

Yunus calls for lifestyle 'traffic rule' to fight global warming

AFP, Seoul

The 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr Muhammad Yunus called yesterday for a worldwide lifestyle change, saying global warming is "a matter of life and death" for low-lying nations like his own country Bangladesh.

In a keynote speech to a symposium on climate change, Dr Yunus suggested a "traffic rule" under which products bear red, yellow or green markings to indicate the extent to which they come from renewable sources.

Prof Yunus, honoured for his

creation of the Grameen Bank which grants microcredit to the poor, said his country is bearing the brunt of climate change, with 40 percent of its land mass less than one metre (3.3 feet) above sea level.

Sea levels are rising an average three millimetres a year, he said, and Bangladesh's 150 million people are already confined to living on around 144,000 square kilometres (55,598 square miles).

"Floods and Bangladesh are becoming synonymous," Dr Yunus said, adding that their frequency and intensity are increasing year by year.

"For many people around the

world this is an issue of concern but for us it's an issue of life and death."

He called for global lifestyle changes to make the world a better place.

"Can we come to a decision, this simple decision globally? Each generation will make a pledge they will leave the world safer than we found it when we came to this world. I think that is the best start to make it happen."

Dr Yunus said allegations that rich countries are the polluters and developing countries the victims no longer apply since the quality of life and consumption levels are also

rising in underdeveloped countries.

"The worst part of it is, we (developing nations) are imitating the world which created pollution. So our lifestyle is imitating the lifestyle of the people who have already led the way. That is the most dangerous part of it."

Dr Yunus said the lesson was that the world could not continue a lifestyle at the cost of the planet itself.

"So we have to find a lifestyle which is consistent with our principle or decision – we should leave the world safer than we found it."

Efficient use can save 800MW electricity: Energy experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Energy experts at a roundtable yesterday gave energy saving through its efficient use a top priority followed by setting up coal-based power stations in the northern part of the country to meet the increased power demand and ensure energy security.

Termining corruption and mismanagement as the major obstacle for setting up new power plants in public sector, they said the government should provide private sector with finance and other facilities to set up power plants to add more power to national grid.

The roundtable styled 'Energy efficiency: Third fuel for Bangladesh' was organised jointly by Energy and Power, a fortnightly magazine, in association with German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) at the Cirdap auditorium in the city.

"No load shedding would be there if we could save 700MW to 800MW of electricity. Both the engineers and common people should think of how

we can save more energy," said Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury while speaking as chief guest at the roundtable.

He said a lot of gas is being misused in some industries while there is only 13.5 tcf (trillion cubic feet) of reserve that will hardly continue up to 2012 to 2015.

"The other source of energy is coal, but it is very unfortunate that we could not take any decision on coal yet. If we cannot take a decision, we are going to face serious consequences in future," Tapan added.

Experts will have to make strong recommendations on coal, he said as journalists asked why the government is not taking any decision on it.

Urging all to use energy-efficient bulbs, he said a proposal has been sent to the finance ministry to import energy-saving bulbs.

In the keynote presentation, German Development Cooperation Senior Adviser Dr Khurshed-Ul-Islam said efficient use of power in thermal, electrical and even combined heat and power systems could save around 800MW of electricity.

"This is equivalent to two-power-plant capacities or deferring electric power demand and growth for two years," he said, adding that application areas for efficient energy use are domestic, commercial and industrial lighting, industrial motors and power factor improvement.

The other options for future energy security are solar, bio-mass, bio-gas, wind and hydro power, but the penetration of these renewable sources is low with the major barriers being financial, technical and social, said Khurshed, also former consultant of World Bank's First Energy Audit Project.

Prof Nurul Islam of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) suggested introduction of a course for electrical engineering students on efficient use of energy.

Stressing the need for strengthening the government's regulatory activities to monitor such energy saving issues, he said the NGOs, working on renewable energy projects, often end up their projects due to discontinuation of funding, which ultimately results in loss.

