

MOMIN MURDER OC Rafiq on 4-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT Suspended officer-in-charge (OC) of Motijheel Police Station AKM Rafiqul Islam, the prime accused in the college student Kamrul Islam Momin murder case, was placed on a four-day remand yesterday.

Metropolitan Magistrate Abdur Rouf Khan issued the order when the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced the suspended OC before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, Dhaka under tight security.

On October 19, Assistant Superintendent of Police Kazi Abdus Sabur submitted a prayer to the CMM's Court for a five-day remand of the accused.

The defence lawyers submitted a petition for cancelling the remand prayer and said their client was falsely implicated in the case as part of conspiracy to harass him.

Opposing the petition for cancellation of the remand prayer, the prosecution said a gang of criminals killed Momin following the direction of OC Rafiq.

The accused needs to be quizzed to find out vital clues about the killing and the whereabouts of his other accomplices, the prosecution added.

After hearing the two sides, the court granted four-day remand for the accused OC.

Rafiqul Islam was sent to jail on October 16 after he surrendered to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka seeking ad-interim bail.

Kamrul Islam Momin, 22, a student of Dhaka Commerce College, was gunned down in front of his Ibrahimpur house on September 13.

Momin's father Abdur Razzak filed a murder case with the Kafrul Police Station accusing OC Rafiq and 27 others while police have so far arrested 13 people.

Hasibul Haq Johnny, one of the accused, made a confessional statement before a magistrate on September 22.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police closed the accused OC on September 15 and suspended him on October 2 for not reporting to the Rajarbagh Police Lines.

AL to make country hunger-free, if voted to power

Leaders pledge at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday pledged to make the country free from hunger and poverty by developing its agricultural sector if it is voted to power again.

Speaking at a seminar, the AL leaders said they will take steps to ensure adequate supply of seed, fertiliser, diesel and other inputs at a reasonable price to the farmers.

The seminar titled 'Crisis in agricultural sector and failures of the alliance government: Future directives' was organised by the AL at the National Press Club in the city.

"We will definitely fulfill our pledges if we return to power again," said AL Presidium Member Motia Chowdhury.

She said whenever the BNP comes to power the suffering of the farmers increases and the production decreases.

"The country achieved self-sufficiency in food during our regime," said Motia, a former agriculture minister.

She said in stead of developing this sector, the alliance government has increased the price of seed, fertiliser and diesel.

In a keynote paper, Dr Mohammad Abdur Razaque MP said the coalition government has completely failed to maintain the continuity of successes in the agricultural sector that the AL government achieved.

The price of fertiliser has been raised by 80 percent and the price of diesel has been doubled during the coalition government, he added.

"The government claims that it has increased agricultural subsidy, but the farmers are not getting its benefits," Dr Razaque said, adding that the real beneficiaries are the importers and dealers.

"Looting is going on in the name of subsidy," he said, adding that the alliance government has no control over market.



Economist Dr Atiur Rahman speaks at a seminar titled 'Crisis in agricultural sector and failures of the alliance government: Future directives' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

The government has also destroyed the jute sector by closing down different mills, he asserted.

AL Presidium Member Abdur Razzak said the alliance government is pursuing a policy of maintaining food deficiency in the country so that they could get foreign aid for looting.

Razzak, a former water resources minister, laid emphasis on co-operative basis cultivation for boosting agricultural production.

Another AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed said the alliance government has failed to achieve a single success in agricultural sector, as there is no inter-ministerial coordination within the government.

Tofail, a former industry minister, said the coalition government has made the country dependent on the imports.

Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, a former state minister for planning, said the government has completely failed to reduce the price of agriculture related materials due to immense

corruption in this sector.

The farmers are not getting even the production cost of their produces due to toll collection by loyalists to the alliance although the price of all essentials has been hiked.

Key-discussant M Anisuzzaman said the present government has no interest in the development of agricultural sector.

Rather, they have pushed back the success that the AL government achieved," he added.

Economist Dr Atiur Rahman said the BNP government has made the agriculture sector a failed one whenever they came to power and for this the unemployment problem has worsened in the country.

He apprehended a severe famine in the Monga-hit areas within one and half months if the government does not take appropriate measures.

Prof Abdus Sattar Mandol, a former member of the planning commission, said the growth in the agriculture sector has been reduced by one to two

percent whenever the BNP comes to power.

"There is a possibility of food crisis in the Boro season due to the governments' mismanagement in this sector," he said, adding, "If this situation continues, the country will be turned into a no-income one very soon."

Former vice-chancellor of Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University Prof Shahadat Ullah said the alliance government has destroyed the agricultural education through massive appointments of teachers in two agriculture universities on political consideration.

