



Begum Rokeya Day today

UNB, Dhaka

The nation celebrates Begum Rokeya Day today marking the birth anniversary of the pioneer of an awakening for women's rights in the subcontinent.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will give away Begum Rokeya Padak 2007 to Prof Latifa Akand and Prof Dr Hosne Ara Begum at Ganyu Memorial auditorium today for their outstanding contribution to socio-economic progress of women.

Various socio-cultural and political organisations have taken up elaborate programmes to observe the birthday of the celebrity. President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed issued separate messages paying their rich tributes to the memory of Begum Rokeya on the occasion.

The president in his message recalled that she took the first step to enlighten the Muslim women-folk in the British India with education amid an adverse environment. "Her contribution is evident in women education, establishing women's rights and eradicating social superstitions," the president said.

Chief Adviser said Begum Rokeya showed the women the enlightened path of freedom breaking social restrictions.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad will hold a discussion at Cirdap auditorium at 3.30pm today to mark the day.

Women and Children Affairs Ministry has chalked out a year-long programme on the occasion with a focus on the lapses of women-related programmes of different ministries for remedial measures.

Under the programme, Paba of Rajshahi, Rupsha of Khulna and Sylhet Sadar upazilas will be taken as three model cases to implement various women development programmes.

CU admission forms collection, submission time extended

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong University (CU) authority has extended time for collecting and submitting admission forms for the first year honours courses for the academic session 2007-08 at the university.

The intended candidates would be able to collect and submit filled forms till December 11. The deadline for collecting and submitting forms were December 06 and 10 respectively, a CU press release said last evening.

Dates for admission tests would remain unchanged.

Saarc Charter Day observed

BSS, Dhaka

The 22nd anniversary of the signing of the Charter of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) was observed yesterday.

The Charter was signed during the first Saarc summit held in Dhaka on December 8, 1985.

The Saarc Meteorological Research Centre (SMRC) organised a function in the city to mark the occasion.

Defence Secretary Kamrul Hasan inaugurated the function as chief guest.

Chairman of the Governing Board of SMRC and Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Defence Brigadier General Shah Muhammad Sultan Uddin Iqbal, Bir Protik, attended the function as special guest.

The defence secretary said the Saarc provided a platform for mutual cooperation of the people of this region.

"Inclusion of Afghanistan as a new member of Saarc will further strengthen this regional body," he added.

Referring to cyclone Sidr, the secretary said people vulnerable to such disaster could be shifted to safer places through early warning at right time by the Met office as well as other concerned departments.

Kamrul said natural disasters are occurring due to global warming and stressed the need for all-out preparedness to be protected from the wrath of such calamities.

The day's programme also included a technical session on various research activities conducted by the SMRC.

Research officers from different scientific organisations including SMRC presented keynote papers.

SMRC Director Dr Samarendra Karmakar addressed the programme.

CHT peace accord misinterpreted over the years

Speakers tell BBC Bangladesh Sanglap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Participants at BBC Bangladesh Sanglap yesterday demanded full implementation of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord, introduction of cellphone network, balanced development of all people including ethnic and Bangalee communities and development of tourism in the region.

"As the accord was misinterpreted over the years, it has not been implemented due to lack of political will," said Chakma Circle Chief (Chakma King) Raja Devasish Roy.

Although several provisions of the treaty have been implemented, there are some important clauses including land dispute and withdrawal of security camps are not implemented, he added.

President of Rangamati district unit of Awami League (AL) Dipankar Talukder, Rangamati Municipality Chairman Habibur Rahman and Chairperson of Green

Hill Tuku Talukder took part in the programme as panellists.

BBC Bangla Service in conjunction with the BBC World Service Trust organised the event at Parjatan Holiday Complex.

Shakeel Anwar of BBC Bangla Service moderated the programme.

Dipankar said the treaty could be implemented if a pro-treaty government assumes power in the next election, otherwise implementation of the treaty would be further delayed.

