



Tanvir Haider dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tanvir Haider, renowned sports organiser and vice president of Mohammedan Sporting Club, died at the BIRDEM hospital yesterday.

He was 54.

Tanvir was suffering from various diseases including diabetes. He was first admitted to the Holy Family Hospital and later shifted to the BIRDEM where he died at about 3:30pm yesterday.

He was actively involved in sports for the last 32 years and played a significant role in various activities including formation of cricket teams of his club. He also held several important positions of Bangladesh Cricket Board.

In a statement, officials, players and employees of Mohammedan Sporting Club, including chairman of its governing body, Abdul Matlib Ahmad, member secretary Monir Ahmed, president Alhaj Mohammad Mosaddek Ali and general secretary M Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan condoled the death of Tanvir.

They also expressed sympathy for the bereaved family members and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Ahamed Krira Chakra and the Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association also expressed profound shock at the death of the cricket organiser.

Amnesty League President Sheikh Hasina expressed her deep shock at the death of Tanvir Haider.

"The death of Tanvir is an irreparable loss to the country's sports arena," she said in a condolence message.

Former state minister for youth, sports and culture, Obaidul Kader, also condoled the death of Tanvir.

The first namaj-e-janajah of Tanvir will be held at Shantinagar after Zohr prayers today (Thursday). His body will be taken to Mohammedan Sporting Club for a second namaj-e-janajah.

He will be buried at the Azimpur graveyard.

Exports

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of Coastal Sea Food and former president of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association.

"Not a single export certificate was issued from the association office in the last one week," he said. The sector would be hit hard if the crisis persists, he feared.

"The next season for cultivating shrimps of a particular variety (black tiger) is going to begin in April and I do not know what would happen to the huge investment in shrimp cultivation".

It would mean a disaster for the country's second largest foreign currency earner if the cultivators are deprived of a reasonable price, Mostasas said.

He said the exporters and packers need a lot of money to ensure a reasonable price for the cultivators. "Shrimp cultivators would not get a reasonable price if the exporters stop buying their products."

Independence Day

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reviewed the parade and took salute during the march past.

On arrival at the Parade Square, the president was received by Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar and the chiefs of the three services.

Members of the army also presented spectacular rope jumping from helicopters while a number of paratroopers carrying flags landed in the middle of the Parade Square.

Air Force planes, some emitting coloured smoke, flew past the Parade Square.

Mechanical section of the parade included tanks, artillery, torpedoes, mobile transmitters and some other equipment used by the armed forces.

Earlier, the president, prime minister and leader of the opposition in parliament gave separate messages on the occasion of Independence Day.

The day is being celebrated at national and local levels as well as at Bangladeshi missions abroad.

State-owned radio and television put up special programmes and newspapers brought out special supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

Special diets were served at hospitals, prisons, orphanages and vagrants' homes.

However, reception by the president at the Bangabhaban and some cultural functions were called off while illumination of government buildings was cancelled.

In darkness, Baghdad shakes

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meaning. A tyrant, he wrote, is a man who allows his people no freedom, who is "puffed up by pride, driven by the lust of power, impelled by greed, provoked by thirst for fame".

Yet Tuesday morning, 20 miles from Baghdad, ordinary Iraqis, without the presence of the "minders" who dog our heels, spoke of George Bush in just such language. I was standing on what may soon become the Baghdad front line, perhaps 10 miles from the B-52 bombings, 30 miles from the nearest US Marines, and behind me coils of black smoke were towelling into the sky from the burning oil berms. A ferocious storm was blasting sand into our faces, turning the sky a dark, bloody orange, the ground shaking gently as the B-52s came back.

A senior Iraqi business executive wanted to explain how slender was the victory the Americans were claiming. "Throughout history, Iraq has been called Mesopotamia," he said. "This means 'the land between the two rivers'. So unless you are between the two rivers, this means you are not in Iraq. General Franks should know this."