BD Rahmatullah of Rural

Electrification Board said Bangladesh is the only country where energy efficiency and conservation are not stressed.

There is 21 percent system loss in the electricity, while a lot of indiscipline is existing in the metering system, he added.

At least 2000MW electricity could be added through efficient use of energy and captive power plants, Rahmatullah said, adding, "We have the crisis in management and thinking."

Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Nasir Hossain said the government should have a policy for efficient use of energy as well as encourage the local industries to set up power plants and add to the national grid, making the grid an 'energy super highway'.

Stressing on privatisation in energy sector, he said the worst victims of power crisis are the small and medium enterprises.

Prof Shah Nawaz Ahmed and Dr Ijaz Hossain of Buet, Dipal Barua of Grameen Shakti, Mostafizur Rahman of Energy Audit Cell, and Brig Gen Nazrul Hasan of Desa also spoke at the roundtable moderated by Energy and Power Editor Mollah Amjad Hossain and Journalist Farid Hossain of AP.

Agitating workers to be brought back from Malaysia

BSS, Dhaka

Adviser for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury asked the High Commission in Malaysia to resolve the problem facing by 110 Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia immediately.

He gave the directive following the media report on the hunger strike by the Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia.

As per the directive, the HC made relentless efforts to solve the problem with the support from recruiting agencies, NGO representatives and Bangladeshi community in Malaysia, according to an official handout in the city yesterday.

Each of the agitating workers has been offered 1,000 Malaysian Ringit or equivalent money for their families in Bangladesh and proposed to join their present jobs temporarily with an option to change those by the three weeks.

"But they continued the hunger strike demanding steps for their return home with arrear salaries of six months and the money they had given to the recruiting agents," the handout said.

"All the initiatives went in vain due to non-cooperation and rigid mentality of the agitating workers. So, the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare is compelled to bring back the workers to Bangladesh in cooperation with the Malaysian government as the incident might hamper job opportunities for the others in that country," the handout said.

The ministry, however, has formed a three-member committee headed by its secretary to deter recurrence of such incidents in future. The committee is likely to visit Malaysia by the next one week.

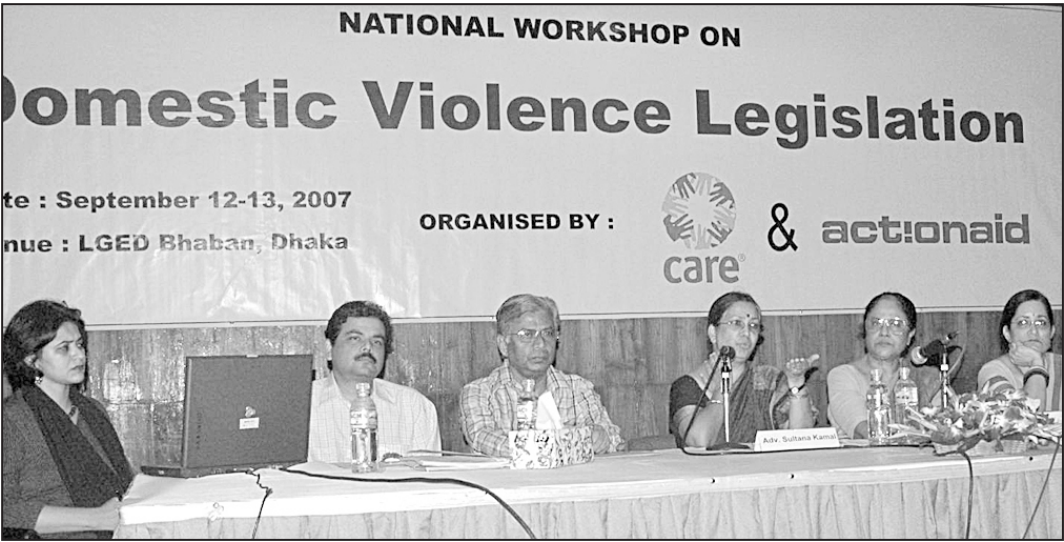


PHOTO: STAR

Advocate Sultana Kamal speaks at a workshop at LGED auditorium in the city yesterday. On her right are Nurul Huda, Hasan Majumdar and Barrister Sara Hossain and on her left are Ayesha Khanam and Farah Kabir.

