



Death anniversary of Ahmedul Kabir today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the first death anniversary of Ahmedul Kabir, a pioneering media personality and the chief editor of the Daily Sangbad.

Kabir, who was also the president of Gonoatantri Party, had a brilliant and chequered career as a journalist, politician and business leader to his credit.

Widely regarded as a progressive politician, he was an organiser of the War of Liberation and arrested by the Pakistan occupation army in 1971.

He was the pioneer of freethinking and made invaluable contribution to the nation at its crucial junctures.

Kabir was also elected a member of parliament twice from his home district Narasingdi.

Different organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes to mark his death anniversary.

The programmes include placing of wreaths at his graveyards, quarkhwanis, milad mahfil, and a discussion at Palash in Narasingdi.

The Sangbad will hold a memorial meeting at Shishu Academy auditorium in the city at 3.00pm tomorrow.

6 robbers get 32 yrs for killing retired official

COURT CORRESPONDENT

ADhaka court yesterday sentenced six robbers to 32 years' rigorous imprisonment for killing a retired anti-corruption official on February 27 last year.

The convicts are Zahangir Alam Ripon, Md Khurshed Alam Sumon, Ibne Shahadat, Md Sharif Khan, Saiful Islam Russel and Churnnu.

Judge Md Shamsul Alam Khan of the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court handed down the verdict at a jam-packed courtroom.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 17 out of 22 prosecution witnesses.

'Reconstitute anti-graft body'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 315 teachers of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday demanded reconstitution of the Anti-Corruption Commission with neutral persons and accused the government of politicising it.

In a joint statement, they alleged that those appointed in the newly created office were directly involved with the ruling coalition and the Zia Parishad.

Signatories to the statement include Prof SM Imamul Haque, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof Mohammad Hossain Monzur, Prof Harun-or-Rashid, Prof Mohammad Akhteruzzaman, Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, Prof Khondokar Bajlul Haque, Prof Sultana Shafi, Prof Moshihuzzaman and Prof Durgadas Bhattacharya.

In the case filed with the police, it has been alleged that a gang of robbers entered the house of the victim, Abdus Sattar Khan, at Mitali Road in the city's Dhanmondi area at about 7:15pm on February 27 last year and killed him. They also took away money and valuables.

The victim's son-in-law Engineer Mir Anwarul kabir filed the case the same day.

Soon after the incident, police arrested six robbers and they gave confessional statements to magistrates on different dates.

Postal operator on fresh remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Mahbub Ali, a postal operator at the General Post Office (GPO), arrested for faxing a threat to the US Embassy, was placed on a five-day fresh remand yesterday.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced Mahbub Ali before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka at 4:30pm on completion of a five-day remand and sought another seven-day remand for interrogation.

In the remand prayer, the investigation officer (IO) stated that Mahbub admitted his guilt and he needs to be quizzed further to find out the whereabouts of his accomplices and other teams involved in the incident.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza granted a five-day remand.

The CID arrested Mahbub on November 17 for faxing the threat to the US Embassy on November 9.



Malaysian Air Force Chief General Datuk Nik Ismail Bin Nik Mohammed called on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

KILLING OF ARMY MAN Security forces launch manhunt for criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Security forces have cordoned a vast area of Bandarban sadar and Roangchhari upazila to nab the criminals after the killing of a non-commissioned army officer by the tribal miscreants in the early hours of Monday.

Lance Corporal Abu Bakar was shot dead when he was in an army team on duty at a religious fair at a Buddhist temple at Jamchhari at about 1:30am.

Sources said members of the security force are continuing their massive search operation in suspected areas and vehicles.

They arrested eight indigenous people of whom three were released later.

Members of army and BDR have been deployed at important points and establishments of Bandarban hill district. They are also patrolling the town.

The tribal miscreants have attacked the members of the security forces three times in Roangchhari upazila in the last two months.

Our Manikganj Correspondent adds: the body of Abu Bakar was buried at his own village Sreebari

1,737 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,737 more people, including two listed criminals, on various charges from different parts of the country in the last 24 hours till 6.00am yesterday.

The law enforcers also seized 16 firearms and 57 rounds of bullet.

Weavers to launch agitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Sanjukta Tanti Samity will launch a month-long agitation programmes across the country if the government does not meet their 17-point demand including the distribution of VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) cards among the 15 lakh weavers by December 30.

The programmes include rallies, processions and demonstrations in 38 districts from January 1 to 30.

Besides, the leaders of the samity, a common platform of different weavers' associations, will hold discussions with political parties, professional groups and workers' organisations from February 1 to 12 to drum up support for their demands.

The programmes were announced from a rally at the Muktaganj in the city yesterday.

Earlier, hundreds of weavers from 38 districts observed a token hunger strike from 11:00am to 4:00pm demanding distribution of VGF cards and interest-free loans for their rehabilitation.

