



Sultana Islam passes away

Begum Sultana Islam, a social worker, educator and writer, passed away yesterday, says a press release.

Sultana Islam was the wife of late Shamsul Islam, chief engineer of WAPDA.

She was the founder president of National Women Federation and recipient of Queen's Coronation Medal for her outstanding social work in 1953.

Born in Kolkata, her maternal grand father was Sir Abdur Rahim, Chief Justice of Bengal, and paternal grand father was Moulvi Mahmood. She was a graduate of Kolkata University.

Begum Sultana Islam was the founder principal of Tejgaon Girls' High School and Little Blossom's Kindergarten School.

She was the president of Jatiya Mahila Sangstha, honorary member of Film Censor Board, general secretary and vice-president of All Pakistan Women's Association to name a few.

Her kulkhwani will be held after Asr prayers on August 19 in her family residence at House- B 129, Road-21, New DOHS, Mohakhali.

Amina Mashuri Rahman

Amina Mashuri Rahman, wife of late Senior Minister Mashuri Rahman (Jadu Mia), died of cardiac arrest on Friday night at the age of 72 at the National Heart Foundation Hospital, says a press release.

Amina was hospitalised on August 12 following a massive heart attack.

She left behind her three sons, two daughters, several grand children and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

Her namaj-e-janaza will be held after Maghrib prayers at New DOHS Jame-Mosque at Mohakhali in the city today.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the Janaza and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Her body will be taken to her village home at Sunderkhata in Dimla under Nilphamari district for burial tomorrow.

Amina was the women affairs secretary of the National Awami Party (NAP). She was active in progressive politics particularly during the anti-Ayub and pro-democracy movement.

Eve-teasers

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a nearby dormitory chased them, caught Badal and Prince and beat them up. Their motorbike was also set on fire, witnesses said.

Medical student leader Golam Mustafa Ali said the JCD cadres, claiming themselves to be followers of Mashui Alam Sentu, came twice on Friday night in microbus and motorbikes.

Sentu however said he himself went to the trouble spot and handed over the two unruly cadres to the police.



Poster exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of a poster exhibition on graphic design titled "L' art pour l' art" by Pierre Mendell and Klaus Oberer will be held. Venue: Goethe Institut exhibition hall, Dhanmondi. Time: 6.00pm. The exhibition will remain open till August 28 from 2.00pm to 8.00pm daily except weekends and holidays.

Cultural function

Nazrul Academy organises a discussion and cultural function to mark the 62nd death anniversary of poet Rabindranath Tagore. Venue: Academy Bhaban, Moghbazar. Time: 7.00pm.

Prize giving ceremony

The prize giving ceremony of the art competition titled 'Amar Sabuj Bangla', organised by Youth and Social Development Organisation, will be held with State Minister for Finance and Planning Shah M Abul Hussain as chief guest. Venue: Begum Sufia Kamal auditorium, National Museum. Time: 5.30pm.

Award giving ceremony

On completion of a course on 'NGO Leadership and Management' under the global partnership programme, a postgraduate diploma award ceremony will be held. Venue: BRAC Centre auditorium, Mohakhali. Time: 4.00pm.

Earthquake meeting

A high level meeting of earthquake experts will be held with Disaster Management and Relief Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ebne Yousuf in the

Oil pipelines

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tip of the so-called Sunni Muslim triangle, a wedge of north-central Iraq known for its support of ousted president Saddam Hussein and the high number of attacks on US troops there.

A US army spokesman said earlier Saturday firefighters were trying to extinguish the blaze.

"They have contained it but are still fighting it," said Lieutenant Colonel Bill MacDonald of the Fourth Infantry Division, speaking from the town of Tikrit.

Sabotage and looting have plagued Iraq's oil sector since Saddam was toppled by US-led forces in April, with pipelines suffering crippling damage and just 150 of 700 oil wells in working order, officials have said.

AFP adds: Firefighters battled a blaze on Iraq's key oil pipeline to Turkey on Saturday, as another US soldier was wounded in an attack by guerrilla insurgents fighting the coalition forces occupying Iraq.

