



Blake made Asst Secy of State for South Asian Affairs

REZAUL KARIM

Veteran diplomat Robert O. Blake has been appointed as Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, according to an announcement of the US government.

Blake replaced Richard A. Boucher who served as the assistant secretary for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs for more than three years.

A US Senate Foreign Relations Committee has approved the nomination of Robert Blake, currently the US ambassador to Sri Lanka.

Since there was no opposition, Blake's nomination was approved without a debate and he would take charge of his new office soon, diplomatic sources said.

They said Blake will take up a tour to South Asian countries and is likely to visit Bangladesh mid-June.

Richard Boucher was sworn in as the assistant secretary by the Bush administration on February 21, 2006 when the bureau was expanded to include the nations of central Asia.

The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs deals with US foreign policy and US diplomatic relations with the countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, the Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

On April 24, President Barack Obama nominated Blake, who has also served as the deputy chief of US mission in New Delhi from 2002 to 2006.

Blake in his testimony on May 14 before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said Bangladesh, the world's seventh most populous country and one that has experienced nearly 20 years of solid economic growth, has begun an important transition back to democracy.

Last December, the country held the most transparent and fairest elections in its history.

However, continuing civil-military tensions underscore the tenuousness of the democratic transition.

"We will work with the people and the new government of Bangladesh to help build stronger democratic institutions and to address the problems of poverty, chronic corruption, and the culture of impunity, and domestic and international terrorism," he added.

A foreign service officer since 1985, Blake has also served at the US embassies in Tunisia, Algeria, Nigeria and Egypt. He also has held a number of positions at the State Department in Washington.

Blake obtained a BA from Harvard College in 1980 and MA in international relations from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in 1984. He is married to Sofia Blake. They have three daughters.

Loknath festival on June 3

BSS, Dhaka

The 119th 'Tirodhan Dibas' or death anniversary of Loknath Brahmachari, a great saint who preached the universal message of humanism, will be observed in a befitting manner across the country on June 3.

The main congregation of the devotees will be held at Barodi in Sonargaon, Narayanganj, where Baba Loknath breathed his last at the age of 160 years. He was born at Kachua village under Barasat district of West Bengal, India.

Various organisations have taken up elaborate programmes to observe 'Paduka Utsab' on the day.

Sree Loknath Brahmachari Ashram at Swamibagh in Dhaka will also hold a competition for juveniles today to help develop their talent.

Paduka Utsab will be held at Harikhol village in Chandina of Comilla, Chandpur, Narsingdi, Narayanganj, Chittagong, Barisal, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dinajpur and other districts in a befitting manner.

A large number of devotees from India also visit Barodi to join the festival.

JS BODY ON LIBERATION WAR MINISTRY MEETS

Move to revive Muktiyoddha Kalyan Trust industrial units

RASHIDUL HASAN

The parliamentary standing committee on the liberation war affairs ministry yesterday formed a sub-committee to find out ways to revive all the industrial units belonging to Muktiyoddha Kalyan Trust.

At present, most of the 32 industries run by the Kalyan Trust are closed due to mismanagement and corruption.

Out of the nine industries, now in operation, three are loss-making. Tabani Beverage, once profitable and popular venture of Kalyan Trust, is not in operation now.

The trust uses the profit from these industries for the betterment of freedom fighters, especially those who were

wounded during the liberation war.

"Most industries of Muktiyoddha Kalyan Trust are not in operation at present. A few industries, which are in operation, are also loss-making. So, we have formed a sub-committee to identify the problems facing these industries and to find out ways to revive them," Maj (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam, chairman of the parliamentary committee, told reporters after its three-hour-long meeting at the parliament building.

The sub-committee was also asked to appoint a consultant group for expert opinions regarding reopening of the industries and

assessment of its assets and liabilities.

Headed by Shajahan Khan, the three-member committee has also been asked to submit its report soon.

The parliamentary committee also formed another sub-committee to prepare a list of genuine freedom fighters by adding the names of those dropped from the existing three lists and deleting the names of fake freedom fighters.

"The three lists of freedom fighters have flaws. The names of real freedom fighters were not included in the lists. On the other hand, the names of fake freedom fighters appear on the lists," Maj (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam said.

"So, we have formed a sub-committee to prepare a correct and unified list of freedom fighters to replace the existing three lists," the veteran freedom fighter added.

Headed by Shamsurrahman Sherif, the four-member sub-committee has been asked to submit its report within the next one month, he said.

