



Prof Rehman Sobhan addresses the launching ceremony of a book titled 'Muslim Revolutionaries and the British' at Bangladesh Enterprise Institute in the city yesterday.

'Muslim Revolutionaries and the British' launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A book titled 'Muslim Revolutionaries and the British' by late Khondker Ali Afzal was launched at a function at Bangladesh Enterprise Institute in the city yesterday.

The 338-page book, published by the APPL Publishing House, documents the Muslim history of Indian Subcontinent from 1914 to 1919.

Khondker Ali Afzal, a former secretary of the Bengal Legislative Assembly and joint secretary of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, started writing the book in 1959.

It took long 36 years to get the book published as the author himself, who died in 1969, could not publish it during his lifetime, said one of the daughters of the author and former advisor to the caretaker government Rokia Afzal Rahman.

"We the sisters and brothers felt it our obligation to publish our father's work," she said, adding, "But we had to work for last four to five years collecting necessary and relevant information to make the work complete."

The work narrates the Muslim history of a certain period in which adequate documents and books are not available, she said.

There are many conventional histories on the period, but Khondker Ali Afzal has covered a part of the history that has been little known, although the author was not a historian but a Barrister, said eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain.

It is not correct to say that democracy in our country is nascent, as former Muslim League member Hussain Shahid Suhrawardy spoke for democracy in the National Assembly of undivided Bengal back in 1921, he added.

Turning to the Bengal Legislative Assembly, to which Afzal has been a witness, one may see the level of wisdom and depth of content in the parliamentary discussions, Dr Kamal said.

Khondker Ali Afzal was a person of great respectability, decency and integrity, said Prof Rehman Sobhan, adding that the book bears the author's labour and scholastic merit.

The work provides an insight into the contemporary history and international trends, he added.

Former ambassadors and foreign secretaries AKM Moshed and Farooq Sobhan, former ambassador Arshaduzzaman and APPL Managing Director Shahina Rahman also spoke.

Author's family members Bilquis Afzal, Nilofer Afzal, Mahboob Afzal, Brigadier Mansur Afzal, Asma Afzal, Massarat Khan and Khadija Afzal were present on the occasion.

Attack on BDB activists condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) President Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday condemned the attack on BDB activists in Thakurgaon on Wednesday allegedly by BNP activists.

He said the attack proves that BNP doesn't encourage the politics of talents. BDB doesn't believe in the politics of hatred and muscle power, he added, expressing his hope that people will soon protest the government's criminal activities politically.

He also said despite all these tortures, BDB won't be dissolved from the people's mind. Dr Chowdhury thanked the people of Thakurgaon for resisting the BNP activists. He demanded immediate release of the BDB activists and expressed sympathy towards the injured party men.

Govt's improper plans cause environmental degradation

Speakers tell Bapa seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists and academicians at a seminar yesterday said the government's improper development plans are causing environmental degradation depriving people of their basic rights to safe living.

The successive governments only considered economic growth for development, but never thought of the environmental issues as its component, they said.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), in association with Nagorik Uddog, organised the seminar on "Environment and Human Rights" at the city's VVA auditorium on the second day of its 5-day programme marking the World Environment Day on June 5.

"If we inquire about the success stories of the country in the last 3 decades, the experts would surely note micro-credit and women advancement, but not the environment," Professor Mahbuba Nasreen of Dhaka University said.

Every aspect of environment, ranging from forestry, soil, water and food to agriculture, was degraded seriously in the previous years, she said.

The pressure of population on one hand and the commercial attitude of the policy makers in the other are mainly responsible for this, she added.

"Our future generation has to pay high cost in the long run if we artificially moderate the nature," Professor Mahbuba said, adding the rate of natural disasters and extreme heat in the recent time simply indicate the danger ahead of us.

Speaking as the chief discussant, Mahbuba noted the use of chemical fertilisers and insecticides has

increased to 45 percent, while the forestland decreased to 6 percent in the last one decade.

The government, however, claims the forest land in the country is 12 percent.

Presiding over the seminar, Bapa Vice President Professor Kazi Modina said the status of water, especially in the northern districts, is very vulnerable and the government has to take immediate steps to solve the crisis.

"Due to too much use of underground water, the layer is going down that might cause disaster in the near future," she warned.

