



Children offer prayers at the grave of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam on the Dhaka University campus on his 104th birth anniversary yesterday.

# Tribute to Nazrul

## PM opens three-day national programme at Darirampur

BSS, Dhaka

The nation yesterday paid rich tribute to the national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, better known as the 'Rebel Poet', on his 104th birth anniversary.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia inaugurated a three-day national programme at Darirampur of Trishal upazila in Mymensingh district, organised by the Cultural Affairs Ministry.

The prime minister said the multidimensional creative works of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam enhanced the dignity of Bangla language and literature, and contributed as a powerful source of inspiration during the War of Independence.

"Nazrul is the poet of our soul ... To show true respect to the national poet in independent and sovereign Bangladesh is to march

forward towards prosperity with dignity," she said in her inaugural address.

After formally opening the three-day national programme, the prime minister also inaugurated a 'Nazrul Fair' on the Darirampur Nazrul Academy premises.

In the morning, the State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman placed floral wreath at the mazar of the poet. Officials of different departments and institutions under the ministry also placed wreaths.

The mazar premises of the poet at the Dhaka University turned into a place of festivity and reverence when a cross-section of people belonging to several organisations assembled there to pay their tributes to the poet.

Teachers, students, officials and employees of the Dhaka University placed wreaths at the poet's mazar. Addressing a discussion at the mazar premises, vice-chancellor Prof SMA Fayez said it is everyone's responsibility to take proper initiatives to evaluate the life and contribution of poet Nazrul. "It is the best way to show respect to him," he said, adding, "We could also enrich our national heritage by carrying out research on his literary works."

Prof Mohammad Moniruzzaman of the university's Bangla department spoke on the life and works of the rebel poet. Artists of different cultural organisations participated

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# AL's joining budget session depends on govt attitude

Deputy opposition leader tells

NAZRUL ISLAM

Participation of the Awami League (AL) in the upcoming budget session of the Jatiya Sangsad depends on the ruling alliance's attitude to the opposition, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid said.

"It depends on the ruling parties' attitude. We have yet to decide on the issue," Hamid said in an interview with The Daily Star.

"We've to lodge protests if the government places an anti-people budget," he added.

Will the opposition legislators resign en masse if the current trend continues?

"Resignation is not the ultimate solution."

"We'll continue our protest in and outside the parliament and let the people know that the government has lost legitimacy to run the



Abdul Hamid

country," he said.

It is the common man who will decide whether the government will continue in power or be toppled through a mass movement,

Hamid said.

The AL boycotted the previous session on the opening day protesting against the switching off of the microphone of the leader of the opposition.

After walking out of the House, the AL lawmakers threatened the government with non-participation in the budget session that begins on June 10.

Hamid said: "The Jatiya Sangsad will be effective once the government changes its step-brotherly attitude towards the opposition, ensures opposition lawmakers' participation in development activities and helps the speaker run the House as per the constitution, the Rules of Procedure and parliamentary conventions."

Without tolerance, democracy cannot flourish and parliament

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## Magistrate sues lawyers for calling names

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A magistrate in Satkhira yesterday filed a case against two lawyers, accusing them of swearing at him upon rejection of a bail prayer.

Shah Alam, general secretary of the Satkhira District Bar Association, and Advocate Mostafa Lutfullah stand accused in the case filed by First Class Magistrate Shahjahan Ali with the local police station. The magistrate also alleged that the two vandalised his chamber's door and windowpanes.

On May 19, the magistrate rejected the bail prayer of Hafizur Rahman, an accused in a theft case. The lawyers for the accused confined the magistrate to the courthouse, pressing him to change the order, according to the allegation.

Later, Additional District Magistrate of Satkhira District Magistrate's Court Mohammed Gaus granted bail to Rahman. He also said legal action would be taken against the agitating lawyers.

Mujibur Rahman, Khulna division commissioner, is scheduled to visit Satkhira today to investigate the incident. He also issued letters to the lawyers to appear before a probe committee.

But the Satkhira District Bar Association yesterday decided not to cooperate with the investigation team. The Bar also demanded removal of Gaus for his comments on the lawyers.

# New committee rankles with BNP

## rank and file

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Discontent is brewing among leaders and activists of the ruling BNP and its front organisations over the formation of new committees at different levels.

BNP sources said the current trend of forming committees at upazila, district and other levels through 'so-called direct voting' has frustrated many genuine and dedicated leaders and workers. The new system is known among party men as 'Bogra Model', as it was first introduced in Bogra.

They said though the model appears democratic, it is driving out genuine party men who have been pursuing BNP politics for long from

committees at different levels.

Some policymakers of the BNP, seeking anonymity, observed that corrupt and moneyed men, who usually become very active in favour of the party that comes to power, have started coming into the leadership of the party and its wings. In the process, active and dedicated party men are either being dropped or sidelined.

They noted that usually central leaders first try to form a committee of the party or its front organisation through an understanding among senior and junior leaders and activists to avert conflict within.

But now such understanding or

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PHOTO: AFP

From left: LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil and Workers' Party leader Rashed Khan Menon at the South Asian Free Media Association conference in Dhaka yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Four test tube babies were born at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital on Friday and Thursday. Their mother is doing fine, but the babies, placed in incubators, are at risk. The mother earlier gave birth to seven children, but two of them died from hereditary disorder.

