



Sufia Kamal's 95th anniversary of birth today

The 95th birth anniversary of poet Sufia Kamal will be observed today. Sufia Kamal is unquestionably one of the most prolific bards. She pioneered the revolution for achieving human rights, democracy and socio-cultural emancipation, litterateurs observed.

Awami League President and leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina in a message said that lyrics of Sufia Kamal have ignited the deprived women of Bangladesh and would do the same even centuries later.

To mark the day, Bangladesh Mohila Parishad organised a memorial lecture, styled "Contribution of poet Sufia Kamal in establishing a communalism and militants-free society and culture", which will be presented by Professor Dr Sanjida Khatun. The lecture to be held at the CIRDAP auditorium at 04:00pm today will be followed by a cultural function.

Hena Das, president of the organisation, will preside over the programme.

Schoolboy, shop employee murdered in city

An employee of a shop was stabbed to death by a gang of criminals in the city on Sunday night. Police identified the victim as Elahi Ashraf Robin, 28, a staff of Ayesha Shopping Complex at Malibagh.

Elahi went missing when he was returning to his house at Bhanga Press area in Demra from his workplace. Demra police retrieved the body from Janapad Road in Demra at around 1:00am.

Meanwhile, Lalbagh police recovered the body of a schoolboy from Buriganga river yesterday. He was identified as Mohammad Hasan Saad, 12, a class VI student of Oxford International School.

He went out of his house at Rahmatganj at around 5:00pm to play football with his friends. As he did not return on Sunday night, Saad's father Haji Abdul Jabbar filed a general diary with Lalbagh Police Station the same night.

Locals informed the police after they found the body floating in the river. No mark of injury was found on his body. A UD case was filed in this connection.

"If the family suspect that Saad has been murdered in a planned way, we will turn the UD case into a murder case," said the duty officer of Lalbagh Police Station.

Workers of Bata shoe demand regularisation of jobs

Hundreds of workers of Bata shoe factory at Tongi yesterday formed a human chain and demonstrated inside the factory demanding regularisation of their jobs and higher wage. They became agitated after they heard that authorities of National Federation (NF) have agreed to meet most of the demands placed by its workers and staged demonstration inside the factory. They have been observing work abstention for the last few days demanding higher wage and regularisation of job.

Bata authorities, however, denied that they are their employees. "We hire some people to do some of our jobs, but they are not our employees," said a Bata official. Earlier, the meeting held between the workers and owners of NF at noon ended peacefully as owners have agreed to meet most of the demands of the workers. Owner Shafique Ahmed, Manager Toufique Ahmed, Chief Engineer Shofuddin represented owners while Ghiasuddin, commissioner of Tongi Pouro Ward, and 11 representatives from the workers were present at the meeting. The NF workers 11-joint-demand include regularisation of job of those who have been working for four years and salary hike by Tk300.

Ruling party 'land grab' policy leads to environmental disaster

Say AL leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

'Land grab' policy of the BNP-Jamaat ruling alliance has not only created political and economic crises in the country but also led to the environmental disaster, said Awami League leaders at a press conference yesterday. Criticising the government for its anti-environment policies, they said it has reduced the budgetary allocation for development of the environment to Tk 242 crore this fiscal, down from Tk 417 crore last fiscal.

AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed alleged that the BNP-

Jamaat men have grabbed six lakh acres of khas land in the last four and a half years.

Referring to the introduction of environment-friendly four-stroke CNG autorickshaws, he said the ruling party had opted for it just to amass wealth. Although each vehicle costs only Tk 75,000, its party men sold it at Tk 3.5 lakh, he added.

Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, another presidium member, said the myopic policies of the government would cause suffering to the people as well as the next generations.

AL environment affairs secretary Dr Hasan Mahmud said that PM's Parliamentary Affairs Advisor Salauddin Qaoder Chowdhury was recently awarded for his contribution to afforestation, although he implemented such programme with the government funds on 41 acres of land, which is actually owned by other people.

He also said that the ruling party MPs, leaders and activists are now even trying to do business over graveyards.

AL Presidium Member Amir Hossain Amu also spoke at the press conference held at a community centre in the city.

