

World Human Rights Day today

UNB, Dhaka

The World Human Rights Day will be observed in the country today.

On this day in 1948, the Universal Human Rights Charter was signed in Paris and its principles and philosophy were later included in various international human rights charters for implementation in many countries.

On the eve of the 59th World Human Rights Day, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in a message said the caretaker government is determined to make democracy more functional and relevant for the people of Bangladesh by ensuring good governance, strengthening legal norms and institutions that would protect fundamental human rights.

The decision to establish the national human rights commission is a manifestation of the government's total commitment in this regard, he said.

United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) will hold a discussion with Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin as the chief guest. UNAB president Prof Muzaffer Ahmad will preside over the programme.

Court accepts charge sheet against Nikita

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A court in Dhaka yesterday accepted the charge sheet of a case filed against Zannatul Ferdous alias Nikita, known as 'yaba dealer', for possessing 34 yaba tablets at her Shantinagar residence in the city.

After scrutinising the case docket and other relevant documents, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Hemayetuddin passed the order in this respect discharging Nikita's parents and her brother from the charges as per the plea submitted by the investigation officer (IO) of the case.

The court then sent the case to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) for its transfer to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court for trial.

Earlier on Wednesday, Sub-Inspector (SI) Selim Badsha of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-3), who is also the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet against Nikita to the CMM's Court, showing 26 people as prosecution witnesses.



Obituary

KM Jahangir Aminul Haq, a noted businessman and social worker and elder brother of the daily Manabzamin Editor Mahbuba Chowdhury, passed away at St Joseph Hospital in London on Friday at the age of 59, says a press release.

In his student life, he was the general secretary of the Students' Union of Notre Dame College.

Haq worked for Pakistan Television and later for Bangladesh Television (BTV) as a newscaster. He also contributed to a number of leading newspapers in the country.

He was a board member of Westminster Primary Care Trust and the chairman of an independent police advisory committee in London.

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

Sheikh Azhar ul Islam



Sheikh Azhar ul Islam, former administrative officer of Urban Development Department and a social worker, passed away due to cancer at New York in the United States on December 1 at the age of 67, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, two sons, and three daughters to mourn his death.

He will be buried at Mukambazar graveyard, Bhadeswar in Sylhet immediately after arrival of his body from the USA.

Md Nazrul Islam



Md Nazrul Islam, a resident of Jafarabad at Dhanmondi in the city, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at a city hospital on December 4, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, one daughter and one son to mourn his death.

Haji Moshuiddin

Haji Moshuiddin, uncle of Mohammedan Sporting Club Vice-President Shariful Islam, passed away due to old age complications in the city yesterday at the age of 78, says a press release.

Rizia Khatun

Rizia Khatun, mother of former footballer Abdus Salam Murshedi, passed away due to cancer at Salam's Gulshan residence in the city yesterday at the age of 90, says a press release.

She left behind her four sons and two daughters to mourn her death.

Continue move to check corruption

Governance experts tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent governance experts and academics at a seminar yesterday lauded the government initiatives for institutional reforms and trial of the corrupt; but said these will not bear fruits as long as the scope for power abuse remains in the absence of legal and ethical standards.

They suggested identification of legal and institutional weaknesses with necessary amendments so that political will that has been created in the country to combat corruption must be sustained.

The seminar titled 'UN Convention Against Corruption: Implications for Bangladesh-What Next?' was organised jointly by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

The seminar was organised on the occasion of the International Anti-Corruption Day 2007.

Speaking at the seminar, ACC Chairman Lt Gen (Retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury urged the authorities concerned to be prepared in line with the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) to reap its benefits in the recovery of assets and checking corruption.