Legal framework needed to curb domestic violence

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day workshop ended in the city yesterday with a call for enforcement of law and building awareness among the people to curb domestic violence.

The workshop styled 'National workshop on domestic violence legislation' ended at LGED auditorium after three-day discussion on the draft 'Domestic Violence Bill'.

Representatives from Sri Lanka, Nepal and India took part and shared their experiences in the workshop organised jointly by CARE and Action Aid, Bangladesh.

The Law Commission submitted the draft to the law ministry in 2006.

The bill proposed protection order that includes granting exclusive occupation to the survivor and directing the offender to pay maintenance and penalty.

Besides, it made a provision for enforcement officer to facilitate, assist and help victims or survivors to avail legal remedies.

Legal experts and rights activists at the workshop urged the bodies concerned to disseminate information on the nature of domestic violence, right to freedom from violence and available remedies.

They said with a view to enforcing

the proposed prevention, protection and control of domestic violence there should be a mechanism to monitor the implementation process of the law.

Barrister Sara Hossain discussed the bill which states that every member of a family is supposed to be protected from physical, psychological and sexual abuse including economic abuse.

Speaking as chief guest, Advocate Sultana Kamal, former adviser to the caretaker government, observed that "attacks on women take place with apparent impunity... and in fact this has worsened the crisis."

"We want to stop domestic violence under a legal framework," she said, adding, "Enforcement of law and awareness among people would definitely curb the violence against women, otherwise we would be treated as a nation that entertained spouse beating, acid attack and all sorts of cruelty."

Nurul Huda, former inspector general of police, said domestic violence is an in-built crisis in the society and laid emphasis on bringing an end to this social problem.

"We have adequate laws to prevent domestic violence, but as the umbrella law would encompass everything it would be more effective," he added.

Huda observed that police should not be involved in addressing the domestic violence.

Jayasri Samaddar, law commission member, and Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid, also spoke on the occasion. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad General Secretary Ayesha Khanam moderated the programme.

Air chief calls on president

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Air Staff Air Marshall SM Ziaur Rahman made a courtesy call on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

The air chief apprised the president of various issues relating to the development of Bangladesh Air Force. He sought continuous support and cooperation from the president and Supreme Commander of Armed Forces in discharging his duties.

It was a routine visit by the air chief, said a Bangabhaban release.

Iajuddin assured the air chief of all cooperation.

Divers fail to trace damaged gas pipeline under Karnaphuli

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Divers yesterday could not find out the damaged supply line of Bakhrabad Gas System Limited (BGS) that caught fire under the river Karnaphuli near Kalurghat Bridge in Chittagong on Tuesday night.

As a result, the reason behind the fire and the extent of damage could not be known.

The divers of Bangladesh Navy began their operation to repair the line on Wednesday but they could not dive into the river due to strong current on the day.

According to sources, the nine-member team led by Lieutenant Commander Fazlar Rahman yesterday dived into the river and searched for the pipeline for a long time.

But the divers failed to trace the 20-inch diameter concrete pipe buried 20 feet into the riverbed.

The divers searched over 150 feet area on both side of the possible location of the pipeline, said GM (operation) Saiful Alam.

"We are now making vertical ditch over the pipeline on the other bank of the river and reached 10 feet into the sand," he said.

But strong current is delaying the operation, he added.

Sources also said it might take two or three more days to restore gas supply through an alternative line.

Meanwhile, the four-member probe committee headed by BGSL GM (Planning and Development) Mahbub Hossain started investigation into the accident that snapped gas supply to a huge area in Boalkhali and Patiya.

Training for marginalised communities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 25 representatives from different marginalised communities were given training on different legal issues, including human rights, child marriage, dowry, rape and human trafficking, says a press release.

