

Protest at move to change name of Sufia Kamal Nat'l Public Library

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A section of the country's leading intelligentsia yesterday formed a human-chain at Shahbagh in the city protesting at the government move to change the name of Sufia Kamal National Public Library.

Four socio-cultural organisations -- Jatiya Kabita Parishad, Bangali Sangskriti Kendra, Bangabandhu Abritti Parishad and Daak Diye Jai -- organised the hour-long human-chain in front of the library from 10:30am, participated by their members as well as other eminent poets, writers, teachers, students and cultural activists.

The previous government of Awami League named the library after one of the country's most revered poets, late Begum Sufia Kamal.

Terming the government decision anti-people speakers at the protest programme demanded to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

TODAY'S POLLS TO GO AHEAD Taiwan president shot during campaign

REUTERS, Taipei

Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian survived an assassination attempt yesterday while campaigning on the eve of a presidential election, escaping with a bullet wound to the stomach.

Vice President Annette Lu was also wounded in the attack in the southern city of Tainan but was not badly hurt, officials said. The pair were rushed to hospital, but a hospital official said later that they had left to fly back to the capital.

Officials said today's election would go ahead as planned.

Chen and Lu had been travelling in an open-top jeep through Tainan streets, waving to crowds, when unknown assailants shot at them at 1.45pm local time.

Police said they believed two standard handguns had been used and at least two shots fired. They had yet to make any arrests.

China had no immediate com-

ment. Beijing regards Taiwan as a renegade province to be recovered, by force if necessary.

Chen, who was not wearing a bullet-proof vest, was rushed to



Chen Shui-bian

hospital in Tainan, his home town, where he received 14 stitches in an 11-cm long, three-cm deep wound. Television reports said the 54-year-old president was able to walk in for treatment.

Lu, 59, was hit in the right leg and had to be assisted but her condition was not serious, officials said.

It was unclear if the attack in a country where such political violence is virtually unknown would affect the election outcome. Analysts said most voters had already made their choice based on policy and were unlikely to be swayed by emotion now.

Chen's chief of staff, Chiou I-jen, told a news conference that the president had called for calm.

Both the DPP and the opposition Nationalists called off campaigning after the shooting.

Officials had voiced worries that

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

JSD activist murdered in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An activist of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) was murdered by unidentified assailants at village Kakiladah in Mirpur upazila of the district on Thursday night.

Police quoted family sources as saying a gang of seven stormed into the house of Osman Ali, 45, of the village at around 11:30pm and picked him up at gunpoint. The gang took him to a nearby field and slit his throat.

They said Osman was accused of murder in five cases filed with Mirpur, Bheramara and Daulatpur Police Stations.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy. A case was filed with Mirpur Police Station.

3 children buried alive in Jhenidah earthslide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Three children were buried alive under huge chunks of earth while playing in a roadside ditch at Solemanpur under Moheshpur upazila in Jhenidah Thursday afternoon.

They are Zohurul, 8, son of Joyal, Torikul, 10, son of Saker Ali, and Rafiqul, 10, son of Sukur Ali.

Local people and hospital sources said a side of the 15-foot-deep ditch suddenly collapsed and came crashing down on the children, killing them on the spot.

The bodies were later recovered by locals on the scene.

Police, local admn foil bid to expel Ahmadiyyas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Police and local administration have foiled an extremist bid to evict some 200 Kadiani families from Amtali upazila in Barguna.

Sources said the Amtali chapter of an extremist outfit called 'International Majlish-e-Tahaffuz-e-Khatm-e-Nabuwat' called for expulsion of Kadianis from the Amtali area unless they were officially declared non-Muslims by March 18.

Some 1000 local Kadianis, popularly known as Ahmadiyyas, were thrown into a state of panic after extremist leaders made the calls for their expulsion at religious gatherings on March 14 and 15.

The matter was brought to the notice of the upazila nirbahi officer

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

THE STRENGTH WITHIN World on tip of fingers

ASHFAQ WARES KHAN

Harbilash doesn't think about it, he doesn't want others to think about it. His world is just as fruitful as a craftsman at his local markets, with or without what others call his 'disability'.

For Harbilash, the world is on the tip of his fingers, both literally, and figuratively. The fingers, as he says, are the most important things in his life because they help him attach to the world, earn a living, and in effect, reinforce his belief that he can make it on his own as a craftsman despite what others call his disability -- his blindness.

Training other craftsmen and women these days and a businessman of handicrafts in his own right, Harbilash, a man in his late 20s living in Agailjhara union in Barisal, was afflicted with the curse of blindness at age two because of small pox.

