

31pc of juvenile delinquents didn't attend school: Study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 62 percent of some 144 under-aged inmates in six prisons and two correctional homes are between 12 years and less than 16 years and 31 percent of them did not attend the school, revealed a study.

A large number of the inmates came from poor and distressed families and 20.14 percent of them are factory or automobile workshop workers, it added.

The findings of the study on 'Under-aged prison inmates in Bangladesh: A sample situation of the youthful offenders in greater Dhaka' were presented by Retired Police Officers' Welfare Association Bangladesh at Rajarbagh Police Telecom auditorium in the city.

ActionAid Bangladesh supported the study that was conducted on 144 inmates in Dhaka Central Jail and five district jails namely Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Gazipur, Narsingdi and Manikganj and two Unnayan Kendras (correctional centres) during the period from February to April 2008.

At that time, the total number of inmates in prison and correctional centres was 279, the study added.

Presenting the study, Dr M Enamul Hoque, former inspector general of police (IGP) and former member of law commission, said almost 50 percent inmates have been living in the prisons and correctional centres for a period of around three months.

About 23 percent inmates were involved in theft, 18.5 percent in murder, narcotics offences with 13.19 percent and 10.14 percent with possession of illegal arms, he added.

Some 42 percent inmates committed their first offence singly while around 46 percent inmates committed their first offence in a group, he said, adding that habitual theft, extortions, group venture, possessions of illegal arms or explosives, sex perversion, suspect in murder cases were stated to be the first offence by the inmates.

Regarding the progress of the cases, he said no hearing took place in more than 34.31 percent cases and no probation was found to have been granted by the court.

Dr Hoque further said no inmate stated that any probation officer from the department of social service contacted with any of them for their release under the 'Probation of Offenders Act-1964'.

He also said nearly 28.45 percent of the total prisoners had political connections particularly in joining political procession, meeting and picketing during hartal.

The average family size of the inmates is 5.14 percent and occupation of the inmates' fathers mostly is petty business that stands at 23.33 percent, he said, adding that 17 percent of their fathers are rickshaw or van pullers.

He further said nearly 57 percent inmates suffer from skin diseases, particularly scabies and medical attention to the inmates needs to be improved further.

Little recreation, restriction of seeing guardians and long for sports equipment are the main problems facing the inmates, he said, adding that the attitude of the inmates is still found to be remorseful.

DIG (Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiqui said they are earnestly trying to keep the under-aged inmates in a sound environment.

"We never treat them as prisoners rather we try to keep them by showing affection as much as possible," he said.

Presiding over the occasion, ABMG Kibria, former IGP and former adviser to a caretaker government, said the problems of the under-aged inmates will soon be disappeared as a number of organisations are working on the issue.

"But there are around 4 lakh floating children in the city and we have to think about them," he said urging the police officers to work with responsibilities.

BNWLA Executive Director advocate Salma Ali said a comprehensive action plan needs to be taken so that the juvenile inmates can get all sorts of facilities, including shelter, medical treatment and psychosocial supports.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Additional Commissioner Abdus Salam and Farah Kabir Country Director ActionAid Bangladesh also spoke.