"The sub-committee will verify the existing three lists. They will delete the names of fake freedom fighters and will incorporate the names of real freedom fighters into the list."

The sub-committee has also been asked to submit a report on how to ensure transparency and accountability in the Muktiyoddha Sangsad.

Use environment-friendly technology to extract coal: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday underscored the need for using environment-friendly state-of-the-art technology in extracting coal from Barapukuria coalmine so that local villagers do not suffer any kind of loss from soil subsidence.

She made the remark when an eight-member delegation of the consortium company of Barapukuria Coal Mine, Xuzhou Coal Mining Group Corporation, China, led by its Chairman Huang Xinhai called on the Prime Minister at her official residence Jamuna.

The Chinese delegation also assured the prime minister of using the best technology in extracting coal that will not harm the locals.

Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abdul Kalam Azad briefed newsmen after the meeting.

The chairman of the Chinese company told the

prime minister that they will make the best application of their company's experience of '127 years' to save the people from any big loss of their property.

The consortium will also share the compensation to be made to the villagers, the delegation told the prime minister.

The delegation also informed the premier that they will visit the Barapukuria Coalmine site today.

Huang Xinhai said the prospect of the Barapukuria Coalmine is "very bright".

The prime minister informed the Chinese delegation that the present government has planned to set up several power plants to rid the country of power crisis.

She also called for Chinese investment in larger volumes in Bangladesh's power and electricity, gas and other infrastructure sectors.

In reply, the Chinese delegation members also expressed their keen interest

in making more investment in Bangladesh.

"China so far has made significant contribution to the socioeconomic development of Bangladesh, including to the road communications. We attach due importance to the existing friendly relations of Bangladesh with China. We also hope that the bilateral relations will be further strengthened in the days to come," she said.

Power and Energy Adviser to the Prime Minister Taufiq-e-Elahi

Chowdhury, Prime Minister's Office Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman and Energy Secretary Mohammad Mohsin were present.

The mine will produce 1 million tonnes of coal per annum when

commercial production will commence. Some 65 percent production will be used in 250 MW coal-fired power station and remaining 35 percent in brickfields and other domestic purposes.

3 accused flee from court

Lawyer showcaused

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court Tuesday asked a lawyer to explain within 15 days why a recommendation to cancel his certificate would not be sent to the Bangladesh Bar Council for helping three accused flee from the court-room.

The court also directed the deputy commissioner (prosecution) to take legal actions against two on-duty police constables -- Mohammad Shahabuddin and Mohammad Azad -- for making way for the accused to escape.

On May 26, three accused in a cheating case -- Mohammad Abdul Baqui, his sons Ahmed Riaz Jewel and Siddiq Imroz alias Babul -- surrendered before the court and sought bail.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate SKM Toifal Hassan passed the

order rejecting their bail prayers and ordered to send them to jail. But the accused made their escape from the dock unchallenged by on-duty policemen.

Following the incident the magistrate sent for Pran Nath, the lawyer of the three accused, and asked him to bring back his clients but as the lawyer did not comply with the court order the magistrate issued a show-cause notice upon him.

According to the prosecution, Abdul Baqui in collusion with his two sons forged a drug licence of former lawmaker late Dr Kazi Abu Yusuf and took possession of his drug shop.

Yusuf's wife Shawkat Ara filed a cheating case against Abdul Baqui and his sons on November 4 last year. The three accused secured bail from the High Court till submission of the police report.

DU SENATE POLLS White Panel bags 18 posts, Blue & Pink Panels 17

DU CORRESPONDENT

BNP-Jamaat-backed 'White Panel' teachers won 18 seats while pro-Awami League and left-leaning teachers of 'Blue and Pink Panels' bagged 17 seats in the election to the 35 posts of teachers' representatives in the Dhaka University (DU) senate yesterday.

The Blue and Pink Panel teachers jointly contested the election for all the 35 seats under this category in the 104-seat senate, which elects a three-member panel of full-time vice-chancellor.

A total of 1,097 teachers cast their votes in the election held on the TSC premises, with DU Treasurer Prof Mizanur Rahman as the election commissioner.

Prof Abdul Barakat of Blue and Pink panels secured the highest number of votes (651), followed by Prof Sadrul Amin of White Panel (645) and Prof Akhtaruzzaman of Blue and Pink Panels (595).

