dec 23		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-22	5-28
Esha	7-30	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Russia rallies round Iraq

Military campaign runs counter to Moscow's interest, foreign minister says

AFP, Moscow

Russia yesterday stood up firmly for Iraq by declaring that a military campaign there ran counter to Moscow's national interests and urging Washington to strictly abide by the United Nations resolutions on the conflict.

"The most important thing is making sure that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction," Foreign Minister Ivanov said in an interview with Channel One, broadcast first in Russia's far-eastern regions, and picked up by news agencies.

"All other goals run counter to our interests," Ivanov said in reference to the military campaign.

Ivanov called on Washington to abide by the rules of UN Security Council resolution 1441 - which sets strict conditions for Iraqi compliance with weapons inspection - that he stressed was the best method for assuring that Saddam Hussein's regime disarmed.

"Russia and the United States have developed a joint groundwork - the most important goal is that Iraq complies with the UN resolution," Ivanov said.

He added that Russia would take no part in any campaign if it went ahead.

Edging still closer to Saddam, Ivanov further brushed aside a recent conflict between Russia and Iraq over Baghdad's decision to rip a lucrative

oil contract held in Iraq by Russia's state-run oil company LUKoil.

Reports said that Saddam's regime nullified the deal after learning that LUKoil executives had contacted the Iraqi opposition and US officials in a bid to make sure that the contract would still be valid should the current Iraqi regime fall.

The problems between LUKoil and Iraq "arose two or three years ago, and are not directly linked to the current situation," Ivanov said in his first public comments on the dispute.

His comments are the firmest to date in support of the pace of Iraq's cooperation with weapons inspections.

Russia had previously offered only a vague response to the 12,000-page weapons report delivered to the United Nations by Iraq this month.

Although as a Security Council permanent member it is in possession of the full Iraqi declaration, it has refused to comment on the text directly, saying that UN inspectors' report delivered to the UN on Thursday did not prove that Baghdad was at fault.

Analysts had suggested that Moscow's cautious approach betrayed an implicit support for a joint US-British campaign to topple Saddam's regime - as long as such a strike was first approved by the United Nations, where Moscow wields veto power.



PHOTO: STAR

Four persons arrested by the Department of Narcotics Control for possessing narcotic stimulants and foreign bank-notes in the city yesterday.

Drugs seized, 3 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) yesterday arrested three people at Khilgaon in the city for possessing narcotic stimulants.

A DNC team arrested Tamal, Imran and Bappi and seized 404 stimulating tablets in a raid on a house at D-block in Banasri, Khilgaon, at about 4:00am.

The DNC personnel also seized 3.21 lakh taka and 428 Singaporean dollars.

The raid came after arrest of a youth named Jewel in Gulshan by the same department on Wednesday. He confessed that his gang members were peddling drugs.

Jewel was arrested for possessing porn compact discs (CDs) and stimulating drugs. All of them were peddling drugs for long, said the DNC officials.

Jewel had links with former lawmaker Golam Faruk Ovi, who is suspected of involvement in the killing of Tania Mahbub Tinni, a model and actor.



PHOTO: STAR

Students queue up under police guard for application forms for MBBS admission to the Dhaka Medical College yesterday. (Story on page 1)

Mymensingh blasts a ploy to hook opponents: Hasina

UNB, Mymensingh

Opposition leader and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has again termed the Mymensingh cinema bombings a "stage-managed" ploy to hook government's political opponents and blamed the prime minister for the tragedy.

"This could not happen without government patronage and ministers should be interrogated to find the real culprits," she said talking to journalists at the Mymensingh Press Club yesterday noon.

The opposition leader said immediately after the bomb blasts, the prime minister visited Mymensingh and blamed the opposition for this dastardly act.

"How could the PM know that the opposition did such a horrible thing?" she questioned. "Is it possi-

ble to plant such powerful bombs without the patronage of those who are now in power?"

Hasina criticised the prime minister's comment on the incident. "After such a comment of the prime minister, what would the probe committee do?" She asked.

Criticising the government, the Awami League chief said the charge-sheeted accused in the Udichi-bombing case "is now a minister while a state minister is an accused in a case of smuggling".

She asked when army has been in operation and leaders and workers of opposition parties are on the run "to avert atrocities of the BNP-Jamaat" combine, who would dare to make and carry those bombs.

Hasina said the prime minister is accusing the opposition leaders and workers, harassing and torturing them as "she (PM) does not want

the real culprits tracked down".

She said all the bomb-blast incidents took place at entertainment places and observed that the attackers targeted the cultural activities in the country.

