

Poverty remains as past govts ignored key principles

Says symbolic tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Poverty is not wiped out from the society as all previous governments ran the country ignoring its key principles, said a symbolic tribunal against poverty in a verdict yesterday.

Crocodile kills one in Khan Jahan Ali shrine pond

UNB, Bagerhat

A young man was killed by a crocodile in a large pond on the premises of Hazrat Khan Jahan Ali's shrine here on Wednesday night.

Police recovered the floating body of Rubel Sheikh, 25, yesterday morning. He hailed from Nurullapur village in Moreganj upazila of Bagerhat district.

Rubel along with his mother Firoya Begum came to visit the shrine. When he went to the pond for taking bath, the crocodile attacked and dragged him into deep of the pond.

Local divers could not recover the body despite overnight operation in the pond. The crocodile devoured some parts of his body.

'Remain alert about frauds in name of army officers'

UNB, Dhaka

Military authorities have urged all concerned not to get confused with the reports of recent incidents of fraudulence in the name of army officers and to remain alert about such frauds.

"Recently some incidents of fraudulence in different areas in the name of senior army officers came to the notice of army headquarters," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a release yesterday.

A few days earlier, a "so-called journalist" was arrested by the law enforcers while committing extortion in the name of army officers in Khagrachhari.

"Gangs of frauds have been collecting tolls and receiving other benefits illegally from the local people in the name of senior army officers," the release also said.

"All concerned have been requested not to get confused with such illegal activities and beware of it."

The authorities also requested all to contact directly over mobile phone (0171333256, 01713247504 and 01191001728) to check such matters.

Fema president resigns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Munira Khan, president of Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (Fema), yesterday resigned from the post in protest of violating its constitution, says a press release.

She said, "There is no provision to conduct the election to the national executive committee in the annual general meeting (AGM) according to the Fema constitution."

"A letter was sent to the election committee chairman by the president requesting him to cancel the executive committee election which will be conducted in half an hour only, which is a gross violation of the constitution," added the release.

"As the election committee did not reschedule or announce the cancellation of the election till now, I do not want to be a part of the meeting or the election," she added.

Munira Khan, a life member of Fema, a non-government election watchdog, was elected its first president in 2003.

Fema in a press release said last night Munira Khan's resignation that came only 36 hours before holding of the AGM is an attempt to create confusion among its members.

Clarification

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Airline Pilots' Association yesterday gave clarification on a report headlined 'Passengers suffer as pilot refused to fly Airbus' published in The Daily Star on August 20.

It said the flight to Sylhet on August 19 was delayed as no pilot was detailed beforehand to operate the Airbus.

"As per regulations, at least 12 hours prior notice is required to detail a pilot to operate any flight. Since this was not done, no Airbus pilot was available to operate Dhaka-Sylhet-Dhaka flight," said the clarification signed by Capt. SM Helal, president of the association.

Empowerment Trust and the Peoples Forum on MDG at LGRD auditorium in the city.

The court handed down the verdict following some cases filed by distressed people from different places.

Justice Golam Robbani led the jury board of the symbolic tribunal.

He said it is the duty of an independent state to ensure fundamental rights of its people, but previous political and non-political governments failed to meet these demands.

Justice Robbani said the future government should follow the constitution and the spirit of the

liberation war to rid the country-men of poverty.

The other jury members were Ranjan Karmakar, executive director of Steps Towards Development, Taramon Bibi Bir Protik, trade union leader Dr Wazedul Islam Khan and Dhaka University teacher Hafizur Rahman Karzon.

Different political leaders, economists, intellectuals, women leaders, lawyers, educationists, journalists and civil society members took part in the programme.

Awami League Presidium Member Suranjit Sengupta said an additional three crore people are now living under poverty line due to skyrocketing price hike of daily

essentials.

"Country's poverty will not be removed if we follow the prescriptions of the US and the World Bank. The caretaker government should immediately hand over the power to an elected government, otherwise, the number of distressed people will increase further," he said.

Chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said the allegations of poor people are true and the state cannot avoid them.

Economist Dr Atiur Rahman, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader Shirin Akhtar and Jatiya Party leader GM Kader also spoke on the occasion.

Concerted efforts can make Bangladesh a middle-income country by 2020: Army chief

UNB, Noakhali

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday said Bangladesh could become a middle-income country by 2020 if all of us make a concerted effort to this end.