Bodies of 8 Bangladeshis lying in Saudi mortuary for 3 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The bodies of eight expatriate Bangladeshis have been lying in a mortuary in Saudi Arabia for the last three months as Bangladesh's national carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines is lingering to carry those home, according to a fax message received from the Kingdom. The eight expatriates had died

in a road accident in April this year. The dead are: Azgar Hossain, Abdul Halim, Abul Bashar, Abul Kashem, Mofizur Rahman, Abdur Rashid Abbas Mian and Robu.

The Bangladeshi business community sources alleged that the bodies could not be sent home due to non-cooperation by the national carrier Biman even though all formalities in the Kingdom have already been completed.

According to a provision, Biman brings home the body of any expatriate Bangladeshi free of cost.

The president of Saudi Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce Enayet Karim has sought intervention by the civil aviation minister in this matter.

2 cases against JMB Gazipur commander transferred to Speedy Tribunal

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Two cases against Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) regional commander of Gazipur Enayetullah Jewel have been transferred to the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1, Dhaka for its quick disposal.

The two cases, one under the Arms Act and the other one under Explosive Substances Act, were filed with Joydevpur Police Station on January 9.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the tribunal yesterday took up the case for trial and fixed June 25 for hearing on charge framing against Jewel. The tribunal also directed the authorities concerned to produce Jewel before the court on that day.

Police recovered huge arms, ammunition and bomb-making materials from a depository of outlawed JMB in Dakkhin Khan village under Joydevpur Police Station in Gazipur district on January 8 this year.

The cache seized includes three kilograms of gunpowder, one pistol, two country-made shooter guns, one foreign-made shooter gun, 16 bullets, five cartridges and three knives.

Following the confessional statement of Jewel, Gazipur police conducted a raid on a graveyard and found the arms from there. The weapons were buried in an abandoned grave.

Listed criminal held in Bagerhat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested a listed criminal on Sunday at Nagerbazar under Sadar Police Station in Bagerhat.

The arrestee was identified as Siddiqur Rahman alias Bomaru Siddique, 40.

Siddique is a professional bomber of an underground party and an accused in seven bomb attack cases, police said.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rabeya Khatun, a prominent leader of Dhaka City Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, passed away due to cancer on Sunday night.

She left behind her husband, two sons and one daughter.

Professor Kabir Chowdhury, president of Advisory Committee of Nirmul Committee, Acting President of Nirmul Committee Shariar Kabir and General Secretary Kazi Mukul expressed their deep shock at her death.

Death anniversary

Today is the 22nd death anniversary of A h m a d Sobhan, former president of Supreme Court Bar Association, National Bar Association and vice-chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council, says a press release.

On the occasion, milad mahfil will be held at his Dhanmondi residence after Maghri prayers.

Prof Kazi Abdul Latif

Today is the first death anniversary of Prof Kazi Abdul Latif, founding head of the Department of Chemistry of Rajshahi University, and former member of the University Grants Commission, says a press release.

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

Relatives, friends, and admirers are requested to pray for the eternal peace of his departed soul.

Prof Md Abdul Jabbar

Today is the sixth death anniversary of Prof Md Abdul Jabbar, former vice-principal of Mymensingh Ananda Mohan Govt College, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and Quaranahani will be held on Friday at 11:00am at his village home at Musuli under Nandail upazila in Mymensingh.

MSadekin

Today is the 7th death anniversary of M Sadekin, a journalist and freedom fighter, says a press release.

He worked in Shadin Bangla Betar Kendra during the War of Liberation.



Bangladesh Awami Jubo League takes out a procession at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday in support of today's Election Commission siege programme.

'Gender budgeting not reflected in nat'l budget'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said gender budgeting is not reflected in the proposed budget for 2006-07, although it was highlighted in the budgetary speech.

Gender budgeting, which means planning the budget to establish women's rights, has not been possible due to the methodological flaws and ambiguity is also seen in the budgetary allocations, they said.

Steps Toward Development organised the discussion on 'National budget 2006-2007: Gender analysis in agriculture issue' as a part of its post-budget series discussion.

The speakers said the allocation for women and children affairs ministry has increased by 16 percent, compared to the budget of last fiscal, but it would not be helpful if women's issues were not addressed properly.

