



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia poses with the recipients of the Independence Award 2004 for photographs at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka yesterday.

Care (USA) president arrives today

President of the Care (USA) Peter Bell arrives in Dhaka today on a six-day official visit, says a press release.

He will meet the representatives of donors' community and share experience with the members of the civil society during his stay.

Peter Bell will also meet Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, minister for local government and rural development.

He will visit different programmes on prevention of HIV and see activities in different sectors for empowerment of women.

Peter Bell is accompanied by Barbara Murphy Warrington, senior vice-president, Human Resource, Deb Neuman, senior vice-president, External Relations, and Christina Chan, assistant to the president.

The Care is an international non-governmental organisation working in 71 countries to ensure better future of the poor people.

Slaughtered body recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the slaughtered body of an unidentified man from the bank of the Turag at Basilla in Mohammadpur yesterday morning.

The body of the victim, aged about 30 years, was sent to the morgue of Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Clad in brown shirt, chocolate trouser and black shoes, the body bore 13 stab injuries in chest and stomach while the neck was almost severed.

The morgue sources said the killers first strangled him with a white nylon rope and later slaughtered him.

Police suspected that the assailants might have killed him elsewhere and dumped the body in the secluded riverbank.

16 Bangladeshi fishermen freed from Indian jail

Legal aid bodies continue efforts to release 14 more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sixteen Bangladeshi fishermen have been released from Alipur jail of West Bengal, India, recently following an initiative by the two legal aid organisations of Bangladesh and India.

Efforts are underway to free 14 more Bangladeshi prisoners from the Tamluk jail in West Bengal.

The two organisations -- Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and the Legal Aid Services of West Bengal (LASWEB) -- have joined hands to provide legal support to citizens of one country who are languishing in jails of the other country without trial or after serving their terms.

A good number of Bangladeshi citizens have been languishing in Indian jails and Indians in Bangladesh prisons, said officials of the legal aid organisations at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) will help the Indian prisoners while the Legal Aid Services of West Bengal (LASWEB) will provide legal aid to Bangladeshi prisoners.

"We found the idea of initiating a legal collaborative mechanism in the face of increasing trafficking in women and children from Bangladesh to India as they often end up in jail custody but do not get any legal support," said LASWEB Chairman Justice DK Basu.

"Many Bangladeshi citizens have been languishing in various jails of West Bengal, Mumbai and Delhi," said BLAST Vice-Chairman Justice Naimuddin Ahmed. But he could not give the exact number of the prisoners.

DK Basu said there are 32 Bangladeshi prisoners in Tamluk jail in Medinipur district and 46 Indian prisoners in Jessore jail and 14 in Rajshahi jail.

The two organisations signed a

Memorandum of Understanding to work out a mutual collaboration on November 21 last year.

According to the MoU, they will provide legal aid to the prisoners without any fee.

"But the handing over of any prisoner will depend on mutual understanding and on proper inquiry by both the governments," Naimuddin said.

The organisations have facilitated the release of 16 Bangladeshi fishermen from Alipur jail on January 20 and they returned home on January 25.

These fishermen had been missing from their fishing trawler since October 2003, said Director AN Mahmood of BLAST.

The BLAST has also filed a writ petition for release of 13 Indians who have been languishing in Rajshahi jail even after they have completed their prison terms about one and a half years ago.

'8th amendment to constitution done from political point of view'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 8th amendment to the constitution was done not from religious but from political point of view, said the speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They said there was no necessity to declare Islam as the state religion of a country where the majority people are Muslim.

The discussion on 'Religious Freedom in Bangladesh' was organised by Odhikar, a human rights organisation in the city.

Presenting his theme paper on 'Religious Freedom', Farhad Mazhar, a noted columnist, said

religion was always misinterpreted in this country.

He said religion does not identify friends and foes rather it is a project for emancipation of the people.

The interest of human being should be put above all things, said the State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharef Hossain Shahjahan.

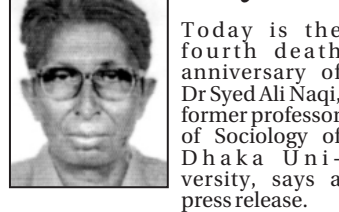
He said communalism cannot be eradicated in a day, rather it is a continuous process.

"We are unable to reply the propaganda against the Ahmadiya Community as all our publications have been banned," said MA Awal.

Women in Hindu religion are not considered as human being as they are deprived of the property of their father as well husband, said Ruma Halder.

General Secretary of Bangladesh Indigenous People's Forum Sanjib Drang urged everybody to recognise the rights of ethnic minority.

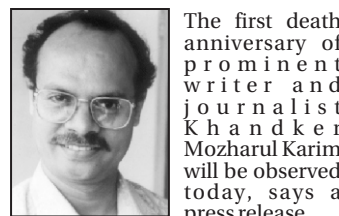
Death anniversary



On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be arranged at his daughter's residence at the Shaheed Giasuddin Ahmed Residential area on the Dhaka University campus.