"Our concerted efforts will be the key to development of Bangladesh," he said while addressing a gathering at Hazirpur village in Begumganj, Noakhali.

Earlier, the army chief visited Ahammad Bahumukhi Samabaya Samity there and inaugurated various projects such as dairy farm, biogas plant, bio-electricity and mushroom cultivation.

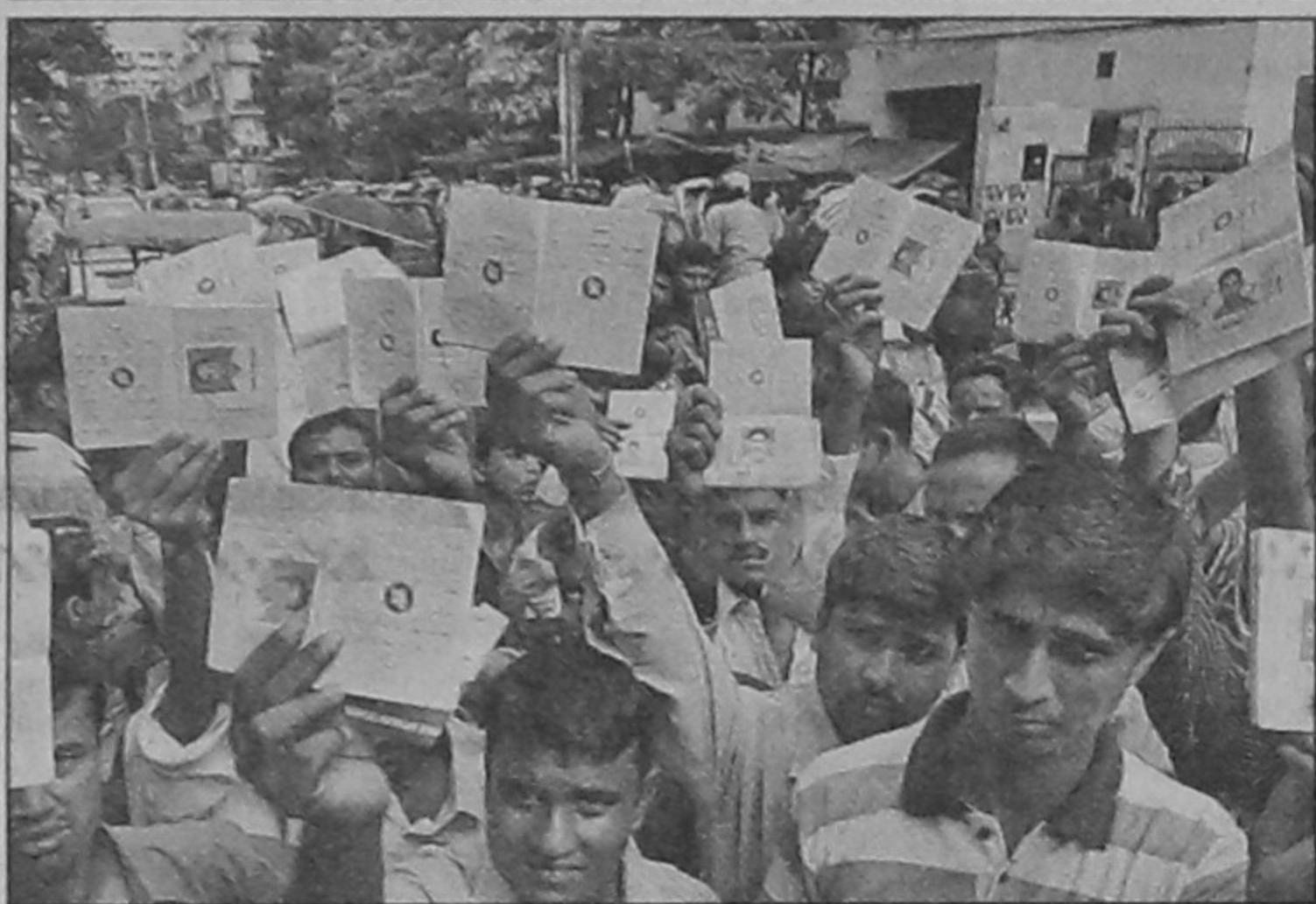
General Moeen said the unemployment problem could have

been avoided if the rich people in every locality had created employment opportunities, especially for the young generation.

