

Call for survey on high-rises to ensure fire safety

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday suggested introducing a survey system for high-rise buildings in the major cities and giving fitness certificates every year based on the survey to ensure fire safety of the buildings.

Stressing the need to raise awareness of fire safety, they said every house should be equipped with fire extinguishing support and all the members of a family should learn proper knowledge about the use of the equipment.

Media Initiative for Public Policy (MIPP) organised the roundtable on 'Fire safety preparedness' at Press Institute of Bangladesh in the city which was moder-

ated by its President Farid Hossain. MIPP Joint Secretary Pranab Saha presented a concept paper.

Speaking as the chief guest, Home Minister Sahara Khatun said firefighting should get highest priority in major cities, but previous governments did not take any steps in this regard.

Underscoring the importance of proper training and knowledge about using the modern equipment, she said even the guards of many buildings do not get necessary training despite having adequate arrangements.

Director General (DG) of Fire Service and Civil Defence Brig Gen Abu Nayeem Shahidullah said every building must have to be brought under fire safety system with

necessary equipment and training.

He suggested introducing a chapter in school syllabuses on fire safety and earthquake management.

Maj Asadul Haque, former DG of fire service, said new and modern equipment, including at least a 70-metre ladder is urgent for firefighting.

Architect Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed said homeowners have to ensure fire prevention measures. "A survey should be conducted on buildings to find out the faults."

Rehab President Tanvirul Haque Prabal, Deputy Editor of the Jugantar Saiful Alam, Rajuk Director Tapan Kumar Nath and its member Zainal Abedin Bhuiyan also took part in the programme.

'Remove Bangalee settlers to preserve CHT heritage'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Preserving the tradition, culture and heritage of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) would not be possible unless Bangalee settlers are removed from there without any delay, said the speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday.

"If we want to see Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachhari as a land with its diversity, beauty and heritage, we must ensure that Bangalee settlers and armed forces are removed from the hill districts immediately," said Prof Ajay Roy who presided over the meeting.

He said deployment of

army in hill districts in the present way is creating innumerable problems and showing a colonial attitude towards ethnic people.

Referring to a recent census, Prof Ajay mentioned that the tradition, heritage and diversity of the hill districts are at risk as 56 percent of the total population there are Bangalees.

"At the present situation, we must also talk about indigenous people living in plain land as over the years their recognition has disappeared," said Raja Debashish Roy while presenting a keynote paper.

"Unless language and culture of ethnic minorities in

the hill districts are preserved, we will forget our history. Once a nation forgets its history, the nation dies," said Justice Gholam Rabbani.

He also demanded setting up of comparative language study institute in all universities and an exclusive university mainly for indigenous students in the hill district.

The speakers also underscored the need for a uniform law to ensure coexistence of diverse ethnicity in the country.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam, Bhorer Kagaj Editor Shyamol Dutta and Advishi leader Sanjib Drong also spoke at the meeting.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh



Advocate Mahmud Al Noor Tareq, mayor of Mymensingh Municipality, died of a massive cardiac arrest at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital on Thursday night at the age of 60.

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

Advocate Tareq, also an Awami League leader, was also elected president of Mymensingh Bar Association twice and its secretary four times.

Advocate Tareq was the vice-president of AL district committee and District Sports Association.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at Anjuman Eidgah ground in the town and he was buried at Gulkbiri graveyard.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has expressed condolence at the death of Advocate Tareq.

Abdus Salek

RU CORRESPONDENT

Abdus Salek, a former sub-accountant of Sonali Bank, Rajshahi corporate branch, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) on Thursday night at the age of 58.

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

He was buried at Tikapara graveyard after a namaz-e-janaza at Tikapara Eidgah maidan yesterday.

Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton and Sonali Bank officers' and employees' associations expressed condolence at the death of Abu Salek.

Sheikh Abdul Wadud

BSS, Dhaka

Sheikh Abdul Wadud, father of Mostafa Feroze, chief news editor of Banglavisian and founding general secretary of Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU), died of old age complications at Central Hospital in the city yesterday afternoon at the age of 81.

Wadud, a former airport manager of Civil Aviation Authority, left behind his wife, two sons, a daughter and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Mirzanagar under Keshabpur upazila in Jessore.

Qulkhwani

METRO DESK

Qulkhwani of Maj Gen (ret'd) M Khalilur Rahman, a former AL lawmaker from Jamalpur, will be held at the Old DOHS Community Centre in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

He passed away on April 20. Maj Gen (ret'd) Khalilur Rahman, who joined the army in 1949, also served as the BDR chief and the Chief of Defence Staff of Bangladesh Armed Forces.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the qulkhwani and pray for salvation of the departed soul.



Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Jatiya Nadi Raksha Andolon form a human chain in front of National Museum in the city yesterday protesting the construction of Tipaimukh Dam.

Shipbuilding can play significant role in boosting economy

UNB, Dhaka

Local shipbuilders, who have already made a mark in wooing foreign buyers, said Bangladesh has a marvelous opportunity to earn huge foreign currencies by building and exporting ships.

"If the government patronises this prospective sector, it can play a significant role in giving a boost to the national economy," said Karnaphuli Shipbuilders Ltd Managing Director MA Rashid, appreciating the present government's positive approach to the sector.

He said marine vessels, ferries, cruise ships, fishing boats and launches are built in the country's coastal belt and the offshore islands, but the potential of this sector still remained untapped simply for lack of visionary entrepreneurs, favourable atmosphere and government support.

"We can raise GDP (gross domestic product) by at least 3 percent within the next six years if we're given an encouraging environment," he added.

Industry insiders said the shipbuilding industry will be the driving force of another socio-economic uplift in the country after the RMG-driven revolution in the 80s, as it can create huge jobs at shipyards and its backward linkage industries.

The annual turnover of the global shipbuilding industry is around \$1,522 billion. European shipbuilders stopped

taking orders until 2010, while Asian shipbuilders in Korea, Japan, China, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam have already received adequate export orders.

It is assumed that over \$300 billion worth of export still remain untapped and local ship-making companies can grab this opportunity.

"This is a new but bright sector for us. So, it deserves a special consideration. The government will provide all necessary supports to this sector for its growth," Industries Minister Dilip Barua told the news agency.

Meanwhile, Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) has recommended giving priority to the shipbuilding industry in the upcoming three-year import policy. It also recommended a plan to bring down bank interest rate to eight percent and simplify the import procedures of raw materials for the shipbuilding industry.

Sources said Western Marine Shipyard Limited has so far received orders for manufacturing five seagoing cargo vessels from a Danish company.

Another two shipbuilders -- Ananda Shipyard Limited and Slipways Shipyard Limited -- are also doing a good business.

Chairman of Western Marine Shipyard Md Saiful Islam said Bangladesh has a competitive edge on shipbuilding for having efficient and cheap labour force.

Referring to a problem, he said the country has an image crisis in the western

and developed countries, adding: "We can rebuild the image with a flagship industry such as shipbuilding."

"Shipbuilding is a heavy industry and also highly technical. Bangladesh can be turned into a shipbuilding nation from a ship-breaking one," Saiful mentioned.

Entrepreneurs said having international certification and accreditation from the Germanischer Lloyd and Norske Veritas are a must for a country to grow as a shipbuilding nation.

"In most cases, international certification depends on the vessel's design, craftsmanship, interior and exterior decoration, utilities, security and safety features that are again directly linked to the international suppliers of the vessel components," an official of the country's biggest private shipyard said demanding a favourable import policy for the budding industry.

Referring to Vietnamese investment in shipbuilding over the last decade, officials said Bangladesh has a competitive advantage over its Asian competitors because of its cheap and able workforce.

They think it is high time to tap the potential and urged the government to provide the industry required moral and infrastructural support.

Western Marine Shipyard has so far built 55 vessels. The vessels acquired certification from the international classification companies.



Prof Ajoy Roy speaks at a view exchange meeting titled 'Compendium on IP Laws in Bangladesh' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are Justice Gholam Rabbani and Ayesha Khanam and on his right are Dalim Chandra Barman and Raja Debashish Roy.

BDR, BSF agree to check cross-border crimes

BSS, Satkhira

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at a meeting yesterday agreed to work together to check cross-border crimes and resolve other problems.

Held in the Sultanpur border area under Kalaroa upazila of Satkhira, the company commander-level meeting discussed matters relating to killing and kidnapping of innocent Bangladeshi nationals, smuggling of arms, explosives and drugs, human trafficking, insurgency and cross-border terrorism.

BDR Hijoldi Company Commander Subedar Munsur Helal led the six-member BDR team while Acting Company

Commander of BSF Govindapur Company SI Ram Das headed the six-member BSF side at the meeting.

Both the BDR and BSF sides handed over documents of joint border pillar checking.

The BDR alleged that BSF men have been killing innocent Bangladeshi nationals along the border areas rather than arresting them.

The leader of the Indian delegation assured the BDR

that necessary actions will be taken against those found involved in killing and kidnapping of innocent Bangladeshi nationals.

The BSF officials showed positive attitude in resolving disputes through talks, a BDR official said.

Deputy Assistant Director of BDR 41 Rifles Battalion Mahbubur Rashid said some decisions were taken to avert untoward incidents.



No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 24 hours as of 6:00pm today.