For the businessman, the US Marines were, as we spoke, crossing the Euphrates under fire at Nasiriyah Tuesday as hundreds of women and children fled their homes between the bridges. But still, by Tuesday evening, only 50 or so American tanks had made it to the eastern shore, into "Mesopotamia". It didn't spoil the man's enthusiasm.

"Can you imagine the effect on the Arabs if Iraq gets out of this war intact?" he asked. "It took just five days for all the Arabs to be defeated by Israel in the 1967 war. And already we Iraqis have been fighting the all-powerful Americans for

five days and still we have held on to all of our cities and will not surrender.

And imagine what would happen if Iraq surrendered. What chance would the Syrian leadership have against the demands of Israel? What chance would the Palestinians have of negotiating a fair deal with the Israelis? The Americans don't care about giving the Palestinians a fair deal. So why should they want to give the Iraqis a fair deal?"

This was no member of the Baath Party speaking. This was a man with degrees from universities in Manchester and Birmingham. A colleague had an even more cogent point to make. "Our soldiers know they will not get a fair deal from the Americans," he said. "It's important that they know this. We may not like our regime. But we fight for our country."

The Russians did not like Stalin but they fought under him against the German invaders. We have a long history of fighting the colonial powers, especially you British. You claim you are coming to 'liberate' us. But you don't understand. What is happening now is we are starting a war of liberation against the Americans and the British."

Now the businessman wanted to talk of President Saddam. "We Arabs care about dignity," he said. "Half of Lawrence's 'Seven Pillars of Wisdom' is about Arab dignity. In our lands, populism won over democracy for historical reasons. Saddam has provided regional safety. I am safe providing I do not confront the regime."

Saddam may be very severe against political dissidents but he is also very severe on criminals or anyone who is aggressive with us. That includes the Americans."

Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan was more rhetorical Tuesday. He talked of the "perfidy

of the Americans."

But I am possessed of a strange thought. That if the war is still going on when I reach the end of this book, if the bombing and the shelling is continuing when Thomas More has his head chopped off, then it is likely that General Tommy Franks' head will roll too.

Some of the 1.2 million residents have resorted to drinking from the Euphrates.

The river is polluted with untreated sewage, and aid agencies fear the spread of diseases such as dysentery and cholera.

The Red Cross team, including a specialist engineer from its international staff, was only able to reach the Wafa al-Qaid plant, north of Basra, after having first been granted safe passage by both the British forces surrounding the city and the Iraqi fighters.

The engineers were working Tuesday night to install portable generators to get the plant working, although it will not be able to operate at full capacity.

There will be a further delay while sufficient pressure is established for water to start flowing from taps.

The Red Cross is also attempting to get safe passage for local technicians to assess and repair the damage to the high voltage power lines, which were cut on Friday during intense fighting.

Forian Westphal, a Red Cross spokesman, said: "It cannot be a permanent solution to run on generators, because you have to cut them at times to refuel them or let them cool down."

"But it will definitely be a major improvement on the current situation."

Getting humanitarian supplies into Basra is becoming an increasingly urgent task for the US and British forces engaged in the "hearts and minds" battle to convince ordinary Iraqis that the invasion forces are there to help them.

Several Arab countries warned the United States that the war could have a damaging ripple effect on the region. "Arab leaders, especially in Egypt and in the Persian Gulf, are in a very, very dangerous situation," one analyst, Diana Rashad of the Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo, told The Washington Post. "We could all feel this danger coming."

Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets yesterday in Syria, where the government is vehemently against the war.

Police in Beirut used tear gas to stop thousands of demonstrators from marching on the British embassy and witnesses said about 20 people were detained.

Protest marches also took place in Tunisia and Libya, and the Iraqi embassy in Algiers said some Algerians had volunteered to fight the US and British troops.

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Both Baghdad and Washington denied they had received a Saudi proposal.

Hasina blasts

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"Is the prime minister not a Muslim? Why have Khaleda and Nizami kept mum and why are they not showing sympathy for their Muslim brothers?" she questioned.