Habibur said as there are some highly controversial clauses in the accord, its full implementation would take time.

Tuku observed that if the accord is implemented, both the Bangalee and the indigenous community would be benefited.

Referring to Law Adviser Mainul Hossain's comment to review the treaty, Chakma Raja said as the treaty was signed between the government and the Parbatya

Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity, its review is not possible without the nod of the two sides.

The panellists said it is quite illogical that the government is not providing mobile phone network facility to people of three hill districts on security ground.

They urged the government to initiate small range mobile network in the towns as early as possible to involve hill people in development process.

On Mainul's comment over filing sedition charge against Jamaat leaders, Dipankar and Habibur said if the state has good will then it could stand beside the person who filed the case.

Otherwise it would be an effort to save the Jamaat, they viewed.

The panellists urged the government to turn the hill districts into an internationally standard tourism spot.

Raja Devasish laid emphasis on the involvement of local people in the process.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed presides over a meeting on fertiliser at his office in the city yesterday.

Afghanistan too weak to go after rights violators: Karzai

AFP, Kabul

President Hamid Karzai said yesterday addressing human rights abuses in Afghanistan's violent past would take years with his government still too weak to take on those behind the continuing atrocities.

The president said he had held back on implementing a three-year peace, reconciliation and justice plan that he signed in 2005 "on purpose" to prevent any violent backlash from those behind human rights violations in the past.

"There are tyrants in our land," Karzai said at a meeting of around 200 rights activists and victims of alleged war crimes in this country's three decades of conflict.

"They exist in our political circles, but we must move with lots of caution so as not to cause lots of noises and more human rights violations," he said at the event to mark the 60th anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Former warlords and other people alleged to be linked to murders, rapes, torture and other atrocities in Afghanistan's bloody past hold seats in the administration and democratically elected

parliament.

Several people at the meeting, including some claiming to be victims of abuse, demanded Karzai explain why these alleged abusers had not been dealt with and the reconciliation plan acted on.

"Because the power to implement it does not exist in the government," Karzai responded.

"It will take time. We are better than five, six years ago but to bring an ideal justice would maybe take several years, nine, 10 years," said Karzai, who took power six years ago after a US-led invasion toppled the Taliban regime.

The president said rights violations and atrocities were continuing today with his government unable to reach the culprits. He said these included warlords who still hold sway in some areas as well as Taliban insurgents.

"Still there are people -- I don't mean the Taliban -- who by the force of (the) gun, money and political power are stepping on Afghanistan's people's rights," he said.

"There are places where the government can't reach and persuade those still violating human rights."

"The government is better

compared to five years ago but there are still places where the government is weak to safeguard the human rights."

The justice plan has a range of provisions, including compensation and documentation of abuses, and also suggests the possibility of prosecution -- a suggestion that has angered many of the men who rights groups say committed abuses.

Three killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least three people were killed and five others injured in separate road accidents in Chittagong and Manikganj yesterday and on Friday night.

Unb from Chittagong adds: Two people were killed and two others injured when a bus hit an auto-rickshaw at Alauldighi in Hathazari upazila on Nazirhat-Chittagong highway yesterday.

Witnesses said a Chittagong-bound bus from Khagrachhari dashed the CNG-run three-wheeler in front of Chittagong University's gate No 2 around 2:30pm, killing auto-rickshaw driver Rafiqullah, 35, and passenger Harunur Rashid, 28, on the spot and injuring its two other passengers.