AL Organising Secretary Abdul Mannan said the present government did not take any measures to increase food production.

"We have to save the farmers from the ugly grip of the coalition government to save the country," said President of Krishak League Dr Mirza Abdul Jalil.

Hasina offers fateha at mazar of Bangabandhu amid tight security

BDNEWS, Tungipara

Leader of the opposition in Parliament and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina offered fateha at the mazar of her father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara in Gopalganj yesterday amidst a tight security.

Hasina, now in Tungipara on a three-day visit, placed wreaths and offered munajat at the mazar and attended an iftar party at the Bangabandhu Bhaban.

She will exchange opinion with people from all walks of life from her constituency and participate in party functions.

Hundreds of people braving odd weather stood by the roadsides on her way to Tungipara and greeted her.

Security was beefed up at the mazar area. A metal detector was set up and intelligence agencies were kept on sharp vigil.

Earlier, Hasina urged the people to build up united resistance to rid the country from the BNP-Jamaat alliance misrule.

She was speaking at a roadside rally at Srinagar in Munshiganj on her way to Tungipara from Dhaka.

Helpless and half-fed lakhs of people in the northern districts are slowly embracing death but the government seems indifferent to these starved people. Sukumar Ranjan Ghosh chaired therally.

UN Day today

UNB, Dhaka

The UN Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere across the globe today to mark the 60th anniversary of the world body.

In a message on the occasion, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia sought collective will and concrete action to build a global partnership under the UN umbrella for a better future for the coming generations.

The international community is reminded of the challenges that they face today, ranging from poverty and deprivation to environmental degradation and extremism, she said.

"We need the UN more than ever to tackle various issues of global concern," the prime minister said, renewing the commitment of the people of Bangladesh and its government to the objectives and principles of the UN charter.

BREAST CANCER

AMCH releases poster today

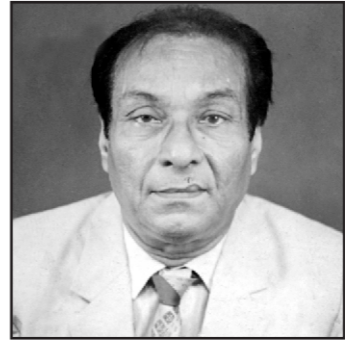
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH) will release a special poster today to create awareness about breast cancer.

National Professor Dr M R Khan will release the poster as chief guest at a function at the auditorium of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) Bhaban in Dhanmondi at 11:00am.

DAM President Kazi Rafiqul Alam will preside over the function.

The four-colour attractive poster contains a slogan 'Breast cancers can be completely cured' along with some simple awareness messages.



Death anniversary

Today is the seventh death anniversary of Justice Amin-Ur-Rahman Khan, former law secretary and member of the Law Commission, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held after Asr prayers at his Mirpur residence.

Abu Reza Khan, member (engineering), Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority, is his son.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Ziaur Rahman (Zubair), former chief purser of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, will be held at his residence at Dhanmondi in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow (Tuesday), says a press release.

Zubair passed away due to prolonged illness in Toronto, Canada on October 13 at the age of 60.

He left behind his wife, three daughters and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death.

His body is due to arrive this morning.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held after Zohr prayers at Taqwa mosque near Dhanmondi Road No 32 bridge.

He will be laid to rest at the Mirpur martyred intellectuals' graveyard the same day.

Clarification, our reply

FROM PAGE 1

"I would like to state that there was no graft case about Kafco against me. The proposal of Kafco was examined by a committee comprising six secretaries headed by the then finance secretary and as the industries secretary I simply submitted the proposal of the committee for the approval of the vice-president/president as recommended by the committee. As such there is no question of any allegation of bribery against me and my integrity and moral character were above any question.

"I have never taken side in favour of gas export. On the contrary, the export debate was there before I took over the charge of the Energy Division." Mosharraf said he constituted two national committees in this connection.

"I have never advocated in favour or against the export of gas except advocating acceptance of committee reports. The committee recommended, to encourage the exploration of new gas fields, IOCs (international oil companies) may be allowed to export their portion of gas which we purchase at international price in foreign currency."

He recalled The Daily Star repeatedly wrote false and fabricated information on Niko.

"The JVA (Joint venture agreement) with Niko was approved by the then prime minister on June 6, 2001 based on an MoU signed on August 23, 1999 and on the basis of the report given in 2000 by a committee identifying abandoned gas field... The incumbent government reviewed and re-examined the contract and after vetting from the finance and law ministries the prime minister again approved the JVA on March 18, 2003," he pointed out.