Land depression over Orissa, W Bengal moves northwestwards

UNB, Dhaka

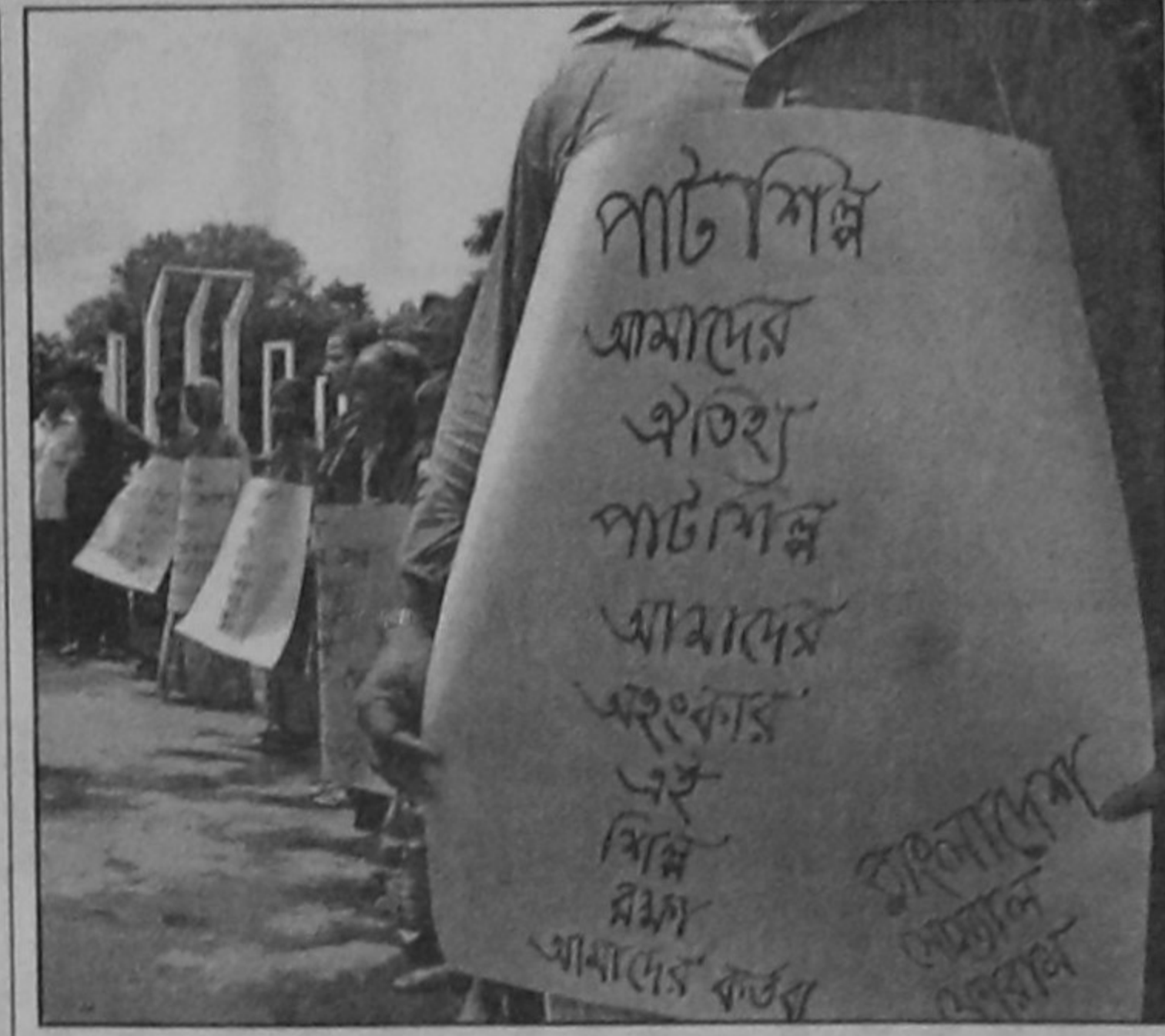
The land depression over Orissa, West Bengal and adjoining area moved northwestwards and now lies over Orissa, Bihar and adjoining area.

"It is likely to move in a north-westerly direction further inland and weaken gradually by giving precipitation," said a special bulletin of Met Office.

Under its influence, steep pressure gradient persists over north Bay. Squally weather may continue to affect the maritime ports.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal number three.

All fishing boats and travelers over north Bay have been advised to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution until further notice.



Bangladesh Social Forum stages a demonstration at Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday demanding steps to save jute industry.

DRUG TRAFFICKING ON RISE Law enforcers asked to watch borders, check infiltration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alarmed by the rising trend of drug trafficking in the country, the home ministry yesterday asked the law enforcement agencies to strictly watch the borders and check infiltration of both drugs and the accompanying explosives.

The instruction issued after the 43rd National Committee to Combat Smuggling revealed that 38 kilograms of heroin and 49,000 bottles of Phensidyl have been seized in only four months between mid-April and mid-July in Rajshahi region.

"Keep eyes on the borders so that the deadly drugs cannot enter the country," Home Adviser MA Matin directed the law enforcers at the ministry.

He said explosives and explosive substances also accompany the illicit drugs, adding "It is, thus, very important to check drug smuggling in the country."

Sources said huge contingent of drugs, including heroin, Yaba tablet and Phensidyl are entering the country through the land and sea routes. A small amount of those are being seized by different agencies.

They said drugs are being smuggled in for both local use and trafficking to a third country.

Matin said the meeting discussed about the framing of a summary court to quickly dispose of the growing number of pending smuggling cases.

"Some 22,000 cases are presently pending which is a big number," he told reporters after the meeting.

Home and shipping secretaries, divisional commissioners, National Board of Revenue (NBR) chairman and director generals of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Bangladesh Navy and Coastguard attended the meeting.