The injured -- Harunur Rashid's brother Mamunur Rashid and aunt Jainab Begum -- were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Later, police recovered the bodies and sent those to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

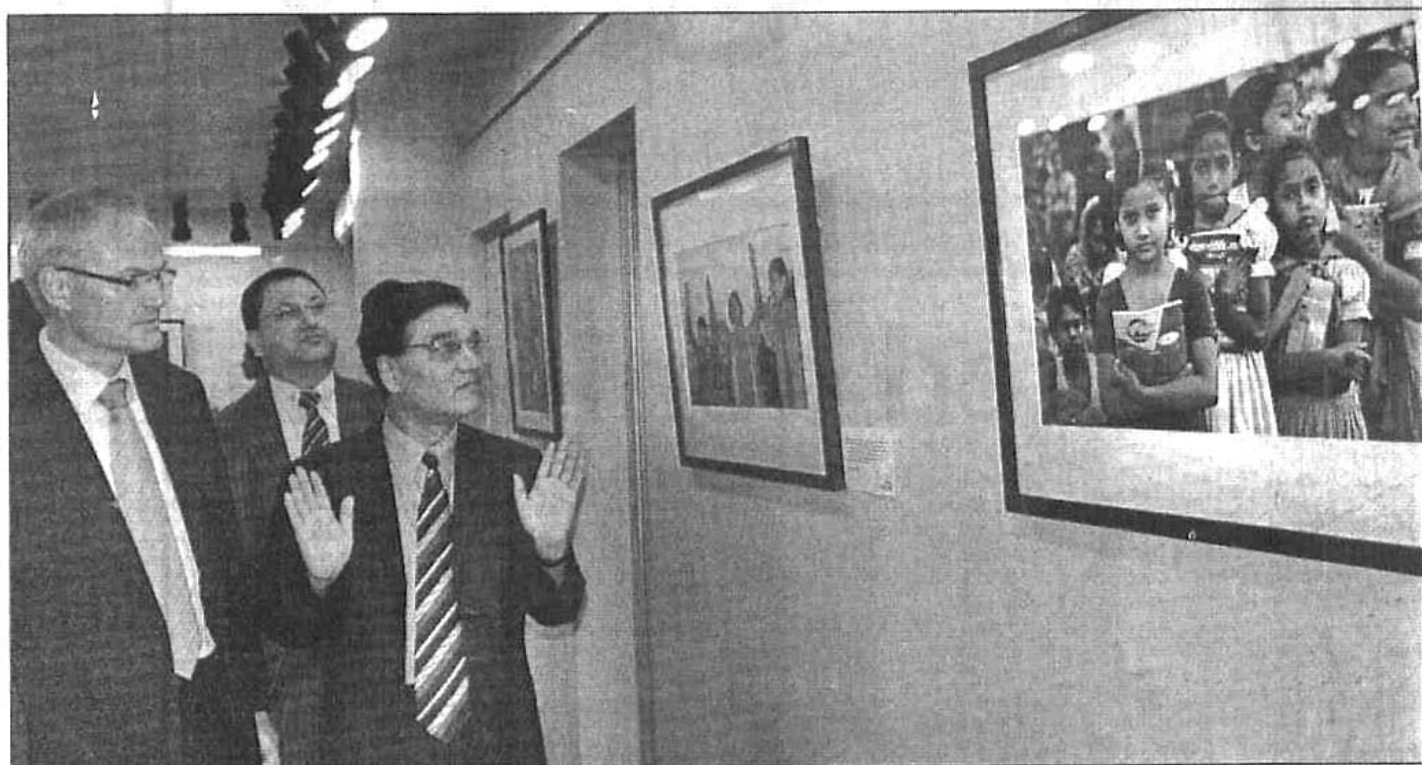
Our correspondent from Manikganj reports: A tea stall boy was killed and three others were injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Aricha highway at Tepra bus stand under Shivalaya upazila in Manikganj on Friday night.

The victim was identified as Sujon, 12, son of Buddha Dey of Dashchira village.

Shivalaya police station sources said the accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound bus from Paturia hit them while walking along the footpath at Tepra leaving Sujon dead on the spot.

The body was taken to Manikganj Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

The injured were taken to Uthuly Health Complex.



A photography exhibition titled "Fighting corruption: a collective responsibility" began at Drik Gallery in the city yesterday. UNDP organised the exhibition to mark the International Anti-corruption Day 2007.