The two-day training programme that ended on Wednesday was organised by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and Research Initiatives of Bangladesh (RIB) where people from different indigenous communities, including, Munda, Buno, Kaora, Bede, Shanta, Monipuri and Sweeper attended.

They were also given training on issues related to their everyday life like indigenous land distribution, community right and environmental law.

RIB has been providing legal assistance to the people after conducting a research on the issue so that the people given legal training would contribute in establishing rights of their respective community people.

BLAST will conduct at least four training courses to make the people of the deprived community aware of their rights.



Six top scouts leaders of the country pose for photograph with senior Rotarians of Rotary Club of Dhaka Urbana in the city recently.

WEATHER TODAY

Moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over all the six divisions of the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy rainfalls are also likely at places, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country during the period.

Highest temperature 34.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Khulna and lowest 23.5 degree Celsius at Cox's Bazar.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:04pm today and rises at 5:45am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature in celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.2	26.0	81	76
Chittagong	31.4	25.8	78	80
Rajshahi	34.0	27.0	80	87
Khulna	34.2	26.7	87	90
Barisal	32.5	26.0	88	80
Sylhet	29.3	26.0	97	89
Cox's Bazar	32.0	23.5	76	89

TAX EVASION CASE

Arrest warrant against ex-AIGP

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued an arrest warrant against former additional inspector general of police Mohammad Shahidullah Khan after the National Board of Revenue (NBR) filed a tax evasion case against him.

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after Nahid Nawshad Mukul, deputy tax commissioner of the NBR, accused him of evading Tk 16,54,832 in income tax for fiscal years from 2001 to 2007.

Moreover, Shahidul also concealed over Tk 76.53 lakh in his tax return submitted earlier to the NBR.

'Rotary Shares' with Scouts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rotary Club of Dhaka Urbana, RI District 3280 Bangladesh in association with Alamo Rotary Club, RI District 5160 California USA handed over about US\$4000 to six scout leaders to help them attend the 21 World Scout Jamboree held in London from July 27 to August 7.

The funding was initiated by Rotarian Past District Governor Brian D Thiessen, vice chair, International Fellowship of Scouting Rotarians, as part of the 100 years celebration of Rotary and Scouting in line with this year's Rotary theme: Rotary Shares.

The six recipients are Leader Trainer Mujibur Rahman Mannan (Regional Field Commissioner of Dhaka), Leader Trainer Aminul Ehsan Khan Parvez (Deputy National Commissioner Bangladesh Scouts), Assistant Leader Trainer Mashur Rahman (District Scout Leader, Chittagong Naval Scouts), Assistant Leader Trainer Abul Khair (Assistant Field Commissioner Bangladesh Scouts), Woodbadger Md Atiquzzaman (Deputy Regional Commissioner Bangladesh Scouts Rover Region and Secretary, Dhaka District Rover) and Woodbadger Jubair Eusuf (Scout Leader, Willes Little Flower School).

The cheques were handed over by District Governor Rafiq Ahmed Siddique, Past District Governor Prof Jalal U Ahmed, Past District Governor Salim Reza, who was instrumental in channelling the international funding, and Rotarian Major (Retd) Qamrul Islam (President Dhaka Urbana).

The event was coordinated by Past President Architect Prof Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed, chairman, District Rotary Fellowship (Global Networking Group) Committee, Club Vice President Kazi Nazmul Haque Nazu and Club Director Dr ASM Badrudduza.

The programme was the 289th Regular Weekly Meeting and a club fellowship in which Rotary-Anns, Rotary-lets and guests participated.

Saarc finance ministers meet today

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preceded today by a finance secretary-level meeting where joint secretary at finance division, Syed Monzurul Islam, will stand in for the finance secretary.

The Delhi ministerial meeting will mainly focus on finalising the recommendations on the fund's charter and by-laws -- prepared by the member countries' finance and foreign ministry and other related government officials at their August 21-22 Kathmandu meeting -- financial issues related to the roadmap of Saarc Economic Union and development of a regional capital market, official sources said.