In the latest assault on coalition forces, a US soldier was slightly wounded early yesterday when his patrol came under attack in a village near the town of Baquba, northeast of Baghdad, the US army said.

"The soldier's convoy came under attack from a suspected IED (improvised explosive device), small arms fire and RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) just after midnight," said Lieutenant Colonel Bill MacDonald of the Fourth Infantry Division.

The patrol returned fire and a supporting helicopter fired missiles at the attackers, he said, adding that he had no reports of Iraqi casualties.

A witness said a US army vehicle was destroyed in the attack in the village of Abara, but the army did not confirm this. The village was sealed off after the attack and US troops conducted house-to-house searches, said the witness who requested anonymity.

Baquba, 65 kilometres northeast of the capital, is home to both Sunni and Shiite Muslims, and has also been a regular battleground between US troops and guerrilla insurgents believed to be linked to Saddam.

In Baghdad, Shiites in one of the city's poorest districts again warned

Ransom

FROM PAGE 1
Amin Siddiqui and Bakolia OC Abdul Malek.

The other two officers transferred are DB Sub-Inspector Mohiuddin Salim of the CMP and Ruhul Amin, OC Fatikchhari, of district police.

Police could make no progress in resolving the mystery behind the abduction and killing of another millionaire businessman Rezaur Rahman alias Zakir till yesterday.

On completion of a two-day remand, the four accused were produced before a magistrate's court yesterday. The court sent them to jail.

They are Zahir Md. Khan alias Shahabuddin, local BNP leader and a CMP- listed terrorist, Shah Alam, BCL leader and local Omar Gani (MES) College students union vice president, Wasim Uddin, and a local butcher Abdul Halim.

The three-day remand of another accused, Akter Hossain alias Raju, detained at the Boalkhali Police Station ends today.

No further arrest was made in this connection yesterday.

Zakir was abducted from the city on July 11 and his bullet-ridden body was recovered from Militarypolice area in Boalkhali on July 12.

chair. Venue: Conference room of the ministry. Time: 11.00am

BSCIC conference

The inaugural session of the annual conference of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) will be held with Industries Minister Matuir Rahman Nazami as chief guest. Venue: BSCIC conference room, Motijheel. Time: 11.00am.

Water seminar

A seminar on 'Third World Water Forum Outcomes', organised by the Institute For Environment and Development and NGO Forum and ITN, will be held. Venue: ITN conference room of BUET. Time: 10.00am.

Inauguration

The inauguration ceremony of Italia Bar and Bistrot, the Italian restaurant of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, will be held with State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin as chief guest. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 7.30pm.

Launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of Jamini, an international arts quarterly, will be held. Noted novelist Amit Chowdhury, artist Mohammad Kibria and Professor Anisuzzaman will jointly launch the magazine. Venue: Hotel Sheraton.

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen a film titled 'Reservoir Dogs'. Venue: 21/C, Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

the Americans that they will fight them if they resume patrols there.

Many residents of Baghdad's Sadr City district, an impoverished suburb that is home to about two million Shiites, said they would rise up if the US military returned.

The US army on Friday insisted it would continue its security operations in the area, but residents and police said Saturday there had been no patrols since Wednesday.

1,269 Gram Sarkar units formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 1,269 units of the Gram Sarkar were formed in 39 districts yesterday.

According to the monitoring cell at the Local Government Division of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Cooperatives, the number of Gram Sarkar units formed since August 2 is around 11,500.

The entire process is expected to be complete by the middle of the next month if the current momentum continues, said monitoring cell officials.

Although the officials claim the enthusiasm of grassroots to be gradually increasing, reports speak of low attendance and clashes in several areas of the country.

Most people are aware neither of the process nor the structure and function of the Gram Sarkar, say reports from various parts of the country.

There is a serious lack of publicity regarding the Gram Sarkar, sources said.

Officials, however, refute the allegation that the Gram Sarkar units are being formed with minimum attendance of local voters.

According to the plan, 40,392 units are to be formed across the country comprising 5,25,096 members.

AL's countrywide demonstration Aug 19

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League will stage demonstration across the country on August 19 to protest harassment and arrest of the party's women activists during the hartal hours yesterday.