Matin said the process to install a scanner at the Chittagong Port is at its final stage, adding, "The NBR chairman informed the meeting that they will finalise buying of a scanner in February next year which will cost Tk 105 crore."

Setting up of scanners at all the land and seaports have become necessary to check trafficking of illicit drugs, arms and explosives hidden inside both the incoming and outgoing goods.

PROPOSED HEALTH POLICY A design to bring health sector under private management Say doctors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed health policy has been designed to bring the health sector under private management.

This view was expressed by a group of physicians under the banner of Janaswarthy Chikitsak Samaj at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium yesterday. The National Committee for Health Rights Movement was a co-sponsor of the conference.

Committee President and former chairman of Doctors Association of Bangladesh Prof Dr Rashid-E-Mahbub said private ownership is the main feature of the new health policy which is a 'threat to public health.'

Health sector in the country involves a business worth 20 thousand crore taka, he said, adding, people who are trying to be gained from privatisation of health sector, are working to make the proposed health policy effective.

Dr Mahbub said the efforts for privatisation of health sector are the results of government's negligence to its constitutional obligation to provide health service to all citizens.

Moreover, the government did not mention the limitations of the previous health policy for which the new policy was necessary, he added.

The speakers said the proposed health policy should be discussed in next parliament like the previous one which was discussed in the house in 2000.

"They also raised the question whether the present government has the right to introduce a health policy."

The government plans to lease out six hospitals, 15 upazila health complexes, 138 union health centres and 378 community clinics while health committees are being formed comprising joint secretary and deputy commissioner who are not directly involved with the health sector, said Prof Moazzem Hossain while presenting a keynote paper.

He said the proposed health policy does not include any policy on the medical education and urged the physicians not to turn medical education into a commodity.

Due to lack of proper planning, coordination and government assistance the private health service is failing to provide its desired role, said the doctors.

They said due to lack of proper quality control, monitoring and accountability the privatised hospitals and diagnostic centres are becoming threat to public health.

Prof Ruhul Haque, Prof Iqbal Arsal, Dr Mustafa Hossain, Dr Shakil Akhter and Dr Nitai Kanti Das also addressed the press conference.

Bangladeshi NGO official dies in road crash in Sierra Leone

UNB, Dhaka

Dr Shahnewaz Alam Khan, Country Director of Concern Worldwide in Sierra Leone, was killed in a car accident in Freetown in Sierra Leone on Wednesday evening.

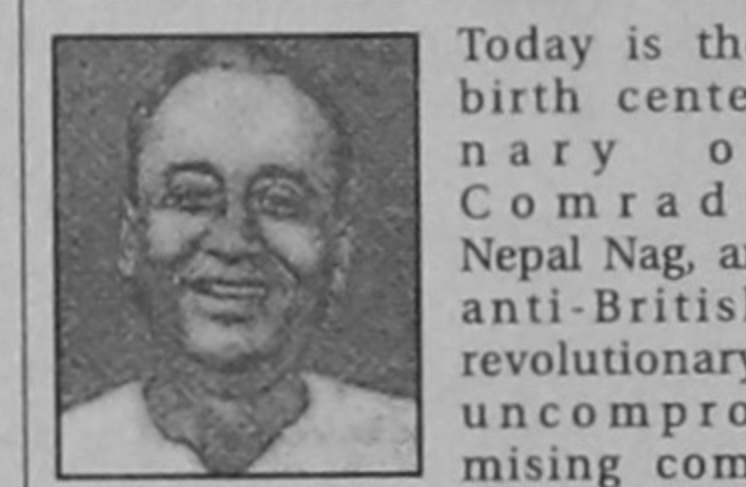
Shahnewaz joined Concern Worldwide in Bangladesh in 1998 as the head of health and nutrition programme. He was appointed Country Director of the NGO in Sierra Leone one year ago.

His body will arrive in Bangladesh soon, said a release.

Meanwhile, Concern Worldwide Bangladesh Country Director Kieron Crawley has expressed his deep shock at the death of Shahnewaz.

Birth centenary of Comrade Nepal Nag today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the birth centenary of Comrade Nepal Nag, an anti-British revolutionary, uncompromising communist leader and one of the organisers of the country's Language Movement.

Nag, popularly known as Rahman Bhai, was born on this day in 1909, says a press release.

He was also a pioneer of trade union movement in the country. He breathed his last on October 5, 1978.

On the occasion, Comrade Nepal Nag Birth Centenary Observance Council have chalked out an elaborate programme, including a discussion, at Mukti Bhaban at Purana Paltan in the city at 3:00pm.