She also called upon all to come forward and raise awareness against the speedy expansion of salinity of soil in the southern districts and find out accurate solution.

Presenting the keynote paper, Shawkat Hasan, programme officer of Nagorik Uddog, said 'Sound and Safe Environment' has gained the status of international law in a conference in Sweden in 1972, but it is rarely implemented.

He blamed the monopolistic attitude of the developed countries in imposing the industrialisation that cause environmental pollution to the developing countries.

Rakibul Islam, Zahedur Rahman, Md Sarwar, Khan Abdur Razzak and Hasibur Rahman from various environmental and human rights organisations also took part in the discussion.

Manjoor Rahim new envoy to Germany

UNB, Dhaka

The government has decided to appoint AB Manjoor Rahim, currently ambassador to the Union of Myanmar, as ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany.

A career diplomat of the 1979 batch of the BCS (Foreign Affairs) cadre, AB Manjoor Rahim had his education in the University of Dhaka with BA (Honours) and MA in History.

Rahim served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka as well as the Bangladesh missions in Rome, Seoul, Stockholm and Jeddah and the Bangladesh Permanent Mission in New York in various capacities.

He has been serving as the ambassador of Bangladesh to Myanmar since September 2002, says a Foreign Ministry press release here yesterday.

Babar joined the Pakistan Foreign Service in 1980 and held various diplomatic assignments in Pakistan missions abroad. He has been serving as Director General in the Pakistan Foreign Ministry since December 1, 2003.

WEATHER TODAY

Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Sylhet division and weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country till 6:00pm today.

Moderate to severe heat wave may continue over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Khulna divisions and the regions of Majeedee Court during the period, Met Office said predicting slight rise in day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 43.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 22.6 degree Celsius at Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:43pm today and rises at 5:11am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

TRI-NATION GAS PIPELINE PROJECT Ministries drag foot on filing reports

UNB, Dhaka

The four line ministries are yet to submit their reports to the energy ministry on the proposed tri-nation gas pipeline project.

Under the project, a 950-km pipeline will be built from Myanmar to carry its natural gas to India through Bangladesh territory.

An inter-ministerial meeting on May 16 had decided that after examining different issues linked with the proposed tri-nation gas pipeline project, the commerce, power, home and foreign ministries would prepare their reports and send those to the energy ministry within a week.

The four ministries had also been asked to clarify their views on the three conditions set by Bangladesh for India to agree before signing the project agreement.

The conditions are allowing Bangladesh to import electricity from Nepal and Bhutan through Indian territory, allowing Bangladesh to export goods to the two landlocked Himalayan kingdoms through Indian corridors and reducing trade imbalance between Bangladesh and India.

The deadline for submission of the reports of the relevant ministries expired on May 23, but none

of them sent any reports to the energy ministry.

State Minister for Energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain yesterday told reporters that his ministry would proceed with the issue on the basis of the proceedings of the earlier meeting.

"It is unfortunate...none of the line ministries has submitted any report to the energy ministry on the issue", he said.

He said the next inter-ministerial meeting will be held sometime in the middle of this month after his return from a week-long tour abroad.

Earlier on January 13, Bangladesh, India and Myanmar had signed a joint statement at a ministerial meeting in Yangon to go ahead with the proposed pipeline project.

At that time, India had reportedly agreed to accept all the three conditions set by Bangladesh for a swap.

Later, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was due to be signed by the three nations on February 25 in Dhaka. But Bangladesh deferred the schedule, saying that it was not prepared to sign the MoU.

Reform in laws a demand of time: Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said the government is going to reform the laws to meet the demand of time.

"Our desperate eagerness to make the judicial system more dynamic and smooth leads the

Rejoinder

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Senior Jail Superintendent of Kashimpur Central Jail-2 in Gazipur has denied the allegations that the deputy jailer and the jail guard had been torturing convict Shariful Islam for the last three months.

In a rejoinder to a report published in The Daily Star on May 27 under the headline 'Prisoner complains of torture in Kashimpur Jail', Senior Jail Super Bishwanath Das said the report is false and baseless.

In the rejoinder issued on May 28, the senior jail super said that the convict was brought to Kashimpur Central Jail-1 on February 25 and then to Kashimpur Central Jail-2 on April 20 from the Dhaka Central Jail as he misbehaved with other prisoners and engaged himself in anti-administrative activities there.