"Regarding the payment of \$4 million to Niko, this is nothing but payment on account for the gas already supplied by Niko to Petrobranga," he said. Mentioning acute gas crisis of 2004, he added, "In the greater interest of the country and to avoid closure of the major industries we took gas from Canadian company Niko."

He said a committee headed by the ministry's additional secretary was assigned to fix Niko's gas price. During negotiations, the government indicated maximum of \$2.1 per mmmcf but Niko insisted on minimum \$2.35.

"After they supplied gas for more than two months, payment of \$4 million was made on account which was much lower than \$2.1 per mmmcf, otherwise they would have stopped gas supply. So this cannot be considered illegal payment," he pointed out.

"The supply of the 19km pipe by Titas to Niko was given on loan so that gas from Tengritila, if successfully extracted, could be supplied to Jalalabad gas for national grid to avoid gas crisis. I understand Niko has already returned the pipe to Titas. The order for giving the pipe to Niko on loan was given by Petrobranga and not by me."

Mosharraf said he always laid stress on equipping Bapex and giving it more resources. "There was no block and gas field available for Bapex. I have given blocks No. 8 and 11 and four developed fields for production to Bapex. It is only during my tenure that full initiative was taken to revitalise Bapex to increase the total gas production," he added.

On pipelines, he said he initiated the projects for Ashuganj-Manohardi connection, Dhanua-Aminbazar and Dhaka city circular pipelines.

Petrobranga companies' boards were headed by the secretary and additional secretary of the ministry or the chairman of Petrobranga. He claimed, "There was no question of any interferences by myself or any alternative powerhouse."

"Any delay in implementation of any project was responsibility of either Petrobranga or the boards of the companies."

He noted that there was shortage of trained manpower in Petrobranga when he assumed office. He arranged direct recruitment of top level executives on market based salary and benefits by constituting a powerful selection board through advertisements in the newspapers.

He rejected the allegation of hefty amount of money being siphoned off on a monthly basis saying, "I categorically reject about my involvement in any corruption in any manner."

Claiming his success he said he had successfully taken short-term, medium term and long-term measures for gas production and distribution. "Nearly 4,000km transmission and distribution lines were constructed... Besides all the acts, rules and regulations concerning the energy sector have been updated... formation of Energy Regulatory Commission is one of the most important events.

He also claimed success for the CNG revolution. "When I took charge of the office, there were only three gas stations and one conversion workshop in the country. The number of CNG-run vehicles was only 1,500. At present there are more than 100 CNG stations, more than 50 CNG conver-

sion workshops and nearly 50,000 CNG-run vehicles," he said.

OUR REPLY On June 16, upon returning from the US, Mosharraf told journalists he will not return the Tk 1 crore 2005 model Toyota car to Niko, as there was "nothing wrong in it". He however "resigned" soon after making this statement.

The rejoinder failed to say who hatched a 'conspiracy' and how his resignation saved the government from a false allegation.

KAFKO The Daily Star mentioned Mosharraf's close involvement in a highly dubious deal like Kafco. Whether this deal is dubious or not is well exposed by what the former chief of Kafco Dr M Towhidi said, "I have been appalled by the injustices done to Bangladesh through the Kafco project. The project costs, at above \$500 million, were over \$100 million more than they should have been."

Dr Towhidi said this in a letter addressed to Kafco Managing Director Dr John H Wilson on February 21, 1999 and published in The Daily Star on March 4, 1999.

CONVICTION In the early 90s, Mosharraf was convicted of drawing salaries against two posts at the same time during the Ershad regime. He was also convicted of pilfering gasoline from government cars. He also served a few weeks in jail. He is also accused of misappropriating Tk 63 lakh in foreign currency in a case that remains pending in the High Court.

GAS EXPORT Mosharraf openly emphasised gas export issue on numerous occasions. On August 3, 2002, The Daily Star quoted him as saying, "We are going to take decision regarding export of gas soon. We have already wasted enough time."

According to him, at least 50 countries of the world have become economically solvent after exporting gas.

Speaking exclusively with the weekly Holiday on August 7, 2002, Mosharraf said he expected the gas utilisation committee to submit its final report next week, and a definitive decision by the government on the sensitive issue to be finalised by the end of September.

He said by all indications, the government is likely to approve 'limited export' of all international oil companies' (IOCs) share of future reserve discoveries. He also said the committee report should be acceptable to Unocal.

On February 9, 2003, the Voice of America reported that the energy ministry yesterday formally submitted a gas export proposal to the Prime Minister's Office for approval. Mosharraf said that by 2020 Bangladesh will have 34.67 trillion cubic feet of gas.