He also assured that the army would continue to assist in such cooperative ventures.

General Moeen said some 120 families would have electricity facilities through bio-power plant and the gas to be produced by the plant could be used as fuel by 16 more families daily. Besides, local farmers could use organic fertiliser in their croplands.

GOC of Comilla region Maj Gen Anwar Hossain, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Haque and chief of Noakhali unit Col Ezaz Hakim Siddiqui were present on the occasion.



Some 50 Bangladeshi workers who returned from Dubai after being cheated by manpower brokers stage a demonstration in front of the Labour and Employment Bureau at Kakrail in the city yesterday.

NIKO, BARGE-MOUNTED POWER PLANT CASES HC begins final hearing on Hasina's petitions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday started final hearing on the petitions filed by Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, now abroad on parole, for quashing the Niko and Barge-mounted power plant graft cases against her.

Barrister Rafique-ul Huq, counsel for Hasina, made his preliminary arguments in favour of quashing the cases.

The HC bench comprising Justice Sheikh Rezaul Karim and Justice Md Rais Uddin fixed August 25 for further hearing of the petitions.

On September 2 last year, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Deputy Director Sabir Hasan filed the barge-mounted power plant corruption case with Tejaگون Police Station against Hasina and six prominent personalities including former energy secretary Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury.

According to the case Hasina and the other accused through mutual understanding and use of influence helped Wartsila Power Development Ltd Consortium and its two local partners, Summit Group and United Group, win a deal for setting up a 100MW power plant in Khulna depriving the lowest bidder.

The case statement says a few days before and after the deal, these three companies paid a Tk 3 crore kickback, which was spent for buying a house with some land in Dhanmondi for the Bangabandhu Memorial Trust set up and controlled by Hasina.

Sabir Hasan filed another case with Tejaگون Police Station on December 9 last year accusing Hasina and six others of corruption and abuse of power in awarding three "abandoned" gas fields at Chhatak, Kamta and Peni to Canadian company Niko Resources Ltd during the tenure of the Awami League government.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Former law-maker Sayeda Sakina Islam, wife of cultural personality and journalist Fakhruddin Islam Khan, passed away at her residence at Lalmitia in the city yesterday at the age of 81, says a press release.

She left behind one son, two daughters, grandchildren and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

She will be buried at Muslim Graveyard in Barisal today.

Her qulhwani will be held at her residence at Sadar Road in Barisal city after Asr prayers tomorrow.

Shamsul Huda Chowdhury

METRO DESK



Prof Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, an eminent scholar, passed away due to old-age complications on August 19 at the age of 85, says a press release.

Prof Shamsul Huda, a former dean of the agriculture faculty of Bangladesh Agricultural University, also served as a teacher at MC College in Sylhet and at Rajshahi College in Rajshahi.

His qulhwani will be held at his residence at Uttara after Asr prayers today. Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the qulhwani and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Shamsul Huda

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj



Shamsul Huda, a former assistant general manager of Rupali Bank, passed away at his Manikpur residence yesterday at the age of 80.

He left behind his wife, one son, five daughters and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

He was buried at Katakhal Graveyard.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Principal of Residential Model School and College Lt Col Khandaker Farhad Hossain expressed deep shock at the death of Shamsul Huda.

Chehlum

METRO DESK



Chehlum of Dr Md Zahirul Hoque Bhuiya, former vice chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University, will be held today, says a press release.

Dr Zahirul, a renowned soil scientist, was also a professor of Dhaka University.

On the occasion, fataha will be offered at his graveyard. Also, Quarkhwani, distribution of food among orphans and doa and milad mahfil will be arranged in Dhaka and Naoghat village.

Renu Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Chehlum of Renu Rahman, mother of Md Majibur Rahman, bureau chief of the daily Tathya Dhara, will be held at 1/6 Mill Barrack Police Lines in Sutrapur today, says a press release.

Relatives, admirers and well-wishers are requested to attend the chehlum.



Hundreds of leaders and activists of Awami League gather in front of the party office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday to pay homage to those killed in a grenade attack on a party rally on August 21 in 2004. (Story on page 1)

3 cops injured in bomb attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three policemen were injured, one of them critically, when unknown criminals hurled a homemade bomb at them near the Judge Court in the capital last night.

