

A unique initiative to help sidr-hit acid victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was a unique initiative for extending hands of friendship and assistance to those who are the survivors of acid attack, a cruel form of menace that destroys beautiful dreams of life.

People from various walks of life—showbiz, diplomatic corps, businesses and social services—gathered at the residence of British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury in the capital yesterday to extend their helping hand to acid survivors and to say that they are not alone.

At the fundraising programme

organised by the Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) and British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury, they donated money to re-build the houses of 61 families of acid survivors whose houses were destroyed by the devastating cyclone Sidr last year.

"They went through double miseries. Social stigma and natural disaster made their lives miserable. They could not collect relief materials like others," said Foysal, an ASF official.

Survivors like Nasima, Bakul and Halima had no alternative but to take shelter at the neighbours' houses, he added.



British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury speaks at a function to raise funds for Acid Survivors Foundation at his residence at Baridhara in the city yesterday.

UNION PARISHAD OIKYA JOTE Local body elections before parliament polls demanded

UNB, Dhaka

A delegation of the Union Parishad Oikya Jote at a meeting with advisers yesterday demanded local government elections before parliamentary elections.

During the meeting held at the state guesthouse Meghna, the Jote delegation led by its President Mahbubur Rahman Tulu also placed proposals to strengthen the local government institutions.

Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader, Law Adviser Hassan Arif, Education Adviser Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman and LGAD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal were present at the meeting.

Oikya Jote Secretary General Matur Rahman Tapan and Co-

chairman Abdul Hossain Khan were present.

Asked about his comment on political parties' demand for holding the parliamentary elections first, Tulu told reporters that political parties can not demand it as the local body elections are non-political.

He said the advisers told them that if the local body election is held first it would not create any problem for national election.

They also expressed their firm commitment to hold the national elections according to the set timeframe.

Adviser Anwarul Iqbal told the reporters that the Oikya Jote leaders raised their various demands and sought local body elections

first to stop unwarranted interference by MPs.

The Oikya Jote also demanded seats reserved for women representatives in the local body institutions.

The advisers said the government would consider their demands.

The Jote demands include 40 percent allocation of the annual development budget for local body institutions, steps to ensure that MPs can not interfere in projects undertaken by the local government after establishment of the national government, 40 percent women representation to local body institution and placement of all manpower working in local government bodies under the local government authorities.

Allegation of Tk 10 crore misappropriation from retired armed forces staff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 327 retired staff of Bangladesh Armed Forces yesterday alleged against a business organisation run by six other retired officials of the department for misappropriating about Tk 10 crore from them.

The allegation came from a press conference held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) auditorium in the city.

The victims said they deposited about Tk 7.0 crore, which are all of their incomes during their service life, to Al-Akaba Trading and Suppliers Ltd. They deposited the amount on conditions that the company would provide them Tk 1,500 monthly as interest against per Tk 1.0 lakh.

But the company was neither paying them the interest money nor returning their deposited amount, they alleged, saying that the company officials had also been threatening them.

They also alleged that despite their filing of a case with Pallabi Police Station, police did not take any necessary step to recover the money and arrest the accused.

Senior Warrant Officer (Retd) Md Hasanuzzaman read out a written statement on behalf of the victims. He said retired armed forces officials Abdul Kaiyum, Mohammad Abdur Rouf, Azizul Huq, Amir Hossain, AKM Azad and Mohammad Kamruzzaman received the money from them through separate deeds and vouchers.

AGM Akhter Hossain and Mossarraf Hossain, two other victims, also spoke.

The victims said they started depositing the money since 2004 and one of the victims deposited highest Tk 14 lakh.

Asked, they said they deposited the money to private company Al-Akaba Trading and Suppliers Ltd as it had assured them of providing more interest than the banks.

When contacted, DMP Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Mirpur-Pallabi zone Anwar Hossain told The Daily Star, "We are alert so that the accused cannot leave the country and, therefore, we have sent letters to the immigration departments."

Anwar Hossain, however, said police are also trying to arrest them in this connection.