On December 23, 2003 The Daily Star again quoted him as saying, "We have untapped gas reserves. There are prospects of (gas) export although the government has not taken any decision yet."

NIKO On Niko issue, documents clearly show it is the BNP government that approved the JVA. The June 6, 2001 document signed by Sheikh Hasina was actually an approved 'Procedure for development of marginal gas fields.'

There was no memorandum of understanding (MoU), but a framework of understanding (FoU) signed in 1999. A FoU does not allow Niko to have access to three gas fields, which was awarded to it through a JVA in October 2003.

The FoU did not dictate any legal obligation for the state.

The payment of \$4 million to Niko stands illegal until today, as there is no agreement. The government cannot commit illegal action to save some industries. Legality cannot be merely established by some arguments.

As the man in charge, Mosharraf automatically holds the onus of the energy ministry directive to Titas to lend out 19km pipes to Niko. It is still incomprehensible how he can justify lending out national resources to a private company.

That pipeline was used for a gas field, which suffered blowouts twice and is still burning. Why would the minister let Niko focus on pipeline building using pipes, which are only usable for low-pressure gas supply, instead of completing the remedial work? It is interesting to note that following this pipeline scandal, Mosharraf received the Tk 1 crore car from Niko.

PIPELINES & BAPEX The Ashuganj-Manohardi pipeline was supposed to start operation in July last year. Because of lack of understanding the importance of this pipeline, the government went slow with it.

The latest deadline for this project is July next year.

On equipping Bapex, the minister did not bother about purchasing a drilling rig for Tk 70 crore when tender was floated two years ago. Now the government is purchasing the same for Tk 140 crore.

FBCCI mobilises funds for Pak quake victims

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Responding to the request of its Pakistani counterpart, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) has started mobilising funds and relief materials for earthquake survivors of Pakistan.

The FBCCI President Mir Nasir Hossain announced this when Ikram ul-Majeed Sehgal, special emissary of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), met the federation leaders at its office in the city yesterday.

Ikram Sehgal came to Bangladesh to mobilise financial and material assistance from the Bangladeshi businessmen.

"We are working out a plan to collect relief materials for the victims," Nasir said.

He said, "medicine and tea will be sent from the business sector of Bangladesh for the victims. Besides, we will also try to send blankets and winter clothes."

He said the apex business body has already issued a circular to all the chamber bodies to mobilise financial and material supports as soon as possible.

"We will try to send at least one relief consignment within November 15," Nasir said.

"The magnitude of devastation cannot be described or explained by words... many of the areas devastated by the earthquake of 7.6 magnitude on the Richter scale had not been reached yet because of inaccessibility through roads," Ikram Sehgal told the business leaders. Landslides have blocked all the roads, he added.

"The response we have received so far from the international community was worth about 700 million US dollar, which is much lower than the estimated

amount of 5 to 10 billion US dollar for recovery of the loss," he added.

"We are badly needed tents, blankets and doctors to save the survivors," he said, adding, "At least 500,000 blankets, 2 to 2.5 million tents, and 400 doctors, and many volunteers are required apart from setting up of 30 to 40 hospitals in the affected areas."

Ikram Sehgal called upon the businessmen to respond quickly at the dire needs of the brotherly people of Pakistan. He will leave for New Delhi today to meet the leaders of Federation of India Chamber of Commerce and Industries in a similar mission.

Another report adds, the United Nation World Food Programme (WFP) in Bangladesh is dispatching 200 metric tons of High Energy Biscuits to meet the immediate nutritional needs of earthquake victims in Pakistan.

WFP chartered aircraft is flying the biscuits from Dhaka to Peshawar in northern Pakistan.

"We are very happy to be able to contribute to the critical operation in Pakistan," said Edward Kallon, WFP Bangladesh Deputy Country Director. "The response to this disaster has transcended boundaries of all sorts, and we hope that our contribution can assist the earthquake survivors."

Transport of the biscuits to Peshawar will continue for four days, through October 25. The biscuits, which are easily transportable, are intended to meet immediate nutritional needs in some of the hardest-to-reach and worst-affected areas of Pakistan.

The high Energy Biscuits have been released from WFP's existing stocks in Bangladesh that are used for school feeding programmes in the country.

'Step up drive against food adulteration'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists yesterday demanded that the ongoing drive against food adulteration be stepped up and extended across the country.

They also called for strict enforcement of laws to check sale of adulterated and unhygienic food and the use of colour in food items.