Samity President Sheikh Mohammad Jahad All told the Daily

they would meet Jute and Textile Minister Shajahan Siraj next month to discuss their problems. Samity General Secretary Shamsul Alam Zulfikure said weavers are passing their days in great hardship as huge quantities of yarns and clothes were totally damaged by flood. Leaders of different organisations including Sanjukta Sramik Federation, Bangladesh Sanjukta Krishak and Kathmajur Samity and Sanjukta Truck Paribhan Sramik Federation also joined the hunger strike.



Weavers stage a token hunger strike at Muktaganj in the city yesterday to press for their 17-point demand.



Syed Anisul Haq, president & managing director of Bank Asia, speaks at an Eye Camp at Tarail Pilot High School in Kishoreganj on Monday. Md Saiful Islam, upazila nirbahi officer, Shahjahan Talukder, general manager of Kishoreganj Palli Biddyt Samity, Mohammed Baquer, project director, Islamiya Eye Hospital, Dr Deen Mohammad, upazila health & family welfare administrator, and Satiya Ranjan Sahan, headmaster of the school, are also seen.

Free eye camp held in Kishoreganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the eve of its fifth anniversary, Bank Asia in collaboration with Islamiya Eye Hospital arranged an eye camp at Tarail Pilot High School in Kishoreganj on Monday.

A total of 900 students, teachers and staff of Tarail Pilot High School were offered free check-up for eye-sight problems and provided with prescriptions, medicines and spectacles, said a press release.

Two teams of Islamiya Eye Hospital, comprising experienced doctors and medics, under the supervision of Project Director Mohammed Baquer, conducted the daylong eye camp.

A similar camp was arranged at Malkhanagar in Munshigonj where approximately 800 students received free treatment for their eyesight problems.

The Bank Asia will also extend financial assistance for ophthalmologic operations on all the children of the country who are blind by birth.

It was recently decided by the board of directors of the bank as part of its Social Service Programme.

DHAKA TODAY

BELTA workshop

Bangladesh English Language Teachers' Association (BELTA) will hold its monthly English Language Teaching Workshop titled 'Teaching Writing with Pictures'. Venue: British Council Auditorium, Fuller Road. Time: 3.30pm. All English teachers welcome to attend.

Cultural function

Network for Ensuring Adolescents Reproductive Rights and Services (NEARS) organises a cultural function as part of its two-day conference. Venue: IDB Bhaban Auditorium, Agargaon. Time: 5.00pm.

Film show

Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen three films titled 'Tempress Moon' by Chen Kaige of China and 'Days of Being Wild' and 'Chungking Express' by Wong Kar Wai of Hong Kong. Venue: German Cultural Centre, Road-9, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.00pm, 5.15pm and 7.00pm.

Convocation

The 8th Convocation ceremony of North South University will be held with President Iajuddin Ahmed as chief guest. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Time: 10.30am.

Academy film show

Academy Film Society will screen a German film titled 'The Tin Drum' (1979). Venue: 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Installation ceremony

The installation ceremony of newly elected office bearers of Bangladesh Chartered Accountancy Chhatra Parishad will be held with Law Minister Moudud Ahmed as chief guest. Venue: Institution of Engineers' Auditorium, Ramna. Time: 3.30pm.

Gas export issue

FROM PAGE 12

made a Tk 1200 crore investment proposal and the Chinese government has also expressed willingness to invest in Bangladesh in a big way for methanol production and export.

"The pressure for gas export is no more there. As the demand for gas grew in domestic market, the IOCs are now feeling encouraged to go for fresh explorations," the state minister told The Daily Star in an exclusive interview at his Banani residence in the capital.

Explaining why gas demand has shot up, Mosharraf said, industrial investment has risen by 23 percent this year compared to last year's. In addition, because of the prevailing power disruptions, many industries are now generating captive power up to 200 mw using gas, he mentioned.

Mosharraf said the annual increase in domestic gas requirement was projected at seven percent a couple of years back but now it has shot up to 13-14 percent. In such a situation, the government resorted to buying Niko-Bapex's gas without finalising the price.

"They're asking for \$2.35 per cubic feet of gas and we're offering them \$2.10. As there is gas crisis, we started taking gas from them upon a written understanding that price would be fixed later," the state minister explained.

Unocal, which had been dragging foot over new gas production saying it would go for further exploration and production if export was allowed, has also changed its position. It has dropped the export agenda that drew public criticism and pushed ahead a gas purchase agreement.

Under its November 8 agreement for supplying gas from Bibiyana field where Unocal invested about \$230 million, the American company will sell 250 mcmcf to Petrobranga from October, 2006, 375 million cfm from December, 2007 and 493 mcf from December, 2008.

Discovered in mid-1998, Bibiyana gas field in Block No 12 situated in Sunamganj has a recoverable reserve of 2.4 TCF (trillion cubic feet) gas.

But Unocal has incorporated a clause that gives the company the right to cease gas supply to the government if Petrobranga fails to pay bills for five months at a stretch. Asked about providing such a right to an IOC, and losing sovereignty over the country's own natural resource, Mosharraf quips, "If

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