They also stressed the need for adopting a women-friendly agricultural mechanism strategy. Presenting the keynote paper,

Prof MA Sattar Mandal of Bangladesh Agricultural University said the National Budget 2006-07 did not have allocation for some high growth thrust sectors, particularly the poultry farm where 75 percent of success was achieved by rural women.

He suggested providing block allocation for training of women working in poultry farms as this sector is threatened by avian flu and other diseases.

Media personality Shykh Seraj stressed the need for changing social attitude towards women.

Women's contribution to agriculture is not recognised and the sectors where discrimination is prevailing should be identified clearly, he said.

Sixty-three percent of the total labour force in the country is still engaged in farming but they are not considered as labours and have not the right to pay bargaining, he added.

"Budget allocation for the agricultural sector has increased 42 percent and we have to identify

how much of this budget is women-friendly," said Dr Abdur Razzak, a member of parliamentary standing committee on agriculture.

There is massive corruption in credit distribution for the marginal group and the agricultural subsidy is not much helpful for the farmers, he added.

Economist Dr Atiur Rahman said this budget would help spread corruption.

He called for forming a citizens' committee to monitor whether the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is really benefiting women and whether the budget has taken into account their needs.

GM Kader, another member of parliamentary standing committee on agriculture, and Asgar Ali Sabri of ActionAid, Bangladesh, also spoke at the discussion moderated by Executive Director of Steps Towards Development Ranjan Karmakar.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY TODAY 8.4 m refugees across globe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Refugee Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere across the globe today with a message of keeping the 'flame of hope' alive among the uprooted people.

A special UN General Assembly resolution, unanimously adopted on December 4 in 2000, designated June 20 as World Refugee Day in solidarity with the Africa Refugee Day.

This year the theme of the day is 'Hope'.

In a message on the eve of the day, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said over the past few years, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has helped millions of people repatriate or start over in a country of asylum.

He also said the UN agencies are working together to ensure that millions of people displaced within their own country, often in conditions similar to refugees, receive the assistance they need.

In a message United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres said, "There is one common trait among the tens of millions of refugees that we have at the UNHCR agency have helped over the past 55 years—it's the fact that despite losing everything, they never give up hope."

To observe the day, UNHCR office in Bangladesh has chalked out an elaborate programme in Dhaka and Cox's Bazar. These include distribution of promotional items and materials on refugees' rights, press brief-

ing, seminar and film show.

UNHCR will organise two seminars on "Forgotten no Longer: Nurturing Hope and lending a hand to the refugees through International Refugee Law" and "Bengal Partition: Reflection on Culture" at the National Museum today in association with Rainbow Film Society at 4:00pm.

The UNHCR Representative in Bangladesh Pia Prytz Phiri appreciated the people and Government of Bangladesh for generously hosting the refugees from the northern Rakhine State in Myanmar for a period of 15 years.

"There are now around 21,000 refugees in camps, some are there for their lifetime," she said.

Aliwardy new BTTB chairman

Engineer Aliwardy Khandkar joined yesterday as the new chairman of the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB), says a press release.

Earlier, Khandkar was Member (Planning & Development) of BTTB.

He joined the civil service in the then T&T Department in 1976 as Assistant Divisional Engineer and promoted as General Manager of BTTB in 2001.

"On this 6th World Refugee Day, I would like to draw attention to their plight and your support in finding solutions," she said.

As of the end of 2005, the number of the Persons of Concern to UNHCR globally is 20.8 million. 8.4 million are refugees, 6.6 million are internally displaced persons, 1.1 million are returned refugees, 668,000 are asylum-seekers, and 960,400 are others concerned to UNHCR.

The geographical distribution of refugees is Africa 2,571,500, Europe 1,965,800, America 564,300, Central and West Asia 2,467,300, and South and East Asia and the Pacific 825,600.

EXTORTION, LOOT OF CROPS Landless blame Bangla Bhai, Jamaat leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Landless people of Bagmara in Rajshahi yesterday accused 10 militants, including JMB's operations commander Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai of extortion and looting their crops.