It will also hold a protest rally in the city today.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the party presidium at the Dhanmondi office yesterday with acting AL president Abdus Samad Azad MP in the chair.

The meeting also discussed the country's overall political situation, said a press release.

Tannery

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ERD failed to arrange foreign funds. The meeting emphasised speedy implementation of the project to ensure a drastic fall in environmental pollution in the capital.

According to the PP, all tanneries in the country are private and 95 per cent of them are located at Hazaribagh in the capital. These industrial units, numbering 185, have grown in this area in an unplanned way over the last 50 years.

On an average, Hazaribagh tanneries discharge nearly 21,600 square metres of liquid pollutants, which ultimately flow into the Buriganga river, creating a massive environment hazard.

The units produce seven million square metres of leather annually fully for export, fetching Tk 1,500 to 1,600 crore in foreign exchange. Moreover, they employ a large number of people.

Sources hoped relocation of the tanneries would help the industry grow further and even attract foreign investments. It would also contribute to improvement of the city's environment.

GPA

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The new rule created some difficulty for the Notre Dame College as it admits some students from a minority community, most of whom would not qualify for admission under the new rule, the education secretary said.

The government recommended resolving the problem of selecting students with the same GPA through oral tests.

Education ministry officials had earlier said the colleges would have to comply with the government decision and any violation would expose them to punishable offence.

The colleges blamed the education ministry for issuing the circular abruptly.

The government in a circular last week laid out the guidelines cancelling written tests for admission to public and private colleges. From now on, the GPA in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations will be the criterion for admission.

The circular added that those who scored at least Grade D and GPA 1 in the SSC and equivalent exams in 2002 and 2003 will be eligible for admission.

However, students who passed the SSC or equivalent exams held in 2001 will have to sit for admission tests.

Colleges will have to complete the admission procedures by this month, education ministry officials said.



Activists of the Awami League arrested by police from the Bangabandhu Avenue area during hartal hours yesterday.

Hartal passes off quietly

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front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi but police confined them within barbed fences. Workers of Bangladesh Chhatra League and Shechhayasebak League also demonstrated near the area.

Indiscriminate crackers exploded at different parts of the city. Nadia Begum, a High Court employee, was injured as a cracker hurled from a running minibus exploded near Karwan Bazar underpass at about 11:30am.

Two crackers blasted near Tuberculosis hospital gate at Mohakhali in the city at around 9:30am. Another unexploded cracker was recovered from the spot.

Police arrested Motaleb with two hand-made bombs in the city's Lalmoan Shah Street in Sutrapur.

A large number of policemen including women police cordoned off the AL central office since the early morning and put up barbed wire blocking the road during the hartal hours. Law enforcers barred opposition workers to enter Bangabandhu Avenue, however, senior AL leaders managed to gather there.

Government offices remained open with a thin presence of officials and employees and private offices functioned partially.

Most shopping centres of the city kept their shutters down but many roadside shops remained open. A good number of buses and auto-rickshaws plied during the hartal hours but rickshaws moved as usual. No inter-city buses operated.

Train services to and from Kamalapur station was normal. The

Zia International Airport operated normally despite the hartal.

Meanwhile, the AL leaders formed a half an hour human chain in front of the party's central office at 5:30pm to protest detention of female workers.

Among others AL leaders Begum Matia Chowdhury, Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Abdus Shaheed MP, Mohammad Hanif and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya were present in the human chain.

Around 5,000 riot police, Bangladesh Rifles and Ansar personnel were deployed at various strategic points in the city to avert untoward incident during the hartal hours.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong added: Apart from stray incidents at the city AL office, the dawn to dusk hartal passed off peacefully.

Pickets torched at least two vehicles in front of the AL office at Darul Fazal market in the morning.

Chittagong port activities were hampered due to the hartal. However, loading and unloading took place in few jetties, and delivery of goods was halted throughout the day, port sources said.

Train services and flights from the port city were normal with thin number of passengers. Mechanised vehicles stayed off the roads till late afternoon. City roads and main thoroughfares were predominantly occupied by rickshaw during hartal hours.