Of the injured, Constable Monwar Hossain, 25, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in an unconscious state. He received serious wounds as the bomb hit his chest and throat, hospital sources said.

Two other constables - Shafiq and Akram - received minor injuries.

Kotwali police said someone hurled the bomb when the three policemen were patrolling the Judge Court area at around 10:35pm.

2 schoolgirls drown in Turag river

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two schoolgirls drowned in river Turag at Nirashpara village in Tongi yesterday afternoon.

Nipa Akhter, 12, a class four student of Shaheed Smriti School, and Rita, 10, a class three student, drowned when they were swimming in the river at about 3:30pm.

Two other girls, who were also swimming with them, informed local people of the incident. The locals then rushed to the scene and recovered the bodies at about 5:30pm.

Tongi police said an unnatural death case was filed in this connection and the bodies were handed over to their families.

Abdullah Al Mamun's death condoled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Messages of condolence poured in from different socio-cultural organisations and political leaders across the country at the sudden demise of noted playwright, actor and film director Abdullah Al Mamun.

Cultural Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury in a condolence message said the entire cultural arena would suffer an irreparable loss at the death of the playwright.

"He will be always remembered with reverence for his best creation both in television and cinema," she said.

Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser Mahbub Jamil also expressed his profound shock at the untimely death of Abdullah Al Mamun.

"The void created by Mamun's death in the country's film and theatre arena is irreparable," he said.

Information Secretary Jamil Osman in his message recalled the contribution and sincere service of Mamun as the deputy director general of Bangladesh Television and the director general of National Institute of Mass Communication (NIMCO).

Convener of the central committee of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD), acting General Secretary of Gono Forum Subrata Chowdhury, President of Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh Khondokar Ali Abbas and Saiful Haque expressed their deep shock at the death of Mamun and sympathised the bereaved family in separate messages.

Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies, Theatre Art Unit, Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra, Centre for Asian Theatre, Jatiya Party, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Workers' Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Students' Union, Srani Karmachari Oikya Parishad, Bahubachan, a drama group, and Srijon also expressed their shock.

Abdullah Al Mamun was not a drama personality only - his films, writings and protest language always encouraged the progressive-minded people, the leaders said.

He contributed a lot in flourishing the non-communal democratic and progressive spirit in the country, they said, adding that Mamun played a leadership role since the last four decades in the country's non-communal democratic cultural movement.

They also prayed for the salvation of the departed soul of the drama prodigy.

Tk 4cr Japanese grant for Nat'l Museum

UNB, Dhaka

Japan will provide 62.3 million yen, equivalent to approximately Tk 3.88 crore, in grant aid for the Project of Improvement of Audio-visual Equipment of Bangladesh National Museum.

Japanese Ambassador Masayuki Inoue and Secretary of Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance, Mohammad Aminul Islam Bhuiyan signed an agreement to this effect in the city yesterday.

Under the agreement, the

government of Japan would extend grant assistance to the government of Bangladesh to provide the National Museum with audiovisual equipment such as video-shooting system, studio-editing system, projection system and sound-and-lighting systems.

"Video-shooting system and studio-editing system would make it possible to record high-quality image and quality editing. This is how the museum can preserve national and cultural heritage of Bangladesh," says a press release.

Bangladeshi student shot dead in US

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladeshi college student was shot dead by unknown miscreants at his own shop at Philadelphia at Pennsylvania State in the United States on Wednesday.

The victim was identified as Fakhruddin Apu, 19, who hails from

JS RESERVED SEATS 'Elected govt to take decision on election'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elected government should decide whether direct polls will be held in the reserved seats for women in parliament or not, said the leaders of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) yesterday.

They also said the political government should decide whether the quota for women will be increased or not.

They however said the caretaker government (CG) should implement the National Women Development Policy and obey the Cedaw protocol as Bangladesh is one of the signatories to the protocol.

The BMP leaders were speaking at a view-exchange meeting with the visiting UNCEDaw committee member Shanthi Darian at the National Press Club in the city.

Shanthi exchanged with the Parishad leaders about her experience in the field of women empowerment at different levels and assured them of her help in the fight for women's empowerment in the country.

She said the situation of women in Bangladesh is improving but in a slow pace.

BMP President Ayesha Khanam presided over the meeting which was also addressed by Salma Khan, former chairman of UNCEDaw committee.