The former prime minister said foreign bomb experts had examined the splinters of the bombs and came to the conclusion that these bombs were made by experts.

"The chemicals used in the bombs are not usually used. So why the government is not finding out where these bombs were made and who made these? Why the FBI report on bomb blasts is not published?" she asked.

Hasina said 28 police officials were given bomb-related training during Awami League rule and questioned why investigation was not being carried out by those

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Road accidents kill 16 in four districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 16 people were killed and 71 others injured in road accidents in Faridpur, Sylhet Noakhali and Feni districts yesterday.

Of them, six were killed in Faridpur, four in Sylhet and three in Noakhali and Feni each.

Our Magura Correspondent reports: Six people were killed and 40 others injured when a Satkhira-bound bus from Dhaka overturned and fell into the roadside ditch near Aruakandi bridge in Madhukhali upazila of Faridpur district at around 11-45 am yesterday.

Four of the dead were identified as Rubia Khatun, 40, wife of Abdul Wadood of Choubaria village under Mohammadpur upazila in Magura district, Hakimuddin Khalifa, 60, of Fursha village in Faridpur sadar upazila, Sukura Begum, 50, wife of late Mahtab Mian of Goalkhali village in Khulna district and Bazur Rahman, 40, a BDR constable of Narail district. Identity of two others could not be known immediately.

All the dead were bus passengers.

The injured were admitted to

Faridpur Medical College Hospital.

Our staff correspondent from Sylhet writes: Four people were killed and 13 others injured in a road accident on the airport road here yesterday.

The accident took place at about 3-05 pm when two autorickshaws collided with a minibus near the main gate of Luckatoora Tea Estate.

The minibus was trying to overtake another minibus.

Two of the dead were identified as Rustom Ali, 35, son of Mohammad Ali of Barsala Manglipar in Sylhet sadar and his daughter Tamanna, 7 and ex-UP member Suruj Ali, 62, identity of the other could not be known. Of the injured, nine were admitted to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital while four others to a private clinic.

In Noakhali, three people were killed and seven others injured as a truck rammmed a passenger tempo at Kalikapur on Feni-Laxmipur road yesterday, according to UNB.

Police said the accident occurred at noon, killing tempo passengers

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7 railway men killed as freight trains collide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Seven railway workers were killed and 25 injured when two freight trains collided at Saraknagar Koidanga area under Bhangrui Upzila in Sirajganj on Saturday night.

The accident disrupted rail communication between Sirajganj and Ishwardi for seven hours starting 11:00pm Saturday.

According to railway officials, one freight train, on colliding with another, overturned.

The dead were identified as Abdus Sattar, 25, Sawkat, 30, Shakhawat, 28, Al-Amin, 35, Rezaul, 40, Ohidul, 32 and Lulu, 19.

Of the injured, five were admitted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH). The rest were admitted to the Pabna General Hospital, Chatmohar Health Complex and Bhangura Health Complex.

Sources said, the two trains were of Ercon International, an Indian railway firm in charge of fitting railway tracks.

Transport dearth makes rickshaw ban a misery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Keeping rickshaws off a stretch of the Mirpur Road has created serious problems for citizens.

The authorities concerned have failed to provide an adequate number of public transports to solve the problem.

The situation is going to worsen for thousands of people living around the Mirpur Road, as three wheelers with two stroke engines will not be allowed to move on the city roads from January 1. Sources said the authorities would not be able to provide any alternative mode of transport throughout the month of January.

However, Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda has said that the government has taken adequate steps to face the situation that will arise after the complete withdrawal of the three wheelers with two stroke engines in the city.

Addressing the launching ceremony

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'Drug trafficking on alarming rise'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Drug trafficking is accelerating at an alarming pace in the country, noted the speakers at a seminar yesterday in the city.

The seminar on drug abuse prevention and rehabilitation was organised by the Centre for Sustainable Development and Research (CSDR).

In his keynote paper, Director General of narcotics control department Mohammed Salam said they have tracked 3452 cases of drug trafficking between January to June this year.

He added that at least 4140 persons were arrested and 9.335 kg

of Heroin, 3.542 kg of Charash, 0.023 kg Opium, 1270.37 kg Cannabis and 5814 Cannabis plant were seized. About 4,83,88 bottles and 149.65 litres of Phensedyl together with 488 ampoules of Tidigescin injection were also seized.

The number of cases, arrested and seizures is almost double compared to the same period in 2001.

Availability of drugs has increased as Bangladesh is located between the two major opium producing areas known as the Golden triangle and the Golden Crescent, the speakers noted. Moreover, the porous borders with India make it easier to smuggle

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