From the Blue and Pink Panels, Prof ABM Faruque, Dr AKM Golam Robbani, Prof Khandaker Bazul, Dr Zinat Huda, Dr Nazma Shaheen, Dr Nasrin Ahmed, Dr Fakhru Alam, Prof Mamtaj Uddin Ahmed, Dr Mihir Lal Shaha, Dr Muntasir Uddin Khan Mamun, Dr Mohammad Mohabbad Khan, Dr Mohammad Anwar Hossain, Dr Mohammad Aftab Ali Sheikh, Dr Mohammad Rahman Ullah and Dr Shahid Akhter Hossain emerged as winners.

And the White Panel winners are Prof Abu Ahmed, Dr Abul Hasnat, Dr Abbas Ali Khan, Dr ABM Obaidul Islam, Dr Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, Dr Tajmeri SA Islam, Dr Nevin Farida, Dr Borhan Uddin Khan, Dr Mamun Ahmed, Dr Mohammad Akhter Hossain Khan, Dr Mohammad Abul Bashar, Prof Ferdous Hossain, Mohammad Lutfar Rahman, Dr Mohammad Sirajul Islam, Dr Mohammad Hasanuzzaman, Dr Laila Noor Islam and Dr Sayed Saleheen Kadree.

KILLED IN 'SHOOTOUT' 2 identified as students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two youths, who were killed in a 'shootout between them and Rab' near Manik Mia Avenue in the capital early yesterday, were students of Dhaka Polytechnic Institute.

Mohammad Zinnah Ali was a 6th semester student of mechanical engineering and a resident of Zahir Raihan Dormitory while Mohsin Sheikh was a final semester student of electrical engineering.

Students of the institution yesterday termed the killing a "planned killing by law enforcers" and demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits after an impartial investigation. They made their demand before the principal of the institution.

Students and teachers of the institute said Zinnah and Mohsin were members of Bangladesh Chhatra League but they neither had any criminal

records nor were they involved in any unethical activities.

Tejgaon Industrial Area Police Station sources said they found no cases or general diaries filed with the police station against them.

Mohammad Shamsul Alam, principal of Dhaka Polytechnic Institute, told The Daily Star that four factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League are active in the institution and they clash often over establishing supremacy on campus.

Many cases have been filed against Chhatra League activists by their rivals but these two were not accused in any of those cases, he added.

Mohammad Aminur Rahman, roommate of Zinnah, said Zinnah joined politics only to have a seat in the dormitory. He was a brilliant student, he added.

Zinnah around 9:30pm Wednesday night went out of his dormitory room to have

dinner, Aminur said, adding that the next morning he watched his body on television news.

Campus sources said Mohsin used to stay in a room of Latif Hall.

Police said the bodies were sent to Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy. Morgue sources said the bodies had several bullets in the throat and chest.

According to a press release of Rab-2, Rab personnel, who set up a check-post near Manik Mia Avenue, challenged the two students but the "two tried to run away shooting at Rab personnel around 12:30am".

The Rab personnel returned fire that led to a gun battle, the press release says, adding that Rab found the bodies after the five-to-seven-minute firefight.

They claimed they recovered two seized and four bullets from the spot.

SAFE MOTHERHOOD DAY OBSERVED '60,000 women suffer from maternal complications a yr'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the theme of 'Ensure safe motherhood, build healthy nation' the Safe Motherhood Day 2009 was observed across the country yesterday to create awareness about maternal and child healthcare issues.

Different government and non-government organisations held various programmes in the city and elsewhere in the country to mark the day.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organised the inaugural function of the day at Osmani Memorial auditorium in the city.

In his inaugural speech Health and Family Welfare Minister Prof AFM Ruhul Haque said two women die every hour due to pregnancy and childbirth related complications and around 60,000 women suffer from maternal complications every year in the country.

He said the government would reactivate community clinics across the country soon to reduce maternal and child mortality as it is an innovative approach to deliver maternal and neonatal healthcare service effectively.

The health minister said to reduce maternal mortality his ministry would take special programmes to create awareness about bad effects of early marriage as it is one of the main barriers to overcome the situation.

Attending the function as special guest, Prof Dr Syed Modasser Ali, adviser to the prime minister, said the government would take effective measures to bring down the maternal mortality rate to zero level.

"The government has a plan to appoint more local health consultants to improve healthcare services as it is not possible to improve healthcare facilities only depending on foreign consultants," he said, adding if it is necessary six local consultants would be appointed instead of one foreign consultant.