There are also chances of rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind at one or two places over the regions of Sylhet and Comilla, Met Office said.

Prevailing moderate to severe heatwave over Khulna division and the regions of Dhaka, Tangail, Faridpur, Rajshahi and Ishwardi mild to moderate heat wave over Rajshahi division and the regions of Mymensingh, Madaripur, Rangpur, Chandpur, Barisal and Patuakhali may continue, it added.

Besides, day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:25pm today and rises at 5:28am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 41.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 21.8 degree at Rangpur.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius, Humidity in percentage, Morning, Evening

Syed Ahmed laid to rest

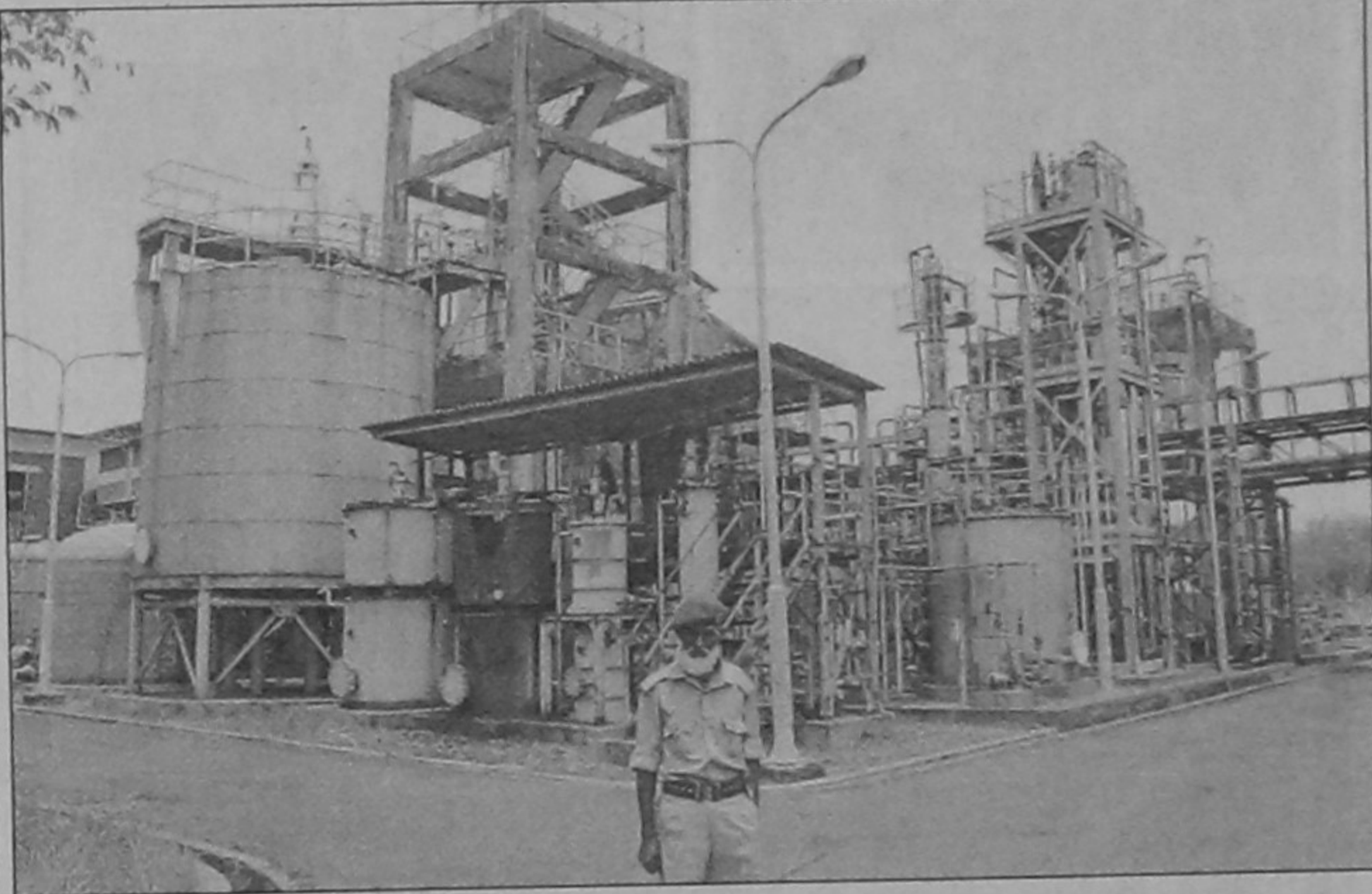
BSS, Dhaka

Veteran politician Advocate Syed Ahmed was laid to rest at his family graveyard at Faridpur under Kuliarchar upazila in Kishoreganj district yesterday.