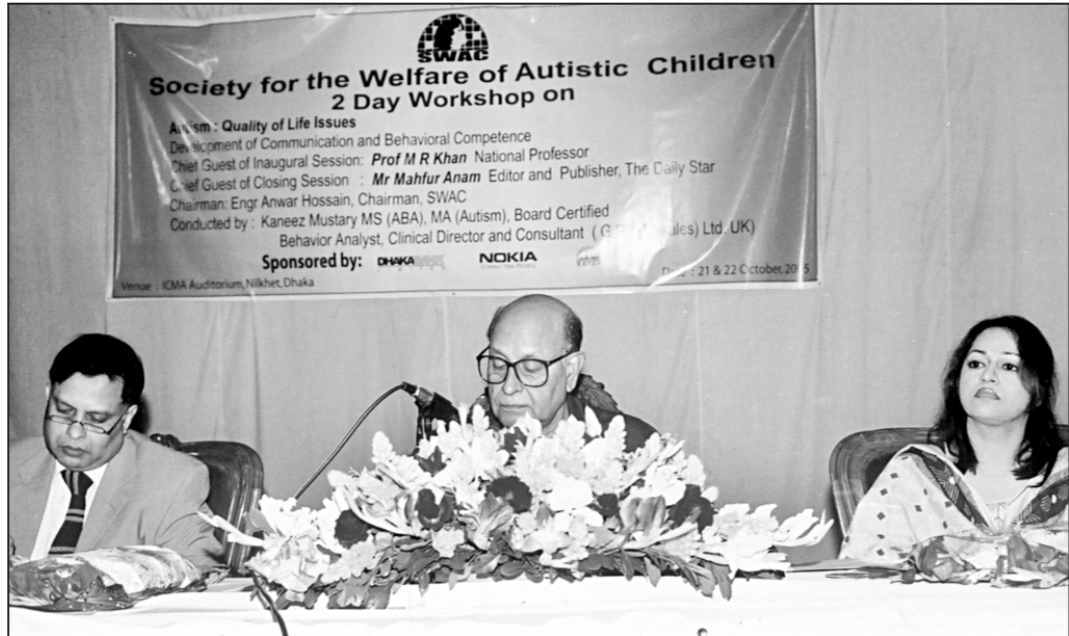
The Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) staged a rally and

formed a human chain at Shahbagh in the city to voice the demands.

The speakers said the profit-hungry traders, sometimes in con-ivance with the government officials, have continued to indulge in food adulteration and mix harmful colour and chemicals with foods and drinks, posing serious health hazards.

Representatives of Dorp, Coalition for the Urban Poor, Seba, Nagorik Udyog, Nagorik Sanghati, Green Voice, Osmani Udyan Protection Movement, Jubo Nagorik Adhikar Jote, Peace and The Hunger Project also joined the demonstration.

Presided over by Syed ANM Wahed, vice-president of Bapa, the



National Professor Dr MR Khan speaks at the inaugural ceremony of a workshop on 'Autism: Quality of life issues, development of communication and behavioural competence' at the ICMA Auditorium in the city on Friday.

Workshop on autism held

The Society for the Welfare of Autistic Children (SWAC) organised a workshop on 'Autism: Quality of life issues, development of communication and behavioural competence' that concluded on Saturday, says a press release.

Autism Expert Kaneez Mustary conducted the two-day workshop at the ICMA Auditorium in the city.

National Professor Dr MR Khan attended the inaugural ceremony as the chief guest while Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, was present at the closing session as the chief guest.

They appreciated the SWAC's efforts for the welfare of the autistic children.

The National Professor also consented to be the chief advisor to the SWAC.

The SWAC has been working relentlessly for the last six years in the pursuit of improving the lives of autistic children across the country.

WEATHER TODAY Light to moderate rain likely UNB, Dhaka Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and at many places over Chittagong division till 6:00pm today. Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also expected at places. Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country during the period. Highest temperature 32.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and lowest 20.3 degree Celsius at Sylhet. The sun sets in the capital at 5:25pm today and rises at 6:01am tomorrow. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

DHAKA TODAY Discussion on agriculture Agriculturalists' Association of Bangladesh organises a discussion on 'Achievement of alliance government in agricultural sector' with Agriculture Minister MK Anwar as chief guest. Venue: BARC, Farmgate. Time: 3:30pm. UN Day symposium United Nations Association of Bangladesh organises a symposium to mark the United Nations Day with M Shamsul Islam as chief guest. Venue: Brac Centre Inn, Mohakhali. Time: 4:30pm. AL seminar Bangladesh Awami League organises a seminar on 'Destroying institutions: Politicisation of the police and the administration'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.