Reports from Khulna, Barisal, Pabna, Brahmanbaria and Gazipur said the hartal was observed peacefully.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the AL presidium, chaired by Acting President Abdus Samad Azad, last evening decided to hold a rally in the city today

and demonstrate across the country Tuesday to protest police atrocities on female activists during the hartal hours.

The main opposition enforced the hartal demanding execution of the court verdict in the Bangabandhu murder case.

Power tariff

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Company (DESCO), sources said.

All subscribers in the three slabs have to pay a flat rate of Tk 2.5 per unit from September instead of three separate rates of Tk 2.26, Tk 2.42 and Tk 3.62.

Currently, the five slabs in domestic category are: 000-100 units, 101-300 units, 301-500 units, 501-700 units and above 700 units, ministry sources said.

Subscribers consuming up to 100 units and between 101 and 300 units have to pay an additional Tk 0.24 and Tk 0.08 for each unit from next month, but consumers of between 301 and 500 units would get a discount of Tk 1.12 per unit after the rationalisation, sources said.

"It is a common global practice to allow consumers purchasing more power to enjoy competitive prices and incentives," said a senior official of the ministry, adding that the government move is not geared to increase revenue earnings. "There is little chance to earn additional revenue from the rationalisation," he said.

He said the rationalisation would not only remove discriminatory rates between rural and urban subscribers, but also help establish a rational distribution of electricity across the country.

Two outlaws murdered in Chuadanga

BSS, Chuadanga

Two activists of outlawed Purbobanglar Communist Party (PBPC) were murdered by their rivals in separate incidents Friday night.

The outlaws are Beltu, 30, son of Jhandu of village Puropara under Alamdanga Upazila and Shahar Ali, 45, son of Jahan Ali of village Bazdia under Jibannagar Upazila of the district.

Police said the armed cadres belonging to another outlawed party slaughtered Beltu at a place, few yards away from his Saraganj residence while Shahar Ali was shot dead at Kashipur village under Jibannagar upazila.

Police said the slain outlaws were wanted in a number of murder and robbery cases.

Body of drowned SUST student recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The body of ANM Nazibullah Rajon, a student of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), was recovered yesterday from the river Plain near Jafflong.

Rajon and Faisal, two SUST students, had drowned in the river on Friday. Faisal's body was recovered within half an hour while Rajon remained missing.

Rajon's body, recovered at around 10:30am, was first taken to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and then to the varsity campus.

The Namaj-e-janaza was held on the campus at 5:30pm and the body was handed over to his relatives to be taken to his village home in Bogra.

Rajon, son of Shahidullah Miah, was a first year honours student of physics.

The varsity has arranged for a Milad Mahfil at the varsity mosque after the Zohr prayers today.

Three SUST students-- Faisal, Rajon and Ashique-- together with four of their friends from Dhaka went for a swim to the Jafflong Picnic Spot on Friday when the fatal accident occurred at around 11:30am.

Blackout cause

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Bloomberg applauded his city's 8 million residents for weathering the high temperatures without electricity or air conditioning.

"It tells you something about New Yorkers," he said.

While officials were still unable to explain exactly what caused such a rapid collapse in the power grid, Americans expressed relief that they had not been the victims of a terrorist act.

US Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham said there was "no evidence it was an intentional act."

In Washington, the House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee said it would convene hearings on the blackout when Congress returned next month from its summer break.

New York Gov. George Pataki said he wanted to know why the system crashed so catastrophically.

"How did this happen, why did it happen and why did we have a systemic failure across the power grid in the Northeast when we were told after the blackout in the 1960s that this would not happen again?" Pataki said.

Procedures put in place after a

huge blackout in 1965 failed to isolate breakdowns to small areas of the country.

Former Energy Secretary Bill Richardson said much of the U.S. electricity system was 50 or 60 years old.

"We're a superpower with a third-world grid. We need a new grid," said Richardson, now governor of New Mexico.

Charges framed

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Police Station on November 19 1975.

Bodies of the victims were recovered from the jheel in February 1976.

The Detective Branch (DB) of Police took up the cases for investigation and submitted final report in January 1978.

