

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

'Meet special needs with positive attitude to make them self-reliant'

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday called for meeting the "special requirements" of the persons with disabilities everywhere of the society, including family and professional life, with a positive attitude to make them self-reliant.

He also called upon the mass media and the civil society to come forward to create mass awareness against the negative attitude towards the persons with disabilities.

Fakhruddin made the call while addressing a discussion organised by Social Welfare Ministry, Social Service Department, National Disabled Development Foundation and National Disabled Forum at the Osmani Memorial auditorium in the city,

marking the 16th International Disabled Day.

The theme of the Day is 'Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities'.

The function was told that there are approximately 1.40 crore people in Bangladesh, about 10 percent of

the total population, who are disabled. However, there is no official census on it.

Law and Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hosein, Social Welfare Adviser Geete Ara Sufiya Chowdhury, Social Welfare Secretary AB Hye Howlader, president of National Disabled Development Foundation Prof Dr Mohammad Farasuddin, president of National

Disabled Forum Khandaker Zahirul Alam and ASM Mosharraf Hossain of ADD, a disabled welfare affairs organisation, also spoke at the meeting.

Men and women with disabilities and representatives of voluntary organisations working for welfare of the persons with disabilities, among others, attended the function.

The chief adviser called upon government and NGOs, voluntary organisations and each conscious and well-off person of the society to come up with meaningful programmes for providing proper education, training and working

environment to the persons with disabilities to improve their lifestyle.

Fakhruddin said the government is carrying out all possible efforts to involve the disabled population in the mainstream of development activities, as overall and balanced development of the country cannot be ensured without them.

"We're considering disability not only as human welfare issue rather considering it as a development issue. So the 2007-08 fiscal year I've directed all the ministries besides Social Welfare Ministry to formulate separate action plans and implementation of those," he told the function.

He said separate allocation was made for the first time in the current national budget for the development of the persons with disabilities.

Fakhruddin said he has already given a directive to give priority to the physically challenged persons in the government's ongoing relief and rehabilitation operations in the cyclone-affected areas.

He said it is the constitutional

duty of the government to ensure equal rights and balanced development of all citizens of the country.

"The persons with disabilities are the citizens of this country and inseparable part of the society. So, it's our sacred responsibility to ensure their (disabled) equal rights, equal opportunities and the right to live with dignity."

Referring to world famous successful persons with disabilities who made invaluable contributions to the society and the world, the CA said if they get the opportunity they could prove their worth making valuable contributions.

The chief adviser said Bangladesh as a signatory to the 'UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' is committed to it and the council of advisers of the caretaker government on November 25 decided to ratify the convention.

He said the present government expanded the disabled affairs activities to other concerned ministries and organisations, not confining it only to Social Welfare Ministry.



Awami League Acting President Zillur Rahman briefs journalists near sub-jail after appearing before a court in the city as lawyer for detained AL President Sheikh Hasina yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

India to hold Indian Ocean military summit
AFP, New Delhi

India yesterday announced a first-ever summit of navies from 33 nations to bolster regional maritime security along the world's busiest seafarers in the Indian Ocean.

Indian naval commanders outlined details of the summit, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, to be held in February in New Delhi.

"In today's environment, we need to have maritime dominance and partnerships," Naval chief Sureesh Mehta said. "We see ourselves as a great stabiliser of energy movement through this region and so we have to act."

The countries invited to the India summit had to border the Indian Ocean or have territories there. Nations expected to attend include South Africa, Australia, Bangladesh and Thailand.

More than 100,000 commercial vessels transit through the Indian Ocean each year -- 60 percent of them via a narrow strip of sea between Malaysia and the Indonesian island of Sumatra -- many carrying oil supplies to the fast-growing region.

Shafiqul Azam's anniversary of death today



Today is the 16th death anniversary of SM Shafiqul Azam, the doyen of civil service of Pakistan and Bangladesh and former chief secretary of the then East Pakistan, says a press release.

He was also a secretary to the central government of Pakistan, cabinet secretary and minister for jute, commerce and industry, energy and mineral resources.

To mark the day, SM Shafiqul Azam Memorial Committee will hold elaborate programmes recalling his contribution to various fields.

Special programmes will also be held at Dr SM Muhammadul Haque Government Primary School and Shazadi Latifa Khatun Forkania Madrasa at his village home in Chittagong. Special prayers will also be offered for the salvation of his departed soul and alms will be distributed to the destitute.

Advocate Md Azizur Rahman

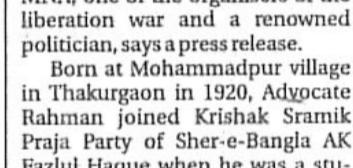
Today is the 16th death anniversary of Advocate Md Azizur Rahman MNA, one of the organisers of the liberation war and a renowned politician, says a press release.

Born at Mohammadpur village in Thakurgaon in 1920, Advocate Rahman joined Krishak Sramik Praja Party of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haque when he was a student of class eight.

As a student leader at Islamia College in Kolkata, he worked with Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

He was also a president of Dinajpur district Awami League.

Poet Abdul Hai Mashreki



Today is the 19th death anniversary of poet Abdul Hai Mashreki, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at Dattapara village in Ishwarpur, Mymensingh.

Abdul Hal Mashreki was a popular poet during the forties.

Bangladesh Betar and BTV will air special programmes on the poet.

Shahidullah Baki

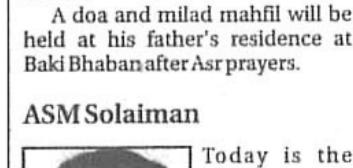


The 36th death anniversary of S. H. A. B. Baki will be held at Dattapara village in Ishwarpur, Mymensingh.