The adviser said the government will also take initiative to train up traditional birth attendants as 85 percent of deliveries still take place at home attended mostly by untrained personnel which accelerates the maternal mortality.

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Mohammad Abdul Qayyum, director general of DGFP, WHO Representative Dr Duangvade Sunghobol, UNFPA representative Arther Erken and Unicef Representative Carel de Rooy also spoke at the programme.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad also organised a discussion titled 'Women's rights: Safe motherhood' at Cirdap auditorium in the city to observe the day.

Speakers at the discussion stressed the need for strengthening monitoring system to know whether the initiatives regarding reducing maternal and child mortality functioning properly or not.

They also demanded more budgetary allocation to address the issue properly.

Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam presided over the discussion which was also addressed by Dr Maleka Banu, general secretary of the parishad, Prof Dr Nazmun Nahar of Birmem hospital, Dr Abdul Qayum of ICDDR,B and Dr Laila Arjumand Banu of Lab Aid Hospital.

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Chehlum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chehlum of Syed Abu Daud, former deputy director of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), will be held today, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at the residence of Syed Abu Abbas at 148/1 RK Mission Road in the city.

Ehsan Wadud Khan Pallab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chehlum of Ehsan Wadud Khan Pallab, younger son of Rashed Moudud Khan will be held today, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa and milad mahfil will be held at his residence at 43 Agamasi Lane in the city after Asr prayers.

He passed away on April 18 while undergoing treatment in hospital in Singapore.

Bodies of four boys recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cnawabganj

Police recovered the bodies of four minor boys who went missing on May 26, from the bank of Mohananda river in Chapainawabganj yesterday. The four boys had been out playing when they went missing on Monday evening.

They were identified as Hayat Ali, 8, son of Mamud Ali, Khokon Ali alias Shihab, 9, son of Anwarul Islam and Arif, 8, son of Anwarul Islam of Gangobari village and Wasim, 9, son of Toslim Uddin from Asua village, both villages under Godagari upazila.

Ahsanul Haque, Officer-in-Charge of sadar police station said, the four boys went missing from Gangobari village and their fathers filed four general diaries with Godagari model police station on Monday night.

A boy grazing cows on the banks of Mohananda, in Anupnagar village yesterday afternoon discovered the bodies. He said he smelt a foul odour on the river bank and as he was investigating the smell, he came across a leg stuck out from under the mud on the river bank.

The boy informed locals and the police later recovered all four bodies from under the mud.

The OC said he suspected that the softened earth on the river bank collapsed while the boys were playing on it, and they died as they were buried under the mud.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Bashir Uddin, a social worker and vice-president of Kotwali thana of Dhaka City Awami League, passed away on Sunday at the age of 65, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three sons, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was severely injured in the grenade attack on the Awami League rally on August 21 in 2004. At that time his eyes were damaged and he bore a number of sprinters in his body.

Death anniversary METRO DESK

Today is the first death anniversary of Al-Kamal A b d u l W a h a b, a child litterateur and lyricist, says a press release.

On the occasion, a Qurankhwani and doa mahfil will be held after Asr prayers. Foods will also be distributed among the orphans.

Mohammad Hossain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 2nd death anniversary of Mohammad Hossain (Moyna), a social worker and president Hazzaribagh Union Awami Swechchaseb Bahini, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his Lalbagh Road residence to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Shamsun Nahar Majid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 3rd death anniversary of Begum Shamsun Nahar Majid, wife of Abdul Majid, former director of Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industries and former president of Bangladesh Hardware and Machinery Merchants Association, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at her residence at Najira Bazar Lane in Old Dhaka.

Sohel Chowdhury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 5th death anniversary of Sohel Chowdhury, a theatre activist and son of Nurul Haq Chowdhury, a retired government official, says a press release.

An active theatre activist of Theatre Centre, Sohel passed away in London in 2004. A milad mahfil has been organised at his village home in Habiganj.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:41pm today and rises at 5:11am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 35.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Mongla, Satkhira and Chandpur and the lowest of 21.7 degree at Sayedpur.

The 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	35.3	27.8	65	55
Chittagong	32.6	26.0	79	75
Rajshahi	35.0	24.0	77	70
Khulna	35.5	25.5	77	66
Barisal	34.7	27.0	75	67
Sylhet	31.8	24.5	72	67
Cox's Bazar	34.3	27.3	77	75