Mirza Azam

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On the other hand, defence lawyers submitted a bail petition saying that their client was implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy to harass him.

After hearing both the sides, the magistrate ordered to send Azam to jail rejecting the bail petition saying that he had no jurisdiction to entertain such appeal as it was filed under the EPR.

On July 16 this year, Azam was sent to jail after he had surrendered before the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka in connection with a case filed for amassing wealth worth over Tk 53 lakh illegally and providing false wealth information to the commission.

ACC Deputy Director SM Mofizul Islam on July 7, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, had submitted the charge sheet against Azam to the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court showing 34 people as prosecution witnesses.

His wife Aleya Azam was also charged with abetting him for acquiring the illegal wealth.

The IO appealed to the court for issuance of arrest warrants against Azam and his wife and the order to attach their properties, as they had been absconding since the case was filed.

Following prayer submitted by the IO, the court had issued arrest warrants against them.

ACC Deputy Director Mobar Khan on January 10 this year filed the case against the couple with Ramna Police Station for committing the offences.

In the case statement, the complainant said Azam accumulated wealth worth Tk 5,362,645 illegally and concealed information about his wealth worth Tk 6,434,295 from the commission.

MiG-29 trial stayed for 3 months

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case filed by businessman Azam J Chowdhury, and Niko and barge-mounted power plant graft cases filed by the ACC.

It has also granted her three months' ad interim bail in the Azam Chowdhury case.

Of the cases against the AL chief, five were filed after the military-backed caretaker government took over on January 11 last year, and 10 during the BNP-Jamaat rule.

Talking to reporters, Hasina's counsel Shafique Ahmed said his client had earlier been granted bail in the fighter purchase case.

For permanent release, all she needs now is bail in the case filed by Noor Ali, he added.

"Next week we'll file petitions on her behalf for bail in the Niko and power plant graft cases, and

the extortion case (filed by Noor Ali)," he said.

He observed that bail in the extortion case filed by businessman Tajul Islam Faruq is not that important as the AL chief has not been shown arrested in the case.

During hearing yesterday, Shafique argued that the divisional special judge's court violated the Code of Criminal Procedure by framing charges against Hasina in her absence on August 20 this year.

As per section 242 of the Code, the court must frame charges against defendants in their presence so they can plead guilty or innocent, he continued.

"Hasina had filed an application requesting the court not to indict her in her absence, but to no effect."

The lawyer said the same court

had earlier granted her permission to be absent from trial proceedings during her stay abroad for treatment.

Opposing the stay prayer, Additional Attorney General Mansur Habib and ACC lawyer Golam Kibria said the trial court did not violate the law since it framed charges against the defendant in the presence of her counsels.

The now defunct Bureau of Anti-corruption (Bac) had filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station on December 11, 2001.

Seven persons including Hasina were accused of causing a loss of Tk 700 crore to the state exchequer for corruption in the purchase of eight MiG-29 fighter planes.

Hasina was the prime minister when the purchase was made.

Gulshan plagued with traffic jam

FROM PAGE 1

when most of the business centres, private universities and schools remain closed.

Taxicabs and CNG-run auto-rickshaws charge at least Tk 30 more to go to Gulshan and Banani from elsewhere due to peak hour traffic congestion.

"Usually a CNG-metre shows a bill of Tk 80-90 when I go to my Gulshan office. But during rush hours I never get a CNG auto-rickshaw if I don't agree to pay the driver over Tk 120," says Jigatola resident Golam Rabbani, who works in a private firm at Gulshan-2.

Traffic policemen observe lack of carparks in many multi-storey commercial installations is a major reason for the nagging traffic congestion.

Chairman of Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) Saiful Islam said a section of people in the private sector are constructing buildings flouting the Rajuk approved plan for carparks.

He however could not say instantly how many buildings or high-rises have flouted parking rules.

Rajuk has designated inspectors for all areas in the capital to inspect whether the buildings are being constructed as per the rules, but the owners somehow manage to bypass the inspection and the law.

Finding inadequate parking space in the buildings, car owners and drivers park their vehicles on the nearest roads.

During a visit to Banani and Gulshan, it was found that a large number of cars are parked on the roads in front of commercial buildings, private universities, schools

and shopping malls.

Kemal Ataturk Avenue where many multi-storey buildings and private universities are situated is one of the most affected areas. "The area is in a mess when students come to their universities in private cars," says Jahangir, a security guard of a multi-storey building on Kamal Ataturk Avenue.