Referring to the conference of independent Awardees at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the former prime minister said the people of Bangladesh will never accept any move to degrade Bangabandhu.

"It's nothing but a mockery" she said.

Women warriors

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genuine freedom fighters might not have any desire for personal gains, but the nation should honour them for their sacrifice for the country. "If we want to uphold our dignity as a self-respecting nation, we have to honour and recognise the freedom fighters."

Chairperson of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad Hena Das said "real history" of the liberation war is still to be written.

Founder of Bangladesh Protibandhi Foundation Prof Sultana S Zaman, whose family participated in the war said, "We are yet to find out the genuine freedom fighters, let alone honouring them."

Proshika President Dr Kazi Faruque Ahmad, who chaired the function, said the history of liberation war is being distorted in different ways.

"By honouring the freedom fighters, we in fact honoured ourselves," he said.

Earlier, a cultural function was held and a documentary film on some women FFs was screened.

Those who received the awards are Rikta Begum and Amena Zaman of Dhaka, Meherunnisa Begum of Chapainawabganj, Mahmuda Khanam, Mamta Begum, Shahida Begum and Saleha Begum of Jessor, Tahera Begum of Laxmipur, Rabeya Khatun, Shahamara Parveen and Karuna Begum of Barisal, Madhumita Baiyadi of Mirsharai, Fatema Khatun and Chaya Rani Sarkar of Tangail, Shakhina

Begum of Kishoreganj, Mirasi Begum of Netrokona, Anwara Begum of Chandpur, SM Monowara Begum of Patuakhali and Rokuya Begum of Panchagarh.

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Arab states

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Mira, Halima Khatun and Josna Ara Sattar of Bagerhat, Urmila Roy, Shirin Shah Newaz, Rokey Begum, Hena, Bulirani Saha, Rokeya Hossain, Rozina Ansari and Hosne Ara Begum Anju of Pirojpur, Mamata Parveen, Jahana Begum, Mahmuda Yesmin and Aklima Khandakar of Rangpur, Rezau Nesa, Anjuman Ara Begum, Morjina Bewa, Meherunnisa, Shamsun Nahar, Taslima Begum of Chapainawabganj, Mahmuda Khanam, Mamta Begum, Shahida Begum and Saleha Begum of Jessor, Tahera Begum of Laxmipur, Rabeya Khatun, Shahamara Parveen and Karuna Begum of Barisal, Madhumita Baiyadi of Mirsharai, Fatema Khatun and Chaya Rani Sarkar of Tangail, Shakhina

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Saudi proposal

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Tuesday that the kingdom had presented a peace plan to the United States and Iraq, and appealed to both sides to stop military action immediately.

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Wheat drive

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target as the season is about to end. And this results in various wrong-doing.

The internal wheat procurement target has been slashed to two lakh tonnes this year from three lakh tonnes last year.

Food officials attributed this downscaling of wheat procurement target to last year's bitter experience and also possible a production shortfall this year.

However, the decision of reducing the procurement target came at a time when the agriculture minister informed the parliament earlier this month that country would produce 17.50 lakh tonnes of wheat this year, higher than the last year's production.

But officials quoting field reports apprehended that wheat output might be lower than the government's projection.

The government would buy wheat at Tk 9,250 a quintal this year against Tk 9,000 a quintal last year.

Film actor Azim passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned actor and film producer Nurul Azim Khaled Rouf, popularly known as Azim, died of cardiac attack at the Sikder Medical College Hospital yesterday at the age of 67.

A popular actor in the 60s, Azim's first film was Rajdhani Booke.

His namaj-e-najana was held at the Film Development Corporation (FDC) yesterday afternoon.

Azim was buried at the Martyred Intellectual Graveyard at Mirpur.

UNB reports: Awami League general secretary Abdul Jalil MP has expressed profound shock at the death of Azim.

"Azim's death has caused an irreparable loss to our cultural arena," he said in a message of condolence yesterday.

In another message, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahaman condoled the death of Azim.

UN will appeal

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