## CPD

## Dialogue in N'ganj today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A National Policy Review Forum meeting will be held in Narayanganj today.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), The Daily Star and Prothom Alo are co-organising the meeting at the Narayanganj Press Club.

CPD Chairman Prof. Rehman Sobhan will deliver the introductory speech while Motiur Rahman, editor of the Daily Prothom Alo, will deliver the opening speech.

Dr. Selina Hayat Ivy, chairperson of Narayanganj Pouroushabha will speak as chief guest and President of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association Monjurul Huq will preside over the meeting.

Prof. Dr AKM Atiqur Rahman of North South University will read out the taskforce report.

Economists, university academics, government and non-government officials, businessmen, journalists and representatives from various social organisations will take part in the discussion.

A taskforce had earlier identified priorities and recommended suggestions on policy issues in the run-up to the last general elections.

## S Asian media conference opens in city

AFP, Dhaka

Hopes for peace in South Asia are high amid recent moves by India and Pakistan to restore normal ties, a regional meeting of journalists here was told yesterday.

"After a prolonged stand-off between India and Pakistan, the ice seems to be melting, even though the causes behind the animosity and conflict continue to persist," Imtiaz Alam, secretary general of the Pakistan-based South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA), told the opening session of a two-day

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## Non-payment of dues

# BPC scraps Biman's credit privileges for jet fuel purchase

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) will no longer supply jet fuel to Biman on credit as the national carrier owes the Corporation over Tk 421 crore in outstanding bills.

A recent top-level meeting decided that from now on, Padma Oil Company, a subsidiary of BPC, would supply jet fuel to Biman Bangladesh Airlines only in cash, official sources said.

Biman buys jet fuel worth Tk 15-16 crore from Padma every month. As per previous provision, Biman used to get the supply on a 30-day credit that was not followed on many occasions.

Officials said the meeting also decided that from May 31, Biman will pay the current financial year's dues, amounting to Tk 33.77 crore, to the BPC to begin the cash deals.

State Minister for Energy AKM Mosharrar Hossain presided over the meeting attended by State Minister for Civil Aviation Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin and officials concerned.

The meeting decided that the BPC in selling jet fuel to Biman will restore the provision of lump sum rebate for the national flag carrier that remained suspended since September, 1997.

However, the officials said this time the rebate will not be straight in certain percentage. Instead, it'll

be given after every six months only if the state-run BPC can make profit.

The rebate will be calculated keeping only 20 per cent of the profit margin of BPC -- that is the difference between the total cost of import and supply, and the selling price.

Following a dispute between Biman and BPC authorities over the previously unpaid rebate, a four-member joint committee had been formed to resolve the matter, said an official.

"After the committee submits its report on the rebate dispute, a procedure will be sorted out to enable Biman to pay its dues to the BPC," said the official.

Before 1996-97, BPC was a profit-making concern and it used to award 20 percent rebate every six months. From January 1991 to June 1995, Tk 140.61 crore was awarded as rebate to Biman.

"At that time the local sale price was rational, compared to the purchasing cost and Biman was then a loss-incurring state organ," said the senior official.

But in 1996-97, BPC incurred a loss of Tk 427.45 crore that prompted the Energy Ministry to withdraw the rebate.

Biman says rebate amounting to Tk 130.91 crore remained unpaid but BPC put the amount at Tk 77.91 crore.

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# All is not over for Mamata

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee missed out on returning to the corridors of power when Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee expanded his cabinet Saturday night inducting seven new faces. But Mamata still appears to be in with a chance to stage a comeback.

The most talked-about element in Vajpayee's reshuffle of his ministry -- the eleventh since he assumed power in October 1999 -- was the drama leading to non-inclusion of Mamata and her party colleague Sudip Bandyopadhyaya in the cabinet.

After the reshuffle at the Presidential Palace here, Vajpayee told reporters that talks were on to persuade Mamata to rejoin his government and for that he would soon effect a "minor" expansion of the ministry.

Mamata, who stayed out of the

cabinet to protest Vajpayee's decision to induct Sudip without consulting her, is now expected to come here for consultations with the prime minister after he returns on June 4 from his overseas tour beginning tomorrow.

In fact, Vajpayee reportedly asked Mamata to fly to Delhi yes-

## NEWS ANALYSIS

terday for discussions to sort out the problem arising out of the decision to give a ministerial berth to Sudip.

But the Trinamool Congress chief reportedly conveyed to Vajpayee that there was no need for hurry and the matter can wait till his return from foreign tour.

Asked whether the BJP wanted to split Trinamool Congress by deciding to induct Sudip in the cabinet, Vajpayee said "there is no intention to break the party. On the

contrary, we want to give more representation to it (in the cabinet)."

Mamata and Sudip were among the founders of Trinamool Congress in 1997 after breaking from Congress. But the two have fallen apart over differences on the issue of quitting Vajpayee government in February 2001 and India's ruling BJP-led alliance in the wake of a news portal's expose of corruption in defence purchases.

Mamata, the then railway minister, had resigned from ministry demanding Defence Minister George Fernandes' resignation in the wake of the expose and joined hands with Congress to fight assembly polls in West Bengal in March 2001.

After Trinamool's unimpressive poll showing, Mamata again veered away from Congress and returned to the BJP-led alliance.

But even after patching up with

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