CYCLONE SIDR

US Congressman seeks colleagues' support to help recover economy

UNB, Dhaka

US Congressman McDermott has urged his congressional colleagues to support the New Partnership for Development Act 2007 (NPDA) to help recover Bangladesh's economic losses caused by cyclone Sidr.

NPDA would eliminate tariff and quotas on all products originating in Bangladesh and in other LDCs, and provide capacity building support necessary to help the countries recover the competitiveness needed to thrive.

The congressman made the appeal in the context of recent devastating cyclone that battered the southwestern part of the country, according to a message received here.

"The United States responded by launching a humanitarian relief operation, but it would take sustainable efforts to help this vulnerable country recover," said McDermott, introducer of NPDA in US Congress.

NPDA would provide critical development assistance needed to help Bangladesh recover in part by eliminating tariffs on products that are exported from Bangladesh.

Citing the huge tariffs Bangladesh pays for its export sales to the USA, the Congressman said, "This unfairness is crippling a country that is already determined by the UN as least developed country, and would continue to be an obstacle to economic recovery from Cyclone Sidr."

The Embassy of Bangladesh in Washington was working with the Congress, the diplomatic community, think tanks and private sector to gather more support for the bill, the Bangladesh Embassy said.

Book fair begins in Ctg tomorrow

CU CORRESPONDENT

A weeklong Muktiuddher Boi Mela (Book Fair) begins in the port city tomorrow.

The fair is being organised by Muktiuddher Shaheed Smriti Pathagar for the second time on the premises of DC Hill with a view to enkindle the spirit of the liberation war in the mind of the new generation.

At a press conference at the Pathagar office yesterday, fair Secretary General Kamrul Hasan Badal said elaborate programmes have been chalked out to mark the occasion.

The programmes include discussion, recollection of nine-month-long war by freedom fighters including sector commanders and the relatives of the martyred, recitation, pantomime, photography exhibition and painting competition.

A special publication titled "Chidri 71" will be published during the fair.

Lt Col (Retd) Abu Osman Chowdhury, commander of Sector 8, will formally inaugurate the fair on behalf of the Sector Commander's Forum.

Fair Chairman and Prof Anupam Sen will preside over the inaugural function.

The seven days of the fair would be dedicated after the names of seven Birshrestha (War heroes) while eight artistes of Swadhin Bangla Biplobi Betar Kendra would be accorded reception.

On different days of the fair, distinguished guests from the capital would take part in different programmes.

The guests include Language Veteran Mahbub-Ul-Alam Chowdhury, Artist Qaiyum Chowdhury, Litterateur and Writer Syed Shamsul Haque, Shamokal Editor Abed Khan, Writer and Researcher Shahrier Kabir, Writer Imdadul Haque Milon, Muktiuddher Jadugar Trustees Poet and Architect Rabiul Hossain, Writer and Researcher Maifudul Haque, Artiste Sara Zaker, Filmmaker Kausar Chowdhury and relatives of the martyred.

Revolutionary Binod Bihari Chowdhury, Azadi Editor MA Malek, Pubokone Editor Taslim Uddin Chowdhury, Prothom Alo Resident Editor Abul Momen and a good number of eminent persons of Chittagong will take part in the discussions.

Cultural programmes will be held everyday.

Fair Joint Secretary General Shawkat Bangalee, Coordinators Masum Ahmed and Faruk Taher, Members Hamid Ullah, Mintu Chowdhury, Saiful Islam, Sajjad Hossain, Hasan Maruf Rumi and Mithun Mallik were present at the press conference.

To make the fair a grand success, the organisers met editors, news editors and chief reporters of different national dailies, private TV channels and news agencies in Dhaka last week and sought their cooperation in this connection.

International Anti-Corruption Day today

BSS, Dhaka

The International Anti-Corruption Day will be observed in the country today with a renewed pledge to combat corruption more effectively.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) will launch a yearlong campaign against corruption today, marking the day.