"I have locked in altercation five times today with the drivers since I joined the duty two hours back. Drivers, mostly of influential people, even threaten us if we tend to do anything," said a sergeant on duty in Gulshan-1 on Saturday afternoon.

Another traffic sergeant, Prashanta Chakma, posted at Gulshan-2 intersection, said the highest number of cases filed in Gulshan are for unauthorised parking.

He said when they start writing case slips from one end, drivers on the other end drive away and again park vehicles in places where sergeants are not on hand.

Eid railway tickets draw huge rush

FROM PAGE 16

kept the counters open till 10:00pm and anybody will be allowed to have tickets till September 25 if they are available."

According to Bangladesh Railway officials, the demand for September 25 and September 26 tickets would not be more than the capacity of Bangladesh Railway. They think that ticket demand for journeys on September 27 and onwards would be high.

Sources said Bangladesh Railway will be capable of carrying around 27,000 passengers sitting and 25,000 more standing each day for three days from September 29.

Sources said Bangladesh Railway has train services to and from 50 districts including Noakhali, Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna,

Rajshahi, Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj and other districts in between these destinations and Dhaka.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) and Bangladesh Railway authorities have taken measures like opening of complaint centres, patrols and intelligence activities to prevent ticket scalping and other irregularities.

Station manager of Kamalapur Railway Station told The Daily Star, "Bangladesh Railway usually operates 22 intercity trains with 15,000 seats and 12 mail trains with 10,000 seats during Eid. It made arrangements for the four special trains with the 2,500 seats to run during the Eid rush."

"Most of the tickets will be sold at Kamalapur and the rest at Dhaka Cantonment and Joydevpur stations," the station manager said, adding "All four special trains are air conditioned and no standing passengers will be allowed in these trains."

He said Bangladesh Railway carried over 27,000 standing passengers each day during the last three days leading up to last year's Eid-ul-Fitr. He said they will be able to carry at least the same number of standing passengers this year.

Bangladesh Railway Director General Belayet Hossain Wednesday told The Daily Star, "We have arranged extra trains and measures have been taken to prevent irregularities by vigilant activities and setting up complaint centres at every station where advance tickets will be sold."

Meanwhile, Rab-3 personnel yesterday morning detained 12 people at Kamalapur for causing public nuisance. They were later let off following interrogation.

Major Jaber Shama of Rab-3, entrusted with checking irregularities and ensuring security to railway passengers, said, "We have been monitoring ticket selling so that none gets the chance of scalping or do other irregularities."

"This year our plainclothes forces are deployed in and around the areas concerned," the Major said.

Glaucoma found in Hasina's both eyes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Doctors at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in the US yesterday detected glaucoma in the right eye of Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina, two weeks after she was tested positive for the disease in her left eye.

The doctors prescribed Hasina some new medicines for her eyes and ears for two weeks after a seven-hour-long medical check-up on her, reported US-based news agency News World and American News Agency (ANA).

The AL president has also been advised to consult doctors at the hospital immediately if there is any side-effect of the new medication.

Hasina's blood and urine were collected for further test.

Abdus Sobhan Golap, accompanying the AL president, told ANA that the possible date for Hasina's return could not be set, as she has to go to the hospital after two weeks for ear treatment.

Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy accompanied her mother to the hospital.

Withdrawal of false cases against Hasina demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 251 cultural activists yesterday demanded immediate withdrawal of all 'false' cases against former prime minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and her permanent release.

The false cases must be withdrawn in order to resolve the current political crisis and to create an environment conducive to free and fair elections, they said in a statement.

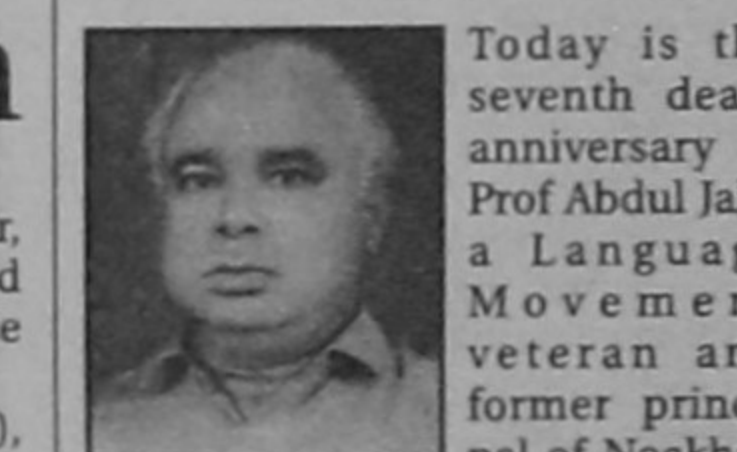
They also demanded immediate announcement of the election schedule and steps to control the price hike of essentials.

