



Ahmed Kabir Choudhury passes away

Ahmed Kabir Choudhury of Sylhet, a language movement veteran, passed away on January 7 at the age of 77, says a press release.

He was the son of late Khan Bahadur Abdul Rahim Choudhury, public prosecutor, and Zobeida Rahim Choudhury, the first Muslim woman politician of Bangladesh.

Ahmed Kabir Choudhury obtained MA in economics from Dhaka University. He participated in the Language Movement of 1952 while a student in Dhaka. While leading student protests, he was injured during confrontations with the police.

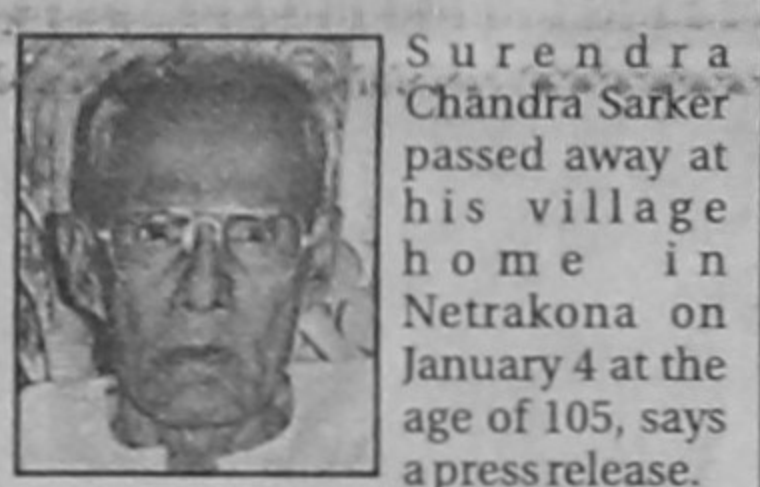
He married Tuli Kabir of Ahia Villa, Sylhet, in 1958. Tuli Kabir, niece of renowned writer Syed Mujtaba Ali, passed away in 1990.

Ahmed Kabir Choudhury was also a tea-planter, rubber-planter and arborist. His love of trees led him to plant many unusual and rare varieties of fruit and ornamental trees at his plantation near Srimongol over a 40-year span. Some trees he raised include Casuarina, Cinnamon, Buddha-Narikel, Avocado, Rambutan and numerous varieties of citrus.

Choudhury is survived by his children Ihtisham Kabir, Imtiaz Kabir and Durba Kabir, five grandchildren, three brothers, three sisters and a host of relatives, friends and well-wishers.

His qulshwani will be held on January 11 after Asr prayers at Road # 3, House # 22, Old DOHS. Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the qul.

Surendra Chandra Sarker



Surendra Chandra Sarker passed away at his village home in Netrakona on January 4 at the age of 105, says a press release.

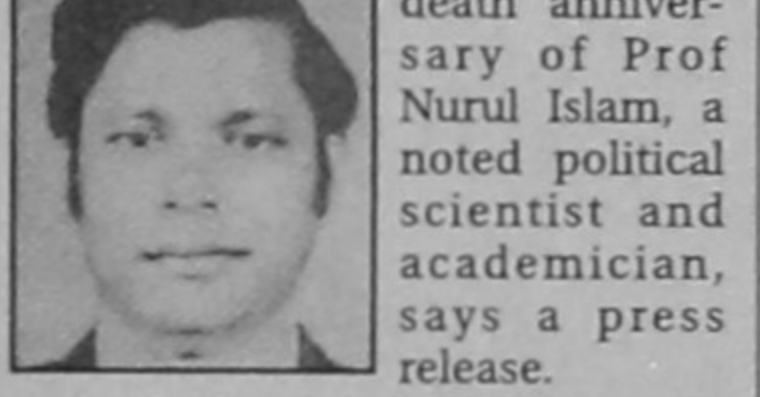
He left behind four sons, one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He is the father of Dr M Sarker, managing director of Sajib Chemical Company Limited.

His Shraddha will be held at his village home on January 16.

His relatives, admirers and employees of Sajib Chemical are requested to attend the Shraddha.

Death anniversary



Today is the 7th death anniversary of Prof Nurul Islam, a noted political scientist and academician, says a press release.

Prof Islam was the vice president of Asian Cultural Centre in Japan. He was awarded gold medals abroad for his research works.

EWG completes voter awareness campaign in 1000 unions

To assist the Bangladesh Election Commission in preparing voter rolls, Election Working Group (EWG) launched voters' awareness campaign in 1000 unions across the country in last six months, says a press release.

The campaign is going on in 921 unions and will be in 1018 more unions this month.

This was disclosed at a workshop for district coordinators and the focal points of member organisations of EWG held at WVA auditorium in the city yesterday.

Rallies, miking, special meetings with hard to reach communities, display of banners, distribution of leaflets and folk cultural programmes were arranged to motivate voters to register in the voter roll during this time, the release added.

Dr Zahurul Alam, director of the EWG, said in the workshop that their campaign has motivated the voters and speeded up the registration process. Army officials, civil administration officials, local government representatives and the media helped them much in their campaign, he added.

CA seeks cops' help in facing challenges

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday sought all-out cooperation of the police with the government in facing reform, electoral and economic challenges.

The challenges will have to be tackled successfully investing all strength in the interest of country's welfare and bringing about fair democratic dispensation, he said addressing police officials ranking SP and above on the occasion of the Police Week 2008 at the International Conference Centre (ICC) in the capital.

He also urged the police force to take all-out initiative to establish a knowledge-based, honest, efficient and enlightened police service to build up a peaceful democratic society and establish justice and good governance in the country.

Reminding that peace, discipline and stability are the main preconditions of economic development and social progress, Fakhruddin said it is the responsibility of the police department to make it happen.

He noted that ensuring public security and law and order is very urgent to maintain favourable atmosphere for trade and investment from home and abroad. Ensuring economic security is equally important for security of

public life and property.

In this regard, he said police members in all levels will have to remain aware and alert and all will have to be groomed with a mindset for socio-economic development.

The CA hoped that the police will play the expected role in smooth transportation of goods and creating trade and investment-friendly environment free of fear and intimidation.

Fakhruddin specially urged the police officials to take necessary steps to make secure the present huge investment in the readymade garment sector.

He asked them to take initiative to set up a 'Specialised Industrial-region Security System' suitable to Bangladesh, reviewing the models and strategies on ensuring security in industrial areas in different countries.

The head of the caretaker government said presently opportunity to apply law independently and neutrally by the police has increased largely due to impartiality and firmness of the present government.

The police will have to earn people's confidence by utilising the opportunity and the sense of relief that made a comeback in public mind following steps taken against terrorism, extortionists and the

corrupt.

This stable situation has to be made sustainable, he said.

Fakhruddin urged the high officials to strengthen the supervision of police activities and ensure chain of command as well as try to resolve the problems and sufferings of juniors.

Regarding reform of police rules and regulations and draft Bangladesh Police Ordinance 2007, he said work is going on to make a time-binding and accountable new law by amending the age-old Police Act 1861.

Communications Adviser Maj Gen (Retd) MA Matin, Home Secretary Md Abdul Karim, Inspector General of Police Noor Mohammad, Additional IGP Nabo Bikram Kishore Tripura and Special Super of Special Branch Golam Rasul also spoke at the function.

Communications Adviser Matin said those who were in power in the past "used police illogically and unjustly for their vested interest".

As a result, police could not perform their assigned responsibilities properly for ensuring people's rights and maintaining law and order, he told the function.

IGP Noor stressed the urgency of approval of the draft of the Bangladesh Police Ordinance 2007 for modernising the police force.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed addresses the police officials at his office in the city yesterday on the occasion of Police Week-2008.

SAUDI AIRLINES OFFICE Passengers protest mismanagement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred air passengers, mostly migrant workers, staged a demonstration outside the office of the Saudi Arabian Airlines at Karwan Bazar in the city yesterday to protest the mismanagement by the office authorities.

The hour-long protest on the road beside Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, housing the airlines office, led to a massive traffic congestion at noon, causing untold suffering to commuters.

Witnesses said the workers came to the office to have their tickets and seats confirmed but had to wait in a long queue on the footpath of the road for hours, which infuriated them. At around 12:00 noon, the agitated workers staged a protest on the road, hindering the traffic movement.

Talking to this correspondent, a number of passengers said they have visas and air tickets but failed to have their seats confirmed in time because of mismanagement by the office authorities.

They even could not enter the office premises and have to wait in queues on the road, they added.

They also alleged that some middlemen in collusion with some office employees control the system and allow those who pay

bribes to enter the premises.

Shahjahan Hossain of Luxmipur said he entered the premises through an alternative gate by paying Tk 240 to the security guards. The guards, however, denied the allegation.

Several others said they had been waiting in the queue on the road since early hours of yesterday but failed to enter the office premises.

Doulat Akbar, officer-in-charge of Ramna police station, said the passengers protested the mismanagement by the airlines office.

As the airlines office do not have any seating arrangement for the passengers, they have to wait on the roadside, he added.

DU Gha unit admission test deferred

DU CORRESPONDENT

Admission test of Gha unit for the sessions 2007-2008 at Dhaka University will be held at 10:00am on February 8 instead of January 18.

A press release said the examination has been deferred due to unavailability of circumstances.

Admission test for Kha unit will be held on February 1.

'Launch movement against communal, imperialist forces'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called on the government to ban religion-based politics and take steps without delay to bring the war criminals to book.

They also called on all to launch a mass movement against the communal and imperialist forces.

Left Democratic Front (LDF) organised the roundtable at Mukti Bhawan at Purana Paltan in the city.

Udichi President Jatin Sarker, columnist Syed Abul Maksud, Coordinator of Sector Commanders Forum Lt Gen (ret) Harun-ur-Rashid, writer and journalist Shahriar Kabir, Prof Anu Muhammad, Prof MM Akash and President of Workers Party Rashid Khan Menon took part in the discussion.

The speakers vowed to eliminate war criminals from the country through legal process.

They also urged all political parties to sever relationship with Jamaat and all other anti-liberation forces.

Jatin Sarker said, "We will have to assess ourselves. Imperialist and communal forces got the opportunities to dominate us because we have failed to act properly."

Terming Jamaat leaders self-proclaimed war criminals, Shahriar Kabir said the Jamaat-e-Islami has no right to do politics in the country, as the constitution does not allow religion-based politics.

Lt Gen (ret) Harun-ur-Rashid urged the government to try war criminals in a special tribunal.

South Asian confce against drug abuse held

South Asian consultation conference to formulate a draft policy to augment movement against drug abuse was held at Dhaka Regency Hotel and Resort yesterday, says a press release.

The two-day conference intended to share experience and ideas of NGOs, and to involve government and civil society in the movement.

Representatives from Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bangladesh are participating in the consultation meeting.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Alcohol and Drug Information Centre (ADC), Sri Lanka, Shelter Don Bosco-India and Vienna NGO Committee on Narcotics Drugs jointly organise the conference.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission President Kazi Rafiqul Alam presided over the inaugural ceremony and DG of Narcotic Control Directorate Md Humayun Kabir was present as the chief guest.



President Iajuddin Ahmed administers the oath to five newly appointed advisers to the caretaker government at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday. From left are Hossain Zillur Rahman, Rasheda K Choudhury, Maj Gen (Retd) Ghulam Quader, AF Hassan Ariff and AMM Shawkat Ali. (Story on Page 1)

ARMS CASE

Trial deferred as KCC mayor falls ill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Special Tribunal (fourth court) of Khulna yesterday deferred the trial of detained Khulna City Corporation (KCC) Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman in an arms case as he could not appear at the tribunal because of his illness.

The trial will begin on January 16 if the condition of the mayor improves, according to a source at the special tribunal.

The tribunal was scheduled to record the deposition of prosecution witnesses yesterday.

Tayebur Rahman was admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) from Khulna District Jail at 3:00pm on Tuesday. He was taken to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMU) by an ambulance at 8:00pm on the same day as his condition deteriorated.

The Superintendent of Khulna District Jail Solaiman Ali said the mayor has been suffering from diabetes, arthritis, hypertension and cardiovascular pain.

Mayor Tayebur Rahman was arrested on the night of November 2 last year from his residence in Dhaka and brought to Khulna the next day.

CASE AGAINST AMINI Naraji petition against charge sheet

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A naraji (no confidence) petition was submitted yesterday against the charge sheet in a looming case against former lawmaker and chairman of a faction of Islami Oikyo Jote (IOJ) Mufti Fazlul Haque Amini and eight others.

Maulavi Rashid Ahmed of Barakata in the city submitted the petition to a Dhaka court saying that the investigation officer (IO) of the case did not investigate the case properly.

The IO was influenced by the accused and submitted the charge sheet to the court on November 30 last year dropping names of Amini's sons Abul Hasanat and Abul Farah and 15 others from it, the petition said. Moreover, the IO did not interrogate the victims who were assaulted by the accused and did not inform him of the investigation of the case, the petition added.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Al-Mamun fixed February 12 for hearing on the naraji petition.

Sub-inspector (SI) Kazi Barkat Ali of Lalbagh Police Station, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet against them to the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court showing 27 people as prosecution witnesses.

Other accused are Mufti Taiyab, Maulana Hedayetullah, Mufti Abul Khair, Mohammad Ali Hossain, Khaled Mosharraf, Shafiqur Rahman, Mizanur Rahman and Saiful Islam.

Extortionists stab transport businessman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of extortionists stabbed a transport businessman at Shyampur in the capital yesterday as he refused to pay Tk 3 lakh in toll.

The victim, Harunur Rashid, with stab injuries in his head and back was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

The gang of four local hoodlums attacked Rashid when he was returning home in the area from Bou Bazar in Shyampur at around 5:00pm.

Family sources said the gang demanded Tk 3 lakh from him about two months ago.

Election should be held as per EC roadmap: UK envoy

UNB, Pirojpur

British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury yesterday said general election should be held as per the roadmap announced by the Election Commission (EC).

"The election should be held by December this year. There is no alternative to it," he said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of a rehabilitation programme for the cyclone victims at Majhar Char.

The British Business Group has taken up the rehabilitation programme. Under the project, houses of 164 Sidsr-affected families will be constructed and repaired in the next three months.

The British high commissioner said that not only the British government but also the British Business Group has extended a hand to the Bangladesh government in its efforts to implement the post-Sidsr rehabilitation programme.

He said the British Business Group has allocated Tk 270 crore for the supply of pure drinking

water, solar energy, cultivation and construction of educational institutions.

The high commissioner also distributed three power tillers among Sidsr victims.

When asked about the resignation of four advisers, he said, "It's completely a political matter."

Presided over by Deputy Commissioner M Abdul Quayum, the programme was attended by Managing Director of Tesco Bangladesh Tam Ki Gray.

Ex-MP Falu granted bail

UNB, Dhaka

Former BNP MP Mosaddek Ali Falu was granted bail by a Dhaka court in a land grabbing and intimidation case yesterday.

Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque granted the bail. Dr Zafarullah had filed the case against Falu.

Remain alert about activities of HR commission

Says AI chief

UNB, Dhaka

Appreciating the formation of National Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International (AI) Secretary General Irene Khan yesterday said the efforts might go in vain if all concerned do not remain alert about the activities and outcome of the commission.

"The structure of the National Human Rights Commission should have to be strong. We should have sharp eyes whether the commission becomes a watchdog or a lapdog. It will depend on how much pressure we put on it," Irene Khan told a roundtable titled 'Freedom of Expression in Bangladesh' at Drik Gallery.

The discussion was jointly organised by DrikNews and Amnesty International, with Shahidul Alam of Drik Gallery in the chair.

The AI chief said it must be clear whether the government has formed the Human Rights Commission after discussing with the civil society members and others concerned or with a motive to keep it just within its ministry.

The said appointments of the commission members must be done

through a transparent process and information about its funding sources should also be available to the public.

Irene said military and democratic governments during pre- and post-liberation war periods had violated human rights and there had been no justice in those cases.

"So, there are always threats of impunity... this threat of impunity can be torn by all-out efforts. And it's appreciating that Bangladesh has already taken such efforts," she said.

Irene said some restrictions have been imposed on the media under the emergency rules. "The way the emergency rules have been written has created an uncertainty. This uncertainty itself put censorship on the media. It's not a good law, so we've asked the government to lift the restrictions," she said.

Young journalists, human rights activists and bloggers exchanged views with the AI secretary general on different issues, including human rights and freedom of expression.

CA condemns attempt on Gayoom's life

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday condemned Tuesday's cowardly attack on the life of Maldives' President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom.

In a message to Gayoom, the chief adviser expressed his concern over the heinous act and thanked the Almighty for keeping Gayoom safe and unhurt.

Saarc Secy Gen due Jan 12

BSS, Dhaka

Secretary General of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) Chenkyab Lyonpo Dorji accompanied by his spouse will arrive in Dhaka on a two-day farewell visit on January 12.

Dorji's tenure ends on February 28, an official of foreign affairs ministry said yesterday.

He will be succeeded by Dr Sheel Kant Sharma, also the Indian permanent representative to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Vienna.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) in collaboration with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will organise an international seminar on 'Humanitarian intervention in fragile states'. Venue: Hotel Lake Shore, Gulshan-2. Time: 10:00am.

Discussion

Bangladesh Kalyan Party organises a discussion on significance of one-eleven. Venue: Hotel Imperial, Bangabandhu Avenue. Time: 3:30pm.

Discussion

Jatiya Party (JP) organises a discussion to mark one year in office of the present caretaker government. Venue: Diploma Engineers Institute. Time: 3:00pm.

Art exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of the 12-day solo art exhibition titled 'Art in mind', hosted by Alliance Francaise de Dacca, will be held. Venue: Galene Zoom. Time: 5:30pm.

Education expo

CEMS Bangladesh organises four-day 2nd education worldwide expo 2008. Venue: Bashundhara city. Time: 11:00am.

Film festival

The inaugural ceremony of the 10th Dhaka International Film Festival will be held. Venue: Shaheed Zia Auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

Syndicate active to encroach on FFs' land in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A syndicate of land-grabbers is trying to encroach the land leased out to freedom fighters in the port city's Bayezid area.

Leaders of Chittagong Freedom Fighters' Welfare Association and some other organisations made this allegation at a press conference at Chittagong Press Club yesterday.

They said over 200 freedom fighters and professionals had been living in 24.61 acres of land under Jalalabad Mouza at Bayezid Police Station after leasing it from the government since 1986.

But, a syndicate of land grabbers had been hatching conspiracy

to grab the land through filing false cases, producing fake documents and giving threats to the leaseholders, they alleged.

Last month the land grabbers even started constructing a boundary wall on the land leased out to the freedom fighters and others.

Responding to an appeal made in this regard, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Md Zafar Alam last week confirmed the land as remaining under the legal occupation of the leaseholders.

The ADC in a letter on Monday also asked the Officer-in-Charge of Bayezid Police Station for taking necessary steps against illegal entry and encroachment, they said.

But, the evil attempts for land grabbing still continued, alleged the leaseholders urging the district administration and police for taking immediate steps to this end.

Chittagong Freedom Fighters' Welfare Association President Jasim Ullah Chowdhury read out the written statement at the press conference while its General Secretary Md Jalal Uddin, Mohammad Abul Bashar of Mukti Gria Sangsthan Samity, freedom fighters Abdul Awal, Wali Ullah Chowdhury, SM Shamsul Alam Chowdhury, Fayez Ahmed of Bijoy Gria Samity and Mohammad Haider of Pahari Nirr Samity were also present.