Our Reply:

Our report is based on the statement of Shariful Islam, a convict in an arms case and accused in another arms case, given before the Judge Md Shamsul Alam Khan of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court on May 26.

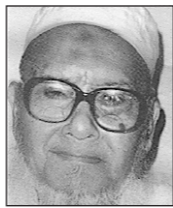
Meanwhile, the same court on May 28 ordered the senior superintendent of Dhaka Central Jail to investigate the allegations that a deputy jailer of Kashimpur jail in Gazipur tortured the convict.

The court also directed the superintendent to submit the probe report by June 9.

In his order, the judge also said the allegations against the two are shocking, adding that physical torture of the convict is illegal and unacceptable.

We stand by our report.

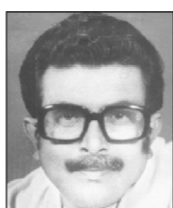
Death Anniversary



Today is the second death anniversary of Professor Md Azgar Ali, a Language Movement veteran, says a press release.

On the occasion, a discussion will be held on his life at Bond-Darul Sunna Alim Madrasa in Sharishabari and Adhyapak Azgar Ali Granthagar will be opened at 10:00am today. A doa mahfil will also be held at his village home Adibari Tarakakadi after Juma prayers.

Sayed Golam Kibria



Today is the 9th death anniversary of journalist Sayed Golam Kibria, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and discussion will be held at his residence at Anandanagar, Badda, in the city today.

government to take initiative for reforming the laws," he viewed.

The Minister was addressing the concluding session of a two-day workshop on 'Reforming Criminal Justice: A Legislative Initiative' organised by the Law Ministry in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

"No reform can bring about a positive change over the night, so we have to be patient for the expected result of the proposed reform in laws," he mentioned.

"For the first time ever, the present government has introduced a tradition of open discussion prior to passing a bill in the country," he said, adding, the government also continues its monitoring on the practical implementation after passing a bill.

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar urged the need for strong investigation system saying the investigating officials must have enough opportunities to discharge their duties properly.

UNDP Residence Representative Jorgen Lissner, Law Ministry Secretary Alauddin Sardar and Additional Secretary Kazi Habibul Awal spoke on the occasion.

Obituary



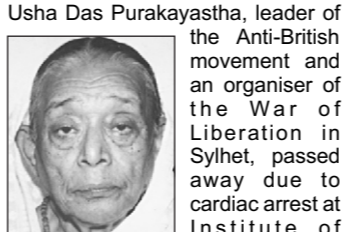
Bangladesh Medical College Hospital at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday at the age of 37, says a press release.

Comrade Yaas Vanu was the wife of Shahin Rahman, Executive editor of the weekly 'Akotat'.

She was buried at the Azampur graveyard.

CPB President Manzurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Muzahidul Islam Selim expressed deep shock at the death of Comrade Yaas Vanu.

Usha Das Purakayastha



Cardiovascular Diseases in the city yesterday at the age of 79, says a press release.

She left behind her son and five daughters.

Chehlum

Chehlum of Alhaj Md Jalal Uddin will be held at his home at 314, Askona, Uttara today, says a press release.

He died of a cardiac arrest on April 27 at the age of 74. He is survived by his wife, five sons and one daughter.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the chehlum.



Advocate Sigma Huda speaks at a discussion organised by the South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR), Bangladesh chapter, at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Loss of democracy in Nepal regretted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday expressed their great regret at the loss of democracy in Nepal.

They said Nepal's democracy has suffered a serious setback through the action of King Gyanendra in February this year.

They also blamed the rise of Maoist terrorism as having contributed to the hampering of the progress of democracy.

The speakers also held the view that the infighting between the political parties and the rivalry between the leaders allowed the king to take anti-democracy measures.

They observed that the countries in the South Asian region should learn a lesson from the recent political developments in Nepal to safeguard democracy.

Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, who recently visited the kingdom as a member of an SAHR delegation, was the main speaker at the discussion organised by the South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR), Bangladesh chapter, at the National Press Club in the city.

Founder-secretary general of Saarc Abul Ahsan, Ambassador Waliur Rahman, deputy chief of Royal Nepalese Embassy Yug Nath Paudel, Prof Ajoy Roy, Hamida Hossain, Elina Khan, Advocate Adilur Rahman and Advocate Subrata Chowdhury took part in the discussion yesterday, with Advocate Sigma Huda, also a member of SAHR, in the chair.