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ASM Solaiman



Today is the 10th death anniversary of ASM Solaiman, former president of Krishak Sramik Party and a leader of the party.

Oikya Jote, says a press release.

He was also a minister and an associate of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haque.

Qurankhwan, a milad mahfil and distribution of food among the orphans will be held at his residence at Pallabi on Friday.



Language movement veteran Abdul Matin addresses a gathering of freedom fighters at the Institute of Engineers' auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left are Maj Gen (Retd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim Bir Pratik and Md. Rahman and on his right are MGP President Ishtiaq Aziz Ulfat and Lt Col (Retd) Kazi Nuruzzaman.

Form special tribunal to try war criminals

Freedom fighters urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of freedom fighters at a gathering yesterday urged the government to form special tribunal to try the war criminals.

The freedom fighters are the living witnesses of war crimes committed during the liberation war in 1971, they added.

The convention of freedom fighters was organised by Muktijoddha Gonob Parishad (MGP), an organisation of war veterans, at the Institute of Engineers' auditorium in the city.

Presided over by MGP President Ishtiaq Aziz Ulfat, the meeting was addressed by language movement veteran Abdul Matin, Lt Col (Retd) Kazi Nuruzzaman, Sector Commander and political analyst Maj Gen (Retd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim Bir Pratik, MGP Adviser Ataus Samad, Md. Rahman, wife of Shahid Matiur Rahman and Birbreshtha Prof Saad Uddin and Col (Retd) HMA Gaffar.

Nuruzzaman said in order to try the war criminals, all pro-liberation forces will have to be united and come to power in the next elections.

Md. Rahman said it is the high time to bring the war criminals to justice.

Saad Uddin said the then newspapermen are enough to prove the misdeeds and heinous activities of the war criminals.

Abdul Matin said the whole nation is united for the trial of the war criminals.

Muhammad Ibrahim said there is no compromise with the war criminals.

Freedom fighter Jamaluddin said what the war criminals did during the liberation war is unparable.

Sidr-affected farmer faces another ordeal

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

A farmer from Barguna, who lost everything to Cyclone Sidr, now faces another ordeal as he finds it difficult to manage money for the treatment of his wife and a daughter who were severely injured during the cyclone that struck the southern coastal areas on November 15.

Panu Mia finally had to take loans from a loan shark at a high interest rate to save his wife Peyara Begum, 35, and daughter Sonia Akhter, 13, but the amount was too little and has already been exhausted. Now he does not know what he can turn to in this time of trouble.

Peyara and Sonia were injured when a tree fell on them outside their house in Barguna when they were moving to a safer place just after the cyclone struck the coastal area.

Peyara with severe head injuries is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) while Sonia with a broken leg at the Orthopaedic Hospital at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka.

The two were alone in their home at village Dallabanga in Barguna on the night of the cyclone as other members of the family went to a relative's house in nearby upazila.

"As we were trying to find a safe shelter desperately, a tree fell on us and both of us got faint," she said. A man rescued them the next morning.

They were rushed to Barguna Sadar Hospital. Two days later they were brought to DMCH as per doctors' advice. Six days later, Sonia was shifted to Orthopaedic Hospital for treatment.

"When I brought my wife and the daughter to Dhaka, relatives and villagers provided me with around Tk 10,000 which was exhausted in two days," said Panu, who has only six bighas of land.

"Later, I took Tk 9,000 in loans from my relatives and which was also exhausted within three days."

"Finding no other options, my son brought some gold ornaments from his in-laws' house and took a loan of Tk 10,500 with three percent interest a month from a local jeweller by mortgaging the gold ornaments," Panu said.

"That amount has almost been exhausted and I don't know who I can turn to for help," he added.

Soon a huge surge of water washed them away, but Peyara did



Peyara Begum
not let go of her daughter's hand.

After being floated for some time, they could manage to reach a road, around one and a half kilometres away from their house.

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Declare 6th Wage Board Award by Dec 10' Demands SSKOP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SSKOP), a platform of journalists and workers of the newspaper industry, yesterday called on the government to declare the 6th Wage Board Award for them by December 10.

They also demanded a halt to the dismissal of employees at the daily Ittefaq, reinstatement of the dismissed employees and steps to resolve problems in The Bangladesh Observer.

The newspapermen placed the demands at a rally held at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

The SSKOP leaders also warned that the journalists and employees will stage a sit-in front of The National Press Club at 11:00 am on December 12 if the demands are not met by December 10. Similar programme will also be held across the country and a work abstention programme will be observed in all newspaper offices, news agencies and the electronic media from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on the day.

SSKOP leaders Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Ruhul Amin Gazi, Motiur Rahman Talukder, Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, Altaf Mahmud, Md Khairul Islam, Abdul Hashem, Omar Faruk, Sardar Farid and Azizul Haque Banna spoke at the rally presided over by SSKOP Co-convenor Mozammel Haque.

She was addressing a regional workshop on 'Steps towards greater protection of trafficked survivors' organised by BNWLA in cooperation with International Organisation for Migration, Save the Children Sweden-Denmark and USAID at Sonargaon Hotel in the city from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on the day.

BNWLA Executive Director Advocate S. H. A. B. Baki said the organisation will continue to monitor the issue as well as their post-traumatic stress disorder in cyclone-affected areas.

"We need to ensure that women can find suitable jobs in the society and earn a decent living," he said.

Besides inter-governmental and regional cooperation, the adviser urged the NGOs and civil society organisations in the source, transit and destination countries to strengthen their networks to rehabilitate the victims of human trafficking.

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