In a press conference at Bagmara, they named Bangla Bhai's associate and Jamaat leader Lutfar Rahman, Abdus Sattar Master, Mokbul Master and Jaded for masterminding looting of landless people's crops.

They also named local JMB cadres Abdul Khalek, Ramjan Ali, Abdul Kuddus, Altaf, Mozaffar Ali and Asman Ali for the same allegation.

They said Bangla Bhai and his group brandished arms and looted standing crops from some 56 bighas of khas (government) land. Over the years, some 300 landless people have been enjoying these crops.

They demanded that the law enforcement agencies help the landless people record complaints and the concerned authorities help them arrange compensations.

Swadesh Development, an NGO, organised the press conference.

Maria Union Parishad member Askari Ali, landless people's representatives Ashek Ali, Abdus Samad, Mina Begum, Tahmina Biwi, Jubela Biwi, Shahadat Hossain and Ferdous Shakhawat, an NGO official, spoke at the conference among others.

The NGO official told reporters that Bangla Bhai's men extorted money from local people and also took money offering jobs abroad.



MA Momen, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, speaks at a roundtable on 'Partnerships for employment of women and youth' at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday. On his left is Larry Maramis, deputy resident representative of UNDP, and on his right is SM Waliur Rahman, director general of Department of Youth Development.

'Produce more non-traditional fruits with medicinal values'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday underscored the need for massive production of non-traditional fruits having medicinal and nutritional values.

They also expressed concern over the extinction of the trees of these fruits which are useful for maintaining environmental balance as well as beautification.

The daylong seminar titled 'Production, management and nutritional value of non-traditional fruits' was organised by Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (Barc) in observance of National Fruit Trees Plantation Fortnight 2006 at its auditorium in the city.

In a keynote paper, Prof Abu Hena

Mohammad Faruk, former dean of Bangladesh Open University, expressed concern over the extinction of non-traditional fruit trees.

He said as these fruits have less commercial values, much research had not been conducted on their nutritional values.

According to Dr Faruk the non-traditional fruits include Anola (Amloki), Hog plum (Amra), Carambola (Kamranga), Bael (Bel), Cashewnut (Kaju Badam), Indian Olive (Jalpai), Custard apple (Sharifa), Monkey jack (Deiwa) and Elephant apple (Kadbel).

Fruits like Guava and Jujube (Kul), enriched with vitamin-c, calcium and iron, are now largely produced and marketed at present, but these were included in non-

traditional category even 10 years ago, he added.

Dr Rahim Uddin Ahmad, director of Cash Crops Wing at agriculture extension department, laid emphasis on planting mother trees of these fruits.

He also stressed the need for training on collecting and marketing of these fruits.

Speaking as chief guest Agriculture Minister MK Anwar urged researchers to develop such varieties of fruits that can be produced round the year.

Forest and Environmental Minister Tariqul Islam called for creating mass awareness for gardening and marketing of non-traditional fruits.

Presided over by Agriculture Secretary Kazi Abul Kashem, the seminar was also addressed by Prof M Mofazzal Hossain of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agriculture University and Dr M Nurul Alam, executive chairman of Barc.

WEATHER TODAY Rain likely UNB, Dhaka Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today. Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said. Highest temperature 38.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 24.2 degree Celsius at Dhaka. The sun sets in the capital at 6:49pm 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.

Masters final, hons final exam results published

Results of 15 subjects of Masters Final Exam-2003, out of 29 subjects, under The National University have been published, says a press release.

The subjects are: Arabic, Pali, Sangskrit, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Library and Information Science, Home Economics, Statistics, Psychology, Soil Science, Bangla, Finance, Marketing, Islamic Studies and History.

Besides, results of five subjects of honours part-3 of 2004 have also been published.

The subjects are: Arabic, Biochemistry, Home Economics, Anthropology and Soil Science. Results of rest of the subjects will be published soon.

DHAKA TODAY Discussion Bangladesh Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) organises a discussion on a study on birth registration. Venue: PIB, Time: 9:30am. Seminar Rainbow Film Society and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) organise a seminar and screening of films to mark the World Refugee Day. Venue: National Museum Auditorium, Time: 4:00pm. Lecture Bangladesh Mahila Parishad organises a memorial lecture on 'Role of Sufia