The signatories to the statement include Prof Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed, Asaduzzaman Noor, Advocate Tarana Halim, Alamgir Kulkum, Kabori Sarwar, Arun Sarkar Rana, Ramendu Majumder, Pijush Bandopadhyaya, Faruk, Falguni Hamid, Ferdousi Majumder and ATM Shamsuzzaman.

Meanwhile, Bangali Sangskritik Jote, Amra Mujib Sena, Dhaka Mahanagar Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote, Jatiya Hindu Motiree Parishad, Bangabandhu Kabita Aritri Sangskritik Parishad, Ram Seta Mandir Committee, Buddhiji Shilpi Parishad, Samillita Shilpi Parishad, Chiranton '71, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Forum, Chalochitra League, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Tarun League and Srijoni Natyaya Gosthi also demanded withdrawal of false cases against the AL chief.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the seventh death anniversary of Prof Abdul Jalil, a language movement veteran and former principal of Noakhali Govt University College, says a press release.

On the occasion, Quran Khotom and milad mahfil will be held at Noakhali Jame Masjid, Majdee Masterpara Baitun Nur Masjid and Al-Arafah Islami Academy (Hefjul Quran Madrasa). Foods will also be distributed among the destitute. Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the programme and pray for salvation his departed soul.

Zubair Chowdhury Rimu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 15th death anniversary of Shaheed Zubair Chowdhury Rimu, a leader of Rajshahi University Bangladesh Chhatra Moitri, says a press release.

He was killed by the Shibir cadres on this day in 1993.

On the occasion, Bangladesh Chhatra Moitri will hoist black flag at its central office at Babupura in Dhaka at 7:00am, wear black badges and pay homage at the Central Shaheed Minar at 10:00am.

A discussion will also be held at its central office at 3:00pm.

Wreaths will be placed at his grave and a volunteer blood donation programme will also be held at his village home in Satkhira.

Mohammad Idris Majumdar

Today is the first death anniversary of Mohammad Idris Majumdar, a retired customs officer, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhawani and doa mahfil will be held at his village home at Majumdar Bari under the Laksam upazila in Comilla.

WEATHER TODAY Light rain likely UNB, Dhaka Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today. Moderately heavy rainfalls are also likely at places during the period, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country. Highest temperature 35.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 23.3 degrees Celsius at Hatia. The sun sets in the capital at 5:58pm today and rises at 5:47am tomorrow. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were: City/Town Temperature in Celsius, Humidity in percentage. Dhaka: Max 31.8, Min 26.1, Morning 79, Evening 89. Chittagong: Max 31.3, Min 25.5, Morning 78, Evening 78. Rajshahi: Max 32.4, Min 26.2, Morning 83, Evening 77. Khulna: Max 30.5, Min 25.6, Morning 90, Evening 92. Barisal: Max 31.0, Min 25.3, Morning 89, Evening 92. Sylhet: Max 35.6, Min 25.8, Morning 73, Evening 63. Cox's Bazar: Max 33.0, Min 25.3, Morning 77, Evening 86.

DHAKA TODAY Solaiman Fair: Theatrewala, a quarterly, organises Ranganaman Solaiman Fair 2008, to pay tribute to drama personality SM Solaiman. Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Time: 10:00am. Photography exhibition: Alliance Francaise de Dacca will host a photography exhibition and a movie sequel titled 'Shopno' by Molla Sagar. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dacca. Time: 9:00am to 12:00noon and 5:00pm to 9:00pm (photography exhibition from September 19-25) and 7:00pm (movie show on September 19, 21, 23 and 25). Mehedi festival: Dhakabashi and National Press Club jointly organise a Mehedi festival and contest. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am. Book launch: The launching ceremony of a book titled 'Shaheed Buddhijibi Prof Dr Faeze Rabbil' will be held. Venue: Liberation War Museum. Time: 3:45pm. Discussion: Samajtantrik Mahila Forum will hold a discussion to mark the 76th death anniversary of Pritilata Waddadar. Venue: Moni Singh-Farhad Trust Bhaban. Time: 10:00am. World Heart Day: Heart Care Foundation, Comilla organises a daylong programme to mark the World Heart Day. Venue: William Carey International School. Time: 08:45am.