In his lecture on 'Political events in Nepal and implications for South Asia', Mahfuz Anam said that the takeover of political power by the king of Nepal in February was a major setback to democracy in that country.

He said Nepal has witnessed changes of 11 governments since the establishment of constitutional monarchy in the 1990s.

The monarchy in Nepal took the opportunity of intra-party feud and weaknesses in the political forces, he said, adding that the fundamental rights were suspended and press freedom was severely curtailed.

"The other countries in the region should learn a lesson from the failure of democratic political forces in Nepal," Anam added.

During the visit in April, the SAHR delegation members met about 35

dignitaries, including high government officials, army chief, civil society members, lawyers, human rights activists, professionals and political leaders to have an idea about the existing situation in Nepal.

Yug Nath Paudel, deputy chief of the Nepalese Embassy, said some provisions, including fundamental rights of the people, had been suspended when a state of emergency was declared for only a three-month period.

However, the fundamental rights of the people have been restored with the withdrawal of state of emergency, he said.

He also said Nepal is committed to democracy and human rights.

Sigma Huda said the recent political upheaval is not only a problem in Nepal but also a great concern for the South Asia region. The SAHR was established to monitor the human rights situation in the region, she said.

Abul Ahsan stressed the need for consolidating democracy in South Asia on the basis of lessons learnt from Nepal.



Shahadat Chowdhury, editor of the Weekly 2000, cuts a cake on the occasion of eighth founding anniversary of the weekly at a ceremony at its office in the city yesterday.

DHAKA TODAY

Discussion

Save The Youth Forum organises a discussion and an art competition for the children with Law Minister Moudud Ahmad as chief guest. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy Premises. Time: 4:00pm.

Session

A session of Khelaghar Child Parliament 2005 will be held. Venue: Bangladesh Family Planning Auditorium, 2 Naya Paltan. Time: 9:00am.

Meeting

A meeting of the old students of Siddheshwar High School (1972 Batch) will be held. Venue: Peshita Restaurant, Kakrail. Time: 4:00pm.

Painting exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of a solo exhibition of paintings by Nazmul Ahsan will be held. Venue: Alliance Francaise Gallery, Dhanmondi. Time: 6:00pm. The exhibition will remain open till June 16 from 9:00am to 12:00noon and from 5:00pm to 9:00pm daily.

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen two films titled 'Monster's Ball' and 'The Interpreter'. Venue: Academy Auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 3:30pm and 6:30pm.

DHAKA TOMORROW Reunion

A reunion of former students of the Engineering Education and Career Programme will be held. It will be rounded off with a cultural show. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

Roundtable

Unity for Political Reforms organises a roundtable on the reforms of the caretaker government. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

Founding anniversary

The seventh founding anniversary of British Council Young Learners' Centre will be held. The programme includes mina bazar, drama, magic show and dance party. Venue: 5, Fuller Road. Time: 10:00am.

Reception

Centre for Women Journalists, Bangladesh will accord a reception to Nurjahan Begum, editor of the Begum, to mark her 80th birth anniversary. Venue: VIP Lounge of the National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

KOIRA ACID ATTACK Home Ministry asks Khulna SP to supervise investigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Identifying the 'Koira Acid Attack Case' as the most sensitive one, the Home Ministry directed Khulna police super to supervise its investigation properly. A three-member team was formed yesterday to monitor investigation of the case and guide the investigation officer (IO) with necessary instructions.

Headed by Additional Police Super Md Moniruzzaman, the two other members of the team are ASP of Dakop circle AKM Razzak and Officer in Charge of Paikgachha thana Enamul Huq.

The latest development of the investigation was reported to the monitoring cell of the ministry yesterday. None but the chairman of Amadi Union Parishad Shah Ebadat Hossain was arrested as of yesterday.

The UP chairman is the prime accused in the acid attack on the family members of Mostafa Molla, a fish trader, on last Friday. The attack claimed the life of his eight-month old baby Mukta and injured wife Rexona Parveen and their son Badsha.

The injured are undergoing treatment in the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The complainant of the case Mostafa was threatened with death by the absconding accused of the case. "I am feeling insecure," Mostafa told this correspondent yesterday.