The commission in collaboration with Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) will launch an anti-graft campaign with the slogan 'Rise against corruption', which will continue up to December 9 next year.

The United Nations declared December 9 as the Anti-Corruption Day to strengthen the anti-graft movement across the world.

To mark the day, TIB has undertaken a five-day programme, including an anti-graft cartoon exhibition that began at Drik Gallery on Friday. ACC Chairman Hasan Mashud Chowdhury inaugurated the exhibition.

TIB will also hold a seminar in collaboration with the ACC at the Bangladesh-China Conference Centre at 3:00pm today.

A four-day inter-university anti-graft debate competition will also begin today. Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz will inaugurate the debate at the TSC auditorium while the ACC chairman will be present as the chief guest.

Other programmes of the day include rally, human chain, discussion and cultural functions.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj



at the age of 73.

He was admitted to the hospital 10 days ago with serious old-age complications.

He left behind his wife, relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at Sewta graveyard in Manikganj town yesterday.

Different organisations including Manikganj Bar Association, Manikganj Press Club and Bangladesh Muktiuddha Sangsad, have condoled his death.

Muhammad Atiqullah

Muhammad Atiqullah, a retired Hajji officer, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at a voters' registration centre at Mirpur in the city yesterday at the age of 65, says a press release.

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

He was buried at his family graveyard at his village home at Chhagalnaiya in Feni.

Momtaj Uddin

BSS, Dhaka

Momtaj Uddin, former president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Samik Jote and a freedom fighter, died of heart attack at his residence at Bhairab in Kishoreganj district yesterday at the age of 70.

He had been a CBA and non-CBA leader of Kohinur Jute Mills and Jabbar Jute Mills for 36 years.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at Panchabati Eidgah at Bhairab.

Coordinator of Unity for Political Reforms (UPR) ASM Abdur Rab has condoled the death of Momtaj.

Malaysia considering detention of Indian activists

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has reportedly warned that ethnic Indian activists accused of having links with Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers could be held under internal security laws.

Ethnic rights group Hindraf, which organised mass anti-discrimination protests in November that were broken up with tear gas and water cannon, has been accused of seeking support from the Tigers.

Abdullah said he had ordered police to monitor Hindraf leaders and followers on suspicion of association with terrorists, and that they could be dealt with under the Internal Security Act (ISA) which allows detention without trial.

"ISA is an option," the premier said according to the New Straits

Times. "I will decide when the time is right."

"If they are deemed (as a threat to national security) we will know what to do."

Cabinet minister Nazri Abdul Aziz reportedly said Hindraf would be banned if it was found to be supported by groups like the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Hindu paramilitary group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

"If it is true that Hindraf leaders have links with them, Hindraf is also a terrorist group," the de facto law minister said according to the Star daily.

Malaysia's ethnic Indians, who make up eight percent of the population, are mostly Tamils -- the descendants of indentured labourers brought here by the British colonial rulers in the 1800s.

Hindraf chairman P.

Waythamoorthy, who is overseas lobbying international support for the group, claimed the government was conspiring against them.

"This is a state conspiracy to divert from the real issue of the oppression, marginalisation and suppression of the minority Indian community," he said in a statement.

"Hindraf will continue its peaceful struggle both locally and internationally."

On Friday, the government also sought to overturn a decision that allowed three Hindraf leaders including Waythamoorthy to walk free from sedition charges related to speeches they made last month.

The speeches criticised Malaysia's system of preferential treatment for Malays, who make up 60 percent of the population. The court has adjourned the hearing until Monday.



Fall in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Night temperature may fall slightly over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 29.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 12.5 degrees Celsius at Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm today and rises at 6:30am 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	27.2	16.0	65	63
Chittagong	26.5	17.5	67	58
Rajshahi	26.0	14.8	75	77
Khulna	27.5	16.0	83	71
Barisal	28.3	14.5	87	80
Sylhet	25.7	14.8	70	74
Cox's Bazar	29.0	17.0	65	62