The SDF succeeded the South Asian Development Fund (SADF), which was created in 1996 with the merger of Saarc Fund for Regional Projects and Saarc Regional Fund.

The regional organisation in the last few years has been considering proposals like Poverty Alleviation Fund, Infrastructure Fund, South Asian Development Bank, Media Development Fund and Voluntary Fund for the Differently Able Persons, in addition to the SADF.

In order to avoid proliferation of funds, the first meeting of financial experts in September 2005 examined the entire gamut of issues relating to the funding of Saarc projects and programmes.

The experts agreed that the proliferation of financing mechanisms would pose administrative, financial and operational difficulties following which Saarc leaders at their 13th summit in Dhaka in

November 2005 decided to reconstitute the SADF into SDF to serve as the umbrella financial institution for all Saarc projects and programmes.

The SDF has been reconstituted with a permanent secretariat and three windows -- social, economic, and infrastructure. The social window, with an initial \$300 million fund, is expected to fund, among others, poverty alleviation programmes and projects.

The infrastructure window will mobilise fund from within and beyond the region and fund infrastructural projects while the economic window will finance non-infrastructure projects.

Another meeting of experts was held on August 24-25 in Kathmandu to prepare recommendations on greater economic integration to help form the Saarc Economic Union, foreign ministry officials said.

Talking to The Daily Star, a finance ministry official said the Kathmandu meeting came up with a set of recommendations on investment promotion, service sector development and formation of a regional customs union.

The least developed members have favoured the process of developing a capital market, arguing that the linkage of capital markets mobilises funds for the domestic markets.

Saarc was founded in 1985 comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Afghanistan became its 8th member at the 13th summit in

Dhaka while China, Japan, South Korea, the United States and the European Union became the organisation's observers at the same summit.

Meantime, the two-day home minister-level meeting in the Indian capital on October 23-24 will discuss measures to harmonise national laws and procedures to meet the common challenge of fighting terrorism in the region, our New Delhi correspondent reported quoting official sources in New Delhi.

India is expected to ask the other Saarc countries to cooperate with each other in fighting the menace in a "sincere and meaningful" manner.

The meeting is likely to discuss an Indian proposal on establishing Saarc Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters to effectively combat terrorism and organised crime, the sources said.

India is also expected at the meeting to seek early ratification of Additional Protocol to the Saarc Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism by the member nations.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh earlier asked the Saarc leaders at the 14th Summit in New Delhi to translate their commitments to root out terrorism into action after the regional leaders pledged that they would work together to eliminate the scourge.

IV fluid prices spiral for supply dearth

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companies rejected the claims, blaming it mainly on unscrupulous hoarders.

"I have ordered 50 bags of Lactoride from Beximco but they've supplied only five bags," said Aamunullah of Day Night Pharmacy in front of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) September 10.

"Beximco, Libra, Orion and Opso Saline manufacture 90 percent of the total IV fluid including Hartman's Solution, cholera saline, dextrose aqua and normal saline," he added.

Another drug trader told The Daily Star about 60 customers of IV fluid returned empty-handed from his store in a span of four hours until Sunday noon.

"If we want 10 cartons of intravenous fluid, we get only two and sell it out in two to three hours," he added.

As a result, patients are forced to count extra money to get the fluid. A patient at DMCH Sunday said he bought Dextrosal (1000ml) at Tk 80 though its MRP was sealed Tk 62.

Beximco Executive Director Nazmul Hassan Sunday told The Daily Star, "There's no shortage of

production and supply of IV fluid and we've enough stock to supply." He blamed the unscrupulous traders who are used to create artificial crises of medicines for quick bucks.

Physicians of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) suspect some unscrupulous traders have hoarded the intravenous saline as soon as the flood situation worsened again in different districts.

The owner of a medium-sized drug company has expressed little hope of a decline in prices as the blame game between manufacturers and retailers continues for quite some time.