But, as per directive of the higher authorities, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) revived the case filed by victim Akmal Khan's wife on March 25, 1997 and submitted a charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka on August 18, 1998 against the nine, showing 106 people as prosecution witnesses.

Gas export meet

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such a decision, we will unnecessarily jeopardise our popularity. We are in a better position by not exporting gas."

Last week, the premier decided to shelve export during his tenure considering that the issue was too big a stake politically and should be left alone, said an influential policymaker, also preferring anonymity.

Opposition political parties and different pressure groups are opposing gas export and the main opposition Awami League threatened to enforce an indefinite strike if the government went ahead with such a decision.

They allege that the government was up for exporting gas under the pressure of the United States and US

oil giant Unocal, and donors.

Opposing groups say the country being the lowest per capita energy consumer severely lacked adequate reserves for its own consumption.

Nobel laureate economist Joseph E Stiglitz during his just-concluding Dhaka visit opposed gas export, saying if Bangladesh exported gas now, it would have to import 15 to 20 years later and be forced to pay two-way transportation costs.

"The opinion of an economist like Stiglitz is the ultimate blow to the export proposition," said a policymaker.

The country consumes over 1,250 million cubic feet of gas per day (mmcf) against the demand of up to 1,290 mmcf.

Bangladesh's proven reserve is estimated at around 11 trillion cubic feet (tcf).

Gold seized

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ised gang was bringing the consignment into the country.

The carrier involved in the smuggling managed to melt with the passengers having been informed of the presence of the customs intelligence, sources said.

The customs team searched the packets at the customs hall in front of the members of the different agencies and recovered the ornaments.

A departmental case was filed in this regard.

According to customs records, gold bars and ornaments worth about Tk 5.16 crore have been seized at the ZIA in last seven months. Three people have also been arrested.

River diversion

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ecological, navigational and economic impacts on Bangladesh.

But, Bangladesh's concern deepened as Indian President P.J. Abdul Kalam, in a nationwide address on Thursday, reaffirmed his government's "first mission" to implement the project to tackle droughts and floods in river-- basin states as well as give them water and power security.

"The first mission is under active consideration of my government... This mission will eliminate the periodical problems of droughts and floods experienced in a number of river basin states and provide both water and power security," Kalam told the Indians.

In a sharp response to the Indian president's remarks, the minister said that an upper-riparian country can not do whatever it wishes, if it harms the interest of a lower- riparian country.

"We've our legitimate right to water," he said, adding that a poor country like Bangladesh would face dire impacts in terms of irrigation, fisheries, navigation and ecology.

The minister, however, disagreed on the notion of taking the matter with the United Nations, as Bangladesh didn't get any benefit from placing the water issue with the UN.

IMF team

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monic affairs recently approved appointment of an advisor to Rupali Bank to evaluate the net worth of the bank which the government has decided to sell off.

Besides, the government will appoint an expert body, comprising a chief executive officer (CEO) and seven advisors for a period of three years, to reform the state-owned Agrani Bank.

Earlier, the IMF asked the government to change the management of Agrani Bank by November 30 this year and privatise Rupali Bank by December 2004.

Aiming to change the Agrani Bank management within the stipulated time, the BB sources said they have been examining the performance chart of some international consulting firms which will be approached for proposals on restructuring of the NCBs and changing the management of the Agrani Bank.

"We will soon shortlist the firms and ask them to submit a restructuring plan for the NCBs and changing the management of the Agrani Bank according to the procurement policy of the World Bank," a high official of the BB told The Daily Star yesterday.

The IMF officials will meet Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, Governor of the BB and top officials of the NCBs during their stay.

The IMF team leader is scheduled to leave the country on August 28 and the members on September 8, sources said.

CU student

FROM PAGE 12

Chowdhury, former MP from the area.

Witnesses said the gang members numbering more than 10 shouted for Moslem and then shot Omar with an AK-47 assault rifle.

Omar was the only son of Sheikh Md. Harun, a retired police official from Aamtoli under Fatikchhari in Chittagong, and now a businessman.

Job eludes graduates

FROM PAGE 12

Private universities are accused of lacking proper evaluation and monitoring systems to ensure that the quality of their education is maintained.