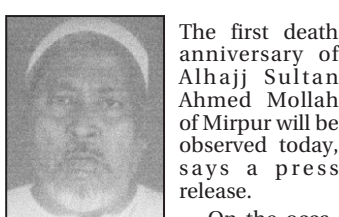
Relatives, students and admirers have been requested to attend the doa mahfil and pray for the eternal peace his soul.

Khandker Mozharul Karim



Mozharul Karim died of cardiac arrest on this day in 2003.

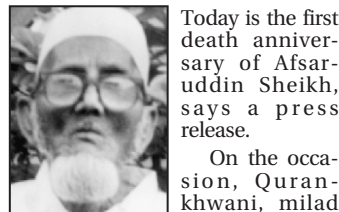
Sultan Ahmed Mollah



On the occasion, doa mahfil will be held at the Pallabi Jame Masjid after Asr prayers.

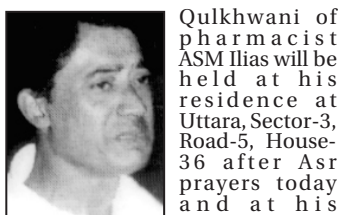
Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the mahfil and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Afsaruddin Sheikh



On the occasion, Quran-khwani, milad and distribution of foods among the destitutes have been arranged at his residence at 15/1 Farashganj Road in the city.

Qulkhwani



Ilias, former general manager of BCIC, died of cardiac arrest on March 23.

He left behind his wife, two daughters and one son.

DF Ahmed



He died of cardiac arrest at the Samarita Hospital in the city on Tuesday at the age of 82.

He was laid to rest at Mohammadpur graveyard after his namaz-e-janaza at Mohammadpur Jame Masjid on Wednesday.

Chehlum

Chehlum of Bashiruddin Ahmed Badshah Mia will be held at his village home Shinepukur at Dohar Upazila in Dhaka after Juma prayers today, says a press release.

Bashiruddin, maternal uncle of Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, died from old age complications at his Tajmahal Road residence in the city on February 5.

Tariqul Islam



On the occasion, Quran-khwani, milad mahfil, special prayers and distribution of foods among the destitutes, will be arranged.

Attempted rape case against Babul Hearing of remand prayer adjourned till Mar 30

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka Court yesterday adjourned till March 30 the hearing of a remand prayer of Nurul Islam Babul, chairman of Jamuna Group, accused in an attempted rape case.

Magistrate Mohammad Shamsul Alam of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court adjourned the hearing following a time petition by the defence lawyers.

In the petition, the lawyers said they filed a quashment petition on Wednesday with the High Court (HC) challenging the legality of the sections under which the charges were brought against Babul.

If the time petition is not granted it would be tantamount to contempt of court as the matter is pending with the HC, Barrister Aneek R. Haque told the court.

The HC fixed March 28 for the next hearing on the issue, he added.

Moreover, the sections mentioned in the FIR (First Information

Report) of the case were repealed by parliament last year, he said.

The prosecution side opposed the petition, saying that the defence lawyers could not bring a stay order from the HC. They prayed to the court for continuing the hearing on the issue. But the court adjourned the hearing.

Police yesterday produced Nurul Islam Babul before the court at 1:00pm amid tight security. The hearing took 45 minutes.

On March 23, police prayed for a seven-day remand to interrogate Babul, showing him an arrestee in the attempted rape case.

In the case filed with Badda thana, a woman alleged that she met Babul, also owner of the Bangla daily Dainik Jugantor, at his office in Motijheel on March 17 for a job and he took her to Kuril Bishwa Road by car with the help of an armed gang. She accused Babul of forcing her into a tin-shed house and attempting to rape her.

Advocates Syed Rezaur Rahman, Abu Sayeed Sagor, Quamrul Islam, Md Anwar Hossain, Abdul Bari and Nurul Islam Babul's wife Salma Islam appeared for the accused.



Ershad Shikder brought back to Khulna dist jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Nazrul made envoy to Kuwait

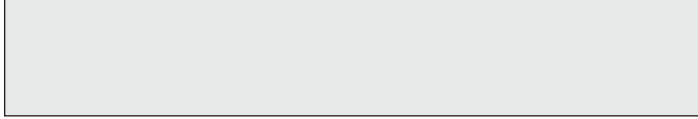
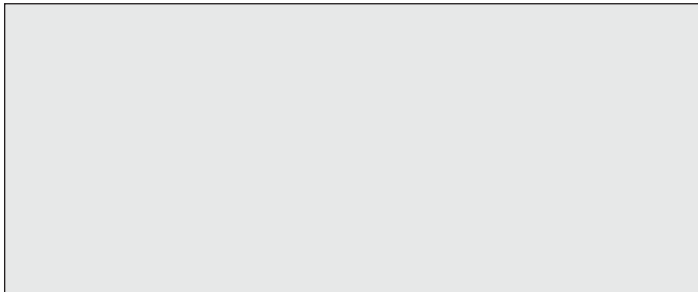
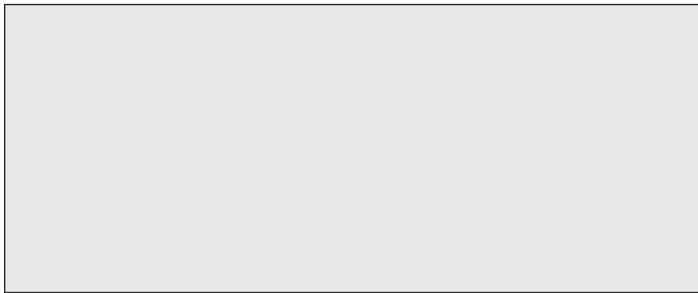
BSS, Dhaka

The government has appointed trade union leader Nazrul Islam Khan as ambassador to Kuwait, a foreign ministry press release said yesterday.

Nazrul is one of the founder leaders of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and held the post of secretary, labour affairs, when the party was established by late President Ziaur Rahman.

Later, he became office secretary of the party with the status of joint secretary general in 1994. He is also the founder general secretary of Bangladesh Jatiatabadi Sramik Dal that was established in 1979 and became president in 2003.

Born in a respectable family in Jamalpur in 1948, Nazrul built his career as an active trade unionist since 1968. Basically a metal worker, Nazrul is an MA in Political Science from Dhaka University in 1974 and held different positions in the regional and international trade union bodies.



DHAKA TODAY

Cultural function
In observance of the Independence and National Day, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy organises a discussion and cultural function. Venue: National Art Gallery of the academy, Segun Bagicha. Time: 5:30pm.

Musical function
Bangla Academy organises a session of recitation and music to mark the Independence and National Day. Venue: Nazrul Mancha of the academy. Time: 6:30pm.

Art competition
Spectrum International School organises a children art competition and its award giving ceremony to celebrate the Independence Day. Venue: School premises, Dhanmondi. Time: 9:30am.

Leo art competition
An art competition for the children, organised by Leo Club of Dhaka Faridabad, will be held. Venue: Kisholoy Kachikachar Mela, Gandaria. Time: 8:30am.

Award distribution
The distribution ceremony of Euro-Binodon Bichitra Award 2003 will be held with State Minister for Cultural Affairs Begum Selima Rahman as chief guest. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 6:00pm.

Liberation War Museum programme
As part of its 8th anniversary programme, Liberation War Museum organises dance, drama and musical function for the children. Venue: Museum premises, Segun Bagicha. Time: 10:00am.

Film show
Academy Film Society will screen two American films titled 'Blue Car' (2003) and 'Victory' (1981). Venue: Society auditorium, 21 /C Jigatola. Time: 3:30pm and 6:30pm.

Discussion
In observance of the Independence Day, Islami Parishad Bangladesh will hold a discussion. Venue: 567, West Nakhlaipara, Tejgaon. Time: 4:00pm.

Blood donation
Lions Club of Dhaka South, in association with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, organises a voluntary blood donation camp. Venue: 8, Gopibagh. Time: 8:00am.

Launching ceremony
Spirit Foundation organises the launching ceremony of a book on network marketing titled

Determination.' Venue: New China Town Chinese Restaurant, Mirpur Road. Time: 7:00pm.

BSSF discussion
Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramik Federation (BSSF) will hold a discussion to mark the Independence Day. Venue: 23/2, Topkhana Road. Time: 4:00pm.

Kite festival
A kite festival and kite flying competition, sponsored by The Oriental Bank to mark the Independence Day, will be held. Venue: University Ground near Doel Chatter. Time: 11:00am.

Cultural function
Bangladesh Mahila Parishad organises a cultural function. Venue: Sufia Kamal auditorium of the parishad, Segun Bagicha. Time: 4:00pm.

Film show
Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'The People vs Larry Flynt' (1996). Venue: Society auditorium, 21 /C Jigatola. Time: 6:30pm.

Launching ceremony
The launching ceremony of a book titled 'Biodiversity and Millennium Development Goals' authored by Dr. P Bala Krishna of IUCN will be held. Venue: FEJB conference room, National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Workshop
The opening ceremony of an international workshop on 'Participatory Action Research' organised by Research Initiatives, Bangladesh will be held. Venue: BRAC Centre Inn auditorium. Time: Mohakhali. Time: 9:30am.

Soft fair
The closing ceremony of the 5th Soft Fair will be held with Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan as chief guest. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 6:30pm.

Cleanliness campaign
The Gulshan Society in collaboration with Dhaka City Corporation and the Rover Scouts organises a day-long cleanliness campaign throughout the Gulshan area. Time: 8:00am.

Kennel club meet
A meeting of the governing council of Bangladesh Kennel Club will be held. Venue: House-8, Road-3, DOHS, Banani. Time: 4:30pm.