Speaking anonymously, the owner added that even the price of essential antibiotics like Amoxycillin and Fluocaxillin would increase shortly as Drug Administration (DA) has approved increased selling price of their active ingredients.

"The price of per kilogram intermediate raw material of Amoxycillin was Tk 2,800 and will be upped now to Tk 3,950. The manufacturers will have to pay Tk 4,542.50 including VAT and raise the product price," said another manufacturer preferring anonymity.

The price hike is inevitable as the medium-sized companies are not allowed to import 6APA, active or intermediate ingredient of Amoxycillin, and will have to buy the raw material at an increased price.

"Besides, as the 6APA importing companies are not supplying raw material to local market for the last three months, the medium-sized companies have also failed to produce Amoxycillin resulting in a crisis."

Currently, the Fluocaxillin capsule of SK+F (500mg) is being sold at MRP Tk 10 per piece and if its price increases, the patients will have to suffer much, said a drug trader. Since the last few days the supply of Amoxycillin has sharply reduced, he added.

"We contacted Orion, Aristopharma and Oponon Pharmaceuticals today for getting Amoxycillin but they apologised," said Abdul Khalek of city's DS Pharmacy yesterday apprehending further price hike.

Amoxycillin captures 20 percent of the local drug market and is one of the most used antibiotics. People especially in rural areas use this drug very often. It is a control category drug, the price of which has

TAX EVASION

Ex-MP Abbasi, Babar's APS, families sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Former lawmaker and LDP president member MA Karim Abbasi, former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar's cousin Salauddin Chowdhury, Babar's APS Mirza Haider Ali, and their family members have been sued for concealing information in their wealth statements submitted to the ACC.

Netrakona Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Assistant Director Md Nuruzzaman Khan yesterday filed a case with Durgapur Police Station against LDP president member MA Karim Abbasi, his wife Hamida Karim, their sons Hamidul Karim and Mahmudul Karim for hiding information in the wealth statement.

The ACC assistant director also filed two separate cases -- one against Babar's APS Haider Ali and Haider's wife Beauty Akhter with Madan Police Station and another against Babar's cousin Salauddin Chowdhury with Netrakona sadar Police Station -- on same charges on Wednesday night.

Netrakona ACC office sources said, MA Karim Abbasi, Mirza Haider Ali and Salauddin Chowdhury submitted their wealth statements to ACC on March 7.

In the statement, MA Karim Abbasi mentioned that he had property worth Tk 9,471,781 while Salauddin mentioned Tk 2,970,047 and Haider Ali Tk 2,970,047.

After the investigation, ACC found hidden wealth of Tk 3,237,421 of Abbasi, Tk 2,391,086 of Salauddin, and Tk 3,79,300 of Haider Ali.

Abbasi, Haider and Salauddin are behind bars now.

Sadeque to be buried tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League leader and former education minister ASHK Sadeque, who passed away due to a cardiac arrest on September 9, will be laid to rest at Banani graveyard tomorrow.

According to an AL press release, the body of late Sadeque will be brought to the party central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city from Apollo Hospitals and his namaj-e-janaza will take place at 10:30am.

Leaders and workers of AL and its different front organisations will pay homage to the late leader there.

Later, his body will be taken to South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad where the main namaj-e-janaza will be held at 11:30am and then he will be laid to rest at Banani graveyard.

Qulkhwani of late Sadeque will be held at Trust Auditorium (adjacent to Shaheen School, airport road) at 3:30pm on Sunday.

Relatives, friends, colleagues and admirers have been requested to attend the qulkhwani to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of Abul Bashar Khan, former executive committee member of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, will be held at Sohagh Community Centre in Eskaton after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Bashar, also members of Maghbazar Ispahani Girls' High School and College, Nazrul Shikhalaya and a founding member of the Maghbazar Chourasta Jame Mosque, passed away at his Ispahani Colony residence on Tuesday night at the age of 78.

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