Ahmed, a senior Awami League leader and one of the leading organisers of the liberation war, breathed his last at a city hospital on Thursday evening at the age of 70.

A senior commander of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation Front (BLF), founding secretary general of Bangladesh Jubo League and noted lawyer, Ahmed left behind his wife, a son, two daughters and a host of relatives, friends and admirers to mourn his death.

Qulkhwani of Advocate Syed Ahmed will be held in Dhaka on Sunday and at his village home in Faridpur on Friday.



A guard stands in front of the state-owned Chittagong Chemical Complex (CCC) at Barakunda in Sitakunda yesterday. The chemical plant reopened yesterday after six years. (Story on Page 1)

Body of missing college student recovered

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong police recovered the decomposed body of a college student hanging from a large tree on a hilltop behind Pritilata Hall of Chittagong University (CU) yesterday.

The dead was identified as Rubel Barua, a 1st year student of Chittagong Government City College and son of Tapan Barua, of Gombdandi village under Boalkhali upazila.

Sources said locals on the CU campus noticed the body when they were collecting dry leaves from the hilltop around 100 feet from the ground on Thursday evening.

They informed police of the matter. The law enforcers recovered the body in presence of his family members and sent it to Chittagong Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Officer-in-Charge of Hathazari Police Station Mohammad Ismail said they found a phone number in a chit in Rubel's bag that read: "None is responsible for my death. I took 70 tablets, but didn't die. My father is a nice man in my eyes."

"The body bore no mark of hit and we are suspecting that he might have committed suicide around eight days ago following pressure for study from the family," he added.

The victim's younger brother Mishu told reporters that Rubel went out off his city's Chandgaon residence on April 16 and did not come back.

HSC examinee abducted in Jhalakathi

UNB, Jhalakathi

A female HSC examinee was abducted by a gang of hoodlums from in front of the Binoykathi exam centre in Sadar upazila on Thursday.

Witnesses said that as the girl, Farzana Alam Eva, came out of the exam centre at around 1:00 pm, a gang of 10 or 12 hoodlums led by Mohammad Shafique, 24, who came riding motorcycles, abducted her.

Her mother Julekha Begum lost her consciousness instantly. She was later rushed to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

BDR mutiny a conspiracy against country

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said the recent mutiny by BDR jawans is part of a conspiracy against the country, which started in 1971.

Calling on all to be united against such conspiracy, they said the BDR mutiny was also part of a bid to foil the move to bring war criminals to book.

Conspirators in and outside the country have been hatching conspiracy since 1971 with a view to making the country leaderless, said Prof Dr Syed Anwar Hossain, former director general of Bangla Academy, who presented a keynote paper at the roundtable at Shahid Tajul Islam auditorium.

If the culprits were tried for the brutal killings that have taken place since 1971, such killings would not take place in future, he said at the roundtable organised by Human Rights International Bangladesh (HRIB).

Demanding exemplary punishment to those involved in the BDR mutiny, he said this is not only a question of human rights but also a question of the country's existence.

Former lawmaker Dr Mohammad Selim presided over the roundtable while Advocate Humayun Kabir Shikdar, Secretary General of HRIB Maimul Islam Chowdhury and Joint Secretary General Hasanuzzaman Hasan also spoke.

Father, son die of diarrhoea in Dinajpur

UNB, Dinajpur

A man and his son died of diarrhoea within a span of eight hours at Dinajpur Medical College and Hospital on Thursday.

The deceased were identified as Mostafizur Rahman, 45, and his 10-year-old son Habib of Rudrani village under Fulbari upazila.

Hospital sources said Mostafizur and his son Habib were admitted to the hospital after being attacked by the water-borne disease.

Mostafizur died on Wednesday midnight while Habib died eight hours after his father's death.

Meanwhile, Bilkis Begum, wife of Mostafizur, was also admitted to the same hospital in critical condition.

DHAKA TODAY logo and text

Birth anniversary

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) organises different programmes, including the launching ceremony of Shakespeare Study Circle, to mark the 445th birth anniversary of William Shakespeare. Venue: Campus building A, ULAB. Time: 4:00pm.

Workshop

Bangladesh Heritage Foundation organises a workshop on 'Trial of war criminals and our law'. Venue: Bilia auditorium. Time: 9:00am.

Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of a book titled 'Dristi Prolobondhita O Shikha' by Diba Hossain and Md Shahrier Haider will be held. Venue: Training room 3, Institute of Education and Research (IER), Dhaka University. Time: 4:00pm.

Workshop

Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Concern Universal Bangladesh will jointly organise a workshop on anti-trafficking intervention in South Asia. Venue: LGED auditorium. Time: 9:30am.

Rotary Dhaka Central

The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.