DHAKA TODAY

World Cyber Games

Grameenphone, F1 Management and Samsung jointly organise the World Cyber Games Bangladesh Championship Finals. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 9:45am.

Founding anniversary

Jatiya Shishu Kishor Sangathan will celebrate the 17th founding anniversary of Amra Kuri. Venue: Jatiya Mahila Sangstha auditorium. Time: 5:30pm.

Inauguration

Nongor, a social organisation, will start its journey. Venue: Faculty of Business Studies, Dhaka University. Time: 9:30am.

Workshop

Democracywatch organises a three-day workshop on 'Good governance and project management' for the NGO activists beginning from today. Venue: Democracywatch auditorium. Time: 9:00am.

Launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of the books 'Yunusism' and 'The Revolution by Rashidul Bari' will be held followed by the premiere of telefilm 'Bishad Shindur Buke Rokto Golap'. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 4:00pm.

Memorial meeting

Bangabandhu Juba Parishad organises a memorial meeting to pay tribute to the victims of the August 21 bomb blast. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:30pm.

Launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of the autobiography of National Professor Dr MR Khan titled 'Jiboner Jolchobi' will be held. Venue: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. Time: 4:00pm.

Roundtable

Shaheed Dr Fazole Rabbi Foundation organises a roundtable on prevention of HIV/AIDS. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:45pm.

Janmastami on Sunday

BSS, Dhaka

Janmastami, the birthday of Lord Krishna and one of the biggest religious festivals of the Hindu community, will be celebrated in the country on August 24.

Bangladesh Puja Uddjapan Parishad and Dhaka Mahanagar Sarbajanin Puja Committee yesterday announced a two-day programme at a press briefing at Dhakeshwari National Temple auditorium in the city to celebrate the day in a befitting manner.

The day's programmes include recitation from the holy Geeta and 'Geeta-jagya' seeking divine blessing for peace and progress of the country at Dhakeshwari Temple Melangan in the morning, bringing out Janmastami procession from the Temple at 3:00pm and Krishna Puja at night.

Besides, a discussion will be held at the Melangan auditorium on the life of Sri Krishna on August 29.

Similar programmes have been chalked out across the country marking the Janmastami.

Bangladesh Puja Uddjapan Parishad President Prof Nim Chandra Bhowmik, General Secretary Advocate Satyendra Chanda Bhakta, Dhaka Mahanagar Sarbajanin Puja Committee President Kaja Devnath and General Secretary Advocate Tapash Kumar Paul spoke at the press briefing.

Maj Gen (retd) CR Dutta Bir Uttam, former general secretary of National Press Club Swapn Kumar Saha, Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, AC Nath, PK Halder, Joyanta Kumar Dev and Nirmal Chatterjee were also present on the occasion.

The leaders underscored the need for upholding the ideal of secularism for establishing a modern democratic system and consolidating national unity and solidarity.

They said the spirit of protecting equal rights for all, irrespective of caste, creed and religion, is an established fact in the democratic world.

They called for celebrating major festivals of all religions at the state level and upholding religious harmony in the country.

Documentary show on poet Nazrul

UNB, Dhaka

The High Commission of India will arrange the screening of a documentary film on poet Kazi Nazrul Islam tomorrow.

The screening will be held at the Indian Cultural Centre at House # 35, Road # 24, Gulshan # 1, at 6:30pm. This will be followed by a brief programme of Nazrul Sangeet, said a press release.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



says a press release.

Selima Khatun was a commissioner of Jessore municipality and the editor and publisher of weekly 'Banihi'. She was also vice-president of Jessore Press Club and chairman of the Jessore branch of Jatiya Mahila Sangstha.

A visiting professor at Connecticut University in the USA, she also served as the headmistress of Jessore Seba Sangha Girls' High school and Kuada Girls' High School.

Religious and social programmes will be held on the occasion of her death anniversary.

Abdur Rob Mridha



Today is the 8th death anniversary of Abdur Rob Mridha, an educationist and social worker, says a press release.

A top leader of the then East Pakistan Teachers' Association, he played a significant role in anti-Ayub education movement in 1962.

He was also the founder-convenor of Babuganj Welfare Association and a senior member of the governing body of Gandaria High School in Dhaka.

His family requested all to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Nurul Alam



Today is the first death anniversary of Nurul Alam, former chief inspector of Explosives, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held. Friends and admirers are requested to attend the programme and pray for eternal peace of the departed soul.