Mostaq, Shyamol elected CUJ president, secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Mostaq Ahmed and Nazim Uddin Shyamol were elected president and general secretary of Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) yesterday.

Mostaq of the daily Inquilab defeated incumbent President Shahid Ul Alam while Shyamol of The Daily Independent incumbent general secretary Reaz Haider of the daily Purbokone.

Other office-bearers are Vice President: Sultan Ahmad Ashrafi, Joint Secretary: Mohammad Ali, Press and Publication Secretary: Alamgir Sabuj, Treasurer: Ratan Kanti Debashish and Organising Secretary: Soumen Dharr. Executive committee members are Nuruddin Ahmed, Santu Kumar Das and Mujahidul Islam.

DHAKA TODAY

CPD dialogue

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organises a dialogue on 'Boro procurement strategy and food security: An actionable agenda'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Report launching

Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) organises the launching ceremony of the Asia Pacific Education Watch Report. Venue: LGED auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Food festival

The nine-day Malaysian food festival 'Authentic Malay Cuisine' will begin. Venue: Westin Hotel. Time: 4:00pm.

Symposium

Energy and Mineral Resource Division and Petrobranga jointly organise a symposium on 'Mining and community livelihoods in Bangladesh'. Venue: Petrobranga seminar hall. Time: 9:00am.

Short film festival

The inaugural ceremony of the 2nd International inter-university short film festival 2008 will be held. Dhaka University Film Society (DUFFS) in collaboration with Goethe Institut, Bangladesh organise the festival. Venue: Goethe Institut auditorium. Time: 5:00pm.

Workshop

A workshop on 'ICT enabled content development for agricultural information' will be held. Venue: BARC auditorium, Farmgate. Time: 9:00am.

Roundtable

Media Foundation for Trade & Development organises a roundtable on gas and power crisis in industry and commerce. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.



Teachers and students of Mass Communications and Journalism Department of Dhaka University take out a procession on the campus yesterday protesting attack on Prothom Alo DU Correspondent Anu Anwar by the JCD cadres.

SQ METHOD Guardians threaten to intensify agitations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Guardians of some renowned schools at a press conference in the capital yesterday said they would go for tough agitations including strike in all high schools across the country if the government decides to introduce structured questions (SQ) for SSC examination from 2010.

Under the banner of 'Guardian Forum', they demanded the removal of the director general of secondary and higher education directorate (DSHE), chairman of the National Curriculum and Textbooks Board (NCTB) and joint secretary of the education ministry for failing to take necessary preparations for introducing the new method.

They also urged the government to appoint honest academics in those vital posts instead of present officials who are allegedly involved with the grabbing of Tk 793 crore in the name of SQ method under the Secondary Education Sector Development Project (SESDP).

Three steps—fresh textbooks, training of teachers and adequate publicity—are needed for introducing a new method of examination. But till today, sufficient number of teachers were not trained while fresh textbooks are not printed. Under these circumstances, how it is possible to introduce the SQ method when three and a half months of the current academic year have already passed," said Advocate Abed Raja, convener of the Guardian Forum, at the press conference held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

He said a vested quarter is trying to implement the SQ method without adequate preparedness only to legalise the grabbing of money.

"I also urge the government to remove the member-secretary of the committee which was formed to review the implementation of the SQ method," he said in a written statement.

The committee will submit its recommendations by April 24. Guardians Amena Begum of Vigarunnisa Noon School and College, Fozia Parvin of Udayan High School, Selina Akhtar of Government Laboratory High School and Nilufer Ahmed of Rifles Public School and College were present at the press conference.

BUETAA annual general meeting held

The first annual general meeting of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology Alumni Association (BUETAA) was held at central auditorium of Buett recently, says a press release.

Around 150 alumni attended the meeting.

The President of the association and Brac University Vice Chancellor Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury presided over the meeting while Chief Patron of the association and Buett VC Prof AMM Saifullah attended the meeting as the chief guest.

Prof Choudhury in his speech urged all to join the association and to work for achieving the goal of transforming Buett into a centre of excellence in education and research with global recognition.

Prof Saifullah thanked the association for honouring him with the chief patron position. He said the association could support the university in different ways, but to do that effectively it must clearly understand the university's specific needs.

With the representation from different batches a new Board of Trustees was formed through consensus in the meeting.

BCL factions clash at DU: 8 injured

DU CORRESPONDENT

At least eight people, including three activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of Awami League (AL), were injured in a factional clash on Dhaka University (DU) campus yesterday.

Campus sources said a group of activists of a faction that was deprived of positions in the last BCL central committee formed on April 6 in 2005, swooped on Reazuddin Ahmed Chowdhury Sumon, an activist of mainstream BCL faction, with bamboo and steel rods in front of Madhu's Canteen at around 2:00pm while Sima Islam and Utpal Saha of the renegade faction were beaten by Shihab, Russell and Rani of Dhaka College unit of BCL mainstream faction and Banti of DU unit on DU library premises at around 1:00pm.

With serious injuries on head and legs, Sumon was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital while Utpal and Sima received treatment from university medical centre and Dhaka University Medical College Hospital respectively.

Jahidur Rahman, the university correspondent of the Daily Dinkal, was also injured during the clashes between two groups.

A good number of outsiders were seen among the activists of both the factions.

A tension was prevailing among the leaders and activists of two BCL factions since morning after Saturday night's chase and counter-chase between the factions on Mall Chatter premises.

The clash ensued after mainstream BCL activists swooped on

Utpal and Sima right after their scheduled demonstration demanding release of AL President Sheikh Hasina ended.

On Saturday night, activists of two factions took position at Mall Chatter at around 11:00pm and the rival factions chased and counter-chased each other till 2:00am yesterday.

Meanwhile, two crude bombs exploded on the spot within seconds. Later, normalcy was established after the authorities deployed a good number of police.

BCL DU unit General Secretary Sazzad Saqib Badsha said, "To vandalise our ongoing demonstration for the release of Sheikh Hasina, forces from a certain quarter are hatching a conspiracy."

However, Alamgir Kabir Dolan, a leader of the renegade faction, told The Daily Star, "It was unexpected that activists of BCL would beat each other. Everything happened due to the inefficiency of leaders in the existing committee. Junior BCL activists want a new committee."

However, sources said the incident resulted from a longstanding clash between the leaders and activists of the factions.

The situation will worsen if BCL high-ups fail to handle the issue carefully, sources added.

DU VC Prof SMA Faiz said they have called an emergency meeting of the syndicate today to monitor the overall situation of the campus.

A DU press release yesterday added that a five-member probe committee has also been formed with Pro-VC AFM Yusuf Haider as convener to investigate into the incident. The committee will submit its report within seven days.

'Implement Women Dev Policy immediately'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different women and student organisations yesterday demanded immediate implementation of the National Women Development Policy (NWDP) and condemned the government decision to suspend the NWDP.

The Bangladesh Chhatra Moitte yesterday formed a human chain at the foot of the Aparajeyo Bangla on the Dhaka University campus demanding immediate implementation of the NWDP and protesting the violent activities of

the fundamentalist forces in the National Mosque over the NWDP.

Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra, a centre for women journalists, in a statement signed by its President Nasimun Ara Haque also demanded immediate implementation of the NWDP without any changes and condemned the violent activities of the fundamentalist forces on the National Mosque premises.

Bangladesh Nari Mukti Sangsad yesterday wondered if Bangladesh belongs to the fundamentalist forces.

Create pressure on CG for polls

Manju, Menon urge expats in US

UNB, New York

Jatiya Party (Manju) Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju and Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon urged the Bangladeshis immigrants in the USA to create pressure on the caretaker government to immediately hold free, fair and acceptable general elections.

Speaking at a meeting at Club Sanam in Astoria, USA on Saturday, both the leaders said the caretaker government took over power in a situation when there was no other option. But, the agenda they had at the time of taking power is now far behind.

Manju and Menon said the caretaker government has taken control of everything. They are trying to demolish the backbone of our established political parties and planning to form new party.

The meeting was organised by the America-Bangladesh Press Club. President of the press club and Thikana President Said-ur-Rab made welcome speech. Moderated by Weekly Porichoy Editor Nazmul Ahsan, the meeting was attended

by Ekhn Samoy President and Editor Kazi Shamsul Hoque, Thikana Editor Fazlul Hoq, Thikana Executive Editor Lavlu Ansar and Porichoy Executive Editor Darpan Kabir.

Manju said since our independence in 1971 we achieved a lot in different aspects. Once our budget used to be Tk 2000 crore, now it is Tk 64,000 crore. Once we had 16 districts, now we have 64 districts and 480 upazilas, 4900 unions with modern facilities. He termed these as achievements for Bangladesh.

Criticising the activities of the present caretaker government, the leaders asked the government to take lesson from Hamas, Lebanon and Pakistan and form a government with the consent of the people of Bangladesh.

Menon said it is not easy to establish a controlled democracy in an independent country, which in fact the present government is trying to do in Bangladesh.

He urged the people in and out of Bangladesh to compel the caretaker government to hold the elections as soon as possible.

Two journo assaulted on DU campus

DU CORRESPONDENT

Activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) beat two correspondents of two national dailies on Dhaka University (DU) campus within 12 hours.

The activists of JCD, student wing of BNP, beat Anu Anwar, the university correspondent of the Prothom Alo at Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall in the early hours of yesterday while the activists of BCL, student wing of Awami League, assaulted Jahidur Rahman, the university correspondent of Daily Dinkal in front of the Central Library at around 1:00pm.

JCD activists Tuhin, Lenin and Sabuj of Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall severely assaulted Anu in front of the hall gate while he was sending a report to his office over the phone.

Anu said the JCD activists beat him as they got angry over the news.

The BCL activists beat Arman when he went to save Sima, an activist of 'post-deprived' faction of BCL during their internal clash on the library premises.

Teachers and students of mass communication and journalism (MCJ) department brought out a silent procession and held a rally in front of the arts building protesting the attack on Anu.

The rally demanded exemplary punishment of those responsible for the incident.

Prof Arefin Siddique, Prof Ahaduzzaman Mohammad Ali and Assistant Prof Shameem Reza of MCJ department, and Dr Wahiduzzaman of the Institute of Education and Research participated in the procession and rally.

Dhaka University Journalists' Association (Duja) and Bangladesh Chhatra Union also condemned the attacks on the journalists on the campus.

Duja will form a human chain and hold a rally today demanding exemplary punishment of the persons responsible for the attacks.

Mass signature campaign against corruption opens next month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Support Advertising Limited will launch a mass signature campaign against corruption across the country for the next six months.

The programme will begin in Dhaka next month, said the organisers at a press conference at the National Press Club in the capital.

Stressing the need for national unity to make the country free from corruption, Dr Kamal demanded disclosure of the information about the siphoned-off government money.

He said public money has been plundered due to lack of accountability of the elected representatives.

Wishing a success of the campaign, Muzaffer Ahmed said people are paying for the widespread corruption.

The common people should go with the anti-graft movement as the rulers are not interested to stop corruption, he added.

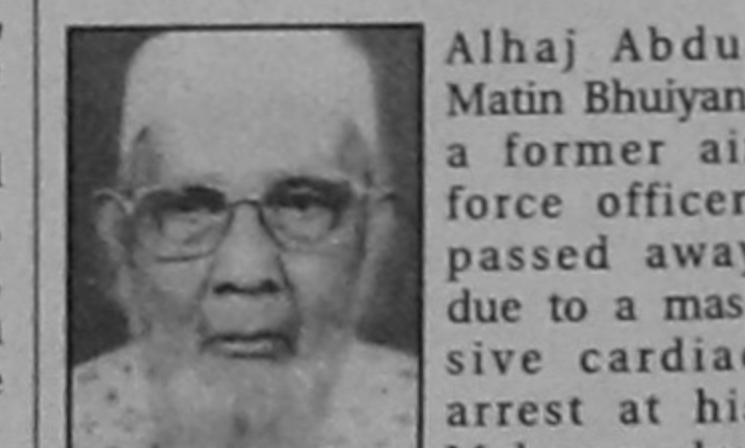
Obituary

Rabul Karim, father of former office secretary of the Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) Mohsinul Karim Lebu, died of old age complications at his Nilphamari residence on Saturday night at the age of 78, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three sons, two daughters and a number of relatives, friends and admirers. He was laid to rest at his family graveyard.

DRU President Alamgir Hossain and General Secretary Elias Khan expressed deep shock at his death.

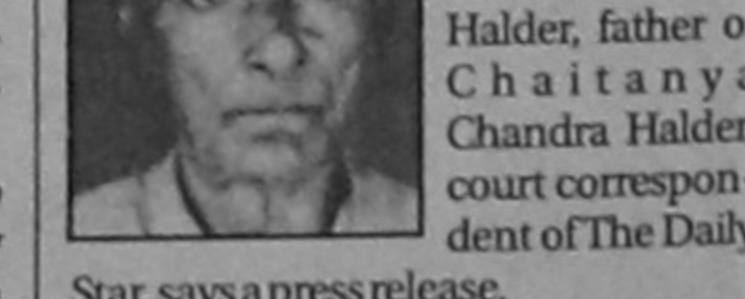
Alhaj Abdul Matin



Alhaj Abdul Matin Bhuiyan, a former air force officer, passed away due to a massive cardiac arrest at his Mohamadpur residence in the city on Thursday at the age of 79, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, four sons, four daughters and a number of relatives, friends and admirers.

Death anniversary



Today is the seventh death anniversary of Surendra Nath Halder, father of Chaitanya Chandra Halder, court correspondent of The Daily Star, says a press release.

On the occasion, recitation from the Geeta, Kirtan, discussion and a prayer session will be held at his village home at Nayakandi Bajitpur under Rajoir upazila in Madaripur district.

Rotarians pledge to make dreams real

The District (national-level) Assembly 2008 of Rotary International District 3280 Bangladesh was held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city on Saturday, says a press release.

Participants from all over the country pledged at the Assembly to fulfil the Rotary theme for 2008-2009 'Make Dreams Real' to reduce child mortality, provide safe drinking water and education to children.

The daylong programme for over 1700 Rotarians, the largest Assembly ever, was hosted by Rotary Club of Dhaka Urbana.

The inaugural plenary session was addressed by District Governor Rafiq Ahmed Siddique, District Governor-elect Md Hafizullah, former DGs M Jamaluddin and Salim Reza, DG-nominee AKM Shamsul Huda, DG-nominee Dr Manzurul Haque Chowdhury, past DG of District 3290 India-Nepal-Andaman Islands Sekhar Mehta and incoming District Secretary PP Fariduddin Khan Siddiqui.

President Rotary Club of Dhaka Urbana Major Qamrul Islam (Retd) delivered the vote of thanks with Deputy Governor-elect Prof Nizamuddin Ahmed of Dhaka Urbana in the chair.

6 held on charge of cheating

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested six youths with a video camera from the city's Uttara area on charge of cheating former Awami League lawmaker Chaiyion Islam of Sirajganj district.

The arrestees are Kamrul Hasan Nasim, 31, Saiful Islam Razu, 31, Jahangir Alam Suman, 28, Shahidul Huda Russell, 22, Ainal Huq, 26, and Jasim Uddin, 30.

Police said they arrested the youths from the residence of the former lawmaker for cheating him.

Uttara Police said the youths took Tk 7,000 from him saying that they would telecast his interview on a television channel.

The arrestees told police that they make package programmes for different television channels.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Tangail, Mymensingh and Comilla in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country.

Mild to moderate heat wave sweeping over the Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal divisions may continue, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 40.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 19.8 degrees Celsius at Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:23pm today and rises at 5:31am 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	36.4	27.4	74	43
Chittagong	32.0	26.3	78	71
Rajshahi	39.4	23.0	86	31
Khulna	37.0	27.3	75	51
Barisal	36.3	27.0	80	72
Sylhet	34.5	24.0	77	70
Cox's Bazar	34.5	27.3	73	74