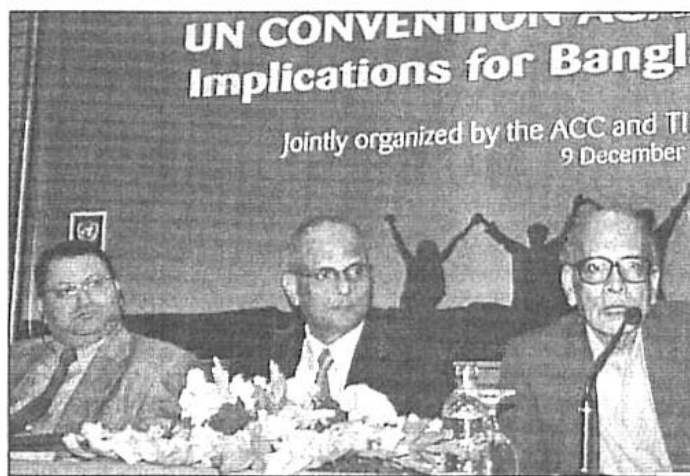
"UNCAC itself does not make us corrupt-free. We should be prepared to change the domestic laws in line with the UN convention," said the ACC chairman, adding that there are gaps between domestic legal instruments and the UNCAC.

The political will to combat corruption must be sustained and no agency should be able to divert the attention of the government to check corruption, he observed.

Replying to a question, Mashhud said there is no scope for debate between ACC and proposed Truth Commission because the latter must have legal basis and people's support.

Chairing the seminar, TIB Trustee Board Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said there is weakness in detecting financial crimes in Bangladesh. He said the government should take the advantage of the absence of any anti-monopoly act, the big businesses monopolise, and it helps corrupt the government functionaries, he said.

The banking system is also



TIB Trustee Board Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaks at a seminar at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday. On his right are ACC Chairman Lt Gen (Retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury and UNDP Country Director Manoj Basnyat.

designed in such a way that there is no legal authority over it allowing deposition of illegal money, he said, adding that according to UNCAC by Bangladesh has created opportunities for getting help from other countries in recovering the assets smuggled out illegally.

Prof Muzaffer said two very important sectors, education and health, remain out of the reforms as of now and hoped that the ACC will look into the matters.

"If corruption remains, human rights will never be established. Contribution of corruption in creating inequality is so much that it must be checked," the eminent educationist said.

Lauding the policy of institutional reforms, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman in his keynote presentation said, "These reforms can neither bear fruits nor can be sustained without establishing convincingly that appointments, promotions, postings and transfers in public service are based on performance and merit and not on political influence and bribery."

As long as the scope remains for abuse of power with impunity, and as long as effective legal and ethical standards are not in place with enforcement mechanisms for their implementation, tolerance of corruption will continue to be expected or sustained, he added.

In the embedded structure of corruption, a key actor in addition to politicians and public officials is the

private sector, which is the supply side of the win-win game in corruption, Iftekharuzzaman noted.

"The sooner it is possible to mainstream anti-corruption values in the private sector the better is the prospect of implementation of UNCAC," he said.

Iftekharuzzaman apprehended that implications of emergency in terms of human rights, public harassment and sense of insecurity and a shaky confidence in businessmen with its implications on the market price—all together may speed up the process of eroding public support.

"To sustain public support, people must be convinced that in the end the anti-corruption drive is going to add value for them and reduce hardships for them," he added.

UNDP Country Director Manoj Basnyat said steps against corruption taken by the government will lead to more investment, public service delivery, accountability and poverty reduction.

Establishment Secretary Abdus Salam and ACC Director General Abu Talib Miah also spoke.

At the seminar, winners of TIB-organised cartoon competition and UNDP-organised photography competition were given trophies.

The day was also observed by 36 Conscious Citizens' Committees through rallies, debate competitions and other programmes across the country.

Nat'l commitment to help overcome post-Sidr state

Says chief adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday expressed the hope that the broad-based national commitment as reflected through united efforts in providing assistance to the cyclone victims will help overcome the situation.

He said a possible outbreak of waterborne diseases did not occur in the cyclone-affected south and south-western region following the supply of safe drinking water.

Fakhruddin made the remarks while receiving donations for the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund from a number of organisations and institutions at the CA's office.

He informed that so far Tk 120 crore of the fund has been sent to the affected areas, particularly as grants for rebuilding houses and other priorities.

The chief adviser said micro-financing institutions, NGOs and banks are providing loans to the cyclone-hit people of various professions to help them restart their life and resume economic activities.

He said NGOs are not recovering the loan instalments from the cyclone-affected people and announced to provide new loans.

As some kids came with donation with others, the chief adviser expressed happiness witnessing their compassion for the cyclone victims and hoped that from this sense of feelings the kids would be able to lead the country in the future.

Those who handed over cheques included ex-secretary SM Al-Hossain, MCCI President Latifur Rahman, Chairperson of National Bank Ltd Parvin Huq Siddiq, President of the managing committee of Comilla Modern High School AKM Sohel, President of Bangladesh Govt Secondary School Teachers Association Rehena Khatun, Principal of Ideal School and College Shahana Ara Begum and two students of the school, Principal of International Turkish Hope School Bayram Saatci and some of its students, Principal of Little Scholars Tutorial and High School Monwara Bhuiyan and its two students, and Vice-president of Pabna-Sirajganj District Welfare Association Md Abdul Wahab.

Govt to expedite efforts for empowering women: CA

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said the government wants to accelerate its ongoing efforts to pave the way for empowering women in all spheres of society to establish their rights.

But the country still has a long way to go to reach the goal, he observed while addressing a function at the Osmani Memorial auditorium, organised by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs marking the Begum Rokeya Day.

Chaired by Women and Children Affairs Adviser Geetara Safiya Choudhury, the function was also addressed by Women and Children Affairs Secretary Rokeya Sultana.

Advisers, academics and representatives from various women organisations and NGOs were also present.

The chief adviser handed over Begum Rokeya Padak 2007 to Prof Latifa Akand and Prof Dr Hosne Ara Begum for their outstanding contributions to women education and development at the function.

The award carries a gold medal and a certificate.

Fakhruddin urged the womenfolk to be inspired by Begum Rokeya's ideals and spread her thoughts to even the remotest areas of the country to pave the way for women empowerment.

Begum Rokeya as a social reformer specifically stated that interests of men and women are no different as women and men are



Prof Latifa Akand and Prof Dr Hosne Ara Begum, winners of Begum Rokeya Padak 2007, pose for photograph with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at Osmani Memorial auditorium in the city yesterday. Women and Children Affairs Adviser Geetara Safiya Choudhury, extreme left, is also seen.

like two eyes of the society, he added.

He said the call of Begum Rokeya for the women to become self-reliant did not go in vain. "Imbued with her spirit, ideal and appeal, the women of this country are marching ahead... Today, gender-friendly budget has become essential precondition also in development planning of Bangladesh."

Recalling Begum Rokeya's struggle against repression on women in her time, he said unfortunately such situation still prevails in some places. Putting an end to this is now very urgent, he added.

Later, the chief adviser and his wife Neena Ahmed witnessed a

musical drama, based on the life of Begum Rokeya, performed by children.

'Launch social movement to end violence against women'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Begum Rokeya Day was observed yesterday in the country with a call for launching a social movement to bring an end to violence against women.

Women and Gender Studies Department of Dhaka University (DU) organised 'Rokeya Memorial Lectures' where women leader Dr Maleka Begum said predominance of patriarchal culture in the society still remains as an obstacle to women advancement.

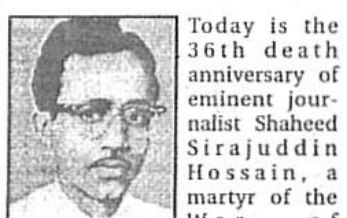
Prof Dr Anisuzzaman presided over the function, also addressed by Prof Ferdous Azim, member of Nari Pakkha and Ayesha Banu, chair of Women and Gender Studies Department, and Hameeda Hossain, member of Ain O Salish Kendra.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad organised a discussion on the occasion where Dr Golam Murshid, academic and researcher, was present as the chief guest.

Steps Towards development (Steps), Dhaka Development Forum, and Gender and Development Alliance jointly celebrated Rokeya Day in 18 districts through organising different programmes.

Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra, Nari Shiksha O Nari Samikha Forum, Barcha Shiksha Nari and Fatma Samajtantrik Dal also organised discussions on the occasion.

Sirajuddin Hossain's anniversary of death today



Today is the 36th death anniversary of eminent journalist Sirajuddin Hossain, a martyr of the War of Liberation, says a press release.

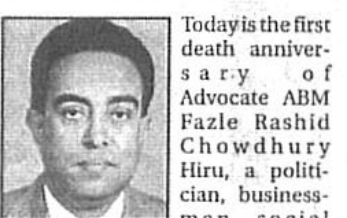
Pakistani occupation forces and their collaborators, Razakars and Al-Badr, took him away from his residence at Chameligh in the city on this day in 1971 since then he had been missing.

Sirajuddin Hossain, former executive editor of the Daily Ittefaq, helped mobilise people's support during the War of Liberation through his writings.

A pioneer of investigating reporting, Sirajuddin was also the news editor of the daily Ittefaq.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and discussion will be held at his residence at 3/11 Asad Avenue at Mohammadpur in the city after Maghrib prayers. Quarakhwani and milad mahfil will also be held at Shaheed Sirajuddin Hossain College in Khajura and at his village home at Sharusura in Magura.

ABM Fazle Rashid



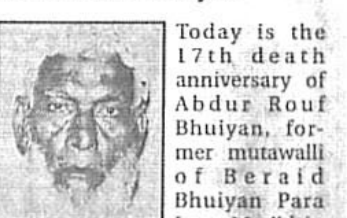
Today is the first death anniversary of Advocate ABM Fazle Rashid Chowdhury Hiru, a politician, businessman, social worker and lawyer, says a press release.

Fazle Rashid was the eldest son of late AKM Fazlul Kabir Chowdhury, former leader of the opposition in East Pakistan Assembly.

On the occasion, Quarakhwani, doa and milad mahfil will be held at his residences in Dhaka, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and village home at Gohira in Raozan.

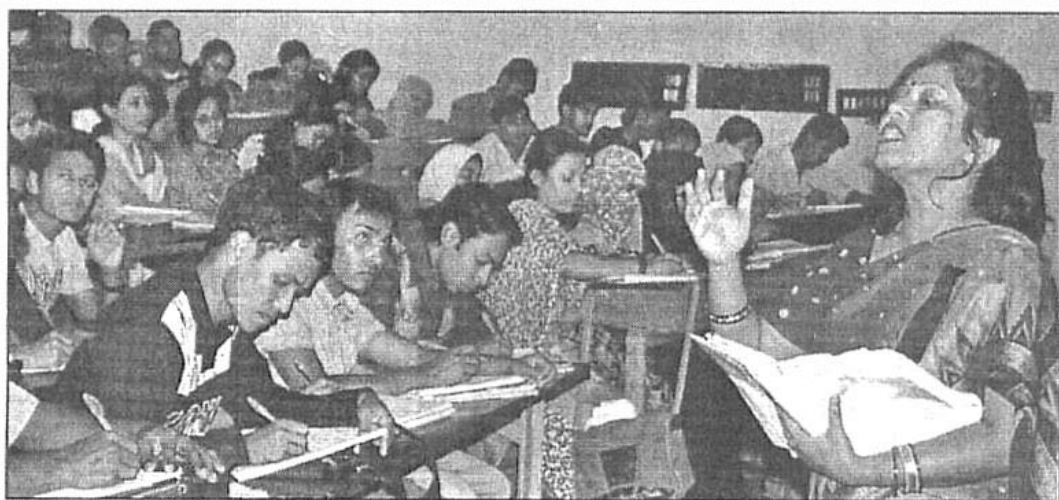
All are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Abdur Rouf Bhuiyan



Today is the 17th death anniversary of Abdur Rouf Bhuiyan, former mutawalli of Beraid Bhuiyan Para Jame Masjid in the city, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa will be held for peace of the departed soul.



A Dhaka University teacher delivers lecture during a class wearing black badge yesterday as part of the teachers' two-day demonstration demanding immediate release of their detained colleagues and students. (Story on Page 1)

'Formulate coal policy that reflects national interest'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged the government to formulate a national coal policy that would reflect the interest of the nation.

To make sure that there is nothing against the people in the coal policy,

the government should publicise the draft coal policy before approving it, they demanded.

The roundtable titled 'Phulbari coal mine and conspiracy' organised by Workers' Party was held at Shaheed Asad auditorium in the city.

Speaking at the programme,

Politburo Member of Workers' Party Haider Akbar Khan Rono said that some quarters with connivance with some foreign companies are plotting to exploit country's mineral resources by depriving the common people who are the real owners of such resources.

Before taking any decision regarding the mineral resources, the government should realise that people of the country would stop any move that goes against their interest.

"Government should respect its agreement with the people of Phulbari where it promised not to allow open-pit coal mining in any part of the country," he said.

Citing the example of India he also urged the government not to lease out any coal mine to any foreign companies.

Regarding why state-owned companies are not given the task of exploring and extracting mineral resources, former chairman of Petrobangla Hossain Mansur said some quarters in Bangladesh deliberately kept the state-owned enterprises weakened to promote their vested interests.

President of Workers' Party Rashed Khan Menon moderated the programme while its General Secretary Bimal Biswas, General Secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh Mujahidul Islam Selim, President of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Hasanul Huq Inu and Prof Shamsul Alam of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology also spoke.



Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country having chances of light rain or thundershowers over Rajshahi division and the regions of Tangail and Mymensingh in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Slight rise in night temperature is expected over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 28.2 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 10.3 degrees Celsius at Srirangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:12pm today and rises at 6:31am 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	26.0	16.8	58	63
Chittagong	26.4	16.5	73	55
Rajshahi	25.8	13.3	73	76
Khulna	25.6	15.5	74	74
Barisal	26.5	14.8	82	90
Sylhet	27.0	14.4	71	72
Cox's Bazar	28.2	17.6	63	60

DHAKA TODAY

Inaugural ceremony

The inaugural ceremony of the 1st Saarc Youth Camp 2007 will be held. Venue: National Youth Centre, auditorium, Savar. Time: 10:30am.

ECD conference

Bangladesh ECD Network organises a two-day Second National ECD Conference beginning from today. Venue: Bangladesh Shiksha Academy. Time: 9:30am.

Convocation

The 6th convocation of Bangladesh Institute of Medical and Dental Technology (BIMDT) will be held. Venue: Biam auditorium. Time: 9:00am.

Symposium

United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) organises a symposium to mark the World Human Rights Day. Venue: Hotel Purbani International. Time: 5:00pm.

Seminar

Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco organises a seminar on the occasion of World Human Rights Day. Venue: Hotel Sundarban. Time: 10:30am.

Media award

Unicef Bangladesh organises the third annual Meena Media Awards ceremony. Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 10:30am.

BMSF Seminar

Bangladesh Manobadhihikar Samonyi Parishad (BMSF) will organise a seminar to mark the World Human Rights Day. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 9:30am.

Seminar

Bangladesh Labour Research Institute (BLRI) organises a seminar on 'Take the lead-stop AIDS keep the promise'. Venue: National Scouts Bhawan. Time: 3:00pm.

BILIA Discussion

Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) organises a discussion to mark the 75th founding anniversary of BBC. Venue: BILIA auditorium. Time: 10:30am.

ICDDR,B seminar

ICDDR,B in collaboration with Reproductive Health Programme of MOHFW and Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh will organise a seminar on 'Postpartum haemorrhage prevention and use of misoprostol in rural Bangladesh'. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 8:30am.

Debate

The daily Amar Desh organises a debate to mark the World Human Rights Day. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.

Discussion

Human Rights Watch Bangladesh will hold a discussion to mark the World Human Rights Day. Venue: Conference room, Bangladesh Hockey Federation. Time: 5:00pm.

Human chain

Partnership of Women in Action will form a human chain to mark the World Human Rights Day. Venue: In front of National Museum. Time: 2:00pm.

Roundtable

Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC) organises a roundtable on 'Health and human rights: Legal aspects'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:30am.



Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Latifur Rahman hands over a cheque to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for the cyclone-affected people at the latter's office in the city yesterday.



Buet Vice-chancellor Prof Dr AMM Saffiullah hands over a cheque for Tk 7,55,100 to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for the Sidr victims at his office recently.



AA Moniruzzaman, acting chairman of the board of governor of the University of Asia Pacific, hands over a cheque for Tk 3 lakh to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the latter's office in the city on December 6 while Vice-chancellor Prof Abdul Matin Patwari looks on.



Osman Murad, Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Bank, hands over a cheque for one lakh dollar to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for the cyclone-affected people at the latter's office in the city yesterday.



Sri Lankan High Commissioner V Krishnamoorthy hands over relief goods for the cyclone victims to Food and Disaster Management Secretary Dr Mohammad Aiyub Mia on December 4.