From that point on, Harbilash felt his way the objects around him and started to depend more on his hands, especially on his hands, to feel the world.

The youngest in a family of nine, Harbilash's attempts to even help around the house were always resisted by his older siblings because they felt he was incapable of doing anything effective and it would be a waste of everyone's time.

"They all wanted me to act like beggars, and it didn't matter how many times I told them that I didn't feel sorry for myself, they only spoke of me as some one who is defective and a burden," says Harbilash.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

Bakhtiar at a centre for rehabilitation of the visually challenged at Agailjhara in Barisal makes a stool. He is a craftsman despite what others call disability.

Free occupied banks of Buriganga

Long march by activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists yesterday demanded immediate resumption of the government measures to free the illegally occupied banks of the river Buriganga.

From a long march in the morning from Sadarghat to Kamrangirchar, staged by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (BAPA), under the banner of 'Save the Buriganga', participants also demanded that the recommendations of a taskforce to restore navigability and smooth flow of water in the river be implemented immediately.

Eminent economist Professor Mozaffar Ahmed, convener of 'Save the Buriganga', inaugurated the long march, which was joined in by people from all walks of life.

Mozaffar Ahmed, while address

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

Environment activists under the banner of 'Save Buriganga Movement' march on the riverbank yesterday, demanding immediate resumption of a government drive to remove encroachment on the lifeline of Dhaka.

Fighting on for 'capture' of al-Qaeda's No. 2

AP, Islamabad

Pakistani forces yesterday stepped up an offensive they believe has cornered and perhaps wounded Osama bin Laden's deputy Ayman al-Zawahri, using artillery and helicopter gunships to attack militants near the rugged Afghan border.

Fighting spread yesterday to two more villages in South Waziristan, where hundreds of paramilitary forces began an operation against al-Qaeda and Taliban fugitives four days ago. Townspeople said heavy guns fired through the night and they saw jet fighters in the area, although it wasn't clear if the aircraft had

opened fire.

Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf said a "high value" target was believed trapped, and three senior Pakistani officials told The Associated Press late Thursday that intelligence indicated it was al-Zawahri.

Pakistani forces battled with hundreds of militants in five villages near South Waziristan's main town of Wana, pounding fortress-like mud-brick compounds as paramilitary forces began an operation against al-Qaeda and Taliban fugitives four days ago. Townspeople said heavy guns fired through the night and they saw jet fighters in the area, although it wasn't clear if the aircraft had

At least 41 people -- 15 soldiers

and 26 suspected militants -- were killed earlier this week in fighting in the area.

This semiautonomous tribal region, which has resisted outside control for centuries, has long been considered a likely hiding place for the top two al-Qaeda leaders -- but there was no indication bin Laden was with the Egyptian-born al-Zawahri. However, the two have travelled together in the past, and bin Laden and al-Zawahri entrenched suspects fought back. An intelligence official said "dozens" were killed Thursday, and some of their hide-outs had been flattened.

The United States has offered a \$25 million reward for information leading to al-Zawahri's capture. On

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

PBCP-Janajuddho claims it killed Mongla BNP leader

Two picked up as suspects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Janajuddho faction of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-J) in a fax message yesterday claimed responsibility for the Thursday night's murder of Mohammad Abdul Baten, president of Bagerhat district unit of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal.

The fax message signed by PBCP-J Khulna Bagerhat Regional Committee Secretary Ripon Ahmed and sent to Khulna Press Club at 7:05pm yesterday said MA Baten was killed for deceiving the toiling masses and for his immoral character. It also labelled him as a class enemy and a debauchee.

MA Baten, 50, was bombed to death in a drive-by attack near his Madrasah Road house in Mongla town at about 8:00 Thursday night. Witnesses said the attackers hurled a bomb at his head from a running motorbike when he was returning home alone from Mongla BNP office.

Besides being the president of Bagerhat district unit of the workers wing of ruling BNP, Baten was also the vice president of the district unit and president of Mongla upazila unit of BNP. He was the first elected chairman of Mongla

Pourasabha and held the office for 18 years in a row.

The assassinated leader was buried at his family graveyard following namaj-e-janaza at several places, including the district BNP office, after jum'a prayers yesterday.

Meanwhile, police on Thursday midnight arrested two young men, Shamin, 22, and Salam, 23, as suspects. Police also nabbed Rakibul Islam, 30, driver of the motorcycle used by killers, at Joymoni village under Mongla upazila early yesterday morning. The motorcycle (Kushtia-Ha-11-1744) was recovered from Boraitala an hour after the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Prayer Timings

March 20

	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-55	5-
30 Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-16	6-20
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation