

PAHELA Boishakh IN PICTURE



PHOTO: PID

Wife of US Ambassador Harry K Thomas performs at a function at Sonargaon Hotel on the occasion of Pahela Boishakh on Wednesday. The foreign ministry arranged the function for foreign diplomats. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia also attended the programme.



PHOTO: STAR

Sammilita Sangskritik Jote at Dhanmondi Muktamancha



PHOTO: STAR

Chander Hat rally in front of the National Press Club



PHOTO: STAR

Women eating panta bhat (cooked rice soaked with water), a traditional breakfast, at Ramna Batamul



PHOTO: STAR

Jatiyatabdhi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha at Ramna Batamul

Bangabandhu greatest Bangali of all time

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the "Greatest Bangali of All Time" by a listener's poll conducted by the Bengali Service of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) on April 14.

The second place went to Nobel prize-winning poet and playwright Rabindranath Tagore, while rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam sealed the third spot.

Another Nobel laureate, economist Amartya Sen, was the only living person to feature among the top 20 at number 14. The survey put only one woman in the top 20, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, at number six.

Popularly known as Bangabandhu or Friend of Bengal, Sheikh Mujib was born on March 17, 1920, in Tungipara of Gopalganj district and spearheaded the country's independence struggle. He was assassinated along with most of his family members in a military putsch on August 15, 1975 at his residence.

His historic speech on March 7, 1971 changed the course of the struggle for independence in the then Pakistan and gave millions of Bangalis a new sense of direction. Sheikh Mujib possessed the rare quality of harnessing the awesome power of the masses that overthrew the military regime standing in the way of Bangladesh's liberation.

The former Bangladeshi president was one of the scores of politicians to figure prominently in the poll, including Ziaur Rahman, the assassinated husband of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

The BBC survey, beginning on February 11 and running through March 22, produced 140 names and the top 20 were compiled on points awarded according to listeners' order of preference. The greatest

Bangali was adjudged by the highest number of points accumulated from the preference the BBC received from its listeners, not from the percentage of their names proposed by listeners.

The BBC's Bengali Service has nearly 12 million listeners in Bangladesh and eastern India, home to some 250 million Bangla speakers.

Listeners were asked to nominate their five greatest Bangali. The names were announced through a countdown over 20 days that began on March 26, the Independence Day, and ended in the announcement of Sheikh Mujib's name on April 14, Pahela Boishakh.

The others are Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haq (fourth), Subhash Chandra Bose (fifth), Rokeya Shakhawat Hossain (sixth), Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose (seventh), Ishwar Chandra Bidyasagar (eighth), Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani (ninth), Raja Ram Mohan Roy (10th), Mr Nasir Ali Titumir (11th), Lalon Shah (12th), Satyajit Ray (13th), Prof Amartya Sen (14th), Martyrs of the Language Movement of 1952 (15th), Dr Mohammad Shahidullah (16th), Swami Vivekananda (17th), Atish Dipankar (18th), Ziaur Rahman (19th), and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (20th).

"Thousands participated in the survey from Bangladesh, eastern India and other countries of the world," says Sabir Mustafa, the head of BBC Bengali Service, while talking to The Daily Star yesterday. "The participants were asked to nominate five names chronologically. And from the response we believe that the participants were independently thinking about their nominations. It appears they were not driven by any political motive."

The top nominee bagged five points and the fifth nominee got one point. The BBC made their selection of the top 20 persons on the basis of the total points each of them polled.

He noted many respondents named Tagore, Bangabandhu and Golam Azam in the same nomination sheet. "This shows that the respondents were not considering the names on the basis of their political affiliation," Sabir noted.

He added that the point margin between Bangabandhu and Tagore was nearly double, Tagore got almost double the point of Nazrul and Nazrul got nearly double the points of Sher-e-Bangla. All other nominees have narrow difference of points.

Beyond the top 20, respondents picked Sheikh Hasina, Khaleda Zia, Kader Siddiqui, MAG Osmani, Chittaranjan Das and Sourav Ganguli, the current Indian national cricket team captain.

Most of the voters were from Bangladesh. "Bengali voters think very highly of Subhash Chandra Bose, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Bidyasagar, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Atish Dipankar," Sabir points out.

The Bengali Service chief also explains why they decided to run a survey based on the concept of greatest Bangali. "It is because the modern concept of media is to increase interactive programmes with listeners' inputs. Survey increases interactivity. Secondly, this survey outcomes resulted in programmes on the lives of these people. This is an enlightening experience for all. And finally, the listeners and the people feel proud of their heritage."

BBC Bengali Service borrowed the idea from BBC TV's last year's programme "Greatest Britons".

"Next, we have plans to hold a

survey on the century's greatest songs," Sabir reveals, "because our listeners love music and because the radio is a perfect medium for it."

Intensify movement to oust govt: Jalil

OUR CORRESPONDENT, KUSHITA

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil has called upon the party men to intensify their movement to oust the government by April 30.

"Days of the anti-people government are numbered. We must dislodge this government through a mass movement and rescue the countrymen from the misrule of BNP-Jamaat," he said while addressing a three-year council of Kushtia District Awami League at the local Shilpakala Academy auditorium yesterday.

Jalil said this government came to power with the pledge to ensure peace and remove poverty. But now it is indulging in terrorism, corruption and nepotism through politicisation of everything, he added.

Criticising the government for price-hike of essentials, fuel and fertilizer, Jalil said the common people are hard-hit by rising prices.

Chaired by district Convenor AL Alhaj Rashiduzzaman Dudu, the council was also addressed by Barrister Amirul Islam and Prof. Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin.

Unite to foil AL conspiracy: PM

OUR CORRESPONDENT, BARISAL

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday accused the main opposition Awami League of hindering the development activities.

"Remain vigilant against the anarchy of the Awami League," she said and called on all to unite to foil its conspiracy.

Addressing a rally at Bells Park Maidan in Barisal, the prime minister said the opposition was creating a law and order situation across the country as it became envious of the government that initiated many development activities.

The Awami League did nothing for the welfare of the people, she said, adding that it has now realised that it would lose its popularity if the development activities of the alliance government continued at the current pace.

"They (AL) had created a reign of terror across the country during their five-year rule and plundered country's wealth," Khaleda said.

"They also killed many people during their tenure and now trying to kill more in the name of movement," she said, adding that the opposition doesn't believe in democracy and rule of law.

"Bring them down to the lowest place in the next general election as they are conspiring against the country for power," Khaleda said.

Referring to the success of her government in the educational sector, the prime minister said, "The AL plundered the rice allocated for the 'food for education' programme and that is why we have decided to convert the

programme into 'money for education'."

Presided over by Mayor Mujibur Rahman Sanwar, the rally was also addressed by Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon, State Minister for Law Shahjahan Omar and leaders of the four-party alliance.

The prime minister also laid the foundation of a court building, Bangladesh Bank building, Women Technical Training Centre and Model High School in the district town.

Daily Star-CAMPE roundtable tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A roundtable on 'The role of the private sector in local resource mobilisation for basic education' will be held in the city tomorrow.

Jointly organised by The Daily Star and the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), the roundtable will begin at 5:00pm at Sonargaon Hotel.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman will be present as chief guest and noted educationist Prof. Mozaffar Ahmed as the inaugural speaker.

Representatives of different chambers, business leaders and educationists will take part in the roundtable.

The aim of the roundtable is to facilitate discussion of how best to leverage the private sector and business community to advance the nation's basic education agenda.

The discussion will focus on what role it is possible and desirable for the private sector to play in basic education, what the relationship between the government and the private sector in this endeavour should be, and what measures the government can take to sensitise private sector involvement.

At a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium, he said block supervisors of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and rice farmers across the country would be benefited from the rice knowledge bank which would be made available in computer disks and designated website.

Dr Noel, also the manager of the five-year PETRRA project supported by the Department for International Development (DFID) of the British government, said over a dozen of other innovative technological programmes and methods would be showcased at the two-day workshop to be held in the city on April 17 and 18.

In the upcoming workshop, a good number of NGOs and pro-agricultural institutions would come up with breakthrough innovations on different extension methods.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League took out a procession in the city on Wednesday welcoming the BBC listeners' poll survey that adjudged founding father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the "Greatest Bengali of All Time."

Rice Knowledge Bank at final stage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The poverty elimination through rice research assistance (PETRRA) project of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) is now at the final stage of developing an agricultural communication tool styled as 'Bangladesh Rice Knowledge Bank', said Dr Noel P Magor, IRRI representative in Dhaka, yesterday.

Organised jointly by the IRRI and the DAE, the workshop will be attended by Agriculture Minister MK Anwar as chief guest.

PETRRA Research Programme Manager Ahmad Salahuddin and Communication Manager Mamunul Haq were also present at the briefing.

Hasina to visit tornado-hit areas today

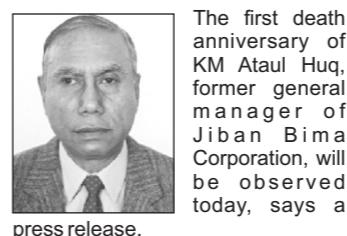
UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will visit tornado-hit areas of Netrakona and Mymensingh districts today.

She will first visit Mymensingh Medical College Hospital to see the injured in the morning. Later, she will visit Haluaghata and Gazir Vita in Mymensingh and Mouga and Medini in Netrakona Sadar to express her sympathy to the tornado-hit people.

Hasina will return to the capital at night.

Death anniversary

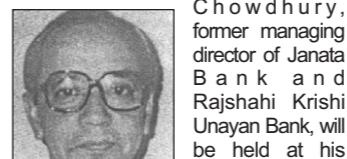


The first death anniversary of KM Ataul Huq, former general manager of Jibon Bima Corporation, will be observed today, says a press release.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Langalcourt in Laksam. His quirkhawni will be held at his home in Dhaka after Asr prayers on April 23.

The Geetkabi Sangsad and the Sangeet Parishad expressed condolences at his death.

Quirkhawni and distribution of food among the destitute have been arranged on the occasion.



Quirkhawni of Jalilur Rahman Chowdhury, former managing director of Janata Bank and Rajshahi Krishi Unayan Bank, will be held at his residence at Sheltach Nirlibili, 210/2 Elephant Road, after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

He died of a cardiac arrest on April 4 at the age of 64.

Afzalunnessa Anwara

Begum Afzalunnessa Anwara Hossain, wife of late Dr Syed Moazzem Hossain, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, died on Tuesday, says a press release.

Her quirkhawni will be held at her Dhannondi residence (House # 12, Road # 5) after Asr prayers today.

Road, after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

He died of a cardiac arrest on April 4 at the age of 64.

DHAKA TODAY

Film show

Bishwa Sahitya Kendra will screen an Indian film titled 'Mr. and Mrs. Iyer', directed by Aparna Sen. Venue: Bishwa Sahitya Kendra auditorium, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. Time: 5:00pm.

Movie show

Academy Film Society will screen two American films titled 'Driving Miss Daisy' (1989), and 'Lost in Translation' (2003). Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 3:30pm and 6:30pm.

HURDCO programme

The Annual Cultural Programme of HURDCO International School will be held. Venue: Ka-19/1 Basundhara Road. Time: 4:30pm.

Leo Club programme

The Charter presentation of Leo Club of Dhaka Central will be held under the auspices of Lions Club of Dhaka Central. Venue: Tajmahal Restaurant. Time: 4:00pm.

Get-together

Natun Katha, a national weekly, organises a get-together to mark the 25th year of its publications. Venue: 31/F, Topkhana Road. Time: 5:00pm.

Condolence meeting

Women for Women and Bangladesh Federation of University Women will hold a condolence meeting in memory

Blood donation

As part of its programme to celebrate Barshabor 1411, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) and Bangladesh Chartered Accountants Chhatra Parishad (BCACP) will jointly organise a voluntary blood donation camp. Venue: BCIC auditorium. Time: 5:00pm.